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P R I E S T C R A F T

By F. ROBERTSON

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ERRATA.

Page 4, line 18, *for* "wherein" *read* "in parts of which."  
„ 88, line 2, *for* "argument" *read* "intention."

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JEREMIAH v. 30.—“A wonderful and horrible thing is committed in the land ; the *prophets* prophesy falsely, and the *priests* bear rule by their means ; and my people love to have it so : and what will ye do in the end thereof ?”

JUDE 4.—“For certain men have *sneaked in* at unawares (*παρσιίδυσαν*) who were mentioned of old unto this condemnation ; unholy, turning the grace of our God into lasciviousness, and denying Jesus Christ, who is our Lord and God and only Master.”

# PRIESTCRAFT;

OR,

## CHURCH VERSUS BIBLE.

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AMIDST all the discussion and argument raised by the writings of that celebrated mathematician, there was no feature in the whole mass of correspondence and public declamation more strikingly prominent than the *impotent vituperation* of what may be called the Orthodox party against Bishop Colenso.

Their argument (if bitter invective can be said, by courtesy, and in virtue of its being launched on *the right side*, to amount to argument) divided itself into the following:—

1st, That Bishop Colenso only reasserted what had often been said before, and that his assertions had all been amply disproved long ago, as any child might know.

2d, That he was a great brute for scattering doubts broadcast in the Church, when he was paid to keep



them quiet ; and, " What did he mean by taking away the people's religion ? " " What could he offer as a substitute ? "

These were the views privately given by eminent churchmen after Colenso's works had been long before the public, and when therefore they, from their position, were bound to have consulted, and formed mature opinions on the subject.

I do not refer to the so-called *refutations* of Colenso *in print*, because any one who reads them can form his own opinion, and will probably, as a thinking man, come to the conclusion that if, for instance, the numbers of the children of Israel questioned by Colenso are not representative numbers whose meanings have been lost through defective tradition, but mean actually the arithmetical numbers that left Egypt, and led enough flocks and herds to kill passovers, &c. during forty years, in what was then, and is now, a wilderness of sand, wherein there is not a blade of grass to be seen, much less pasture for such a number, Moses must have forgotten to remind the children of Israel of the greatest of all the miracles which took place during their journey, when he summed up all that God had done for them, or else that he made a mistake in the numbers recorded. The first of which suppositions is of course the more extraordinary, and the second fatal to credit or not, according to each man's conception of the value of accuracy, and the absolute or relative nature of inspiration.

But the general tone taken by those who defended orthodoxy was such as to raise doubt more than anything Bishop Colenso could say ; not doubt of the truth of the Bible, but doubt of the doctrines *they* deduced, and the interpretation *they* put upon the Bible. Their contemptuous assertion that " any schoolboy could have

answered Colenso's difficulties," is out of place, and carries no weight ; for any one can see that Colenso is not a fool, though he has dared to think for himself ; and it would have been preferable and more convincing to have answered his doubts than merely to state that they could be answered. Besides which, it is as hard to believe the convictions to be sincere of men who dare not give a reason for the faith that is in them, but who bite and kick, and scream out "Heresy!" the moment they are questioned, as it is to believe that the bluster of a bully is a greater sign of bravery than quiet confidence.

In order to hold orthodox opinions on the doctrines of the Church, they teach that one must approach what he is taught is the highest and noblest religion on the earth in a state of mind which would be a disgrace to a Hottentot—a state of abject prostration, refusing to search the Scriptures, and see if what he is taught is really so, declining, with touching humility and praiseworthy self-abasement, to raise his unworthy eyes to look what (not the Bible, but) "Mother Church," tells him, fairly in the face : he is not to use his reason, because that is heresy, but he is to take it for granted that the doctrines are all right, even if plainly unworthy or contradictory, for the simple reason that it is very wrong indeed to think otherwise. He is to ask no questions, look nothing fairly in the face which at first sight suggests a doubt ; because, "if once you begin to doubt and cavil there is no end to it : " he is not to consider whether what is attributed to the God of Reason and Order by the orthodox party be really what the Bible teaches, or be reasonable and good, or unjust and capricious. Far be it from him to do anything so monstrous as to try the doctrine, or try the spirit of it, whether it be from God, before he receives it ; that would be overweening self-confidence : no, he is merely to take

all that he is told for granted, not venturing to question it. And he is further to persuade himself that this is what is meant by receiving "the kingdom of God as a little child," though nothing is more characteristic of children than surprise and inquiry, nothing more opposite than a spirit of false humility, and obsequiously complimenting religion by accepting and taking for granted anything and everything that men present under the name of doctrine.

The whole contention about Colenso, and particularly the impotent abuse of the orthodox party, has drawn the attention of many to doctrines which are said by the Church to be of vital importance, but which appear to be not *necessarily* deducible from, or contained in, the Bible. It is far better to scatter doubts and have them answered publicly now, than to leave them to smoulder on, destroying a man's spiritual life here, and haunting him on his deathbed: it is no use *then* telling him it is very wrong indeed to doubt what "Holy Mother Church has always at all times and in all places," &c. &c. He will want something which depends clearly and intelligibly on the Bible, and commends itself to his life and reason—not something that takes twelve hundred pages of astute argument to prove to be really the teaching of the Bible; nor, again, what a Church, consisting of some good and many bad men, all liable to error and sin, have agreed to teach as doctrine.

The following suggestions are accordingly put forward in the strong conviction that what is really true need not fear inquiry, or even assault, and that what is untrue is better separated; and that doubts which will occur to any thinking man who turns to religion with his heart and mind, and makes it a matter of life, not a matter of speculative inquiry or of self-satisfied patronage, would

be better answered than cried shame upon, if any one can and will answer them. As the subject will only admit of direct question or assertion, that form will be adopted in the following remarks ; remembering that the object is not to lay down a doctrine, or even a contradiction of doctrine, but, if possible, to provoke a good defence of the truth, and to show its strength by either assault or proof.

The arguments are not those of a subtle theologian, as is manifest, but are such as might occur to any sincere and thinking man who reads his Bible, though some of them are drawn from distinguished writers.

*First,* Although the Church teaches that except a man believe rightly the doctrine of the Trinity he cannot be saved, but without doubt he shall perish everlastingly ; yet it is impossible to make out from the Church-teaching whether she really means one or three. The moment you speak of one she shows you three ; the moment you say three she assures you there is only One. And no one teacher in the Church dares to explain what he means, or even what he thinks or conceives in his own mind, when he talks of three persons forming one God ; all he can do is to quote a text, because he is not sure that he thinks rightly on the subject : so he dares not put it into his own words, even to make what he thinks on the subject intelligible to his own child. All he can say is, "It is a mystery, and in such matters we must submit our reason to faith—the simple, childlike faith—that it is so ; that is quite enough for us." In other words, we must shut our eyes, stop our ears, and assert incessantly the words of a certain formula.

Does he really consider that a man's salvation rests on his jingling certain words without even attaching an idea

of their meaning? Does he dare to say there are three individuals in the Godhead? No, because he is not sure whether "individual" is what the Church meant by "person" or no. "Hear, O Israel, the Lord our God is" Three Lords, he says in his mind, but he luckily remembers in time, and says, "One Lord;" you are not allowed to say there are Three Lords, only to think so. You are to pray to One for the sake of another to send a third, and you will not be heard by the one unless you ask for the sake of the second, and yet there are not two. If the Trinity be compared to a man's soul acting through the operation of his body, the Bible doctrine is intelligible, and, though still a mystery, is not a contradiction. Those who think that there are three distinct Gods, might by their own reasoning have added a fourth, namely, the God Schaddai mentioned by Jacob, Ezekiel, and Job.

Prayer *through our Lord* will admit of a different meaning from that put upon it by the Church, just as when one addresses a person, one communicates with his mind or soul through his body—namely, through his sense of hearing. But there are people who will say it is blasphemy to ask questions straightforwardly, and bring forward difficulties on such a momentous matter as this, whereon, they say, a man's eternal salvation or hopeless damnation depends; "without doubt he shall perish everlastingly." Where in the Bible? in the world? is the foundation for that "without doubt"? Damned for not understanding what no sincere priest dares to form a distinct idea upon. "Without doubt" all the good men of the children of Israel, all the prophets also, and all that belonged to the old Jewish Church, "shall perish everlastingly." They only knew Jehovah as the God of their fathers, of Abraham, of Isaac, and of Jacob; not as God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Ghost.

And yet though this was not revealed to them or to any in this world before the Council of Nice coined the doctrine, yet the Church says in the creed composed by the Council of Nice, and committed to writing by St Athanasius, that this is the most important thing in religion, without accurate views upon which every one will be infallibly damned for ever! Prove it of course you *can*, or any other single fallacy; but reconcile it with our Lord's teaching, and with the whole scope and object of Christianity, and its messages of mercy, you *cannot*.

*Secondly*, The Church teaches that God the Father, being full of wrath against mankind, separated them from Himself, and sentenced them to universal damnation, and allowed innocent children to be born into this inevitable damnation; but that He persuaded or excited His Son to descend and take upon Himself the curse, and so to expiate the wrath of His Father. That He did so, and was scourged, spat upon, and crucified; and that by this means God the Father, being pacified by the misery which He saw His Son endure when nailed to the cross, cancelled the sentence of damnation against those for whom His Son should intercede. The above doctrine being contrary to the Bible, which teaches that God is love and mercy itself, desireth not the death of a sinner, but rather that he should turn and live; and not only contrary to the Bible view of God, but absolute blasphemy, attributing that to the God of mercy which would never be ascribed to a good man, but only to a wicked man or a devil.

*Thirdly*, The Church teaches that man can only be saved by Christ's merit being imputed to him through faith, all his own works being utterly inadequate to save him. Whereas it is evidently necessary to lead a good life; it is said men shall be judged by their *works*.

This is unnecessary or superfluous if merit can be instantaneously transferred to any one by a single arbitrary act. Why then does hell still exist? why is a single human being damned, if any one can be instantaneously made good? and *when* does this imputation take place? We must suppose not in this life, for if it is not sufficient to keep a man from actual sin in this world, what guarantee is there that it will keep him from committing sin in the next world, following his old habits, and being punished for so doing? Moreover, this also is rank blasphemy, for to say that man can be saved by an arbitrary act of grace is to attribute capriciousness to God. It is also as much as to say, if any man is damned it is God's fault, since any one can be forgiven and made good and saved by pure and arbitrary mercy, without any effort or active co-operation on his part, which effort would render it meritorious, and therefore null and void. The tendency of this doctrine is not to bring men to live a good life, but to abolish religion and to induce inactive security; for a man will say, "I cannot *take* this saving faith; it must be given to me of pure mercy. All my works are worthless, therefore what is the use of trying to do good, when there are no such things as works of supererogation either, as the Church itself allows in the Thirty-nine Articles?" "By the works of the law shall no man living be justified." Does this not mean the ceremonial law, on which St Paul was writing, not the moral law?

The Church since the Council of Nice has taught that it is allowable to acknowledge three Gods and three Lords, because "he is constrained by the Christian verity or truth to acknowledge each person by himself to be God and Lord;" and yet he is not allowed to *say* so, because religion forbids it. That each of these three persons has His separate functions—thus God the Father is

to be approached and implored to impute His Son's righteousness, or to be merciful for the sake of His Son's sufferings on the cross, and to send the Holy Spirit, who is also an equal God, to operate the effects of salvation. And this is to be held as true doctrine because "the Church says so;" whereas it is impossible not to see that there are more than twenty different senses of the word *church*, besides that there are scores of so-called churches which claim to be true for the same reasons and in the same sense, and yet that these all differ not only in externals but in doctrine, so that what is called truth in one is called heresy in another. It is therefore unsafe for a man to rely on the decisions and doctrines of councils or assemblies calling themselves *the Church*, or even bearing office in a church, forasmuch as such councils have from time to time revoked each other's decisions and doctrines, and have taught unworthy doctrines, as that a man may not only buy pardon for a past sin, but may take out a licence to commit a future sin, according to a fixed scale of charges, called an *indulgence*; that images and bones are to be venerated; that dead men may be invoked, and suchlike; that God predestines some to heaven and some to hell, which doctrine is contrary to His mercy and consistent dealings with men.

The Bible doctrine appears to be briefly, that a man is to love God with all his heart, mind, soul, and strength, and his neighbour as himself; that he cannot love God while he commits actual sin; that he is therefore to commence by abstaining from sins, trying to see his sins, and asking God's assistance. For this reason the commandments are prohibitory, because a man cannot love God, and hence do good from the love of God, while he willingly does evil. Thus the law is a *παιδαγωγος* to bring him to Christ (not an imperfect summary, needing supple-



mentary teaching, that where a sin is forbidden the contrary is enjoined, and that this also is to be forced). That the man is to force himself to avoid actual sins, he will then come to love the good in others, imperfect as it is. This is loving his neighbour—not loving his person, but the good that is in him; and afterwards having thus loved “his brother, whom he hath seen,” he will be admitted to love God, whom he hath not seen, and the works will result from that love as necessary consequences, without any forcing or idea of reward or merit.

The Church does not know what to think really, and therefore teaches a confused mass of contradictions on the subject of God’s mercy and eternal love to all, and yet of His wrath, anger, indignation, punishing, casting into hell, and doing evil, &c., which latter may be understood as being described according to the appearance of His operations as seen by wicked men, to whom they are addressed, not as seen by good ones, to whom such terms are never addressed in the Bible. Thus where a strong bad man infests those who are good and gentle, an operation of mercy to the good may be to drive away their oppressor, not necessarily by an external palpable miracle, but by means of an ordinary operation of the law which punishes him, and which is to him in its operation like anger, justice, or punishment. In fact, until a man leaves off sin he cannot begin to approach God without disaster, much less to love God; because God’s mercy acts towards those who live in sin as detection and punishment, and they cannot afford to approach Him; therefore their only chance of security in sin is to keep far from Him.

It appears that these descriptions of God’s anger, &c., are not meant to be literally taken, for anger is an imperfection, and is characteristic of surprise, not of om-

niscience ; so is indignation. These things can no more be taught *literally* as by the Church, that God is sometimes angry and sometimes pleased with a good man, according to isolated acts of his, than the verses which talk of the stars of heaven falling upon the earth, which yet is far smaller than any one of them ; or which say that the actual size of the city of Jerusalem is to be suddenly made into a perfect cube, its length and breadth and *height also*, all being equal, and each being twelve thousand furlongs, which shape would be impossible for a city.

The arguments adduced by the orthodox party in favour of Three distinct individuals, having each separate functions, in the Godhead, are reducible to these—

1st, From the Bible. In Genesis, “ God said, Let us make man in our own image,” where the combination of the singular and plural in the Hebrew is fancifully thought to imply the doctrine of the Trinity from everlasting, or before the world was made ; but this argument would as distinctly prove that every native of India firmly believes, or intends to imply, a Trinity in every person to whom he has ever adopted the usual respectful form of speech common in all Oriental languages without exception.

At our Lord’s baptism the three persons were present, and “ all but visible.” To this it may be answered, there is only one God, Jehovah. There is no ground for saying that when Jehovah God took upon Himself a natural body, as the only means of effecting conjunction with those who had become grossly carnal and corporeal, and who had separated themselves from Him, and from the consideration of all that was spiritual and internal, the appearances which accompanied the external baptism of His humanity denoted

other gods, or more than one. Even though our Lord, during His bodily life, while His natural body and mind were growing, prayed to His Father as to another, when His humanity was not as yet glorified, or conjoined finally with the Father, though the Father was *in* Him even from the first.

The verses in the commencement of St John's Gospel, and throughout, will bear this meaning, that God appeared in the *Human Form* from the earliest record we have ; that He appeared in this form before He was born into the world, or took unto Himself a soul and body ; and that the rational soul and human flesh grew as men grow in mind and body, and thus prayed to and addressed God as another till the final conjunction.

2d, The orthodox party derive their doctrine also from the Prayer-Book. This book, purporting to be founded on the Bible, has introduced a doctrine contrary to the Bible, and landing the soul who follows it in a maze of incomprehensible contradictions, so that he knows not in his bewilderment whether to address One or Three, whether God is to be loved or feared ; whether he is to work out his salvation with diligence, and to keep his body in subjection, or whether that is all superfluous, and he need not have troubled himself about it ; whether there is a real gulf between the good and the wicked ; or whether we have all sinned and come short of what God expects as a taskmaster from us, meaning that we are all pretty much the same, and one not much better than another ; whether God is a loving Father, whose mercy is over all His works, or whether He is an inexorable Judge, only to be pacified by your luckily remembering in time to talk about the misery His Son underwent, and His torture on the

cross (though what in the world that has to do with you, or whether it has anything at all to do with you, you need not ask, for you cannot know. It just depends whether it is freely imputed to you or not). You can *prove any one* of the doctrines of the orthodox party by one or two texts, taken with your eyes shut to the main teaching of the Bible; but you cannot *reconcile two of them*. So can any false doctrine be proved. Give me any fallacy, and I will prove it by a verse from the Bible.

The Litany, the Athanasian Creed, and the Collects, are what are used to prove or imply the three individuals of the Godhead. Did our Lord tell us to pray to God the Father for the sake of the agony of God the Son? No; but He said, "Whatsoever ye shall ask in my name," &c.; and that necessarily means, that if you ask anything which is trifling or bad, and tack His name to the end of it, it will be granted! No wonder religion with the good, who *will* take errors for granted, ends in bewilderment, and with the masses is ridiculed as unreal and preposterous, when a direct promise like the above has to be explained to mean nothing, in order to fit orthodoxy, because there is nothing which a man can obtain by using a set of words to God, and saying, "for the sake of Jesus Christ our Lord" at the end of it. Can any one doubt that our Lord's name must mean something far more effectual than a form of ending prayers? *In His name* may mean in the spirit which He taught, and which is communicated to a man gradually as he forms his life according to our Lord's example and teaching, and desires only what is good and right.

No man dares take that text and assert that it is absolutely and literally true; and yet, absolute doc-

trines are founded on isolated texts, and insisted on by the Church, which cannot be so easily proved to be misconstrued by the Church, and which do more harm in consequence. They would say, it means if you ask for anything really good for your eternal welfare. To this it may be answered, Are you not then allowed to ask those things which are requisite and necessary *as well for the body* as the soul? But if you modify this text so, at least believe that some of those you take so absolutely about predestination to hell by a God of mercy—letting Adam and Eve sin, and the majority of a world perish, rather than put it out of their power to sin; letting Cain kill Abel, and only cursing him after the act; and those from which you teach the resurrection of the natural body, when it has not only been eaten by mice or worms, but has contributed to the life of other living bodies, so that, to raise up half those earthly bodies would be to destroy the rest and unmake them—may require similar modification. Believe that you may require to modify a verse which appears to teach that which is unreasonable and contrary to the consistence and harmony of God's dealings, which are never violent, unreasonable, or eccentric.

If people have to wait in their graves asleep till the last day, what of those who have been expecting the resurrection for the last six thousand years, and no signs of it yet! How did St John see the spirits of the just *as men*, so that he could see, hear, and even touch them, if they have to wait for their rotten old carnal bodies before they rise? May not the *day of judgment*, like the *day of affliction*, the *hour of danger*, mean a state consequent on natural death? If not, why not?

The reasonings from orthodox doctrine can only land a man in fearful doubt and perplexity. The promise of

divine truth and guidance is evidently far from those who claim it—full of their own dignity, as “eminent divines” and “Church dignitaries,” not of the love of God. Of course they say, “It is not myself, but my office that I magnify;” no doubt it is, and it is not myself, but my purse I am proud of; and few men are proud of the number of pounds of meat there is on them, if that alone is self.

What is a more fruitful bone of contention than the reconciliation of man’s free agency with predestination? and how is it possible to reconcile what is true with what is false? If words or descriptions could do it, it would have long since been done, for many and able men have tried.

Suppose it were God’s object to induce man to serve him from love and affection (not merely to do His will like a machine, or independently of motive), can love and affection be consciously forced before they exist? If God were forcibly to withhold man from sins, seeing the evil, darkness, and misery they would inevitably bring, is it uncertain what the result would be? A father may keep his child forcibly from harm; but if that child has grown to years when he has thought and wish and likings of his own, such restraint not only causes him, the moment he has an opportunity, to plunge all the deeper into the unknown and forbidden sin; but if no opportunity occurs, still he causes a sense of constraint, and effectually stops all voluntary or affectionate intercourse on one side, if not on both; as one appears constantly as a hard keeper, and the other longs to be free, and would prefer to have been born without will to being constantly thwarted. That God *could* have created man otherwise may not be doubted; but as He *has* gifted man with free choice, only capable of being led, not forced, it is *that free choice* of service that

love alone can prompt a man to give to Him, and which alone causes utter devotion to Him.

How can a true Church teach that God, of His own unquestionable good will and pleasure, predestines some by free election to grace and some to hell? Do they dare to say that one man may not be saved as well as his neighbour, if he rejecteth not the counsel of God against himself? They don't know what they teach. What a cruel and monstrous doctrine! Is it the God who is love itself and mercy itself of whom they dare to teach this? This is from "Holy Mother Church," with whom is the Spirit of truth, as they claim—a promise which refers to all who worship God in spirit and in truth, and not to any set or establishment, even though as fearfully deadly to truth as the *Council of Dort*.

It appears that a man who values truth must not depend on any councils of men, but on the word of God, which is above all councils. Their favourite maxim, that it is heresy (*αἵρεσις*, or choosing for one's self) to seek truth direct from the fountain of truth, and that man is to use the means which God, in His infinite wisdom, has appointed (meaning themselves and their doctrines), to come at truth, is an imposition.

The means valuable, useful, and necessary, when men depended on preaching, are not the means necessary when printing has been invented, and every man can draw from the fountainhead. The means God has appointed are prayer, a good life, and affectionately searching in the Bible for what you want light thrown upon. True, a good life implies many things; but still learning from a fallible man is not one of them. "Whoso doeth my words, he shall know of the doctrine." Is this distinct? Those who follow the orthodox doctrines may reasonably ask, "If their doctrines be true, why did the

Lord come into the world, and adopt this mode of accomplishing man's redemption, when God, by His omnipotence, might have effected the same redemption by a single effort of His will? Why was not the whole race of mankind, without exception, saved? and why does the devil exist? Why is there such a place as hell? Cannot God make all the devils angels, if He is omnipotent? Why did sin first originate? Who can answer that? Why is there sin and consequent misery in the world, and also blindness, so that men cannot see that all misery comes from sin, and so leave it off, but that they place their cunning wherein they think they see in delusions? Would not an utter change of all this be worthy of an omnipotent God?" Whereas these are futile fancies; the Divine omnipotence does not act without order, nor contrary to order. And if it is *order* that such a fearful departure from happiness should exist now, why not, or is it more likely that there will not be, hereafter?

Faith in God is a loving confidence in Him. No bad man can have or acquire such a feeling, but only he that leads a good life; hence this is implied in faith, though, like an axiom of Euclid, it is not always being mentioned with faith.

It is a contradiction to teach of three persons that the Father is God, the Son is God, and the Holy Ghost is God, and that each person by Himself is God (not that they merely "partake of divinity alike," as members of a senate); and yet that these three only form one God. The verse, "There are three that bear record in heaven, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost; and these three are one," is a spurious interpolation, of a piece with the mischievous doctrines which those unscrupulous men taught, and fiendishly hoped to place



beyond question by coining a verse in the Bible to prove their new doctrine. Now, though every educated churchman knows that this verse is spurious, and also knows when it was inserted, yet who dares tell men so? Oh! it would not do; it would merely cause doubtings to tell them what a fearful tampering with Scripture was affected by "Holy Mother Church" when she wanted a distinct verse to prove something useful in 1 John, v. 7.

The same doctrine which forms a Trinity of distinct persons would admit a fourth—the God Schaddai, which is translated the Lord God Almighty throughout Moses, Job, and Ezekiel—whereas there is only one God. The Bible teaches that it was God Himself, Jehovah, who descended and assumed the humanity; not a Son born from eternity—Isaiah, xlv. 21, 22, xliii. 11; Hosea, xiii. 4; Isaiah, xlix. 26, lx. 16, xlvii. 4; Jeremiah, l. 34; Isaiah, xlv. 24. Here it is said that Jehovah Himself assumed the humanity. Why should He have done so rather than say one word of omnipotent violence, and arrest the necessary consequences of sin and its career? Who can conquer an enemy without resorting to *suitable means*; who can catch fish by wishing them to come and be caught, without a net? Who can communicate between what is spiritual and what is carnal, but a mediator or a medium who has the characteristics and nature of both combined? There are laws which we may trust God not to break through, fortunately for our trust in Him.

It is strange for Roman Catholics that our Lord never called Mary "Mother," always *γυνή*, lady; or, as we translate it, *woman*. Again, when they said, "Blessed is the womb," &c., meaning His mother, He did not say, "Yes, that is very true; and I should have mentioned that when you use the prayer I taught you, you should

address it to *her*, or to *me through her*," but "Nay, rather blessed are they who hear my words and do them." And, in another place, "Whoso . . . the same is my mother, and sister, and brother."

This shows the value of any Church-teaching but the teaching of that spiritual Church which consists of those who love God and worship Him in spirit and in truth ; with whom, indeed, is the promise of guidance into truth.

By the plainest rules of a *fortiori* reasoning—for it is necessary to resort to arguments where the thread of truth has been lost—if the Virgin Mary is to be idolised because it was said of her, "Thou shalt be called blessed *among* women," much more should we all fall down and compose litanies to Jael, the wife of Heber the Kenite ; for it is written, Judges, v. 24, "Blessed *above* women shall Jael the wife of Heber the Kenite be," &c.

Is it not evident that monstrous doctrines can be founded upon isolated texts, which doctrines were evidently never contemplated ? Fancy all the apostles having forgotten to teach people to address the Virgin Mary, when it is yet far more important to come to her than to the One by whom we alone can be saved.

It appears that God took upon Him the humanity that man might be able to approach Him, even when fallen into as carnal a state as man had done ; for how can a person address the invisible soul of another ? must he not do it through a body ? So when men have extinguished all that is spiritual by leading a carnal life, nothing but what presents itself to the carnal senses is perceived. No one can address God but as conceived in a human form, because otherwise his mind cannot frame a conception of the Divine Being, *as a Being* ; only as an impersonal abstract idea. Hence God must be addressed through

the Son of God or His Divine humanity. Just as when a man addresses his neighbour, he may want to persuade his mind, or to get active bodily help ; but his neighbour's mind and his body, and his operation or goodwill, are not three persons, though they may be talked of independently of each other ; one cannot be asked for the sake of the other to help. It is nowhere said or implied that our Lord bore the punishment *due to our sins* ; and the doctrine that He did so is fabulous, and founded on an utter misunderstanding of Scripture.

The quotation from all four Gospels about the Holy Spirit descending as a dove on our Lord may have been only an appearance or representation of purification. To imagine that the Third Person of the Trinity was contained in that dove appears no more necessary than to suppose that the appearance related in the Acts, ii. 2, clearly proved that there are a hundred and twenty Holy Ghosts, or that, though a lamb represents innocence, yet our Lord was necessarily in the lamb which John saw (Rev. xiv.) when yet He is in a human form.

It might be as well to adduce a few of the probable answers of the orthodox party to such suggestions, so as see what they are worth ; and as brevity is almost as important as clearness, we will use the shortest form—that of dialogue between *C.* the challenger and *D.* the defender of orthodoxy.

*C.* My only aim is to bring out the truth, clear it from error and the fancies with which man has obscured it ; and therefore, if you can show me that you are right and I am wrong, I will leave my own views and agree with you ; my only desire is to be right.

*D.* You have taken a curious way, indeed, to show that, by assaulting what the Church has always believed.

*C.* I do not assault it as an enemy, but as a man

anxious to know what ground he stands upon, not content with saying, If we are wrong, we are all wrong together.

*D.* It is true there are difficulties in religion, and they are tests to our faith ; our business is to accept with thankfulness what God *has* given us, and where difficulties occur, to submit our reason to faith in the matter.

*C.* Do you mean with reference to the Bible itself, or to Church-teaching only ?

*D.* The doctrines of the Church, as you know, are all drawn from the Bible ; they are therefore identical.

*C.* I do not think that the doctrines of the Church are even reconcilable with those of the Bible ; and I think that by submitting your reason to faith you merely mean that words are to be used without attaching any idea at all of their meaning. What do you mean by, or what virtue or reality has, a belief which you cannot conceive with your mind, and of which you dare not form a distinct idea if you try to be sincere, lest you should be wrong ? You can say it is *not this*, or it is *not that* either, but you cannot say what you believe of the matter, that it *is*.

*D.* What matter do you refer to ?

*C.* Any one of the doctrines of the Church. There is not one of them as to which you can take a distinct and consistent and resonable view throughout, although real truth is distinct and consistent and reasonable. If you think long on any doctrine of the Church, you come to a contradiction and have to say, "It is above our comprehension how to reconcile this apparent contradiction with what Holy Mother Church teaches, nevertheless I *believe* that it is reconcilable" (meaning that you *take it for granted so far as to assert that it is so*), although your reason, which, though not above religion, is always com-

patible with it, tells you distinctly that the contradiction is repugnant to the doctrine, if any meaning is attached to either ; and when you cannot understand it you say, "God has in His infinite goodness and wisdom placed these things out of our sight,"—not, "We, by our wicked perverseness, indifference to truth, and sinful lives, have become blind so as to believe what is false, and not to see and recognise the never-failing evidences of falsity and error in what we teach, though we know them and recognise them elsewhere."

*D.* Who is to be the judge of what is true in matters of doctrine if not the Church, to whom our Lord gave a distinct promise of His Spirit to guide them into all truth ? Can you really think that your view or opinion of what is to be received is to be put in the balance with what all the learned men who have ever lived in the Church have taught ?

*C.* In other words, "Thou wast altogether born in sins, and dost *thou* teach *us* ?" I rely more on our Lord's promise, "Whoso keepeth my sayings, *and doeth them*, he shall know of the doctrine," than on a second-hand assertion of what "very learned divines" have always taught. What you say sounds most just, but go farther one step, and what follows ? The inquiry, What *have* these learned divines taught ? It is doubtless impossible to state all that they have ever advanced, and show that they have entangled truth with error ; but take any duty as they teach it, and though I cannot pretend to teach you or give you light, which God alone can do to both of us, if we really seek truth and value it above our own foregone conclusions, I will yet bring you to a contradiction, showing that either evil will result or falsity appear in the result from your Church doctrine, because there is a fundamental error in the Church. I would say, beforehand, that I under-

stand our Lord's promise of a guide, to apply to a church of those who love Him and seek the truth, and live good lives, not those who have never believed because they have never looked for conviction, have never looked because they have been afraid to gather evidences of truth lest they should find proofs that their truth is falsehood and who have deluded themselves that this wretched and awful mental attitude of *taking* everything a fallible teacher presents as contained in or implied by the Bible *for granted*, without presuming to weigh or consider it *lest doubts should arise*—that this attitude is receiving the kingdom of heaven like a little child—and that this fear of considering the doctrines of the Church lest they should turn out to be false, shows their firm confidence in their truth. They say, "I really don't think we have ever doubted so-and-so ; why should you suggest doubts to us ? is that doing good ?" It *is* doing good if it provokes you to consider *why* and on what grounds you believe so-and-so. You *cannot* believe what you have never considered, *and come to a conclusion upon*, in your own mind. To say that you *can* is to deceive yourself ; you can merely argue one day from "luckily remembering" one text, and another day from another striking you, always modifying by the last word, and never arriving at a clear and unchangeable conclusion on the simplest matter. You believe in a tempter. Do you think he will forget or omit to test your faith ; and would you not do better to be prepared by having light in you, than to hope to escape questions you know not how to answer in the day of trial by shutting your eyes to them now ? Or do you hope to be excused such searching trial of the grounds of your faith ? If so, what do you think is the object of temptation, or of permitting the truth to be assaulted ?

*D.* You are wandering rather from the subject. The question was on the doctrines of the Church. I will take, then, the doctrine of charity.

*C.* The doctrine of charity is a very wide one, if you take St Paul's view of it. There are many senses to the word ; in what sense do you here wish it to be considered ?

*D.* In the Church sense—to love your neighbour as yourself, and to do to all men as you would they should do unto you.

*C.* To this, as here stated, though you quote from the Bible, not from Church doctrine, in the first clause, I would only ask, as the lawyer did, "Who is my neighbour?" Luke x. 29. To the second clause I should say, I presume you yourself would add that you understand that you are to do to all as a *good and reasonable man* would that you should do unto him : not that this applies to a bad or foolish man, who might wish foolish or bad concessions from his neighbours, and whose duty it would be in that case to do bad and foolish things to his neighbours.

*D.* Undoubtedly, if you quibble about plain words, such understanding is to be implied.

*C.* I have no wish to quibble, but to show that your explanations require as much explanation as the Bible which you explain.

*D.* To your first question I refer you to our Lord's answer to the lawyer as my answer to you.

*C.* I wished you rather to argue from the Church explanation of the Bible than from the quoted actual words of the Bible. May I ask you what lesson the Church draws from our Lord's answer, as contained in the parable of the man who fell among thieves ?

*D.* Clearly this, that it is not merely those of the same

country and church, but even utter strangers, who are our neighbours, as represented by the Samaritan or stranger taking compassion on the man, and pouring in wine and oil and binding up his wounds ; this teaches us that every one is our neighbour, and that we ought to love all, and to help all that are in misfortune.

C. To me, by this explanation, you appear to invert the whole meaning of the parable, and certainly the words of it. I will not venture to argue with you on what our Lord meant, but may I place my interpretation by the side of yours, and see if it is not at least worthy of consideration ? I will continue the argument after, but you astonish me by the inversion of what I thought our Lord meant. Taking merely the literal words of the parable, the lesson I draw is this, that a man is a neighbour to another *if* he does good to him, and *as far as* he does good to him ; for there are degrees of neighbourliness. Do you not see that you lose the point utterly of our Lord's question, "*which of the three* was neighbour to him that fell among thieves ?" Therefore, which of the three was he bound by the commandment to love as his neighbour ? implying that the two who showed no mercy were not neighbours, and were not to be loved as one's self. That the *good Samaritan*, by performing the act of mercy, made *himself a neighbour* to the *man*, and laid upon the *man* the duty of loving him (the Samaritan) as himself : not that the man who fell among thieves was from the first a neighbour to all three, Priest, Levite, and Samaritan, the lesson not being to Samaritans that they are to consider all in misery their neighbours, but to those relieved to consider those who do them good in any way as their neighbours, and to love them. I argue, hence, that it is a duty to love all that do good, not to love the evil.



*D.* Do you not hold that you should love all men, even your enemies? If so, what of our Lord's injunction?

*C.* I think that means personal enemies, and I look to the good or evil in a man as the true consideration, not personal animosity. Your view of loving all men in one sense is allowable, that of loving to do good to them; but that you should not love, or even form friendship with, bad men is evident (2 Chron. xviii. 1, 2, 3; and xix. 2). Besides which, it is evident that such love of such neighbours is impossible, and if attempted leads to evil, and is a snare. Also, if you give indiscriminate alms to good or bad indifferently, you are like a person who feeds and pets sheep and wolves at the same time.

*D.* What! would you then let the wolves starve?

*C.* No, but feed them through such channels that they must conform to *outward* quiet and *appearance* of good before they can avail themselves of your bounty. You will understand what I mean.

*D.* Then no one is to give money to a beggar till he has a certificate of his past life?

*C.* No, I do not say that; but make some effort to see if the man is good or not before you decide *how far* to assist him, and then act to the best of your judgment towards him. Of course, any man who is starving should be relieved, but I should call that humanity rather than charity. I refer to those who work, and do their best, and try to settle and live honestly, and yet want money help; those you should help. But idle vagrants, who beg if you are present, and steal if you are not, you should do all in your power to discourage.

But this is beside the question. I think I have shown that if all men are your neighbours, and to be loved as yourself, you cannot possibly do so without doing abso-

lute evil, if indeed the lovers of evil are really enemies to God. Perhaps you will also say that the enemies of God are to be helped and loved just as the "children of God." Read the Bible with that idea in your mind, and see how long it is before you find it refuted. It would be impossible to refute all the false doctrine the orthodox party have taught; but that will suffice. I wish to know, however, why, if you believe that light and illumination are given to the good, not to the wise or prudent, you always go to the *wisest* men, and quote their opinions, instead of asking the *best* men you know. You confound them together. Our best men are our wisest; very true, but why confound mere memory-knowledge of records and writings and sciences with the perception of good and truth, and true wisdom? Will you, if you believe the Church-teaching, instruct me, and tell me how it is that St Peter says, "No prophecy is of private interpretation," &c.; "but holy men spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost." Yet it is always said, not the Holy Ghost, but Jehovah, spake to them, or the word of the Lord came to them, &c.

*D.* What a quibble!—that merely proves that the Holy Ghost is God.

*C.* And again, John, vii. 39—"For the Holy Ghost did not yet exist (*οὐπω γαρ ἦν*), because Jesus was not yet glorified."

*D.* We understand that the word *δεδομενον* is understood.

*C.* Well, if you take similar liberties with all inconvenient verses, there is little indeed you cannot prove.

Do you think it conceivable that if the Holy Spirit is a distinct person in the Godhead, it would always have been spoken of as *it* (neuter), not as *He*, and never once

addressed in prayer on record? Would St Peter not have prayed to it and thanked it when it descended on the Feast of Pentecost?

I do not deny the Trinity, nor explain it away; but I understand it very differently from your orthodox way—as three Gods which are yet not to be *called* three.

*D.* How then do you understand the verses at the commencement of St John if you deny the Trinity?

*C.* I do not deny it, and my wish is to question your views, and prove them wrong if I can; in fact, to assault them, not to prove mine right. I consider, however, that the word (*λογος*) means the manifestation of God to His creatures. That God manifested Himself from the first record in the *human form*, whence also He said, "Let us make man in our own image," and again, "In the image of God created He them, male and female." That this manifestation was afterwards in the natural body or flesh of this world by the birth of Jesus Christ our Lord. But how *can* you believe that God appeared under a human form before the birth of Christ, although it is said so repeatedly in the Old Testament, besides the fact that He made *man* in *His* image, not *Himself* in *man's*? When you do not believe that man has a real spiritual body after death, but has to wait for the resurrection of his rotten carcass! All your doctrines hang in shreds together to create delusion and bewilderment; they neither fit each other, nor can you learn to see truth from them. There is not one that you can traverse throughout; but you go a little way in it, come to a contradiction, and there sit down, and try to believe that plain contradictions are signs of the grandeur and depth which you cannot fathom, even in matters which are not unfathomable, but plain and clear, if you clear the word of God of the teaching of erring man. Can you

not see that a man cannot really believe what he can form no clear conception of? I don't say what he cannot UNDERSTAND (because my meaning might be twisted. A man may know that two and two make four, but he may not be able to UNDERSTAND so thoroughly as to illuminate either an idiot or a perverse man *why* they do not make five), but a man must take in his mind what he holds as an article not of verbal assertion, but of real belief; and I boldly assert and challenge you to deny that man thinks of God in your Church, not as a child looks to a good father, but with his ideas, understanding, and everything else, handcuffed and fettered; that he knows not what view he is justified in taking of God from the promiscuous jumble of contradictions strung together by your Church. Is he to look to three? No; certainly not; to one. But to that one for the sake of another who is still the same. No; not the same, only identical; no, not identical—the same in personality, but different in person; and yet not different, but the same. Can you say that God the Father intercedes with God the Son for us? No; then they must be different, else why intercession of one with another? their wills and sympathies must be different. WHAT CAN show you that your wretched doctrine is not Scripture—that there is one God, and one only, and that you can no more divide Him in essence, and speak of Him as separate persons, than you can separate a man into spirit, body, and operation, and treat him the same way as two or three?

It is impossible to argue with those who are in utter error in fundamental truths, because argument must have a ground to stand upon, and some axioms in common; but only go to the word of God, seeking light from the God who inspired it, and you will then see, as from a mountain-top, the errors and wanderings of those who

commence by taking error for truth, and hence have no consistent or clear views, but only endless reasonings and verbal bickerings, wherein He who has the sharpest memory and the greatest facility in twisting Scripture bears off the palm, not one among them seeing the truth, because they give the preference to their false doctrines rather than to the indications of truth ; and perception of truth is only given to those who earnestly desire it, and lead pure lives. To those it appears that there is evidently one God, and one only, therefore that the Trinity is in one person, not in three.

Again, the Church teaches that the Bible (at least certain books which she has passed and called canonical) is inspired, EVERY WORD OF IT, and that she alone has the power and right of explaining it, and determining its meaning. If so, may I ask you what is the signification of the verse, 1 Chron. xxv. 8—"And they cast lots, ward against ward, as well the small as the great, the teacher as the scholar" ? and what is its object and bearing upon man's salvation ? or, to be strictly literal, explain its use, as "doctrine, reproof, correction, or instruction in righteousness," or else own that your Church has lost the key to the interpretation of what to natural man appears only to bear on "endless genealogies," from which nothing can be learned, and of which it is impossible to remember two consecutive verses, or, if remembered, to apply them.

*D.* I consider that the Bible treats of such matters as genealogies to keep the tribes distinct.

*C.* And is that the object to which you reduce inspiration ? Besides, are the tribes distinct ? Can you find any trace of them now among the Jews ?

No ; you, the professed custodians of the word, have lost the key to interpret the meaning where the Bible

appears to treat much of unimportant subjects, such as fields, gardens, groves, woods, trees, the olive, vine, fig-tree, cedar, poplar, and oak ; of lamb, sheep, goats, calves, oxen ; of mountains, hills, valleys, rivers, fountains, and the like, and little of spiritual things, except in a few places. What an unworthy view to take of inspiration, if you believe there is nothing more in the words than that ; and yet you cannot say *what* they mean more, though you dare not say that they have no interior meaning. Consider, I pray you, whether this verse is intelligible, instructive, or worth recording, if you allow nothing to it but its bare external wording ? Are these and suchlike the worthy subjects of inspiration ?—" In that day there shall be a highway out of Egypt into Assyria, and the Assyrian shall come into Egypt, and the Egyptian into Assyria ; and the Egyptians shall serve with the Assyrians. In that day shall Israel be the third with Egypt, and with Assyria a blessing in the midst of the land ; which Jehovah Zebaoth shall bless, saying, Blessed be Egypt my people, and Assyria the work of my hands, and Israel my blessing."—Isaiah, xix. 23-25. I assert that there is a hidden meaning in these verses, and you have three courses open to you—either with a high hand to deny that it is so, or to produce the key, and explain the meaning as inspired, or else to confess that your Church has lost the key, if she ever had it.

*D.* I decline the question ; it is not for us to inquire what is worthy of the Divine inspiration. Our business is to follow God's teaching and the Church's—not to be wiser than He. As for a hidden meaning, allegory may be allowable in poetry, but in a plain declaration of facts it becomes falsehood. I could as soon believe that "There was a man sent from God, whose name was

John," was allegorical, as what precedes it, or what is strictly historical, and what, therefore, need not have been the subject of inspiration, though we believe that it was so actually.

C. Try then to take it strictly literally, and see that it is impossible—"In the beginning was the Word." What is the beginning of eternity? Surely you must understand something, unless you violate reason by saying that even eternity had a beginning. "Was the Word"—what word out of the ten thousand common to most Eastern languages, or out of the hundred thousand which have been said to be in use in one (Arabic)? Do you not see that something *must* be understood? and it is only a question, What, and how, and where. And if your Church professes to have the custody of the Scripture, and to be able to explain it, she should be able to show, and that in no ambiguous or vague way, how the text I quoted is "profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, and instruction in righteousness." I do not assert that there is no hidden meaning in such verses. On the contrary, I believe that there is; but I defy the Church to find it, or to give a consistent explanation which shall bear such marks of genuineness as *this*—namely, that the meanings she attaches to the literal words shall apply to all places elsewhere in the Bible where those same words are found.

And now this discussion must be closed—not that it is exhausted, but, on the contrary, because it is inexhaustible; and if this is the means of suggesting what is true, or bringing out what is true, or of clearing away error, it will have been of some use. If it is false, it cannot hurt those who are grounded in truth, and good. And if any part is true, there is less ground to fear and hesitate in putting it forward.

The more men fix their attention on matters which are not immediately self-evident, the more they understand them in their different bearings—nay, the more clearly they see features contained in them which at first were obscure; this rule applies to every subject, social, moral, or scientific, upon which the human mind can exercise itself, or to which it can direct its attention. Moreover there are certain latent features which, as far as human experience can guide us, are *infallible* as indications, and to imagine them fallible would be to unsettle reason and depose it from its proper place as a check and controller and referee to guard against silly credulity or ill-founded scepticism. Such features every mathematician or student of exact sciences understands in matters which pertain to exact sciences; and though it would be impossible to illustrate scientifically and also intelligibly to all, yet any one can for himself think of reasonings which have at some time or other brought him to a just conclusion on some subject, and which he “*knows*” to be right, as he would say, though he might or might not find it difficult to explain *how* he knows it, or *why* he believes them to have been right, though no one says they were wrong. It is no use quoting exact sciences where doctrines of religion are under discussion, for they are not parallel; but still this same feature characterises both, that what is true commends itself to the reason as well as to the perception when candidly contemplated; truths fit together, they do not jostle each other, or contradict each other—they do not first appeal to your reason, and condemn you for not believing them because your reason might have shown you that they were truths, and then turn round and say, What is your silly human reason that it should contemplate what is divine? who are you that



you should judge of God's actions? Also truths illuminate, and throw into things before obscure a light which a man can no more describe than he can communicate to others; that is, when a man understands rightly, *nothing* true contradicts what he thus sees and understands, but other truths fall into their right places naturally. If the Bible is written for man's instruction and help, any fool would allow that it ought to explain things before obscure, and to illustrate God's ways to man—not to be (as explained by the Church) a maze of contradictions attributing the most contrary weaknesses to God, and requiring more explanation than they who explain it can give. Of two explanations of one and the same thing, that one would be held the most probable which presented no irreconcilable difficulties, and of which the parts fitted together symmetrically and evidently, in preference to that which created more monstrous difficulties than those sought to be explained, and whose parts could not cohere together, so that you had to shut your eyes to one while you looked at any other. It is impossible in a moderate compass to consider many of the Church's doctrines, or even a few in all their bearings; but still there are glaring absurdities in what either the Church of England, High Church, or the Church of Rome teach which are characteristic of human perversion, and which tend more to glorification of the priesthood than to God's glory, and which may be evident to any one who chooses to look the matter in the face. And these are the features we wish to bring out. And we appeal to each individual's consciousness of what is right, which consciousness is inalienable, whether such be the marks of truth as he is in the habit of recognising them and applying them to form opinions in matters of importance in his everyday life; or whether

they are not infallible marks of blindness, presumptuous dictation in matters of which they know not even the rudiments, and of ignorance and self-exaltation.

Let us first look at the Church-teaching on the subject of private judgment and its worth. They say WE, and WE alone, *the Church* (whichever of the twenty or thirty present churches or dissenters it may be), have the key to unlock the meaning of Scripture—because did not our Lord commit all such things to Holy Church? Therefore you are not fit, or capable of understanding Scripture, nor of judging what you are to believe and what not; and it is heresy to choose for yourself what you will believe, or not. Free judgment has nothing to do with religion—you must take it for granted that *Holy Church* is right; *that* is faith, the rest is contumacious heresy. “Why?” Because the Bible says so. How do I know the Bible says so when I am not fit to understand what it says even in the simplest things? Because the Church says so.

In fact, I am to believe that the Bible has committed all the matters of faith to the priesthood alone, “*because the Church says so of the Bible,*” and that the Church is right in saying so “*because the Bible says so of the Church.*” You are to believe that A is a respectable man because B says so, and you are to believe B in saying so because A says he is a respectable man.

If a man is not to use his own judgment in religion, but merely to believe as he has been told to do, and follow what his ancestors or teachers have prescribed for him, who could blame those who rejected the Gospel? or who can rightly endeavour to convert savages? The appeal was made by our Lord and His followers to the very exercise of right judgment and perception of truth, which orthodoxy calls heresy—that is, considering what

is taught as to whether it bears the infallible marks of a true and rightly-directed worship of God or not. Is it not evident that the tendency of all churches has always been to deteriorate till they had no reality in them? The Jewish Church was much more distinctly ordained by God than the Christian Church, or at least secured as to orthodoxy, because before their very birth the Priests and Levites were foreordained and consecrated by genealogy, not by subsequent private choice, to their office, yet they taught hardly a particle of truth when our Lord came. What meaning do those who trust in *the Church* attach to these words: "Cease to do evil; learn to do good;" "Trust ye not in lying words, saying, The temple of Jehovah, The temple of Jehovah, The temple of Jehovah, is here" (meaning the Church). "Will ye come and stand before me in this house, which is called by my name, and say, *We are delivered*, while ye do all these abominations?"—Jer. vii. 4; 9, 10. Besides, let them follow their fearful doctrine one step further, and see whither it leads them. You quote your so-called *Church* in the face of the Bible, "Ye fools and blind," for whether is greater, the self-styled Church, or the Word of God that instituted the Church? Is it not a risk to trust what calls itself the Church, but which by her own teaching you have no right to believe to *be* the Church, because you are not competent to judge whether she is or not, and it is heresy to choose for yourself which is the Church and which is not?

Again, the High Church teaches that the Lord's Supper was ordained in order to put God in remembrance of what He suffered for man. What an unworthy view to take of God's providence! Do they really think that He requires to be reminded thousands of times weekly of the most important event which ever took place? Do

they think, because God is spoken of as angry, as punishing the evil, &c., that imperfection is really one of His attributes? that uncertainty, doubt, anger, forgetfulness, are parts of infinite perfection! If they would apply their precious doctrine to explaining what is written after the appearance as seen by wicked men, instead of ingeniously founding falsities on isolated texts, and then making them more prominent than what is unmistakably taught in the Bible, they would not need that people should surrender all wisdom, reason, and right judgment in order to follow their teaching; and good men, instead of hysterical females and musical and conceited young men, would form their congregations. "This do, not in remembrance of me, but to put me in remembrance of you."

What does the High Church teach on the subject of confession—and on what is this doctrine founded? This is a private doctrine; it is that ladies and gentlemen are to confess all the evil that has entered into their minds to a priest, and that he is to give them ghostly counsel and advice, and to absolve them as he sees fit to do so. The practice of confession, however, differs; in some places being almost harmless, and in others most pernicious. It is founded on this text, James v. 16: "Confess your faults to each other, and pray one for another, that ye may be healed." "To each other," not to a priest, unless indiscriminately, and that the priest also confesses to you. Do these priests ever dare to prove what they have founded on this text so literally, by taking also the 14th and 15th verses, which immediately precede their favourite text, equally literally? No; it would not do to try and heal a sick man, because we are not at all sure that we could, and it would never do to try, and yet fail before "Holy Mother Church's faithful sons;" they might recognise our

inability to cure a sick man, though St James distinctly says we *can* do so. Is it then easier to forgive a human soul than to raise a human body? "Whether is it easier to say, Thy sins be forgiven thee, or to say, Arise, take up thy bed and walk?" Moreover, what is meant is, that a man who has done wrong should acknowledge it, and not deny or prevaricate about it, but that candour should pervade their intercourse with each other; but it is nowhere enjoined that ladies should confess to young gentlemen in the softened and mysterious *darkness visible* of the confessional all the impure thoughts, giving every detail (or else the confession is not complete, and therefore absolution, even if given, does not apply, for it is fraudulently obtained), which have entered their minds, even though the thoughts were instantly and prayerfully rejected, and never passed into desire, much less into word or act. It is no doubt very exciting work hearing such confession, and especially if (as with Roman Catholics) questions are asked (to facilitate confession); and if these questions elaborate the sins forbidden, by what in the English version is the *seventh commandment*. Also the punishment of the fair penitents may be a Christian duty, but human experience teaches us pretty distinctly that such improprieties cannot long be indulged with impunity; it is possible to turn the grace of God into lasciviousness. And those who do such things, even if they do them with a pure heart, expose themselves and their dupes to a fearful refinement of temptation, from which they may not escape scatheless.

Another doctrine of the Church is, that our Lord bore the punishment *due to our sins* by His death. This is such a solemn subject that one would prefer to suggest a different interpretation of Scripture, to boldly asserting that such different view is correct.

Might this not be the meaning of Scripture, that our Lord took upon Him our flesh ; to conjoin man (who had fallen into utter denial of all that was spiritual and good, and who had become utterly carnal and attended only to things of this world) with God ? That this conjunction could only be effected, in accordance with God's justice and unchangeable laws of order, by a mediator or medium ; that is, by one who partook of both natures, Human and Divine. That His sufferings on the cross were not to appease the wrath of God the Father, or to embody the punishment which is the natural result of each man's individual sins, but were a *type* of the way the Jews had treated religion. Just as all the prophets from the first were ordered to act in a *typical* manner, and their actions and deaths were public and intended to bear an interpretation which was recognised by the public before whom those acts were done, till they became so worldly-minded that they neither sought nor cared for a spiritual meaning in the outward acts which were a sign unto them. This will doubtless sound unsatisfactory to those who have made all their thoughts and teachings hang on this assertion—that our Lord has taken away our sins. “ Oh what a miserable idea to entertain of the blessed redemption ! ” “ See what this pestilent heretic has landed himself in by his candour, and investigations of truth ! ” Yet bear with me a little, and if I appear to be wrong, in Christian charity set me right ; my mind is not perverse, and is only anxious to discover where the truth lies, so forgive me if I speak freely and fearlessly of your misapprehensions. If our Lord really *has* borne the punishment due to *us* for *our* sins, why are *we too* punished for them ? Or do you take such a noble view of God's providence as to believe that all the wickedness and suffering, sickness and misery in this world, is not a consequence, fruit, and pun-

ishment of sin, but is what God intended, and pronounced "very good" in the beginning? If our Lord has in that sense taken away our sins, how do they yet remain? why do blindness of heart, unworthy ideas of religion, and worldly cares mix with our devotions? Who cannot prove for himself that if he sins he *shall* be punished, that bad habits lead to servitude and unhappiness? That our Lord acted and suffered as He did *in consequence* of the sinfulness of the world, is a very different construction. As the grand prophet, He did what all the prophets did in a minor way. Isaiah xx. 2, 3; Ezekiel xii. 3, 7, 11; Hosea i. 2, 9, and iii. 1, 2; 1 Kings xx. 35, 38.

That He bore our sins in *that* sense, as Ezekiel bore the iniquity of the house of Israel, and again of the house of Judah, Ezekiel iv. 1, 15, appears to be a more reasonable interpretation; but He did not, and evidently has not, *taken them away*.

That such a delusion should require a laboured refutation, only shows what masses of people may come to when they once submit themselves to priestly domination and its pestilent fallacies. Punishment is the natural fruit and consequence of sin; and the man who sins brings the punishment on himself. Not that God takes revenge upon him, but he has placed himself far from God and His merciful dealings, and associated himself with evil things and darkness, so that though he calls God Father with his mouth, and at set times talks very plausibly and says, "Yes, we are all too apt to forget so and so," or "we are all too apt to do so and so," yet it is simply and utterly impossible for him really to trust in God, although he occasionally makes a great fuss about trusting in God, in the half-formed hope that he can thereby manœuvre God into giving him success for the sake of the reputation of His providence. He *cannot* trust in God, because

God's ways are in his sight without law and order, and perfectly capricious; he sees bad men successful, and apparently good men unfortunate, and he sees no further, or at all events here the reality of it ends.

Again, if our Lord's having taken away sin does not free you from committing actual sin every day, and living in a bad frame of mind now, what guarantee have you that some other extraordinary meaning of the phrase will commence *hereafter*?

If such is the real meaning, do you not think it might have been more clearly stated? There are places where one would have expected it. Are people willing to take their chance of its meaning what they suppose? Why do they suppose that their bad habits and sinful lusts will not stick to them after this world? Do they think that, apart from endless and remorseless punishment for past sins, which is nowhere asserted in the Bible, there is no probability of the tree lying as it fell—of their being unable hereafter to form new and higher desires, and so continuing their present evil courses after death, when the time for reformation has passed, and the fire is not quenched, not from lack of mercy on God's part, but from lack of power to avail themselves of it on their own?

Man must *leave off sin*—this is evidently a duty—and look to God before he can see these things: he may argue for ever, on alternate days if he likes, for and against any wrong views, and each day appear to say what is conclusive, and *very very* clever, and yet never see the truth.

If a man's love to God and faith in God has enabled him to break the neck of his own vices, so that he neither finds pleasure in such things nor desires them, he has more ground for "strong confidence" in the power of his religion, than a man who complacently compliments God



by saying, Far be it from me to interfere in such a Divine work—far be it from me to pollute Christ's righteousness, which is imputed to me, by trying to leave off bad habits and to do good. If you say to him, What is meant by working out your salvation in fear, or of St Paul bringing his body into subjection, lest by means of the lusts of the flesh not being in due subjection, he should become a castaway even after preaching to others? he will smile, and say, Those tests have no real meaning, they were only written for fun; there is no chance of a person when he is the object of God's mercy—that is, when he has been from the first predestinated to heaven, and has afterwards had Christ's righteousness imputed to him, and has been justified by faith alone, "since by the works of the law shall no man living be justified," that faith being this, that he shall *loudly assert* that these things are so, and are not otherwise,—there is no chance of a person who persuades himself and loudly asserts this being cast away.

What will those people plead hereafter for having mistaken casual allusions for doctrines of vital importance, and frittered down the real worship of God—that of giving Him the whole heart, and loving Him in spirit and in truth—into extravagant buffooneries and masqueradings, which would not be tolerated in the presence of an earthly king, and which none but savages would think conducive to a heartfelt love? Do they not know that external distractions render deep prayer or deep thought difficult?

How, again, can a man be adopted by God before he is separated from the devil? It is his *desires* that conjoin him to evil, and these *cannot* be forced either by God or by other men, because to do so is to act contrary to order. (Compare Mark vi. 5: "And He *was not able* to do mighty works because of their unbelief." We say a per-

son could not do so and so, meaning it would not have been *proper* for him to have done so ; but here the word is very strong and quite unmistakable, οὐκ ἔδύνατο ποιῆν, or οὐκ ἠδύνατο ποιῆσαι.) Who can be cleansed from sins by the blood of Christ without abstaining from them ? Come periodically and call yourself a miserable sinner, and then go back again to your ordinary courses—say, “ Lord, wash me ; make me clean in Thy blood ; ” when He has given you the means of cleansing yourself, only you will not apply them ; men would of course like to enjoy their sins, and yet be free from the penalties.

We have our Lord’s word for it, that a man who does His sayings shall *see the truth*. Any fool with a tolerable memory can prove anything you like to give him by isolated texts, but a right judgment cannot be deluded, if founded on obedience to God (not Church’s obedience), by elaborate reasonings ; it would indeed be hard on the simple if those who, by a good superficial memory, can pile arguments on plausible arguments, could obscure the light of truth in other minds by their far-fetched ratiocinations as successfully as they do in their own.

The doctrine of justification by faith alone is founded on one text of St Paul’s, grossly misinterpreted, Gal. ii. 16. In the face of the whole Epistle of St James, and utterly ignoring the fact that the whole Epistle to the Galatians was written to oppose the infliction of the *Ceremonial* or *Levitical* law on the Gentiles, and that the words in Gal. ii. 16 refer to the *Ceremonial* law, which (verses 8, 11, 12, 14) Peter had tried to impose, fearing “ them of the circumcision.” The words do not refer to the moral law, James ii. 20-24.

Can “ Holy Mother Church ” explain the allegory of Adam and Eve, or how it comes that not only eternal

punishment should fall on a whole world of innocent children, but that far worse sins, murders, adulteries, theft, hatreds, &c., should have existed in consequence of a childish trivial act which one could hardly scold a child for doing ; and how, moreover, all these evils are accordant with infinite love and mercy ? She cannot do so. All she can say is, " We believe that it is so because the Bible tells us so ; that is quite enough for us. And it shows how God hates sin that such punishment should ensue." That sounds very well, and I will take your own ground. Does it show that God hates sin, that He should allow millions of horrible acts to result from one thoughtless imprudence, or act of childish curiosity ? 2d, Do you really believe it literally, " because the Bible tells us so, and that is enough for us" ? Would you have even known that the historical part, much of which is utterly unimportant if taken only literally, is all also allegorical, or would you believe or suspect it from your precious doctrines ? Gal. iv. 24. If you really believe what the Bible teaches " because it is said so in the Bible, and that is enough for us," you for the moment, and for the moment only, take a more fitting attitude than your usual one. Will you allow me to ask you the meaning of this text, " A wonderful and horrible thing is committed in this land ; the prophets prophesy falsely, and the priests bear rule by their means ; and my people love to have it so ; and what will ye do in the end thereof ?" You had better hope that it does not refer to false doctrine and priestcraft.

Does any man hold that God would reject a devoted servant who loves Him as one God, and whose actions flow from that motive, in favour of one who asserts that there are three Gods, though they are not to be called three, and who does not care to desist from sin for the

love of any one of the three? Is it probable? I will not say that God should do so, because there are human beings, otherwise in the possession of their senses, who consider it a part of a laudable humility to refuse to contemplate God's actions, and admire their wisdom and goodness, even as imperfectly seen by us, and who easily attribute eccentric, arbitrary, and unreasonable actions to God, supposing that it is characteristic of a simple child-like faith to take a silly and unworthy view of God's dealings. Let us therefore drop that argument as useless, and merely take the lower ground, and say, Would it become a good and a just man to show a perverted preference for one who could spell his name perfectly correctly, over one who did all he could to please him, diligently seeking to find out what he would have done, and then doing it with all his heart; and jealously discriminating between what is really his service, and what bears only the name, and has the delusive and fallacious appearance without the reality? would he be likely to prefer those who in his name performed masquerading tomfooleries in green surplices with stars and stripes on them, or those who thought only of him, and acted only with a view to his honour?

There is another mistake very commonly made by a very different class of people; though it cannot be called a false doctrine, yet it is a delusion. They say, "We are to do good works." "What are good works?" and they hit upon one or two, such as relieving the poor, building churches or hospitals, &c., and force themselves to do these, thinking they are thereby doing good as the Bible enjoins, and they think that these works *entitle* them to reward *really*, though they do not say so, and they think themselves better than those who do not perform such works. Instead of trying to obtain the *motive power*,

and then letting the actions follow of themselves as opportunity offers, or making opportunities, they compel the *actions*, which is as great a mistake as for a man to be always pushing the hands of a clock round to make it keep time when it has no mainspring in it. It also deludes people into the belief that they cannot be evil *because they are good*, and no one can be both at the same time.

It appears, then, that a person should force himself *not to commit sins*; that he should not mistake contrition, even if sincere, for repentance, or his religion will never be real or effectual all his life; that habitual confession tends to weaken the feeling of responsibility, and therefore should rarely if ever be indulged in to *man*, though to one who is really ignorant or in low spirits it may occasionally be a great comfort. Confession, even if one tries to be sincere in saying that he is a miserable sinner every Sunday morning, is *not* repentance. It is impossible for a man to approach God while he is in sin; he must leave off evil before he can do good, and to attempt to approach God while in evil appears to be disastrous.

It appears from the Bible that the doctrine of the resurrection of the natural body is a delusion—that man lives, however, as a man, immediately after death—not that he has had to wait in his grave for six thousand years, and perhaps may have to wait six million more, before he again lives as a man, Luke xx. 37, 38; Luke ix. 30-32; Revelations v. 3, xix. 10.

It is evident that men live *as men* after death, from the fact that men are “as the angels” in the conditions of their existence after death, and that angels have the human form, and are not mere ideas or puffs of wind; see Judges xiii. 3, 6, 8-15, and 16-21, Daniel throughout, and Revelations, in which hands, feet, heads, hair,

faces, and breast, and eyes, are spoken of—which very distinctly shows that angels and spirits have real bodies, though a man cannot see them unless his *spiritual* eyes are opened, 2 Kings vi. 17.

If a person reads the Bible in the idea that there is only one God, and that He is the Father of all, and that He is not *called three*, but one (Zechariah xiv. 9), he will understand things in a totally different way from those who believe in three Gods, as the Church (so called) does at the present day. He will be astonished to see how contradictions disappear; and how his glance will penetrate what was before irreconcilable to perception.

The chief causes in sincerely good men, why they are deluded into the belief that there are three Gods instead of one, are these; that they are taken in by what the Church has made Scripture to mean, and which possibly was never intended to be meant. For instance, if a person takes the true view, that there is one God only, he may be staggered by meeting such texts as Titus i. 4, where in the English version it appears distinctly enough to speak of two—namely, God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ; or Philemon 3, wherein is the same appearance; and also where Paul says, “He alway liveth to make *intercession* for us”—where the idea implied apparently, and taught by the Church, is that of God the Father with His arm raised to sweep the sinners into perdition, and God the Son imploring Him to remember what He suffered when nailed to the cross, and on that account to forbear.

Whereas it is a well-known axiom in Greek (not a learned quibble, but a never-failing rule, according to which there is no ambiguity of meaning) that where there is only one article it refers to *both nouns as the same identically*; but if the two nouns are not identical,

there must be two articles. This rule is known to every schoolboy now, but was ignored by our translators occasionally, whether *purposely* or not, perhaps 1 John v. 7 can best testify.

Ὁ βασιλεὺς καὶ ἡγεμὼν means he who is both our king and leader; but ὁ βασιλεὺς καὶ ὁ ἡγεμὼν means both he who is our king and also the man who leads us, as two separate and distinct persons. So Titus i. 4 reads, “Εἰρήνη ἀπὸ Θεοῦ πατρὸς καὶ κυρίου Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ τοῦ σωτῆρος ἡμῶν,” Peace from God, who is our Father and Lord; namely, Jesus Christ our Saviour.

The same is the case in Philemon 3. There being no punctuation in Greek, of course the comma after Θεοῦ πατρὸς is spurious, and only intended to favour the Church's interpretation with those who have a semblance of knowledge without the reality.

“He liveth to make intercession for us,” is much more likely to mean that our Lord Jesus Christ assumed our natural flesh to conjoin us, or make it possible that we should be conjoined, with God; and in virtue of His doing so He is called a *Mediator*, or one who goes between as a *medium* of conjunction and communication; and also in virtue of the same office He is called an intercessor; *intercedere* merely means to *go between*—not necessarily to arrest destruction, which is a totally superfluous idea added by the Church. Man can no more deal with God except through his humanity—that is, as impersonated in Jesus Christ—than he can speak to the soul of another man without his body; that is, without his mouth and the other's bodily ears coming into use.

To imperfect men imperfect teaching is absolutely necessary; perfect teaching would be as incomprehensible to them as the subject sought to be brought within their comprehension. The only thing really necessary is, that

such imperfect teaching should be right as *far as it goes*. We venture to hope that the views herein enunciated have this characteristic, though we are well aware that they may be argued down by misapplication of isolated texts or by ancient fathers; it is easy also to say, "Oh, these are merely the old heresies of So-and-so dressed up again." To that we would only answer, "God shall judge thee, thou whited wall." Let Him judge between us which has sought the truth, and sought it most earnestly, in the right frame of mind, and in the place where truth is to be found. I too was brought up in the High-Church principles, and I therefore well know the tendency of those fantastic fooleries and impositions. To my cost I know what confession can do for me, and I know how my limited powers of attention can be frittered away on shows, and miss the heartfelt worship of God. "God is in heaven, and thou art upon earth, therefore let thy words be few." Is that their idea of worship? Many and ill-chosen compliments to God is rather their style, telling God what He is, and what He has done, and then what we are and what we ought to do, and that we are very far from doing it; that is the burden of the address. I have never read a single heretical author; and these ideas are got from the Bible, and from the Bible alone, not through the dirty channel of the Church's interpretation, or from any other miserable sinner's, but from itself, the Word of God.

In the doctrine of baptismal regeneration, the teaching of a section of what calls itself, with self-dubbed impudence, "the Church," is, that a man was in baptism made "a child of God, an inheritor of the kingdom of heaven," &c.; and that his after-life is merely a consciously hopeless attempt to regain the innocence and purity which he once had as a child; and that, therefore,



it would have been far better for him to have died when a child—the moment the priest had splashed his face with water. They thus look upon baptism as somewhat magical, and degrade God's kingdom to such a low and contemptible state that they suppose a human being is let into it by a mere manual operation of a priest, without his own consciousness, much less consent; and, again, much less striving to enter in. Will nothing open the eyes of these men to the fact, that the innocence and purity of infancy are not *real* purity and innocence? Real purity and innocence are, to have the knowledge of, and have undergone the temptations to, sin, and not to yield to them. A man is really pure who never allows himself to think of evil consciously, when he might, as far as evident restraints go, yield to it with impunity. This is attainable, and ought to be attained, in this world; but I doubt if it is attainable without the love of God being the motive; and this can only gradually be attained as a man leaves off actual sin, which he knows to be sin, and implores God to help him. Baptism took the place of circumcision, Galatians vi. 15, "Neither circumcision availeth anything, nor uncircumcision, but a new creature," although expressly ordained by the same God who substituted baptism, Genesis xvii. 10, 12, 13, 14. For meaning of *new creature* see 2 Corinthians v. 17.

People seem to have the idea, which has also arisen from "Holy Mother Church's" teaching, that at the hour of death they will each suddenly have his sins, bad habits, desires, &c., annihilated. In fact, how should they still be tempted by the lusts of the flesh if they live as wind, or exist as thought, without human body? They believe they are to pass their time in perpetual rest and inactivity. Are they conscious of any want of rest, if they do not overwork themselves to make money? Why

should rest be spoken of as a perpetual blessing? And again, if this long-desired and hard-earned rest is to be their reward, which they can only attain through the gate of natural death, why is long life held out as a blessing in what in the English version is the Fifth Commandment, and as a reward for the performance of a bounden duty? Is it not evident that, if these things are really consistent, there is some misconception of their meaning as explained by Church teachers? In one place, "Few and evil are a man's days," and in another a promise of longer sufferings? as a reward!

The promise of God's forgiveness is not at the moment of death, or ten minutes before, or ten minutes after, but *now* (Rom. viii. 1). Is it not worth considering whether, if that forgiveness does not deliver one from again committing sin and suffering the consequences (which it assuredly does not in this world), it will necessarily do so in the next? If you say, "Why then are promises of forgiveness made to us if they are, as you wickedly try to show, of no use?" I say they are of this use, that they save a man from despair and from fear, which two things might hold him in such slavery that he could never escape from sin. God's forgiveness is not gradual; He "blots out," or "wipes out," as it is expressed, our sins; but man must conquer his inclination to recommit them, or else punishment is a mercy to him, and the only mercy he can receive without detriment. But he must not confound the detection and punishment by wicked men, which is allowed even if he makes a momentary and unwonted effort to look to God, for God's punishing, though God permits it.

A man does not cease from sinning because he has been forgiven for the past; he keeps on doing evil, and entailing the necessary consequence. Most men do not care to inquire what is true of the next world; for they say,

“*who knows?*” but there are some who may at least care to speculate whether it is a matter to be taken for granted that their tastes will all be annihilated hereafter, all their habits changed. A bad man’s heaven would be where he could follow his own lusts,—he confounds religion with sanctimonious psalm-singing, and he heartily despises and loathes both. God’s providence is over all, but not *equally* over all indiscriminately. There is a very different providence over those who love God to those who don’t bother about those things. There is such a thing as standing in the presence of God, and such a thing as being far from Him. One may possibly get a truer view of God’s dealings with us by comparing them with a civil government in this world. A man who has joined a band of robbers, and become a member of their gang, may know that if he were to come forward voluntarily and confess, and beg to be allowed to lead an honest life under the laws, he might be freely pardoned, and would excite interest; but he has chained himself by forming habits which are opposed to order, which also he despises. Moreover, he knows that his companions would kill him for deserting them, if he left his malpractices; so he neither can nor dares to try; and even if his comrades rob him and ill-treat him, still he has to bear their injustice and cruelty. He cannot appeal to the just laws of his country, because he has voluntarily removed himself far from their jurisdiction.

It may be suggested that *Name* in the Bible means something real; hence *the quality*,—otherwise, what is meant by knowing “His Name”? He calleth His sheep by their “name,” meaning their individual characteristics; or again, in Rev. xix. 12, “He had a name which no one knew but himself.” Confer “The secret of the Lord is with them that fear Him” (Psalm xxv. 14).

Is it not true that the faith of the Church at present is a *blind* faith? that is, it is such that if a person presented to a church assembly an epistle written by St Paul, but of which he is not known to be the author, they have no spirit of truth within them as teachers and priests, whereby they can judge of it whether it bears the impress of truth or not. If they received infallible proof that it was Paul's, they would treat it with the greatest reverence, and wrench it to fit their dogmas; but if they did not know this infallibly from some external and gross evidence, they would lightly regard it, though it were inspired as much as the rest. Such a faith is a mere affirmative verbal assertion, and nothing is of value in religion but what regards the actual life and conduct, its ends and motives.

It is plain that outward acts of eleemosynary charity are not the *fruits* meant to be brought forth, or the fruits by which our Lord says of men, "Ye shall know them;" because all men, evil and good, can do such works as building churches and giving money indiscriminately to those who are without it, and evil and good people actually do such works in common.

There is a very significant phrase made use of in places in the Bible: it is to the effect that even when under the influence of the Holy Spirit the members of the primitive church had each one a doctrine, each one a tongue, each one a revelation, &c.—all things should be done unto *edifying*. They were to aim at *edifying* the Church—that is, each other as members of the Church. And it is common even now to ask a person, ironically or otherwise, if he was much *edified* by a sermon. We have completely lost the meaning and force of that word: when people use it now they mean anything, *interested*, *struck*, or *affected*. The word really means only one thing—that is, *Built up*, οἰκοδομῶ; *domum ædifico*, I build up as

a house. This word is most significant as applied to doctrine ; because it is one of the most unerring tests of true doctrines that they cohere, they hang together, fit together and can be built up, as it were. Now, it must have struck the most careless observer of the doctrines of the present Church that they *cannot be made to fit each other*. They may be compared to the materials of a building, which in themselves, as they are found in the Bible, are of such a shape that they *can* fit together, and *do so* in the mind of a good man ; and St Paul himself uses this comparison, saying, also, that a man should “take heed how he buildeth on the foundation” he had helped to lay (1 Cor. iii. 10). But these materials have been so mutilated and altered by “Holy Mother Church” that they can no longer be fitted together. You can look from one to the other and say, “Don’t talk to me of contradictions ; I don’t care if they are contradictions ; if that holy priest tells me that two and two make five in one place and three in another, I will believe him, because he is infallible ; he *must* be, because he says so himself ; and if he further adds that this is true of marbles, but not of apples, I will believe that too. Ah ! there is nothing like the simple childlike faith that it *is so*. Away with your reasonings !” But reason has its province as well as faith, and it is the part of a right reason to discern if doctrine is to be likened to gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, or stubble. One can now only look from one Church doctrine to another, and must not touch, examine too minutely, or even look too close to see if they are what they pretend to be, much less can he build them together. In fact, Church teachers have resorted to such utter perversions of reason, of truth, and fairness to prop up their deductions, that they could not have more lamentably insulted what they meant to uphold by the bitterest opposition, to

say nothing of the fact that *any* heathen religion could be propped up on such terms, and some without such distortions of argument. They could not then have passed a greater insult upon their doctrines than they have done by the palpably unworthy means they have in some instances taken to support them.

What does Holy Mother Church tell us about the Commandments?—that although inspired—nay, written by the finger of God, who is a God of infinite wisdom—yet they are an imperfect summary of man's duty,—that you must understand that where a sin is forbidden—first, all that leads to it is forbidden; and secondly, the contrary virtues are enjoined; although it might have seemed more direct to have at once enjoined the virtue, and left the contrary vice and its tendencies to be understood as prohibited if this were the true view. The Bible view seems more this, that what in the English version are the first nine commandments, tell a man *not to commit* certain *sins*, and the tenth tells him he is not to wish to commit them; because a man must *desist from sin* before he can learn to love God: and so the law is preparatory to bring a man to Christ, as the attendant who brought a pupil to the schoolmaster from whom he was really to learn (Gal. iii. 23, 24, 25). “The law is for the wicked, to bring them to become internally good, not for the good to prevent their becoming wicked” (Gal. iii. 25, v. 14-18). It is unnecessary to charge one man strictly and under a penalty not to steal from another, or not to murder him, when one of the strongest and most delightful motives to action he has is an intense love of doing good to that other. When he has arrived at such a motive as that, it may not be too much to apply Romans xiii. 8, and say he *has* fulfilled the law, and is “no longer under it;” whereas, according to the Church-

teaching, he *is* still under it, and is bound under coercion and a very severe penalty to perform all sorts of contrary virtues, which also he is to force himself to do, and will fall under severe curses and punishments for breaking the law if he does not compel these virtues in himself; whereas, in truth, the Christian virtues cannot proceed from cursings and threats of punishment, but only from one source, and with that source coercion *to good* is impossible, only coercion *from evil*.

How does the Church explain the fifth commandment, "Honour thy father and thy mother, that thy days may be long in the land"? In the same lucid style—that a man is to honour his earthly father and mother, and those who stand in their place—and, in fact, in a greater or less degree, every one.

Are you then to love, honour, and *obey* (mark the *obey*) them, if they are wicked or foolish, and order you to do what is wrong?

No—that is understood; of course you are only to obey them when they tell you to do what is right: it is taken for granted that they will not order you to do what is wrong.

Then do you not think that would have been mentioned, even by a thoughtful man, in drawing up such a law? besides, it can hardly be called *obedience*, and certainly not obedience such as Holy Mother Church asks for in her faithful sons, if you are first to see if the injunction is right or wrong, and then to obey, if it is right—and if it is right *only*; not to obey implicitly, simply because you are ordered, and obedience to all orders is a duty.

Besides this, what do you suppose is meant by the promise, "that thy days may be long in the land"? Do you not know of people who have honoured their earthly parents and yet have died young, and others who have had no filial affection and yet lived to an old age? Do

you ever think of measuring the probability of a man's life in an insurance office by the amount of his filial affection? No, because you don't believe it, though you say you do, and though you understand it all strictly literally. You will say, If it is true I suppose it must mean *something else*; and yet if a man came to you and said, The words father and mother do not refer to earthly parents, but to *something else*; and long life does not mean a long natural life in this world, for that is nowhere spoken of, in this world even, as a sure blessing, much less is it so considered in the Bible. You would say, This man explains away the Bible to mean nothing. I won't have his explanations—I will take it literally, as I find it; and you would very probably feel that you had paid a compliment to the Bible by refusing to have a single word of it explained to you, till you came to something like the above implied promise, and then you would just stick at it, leave it, and go on at something else, just as confident as ever that your ideas were right and unquestionable. The only construction you with your doctrines can possibly put upon it is, that it was said *ironically*; because no man can keep even *that* commandment perfectly in all its bearings, and therefore can never claim the promise attached to it. But what a monstrous notion! Why should it be attached to that particular commandment, and not to the others? Besides, such a view of the commandments leads to no good, but to a fanciful notion of sin; so that people come to say, Every word you say and every thought is wicked, and deserves eternal damnation at God's hands—even contemplative or interrogative thoughts. Thus they strain at a gnat, making out that every thought and look is sin, though they do not avoid unmistakable sins themselves; at least those who say such things as a rule do not, for



they do not know wherein sin consists, and that though a man may see an evil act, and thus his mind may bear upon it, yet if it does not pass into act or word or even desire in his heart, he has not appropriated it; and the mere thought of it is not sin.

But people argue in such a one-sided way, thinking that the most barefaced perversions are lawful if they are "on the right side" (as they think themselves), that it is all but hopeless to concern oneself about them. If these people know of a case in which a man who always honoured his parents lived to a good old age, they never fail to quote the promise attached to the fifth commandment, and say, "Ah, my brethren," at the funeral oration, "what a blessed illustration have we here of God's gracious promise," &c.; but if the very contrary has occurred they wisely hold their tongues on the subject, and choose some other text, and say, "The youth was taken from this wicked and miserable world to his happy home above," &c., which is a very different view of the matter. But could not any heathen doctrine be right well supported by such one-sided declamation? What cannot be proved right if one starts by taking it for granted that it is right, and then tries by all means, fair or foul, true or false, to make it *be* right? A true and rightly-grounded faith does not require violence to be done to any truth; whatever its nature or characteristics may be, these four should be amongst them—1. A loving confidence in God; 2. A harmonious agreement of its doctrines; 3. Conviction of its truth; 4. Spiritual sight (1 Cor. ii. 14). There are certain people in this world who are good men, but who find it impossible to believe what they see to be false, even if told by priests that it is very wrong indeed not to think the falsehood true. It may be overweening self-confidence and contuma-

cious heresy in such people to be unable to give a reasonable and intelligent credence to such a dogma, for instance, as that the part of a quantity is both equal to and greater than the whole of the same quantity; and, moreover, the fact that such a dogma was laid down, or stated to have been laid down, by the Astronomer-Royal, might fail to illuminate their minds and enable them to perceive that the impossibility is nevertheless true. What sort of folly should that be called which gives to fellow miserable sinners a confidence and belief which the man refuses to his own senses? If he mistrusts his own senses, how does he know that he rightly *hears* the priest's words? he has only the evidence of his own sense of hearing them.

If these remarks provoke a good defence of the truth, be it on which side it may, a good object will have been attained. The writer's only object has been to fearlessly assault what appeared false—confident that, if he is mistaken, and is the victim of a false reason and fallacious senses, no harm can result to what is true from question and scrutiny. If, on the other hand, the Church pastors have thought it a small matter to tread down the pastures and foul the residue with their feet, but have given the flock what they have thus trodden down to eat, and water which they have fouled with their feet to drink, Ezekiel xxxiv. 19, then these remarks may be the means of doing good in the contrary way, by separating God's teaching in the Bible from man's, and the simple intelligible truth from the interlardings of man's ignorance and presumption.

Lastly, where it was remarked that the historical part of the Bible was also allegorical, Galatians iv. 24, it is not meant that it is a *fable*, or not strictly and *literally* true, but that there appears to be an *inner meaning*,

without which what is related is often unimportant or even trifling ; and that it is in virtue of this inner meaning of the acts related that they are worthy of relation, and with reference to this spiritual meaning that the letter of the Bible is sacred, and is inspired ; otherwise any educated man might say, " I could have expressed such an event much more strikingly, or much less ambiguously," or he might say, " This is very poor, if that is all inspiration can do," in another part. The writer of these remarks knows full well the standard answers to them, having been himself a member of the High-Church party ; but he sincerely hopes that as some of them are anticipated and discussed herein, this may be the means of inducing those who teach doctrines said to be drawn from the Bible to consider, 1st, *whether* they really and truly believe them to be true ; and, 2dly, *why* they believe them to be true ; and those who learn from priests, instead of from the real means which God has in His infinite wisdom appointed, to consider *whether* they are right in taking the doctrines and commandments of man in preference to the word of God, from which their priests derive their supposed authority ; 3dly, *why* they are right in doing so ; or, lastly (if nothing will make them open their eyes), whether they are willing to take the chance of their being *wrong* in doing so, and its consequences.

Remember that all genuine appeals have been to the Bible. Our Lord says, " They have Moses and the Prophets," not, They have Holy Mother Church—though the Jewish Church was as self-asserting and intolerant of truth when put in competition with her precious doctrines as the present. And the injunction to search the Scriptures is one too universal to be ignored by any sects—if only people could be got to do it—that is, not to

look for isolated texts to bear out plausibly a foregone conclusion, but to seek for such instruction as the seeker really feels that he wants—trusting to God, whose Spirit inspired it, and imploring Him to give light to understand it aright. To such a seeker for truth at the hands of God, the fountain of truth, it is less likely that error, blindness, and delusion should result, than to those who, having the pure spring, prefer to drink their doctrines through a dirty human channel.

It is a much easier thing to assault what is already established, than to establish in the place of it what shall be proof against assault. An assault, however, can only be successful if directed against what is false; for the truth is so strong, and its strength so inalienable, that even bad men and prejudiced men see, and by their acts acknowledge, that it is invulnerable. The only means by which truth can be assaulted with a hope of success, is by misrepresenting it first, and then attacking the misrepresentation, and demolishing it, hoping that the spectators will be cozened into mistaking the misrepresentation, so elaborately and ostentatiously refuted, for the truths as stated, and supposed to be attacked. We have endeavoured not only, as at first intended, to attack fearlessly what appears to be false and unwarrantable in Church doctrine, whether of High Church or Low Church, but also to suggest whence the falsity has arisen, by even quoting the texts on which the very highest and most learned authorities in the Church state the doctrines to have been founded, and showing that it is *highly probable*, to say no more, that another interpretation of those texts is the right one; that the interpretation given by the Church bears this evidence of being wrong—namely, that a doctrine founded upon such an interpretation as the Church gives, not only contradicts other

parts of Scripture, and hence her *own* article for her *own* guidance in the interpretation of Scripture, but is opposed to the whole spirit and teaching of the Bible, which, after all, is the only real and infallible test of doctrine in theory.

We are quite aware that the result of the dogmas of the Church being taken for granted is this, that a man receives them blindly, and in his memory only. He cannot fit them together, and act them, and live them. He remembers them in immense numbers; and when a question is asked about any matter of faith requiring explanation, the very words of the question, by their sound, recall to him some phrase in which the same words occur; and you may, therefore, safely prophesy what he will answer, if you only word your question in a certain form. There appear to be so many and such fearfully important errors in what men believe as the Church's teaching at the present day, that, even if it were possible to clearly reveal to their eyes one truth as it really is, instead of merely suggesting that it *may* be so, they would presently deny it to be a truth, because it would clash with what they take for granted on other matters. For instance, if one were to suggest that man lives as a man in a real body after death, and that, except in cases of violent death, it is generally on the third day after the heart has ceased to beat that he returns to consciousness, they would say, "How do you know that? do you expect us to take a mere impudent assertion on your part for proof?" If, then, one were to prove from texts innumerable that spirits and angels are in the human form, and are not mere ideas or puffs of wind, they could not answer, but would go away burning to find a text which would upset such a novel suggestion. Then they would find such texts as Matthew xxvii. 52,

53 : "And the graves were opened, and *many* bodies of the saints which slept arose and went into the *Holy City*." Also Ezekiel xxxvii. 12-14, and Daniel xii. 1, 2, where it says, "*Many* of them that sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, and some to shame, even everlasting contempt." And on these and suchlike texts, referred to as parallel passages in the Bible margin, they would build the fallacy that man sleeps unconscious for thousands, maybe millions, of years after his natural death. They ingeniously confirm these views also by quoting our Lord's words, John ix. 4, "The night cometh, in which no man can work," which they take to mean the sleep of death. And is it merely an assertion from an anonymous writer that they have, that it may mean a state of spiritual darkness either in this world or the next? Let us compare it with John xi. 9, 10 : "But if a man walk in the night he stumbleth, because there is no light in him." And John xii. 35, 36, "Walk while ye have the light, for he that walketh in darkness," &c. ; where it is evident that, if the darkness of night referred to is a sleep of unconsciousness, in which action of any kind is impossible, it could not be said that those who walk then *stumble*, for they could not attempt to walk at all.

Did it ever strike a thinking and devout churchman, that it is curious Jerusalem should be called "the Holy City," when they had just committed the fearful consummation of their national profanity in that very city, which was also doomed to destruction, by crucifying our Lord, who was the very embodiment of the Law and the Prophets they professed to hold sacred? It is said the dead bodies of the saints went into *the Holy City*. Also in the text above quoted in Daniel it is said, in almost the same words, Daniel xii. 1, 2, "*Many* of them that

sleep in the dust." Let us argue upon it. Why do you suppose it says *many*, and not *all*?

Because not *all* are saved.

Do you suppose it refers, then, only to the good who shall rise again?

Undoubtedly.

Why then does it say in verse 2, "*Some* to everlasting shame and contempt"? Is that also for the good?

Also in Matthew xxvii. 52, 53, it is not *all* the bodies of "saints," but *many* of them. Is there then a chance that we may not *all* rise again, even the good, the "saints" among us, but only *many* of us?

We cannot answer these things; we can only trust to God, who is merciful, that He will have mercy upon us.

But need you overlay His teaching with darkness and falsities which have so clouded men's minds that they can take no clear and consistent view of any matter of religion? Doctrine should give light, and should *be* light—that is, it should illuminate; but our Lord himself says, "Take heed that the light which is in thee be not darkness." And how can a person tell whether his opinions be light or darkness? By diligently scrutinising them, seeing if they, first, agree with Scripture; secondly, explain and group truths otherwise apparently discordant or inconsistent, or deficient in meaning or importance; third, if they possess that property which is similar with regard to the mind to that of light with regard to the natural eyes—that is, if they illuminate and make clear to the mind what they bear upon, and that not ambiguously or vaguely, but in clear sharp outline and distance and relation. It is impossible to think that such an effect is the result of delusion, and that the fumbling of isolated texts, without the power of building them together in the life, is true light. It is not a sign of

true light to be uncharitable and sneer, or vituperate those who differ, especially in religion.—(1 John ii. 9, 10, 11.) And if a man really thinks that his views and belief are such that they make him lead a better life, surely the *delusion of good* is better than the *reality of evil*.

There are two very prominent objections to the common belief in forgiveness at or about the hour of natural death—namely, that it makes it more difficult to try to lead a good life, because a person naturally enough concludes that it is no use trying, or at least he does not clearly and distinctly see *whether* it is use trying, or *what* use it is trying. He says, “By the works of the law shall no man living be justified;” “All have sinned, and come short,” &c. ; “If righteousness could have been by the law,” &c. So it evidently is of no avail to do good. Secondly, such a forgiveness, *in the sense in which men understand it when they say that*, appears impossible ; that is, it is directly contrary to what God has revealed to us of the laws in accordance with which He invariably deals with us, and which He has encouraged us to trust He will never break. Far be it from man to say that God’s forgiveness is only gradual—it may be instantaneous, and yet be *described* as gradual because of the effect or appearance. Is it not evident that forgiveness of the past is *not enough*? A man must be delivered from *re-committing* his favourite sins ; and the only deliverance revealed to us is that of conquering the desire, tendency, or habit of sin ; and *that*, as far as we know or can gather from Scripture, *must* be done in this world, or at least begun. Men mistake imagination or mere thought for their spirit, or they might conclude even from reason that it is as impossible instantaneously to change the life of a man from evil to good, as to change the locality of his body without travelling, or his



habits, and the nature of his atmosphere and temperature, without training. If it were as easy to change a man's spirit from good to evil or the reverse, as it is to *think* first of an evil thing and then of good, there would be no stability, no life, nothing secure, and nothing could be predicated of either evil or good, because each would be liable at any moment to change to its opposite, and the wicked could approach God instantaneously just as well as the good, and therefore might safely leave such considerations as drawing near to Him, till the hour of death or danger rendered such an operation a wise precaution, when they could by one thought place themselves on a par with those who have God in all their thoughts, and served Him all their lives.

We do not attempt to address those who sleep the sleep of death, who do not care whether these things are so or not, and would rather not be bothered about them ; but we would fain suggest to those who seek the truth, that they have no right to *take it for granted* that any assemblage, or society, or association, which dubs itself *The Church*, necessarily has all truth and no falsity in it. Doctrine is throughout the Bible compared to fluid which is drunk ; to water in Ezekiel, most distinctly ; to milk by St Paul ; false doctrine to strong drink in the Prophets. And the effect of false doctrine is similar (on the mind which really takes it in as true) to that of strong drink,—it makes a man take a *drunken* view of truths ; he sees them indeed in a sort of way, but without adequate or worthy meaning, order, or symmetry. In fact, he pays a compliment he does not really mean when he attributes his fanciful and ever-varying interpretation to them at all ; and if he met some of them elsewhere but in the Bible, he would indignantly set them down as nonsense, unworthy of a serious thought from a sensible man.

A good man suffers dreadfully when he starts by taking falsehood for truth, and clinging to it as truth ; or rather, we should say, not *falsehood*, but truths perverted and falsified—that is, doctrines which may be true in a *certain sense* of the literal words, but are not true *as understood*. And when he clings to these, and yet tries to see truth and seeks it, he clings to false doctrine, and yet prays to God to deliver him from false doctrine, heresy, and schism. If he could only ask that prayer without taking anything for granted but that God is good, and has given the Bible as a revelation and means of communication, and will teach those who seek it, how much pain might such a man escape in trying to reconcile what is irreconcilable—the true with the false—and mistaking the protests of his own perception for snares of the devil, and possibly praying against the very indications that might have brought him to the light as delusions! He is like a man who asks a guide to show him the right road, and yet while he professes to be *most anxious to find* the right road, he takes it for granted that he is in it, and just follows the road he is in ; although he finds that the features of the country that road has hitherto led him through, and is still leading him through, are ludicrously dissimilar to those which former travellers have declared to characterise the real country the right road traverses. It is also as if, instead of using his eyes to see the scenery and features of the country around him, he had paid men to tell him that there were such and such things around him, and refused to regard even what he could plainly see, but believed them that mole-hills were really the mountains alluded to by former travellers, and a desert with thistles in it a garden described as being full of fruit-trees. What can be said to a man who declares he believes a priest in preference to his own senses ? Did

it ever strike him that he cannot refuse the evidence, *under the circumstances contemplated*, of his own senses? After all, he has only the evidence of his own sense of hearing that he hears aright what the priest tells him—it is then out of his power to discredit his own senses in such matters and under such circumstances; though he may think it a virtue to act as if he did—that is a very different thing. There is, truly, a sense in which the senses are not to be trusted as conclusive evidence in certain matters; and by a falsification of this truth it has been taught that a man's senses are less to be trusted than the assertion of a crafty or deluded priest.

If a priest wishes to argue in favour of ritualism, and takes this text, 2 Timothy iv. 13, "The cloak that I left at Troas with Carpus, when thou comest bring with thee, and the books, but especially the parchments," and quietly asserts that the cloak alluded to was St Paul's green surplice turned up with yellow, the one that had the stars and stripes on it, which he wanted, because it was impossible for him to have *elevated the Host* without it, and that this was what he wanted it for;—what is there to prevent his following up the same line of proof, and equally independently asserting that the books alluded to were the Church Liturgy as we have it at the present day, including the prayer for the Queen, and Bishop Wordsworth's 'Catechism,' and the parchments were the 'Formula Concordiæ'? Since the moment he asserted it, it would, as such persons believe, commence immediately to have been the fact that it was so. The worst of it all is, that there is no laying the finger upon the fallacy of saying that the Church is infallible. There is certainly in the Bible a promise of the Spirit of Truth.

And if you reason with such persons as we have alluded to, they say first, that you should believe what the priest tells you in his sermon because the Church is infallible, and the Church teaches through her priests, who are therefore to be believed. Then if you point out cases where priests have disputed with each other on the same point, or where, as in the case of Luther, a secession occurred in the Church, and point out that in no sense can the Church either in its Bible meaning as a collection of men who worship God in spirit and in truth, or in *their* meaning as an assemblage of priests, claim infallibility, which is an attribute of God alone, they say the Church is not responsible for what every individual priest in it may say, and her infallibility is not compromised by their mistakes. You can only add, "What then are we to believe as the Church-teaching, which is infallible, if her priests and her councils have controverted and revoked each other's statements, and Popes have excommunicated each other simultaneously?"

It is evidently quite impossible to write otherwise than disjointedly where there is so much to be said and so little space to say it in, if a book, in a readable compass, is to be written.

We will now suggest that there is an interior sense in the Bible, or, indeed, more than *one* interior sense, so that different men can receive different lessons from the same words, according to their *perception*, which, again, depends not in the very least upon cleverness or sharpness, but on character in goodness alone. This is not a mere assertion. We have St Paul attaching a spiritual meaning to Scripture, and the example of the very *ancient Fathers* the High-Church party are so fond of throwing in one's teeth as authorities for

this or that dogma, as if a man could not be a good man, and yet be mistaken in any one individual question. Besides this, apart from such reasoning, is it not self-evident that certain parts *must* be taken in a sort of spiritual meaning to conceive of them at all? It is hard to think of the best texts, just when one wants to, but Ezekiel xxxiv. will do. Can any one believe that this really means no more than that God was going to be the God of a flock of sheep, and King David a prince of the same flock, verse 24, because they had drunk dirty water, and pushed each other, verses 18 and 21? Can he simply and say, "Yes, I believe that too, because it is said so; I don't care how unworthy the idea is, and I firmly believe the flesh alluded to is South-down mutton?" This is no caricature of the way some speak. Let us turn, then, to another verse, and say, Do you really believe that the sun and moon shall be turned into blood, and that the stars of heaven shall fall upon the earth, which yet is smaller than any one of them? And if such a thing as a collision took place with a star or planet, the said planets having atmospheres, and being inhabited with human beings, their total destruction would be as instantaneous as our own; whereas, in the enumeration of signs, this catastrophe is not alluded to, though it would effectually forestall the remaining signs, if taken literally. There are those who would say, and we have heard it said,—“Yes, we believe all this to be literally true; it is the work of Divine Omnipotence, and in such a case we must submit our reason to the simple childlike faith that it will be so because we are told so. Are we to place your idle assertion in the balance with the express declaration of Scripture? There is nothing which could not be explained away at that rate by such as you. We prefer to believe that

the Bible really is true." Then turn to just one more verse, since no argument finds an echo in your understanding but what is supported by a distinct quotation, however accordant with the spirit of the Bible. Turn to Acts ii. 16-20—"This is that which was spoken by the prophet, The sun shall be turned into darkness, and the moon into blood," &c., and tell me whether we have any authentic record that the sun was really turned into darkness in the month of June A.D. 33, and the moon into blood at the same time; and if so, when they were reconverted into their natural substance. We have no possible wish to treat any part of the Bible with irreverence; but there is a pseudo-reverence which takes for granted any absurdity, and does what it calls "adoring the blessed mystery," which means neither seeking to understand or apply the Bible or take it for guidance, but simply stare at the literal words, and mumble them in the mouth. No one should ever quote from the Bible what he has not had light thrown upon, or at least what he has not thought upon till *he fancied* light was thrown upon it, and *fancied* he saw a meaning which appeared, to the best of his judgment, to be excellent, unmistakable, useful, and consistent. The very fancies of really good persons are not necessarily delusions. But do not mistake priests for good men; they may or may not be good. God alone can tell, not you.

A man's duty is rather to live *in the world* uncorrupted, and doing his duty from love to God, than to live *out of it*, even if then also uncorrupted.

There are times and states when seclusion is good, and even necessary,—as when a person first commences a spiritual life, or wishes to break the neck of bad habits, already acquired, by desuetude; but the existence in seclusion is not real life, and God has no need of

your praises and devotions. Devotion should be combined with an active life, so as to be carried from the heart into externals, and thus to leaven the whole conduct. "Herein is my Father glorified, that ye bring forth much fruit;" not that ye chant long forms of verbal praise. Is it not a fearful thing to see how great a tendency there is to "miss the mark" in religion! We were talking just now of seclusion. What a common idea it is that a person who abjures all his or her domestic and social duties, and leads a life of sequestered psalm-singing, has given herself up to "worship God"! The "fakir" or religious beggar thinks that by cruelly torturing himself he is serving the Deity. The inhuman masses of the mob think they are showing *mercy!!* to exist within their depraved and ruthless breasts by tearing to pieces a just and upright man, and insulting his poor sister, who never did them any harm; because a frightful emergency required the strong arm of stern justice to appear, unmixed with tender mercy, till the rebellious murderers were in that position in which alone mercy to *them* could be other than a dangerous curse to *the good*. Again, if a vulgar man wishes to be thought superior to the desire of rank and eminence, instead of talking humbly to prove it, he takes the transparent course of reviling the Queen. Thus there is seen to be a tendency almost universal in those who are without a virtue to mistake its very garb. So it is in religion. What a question for those who have shut themselves in cloisters, and tried to kill all that is natural and lovely and congenial, at the end of all to say, Can it all be a mistake? It is far easier to rend the garments than the hearts. It is easier to make a tight martyr's face and eat no pudding, or, more glorious still, summon all within hail to see how we eat nothing at

all!!! all day long, than to mortify the *flesh*; that is, to abstain from the works of the flesh even as detailed Galatians v. 19-21, unostentatiously. It is a small thing, perhaps, to insult God by acting as if we thought He was pleased, or appeased, or propitiated by our punishing each other.

The hardest thing in this world is to turn from *sin*; all the rest is superfluous, and had better not have the energy wasted upon it, as no one has too much to spare. No sensible person, who believes that there is a serious and difficult race to be run, would waste strength and concentration by affecting the superfluous and fantastic capers of a dancing-master while running for the prize.

Another very bad effect of nunneries and suchlike is this, that many of them, nay most of them, have such rules that those who join them are induced to give up all they have for the common good of the institution and its objects. They say, "Surely, yes; have we not the example in Acts iv. 34? and, besides, it would be no use if any one and every one might at any time renounce the whole thing and leave it." These being the reasons in favour of such a sacrifice, let us see what there is to be said against it. First, it throws away, by one reckless act, all chance of forming such habits of thoughtful and considerate liberality as the life of a person of means gives scope for every day. It is easier to flop all one's fortune into a society for building church organs, and to spend the rest of our life in wishing we had not, than to cultivate generosity regularly and thoughtfully in everyday life; and the effect of judicious liberality on ourselves is better, and sets a better example. There is also another great loss entailed by at one stroke putting the means God has given us out of our own reach; and that loss is of the very essence of all good—namely, the *volun-*



*tary principle.* The person who flings her money at the feet of another has thrown away an incalculable means of self-improvement, and of doing good to herself by a *habitual* liberality to others; and if she, in addition, flings her obedience at the feet of her "mother superior," she has also divested herself of a far more important "talent," and, instead of using it, has repudiated and flung it away.

Of course *argument* can never prove this or any other truth. None can argue more plausibly than priests, and those who have had their answers cut and dried for them by priests. Nothing is so fatal to truth as arguments and verbal bickerings. Any true man can see the truth if he desires earnestly to see it; but there never was a fallacy yet which could not be propped up by verbiage and plausible reasonings. The truth can only be seen in calmness, and in a certain frame of mind of thoughtful and earnest contemplation; the moment controversial bickerings commence, that perception and light which shows a good man clearly what is good takes its departure—not that it can be *overthrown* by verbal disputations, but that it cannot from its nature be dragged into error and perversity, and made manifest there to a disputatious assailant. He cannot drag it into his darkness, and there see it; but he himself must come to the light—ay, and seek it—before he has placed himself in that attitude in which alone it can be seen.

We have boldly ventured to suggest differences of view in matters of religion, having been taught according to High-Church views, and knowing full well the orthodox refutations, which, however, are forced, and, even when forced, inconclusive. We are convinced that there is truth in these suggestions, and that if they only suggest independent thought which results in the conclusion that

our Church-teaching is true and these views are false, they will have enabled the reader to render God a more reasonable sacrifice of himself than by an abject and insulting refusal to look his faith in the face lest it should be false, and calling that refusal a sign of confidence that it is true.

The best argument of the orthodox party is this: "Oh, this is all the old story over again—the old heresy of So-and-so. Why, these things have been refuted dozens of times, and it is only deplorable and contemptible ignorance which could have re-served them up. These are the heresies we have all demolished while we were boys at Oxford; any fool can see through them. It was a little holiday to us then trampling them under foot; much more easily could we now confound their advocates." To this we would rejoin, If you are indeed right and we are wrong, would to God you would confound our views! But we fear that is unlikely. Better republish the refutations of errors, and a dictionary of references to proofs of your orthodox doctrines, than merely assert that you could prove so-and-so. The only real advantage you gain by asserting you could demolish adverse opinions is with ladies and silly men, who are taken in by the disdainful air of easy superiority you adopt, and suppose from your manner that very likely you could quite easily refute those you express contempt for; but if there *be* proofs it is high time to show them, not to brandish the assertion that you *have* them all safely locked up somewhere. We send forth, then, these suggestions, whether any will hear and consider them, or whether they will forbear, confident that, even if all false, they are more likely to do good than harm. The arguments of Churchmen on such subjects have all this feature, that they *silence*, but do not *convince*, a candid inquirer. For instance, we all expect a change in

religious thought soon—I mean all thinking men, not enthusiasts. On one occasion Dr Cumming and his apocalypse was alluded to in the presence of an “eminent divine.” His remark was, “When the signs spoken of as preceding the second advent *really* take place, I don’t fancy we shall require a Dr Cumming to tell us of them,” which remark appeared unanswerable, and so it was and is unanswerable; but the very same remark applies to our Lord’s testimony of John the Baptist, “Verily I say unto you, that Elias has come already,” or to St Peter’s assertion of the very same portents in Acts ii. 16, 19, 20.

It is probable that the story of Adam and Eve is allegorical throughout, both from the nature of the narrative itself and from the references in other parts of Scripture to the account given by Moses, in the New Testament, and also Ezekiel xxviii. 13, and xxxi. 9, 16, where the garden of Eden is named, and the King of Tyre stated to have been in the garden of Eden, and also Pharaoh king of Egypt. How *can* any man reconcile this with Adam being the only man in the garden, &c., if he will not have it that the history, too, in the Bible, is or may be allegorical?

The origin of evil is in man’s abuse of his free agency. God created him not as a machine, but as a voluntary agent; and with a man’s free choice of evil or good we have no record of God interfering—in fact, everything tends to show that He will not do so; and even we, blind as we are, may by thought and contemplation see that, though man might be held from evil by arbitrary interference, voluntary service of love to God could not be the result of such forcing, unless man were at the same time made omniscient to see the reasons, &c. This may be a mystery, but it is not the contradictory paradox our friends the Churchmen make of it; they insist on men

being foreordained to heaven or hell, and then try to reconcile *that* with free agency. As usual, it is a truth falsified and misunderstood, not a downright and easily exposed falsehood at the bottom of their error. Does the sun give light and heat, and not their contraries? yet the earth, by turning from the sun, suffers darkness and cold; and as these are really deficiencies of light and heat, there being no such thing as positive darkness or cold, these may be said to be caused by the sun, by a figurative expression; being in fact dependent on the sun, and our relation towards the sun.

Again, in the matter of God's providence people have learned to talk such utter cant that a sincere man hesitates to express what he thinks. You hear of a man's house being burnt down, and all that he has lost and destroyed—all, except one of his children. At once the parson tells him how merciful God is—oh, what a good God is ours, because He has "spared" that one child and wrecked everything else to perdition! What a frightful distortion! How can that clergyman praise God's mercy to a ruined man, if *that* is how he looks upon it? Is it not more likely that men having removed themselves far from God in all their real motives and desires, and having denied His providence, the fool is answered according to his folly—according to their faith it is unto them? And as they really attribute all things to chance, the appearance of chance clings unto them. Is it likely God would reveal His directing hand *before* people come to Him and own Him on other evidence? Is that the sort of inducement He holds out, that you should turn to Him to escape your railway company failing or your house catching fire? Is there not the same objection to such a manifestation as to outward miracles, that they force temporary belief, but after a time are denied and

explained away, and then laughed at? And if, on the other hand, they continue, they cease to be miracles, and are taken for granted, like sunrise and sunset.

Man has not taken, and does not take the trouble to acquire, the *Love of God* as his motive to action, consequently he remains far from God's real protection. He may say what he likes; he *cannot* trust God, because God would not and does not keep him from accidents and misfortunes, and he may see that every day of his life. To him it also appears (we speak of a worldly man) that the man who loves God is no better off than himself. A man must be very far advanced in religious life—that is, he must have brought his external actions into accordance with his religion through, after, and by means of, his heart, not into forced external propriety independently of, and in contradiction to, what he really feels in his heart—before he can claim God's external protection in that outward sense. God's providence is, we doubt not, over all in spite of this—so is the sun's heat and light; but though no one could live a moment without God's providence in one sense, yet there are very different senses of the word, apparently. The same action of the sun produces in one plant a beautiful flower and fragrance, in another it produces poison or stinging-nettle; again, it causes by the same light and heat health and strength to some, and noxious putrefaction in other bodies. This may illustrate how God's providence *may* cause evil, because, and because only, of the evil of the recipients, He remaining always good. Vermin that are bred in putrefaction can probably just as little conceive the sun's action on a rose, and could just as little appreciate it if they did, as a worldly-minded man can believe or would enjoy God's dealings with those who love Him. He does not believe there is much difference

between a good man and a bad one—thinks they are all much about the same—and never notices what tells him the contrary, hence he cannot help having confused and unworthy notions of Providence.

There is a plausible view on the subject of our all being sinners, as if we were all equally bad, or nearly so, in the eyes of God's infinite purity, and there was no appreciable difference between good and evil. This, however, is contrary to the Bible view. They never speak there of good and bad merging into one, without a line of demarcation, any more than a man could be *very nearly* a British subject—he either has or has not his rights. There is also an ominous mention of a “great gulf” fixed, not as if the worst of heaven merged into the best of hell, there not being much difference between them. And any person who has ever tried can at least conceive what *may* represent the great gulf which may be crossed, and must be, in *this world*, or at least entered, if it is to be crossed at all. Whenever a man changes his objects and pursuits and bent of his mind in the manner apparently implied by the word *μετάνοια* (repentance), he appears invariably to come into misfortune and grief and calamity at first. This experience appears to be universal, that the first attempts to do the work of repentance, if the attempts are decided enough to have any effect at all, are disastrous; and that ridicule, doubt, and uncertainty, loss of associates, desolation, and temptations, and the painful inconsistency of doing evil when trying to do good, have to be passed through before the other side can be gained. It appears also that it is no use praying to be delivered from *such* temptations; they are intended to have a certain effect, and till that effect is produced, James i. 2, 12, they will not be taken away.

It is very common in the Church to hear elaborate

comparisons between millions of millions of years and eternity,—saying, for instance, that if a man lived as many years as there are grains of sand on the sea-shore, &c., it would make no difference in eternity. This fact alone might show them that they conceive wrongly of eternity. Eternity is a *state*, not *duration*; were it duration, their argument would be untrue. Even in this world a man can, by elevating his mind, free himself from the trammels time and space impose. They are appearances which are only real to such senses as the most corporeal of ours. Thought is independent of either—that is, imaginative thought or memory. When prophets saw visions, they saw independently of time apparently, and they sometimes described what was future as if past. No feature is more common in the sacred writings, or more unsatisfactory and puzzling to a carnal man, than the utter confusion of time apparently in prophecy. This view of eternity will explain things which are otherwise unintelligible.

In conclusion, as we are well aware that if these views ever become spread in any degree, ridicule, scorn, and angry misrepresentation are far more likely to be their meed than calm and dispassionate consideration, we will revert to one, the most important of the remarks—that on our Lord Jesus Christ; and without venturing to discuss the mystery of His incarnation, we will resuggest, in briefer and plainer terms, what was said before—protesting that we neither denied His humanity nor His divinity nor His eternity, but that all, as stated in the Bible, are capable of a much clearer and a very different view from that which the Church (so called by itself) has taken and sedulously taught. This view is, that the one God, who is *one* from eternity and *not three*, took upon Himself, not from eternity but in *time*, a human body;

that this human body grew, with its reasonable soul, in wisdom and stature like men's bodies and souls do ; that while this process of growing in grace and in conjunction with God, who was in Him, was going on, and was not yet perfected, our Lord spoke sometimes as a man praying to God, and calling God His "Father," and sometimes spoke as God, saying, "Before Abraham was, I am," &c., the meaning of which phrase, as implying eternity, was well understood by the Jews, who on that account wished to stone Him. God always manifested Himself in the *human form* as an angel before He was born into the world—for angels have the human form, only celestial bodies, not terrestrial. Hence our Lord speaks of coming from the Father and returning to the Father ; and He says, John xvii. 5, "Glorify Me with the glory that *I had with Thee* before the world began ;" and "I came forth from the Father, and am come into the world ; again I leave the world and go to the Father." "God was the Word, and the Word was made flesh," John i. 1-14.

Our Lord sometimes speaks of Himself as God, sometimes as man, and sometimes as the *manifestation* of God ; for without such manifestation God can neither be seen, conceived of in the mind as a being, or approached. When the Father is spoken of, *God* is meant—not the first person of a triad, on whose right hand literally sits a second, the two together urging and sending a third, who is yet the same, yet who also intercedes bodily for all sinners with the two others. The meaning of intercession and mediation has been wrenched and distorted, so that all they treat of is now completely misunderstood.

The attitude and frame of mind induced by the Church-teaching of the present day is such that a man is inclined to say, Far be it from me to presume to draw near and



make this my own in life and internal application of Bible doctrine—far be it from me, a miserable sinner, to presume to talk of “loving God”—how should I be so presumptuous? And they think God is flattered by such unmeaning compliments to what is sacred, and they quote the parable of the Pharisee and the Publican to show that God is more flattered by a good man calling himself a miserable sinner, and telling God how good He is, and what He is, and how wicked we are, than by leaving off our sins and learning to know Him; quite forgetting that the parable is not related of a *good man* and a Publican, but of a *Pharisee* and a Publican—the Pharisees all through our Lord’s teaching being held up as types of hypocritical and sanctimonious pretence. These teachers in the Church put no difference between who are evil and who are good, and confound all together, and apply promiscuously and indiscriminately to *all* what is said to the evil in threats, and to the good in promises. “We are all pretty much the same,” is their doctrine, and we should keep at a decent distance from God; and from this respectable distance we should now and then accuse ourselves of universal and indiscriminate sinfulness, in the hope that *that* is what is meant by “Judge yourselves, that ye be not judged.” How angry these men are when any one rises up and dares to question their assumptions! Who made thee a judge? Do those men believe that if a man cleanses his heart before God, and seeks Him above all things, God will leave that man helpless, and give to self-satisfied and indulgent, easy-going, worldly-minded men what He would deny to one who gave up all the vices he had ever cared for or been enslaved by for His sake? Any good man is likely to take a better view of God’s service than the wisest, cleverest, and subtlest carnal man.

What in the world has his sound practical common-sense to do with spiritual discernment unless it proceeded from it, which is hardly ever the case in this world now? For men, as a rule, become *sensible*, as it is called, before becoming *spiritual*; and, indeed, few ever do become spiritual, or even know what it means. They think, perhaps, in the plenitude of their wisdom, that it means imagination. Let not those who read this be afraid to read the Scripture, and see how far these things may be true. Our Lord himself says and implies in many places that a man must judge for himself, searching the Scriptures. In fact, a faith (if faith it be) founded on the assertion of any man, or men, or Church, cannot convince or bear a man in the hour of doubt, trial, and temptation; for he sees that the best men are also mistaken at times. He cannot help seeing this.

The most important error on which all the rest appear to hang in the Church in the present day is a misconception of God. They call Him *one*, verily, but they address three members independently of each other, and ask them to intercede with each other (not in the Bible meaning of intercession, but) in the Church sense, to stay the vengeful arm about to descend in just wrath and righteous indignation. If any one will conceive in his heart that there is *ONE* God, and that He became flesh to save us and conjoin us, or rather give us the possibility of conjunction with Himself, which we by our carnality had lost, he will understand the meaning of such phrases as St Paul uses—"God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ," &c.—very differently from one who believes in three Gods.

It has been necessary to write as pointedly and forcibly as possible because of the apathy of men. If a man states truth quietly, they nod and go to sleep again; but if

brought out into glaring contrast as to its effects and tendencies with what *they* have made it, then they may take notice ; and if that notice is only to cry Heresy ! Heresy ! and condemn, yet we shall have done what seemed to be a duty, and what our heart burned within us to do in bringing forward our heretical views.

There are one or two remarks we would make in conclusion, though this essay has already become much longer than we contemplated. A person who has not *light* in him cannot discern what is *true* and what is *false*—he cannot see whether an argument is bad and fallacious or not, but he is always liable to be changed in his convictions by the last word he hears in argument ; and he stores arguments that sound plausible and unanswerable in his outward memory ready to be used when wanted—his search is not for what is *true*, but for what will *do to say*. It is a false argument to say, as has been said, that priests have miraculous powers because God committed such powers to them, and their possible unworthiness has no more to do with the exercise of those powers than the morality of a boy has to do with his inheriting his father's property which was left him in his father's will.

That they have NOT miraculous power, even though it was more distinctly promised (if *they* are meant at all in the promise) than the power to forgive sins and hear confessions, is absurdly evident. Let them try going upon snakes and scorpions, or drinking poison, and you will soon see if they are unhurt ; or let them try to heal the sick. What have they been about all this cholera time ?—not a single case on record last summer of a miraculous cure. Shame on them ! Where are their miraculous powers ? was that not a fit sphere of action ?

The case of a son's inheritance and the position of any Christian, who is REALLY ONE, may be compared ; but only if he is really religious, otherwise, be he priest or pew-opener, his having to do with Holy Mother Church in neither case will serve his turn. And it is a barefaced falsehood to assert that any priest has miraculous powers, or has any rights which all good Christians have not in common, or may have, if they are good men.

There is one very subtle argument which is used in favour of the Church's authority ; it is contained in standard books either expressed or understood : it is this, That the only proof we have of the authenticity of the Bible at all, and the only means we have of knowing even what *is* the Bible, is from "Holy Mother Church's ever-blessed tradition ;" and hence, if we question the Church's utter infallibility, we also reject the Holy Scriptures, since they rest on nothing better.

How wonderful it is that such an argument should be diligently taught and endorsed by Bishops in the Church as true and unquestionable ! They say, "You are to believe the Church because the Bible promises IT the Spirit of Truth," &c., Matthew xxviii. 20, and John xvi. 13. And then you are to believe the Bible because the Church says it is true (Bishop Wordsworth's Catechesis, cap. vi. section ii. No. 3, page 51), "Show how the Commandments are closely connected with the Creed and naturally follow after it ?" "Because I receive the Commandments and the rest of God's Word by tradition from the Church *whom I believe*" (*ἣ πιστεύω*). Would any man tolerate such a circular argument in a matter of importance in his everyday life ? and yet we are content to accumulate a mass of texts, not one of which asserts what we wish to prove, and try to make fifty nothings

into one something. God forbid that we should accuse Bishop Wordsworth of an unworthy argument! but having been long held in fallacy, we think it necessary to be distinct so far as to where and on what ground such things are taught. It is a dangerous thing and a most unworthy insult to religion to lie through thick and thin on God's side. It is an insult to Him to suppose that He can be served by forcing true and false to prove a foregone conclusion, or that He is honoured by unworthy means; yet people never say a word against the most flimsy arguments if they are used on the "*right side*," as they consider the end renders the inadequate means sacred. But here the argument that man is to believe the Word of God because of the Church, and the Church because of the Word of God, is not to the honour of God, unless on the monstrous assumption that His Word is honoured by man's patronage.

*The keystone of these fallacies is twofold*—first, the promise was made to our Lord's disciples, and His disciples do NOT mean the present priesthood. Who His disciples *are* really He tells us Himself in another place; nay, He tells us also who is His brother and sister and mother. Were we to build on this text as unwarrantably as priests have built on others far less explicit, our pretensions would far exceed those to which even the Church so called at the present day lays claim. The fallacy, then, is not in stating that the *promise was made*, but that the *priests* are the *people* the promise was made to.

There probably is an intensely spiritual state in which miraculous cures can be effected and poison do no harm, but that state is attainable by *intense love of God*, not by my going and getting myself made a priest, as I could do to-morrow.

We do not wish to say a word against the excellent Bishop quoted, but it was necessary to state some authority, otherwise some might say such a doctrine as that the Church conduces in any way to the credibility of Scripture, never was broached in the English Church.

It is true that the Church, and all Churches, even the heretical and blasphemous Church of Rome, have acted as *custodians* or *guardians* of the Bible. But just consider if that gives them the slightest claim to credibility as against or in competition with the Bible they guarded, or even if they can add anything at all to the teaching of the Bible, except so far as good men can teach and illustrate to those who are infants, or paupers without the power of learning from the true means which "God has in His infinite mercy and wisdom appointed" for us.

St Paul himself speaks of stewards of the mysteries, 1 Corinthians iv. 1, 2; and he also states that if a man is to be a steward it is necessary that he be found faithful. Are we to assume—in accordance with the excellent argument of the gentleman who asserted that the priests *have* miraculous power, in direct contradiction to the separate and conjoint evidence of each and all of his senses, because it was promised (*to them?*)—are we to assume that all stewards *are* faithful, and *always have been?* that the police reports to the contrary are a silly delusion of our poor erring fallible senses? If Sandy Macsnae has charge of your moor while you are abroad, it is perhaps improbable enough that any one can *alter the boundaries* of it, while he is in charge, without his knowledge; but it is by no means so evident that he may not *fraudulently misappropriate* to himself some of your game.

After all, it is not doctrine that constitutes religious life; still false doctrines induce spiritual blindness, and

the good men who are in the Church at the present day are good men *in spite* of their doctrines, *not in consequence* of them.

There are many meanings to the word *Church*, and it is an arrogant and unwarrantable assumption for priests to claim promises to themselves which apply to all good men, and not to priests *unless* they are also good men, and only then *so far* as they are good men. They argue with great subtlety, and say our Lord came down from Heaven to *establish a Church* upon earth, of which the government is to be by bishops, priests, and deacons. They are the rulers, &c., quite ignoring that the object of the Church is to save souls.

Nevertheless it is clear that their object is to bear rule. They would like to re-establish Church discipline and penances, and bring prominently forward any texts which can be made to bear out the idea of *priestly rule*, not of saving human souls. Look what the Roman Catholics have made of religion ; they call us damnable heretics, and so on, because we believe in God instead of the Pope. We have seen it stated in such a manner that, if untrue, it would infallibly have been contradicted, that there are images and churches which are said to have the virtue of remitting periods of purgatory for those who visit or kiss them. Does any Roman Catholic priest deny that such doctrine is taught, not certainly to the educated, but to the poor, and those who know no better than to believe it?

We would suggest that obedience is not a virtue ; though disobedience is the result of evil, and is therefore condemned. Such blind obedience as High Church and Roman Catholics enjoin is unwarrantable, and unworthy of Christians.

Obedience *as an aim*, we mean, is not a virtue for the *good* ; it is only good for the lowest characters, and thus

for bad men : they should aim at obedience to the law ; but when a man has arrived at the only true motive to action, it is a misguided aim, for he will naturally do what is right, and feel the greatest misery when he does what is wrong.

In the same manner self-control and self-denial, resignation, and other spurious virtues, falsely so-called, are only virtues for bad-hearted men. A man whose heart is right has no need to watch himself and control himself, at least not in the sense people mean when they usually talk of self-control ; that is, in externals.

The best and only true self-denial, mortification, and self-control, is to abstain (not from pudding, but) from bad thoughts, lest they should become bad desires, and so enslave the heart. It is beating the air to mortify other things which are matters of indifference.

Since writing the first part of this, it was suggested that perhaps the signs spoken of in Mark xiii. 25, and elsewhere, were not described as *seen from the earth*. But even if a heliocentric explanation be given, it cannot be made applicable to a terrestrial collision with a planet or stars, as even in that case the description would be quite inadequate to the catastrophe.

Also, on the subject of eternity. The expression "*foundation of the world*" is constantly occurring in the Bible. It appears to mean the establishment of the Church, not the creation ; except, perhaps, typically in places. For events are spoken of as happening before the foundation of the world, which happened in time. But the real point is that no account seems to be made of time in prophetic vision ; even where it is stated, in Daniel and elsewhere, it does not appear to apply to our natural measures of time, but to states or conditions.

Also, to revert once more to the arguments in favour



of priestcraft. They frequently put the matter in this form : they say this is called the Church *militant*, because we are to fight, we have a warfare, and so on ; and how can an army fight if it has no generals, no officers, and no organisation? Therefore it must be evident to all that organisation *is* necessary, and that appointed in the Bible is what we keep to—namely, bishops, priests, and deacons. This argument sounds very well, and is perfectly plausible ; but, as usual, it is a perverted and falsified truth at the bottom of the error, not a simple falsehood. No one would wish to do away with the orders, but to keep them to what they were appointed for, and not to let them make rulers of themselves. One is almost startled into the question, Are they really insane? do they really believe that a paid shepherd is of more immediate importance to his master than the sheep he is engaged to watch (*ἐπισκοπεῖν*)? or are they only humbugs, and *pretend* to have this or that power to the poor flock who know no better than to believe them, well knowing that they have no such power or right as they claim, and never had it?

The warfare we have to fight upon this earth is not with enemies against whom organised rule externally, or military discipline, can avail in the very slightest degree; and I will boldly say that no *good man* can think or does think for a moment that Church organisation has anything to do with the real objects of Christianity ; yet priests try to make out that it is important that they should rule, and that the Church was ordained for them to rule it, not that they themselves, utterly unworthy as they prove themselves, were appointed by man to serve the Church.

Their simile, therefore, is an imposition, for, though it is true that we have a warfare here, it is not true that

we are in the position of private soldiers fighting under *their* orders as officers. The war is *within*, and priests can neither rule, direct, or know anything of what goes on in the fight within their neighbour's heart. Neither is the priest to be compared with a civil magistrate, for the magistrate has real and indisputable power committed to him by Government, and his sentences, if just, are carried out; but a priest knows he has not the slightest control over the punishment of other men's sins—he cannot even forgive his own; and whatever text he may find his blasphemous pretensions upon, he may be quite sure it does not mean *that*, whatever else it may mean.

As to priests' celibacy: unfortunately celibacy does not by any means imply chastity; in more cases it is *fatal* to chastity than otherwise. Marriage is not unchaste; certainly not with right-minded married partners. If celibacy meant purity, one could at least respect the man while one execrated his aims.

It is impossible to drop these subjects without saying a few words to remove impressions which careless readers might have received from the foregoing pages.

1st, We do not deny the doctrine of the Holy Trinity, but we suggest that it is in *one* Person—namely, in our Lord Jesus Christ; not in *three* persons, otherwise it could not have been said, Matthew xxviii. 19, in the *name* of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost. We might say it in *English*, thinking of three persons; but “*ἓς τὸ ὄνομα*” could not have been said in Greek of more than one.

2d, It is nowhere said in the Bible that the Holy Spirit is a *person* to be *prayed to individually*; or as the Church has it, to be worshipped and glorified together with the Father and the Son (Nicene Creed).

To those who criticise this book, we would say, it is easy to place yourself in the position of one sitting in judgment on any book from the Bible downwards. We could ourselves make out that every assertion or suggestion in this book is absurd and false, without misrepresenting any perceptibly—nay, something very like that has been done with the Bible before now ; in fact, no composition is or can be invulnerable to hostile and captious criticism. It is easy to say, “ Mr So-and-so denies this truth as always believed, and asks us to believe his view to be true : who *is* Mr So-and-so, that we should put his precious views in competition with what the most learned Fathers have always held ? ” Our answer might be this—There are persons so carnal or *unspiritual*, that spiritual things have no reality to them ; they have neither discernment nor affection, neither head nor heart, for any evidence but that which is corporeal. These men might see if they would that what is real to one man is unreal to another—that a man may make any doctrines real to himself by confirming them ; and therefore any fool might conclude that if he is uncertain, he has at least the best chance, if he makes the things real for himself which concern the highest standard of life. It is necessary to argue from such a low ground as probability, to match the reason of those who reject all testimony as delusive and imaginary which does not appeal to their guts.

*My poor fool*, know this : that when a man speaks the truth, its truth does not depend upon *his assertion* that it is true—nor, consequently, upon his character or celebrity ; but if a man had the spirit of truth he takes it for granted that he received in Baptism, he could *see* what is true by perception without proof to his corporeal senses.

On the subject of confession we wish to say one word more. Confession, such as Roman Catholics and English High Church have made it, is nowhere enjoined in the Bible. It is better to give up sins than to divulge them to a priest. Confession, if it does no worse, always tends to weaken the feeling of responsibility and duty towards God. I know this, for I was brought up as a Puseyite and used confession. As to its abuses, of which few have not heard, we think it better to confine ourselves to a quotation from one who is evidently a good man and a true, to say no more. He says :—"I wish, sir, I could stop here ; but my duty to the public compels me to add that some of the directions for full confession on the part of children are such as no one possessed of ordinary *decency* can read without *indignation*. Such things as the advertisements of a certain class of quack doctors *only allude* to, are put into this book with little, if any, disguise whatever. . . . It is an outrage on all that men in general hold to be right, that, under the guise of religious teaching, under the rule of *priestcraft*, such *infamous* dealing with youthful minds should be tolerated for one moment ; *and yet so it is.*" This is for the chorister-boys. And is there no one to come forward and say, "My good lad, if that blackguard Jack Priest says a *word* to you about the seventh commandment, just put your fist straight between his eyes, and that not *lightly*, nor after the manner of dissemblers" ? depend upon it, he won't say *how* or *why* he got it.

It may be said that some of the expressions in this book are too forcible or pointed ; but we have already given a good reason for avoiding mincing words where priestcraft aims at ruling God's Church, and in no rare cases "turns the grace of God into lasciviousness." We

have yet to learn that brave, manly Englishmen will consent to such tendencies, whatever foreigners may do.

A critic has this great advantage, that he can assume an attitude of superiority over any expressions which betray strong feelings in a book ; but it is a false superiority—the true aim of man should not merely be to destroy his feelings but to direct them aright.

It is easier to destroy the feelings than to bestow them aright, because if once bestowed on unworthy objects they have to be destroyed before they can be, as it were, born again, or reproduced in the right direction. Therefore, to cultivate the love of God, it is necessary first to annihilate the love of whatever is opposed to Him, as a *preliminary* step. The intellect prompted by strong feelings rightly directed, is *superior*, not *inferior*, to the intellect which is calm and dispassionate.

Whilst the above was in the press, confirmation of two of the views herein expressed was afforded in a striking manner, in the very *words* of this book, by three persons, two clergymen and one layman, in letters to the 'Times.' One was Dr Macneile of Liverpool, whose public letter appeared yesterday (8th December 1866); another was S. G. O. (letter dated 26th November 1866); and the third, if we recollect rightly, was signed "Layman." Two of these letters used the argument, that since the power of forgiving or withholding forgiveness of sins was not more distinctly bestowed on the apostles than the power to heal sickness, and was never used by them, whereas the other power was—and since our Lord taught us that a man who can say "Thy sins be forgiven thee" effectually, can also say "Arise, take up thy bed, and go unto thine house" (Matthew ix. 5, 6, 7), and the modern priests not being able miraculously to heal sick-

ness, so neither can they absolve or forgive sins. The other letter (that of S. G. O.) more than bore us out in what we scarcely dared to hint at as the tendency induced by confiding sins of the imagination and affections to a priest instead of casting them out. Any one who has ever tried must confess, that to divulge such things to a priest is *no help* to giving up sin. When the same thing has been said five or six times, the feelings of first confession get blunted—in fact, such confession to a priest habitually indulged, and living in sin, are quite compatible.

It is the hardest thing in the world to bring conviction of a truth home to one who prefers not to know the truth if it disagrees with his errors. Our very translators seem to have conspired to prove certain doctrines of their own by their punctuation and renderings and interpolations in the Bible; therefore, we will look at their favourite text, John xx. 22, 23, in the original, “And when He had said this, He breathed, and saith unto them, Take ye the Holy Spirit. Ἐὰν τινων ἀφήτε τὰς ἀμαρτίας, ἀφέωνται αὐτοῖς ἐὰν τινων κρατῆτε κεκράτηνται.” Ἀφίημι means *dimitto* rather than *remitto*, and κρατέω, fortiter impero. I speak, however, open to correction—being no scholar—but it takes no scholar to see that κεκράτηνται is not “they shall be retained.” It is better in inspired writing to be as correct as possible; never mind the *sense*—in places, sense as carnally judged of may not be intended, as in prophecy. However, translate ἀφίενται or ἀφέωνται as you please, also κρατῆτε τινος (sc. τὰς ἀμαρτίας, subaudit?), and then compare Luke xi. 13, as to the exclusiveness of the gift of the Holy Spirit, and then Mark xvi. 17, as to how one is to know who has the power to exercise spiritual gifts. Is this promise not future? is it not as real and free from ambiguity as John xx. 23?

What, then, is the true conclusion? This, that SINCE our Lord promised the Spirit of Truth to His "Church" (*κυριακή*, sc. *οἰκία*, the Lord's House)—this being implied by the promise in John xvi. 13 to the disciples—and the Spirit of Truth is the Holy Spirit, and our Lord tells us how we shall know those who have the Holy Spirit, Mark xvi. 17, and 1 Cor. xii. 10, 11, and modern priests have not the visible powers promised to those who have the Holy Spirit; and the visible and natural powers of the spirit are more easily exercised than the invisible and spiritual powers by a natural man, Matthew ix. 5, 6; 1 Cor. xii. 31, xiv. 5—THEREFORE modern priests have *not* the power to forgive sins, or absolve men in the sense of clearing them or forgiving them their sins; and, moreover, they have *not* the signs of the Holy Spirit, and are *not* infallible, either separately or corporately, and are *not* "the Church," though they may, if good men, be members of it. The Church referred to in the Bible is the universal Church (catholic meaning universal, *κατὰ ὄλον*). It is as great a piece of impudence the Romish sect calling itself *Catholic*, in any sort of contradistinction to other sects, as it would be for Plymouth Brethren, Latter-Day Saints, or Jumpers to do the same. The only *Catholic* Church is the *universal* Church, made up of ALL those who worship God, and live to the best of their knowledge, in whatever ignorance they may be. Only consider what presumption it is to deny, even by implication, salvation to good heathen men, when some of them make more of their darkness than we of our light. Roman Catholics say they cannot be saved out of the Church—meaning the Church of Rome. Others say it is no concern of ours. All we have to do is to obey what God has told *us*—not to be wiser than He. Infants unbaptised and heathen

are in His hands. This is very safe ground to take, remembering that when a man acts up to what he does infallibly know—*i.e.*, that sin is to be avoided, and the love of God, and of good people as far as they are good, is to be cultivated—then, and not till then, is he sure of more light, and the heart is more important than the understanding. It is the custom for Christians to talk as if they alone knew God, and to take it for granted that they do know God, though it is perfectly clear that knowing “the *name* of God” means something *gradually* attainable—not such a knowledge as the mere letter of the words might carnally bear, John xvii. 26 and 11, 12; Ps. viii. 1, and lxxxiii. 16, and lxiv. 2. This also is evident from the fact, that such knowledge as the body of Christians possess at this day does not do them the least good: only a few amongst them make anything of religion, or make God’s promises real.

Men at this day contradict themselves flatly in what they say they believe. First, they say of the Bible that it is the Word of God, and every word of it is inspired; then they translate it as if it all referred merely to terrestrial objects, thereby completely stultifying their own verdict. What in the world do they suppose is the object of writing such a verse as Genesis v. 31, if that is all the meaning? Besides, that there is an interior meaning, as far superior to the latter as heaven is to earth, is evident from 2 Cor. iii. 6, John vi. 63, 1 Cor. x. 1-4, Gal. iv. 24, Ephes. v. 31, Heb. ix. 8, 23, 24, and x. 1. Also, this interior meaning is not arbitrary, or according to man’s private fancy, or merely *symbolical*, but more real even than the terrestrial objects named in the letter. Does it never strike those who deny this practically, that our Lord, for instance, was not crucified in the land of Egypt, nor a city called Egypt, nor in Sodom, but at Jerusalem;



if earthly meanings are always to be preferred, as the priests say, on the authority of the blessed "Hooker"—see Rev. xi. 8 ; or that one cannot eat the flesh of kings, captains, horses, and chariots ; or that a city could not be as *high* as it is long and broad, Rev. xxi. 16 ?

David calls himself poor and needy, whereas he was anything but so literally. It is not only not *honouring* the Bible, but it is the worst form of *dishonouring* it, to call it holy, and then apply it to terrestrial things, and indignantly refuse to hear of a spiritual meaning, even of verses which to the natural man are utterly unimportant and devoid of meaning. We are told that the Bible is inspired—that it treats everywhere of God and His dealings with man which concern man's spirit and spiritual body, and not his earthly body. Thus it treats of *Good* and *Truth*, and of man's regeneration, notwithstanding the blessed "Hooker's" opinion.

What has blinded men more than anything else on such matters is indifference. This leaves men open to anything priests like to impose or teach. Were it not for this, false doctrines would be detected and refuted as soon as broached. The priests aim at dominion through slightly distorting isolated verses from the Bible. The honest men among them are misled through a wrongly-directed veneration. Their excessive and unquestioning veneration is a snare to them. They have always considered it impious, and, as it were, sacrilegious, to examine the grounds of what they have taken for granted from earliest childhood. They have, perhaps, stored up things which appear to confirm their views ; but they well know in their own heart that what they teach is not the result of prayerful and truthful inquiry, but that nothing which appears against any of their dogmas would meet with fair treatment from them, or ever has. They revile it,

kick it, spurn it—anything but look it in the face, and state, from their light and knowledge, since they are in the truth, why their opponents are in the wrong, in a calm Christian spirit.

The best test all men can bring to bear upon any teaching claiming to be from “Holy Mother Church,” and her ever-blessed traditions and doctrines, *independently of the Bible*—such teaching, for instance, as the High Church, and its development the Church of Rome claim the power of putting forth for the benefit of their “faithful sons”—the best test is to see what the *tendency* of the doctrine is—its direct unmistakable *tendency*. If it is to honour God it is good ; if it is to honour a priest, or anything that places itself between a man and his God, it is highly dangerous. They are shifty people ; they have one religion for outsiders, one for educated members, one for the priesthood, and another again for the poor and uneducated. The pea is never under *this* thimble, nor again under *that*, and you are evidently wrong if you think it is under the third ; and yet it is really under one of the three. A Roman Catholic gentleman told us, in the face of well-known facts, that “the Pope *never curses men* ;” and if facts tell us otherwise, so much the worse for the facts (*Times*, Nov. 29, 1866). Where honesty and truthfulness are made subordinate to priestly domination and craft, it is not difficult to observe the inevitable consequences.

The true interpretation of Scripture, such as is spiritually discerned, has apparently been lost to us, except in a few most important places, and even there it is frequently obscured and overlaid with man’s preconceived notions. The Church teaching, so called, has done more to eclipse the inner meaning of Scripture than any adverse philosophy could have done. All their arguments on doctrines

are founded on a *carnal* view of the literal sense. Now, the very use of the doctrine is, not that a man may vehemently assert that it is so, and condemn every one to hell who does not think so, but that he may form his life from the doctrine. It is no use to affirm a faith, and *strain* to *imagine* that it is so. Is it not evident that real religion is of the inner life, which inner life none but a good man knows of even? Externals have no more to do with essential religion than a man's bootjack has to do with his character: neither is useless, and neither is anything of itself.

The priest argues for the powers of absolution being as *real as baptism*; and that, since all priests can baptise, so can all forgive sins. One feels thankful that such a prominent High Church advocate will condescend to give an argument in favour of what he might simply assert—namely, that he *can* forgive sins, and has often done so. We would avoid quoting the Church: we go to the Bible, as the Church herself professes to have founded all her teaching on “most certain warrants” of God's Word (Art. viii.); therefore one naturally refers to the Bible where real authority and guidance is wanted as the common ground on which we can both stand.

But first we would remark that, if the results of absolution are as unreal and uncertain as those of external baptism, we freely grant that a priest may use the words of absolution with just as little effect to the salvation of souls as he at present uses the words of baptism to the conveyance of the Holy Spirit. Real baptism, like real circumcision, is of the heart (Rom. ii. 28, 29; Gal. vi. 15) and life, and is typified by the washing of water. If any one were credulous or priest-ridden enough to degrade God's dealing with us to somewhat magical, and suppose that regeneration is really effected, and the Holy

Spirit conferred, and the strait and narrow gate entered by the unconscious baby at or about the moment when the priest splashes its face, and all it does is to resist as hard as it can, he might still see from the results that it is not so, and cannot be so. He sees in the Bible what the fruits of the Spirit are, and how to know them; and by the evidence of his senses he infallibly perceives that baptised infants have not the fruits of the Spirit, unless God's gracious promise be degraded till it is explained to make no perceptible difference between those who have it and those who have it not. Baptised children live exactly as other children. Some turn out well and some ill, and any one who has been in the colonies knows that this is so.

Some, however, teach that the germ is given in baptism. This is an ingenious way of saving their pretension; but, unfortunately, like all attempts to prop up God's truth by man's falsehood, it will not bear scrutiny.

1. God's spiritual gifts to man depend on his *own* faith, and earnest desire, and preparation.

2. It is a *mere assertion* that a *germ* is given in baptism. It is unfounded in Scripture. The gift was manifest to all when the Holy Spirit was really conferred, Acts viii. 18, *et passim*.

3. The gift of the Holy Spirit is quite independent of external baptism, Acts viii. 16; sometimes following it, and sometimes preceding it, Acts x. 44, 45, 46, 47, and 48, especially 47; and notice, baptism not in the name of three Gods, but of the Lord, who is the only one God, Acts viii. 16, and x. 48.

The first operation of the Spirit in man is to reform his character; and if that first and most important effect is not produced, it is the part of deluded men to expect to find miraculous powers.

By the way, it is sometimes said that one man's faith may be substituted for another's to procure the Holy Spirit for that other. How such juggling with God's gifts could be taught by men calling themselves Christians is a mystery. Men dare not look their Church's teaching in the face, or they would see through such monstrous notions. Their veneration, instead of being offered to God, is transferred to a so-called Church, and to their amazement they wake and find that their thoughts are in opposition to God's teaching. In Mark x. 13-16, our Lord blessed children truly, but it is not said or implied that they received the Holy Spirit, or a germ of it. Children represent innocence; this explains verse 14. The same applies to Luke xviii. 15; besides, this does not show that their sponsors or parents promised anything for them as conditions, nor does the practice of the Jews in circumcision, nor of the apostles baptising whole households in the Acts.

The faith of one person being accepted for another to procure *relief* is exemplified in Mark ii. 3-5, or Matthew ix. 2, and in Matthew xv. 21-28, and Mark ix. 24; but that is a very different thing. A child's look-out is bad indeed if his chance depend on the faith of his sponsors.

The fact is, all three arguments are inconclusive. Priests wish to establish that when the "holy priest" took me in his "holy arms" in token, &c., and dipped me in "holy water," I then and there received the Holy Spirit.

They try to prove that this actually took place, first, by saying that our Lord blessed infants; second, by saying that both circumcision and baptism were conferred upon infants; third, by quoting instances where sick men were healed on their friends' earnest, active, faithful, and *tearful* (Mark ix. 24) intercession. All this,

regardless of Gal. vi. 15. What "a new creature" means is told us in 2 Cor. v. 17; conf. John xiv. 20, 21, and xvii. 17, 21, 23.

Outward baptism by a "holy priest," then, is a mere badge: there is nothing more in it of itself, nor can there be, except on the condition on which all God's gifts to us depend; and that, as has been stated, is earnest desire, faith, preparation on the part of the recipient; and if that is present, neither can the priest withhold the gift of the Spirit, any more than he can confer it without these necessary qualifications. Baptism meant something very different when it was instituted from what "Holy Mother Church" makes of it now. We do not speak for a moment against the use of external baptism, though the life and spirit is gone out of it. But we do protest against such superstitious teaching as that any spiritual change took place when the "holy priest" signed me with the sign of the cross; that I became *chosen* of God, and a *child* of God, His special care, so as to share all that He has; I died unto sin, I was *born* of the *Holy Spirit*. But it seems utter blasphemy to catalogue quotations of the effects of the Holy Spirit, as has been done in the orthodox book I hold in my hand, which operations are the results of many and long and prayerful efforts, and striving to enter in at the strait gate, and earnestly and faithfully imploring God's help, and forsaking and fearing sin, above all things, as the only thing which can stand between us and God's blessing. It seems blasphemous to collect all these from different parts of Scripture, and coolly assert that they all took place in the kicking, crying baby, who only did all he could to resist it. No wonder God's Word is lightly esteemed when it is taught that all the effects of regeneration, and the awful gift of the Holy Spirit, took place in a baby,

without the smallest effects either in body or character. We can only say, when the apostles communicated the Holy Spirit the effects were rather different, and always manifest. Would the priest not like it to be believed that he had worked a miracle, even at the expense of all reality in God's gifts?

There is far too much pride and love of rule, apparently. It is easy to see the craving after priestly power, the love of the commination service. How some bowels would yearn if only penances and "holy discipline" could be re-established! What! are these the ministers in Christ's Church who would rule by such means?

We would like to say one word in protest against the charge of irreverence in this book. Irreverence to whom? Never in speaking of God or His Word, but of men, if you please, in indignation at the blind mess of confusion they have made of God's Word, by interlarding it with their carnal notions and interpretations.

Besides, pray, remember this, that where doctrines are wrong, it is necessary to point out the fallacy of them by *demonstration*—merely denouncing them is useless; hence we were driven to argue about what is not a matter of argument, but of love and action. If one's friend is calumniated, there are two ways of defending him: one, and the most telling, is that of affection. If you say, "Oh! how can you say so of my friend? you do not know him, or you could not find it in your heart to say such a thing of him. I have known him forty years, and I assure you he is incapable of doing as you say." That is all very well, but it is more to the point if you can prove a distinct *alibi*, and thus show that your dear friend is innocent. This may be more unfeeling, but feelings are out of place in argument, and argument is necessary where perception of truth has been lost. The fact is also

this: if a man speaks as he feels in religious matters—in fact, if he commits his affections to writing—he places an intolerable power of torture in the hands of his critics. If he writes by simple assertion, suggestion, and in some cases argument on the other hand, you may treat it as roughly as you please without torturing him. If a book is wellnigh certain to be harshly judged and spitefully criticised, it is the part of a wise man to expose tough arguments rather than tender feelings to the withering blast; and that he does so is no ground for supposing that he has no feelings on the subject. In fact, to write from the feelings on such a subject in public, if not impossible to a man of sensibility, would be, at least to him, *sacrilege*; to his opponents, *blasphemy*; and to the general public, *insufferable cant*.

How simple and how strong is straightforwardness, as contrasted with the wriggings of priestcraft! A manly and straightforward writer in 'The Times,' signing himself S. G. O., in a letter dated Nov. 26, 1866, accuses the priests of corrupting minds under pretence of facilitating confession. In another letter of a later date, I think about 7th Dec. 1866, he speaks still more pointedly, but this time not of chorister boys, but of ladies. The answer to this serious charge is beautiful. It consists in three points: 1st, It is *only the books* the priests give the penitents which contain bad things; 2d, There is *no need* to ask indecent questions in confession; 3d, It is *probable* that S. G. O. speaks merely from conjecture! Lastly, That since dangers beset youth, such dealing is good, or necessary, or useful.

The first of these hardly wants answering. If the priest teaches that you are to confess to him, and puts a book into your hands to show you on what points to examine yourself, and in what degree of detail to confess, what



a shifty answer is it to say it is not the *priest* but the *book* ?

To the second and third.—Why does the eminent High Churchman not *deny* that the charge is true? Far better do so at once and decidedly, if he does not fear lest revelations should be made which might show that there is reason to doubt the advantage of confessing to a priest, when carried on wholesale and habitually. Will the priests tell us what is the *nature* of the *punishments* and *penances*, and how each is restricted ?

If *A* calls *B* a thief, it is a remarkably weak answer for *B* to say, first, that there is no necessity for him to have stolen anything ; and, secondly, that *A* probably speaks upon conjecture. From S. G. O.'s style, it is more probable that he ascertained facts before he attacked auricular confession. We have used confession, and fearlessly say that we found it *at best harmless*. Sympathy *in sin* is bad. Leave the sin, and then find sympathy.

The priest's argument is plausible towards the conclusion, but contains this grand error, that the sins he speaks of are not best dealt with by private confession or softness or confidence or sympathy, but by advice given in a bold, manly manner, by a medical man to squads of boys together. Religion must be the basis of all improvement, but in this case it must act through another channel than that suggested.

The religion of priestcraft is so slippery that there is no dealing with it in detail. To outsiders it is all fair. They say, " We worship God as well as you do ; " " Don't believe all the calumnies you hear about us." But when you have entered, it gradually becomes " holy church," and then " holy priest," till at last it is " holy bones " of

men's carcasses, and "holy splinters of wood;" "holy this" and "holy that"! What a contrast to our Lord's teaching, Matt. xix. 17, "Why callest thou me good? there is *none* good but *one*, that is God." They think it a small thing to encourage indirectly, ay, and directly too, to themselves an honour which angels even, who are more excellent than men, would eagerly reject, and point to God as the only object to whom demonstration of feeling can safely be offered. See Rev. xix. 10—"And I fell at his feet (the angel's) to worship him (*προσκυνῆσαι αὐτῷ*). And he said unto me, See thou do it not; worship God." Now, Holy Mother Church is in the following dilemma: I don't know the *precise* meaning of ΠΡΟΣΚΥΝΕΩ, — *κυνέω* = *osculator*, I kiss; but whether *προσκυνέω* implies the worship called *δουλεία*, or that styled *λατρεία* by priests, we have the following deduction: If it means the *greater* worship, St John could not have attempted to offer it to an angel, for it would have been idolatry to do so, of which we may not believe St John capable, he being a good man, and well instructed in matters of religion. If it was the *lesser* worship, and therefore allowable, and to be encouraged, not only to angels but to others, why did the angel forbid it, and point to God as the only true object of such worship?

Some people pride themselves on taking what they call "moderate views" in religion, meaning that they prefer doing their religion in a decent respectable way—not too much fervour, and not total neglect. That is the rational way, to avoid extreme views, which are generally equally wrong, and to avoid importing feelings into devotions. This has the *prima facie* advantage of looking plausible. When a man is carried away by his feelings, he is sure of *only one thing*, and that is, that he will say things he will be sorry for

when he becomes calm. Hence control of the feelings is universally recognised as the never-failing characteristic of a safe and a wise man ; impulsiveness is looked upon as dangerous ; and the less a man is prompted by his feelings the wiser he becomes, and this is acknowledged by all to be true, and is true of every subject *except religion*. Religion is a matter of the heart more than of ratiocinations, and of a jargon compounded of intricate formularies. It is not true that the *modus in rebus*, the "golden mean," is to be aimed at in religion ; and the man who recommends moderation in such things, and a half-and-half dilution of the heart, is as much mistaken as the jurymen who is said to have recommended, when *A* had accused *B* of stealing two pounds, and the case was fully made out, and *A* had clearly proved it true ; that as no doubt there was a good deal to be said on both sides, and there were no doubt faults on both sides, the fairest way was to divide the sum, and give one pound to each.

This essay, if it ever finds its way into circulation, is intended as an introduction to the writings of Emanuel Swedenborg, an eminent writer, and servant of God. The ridicule cast on his works by those even who have seen something of them, not only heard of them as misrepresented by others, is very unjust. They say that it is IMPOSSIBLE Swedenborg can have had his spiritual eyes opened ; what he tells is incredible. Besides, are we to believe every man who says, "an angel told me *this*," or "a spirit told me *that*," "I heard a little bubbling sound, and presently I perceived it was a spirit," &c., in competition with what the *Bible* tells us ?

It is impossible to do more than answer very briefly to these objections.

1st, Swedenborg solemnly affirms that every word of

the *doctrine* he taught was dictated to him by God Himself, not by angel or spirit.

2d, One would think that the mere nature of the subject of *heaven and hell*, as pretended to be communicated by one who had seen and experienced what he writes about, would be enough to rouse *curiosity*, and that, having read from *curiosity*, men would at least discern that *either* Swedenborg believed what he wrote to be true, *or* he did not.

If he *did* believe it to be true, *either* it must have been true, *or* he was a maniac. No maniac could have written so much, so consistently, and so calmly, and with such an excellent tendency throughout; *therefore* he was not mad. Therefore, *if* Swedenborg believed what he stated to be true, the probability is that it *was* true.

If Swedenborg did *not* believe what he wrote to be true, he was a bad man and an impostor; but no impostor or bad man could have written with such a good object and tendency. Moreover, no mere man could write on such subjects at all for twenty pages without tripping himself up over and over again; hence Swedenborg is not likely to have been a bad man or an impostor. If a man would lead a good life, there might be less difficulty than he supposes in opening his spiritual sight; but, no doubt, to a bad man it is most dangerous. Most men at the present day are bad men, and hence their blindness. Their best attempt confounds spiritual sight with imagination.

3d, It is never true that Swedenborg can be put in competition with the Bible. He explains the spiritual and celestial interpretation of *the Bible*, and that by no fancy rule, but by unchangeable laws, which bear this evidence of truth, that the *same* interpretation of a word holds

true, evidently and naturally, *wherever* throughout the *whole Bible* that word is met with.

4th, His interpretations throw light and meaning on what is, without them, unimportant or unintelligible.

5th, If you find a bunch of keys, and I claim them, and show that they correspond in number with my boxes, and, moreover, *each* will open one of my boxes, it is more credulous of you to believe still that they are *not mine* than that they *are*.

6th, It is highly improbable that rational men would take up such views as Swedenborg's if there was not the strongest reason for believing them true. Mere novelty might tempt women to wear crinoline, but could never induce a man to face the certain and contemptuous ridicule he is sure to meet with for favouring such views; even the *very objects* consider they have a constitutional right to void their contempt on the man with a new explanation of an old, old doctrine. Never mind if the new explanation be worthy of the doctrine or no—down with it! down with it!

Even curiosity might tempt men at least to look and see what the *arch impostor* can find it in his cunning to invent about heaven and hell—*arcana caelestia*—true Christian religion, &c.; but it is enough to revile them without the trouble of looking at them. Enough, quite enough! Truly such surpassing apathy is sublime! it is stupendous! it is transcendental!

No; you are quite right. You are not bound to believe *every charlatan* who *pretends* he can hold intercourse with spirits, or has seen heaven and hell; but don't say, "We don't know about these things; God has, in His infinite wisdom and mercy, put these things out of our sight;" but say rather, "We, by our perverse wickedness and obstinate indifference, have blinded our

own eyes, so that we neither wish for information, nor can discern between true and false."

The only proof of these things *capable of being shown to carnal men* is in their tendency and consistence and accordance with the Bible. It is not easy to say what an ingenious man *can* do, in the way of inventing a plausible and probable description of an imaginary spiritual world; but it is quite easy to say what he *cannot* do, and any one who reads them in a right mind will own that Swedenborg's writings are beyond human powers of invention. Even if a miracle were to be shown to carnal men, it would have to be repeated for the amusement of each individual, and *then* would prove nothing but itself.

That there is an internal meaning in Scripture (not merely symbolical), we have shown from the Bible itself, above. We will also mention, for our High Church friends, Origen, 'Huestius Origen,' lib. ii., quest. 13, p. 170; Clemens Alexandrinus; Eusebius, 'Præparat. Evangel.,' lib. viii. chap. ix., x.; 'Hist. Eccles.,' lib. ii. chap. xvii., for those who like to have the sanction of antiquity for such a mode of understanding Scripture.

Swedenborg, in his work 'Heaven and Hell,' treats of the state of man after death.

In the 'True Christian Religion' he treats of how man should live and believe in this world, as taught spiritually in the Bible. And in the 'Arcana Cœlestia' he explains the Bible according to his system throughout.

We will add the opinion of the Rev. T. Hartley on Swedenborg's writings:—

"To what purpose is your opposition to the belief of any fresh discoveries of the other world? Is it not a subject of the highest importance to us to know what and where we shall be to all eternity, after a short pas-

sage over this bridge of time? Are there not different degrees of *evidence* in these matters? And supposing that your convictions were at all times so full in relation thereto as to exclude all shadow of doubting, yet are there not infinite particulars and circumstances relating to the world of spirits, which may serve as an inexhaustible fund of fresh discoveries, many of which may have been revealed to others, though not to us, and for us to receive from them? How comes it, then, that you are so void of all reasonable *curiosity* as to prefer ignorance to information in these things; nay, to study objections to the belief of them? Were *any* prejudice allowable in this case, it should rather be *for* than *against* them, especially where they have a tendency to promote faith, virtue, and godliness.

“If *any* knowledge is to be coveted, surely it is that of the laws, ways, and accommodations of that good country which we hope to go to and live in for ever. Besides, such extraordinary manifestations are greatly conducive to the good of this world by laying before us fresh motives and encouragements in our way through it. If we believe the Scriptures, we must allow of such an intercourse between heaven and earth in former times, and if it be less frequent now, it is owing to the infidelity and apostasy of the times; for God’s goodness endureth the same for ever, and good spirits are equally desirous of holding communication with men now as formerly, but then there must be a suitableness for it on the part of the latter—something of that innocence and simplicity of life, which in ancient times served as the basis of such fellowship.

“But, it may be asked, is it not reasonable to expect that every such message from heaven should have the attestation of a miracle to evince the truth of it? To

which suffice it to answer, in the words of Job xxxii. 13, 'The Lord giveth not an account of His matters.' This, however, is certain, that wherever He sends a message, He also gives evidence sufficient with it or in it to *convince* or to *convict*, and condemn the rejection of it."

Our Lord sometimes wrought miracles to *convince*—1 John xi. 15—and sometimes refrained from them to avoid condemning, when He saw that *faith* was absent—Mark vi. 5—in simple unbelievers; and sometimes wrought them to take away all excuse from the hardened and impenitent—John xv. 24. So, then, there is a wide difference between those to whom miracles *can* be shown, and those to whom they *cannot*. Neither miracles, nor fear of death and hell, nor sickness, nor misfortunes, can possibly convert a man; for the only conversion which can remain with him *must* take place of his own *free choice*, in perfect freedom, and *commence* with his choice or affection, not with his *intellect*. And what a man does under the above influences is not of freedom but of coercion. A man who insists on scrutinising *all* that is in religion by his intellect before he will embark in it, is like a man who tries to investigate the looks, manners, inhabitants, climate, and crops of a country by staring at a map through a microscope.

The effect of forcible providence or other compulsion on man's consciousness is well seen wherever we find a stern father in this world compelling his son from evil and to do good. The result at *best* is, that the son forms *no character* at all, as far as his free choice is interfered with; and at *worst* is, that he becomes a hypocrite to his own father, and acquires an utter *disgust* for all that is good in external action, having been dragged to it, and his nose rubbed in it, so to speak, by his inexorable but well-meaning parent. Whence good acts are inseparably



connected with forcing and harshness and necessity in his mind thereafter, and his only real feeling is a longing to be free from such coercion.

The most illiterate Christian, walking humbly in the love of God, and working righteousness according to his best knowledge, never was, and never will be, suffered to fall into any fatal delusion. Whatever priests may say about this not being enough, it is enough, for it includes all that is unmistakably good. Simplicity and uprightness of heart place him under the protection of the Almighty, and he is in the essence of truth, even though possibly without the formal ideas of it; for Psalm xxv. 10, "All the paths of the Lord are mercy and truth to such as keep His covenant and His testimonies." Mistake he may, but cannot dangerously err; for his very errors are innocent, and love sanctifies all he thinks, says, or does.

With regard to the credibility of Swedenborg's writings, it must be remembered that what is true, though not necessarily discoverable from reason, is never opposed to *right* reason; but after all, it is more the right temper and disposition of mind than sagacity or cleverness that enables a man to see such things in their own light, and a contemptuous disposition will find contradictions in the letter of the *Bible*, and plenty of them, if he obstinately sticks to the letter, and will none of the Spirit. It all depends whether the object is a laudable curiosity, backed by a willingness to get instruction, if any can be found, or to dispute and cavil.

The best way to ascertain the truth of the assertion of Swedenborg, that he communicated with the unseen world since 1745, in his letter dated 1769, is to make some approach to the life of piety and purity to which alone such a power can be safe. In fine, to use the words of a good man in his preface to 'Heaven and Hell,' p. 41

—“If, after all, thou canst not read him [Swedenborg] as the enlightened seer, and the extraordinary messenger of important news from the other world, read him as the Christian divine and sage interpreter of Scripture ; or if thou canst not do this, read him as the profound philosopher ; or if he cannot please thee in either of these characters, read him, at least, as the ingenious author of a divine romance. But if neither as such can he give thee content, I have only to add, Go thy way, and leave the book to such as can make a better use of it.”

Every truth gives rise to a corresponding fallacy—spirituality to charlatanism, medicine to quackery—but it is the part of a wise man to discriminate the true from the false ; not to judge of truth from seeing the false only, and include them both in one condemnation.

In conclusion, apologising for possible hurt done to private feelings in attacking what appeared to be false and pernicious doctrines, we feel confident that the views herein expressed are so utterly contrary to what is taught at the present day, that, if wrong, there is very little fear of any one being misled by them ; a man must have a pretty firm and well-founded conviction that his views are right before he can dare to contradict what thousands take for granted.

If these views are wrong, they will fall to the ground of themselves, and their originator is the last man to seek to prop them up ; but if they are true, no mere quibbling can upset them in the minds of those who will dare to read them *through*, not to take a second-hand misrepresentation of them from an opponent. We wish some abler pen had advocated the Bible against those who interlard it with their own errors ; but rather than it should be left undone, we have tried to take it in hand, hoping that, if this arouses attention, abler hands will

come forward in the matter. It is better that those who make these things their special study should speak for the truth. As it is, my friends will certainly say, "Is Saul also among the prophets?" and I can only answer

πολλὰ μὲν ἀέλπτως κράινουσι θεοί  
καὶ τὰ δοκηθέντ' οὐκ ἔτελέσθη  
τῶν δ' ἀδοκίμων πόρον εὔρε θεός.

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There is a certain *endless intricacy* about the teaching of all who quote traditions of men as the fallible basis of their erroneous doctrines, in place of going direct to God's Word. Their teaching is elaborate, and insinuates doctrines, not unfrequently, which would be denied if inculcated in a straightforward manner, by implying such doctrines artfully in an indirect manner. Their style abounds in the following, and such like arguments: "May we not assume so and so?" "Are we not then to suppose?" "Has it not always been held by the best authorities?" "Has not Holy Mother Church invariably taught?" "Nor are we then justified in not taking for granted." "What has holy Father so-and-so handed down to us as his blessed opinion upon this point?" It being quite impossible for any one man to get up and refute such founded assertions, or to ascertain their truth, and sheer madness to think of founding any belief which is to be acted upon in life upon such testimony, there is no harm in simple-minded ignorant people believing what designing priests teach them, provided only they try to lead good lives, and to follow what is unmistakably good and true, and unentangled in priestly superstitions; but even such simple persons who so reverence a priest BECAUSE he is a priest merely,

might see that a priest is also mortal, sinful, and fallible: and if they will read the whole book of Hosea, which treats throughout of the falsification of the Bible by priests, in its inner sense, they will see that priests can also be designing; and also Jeremiah v. 30, 31, Hosea vi. 9. Has not the tendency hitherto invariably been for priests to falsify God's Word to their own glory and dominion, and to make its plain teaching of none effect by their traditions? In the face of this fact, how can men be so foolish as to trust to priests? Nothing but utter indifference could have borne such fruit, or brought men, otherwise clear-sighted enough, to such a state.

What a pity it is to see a man who is innocent, when he is accused of a distinct crime, fencing with the accusation, dividing it into six hundred three score and six heads, and elaborating each metaphysically and allegorically and psychologically, &c., instead of denying it. Such treatment, as long as human nature is human nature, and there is still left a spark of truth among us, will give the indelible impression of a shifty, wriggling mind. No honest man needs circumlocutions or rhetoric, and a good man sees at a glance what subtle craft never can understand, and that is, that simple unadorned assertion, if true, carries greater strength than elaborate subdivision and ratiocinations. A flow of rhetoric, where a simple denial is all that was wanted, is as much out of place, and as suspicious to an honest mind, as the guilty and absurd accuracy of a man who, when accused (say of picking another's pocket), pretends that, in order that his defence may be strictly correct, he must commence by taking the exact latitude and longitude of the spot where he is accused of having offended the law.

Will no High Church priest come forward and say simply what is wanted? which is something to this

effect : " The rumours of improper questions being asked at confession of ladies and others are *utterly untrue*; no such are ever asked at confession, nor are books which allude to improper subjects directly or indirectly recommended to penitents; nor are punishments nor penances inflicted by priests; or, if so, the punishments and penances consist only of . . . . To the best of my knowledge the above is true, and if in any case I heard the contrary, I should repudiate it as an abuse of confession, and do my best to have a priest who had so offended deprived of his office." This would be straightforward, and to the purpose.

We hope, in another part of this essay, to point out the fallacy of the doctrine of *Transubstantiation*. Suffice it here to remark, that as usual again, it is a *truth falsified*, not a direct falsehood at the bottom of the matter.

It is quite true that God is present always with every one, else he could not live. It is also true, in a higher sense, that He is with those who are seeking Him, and again in a higher sense with those who love Him—that He is *in them* and they *in Him*. That He "makes His abode" with them, and leads them into all truth, as they are able to receive it, and make it their own by acting up to it. So that no one may dare to deny that God is present with those who devoutly attend the Holy Supper. But to say that His human body is in the wheaten bread, and His blood in the wine, is no more to be taught by priests in consequence of the verses Luke xxii. 19, 20, "This cup is the *new testament*," &c., than that the New Testament is turned literally into the cup he holds in his hand; or that, when three persons assemble in His name, Matt. xviii. 20, the middle one is turned into our Lord Himself. Such *awful* work do they make of the literal words of the Bible, through blindness to the real mean-

ing, and profound indifference to all but what is terrestrial. At present we cannot enter further into that subject ; but we would gladly by every means endeavour to open the eyes of credulous people to the inconsistencies and tendency of priestcraft.

It is a hard thing to leave off sin and to find God, and it requires all the prayer and all the earnest endeavour a man is capable of to approach Him ; and any external forms are more apt to detain the attention in themselves, or to symbolise what captivates the imagination, than to assist that deep abstraction of thought which is, above all, necessary to earnest prayer. Some forms in a liturgy there must, from the nature of the case, be ; but they should be as few and as simple as is consistent with order. True, the High Church party spitefully sneer at the droning drowsy hum of the monotonous *reading*, as compared with their *intoning*, and at the untheatrical effect of an occasional bad reader "twanging the service through his nose," and the commonplace looks of the congregation, as compared with their florid ritual. But why forget themselves and fall back upon *spite* ? Is this strength or weakness ? How many intone badly for one who reads badly ? Ah, but intoning assists the voice. Well, now you shift your ground ; but if *that* be a reason for introducing new-fangled anomalies in our old service, there is no end to the additions which might be made, as your new-fanglements have already taught us.

After all, it is not so much the ritual as the distinct doctrines enunciated by priestcraft which are apt to do harm. When they take their stand upon such verses as Matthew xvi. 18, 19, "And I say unto thee Thou art Peter ( $\sigma\upsilon\ \epsilon\grave{\iota}\ \Pi\acute{\epsilon}\tau\rho\varsigma$ , masc), and upon this rock ( $\kappa\alpha\iota\ \epsilon\pi\grave{\iota}\ \tau\acute{\alpha}\upsilon\tau\eta\ \tau\grave{\eta}\ \pi\acute{\epsilon}\tau\rho\alpha$ , fem.) I will build my church, and

the gates of hell shall not prevail against it. And I will give to thee the keys of the kingdom of the heavens, and that which thou shalt bind on earth shall be what has been bound in the heavens, and that which thou shalt loose on earth shall be what has been loosed in the heavens." One hardly knows how to set about showing that this does not give priests power to let into heaven or keep out of heaven, or to forgive sins, or *hold a person in his sins*, which they evidently wish to be understood as their prerogative conveyed by John xx. 23.

However, if the reader will have patience to look at three or four *very* brief reasons for objecting to the priestly interpretation, we will endeavour to be as concise and to the point as possible.

First, then, the words in John xx. 23, are not fairly translated: *κρατέω* does not mean I *retain*, but I rule, force, or compel. Whether this makes what we choose to call *sense* or not has nothing in the world to do with the right to translate it as priests do for their own purposes. As well argue that "Thou art Peter" is not sense.

Again, in Matt. xvi. 18, 19, ἡ πέτρα, the rock, applies to *Faith grounded in experience*, not to ὁ Πέτρος. That *Rock* means Faith built upon experience is evident from many parts of the Bible. It also refers *κατ' ἐξοχήν* to *Him* who is the *object* of Faith—namely, the *Truth*.

Again, with reference to the *keys*—let any person first form the idea in his mind that the power supposed to be conveyed to Peter in these words was really given, and then, with that idea fresh in his mind, let him also read Revelations i. 18, also iii. 7, Isaiah xxii. 22, &c., and see whether the idea of priestly admission is tenable.

Here again in Matt. xvi. 19, and also in Matt. xviii. 18, the Greek has not been honestly translated. Ὁ ἐάν

δήσης or ὅσα ἐὰν δήσητε, implies a question whether there be indeed such things: ὅς ἐὰν is very nearly equivalent to ὅστις, but there is that *decided* difference—it is just all important here—for the word could not have been ὅσα ἐὰν but ἄτινα, if a regular daily or weekly or periodical confession and absolution had been contemplated.

Again, we have the same biassed object in translating ἔσται δεδεμένον as if it were δεθήσεται, shall be bound, or more commonly δεδήσεται. Δεδεμένον means that which *has been* bound: it is *past* and not *future*.

Therefore we see that an *injunction* of our Lord has been wrenched into a *promise*; and as thus distorted and mistranslated, an enormous heretical doctrine has been founded by priestcraft upon it—namely, that of priestly absolution, with all its abuses and accompaniments; and this false doctrine is *more* taught, and *more* attended to practically, than any other in the whole range of Church teaching. It is also wider and deeper in its pernicious tendencies, yet such is its foundation.

And such is the foundation of many of the most pernicious doctrines of the present sections of the Church. For instance, the doctrine of justification by faith—(meaning without works).

This doctrine is founded upon what St Paul says of the unnecessary of imposing the *ceremonial* law on the Gentiles, as Peter, yielding to others, wished to do (Gal. ii.). It is also more especially founded upon Gal. ii. 16—“Knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the law *except only through the Faith* of Jesus Christ, and we have believed in Christ Jesus, that we might be justified by the Faith of Christ, and not by the works of the *Law*, because the whole of the flesh will not be made righteous by the works of the Law.” Now the English



translation gives the evident meaning that a man is not to look to the Law, *but, on the other hand*, to Christ, as the first clause of this verse.

If our friend, "any schoolboy," translated *ἐὰν μὴ διὰ τῆς πίστεως* but by faith, anywhere but in the case of a Church doctrine which was to be upheld at any price, he would at once be informed that *ἐὰν μὴ* means except only, and *διὰ πίστεως*, *through* faith, which is a very different thing from translating it, but on the other hand *by* faith, as is done in our authorised version, Heb. iv. 2-6.

This explanation has also the advantage of according with the rest of the Bible teaching, which does not make the moral law out to be of just as much use as so much waste paper, and totally inapplicable to Christians at any stage of their progress. See Gal. iii. 19, 23, 24.

It is absolutely necessary, in order to avoid making such havoc of God's Word, that man should remember the scope and object of each epistle in considering its teaching. When St Paul was writing to men who already made religion to consist entirely in external observances and ceremonials, it is to be expected that he would dwell almost exclusively upon the inner motive which alone gives life and reality to outward actions, so as to correct *their* tendencies. And, again, when writing to those who, throughout Christendom—not in one peculiar nation only—abused such doctrine, and made religion a mere nothing, consisting in a so-called faith without works—*i.e.*, straining to fancy or to imagine that some fact REALLY DID take place, and perhaps also *loudly asserting* that the fact was really so, and further, that they, the true believers would die rather than state that the fact was otherwise—when religion comes to that, no doubt it is to be expected that a writer would dwell almost entirely on the necessity of works, or rather on the impossibility

of separating the two, so as to have one without the other, which is as easy as to have an intense love without an object of that love, either real or imaginary. The priests have made such havoc of the Bible teaching that people's minds are blindfolded who try to believe that priestly teaching is to be credited, and hence submit their reason to it.

These people would be most indignant if one were to tell them that they give the lie to their own pretended belief in every thought and act of their life. That is, they do NOT believe what the priests tell them, though they try to humbug themselves into the assumption that they *do* believe it, that it *must* be true, &c. Let us once more take an instance, and try to show them what Jesuitical sophistry and prostitution of truth that attitude of mind has led them to; then ask them to contemplate the picture, and ask themselves whether such a result *can* be the effect of teaching which is accordant with the God of Truth. We must use arguments which are plain to all: any one, whether he knows Greek or not, can follow, if he will take the trouble, such a clear statement as the following.

Priests assert, on the foundation of John xx. 23, and Matt. xvi. 18, 19, and Matt. xviii. 18, that they can bind or loose sins *in heaven*—*i.e.*, that they can absolve men from the guilt of sin hereafter, though, as in the case of David, punishment be inflicted here *on earth*, and is not remitted by such heavenly forgiveness as their dupes hope they can grant for hereafter.

Now it is evident that a priest cannot loose a man from one single sin or vice, or from its necessary fruit and consequence (James i. 15), SO that the said man shall be delivered from the said vice and its punishment *here on earth*; therefore the priest fails in the condition

of binding or loosing *on earth*; and how then does he argue that binding or loosing will result *in heaven* as a consequence of what he *fails* to do on earth?

The whole object of a person confessing and asking absolution, if it is done with a pure heart, is to obtain eternal or *heavenly pardon*; and with this view earthly punishments are submitted to by the dupes not seeing that, since the priest cannot loose on earth, so neither can he loose in heaven, unless he have that intense faith which can discern whether a person's sin is really forgiven, without chance of error (2 Samuel xii. 13), and much more, whether a man has faith to be healed of a bodily infirmity (Acts xiv. 9), which therefore he could do just as easily as the other (Matt. ix. 5, 6). In case he has this faith, which appears far to transcend the faith of modern priestcraft, as far as the true object of God's glory transcends their aim at their own dominion through religion, then, and not otherwise, could he authoritatively pronounce that SINCE the sin confessed had been forgiven or separated in heaven, THEREFORE he felt justified in pronouncing it loosed on earth. But in this case the result would not be imaginary.

It is evident to any one that the dupes, even though from obstinacy or other reasons they will not allow themselves wrong, yet do *not* believe what they strenuously assert about absolution, and that this is so is more easily illustrated than proved by argument. They altogether mistake the nature of faith, and think it means taking anything for granted on a priest's word, and then stopping their ears and refusing to hear question or proof in the matter.

If A. is a creditor of B., and B., to avoid imprisonment, flies the country and lives in exile, and a third

party, C., comes to B. and assures him he has paid the debt to A., and that B. can therefore now return in safety home, it is one thing if he hands over the receipts to B. as a guarantee that the amount has been really paid to A., but it is quite a different thing if he, on the ground that some people's debts on certain conditions are paid for them, tries to make B. believe that *his* debts are paid, and if yet he fail to give the receipts for the payment, though it is in his power easily to obtain such proofs of payment, if payment had really been made.

The man who in B.'s case returns home and dwells there, shows more confidence that his debt is paid to A. than he who violently and viciously asserts that it has been paid, and yet dare not act on the assumption lest his miserable fancy, which he calls a belief, should be shown how unfounded it is. The only deliverance from sins is and must be gradual; if any man doubt this, we cannot argue to prove it—let him try. His sins are removed from him in only one way, and that removal is proportional to his abstaining from such sins, and from the desire to commit them; and not till he has done this is faith *possible*, or conjunction with God *attainable*.

It has been quite impossible to make a connected composition where the object has been to point out as forcibly and briefly as possible the fearful results of priestcraft, and its unmistakable tendencies, in the space of one readable volume. The language we will not apologise for, as we doubt if any language can be too strong in such a cause. Our object is more to provoke discussion on important fallacies than to lay down the law, and this object is quite independent on the correctness or otherwise of the minutiae of the book itself. The only real obstacle to light which is *bomb-proof* to truth, reason, or demonstration is that never-failing indifference and apathy under

the fostering care of which so many and great heresies have hitherto arisen.

It is quite painful to see the tortuosities which are resorted to in lieu of one single statement in the matter of confession. There has appeared in this day's 'Times' a letter by a female, apparently one of a priest's little flock, attempting to disprove that improper questions are asked at confession. It is a humiliation to point out the inevitable failure of it, and the ill-concealed spite against S. G. O., the brave originator of the scrutiny which priestly doings are now likely to undergo. The fact is simply this:—A set of priests, well knowing the influence they obtain over those who lay bare their hearts to them and submit to their punishments habitually, are accused of attempting to revive auricular confession, and of preaching at people, and putting certain books of "self-examination" into their hands to urge them to confess, and specify under what heads. They are accused of doing these things; and the vague rumours of improper questions being suggested and asked at confession, which every one had heard of but knew not whether to believe, are overwhelmingly fortified by absolute evidence and quotations by a straightforward and brave man, himself a minister of Christ—and, to judge by his courage and love of truth, a very excellent one—who also names the confession-books from which he quotes, and gives the pages and lines where some of the objectionable suggestions occur.

One would think after this that priestcraft would come forward and say straight out, The report is *utterly untrue*; no such questions are asked by us, and we appeal to all thus publicly who have confessed to us if we have ever asked an indelicate question or made an indelicate suggestion. Such, and only such, is the line con-

scious innocence would take. But instead of this simple answer, which would at once have set the question at rest, and rendered it a matter of pure malice for any one in future to hint at the traditional abuses of confession being still possible to priestly nature, we have a shirking of the whole question: they dance away from the question, and make it a matter of the ins and outs of human nature considered in the abstract, more especially with a view to its further elaboration under certain aspects. If one High Church or Romish confessor would state boldly that the rumours are "untrue, and to be *detested* and *abhorred* by a true man," instead of making a puzzle about the manifest impossibility of answering for his neighbours, or cataloguing all the possible abuses of a system he did not originate, and nobody says he did, how glad should we be to hear the manly denial and repudiation of such things. Of course, priests know that *proof* is exceeding hard to come at of what transpires at the confessional, and is inaccessible except through an apostate from their blasphemous doctrines; and it being so self-evident that proof is difficult to any one who considers what coming forward and giving proof would imply, it is doubly wonderful that priests should let the time pass for indignant denial of the insinuation—it is doubly wonderful that they should, in common with their dupes, lose their heads, and in the same breath affect to despise what they have never denied straight out, and yet, full of rage and impotent malice, fling their spiteful and wicked falsehoods against the *character* of the noble-hearted English divine who dared to stand up for what "all civilised beings in common hold to be right," against the crafty machinations of priesthood. Spite and falsehood betray themselves, whether brandished by demagogues to excite the rabble

to revolution, or by those who engage in the most unscrupulous and intolerant of all contests, a religious dispute. The first letter against S. G. O.'s character was at once disproved—if it had not been so, it was still like the Englishwoman's letter, *nihil ad rem*. Priests do not appear to care so much to prove or defend themselves, as to assail all who dare to scrutinise them. They tried even by a perversion of Mark xvi. 17, 18, to give us all a back-hander in the eye. How, forsooth? because they say WE TOO are impostors as well as the priests, for we cannot perform the signs which it is there said all believers *can*. Well, well, well, many and wonderful are the tortuosities of man, when he once becomes crafty and cunning, instead of manly and truthful! Their own futile attempt at a wrenching of Scriptures, if it applied at all, would merely prove that the Bible was an impostor for *saying* we can when we can *not*. Even thus they fail. The true answer, as any but the Jesuitical mind can clearly see, is just this—that we *don't pretend* we can do these things, and priests *do pretend* they can do their miracles.

None but those who have experienced it can tell, probably, what those suffer in mind who have friends, relations, mother, or sisters, caught in the meshes of Babylonish cunning: those who have, will no doubt strive their utmost to prevent the horrible influence from permeating all that at present is honest, truthful, and good, either in religious or domestic life. The hopeless infatuation of those who *have been* caught, is not more strange than the apparent fatality, in helpless accordance with which others of a certain weak mind, strong imagination, and musical taste, walk into the trap with their eyes open, mistaking the elaborate intricacies of priestly traditions for the simple and easy yoke our Lord gave us complete in his teaching. They say, "all our formu-

laries are only *aids* to us; they are all *auxiliary* to the worship of God. You talk about worshipping God, *quite forgetting* that you can't choose *how* to worship him, but must do it by the means and in the way he has appointed, and that way is to be learnt from the Church alone, for the Church alone knows it." Well, *that* question has been discussed already in this book; we will only add, take care that your worship is really addressed to God, and does not stick in the endless wheels and channels you intrust it to, when you might prefer your petition direct.

We forgot to mention above, that the person who wrote to the 'Times' injured the cause tried to be upheld by the malicious and shocking implication in classing the devil and S. G. O. and suchlike together. If he were a devil, what has that to do with the matter? When a man writes to the 'Times,' his initials and his views may become public property, but hardly to warrant such treatment.

The present writer's argument is of this description: A. endeavours to prove that pickpockets do not pick pockets really, because *he saw one* NOT DO IT. All the four heads have this flaw. It is a pretty consideration for husbands of "young married women," if they are to lay bare their secret thoughts to the nearest priest.

It is a pity some priest did not write *himself* on the subject, emphatically denying it; it would be the greatest possible relief to all who have relations entangled by priestcraft, and, coming from a confessor, would be conclusive, and in future men would know how to act if any priest transgressed. Getting a woman to write to the 'Times' has this effect, that the opponent of a vicious system finds himself liable to be held up to popular execration as a *brute* who dared to gainsay a *woman*. If, on



the other hand, from respecting the peculiarities of the sex, he holds his tongue, then a year or so is allowed to elapse in silence, and thenceforth priests can say, "Why, all this was FULLY ANSWERED a year ago; you had better find the answer, and inform yourself on a subject before you talk."

When a woman writes to the 'Times' on a public matter of the utmost importance, she cannot claim exemption from answer or criticism in virtue of her sex, for she waived that consideration by stepping out of her sphere and joining in a general discussion. How any person can talk of gaining "*confidence in the English Church*" by confessing to a priest, is unfathomable. To talk again of "*fictions propagated by*" an English priest, is, to say the least, strongish language, especially where the said English priest states that he has proofs, and gives references. Possibly, if the whole discussion about priests and their ways (which are so utterly distasteful to the candid English mind, as all secret societies which interfere with home relations and with true religion are)—if this discussion goes much further, the champion who has taken the lead against priestcraft may be induced to publish proofs of what he has advanced with reference to existing or recent facts, and existing books. If even such a course as this be the result of the letters in the 'Times' impugning S. G. O.'s veracity, it will not be cause for regret, if it opens the eyes of the English nation once more to the real aims, tendency, and practice of priestcraft.

We say nothing against *individuals*—it is a *system* we attack, not separate members of a priesthood. It is sheer waste of time and trouble to asperse the private character of a man who points out the truth of these things; yet such is one invariable concomitant in the defences of

priestcraft which we have hitherto seen. We attack a *principle*—they, in defence, re-attack *private character*; thus reasoning degenerates into bickering. Suppose the defenders of priestcraft could clearly establish that their assailants were flirting, dining-out, drawing-room parsons, or were absolutely bad characters, what has that to do with the toleration of a most vicious system of secret influence, under the prostituted name of religion. We will turn your own argument to its true application if the premises be sound, and say even *we*, the bad characters, are struck with indignation at the results of priestcraft. Can you pretend such things tend to God's service?

None were more righteous in their own opinion than the Jews, none more particular in external observances, and none elaborated the minutiae of religion more extensively than they did. They repeatedly found our Lord a bad man because he did good on Sunday; and their "holy church's ever-blessed" traditional strict observance of the Sabbath was far more evidently founded, not on obscure and badly-translated verses, but on the distinct and unmistakable command of God in the Decalogue, than modern priestly traditions. Yet with all their holy traditions and holy priests' teaching, our Lord said to them (Matt. xxi. 31), "Verily I say unto you, that the *publicans and harlots* go into the kingdom of God *before you*."

The kingdom of God means the Catholic Church, consisting of all who worship God in spirit and in truth (John iv. 24).

The reason this fearful announcement was made to the Jews was because (Matt. xxi. 28-30) the Jews, with all their formularies and traditions, had *missed the essential* of religion. What that essential is our Lord tells us in

John iv. 23 : *that* is religion, and it is not to be got wholesale in any section of Christianity, rarely even in individuals. "God *seeketh* such worshippers." If our language has been too strong on the subject of confession we apologise for it ; but any man who has felt his own helplessness when friends or relations are entrammelled in the meshes of priestcraft—when the sanctity of home is invaded, and domestic happiness broken up by, say mother, or brothers, or sisters being entrapped by the carefully-graduated baits of the designing ones ;—when he sees, first, the harmless "florid ritual ;" then the little High Church forms—genuflexions, crossings, and turnings in all directions for this and that ; then the reading of Romish books ; then the transference of reverence from God to his sinful creatures—if indeed anything but the *name* of reverence ever was felt to God ; then the arguments, endless and intricate, culled from the turbid ocean of voluminous doctrines called the "ancient fathers," inconclusive, inconsistent, BUT unanswerable ; then the monastic life ; then the belief in miraculous powers ; and then the last step—when humbugged out of all proper feeling or consideration of what is womanly, not to say ladylike, by the pretentious impositions of priests—the laying bare the thoughts of the heart, with all that it involves, to the priestly eye —.

The giving wealth and power to the priests by making over earthly property to them by their dupes is a light evil compared to that of confession—*such* confession to a *man*. Well may a man use strong language, so strong that it is intolerable to priests, when every one knows that the abuses of priestcraft are a byword in the lowest places in the land. Who that has not had all proper feeling suffocated within him by what priests teach under the name of religion, can contemplate the

bare possibility of any that are near and dear to him falling into such a fearfully baited delusion?

No; priestcraft, if not stamped out by inexorable truth and publicity at its first making head, will yet reduce us to *inquisition* days again. There are times and subjects on which delicacy is misplaced, and this is one of them, since they force us to notice the subject at all.

If we choose to be apathetic and take our chance of the "*ever-blessed traditional*" abuses of priestcraft following in its wake, it is at our own proper peril that we do so. Such confession is NOT Scriptural. If people will yet hug the delusion that it *is*, be it so; there is yet another remedy. Make every priest, on his ordination, swear that he will not touch certain questions, or inflict certain objectionable penalties at confession.

Or again, let the confession be, as strictly directed in James v. 16, *public*; ἀλλήλοις = to each other *mutually*; in friendly conference, and *plural*, not to priest in the *singular*; also, let that confession relate to ἀμαρτίας = errata, or to παραπτώματα = blunders or defects, which all refer to what is actual and external—not to half-formed bad thoughts of the heart. Publicity would at once put private abuses out of the question, and test truly whether it is a sincere desire to live as the Bible teaches, or whether it is the pleasure of following a novel and exciting innovation which is involving our homes in the toils of PRIESTCRAFT.

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On the subject of the Holy Communion we wish to add a word, to call the attention of those who occupy the place of the learned to the garbling of Scripture as quoted in our authorised prayer-book from 1 Cor. xi. 24, to the

end. Rather than no attempt should be made to translate these verses properly and honestly, we will attempt it ourselves, conscious that if we blunder, such blunders can mislead none, for they will be instantly and triumphantly pointed out, if they become public enough to obtain the faintest effect. We will write all the false translations of the authorised version, as corrected, in *capitals*, so as to arrest the eye. In places we are driven to use a clumsy periphrasis to *describe* the meaning of one word in Greek, because though there may be an equivalent and equipollent word in English taken in a *certain* one of its many senses, yet there is no *definition* or *precision* of meaning when an English word, such as *trial* for instance, has come to be used for *misfortune*; or *judgment* as synonymous with *punishment*. 1 Cor. xi. 23: For I have received of the Lord that which also I delivered unto you, that the Lord Jesus in the night He was betrayed took bread:

24. And having given thanks, brake it, and said, Take, eat: this is my body, which is broken for you: this do AS AN ACT OF RECALLING ME TO MEMORY (εἰς τὴν ἐμὴν ἀνάμνησιν—ἀναμνήσκω, = I recollect, or recall to memory).

25. Likewise also the cup, AFTER DINNER (δεῖπνον is *dinner*, not *supper* in the sense conveyed; it is emphatically and invariably the principal meal of the day, or *dinner*), saying, This cup is the new testament in my blood, this do as often as ye shall drink it as an act of recalling me to memory.

26. For as often as ye shall eat this bread, and drink this cup, YE DO DENOUNCE the death of the Lord until he shall come (καταγγέλλετε—ἀγγέλλω = nuncio—ΚΑΤΑγγέλλω = *denuncio*, I denounce; not I *do show*, as it is in our version); ἄχρις οὗ (sub. χρόνου) ἃν ἔλθῃ.

27. So that if any one shall eat THIS BREAD, OR DRINK THE LORD'S CUP, WITHOUT APPRECIATING IT, he shall be liable (supply *δίκη*, to the *guilt*, or *imputation*) of the body and blood of the Lord (*ἔνοχος* is simply *liable*, but the construction with *gen.* is a little obscure).

28. But let a man scrutinise *himself* (not go to a priest), and thus let him eat from THE BREAD, and drink out of THE CUP (*ἐκ τοῦ ἄρτου καὶ ἐκ τοῦ ποτηρίου*, not *that* bread and *that* cup, as we have it. Our reading gives a false prominence to the bread and wine, by substituting the demonstrative pronoun *that*, so as to give emphasis and distinction from ordinary bread and wine; whereas in Greek it is, as usual, the simple article).

29. For he that eateth and drinketh WITHOUT APPRECIATING, eateth and drinketh TRIAL unto himself, in that he does not SET APART the body of the Lord as HOLY.

*Ἀναξίως* means, in a manner of which the *body and blood of Christ* are unworthy, not of which the *communicant* is unworthy.

It is impossible to give the objective meaning of *ἀναξίως* in one word. To speak to a king *ἀναξίως* would be to talk to him *disrespectfully*, as *he* did not deserve, not as the *speaker* did not deserve. To partake worthily is to recognise the interior good and value it. This also is evident to any thinking man; for in the other sense—that of preparing oneself till *one* is worthy of *it*—no man ever could be worthy in such a sense. Nor again, if *comparative* worthiness in the voluminous High Church sense be adopted, could any one possibly tell how *little* preparation would put him across the margin between worthy partaking and damnation. *Κρίμα* is, 1st, trial; 2d, decision, or verdict of a trial; 3d, sentence on verdict; 4th, unfavourable sentence; 5th, carrying out of unfavourable sentence or punishment. The remotest meaning of the word=*κρίσις* never meant *damnation*, as our

translators have it. True, they put *judgment* in the Bible margin as if synonymous. What would they think of our friend "any schoolboy" if he translated κρίμα judgment elsewhere than in the Bible, and then appended *damnation* as a marginal synonymous translation?

Διακρίνων means *separating as holy*; PUTTING a DIFFERENCE BETWEEN that and common things. "*Discerning*" is a very remote translation, and as we use the word equal to *perceiving*, it is absolutely *wrong*. With the unlearned our translation is *certain* to mislead, for they say, "We believe in the real presence, therefore we *discern* or *perceive* the Lord's real body (trying hard to imagine it) where others who find fault with us do not so perceive or discern it."

30. On this account many are weak and sickly among you, and *some* sleep.

31. For if we would SET OURSELVES APART (as holy) we should not be judged.

(ΔΙΑΚΡΙΝΩ means to *set apart*, as above. It never means to *judge*, and cannot be made to mean it here.)

32. For BEING CHOSEN OUT we are EDUCATED AS CHILDREN by the Lord, that we should not be condemned along with the world.

(Κρινόμενοι means *selected, separated, and especially chosen out*. Παιδενόμεθα; παῖς—a child; παιδεύω—I treat as my child. Certainly chastening *may* form *part* of such treatment, but why make it so prominent as to obscure the rest of the treatment involved?)

Now, the above has been so garbled that probably no better illustration could be selected to show what unscrupulous men, bent on establishing their own views, will not stick at doing. The alterations are so slight, and yet so all-important to the *meaning*.

Let any man take the idea into his mind that the

“very natural elements of bread and wine” are really changed into our Lord’s human body and blood while in the priest’s hands or the communicant’s mouth, and then, with this idea fresh in his mind, let him read verse 24 : *εἰς τὴν ἐμὴν ἀνάμνησιν*—then (not *fasting*, as priests prescribe, but after the principal meal of the day) he took the cup and said, “This *cup* is the *New Testament*.” Remember that (at communion) the *cup* is not turned into the *four gospels*. The cup represents our Lord’s passion; Matt. xxvi. 39; Mark xiv. 36; Luke xxii. 42, 26. “Ye do *denounce* the Lord’s death till He *shall come*,” is utterly irreconcilable with the idea that He is *there present bodily*. The celebration of the Holy Communion is a *memorial* and *protest* against His being put to death,—not what priests now make it. It is nothing other than craft and pseudo-reverence for the Bible, to make its minutest words of such import that they, subordinate or ambiguous as some of them are, be promoted to *more* importance, and be *more* built upon for doctrine than that which is really unmistakable, and which, therefore, these subtle men gloss over as taken for granted. This treatment is called in the Bible, *ἀιρεσις*, heresy—NOT, as we use the word, for any *sect* which separates itself rightly or wrongly from that of which it once formed a part; in which case it would be an interminable question of “which side constituted the moral majority” before any man could say which side of such separation was orthodox and which heretical, for he has no right to judge which side *has the truth*; he is not competent to do *that*, and if he attempts to apply such a test, he at once makes himself a heretic also, in the Church sense of *choosing for oneself* what to believe and what not to believe. Since, therefore, the less part is separated from the greater, and the greater cannot be



rightly said to be separated from the lesser part, it follows most clearly and lucidly that the *majority* is the real test of orthodoxy, which is absurd.

No; the meaning of heresy, = *αἵρεσις*, is a violent seizing; *αἰρέω*, = capio, *grasping, appropriating* to establish one's own views, thus *forcing* Scripture—it does not mean choice (though choice, *αἰρέομαι*, is also a meaning of the word)—because examination and scrutiny, followed by *choice*, is prescribed and enjoined in the Bible; and because, without such free choice, no religion can, as human nature is constituted, have place in the heart and life, which is the real place for it—not in mere speculative thought. Priests, then, at this day are *heretics*; that is, they grasp, wrench, and appropriate the obscurer things of the Word of God, to override and neutralise what is unmistakably commanded by God, in order to establish their rule, or for other objects than the utter giving of the heart to God.

To continue, let the reader look to verse 28. Under the above idea, could it *still* be called the bread and the cup, and man be told to eat *some* of it, *ἐκ τοῦ ἄρτου*, if it had now become transubstantiated? The best single word for *ἀναξίως* is perhaps *disrespectfully*; unworthily has been misunderstood, and volumes of directions for making *oneself* worthy, which is impossible, have been published. The true meaning is explained above, verse 29; remember that the word translated *discern* or *perceive* is wrongly translated.

One may naturally enough answer us, “What in the world, do you suppose, is the reason men should garble Scripture, and mistranslate it so? what object can they have had in doing so?” There are many reasons; human nature is *very* evil; holy priests can become degenerate, and quote gifts for which they *never quali-*

*fied themselves*, and which, consequently, they never received ; and if people can only be got to believe they have such gifts, they will thereout suck no small advantage. Moreover, none can be got to believe such manifest untruths but such as have had their right reason and godly wisdom rendered imbecile and confounded with the worldly wisdom, which savoureth not the things that be of God ; and this can only be done by taking from them all active thought toward God, by confession of private thoughts, and transference of responsibility to the holy priest ; by denying them the right even to think impartially and sincerely on religious matters, telling them that the truth is *not* to be diligently sought, for that Satan will put doubts into their hearts if they *do* seek it (which is perfectly true ; and it is *through* doubts that truth is seen, just as it is *through* fears and dangers that faith or confidence in God is alone to be got). The only frame of mind suitable to the priest's object, is one of self-abandoned abject submission ; and in order to reduce a sane man, who is also a good man, to this condition, he must be got to believe that priests can do miracles—at least, if they can't, they somehow ought to be able, unless there is some little mistake in the particular case.

This fact is at once established if the good man can be got to believe that the elements of bread and wine change at the priest's touch ; and, that man may believe *that* against the evidence of his own senses, he must be got to suppose that the *Bible* says so ; because, though it is a thing very much to be desired, that pestilent heretics should be debarred from consulting Scripture, and so scrutinising what priests lay down as doctrine, yet unfortunately they *have* the Bible just at present, and it cannot be suddenly taken away from Englishmen, how-

ever advisable, and indeed necessary, such a step may be; we must hope to be able to do so in the future.

Again, as long as people consult their Bibles it will be necessary to garble a little—as, for instance, in 1 John v. 7, where a verse had to be inserted to support us in teaching that there are three *persons* instead of *one*; and men must always feel, in spite of priest's teaching, that, *even though they try to take the testimony of the priests, the testimony of God is greater*, 1 John v. 9.

People must be told that a miracle is wrought at the Lord's Supper *by the priest*; also in *baptism*; and if Scripture does not say so, it must be made to say so. Thus priests will get—first, *credence*, at the expense of *truth*; secondly, *adoration*, at the expense of *religion*; and thirdly, *absolute power* over body and mind, at the expense of *God*.

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TEXTS REFERRED TO IN THE FOREGOING.

Page 28. 2 *Chronicles* xviii. 1, 2, 3.

“ 1 Now Jehoshaphat had riches and honour in abundance, and joined affinity with Ahab.

“ 2 And after certain years he went down to Ahab to Samaria. And Ahab killed sheep and oxen for him in abundance, and for the people that he had with him, and persuaded him to go up with him to Ramoth-Gilead.

“ 3 And Ahab king of Israel said unto Jehoshaphat king of Judah, Wilt thou go with me to Ramoth-Gilead? And he answered him, I am as thou art, and my people as thy people; and we will be with thee in the war.”

Page 28. 2 *Chron.* xix. 2.

“And Jehu, the son of Hanani the seer, went out to meet him,

and said to King Jehoshaphat, Shouldest thou help the ungodly, and love them that hate the *Lord*? Therefore there is wrath upon thee from before the *Lord*." Compare Ephesians v. 11—

"And have no fellowship (*μη συγκοινωνήσεις*) with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather *reprove* them" (*εὐλογησέτε*—*εὐλόγησον* = *arguo*—convince or convict, rather; see John xvi. 8).

*Page 42. Isaiah xx. 2, 3.*

"2 At that time spake the *Lord* by Isaiah the son of Amos, saying, Go and loose the sackcloth from off thy loins, and put off thy shoe from thy foot. And he did so, walking naked and barefoot.

"3 And the *Lord* said, Like as my servant Isaiah hath walked naked and barefoot three years for a sign and wonder upon Egypt and upon Ethiopia, so," &c.

*Page 42. Ezekiel xii. 3, 11.*

"3 Therefore, thou son of man, prepare thee stuff for removing, and remove by day in their sight; and thou shalt remove from thy place to another place in their sight; it may be they will consider, though they be a rebellious house."

"11 Say, I am your sign; like as I have done, so shall it be done unto them; they shall remove and go into captivity."

*Page 42. Hosea i. 1, 2.*

"The beginning of the word of the *Lord* by Hosea. And the *Lord* said to Hosea, Go, take unto thee a wife of whoredoms and children of whoredoms: for the land hath committed great whoredoms in departing from the *Lord*."

*Page 42. Hosea iii. 1, 2.*

"Then said the *Lord* unto me, Go yet, love a woman beloved of her companion, and an adulteress, according to the love of the *Lord* toward the children of Israel, who look to other gods, and love flagons of wine."

*Page 42. 1 Kings xx. 35-38.*

"And a certain man of the sons of the prophets said unto

his neighbour, in the word of the Lord, Smite me, I pray thee. And the man refused to smite him." Comp. verse 42.

Page 42. *Ezekiel* iv. 1, 15.

"4 This shall be a sign to the house of Israel. Lie thou upon thy left side, and put the iniquity of the house of Israel upon it; the number of the days that thou shalt lie upon it, THOU SHALT BEAR THEIR INIQUITY: for I will give the years of their iniquity according to the number of the days, three hundred and ninety days, to bear the iniquity of the house of Israel; and when thou hast accomplished them, thou shalt lie again on thy right side, TO BEAR THE INIQUITY OF THE HOUSE OF JUDAH."

That this *bearing* them, however, did not *take them away*, is seen from verses 13, 16, and 17.

"And Jehovah said, Even thus shall the children of Israel eat their unclean bread. Behold, I will break the staff of bread in Jerusalem, that they may want bread and water, and be desolated, a man and his brother, and consume away for their iniquity."

Page 45. *Galatians* ii. 16.

"Knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the *law*, except only through the faith of Jesus Christ, and we have believed in Christ Jesus, that we may be justified by the faith of Christ, and not by the works of the *law*, because by the works of the *law* the whole flesh will not be made righteous."

That the *law* means the ceremonial *law*, verses 8, 11, 12, 14, show clearly; also Romans iii. 13, 14, 15.

Page 45. *James* ii. 20, 24.

"Art thou willing to know, O vain man, that faith *apart from* works is dead?" (*ζωπῖς*, not *ἄνευ*.)

"24 Ye see then that from works a man is justified, and not from faith only."

Page 46. *Galatians* iv. 24.

"Which things were written allegorically; for these are the two testaments."

Page 64. *Luke* xx. 37, 38.

“But that the dead rise (*ἔγείσονται*, not shall be) Moses also certified at the bush when he calleth the Lord the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob. God is not of the dead but of the living; for all live by Him (or receive life from Him).”

*Luke* ix. 30, 32.

“And, behold, two men talked with Him, which were Moses and Elias.”

“32 But Peter and those with him were overpowered by sleep; and having (not waked, but) had their spiritual sight opened they saw His glory, and the two men that stood with Him.”

Page 64. *Revelation* v. 3.

“And no *man* in heaven, nor in earth, neither under the earth, was able to open the book, neither to look thereon.”

*Revelation* xix. 10.

“And I fell at his *feet* to worship him; and he said unto me, See thou do it not: I am thy fellow-servant, and of thy brethren that have the testimony of Jesus: Worship God; *for the testimony of Jesus is the Spirit of Prophecy.*”

Page 64. *Judges*, xiii. 3, 6, 8 to 21.

“8 Then Manoah entreated the Lord, and said, O my Lord, let the *man of God* (see verse 3) which Thou didst send, come again unto us, and teach us what we shall do unto the child that shall be born.”

“10 And the angel of the Lord came again unto the woman, and she said to her husband, Behold, the *man* hath appeared unto me, that came unto me the other day.”

See verses 11, 16, 21.

Page 49 and 64. *2 Kings* vi. 17.

“And Elisha prayed, and said, *Lord*, I pray Thee, OPEN HIS EYES that he may see. And the *Lord* OPENED THE EYES of the young man, and he saw; and behold the mountain was full of horses and chariots of fire round about Elisha.”

Compare 1 Corinthians xv. 40, 44, 50.

“40 There are celestial *bodies* (σώματα = corpora, human *bodies*, not *substances*, as we use the expression, “foreign bodies”) and bodies terrestrial; but the glory of the celestial is one, and the glory of the terrestrial is another.”

“44 It is sown a natural (ψυχικόν) body; *it is raised a spiritual* body; there is a natural body and there is a spiritual body.”

Can anything in the world be clearer than this on the subject of man requiring his terrestrial carcass before he can enter heaven? If so, we have it in verse 50.

“Now this I say, brethren, that *flesh and blood cannot inherit* the kingdom of God; neither doth corruption inherit incorruption.”

So much for the resurrection of the *body*, meaning the material or terrestrial body.

Page 49. Zechariah xiv. 7, 9.

“It shall be one day, which shall be known to Jehovah, neither day nor night; but at evening time it shall be light; and in that day living waters shall go out from Jerusalem, and Jehovah shall be King over all the earth: in that day there shall be *one Jehovah, and His name one.*”

Page 52. Galatians vi. 15.

“For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision availeth anything, nor uncircumcision, but a new creature.”

Conf. 2 Corinthians v. 17.

“Therefore, if any man be in Christ, he is a *new creature*; old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new.”

How to become “in Christ,” see John xvii. 17, 20, 21, 23.

Page 52. Genesis xvii. 10, 11, 12, 13, 14.

“11 And ye shall circumcise the flesh of your foreskin; and it shall be a *TOKEN* of the covenant betwixt me and you.”

Page 53. Romans viii. 1.

“There is therefore *NOW* no condemnation,” &c.

*Page 11. Galatians iii. 24, 25.*

“24 Wherefore the law was our attendant slave (*παραγωγός*) unto Christ, that we might be justified by faith.

“25 But when faith has come, we are no longer under the attendant.”

*Page 57. Galatians v. 14, 18.*

“14 For all the law is fulfilled in one word, even in this; Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself.”

“18 But if ye be led of the Spirit, ye are not under the law.”

*Pages 60 and 85. 1 Corinthians ii. 14.*

“But the natural man doth not receive the things of God’s spirit; for they are foolishness unto him (that is, in his estimation); neither is he *able* to know them, because they are SPIRITUALLY DISCERNED.”

*Conf. Galatians iii. 1, 3, as to carnal and spiritual.*

*Page 75. Galatians v. 19, 21.*

“Now the works of the flesh are manifest, which are these; Adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness, idolatry, witchcraft, hatred, variance, emulations, wrath, strife, seditions, heresies, envyings, murders, drunkenness, revellings, and such like.”

*Page 75. Acts iv. 34.*

“Neither was there any among them that lacked; for as many as were possessors of lands or houses sold them, and brought the prices of the things that were sold, and laid them down at the apostles’ feet.”

*Page 78. Acts ii. 16, 19, 20.*

“But this is that which was spoken by the prophet Joel, I will show wonders in heaven above, and signs in the earth beneath; blood and fire and vapour of smoke. The sun shall be turned into darkness and the moon into blood before that great and notable day of the Lord come.”

The whole argument is for a spiritual (not merely symbolical) meaning of Scripture, as contrasted (verse 29) with the terrestrial, or natural, or carnal meaning.



See also *Mark* ix. 11, 12, 13.

“And they asked Him, How say the scribes that Elias must first come? And He answered and said unto them, Elias verily cometh first. But I say unto you, that Elias is indeed come, and they have done unto him whatsoever they listed.”

Those who cannot understand the spiritual meaning are carnal, and are called *Babes*, 1st Cor. iii. 1; and suitable doctrine to introduce them to higher things is called *milk* (verse 2), doctrine being called fluid.

So our Lord, when His doctrine, “Blessed are the *poor*,” and “How hardly shall the rich enter the kingdom of God,” was misunderstood to refer to carnal poverty, and wealth in pounds, shillings, and pence, explained and called them “*children*,” saying (*Mark* x. 24), “Children, how hard is it for them that *trust in riches* to enter into the kingdom of God;” and again “Blessed are the *poor in spirit*.”

Page 38. *Luke* viii. 19, 20, 21.

“And He answered and said unto them, My mother and my brethren are these which hear the word of God and do it.”\*

\* In transcribing some of these texts we have made alterations, not that we presume to compare our knowledge of the original with those who translated it; but in places it is quite evident that the English has missed the meaning of the original, and has yet been founded upon, where it disagrees, to establish Church doctrines. We have done this with the less scruple, because if we have blundered in an attempt at correction, such blunder, by affording a mark for satire, will at least serve the purpose of drawing attention to the fact that our authorised English version is in some cases very far from the original, if such a wretched scholar, out of the remains of his school lore, could detect inaccuracy. The punctuations in the original, and the renderings, seem calculated with the object of establishing the views of the writers. And the mere interpolation of 1 John v. 7 is enough to frighten a man who believes every word of what he reads to be the Word of God. If only we could get faithful translators, scholars free from *views* of their own, which they are dying to put beyond question! Rather leave out the punctuation than run a chance of misleading—a comma may alter the whole meaning of a *Will*.

Where the meaning of Scripture is obscure, the very obscurity should be faithfully copied; the effect of trying to make *sense* of it is that one could hardly recognise some of the expressions in the Old Testament as translated—not that they are what we please to call important—but why lose *any* of the Bible, or alter one word, if each word is inspired?

Page 48. *Isaiah* xxvi. 19.

"Thy dead shall live; my corpse, they shall arise. Awake and sing, ye that dwell in the dust, for the dew of herbs is thy dew; but thou shalt cast out the land of the *Rephaim*."

Page 33. *Revelation* xi. 8.

"And their dead bodies shall lie in the street of the great city, WHICH SPIRITUALLY IS CALLED Sodom, and Egypt, where also our *Lord* was crucified."

Page 48. *Revelation* xxi. 17.

"And he measured the wall thereof, an hundred and forty and four cubits, according to the measure of a MAN, THAT IS, OF AN ANGEL."

There is no *the* in the original; *the* angel is not correct therefore.

Page 20. *Isaiah* xlv. 21, 22.

"Am not I Jehovah, and there is no God else beside me." xliii. 11.—"I am Jehovah, and beside me there is no Saviour."

*Hosea* xiii. 4.

"I am Jehovah thy God, thou shalt know no God but me; for there is no Saviour beside me."

*Isaiah* xlix. 26.

"And all flesh shall know that I, Jehovah, am thy Saviour and thy Redeemer." xlvii. 4.—"As for our Redeemer, Jehovah Zebaoth is His name." Jeremiah l. 34.—"Their Redeemer is strong, Jehovah Zebaoth is His name."

*Isaiah* xlv. 24.

"Thus saith Jehovah thy Redeemer, I am Jehovah that make all things by myself alone."

*Isaiah* ix. 6.

"Unto us a Child is born, unto us a Son is given; the government shall be upon His shoulder; and His name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, God, Hero, THE FATHER OF ETERNITY, the Prince of Peace."

## Page 54. John xvii. 26.

"I have declared unto them Thy name, and will declare it, that the love wherewith Thou hast loved me may be in them, and I in them.

## Pages 74, 75, 76, and 90, 91. Isaiah lviii. 3, 4, 5, 6, 7.

"3 Wherefore have we fasted, say they, and thou seest not? wherefore have we afflicted our soul, and thou takest no knowledge? Behold, *in the day of your fast* ye find pleasure, and make an exaction of your penances.

"4 Behold, ye fast for dispute and contention, and to *smite with the fist* of wickedness; ye shall not fast as ye do at this day, to make your voice to be heard on high.

"5 Is it *such* a fast that I have chosen? a day for a man to afflict his soul? Is it that he *bow down his head as a bulrush*, and lie in sackcloth and ashes? Wilt thou call THIS a fast, and the day of the good pleasure of Jehovah?

"6 Is not *this* the fast that I have chosen? namely, to open the bands of wickedness, to undo the heavy burdens, to let the oppressed go free, and that ye break every yoke?

"7 Is it not to break thy bread to the *hungry*, and that thou bring the *poor* that are cast out to thine house? when thou seest the *naked* that thou cover him; and that thou hide not thyself from thine *own flesh*?"

Who are meant above by the *hungry*, the *poor*, the *naked*, and *own flesh*, is a problem for those who pride themselves on being the true Church. The spiritual meaning is invariable, not arbitrary or fanciful. Also, they may try if they can understand what is meant by *smiting with the fist* of wickedness. As the *Church* they should possess a key to these things, and be able to give the explanation, and show that their explanation is consistent, and systematic, and probable.

## Page 95. Jude 4.

"For certain men have sneaked in, who were of old ordained (*προγγεγραμμένοι*) unto this judgment; impious, turning the grace of our God into lasciviousness, and denying Jesus Christ, who

is our God, and Lord, and only master." The comma after God in our translation is spurious.\*

Also to add one word more to what has already been said on the subject of priestly absolution.

It is said in Mark xvi. 17, &c., "These signs shall follow them *that believe*"—*i.e.*, whether priests or laymen. Were we to found upon that verse as priests have upon John xx. 23, "Whose soever sins ye remit," our pretensions would not fall short of theirs. Such gifts cannot be juggled by laying on men's hands; the essential is a faith and love of a nature more intense by far than anything to be found in High Church priests. Those signs no more follow ordinary believers than forgiveness or miraculous cures follow the priest's manipulations.

Page 48. Luke xxiv. 39.

"Behold my hands and my feet, that it is I myself: handle me, and see; for a spirit hath not flesh and bones, as ye see that I have." This proves, together with verses 3 and 5, that our Lord *alone* rose with His *human corporeal* body.

That man, however, has a real spiritual body, as real in every respect as his carnal body in this world, has been shown above—to which may be added Luke xxiv. 4, 23.

Also it is evident to every one who is not determined in his own mind that it *shall not be so*, and that he will uphold his ill-founded assumptions in the face of all truth; that there must be an internal meaning to the Bible, both because the Bible is the word of God and treats not of the things of this carnal body but of the soul; and also from such passages as Ezekiel xxxix. 17-21: "Thus saith the Lord Jehovah, Say to every feathered fowl and to every beast of the field, Assemble yourselves and come; gather yourselves from every side to my sacrifice that I

\* I wished to expunge the passage about the Pope on page 90, as calculated rather to offend men than to overturn a false doctrine, but was too late in finding it out; in future editions it will be altered. As it stands, I am sorry to say I can prove something very like it, if pressed to do so. It was written in a strong feeling of indignation at certain teaching connected with shrines and holy relics, &c. The proposed alteration is to avoid giving unnecessary offence, not because it is untrue that efficacy is taught of such acts of piety by certain in the Church of Rome.

sacrifice for you, a great sacrifice upon the mountains of Israel, that ye may eat flesh and drink blood. Ye shall eat the flesh of the mighty, and drink the blood of the princes of the earth; and ye shall eat fat till ye be full, and drink blood till ye be drunken, of my sacrifice, which I have sacrificed for you. Thus shall ye be filled at my table, with horses and CHARIOTS, with mighty men, and with all men of war; and I will set my glory among the nations." Where no man, even the most material, can venture to say that the words mean no more than the letter, and yet that such is all that inspiration is worth.

The only true answer to this work—if answer can be made—is gently and clearly to prove the views wrong, and show that they are wrong *from the Bible*. Angry abuse of a man's character is no disproof of what he may happen to have held true, and is a mark of spiteful opposition rather than of sure conviction. Even after a man has left this world it has not been thought unworthy by some in their pious zeal (!!!) against his views to assert that he died "miserably, belching forth his blasphemies" to the last. *This*, because probably he had the hardihood to trust in God rather than in a crafty priest and his extreme unction. Even if he left this world at his own earnest desire, yet he is held up as a *warning* to heretics; he has been "sent to his account." Is natural death, then, such a curse? is it a thing to be feared? Yes, it is so by Roman Catholics. Who was it the other day who prayed "that he might die rather than see," &c., when the French troops left Rome. What an extraordinary view of death; and these men claim to be *spiritual*, not *carnal*—no, they are "Holy Priests."

What madness is it to go to old Church tradition for authority! Pray note their reasoning. They say, We believe so and so, because though it is not in the Bible, yet it is in the Church's *tradition*.

Again, We believe the Church's *tradition* because *she* has the promise of the Spirit of Truth; therefore, if our Lord's gracious promise means *anything*, she speaks the truth, and *is to be believed on her own account*.

Be it so. I will not contend that *the Church* means *all* (even heathen) who love God as they best conceive of Him (for none, not even Christians, conceive of Him worthily), and who lead

good lives to their best knowledge. But I will say this: If the Church then has no need to go to authorities for support, what in the world is the object of stating that all she teaches can "be proved by most certain warrants of God's Word?" or why in the world does she quote old traditions of ancient fathers? Why, she even there stultifies her wretched imposition by stating at one and the same time (1) that she is supported by God's Word; (2) that though she is not in every case supported by God's Word, she is *infallible*; (3) that although she has the Spirit of Truth, and therefore all that she says NOW, AT THIS PRESENT TIME, is undoubtedly to be believed, yet the so-called ancient fathers ARE to be *quoted as authorities* in matters of doctrine.

1. What need to go to any authority of bygone times if she herself is *now* infallible? or has she lost the Spirit of Truth?

2. If to any authority, why not to the Bible alone, of which alone the record is authentic, sufficient, and credible, and consistent?

3. Do these people know that those gentlemen called "*ancient Fathers*" wrote enough books on *doctrines of the Church* to fill a couple of Pickford's patent railway vans; and that to master their views would take about six ordinary lifetimes, to say nothing of their mistakes and contradictions?

4. How are we to know to which of the numerous present churches the promise of the Spirit of Truth was made? since the Bible is only to be believed *as supplemented by Church teaching*? and each Church claims infallibility on the very same grounds and by the very same arguments, to the exclusion of all others?

We have said that it is hopeless to put forth arguments against the views of those who make it a point of obstinacy to hold their views, right or wrong, true or false. We will just adduce *one* instance to show the sort of way our opponent can talk down the truth; and, alas! those who are in darkness cannot see the falsity of such an argument, because they will insist on trying to see from *cleverness*, instead of from having their minds *tuned* to truth.

"We will argue, then, from the subject of pages 104 and 105. "Mr So-and-so *seems to say* that the faith of one cannot stand "to procure a blessing for another. Now we have the examples

“ he quotes for showing that even to procure a beggarly earthly relief such substituted faith was distinctly accepted by our Lord himself; and if for a temporal blessing (by Mr So-and-so’s own favourite argument, *a fortiori*), how much more for the highest and most necessary of all blessings—the Holy Spirit? If ye then being evil, &c. How much more shall God give the Holy Spirit? Yet Mr So-and-so quite forgets this, and *seems* to take it for granted that although a man’s body was healed for his neighbour’s faith, his immortal soul would not be so.

“ He asks us to believe, &c.”

The truth, on the contrary, is this—that the two things are not comparable or parallel; and, to avoid a long description, we will briefly show by an illustration how that reasoning is false. A temporal sovereign may give a starving man enough to keep body and soul together, and give him a *chance* or *opportunity* of working himself into a respectable position, or at least of earning his bread; and he might do so much whether the man were good or bad, with *or without* another’s intercession. But it is a vastly different thing to assume that, on the same terms, and equally independently of effort or qualification, the good king would by one arbitrary act promote the said beggar to be his greatly beloved (Daniel x. 11) friend (John xv. 14, 15). And it is not true that the qualifications for an act of humanity are identical with those for friendship or close intercourse, which are implied in the gift of the Holy Spirit. But such arguments cannot be multiplied; we *can* only remind those who care to know which is true of this one verse, “ Evil men understand not knowledge, but *they that seek the Lord understand all things* ” (Proverbs xxviii. 5). Not clever people, or shrewd people, or sharp people. In fact, clever people are the last in the world to believe that such is the case; if they say it, they don’t believe it really.

Having said so much against the intricate and elaborate falsifications in the present Church doctrines, we will once more state briefly wherein true religion really consists. It consists in this—that a man shall obtain the *love of God* as his only motive to action; and a love of the *good* that he sees in *others*—which is called loving his *neighbour*, or his *brother*.

In order to attain to this motive he must first desist from sin—that is, he must try to see sins to be wrong, and implore God's help to avoid them; and only when he has *done* this, and exactly as far as he does so desist from evil, can he be brought to love God. True religion is *quite simple*, and can be carried out in civil, social, professional, or domestic, or religious life so called.

This is the Bible view of religion, whatever the Church says. The doctrine there is that the law is *prohibitory*, to *lead* a man to Christ, in whom his religion is then perfected (Gal. iii. 24). That love is the fulfilling of the law, not because it does *all good* to his neighbour, but because it *does no harm* to his neighbour (Rom. xiii. 9, 10). And the law does not enjoin doing good, but forbids doing harm to one's neighbour, as a preliminary to love.

It is quite impossible that this view should be accepted in the face of Church teaching, especially when those who know the truth withhold it as dangerous to their authority. It is not too much to say that every single verse in the Epistles which treats of justification by faith in Christ as contrasted with the ceremonial law has been misapplied or garbled. Time would fail to point out the infinitesimal alterations of Scripture, all serving one end, and all meant to do so—namely, to back up the priests' teaching about three *persons* in the Godhead from all eternity, and the adequacy of an affirmative contemplation of Christ's merit, instead of working out faith in God. The whole Epistle to the Romans is vitiated by the bias and dishonesty of the translators. And as it is usual for a person who proposes a reform not only to point out the fault, but to suggest an efficient remedy, we propose, without more than a very faint hope that any one would take the trouble to adopt the remedy,—we propose, as the only true remedy, that the Epistles—especially the Romans—should be translated on half-margin, with copious notes, and all doubtful readings marked according to their authenticity; and wherever a word has or might have different meanings, they should be appended in notes. The translators should be the best Greek scholars who could be got to take the matter in hand; and they should make it a matter of conscience to let no views of their own bias them, but



aim only at perfect truth of rendering. If possible, the verses, and even sentences, should be translated disconnectedly at first, so as to insure, as far as possible, freedom from traditional bias. The Decalogue is not useless or superfluous, but *introductory* to religion; which, having been commenced by refraining from actual sin and looking to God, is perfected in His love, without compulsion or idea of constraint. Nothing is more painful than to hear ladies and other ignorant persons quoting verses whose real meaning is as remote from that which they conceive them to bear as light is from darkness, in all confidence that they have Scripture on their side, and hence themselves on the side of Scripture.

The Epistle to the Romans was written to the Jews at Rome, who were most jealous of outsiders, Gentiles (*ἀσθεῖς*), being made equal with themselves in privileges on the sole condition of faith, with all that faith implies. They stood out to the utmost for the necessity of keeping the *ceremonial* law, and of circumcision for the Gentile converts. St Paul's argument in the first chapters is against the *sufficiency* of the *ceremonial* law, in which the Jews placed their whole ideas of religion, without the internal, which was represented by the ceremonies (Rom. ii. 28, 29). In the Epistles generally, where the *works of the law* are spoken of, the *Levitical law* is meant—not the *Decalogue*. The contrast in those days was between the keepers of ceremonial observances and those who did not—not between those who acted well from a religious motive and those who thought it unnecessary to do so. Keeping what we call the law—*i.e.*, the ten commandments—could not be called the *works* of the law, for they are all prohibitory, though transgression of the Decalogue is called *breaking* the law. The key to the fallacy founded on the opening chapters of the Romans is this, that faith and its accompaniments (Rom. ii. 1-6, 7, 8, 10, 13, &c.) are contrasted with the inadequacy of the *ceremonial* law as understood by the Jews, who merely applied it to its carnal and exterior meaning. The contrast was never contemplated between faith as an attitude of mind, and its necessarily accordant action. Faith such as St Paul describes does not aim at even the works of the *moral* law as an end or object, because it already includes them and more. The whole flesh, or all flesh, cannot be made righteous before

God by the works of the law, because the law merely taught what was *wrong*, and was therefore insufficient without faith to show what was right (Rom. iii. 20, and Gal. ii. 16).

The teachers of the present day have, as a body, lost the principle of religion in their extravagant details (Heb. v. 12); hence the simplest truths are obscurely seen or elaborated into falsities under pretence of development. Simple easy doctrine is called milk (Heb. v. 13, and 1 Cor. iii. 1, 2, 3). Their idea of faith is just incomprehensible, and I defy any man to know whether he has it or not. St Paul says, real faith *works* by *love* (Gal. v. 6); that those who live in the Spirit must also *conduct* themselves in the Spirit, or act accordingly. He also, in the Hebrews, eleventh chapter throughout, shows what his idea of *faith* is; and in this chapter in every case the *action* or *operation* of faith is what is quoted, not a mere effort of imagination. The fact just comes to this, that a man must obtain faith for himself before he can understand what it means. When he finds himself acting as he believes God would have him to do, with the fact staring him in the face that it is dead against his own interest, and, to the best of his natural judgment, injurious to do so, he will know how faith begins. We know also this assurance, that charity, or love, as described in 1 Cor. xiii. is greater and more important than faith, but cannot be separated from real faith, for it is the very action of faith, and includes faith (ver. 7). Therefore, if a man really wishes to believe aright, the way to do so is to reform his life, when he will see clearly (Matt. vii. 3). He that doeth my will he shall know of the doctrine; and again, Charity *believeth* all things (1 Cor. xiii. 7). To believe in God (*πιστεύειν εἰς τὸν Θεόν*) means something more than to assert loudly the credibility of what is asserted to be *from* God.

Hebrews xi. 1.—“Now faith is the *foundation* (*ὑπόστασις*) of things hoped for, the *conviction* (*ἰλεγχος*) of things not seen.”

This work was intended rather to rouse those who in an easy-going way have assented to the doctrines of priestcraft of any shade, and its domination in matters of faith—taking it for granted that our Lord's promise applies to *them*, and that they are therefore to be believed in preference to others who worship God in simplicity *as He taught* apart from endless and irreconcilable traditions. Hence our language had to be as forcible as possible in order to arrest attention—such is the language of indignation against a false but enormously over-grown heretical sect—it is not meant to be the language or frame of mind held towards true believers.

It has been suggested that such strong language should not have been used without provocation, and without adducing proofs of that which is hinted at as the infallible tendency and result of priestcraft. What reason we had for coming forward at all in this manner is such as from the nature of the case cannot be made public—nor is it necessary to make it public. Let priests once deny the insinuations in 'The Times,' and we shall then be able to deal with any who transgress, and judge their religion out of their own mouth. But after all, what hold has good or bad on men who hold that to lie for Holy Church is good, and that *religious* good may be contrary to the Decalogue; so that though it is civil, moral, social, or political good to abstain from murder, adultery, theft, &c., yet religion is so *holy* that these things become all right when done by God's *holy* priest? In fact that is what is meant by "taking away the sins of the" (world?) priesthood, I mean, that they can do these things without guilt. It is high time to cry out in fear, when one can appeal from the doctrines of what calls itself the *Church*, to that light of nature

which, apart from the least religious teaching, shows an honest man clearly *what he should not do*. Romans ii. 14, 15, "do by *nature* the things in the law," hence religious good is natural good done from a *religious motive*, and is not contrary to natural good. True religion is a simple thing: an "easy yoke" it is to do social, moral, civil, and domestic duties just as good people do them, only looking to God and being guided by love to Him even in such matters; it is, in fact, to carry out that best motive in actual ordinary daily life—not shut oneself out from all activity, and merely meditate on good subjects; the good subjects themselves will be far more clearly seen if acted upon than if speculated on in the abstract.

For the sake of those who are well-disposed and candid, we will add one or two references to show that what has been said hostile to priestcraft is not without foundation. But again, we say, the only unanswerable proof is impossible to come at, unless convents were subjected to monthly inspections by people perfectly unbiassed in favour of priests and appointed by government, and those who had been induced to *take the vows* were allowed to communicate privately with the inspectors without fear and *without* the presence of priests or their myrmidons. In this case alone could truth be come at.

There is one kind of proof which is unproducibile; another kind is contained in the testimony of those few who have escaped alive after taking the vows. And their testimony may be invalidated by showing that they were under a delusion, and *only fancied* they underwent the ill-treatment of which they carried the marks to their graves.

Or again, it may be said, the person from whose

testimony I quote, was tired of life, and wanted to be privately seized and tortured and put to death—a fate she well knew she ran a terrible risk of suffering at the Romish priests' hands for publishing what she dared to do of their ways. This is quite credible the moment the priest asserts it.

Or again, the whole thing is doubtless a scandalous and trumpery invention written by a bad woman who was also mad, and who deluded the magistrates and the committee of seven members who investigated the disclosures at the time and had the nunnery searched, and the truth of the statements established beyond doubt, in spite of the most ingenious opposition, refusals to publish testimony, the press being intimidated, attempts at Lynch law, planking, boarding, stoning, bricking in all directions at the building in question, to elude discovery.

However, these may be said to be isolated instances of abuse, and a so-called system of religion is not to be judged of by such. Let us, then, look to their present books, and see what they teach about confession—for it is always under the head of *confession* and *penance* that the atrocities are said to begin.

We must, however, premise that there is an *exoteric* and *esoteric* teaching. There is always a mass of respectable outsiders ready to repudiate any hint that indelicate questions are asked at confession. Of course, no one would blurt such questions straight out, without a little finesse to see how they would be taken. The chief strength and protection of the Roman religion, as opposed to the true Catholic religion, lies in the belief of good and respectable persons that, as they experience it, it is harmless and good. Tricks would never be tried with respectable elderly ladies, and consequently there

are always numbers of them ready to contradict what was never asserted of them.

Miss Monk says, release the nuns and ask the prettiest of them if she has any complaints, promising her safety, and that she will never be given back to the priest's power, and you will learn what the meaning of "*holy retreat*" is, a phrase supposed to mean a retirement of the priest for the further mortification of his wicked flesh, and suchlike holy austerities.

To quote authorities at length would be simply to render this book unreadable, which we have no wish to do.

For the satisfaction, however, of those who wish to know something of these matters, and who might think, in the absence of any authority, that they were coined, we adjoin a few references. First to Miss Monk's book, p. 36, last two lines ; p. 37, 38, 39, 41, 42 ; also p. 12, 92, 94, 126, 128, 150, 154, 155, 156.

Difference between a wicked and a religious lie, p. 58.

Character for sanctity and charitable works to outsiders, p. 158.

Proofs of the truth of the disclosures, p. 50, 51, 179, 181, 182, 183, 184 ; also preface throughout, especially pages ii. and iv. Miss Monk escaped from the "Hôtel Dieu" nunnery.

As this, however, is well known to be a trumpery fabrication, let us look to the books sold at the present day as aids to confession, to show boys and girls what sins they are to meditate on and divulge to the priest, and in what degree of detail the sinfulness of sin is to be elaborated. It is *too* bad, after writing instructions for outsiders, such as would induce them to believe that the utmost forbearance is used in confession (see Gresley's 'Ordinance of Confession,' p. 89), and that questions are only to enable penitents to express what sins they wish

to "open their grief" to the priest about, in decent language, and pretending to defend penance and its abuses from the *prejudice* that it is *fantastical* and *absurd* and *ridiculous* (p. 110), and that the detailed questions on improper subjects are only to help the fair penitents to give a name to sins which otherwise they might be at a loss how to describe.

It is too bad, after all this, to write such blackguard things (for there is no other word for it) as are contained, not in an "ill-advised," "obsolete" work, "now out of print," showing "more or less wisdom," but in such books as 'The Daily Companion,' a prayer-book precisely similar in general object and contents to our own Prayer-Book.

If any man can say that he believes it *can*, under any *possible circumstances*, do good to youth of either sex to put a list, such as that on p. 176, 177 of the 'Daily Companion' into their hands, and then tell him, or her, to divulge such things to a priest, the man who could say so must indeed have had all the pitiful, natural, social, moral, domestic, political good scorched out of him. If a man does not know "naturally as a brute beast" better than that, he may indeed go to a priest to learn better.

It is needless to follow this subject. If any one thinks further proof necessary, the letters which appeared in the 'Times' of November 26, 1866, and one dated December 11, also in the 'Times,' can serve as a guide where to look, unless the alarm is taken, and the books put "out of print" quickly.

To turn to a less repulsive subject—the Papal arguments against the use of the Bible without tradition, are, like their other arguments, futile. Doctrine truly is needful, BUT not such doctrine as any sect wholesale can or ever could give. No ; the needful instruction is that

given in answer to earnest desire—by the same God who inspired it—to each individually who asks it. “Pilots,” “captains,” “compass,” &c., are false metaphors. God is our captain, and men can no more be saved *wholesale* by the manipulations of priests, like passengers in a ship by skilful pilots, than they can have digestion, or any other bodily function in common, performed for them.

Protestants are divided in their interpretations of Scripture simply for the very same reason that Romans are. No interpretation can be universal; but just as each man understands some different idea from his neighbour by the word *home*, or *father*, or *mother*, according to his particular experiences, so is it and must it be with the Bible.

As for mistranslations, they are numerous, designed, and scandalous; but no real doctrine rests on isolated texts, and consequently no real doctrine is or can be affected by such. True doctrines are implied *throughout* the Bible, not founded on isolated mistranslations. Only *Church* doctrines are so founded.

As for private opinion, as it is called, a man has only his private opinion that he understands the priest's or Church's *explanation* of Scripture. Hence he is under an *additional* element of error in his judgment, because now he may both misunderstand the Scripture and the Church's explanation of Scripture.

However obscure Scripture may be to those who try to discern its import by learning and cleverness, instead of goodness and the light of truth—in fact, seek a carnal instead of a spiritual meaning, the Church's *guidance* (forefend us), voluminous as it is, is still more obscure. However, let everything have a fair trial. Let us see where we are to look to find what *is* the Church's explanation of Scripture, since we see, by the little work of



the ever-blessed Anthony Martini, Archbishop of Florence, 'On the Bible, and how it is used by (Roman) Catholics,' which work was blessed by Pope Pius VI., that the Church is uncertain of the authenticity and inspiration of the books she pronounces inspired (p. 14). On p. 10 they are inspired without doubt, not because *we* have the spirit of truth, and therefore know them to be so *now*, but because, from traditional records, it appears that the Church once thought so. Why? Did the Church know better three hundred years ago than now? or had she *more* of the spirit of truth then than now? I thought you quoted that promise in another place to prove that she is *now* infallible? why then go to obsolete records?

St Augustine himself said he would not have believed the four Gospels, as we have them, to be genuine had he been told it by the Church, so like are they to the twenty-one spurious Gospels; yet you quote St Augustine as an authority on other points.

This holy archbishop, p. 15, 16, says he would not believe himself that the Song of Solomon was inspired were it not that the Church says so. Let us now, therefore, turn to the Church and see what we are to master in order to know our religion and be able to understand our Bible, without the need of "doing His will" as a qualification.

It will perhaps be sufficient to append a brief catalogue of a few of the most prominent names; and when these have been mastered and their works committed to memory we can then proceed to a few more, and so go on unto salvation.

St Augustine alone is a pretty good store to master, and some of the following have written scores of volumes:—

St Augustine.  
 St Chrysostom.  
 St Ambrose.  
 St Anselm.  
 St Gregory the Great.  
 St Cyril of Jerusalem.  
 Father Liberius.  
 Estius.  
 Vega.  
 Allacius.  
 Medina.  
 St Peter Damian.  
 St Hippolytus.  
 Malvenda.  
 Silviera.  
 Liranus.  
 Didimus.  
 Bede.  
 Irenæus.  
 Theodoret.  
 St Basil.  
 St Athanasius.  
 St Epiphanius.  
 St Cyprian.  
 Father Suarez.  
 St Bonaventure.  
 St Laurence Justinian.  
 Silvius.  
 Valenza.

St Catherine of Bologna, vit.  
 Blossius.  
 St Euphrem of Syria.  
 Lactantius.  
 Silvius.  
 Origen.  
 Entimius.  
 Durandus.  
 St Hilary.  
 Eusebius Emissenus.  
 Dominicus Soto.  
 Bellarmin.  
 St Gregory of Nyssa.  
 Tertullian.  
 St Bernard.  
 Cardinal Gotti.  
 St Thomas.  
 St John Damascen.  
 Lessius.  
 Gabriel.  
 Concina.  
 St Bridget.  
 Rabanus.  
 St Andrew of Cæsarea.  
 Theophilactus.  
 Nicephorus.  
 Maffei.  
 Padovanus.

The above are just half the fathers, saints, &c., quoted by *one* Roman Catholic bishop, "Liguori"—that is, they are quoted between page 1 and page 115, in a book of 287 pages. Yet, after all that reading explanatory of Scripture, he has yet to learn that Scripture relates to the soul, not to the body—that the fall of Jerusalem and Babylonish captivity were not the fulfilment of prophecy, but *types* of the real fulfilment, which is spiritual—that Babylon means the Romish Church, not an earthly city, and Antichrist the same, as to priestly su-

premacv, not only in Revelation, but in the prophets wherever Babylon is treated of—that the signs of the end of the world refer to spiritual, not imaginary or terrestrial catastrophes primarily. Hence St Peter, Acts ii. 16-20, applies the words of Joel, Joel ii. 28-32, over which St Liguori blunders on p. 66, in these words which I quote from the English translation by a Roman Catholic clergyman :—

“The prophet Joel has declared the same : ‘The sun shall be turned into darkness, and the moon into blood, before the great and dreadful day of the Lord doth come.’ Hence St Thomas writes (and his opinion is commonly adopted by theologians) that this darkness of the sun will arise from the withdrawal or suspension of its light, as happened at the death of Jesus Christ. All this is confirmed by St John. ‘And,’ he says, ‘the sun became black as sackcloth of hair, and the moon became as blood’ (Apoc. vi. 12). This shows that the words of Joel, ‘the moon shall be turned into blood,’ mean that it will appear to have the colour of blood.”

Now we will give one more quotation again from St Liguori, a most learned and deeply read man, to show the lucidity of his teaching and the *perfect unanimity* of the Romish Church (called Babylon in the Bible). See p. 71. “With regard to the burning of the world, there is a great variety of opinions among the fathers and theologians. Some say that this consuming fire will come *before* the general resurrection ; others, that it will come after the resurrection, but before the coming of the Judge; others, along with St Augustine, think it will happen after the termination of the general judgment. I am so much confused by so many opinions which I have read that I know not which of them to adopt, and therefore I will only state what St Thomas says ; for in reality, as

St Augustine writes, all these opinions are very doubtful, and time and experience only will show which of them is true."

Here is a pretty conclusion to come to by the infallible guidance of Holy Church. Is this not enough? then read more of the same Bishop Liguori, for you cannot find a more learned author, or one who was better read in Holy Church's unanimous and infallible doctrines and traditions. Yet his views are so carnal that he never even suspects that there is an internal meaning, and that the holy Word of God treats not of carcasses but of souls, and things eternal. Let any man who knows the internal working of priestcraft read Liguori on Antichrist, and think of the Church of Rome, and he cannot but be struck by the wonderful applicability of the unconscious writer's remarks to his own sect.

That it is not lightly to be assumed that the sect of Rome, or Protestants, or any religious sect, taken wholesale, have the illumination necessary to interpret Scripture, even though they argue from plausible grounds that they *must* have it, and so on, may at least be suspected from such considerations as the following verses: Matthew xvi. 6, 7, 12; John xvi. 25, 29, 30, 31; Luke xxiv. 25, 27, especially verse 45,—where it is seen that even those who had been with our Lord all His life yet required to have their "*eyes opened*" before they could understand the spiritual meaning of Scripture, and were constantly blundering as the present churches do, by applying what was said of things spiritual, and therefore lasting and important, to matters which are terrestrial, and therefore transient and comparatively unimportant. The true Church consists of a spiritual body composed of good men, elect or selected, or chosen out, not *arbitrarily*, but on account of the life they acquire

to themselves in this world ; these men all have the one bond of union in common, that they love what is *good* and *true* even as imperfectly seen here, and though their bodies may never enter the same house of worship, yet their spirits are united, and they are thus members of the true Catholic Church, whether they can argue fluently or not on unimportant details. The meaning of the word *church* is therefore utterly misconceived by those who imagine it to apply to this sect or that sect ; for the Church is not of the nature of a sect, or worldly congregation, or set of congregations ; and to group members of the real Church into such congregations produces—first, persecution—secondly, mixture of bad with the good, and hence a gradual deterioration of the whole.

It may be objected that it is incredible that the Scripture should have been given and the true meaning at the same time withheld ; but this is not only not incredible, but is what our Lord himself repeatedly says. The Jews also had the Word of God, but never understood it wholesale. Had the internal meaning of Scripture been revealed, the same sects that now call themselves “the Church,” to the mutual exclusion of each other, and prostitute the literal sense of the Bible to prove it, would have done the same with the internal sense, and would hence have induced a more intense darkness as to truth than they have even now succeeded in doing.

Each man should make the best use he can of the means God has given him. Unanimity is of less consequence than truth ; for unanimity will and must result from truth ; but conversely, truth does not follow from unanimity. Our Lord says : “They have Moses and the prophets ;” “search the Scriptures ;” “searching the Scriptures to see whether these things are so ;” “seek

ye out of the book of Jehovah and read ;” “cursed is he that continueth not in all things written in the book of the law to do them,” &c. Thus the Old and New Testament show alike that the Bible is meant to be known and acted on. If there are mistranslations, still they will do less harm than the garblings of priestcraft, unchecked by the Bible, would do. “He gave some apostles, then prophets, thirdly teachers, then, &c., but *no Bibles! no Bibles!*—so the Papists triumphantly quote, ignoring the falsehood contained and implied by such quoting. The Bible was not kept secret in those times, as Acts xvii. 11, xviii. 24, 28, plainly do show.

The latter text also, taken in conjunction with Acts x. 47, 48, will show that the true Church is not an exclusive sect—but is catholic or universal—that a man may have the choicest gifts of the Holy Spirit without being baptised a Protestant, much less a Roman Catholic; and that men who knew nothing of priestly intricacies could yet speak with tongues, be “mighty in the Scriptures,” and “cast out devils in our Lord’s name” (Mark ix. 38, 39, 40), and be *acknowledged* by our Lord.

It was always implied that all had access to the Scripture, hence it was not specifically enjoined as preaching was, because, also, printing had not then been invented; for the holy writers, though inspired, were not *omniscient* on that account, and human language is of necessity such that it is capable of piecemeal perversion.

Swedenborg says, the reason the internal sense is now pointed out, and the attention of those who will hear drawn to it, is because the end of the Romish Church has wellnigh come, and only those who are well disposed and good at heart will recognise and accept the internal meaning of Scripture; of others, some will ridicule the notion, and others will reason whether it be so or no,

trying to see from reasonings instead of from goodness and truth, and hence will remain blind to it.

The object of revealing that there is an internal sense, and teaching, as Swedenborg does, what that meaning is, is to separate the good from the bad ; the good will accept it,—the bad will laugh it to scorn. Such a separation must take place before the end of the present Church on earth can take place.

It is evidently out of the power of human language to set fallacies at rest once and for ever. As the human mind in each individual progresses either in good or evil and cannot stand still, so, when the fallacies of the day are exposed, it is vain to hope that new and more elaborate errors will not spring up. All man can do is to *suggest* where truth may be found, and then leave it to those who do not take it for granted that they received all truth once for all in baptism externally at the priest's hands, and hence have no further need to seek it and its light, that they may consider which is the true view of religion. Perhaps it may serve to show how easily any confirmed false views may be made to override the truth, if we take an imaginary argument by one who has principled himself in a strong persuasion that the errors of present sects are the light of God's truth ; and give his argument as fairly as we can, just as he would state it, and then show wherein the fallacy of it lies ; but it is a sheer impossibility to do this with all or many such arguments ; *one* must serve for illustration of the tone and nature of all such reasonings. His argument will be something of this sort :—

“To say nothing of the arrogance and presumption of a private individual who ventures to set the Church right on what it should believe, it only requires that the stupidest man should read the farrago of blasphemy con-

tained in these pages to see how futile mere subtlety of reasoning is when opposed to what God has been pleased to reveal to us. Why, the book contradicts and refutes itself over and over again ; there is no need to answer it. It is only what we are accustomed to find and have always seen to be the case with those who from pride or infatuation oppose themselves to Holy Church ; they lead us to greater absurdities than those they thoughtlessly condemn in the Church. I think it quite enough to convince any one of the worthlessness of the views enunciated if we turn to page.....and see what is taught. The sum of it is that because the Church *may* be mistaken in its aggregate opinion, *therefore* a man is less likely to be mistaken in his solitary opinion—that after all a man's private judgment is the final court of appeal. What has private judgment done as yet for us ? Why, it has given rise to all the heresies which have ever distracted and rent asunder God's Church."

Such might be the declamation of an opponent of these views and suggestions, when put into strong and somewhat coarse language, for we aim rather at meaning than at terms.

And all this is plausible enough, and to a merely clever man is unanswerable ; but bring it to the light of truth, and what do we then see ?

1. That there is a real guidance of God's Spirit, which is attainable by desiring it and feeling the want of it.

2. That this guidance is not imaginary but real, and is given to individuals, not to masses wholesale.

3. That this Spirit of Truth is the Testimony of God. See 1 John v. 9, 10, Rev. xix. 10, John xvi. 13, Rev. xii. 17, John xv. 26.

4. That the *Church* and its *teaching*, ay, and the Bible too, is only the testimony of *man* as long as man



only assents to it because he has been told to do so, and that it is very naughty indeed not to think so ; and the Bible itself only becomes the testimony of *God* when man seeks and finds truths in it and acts on them, assenting to their truth, and acknowledging them to *be* truths, from the *spirit of truth* in him, not because *men say* they are to be received as truths, or because it is disreputable to deny them. No natural man can possibly believe the Bible. He will say that he thinks the moral precepts in the Bible are capital rules for life, and with barbarous nations it was perhaps advisable to found them on fabulous and supernatural narrations, or it was unavoidable that they should be so mixed up with fable ; but as to looking for a worthy meaning hidden in the words of the natural sense, he would not dream of it, for he would say at once, "If there is a meaning, what is the use of hiding it?" Though even analogy might show him that as in nature and humanity, so much more in God's word, it is probable that there is more to be found than meets the eye of fools or careless men at first glance.

It is a fundamental error to assume that God will not give light to those who seek it ; that the Holy Spirit is unattainable by private prayer ; that all men got the Holy Spirit and all the light possible in baptism, and therefore none require teaching after baptism ; that the light which God gives in answer to prayer is to be despised and spoken of contemptuously as "private judgment," because there is the widest possible difference between real private judgment—namely, that of a natural and carnal-minded man, and the understanding enlightened by the Spirit of Truth—otherwise the sacred writers themselves may be accused justly of heresy, for there was a church in their time, and they wrote against it.

5. Unanimity in external worship is no test of truth ; were it so, there is not a heathen religion that is not truer than Christianity. Hence Roman Catholics argue, as usual, plausibly, but falsely. Men in a sect may as easily, or more easily, differ in their minds on the Church's explanation of Scripture than on the Scripture itself, and their senses may as easily be deceived as to the priest's words as our Lord's words. Hence man cannot escape using his private judgment, and it is only a question whether he will apply it to the unmistakable words of God, or to those of the priest.

A man *must* form his own faith, though it is a gift of God, just as he forms and cannot escape forming his own life and character, though all men live only from God.

Faith is founded on living and actual experience of God's ways, not on reasonings. Any one who knows the difference between *ἐλεγχος*, founded on experience of facts, and *μαρτύριον*, evidence which might be strong or weak, true or false, and who will read Heb. xi. 1 to the end, will confess this.

6. St John must have forgotten (in Rev. xii. 17) that man need not keep the commandments *now*. According to the Church, he need only remember to say that our Lord kept them—because he is justified by faith, not by works ; and this means that he is therefore at liberty to break the commandments now, being not under the law, but under grace. Romans ii. 1-12, 13, 14, 21, 22, 23, 25, 26 ; xiii. 3, 8, 9, 10, and a host of others, are doubtless mistakes, for the same reason.

7. The practice of preaching or teaching one's betters wholesale at stated intervals, whether the preacher has anything to say worth saying or not ; whether he is in a position and capability to teach his hearers or not, is a

mistake. It may have once been good, it has now become a farce in nine cases out of ten.

If a man wants light he might go to a man whom he knew to be good, and ask him ; and the good man might explain his views to his best ability ; but such preaching as at present is practised is almost useless. In fact, whenever matters of religion degenerate into matters of routine, the spirit leaves them. And, instead of waiting till they think they have the spirit, the way is, to preach as a matter of course ; if with the light from above, so much the better, and if without it, so much the worse ; but anyhow, to preach.

As long as sermons are exacted by the yard or by the three-quarters of an hour, quality will be sacrificed to routine and quantity.

And as long as men make sincerity in prayer to consist in using a set form of words, and, if they are earnest, *trying to mean what they say*, instead of *trying to say what they mean*, they commit an error.

Fancy a person confessing to a priest as a sin that his thoughts had been wandering while he was addressing God ! Yet that is what it has come to, and the man is presumptuous, egotistical, and arrogant, who says you do not know what addressing God means if you could say such a thing.

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*Note.*—In two criticisms kindly offered by friends, it has been objected to a statement on page 29, line 32, &c., that the gender and personality of the Holy Spirit are indicated in the Bible in such passages as John xvi. 13, 14 ; also, xiv. 26 ; xv. 26. This, however, is not so ; *ἐκείνος* is only indicative of propinquity—*ὅς* or *ὃς* might imply personality and gender, but they are never used of the Holy Spirit ; *ἐκεῖνος* (if not spurious) agrees with the word *παράκλητος*, just as *ὃ* agrees with the word *πνεῦμα*, neuter, “*which* the Father will send,” in verse 26, and verses 16 and 17, mistranslated “*whom*.”

Also, the quotation on page 24, line 20, is not meant for any *one* saying of our Lord's, but an abstract or condensed statement of several promises,—such as Matt. vii. 24 ; John vii. 17 ; Luke vi. 47 ; xi. 28 ; John viii. 47 ; xiv. 15, 23, 24 ; xv. 10, 14, and elsewhere ; also, John viii., 31, 32, 43, 47.

With regard to the former criticism, our transcribers were such as would not have scrupled to insert a word or alter a word to prove the personality of the Holy Spirit, therefore all such proofs are insecure, and least of all to be depended on. Nevertheless the Bible is still reliable for the good, for they, and they alone, can, if they look for it, see the interior teaching in verses whose natural sense appears not worth garbling in the eyes of a natural, worldly-minded, or merely scientific, critic.

The real teaching of the Bible is not such as is liable to be affected by such mutilations ; were it so we might suppose our salvation in danger because we have lost the "Book of the Wars of Jehovah," an historical form, and the "Book of Enunciations," the "Book of Jasher," "the Book of Solomon," "the Book of Nathan," and others quoted in 2 Paraleipomena ix. 29 ; or because Holy Church has included books which are not really inspired in her canon—the inspired books being the following : The five books of Moses, Joshua, Judges, the two books of Samuel, the two books of Kings, Psalms (of David), the prophets Isaiah, Jeremiah, Lamentations, Ezekiel, Daniel, Hosea, Joel, Amos, Obadiah, Jonah, Micah, Nahum, Habakkuk, Zephaniah, Haggai, Zechariah, Malachi, Matthew, Mark, Luke, John, and the Apocalypse. The rest have not the internal sense alluded to, though written by inspired men, for they were not *dictated*.

THE END.



BLAIR ATHOLE, 28th February 1867.

DEAR SIR,—I venture to address you on a subject on which, I see by an advertisement in ‘The Times,’ we are mutually engaged—namely, *Puseyism*. I too was a Puseyite, though I only saw the worst of priestly intricacies afterwards. In my work entitled ‘Priestcraft’ I have shown the falsity and abuses of confession, but not in *detail*, as I hope you are doing, for before this monstrous evil can be put down, some well-authenticated cases of abuse must be made public; and you know that the priests’ security lies in the fact that, besides a *mortal* sin—which the penitent incurs by divulging aught of what transpires at confession—there is this consideration, that he or she accuses herself *too* in coming forward. Where then is the individual of sufficient strength of mind to say, “I will bear the shame, I will at least make it impossible for priests to delude more of the weak-minded and ignorant, by coming boldly forward and disclosing all that took place, both at my confession and penance”?

Such confession as High Church and Roman Catholics enjoin is nowhere mentioned in the Bible. The one invariable word used is *ὁμολογεῖν*, and this word merely means to *assent* or *agree* or *harmonise*; never to *divulge* to a priest in secret. To “confess the Lord Jesus” is to harmonise the character to His, to “let that mind be in you which also was in Christ Jesus” (Philippians ii. 5); not to assert stoutly that He *really did* exist, or *really does* exist.

If the word *confess* is used in its old sense, to *say together*, or agree, it is an allowable translation of *ὁμολογεῖν*; but what we *now* mean by confessing to a priest is as far from *ὁμολόγησις* as scandalous mistranslation can make it.

The words in John xx. 23 are completely mistranslated; so also are Matthew xviii. 18 and xvi. 19. *Δεδέμενα* are *past*, not *future*; and the whole is an injunction, not a promise. You may or may not have seen the black-guardism which young gentlemen and ladies are taught to meditate on and divulge to the priest on the strength of these verses; and if you try to obtain the books I name to you, instead of the 'Prayer-Book for the Young,' they will send you 'Prayers for Young Persons,' by the Bishop of Carlisle; and if you ask for the 'Daily Companion,' they will send you Bishop Forbes's 'Companion to the Altar,' or some such equally harmless work, or pretend that the work you seek is out of print, if you know too much to be misled. So instead of giving you a reference, I transcribe for you a passage as a sample of the filthiness indulged in under the head of "allowing the penitents to *open their grief* to a priest." I need not tell you that questions *are* asked, and details elicited, for *that* you are sure to know, and their own books amply do testify.

When one can appeal from such filthiness to that which every honest man knows "naturally as a brute beast" (Jude 10), it is indeed high time to revise the system, and put a check of common decency on the priests. For though decency is not *superior* to religion, and could not teach religion, yet no religion is *contrary* to decency any more than it can be *contrary* to honesty or morality, for it implies all three, and *more*.

Our Lord gave us never a hint about mysteries, nunneries, and inviolable oaths of secrecy in the religion

He once for all delivered. He speaks of no endless and irreconcilable traditions necessary to supplement His teaching, and committed to "holy" priests; on the contrary, he says (John xviii. 19-21) what seems exceedingly little accordant with such obscurations of doctrine. Hence, as long as secrecy and artificial mystery are made to characterise any part of priestcraft, so long will its doctrine and practice be held in doubt and disapprobation by every good and true man.

I am almost afraid you will render your book unreadable if you insert the following in full; however, it is a less evil that gentlemanly and ladylike feelings should be shocked at an evil than that they should find the pestilence ensconced under what they thought was the throne of God—the very threshold of mercy.

'Daily Companion,' page 176: "Have you been guilty of fornication, or adultery, or *incest*, or any *sin against nature*, either with a person of the *same sex*, or with any *other creature*? How often? Have you been guilty of *self-pollution* or of *immodest touches* of yourself? How often? &c. Have you abused the marriage-bed by any *actions contrary to the order of nature*? or by any *pollution, &c. &c.*," *usque ad nauseam*. I think this is enough; if such filth is to be dabbled in, in order to leave off sin, it is, to say the least, a new way of doing the work of repentance, and one which does not promise to be successful. If you expose these things, you render your own work unreadable; if, on the other hand, you merely *allude* to them, priests show duplicate books, which they furnish to outsiders who are not yet safely in their toils, and who therefore are only admitted to the *exoteric* doctrines, which are harmless, plausible, and, to look at, *most excellent*; and thus they *prove* your quotations and



allusions to be utterly malevolent and untrue. Of course, they never try indecent questions with respectable elderly females—no one accuses them of *that*. Hence there are always plenty such ready to come forward and deny the allegations. But, unfortunately, like garotting in railway carriages, though no one supposes, or ever said, that every traveller in a first-class carriage is a garotter, yet the fact that robbery and murder *have been* committed and *can be* committed any day with impunity, is quite sufficient to justify exposure of a vicious and dangerous *system*. And it is the *system*, not Dr Pusey, or any one individual, that we condemn. Hence the usual disproof of these things is as foolish as if I were to say, "I have travelled in a train without being garotted, therefore the assertion that such things have been, and may still be, done in trains is a wicked falsehood."

Wishing you and your object most hearty success, I am, dear sir, yours most sincerely,

FRANK ROBERTSON.

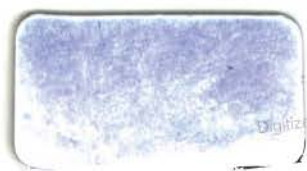
The passages on confession are "*argumenta ad hominem*"—that is, they *grant* the priestly interpretation of *confession*, for the sake of argument; and show that even *then* their horrible mental extortions are miserably opposed to Scripture, which they have made of none effect by their tradition.

It is not only the details, but the whole spirit of the religion taught by the priests, which is utterly opposed to that taught by our Lord; just as the Pharisees had amplified God's religion committed to them into extravagant and vain details which lost the spirit. What a difference is there between the endless cataloguings of sins, with their classifications, and undergoing punish-

ments, and taking *revenge* upon sin in ourselves, voluntary penances, acts of mortification, &c., as taught by modern priests, and the religion which God accepted in Samuel, in David, in Joseph, or such as is implied in Luke xviii. 17; Mark ix. 36, 37; Luke ix. 47, 48; Matthew xviii. 3, &c. When a man *leaves off sin*, which he *can* do, he then, and not till then, becomes what is called "*innocent*;" and this state of deliberate and purposed *abstinence from sin*, or innocence, is the state typified in the above texts by a *little boy*, in which state alone the kingdom of God can be received; not that mere abstinence from sin, without purpose or faith, is sufficient—Romans iii. 20-22—in itself; but it is the necessary condition of receiving the gift of God, when mixed with faith—Heb. iv. 2.

What a difference between the unattainable and impossible exactions of modern priestcraft, and the daily life of such men as Abraham, the "friend of God," Jacob, Joseph, Daniel, Amos, or any one of those of whom we have record! They engaged in the usual avocations of this life, and some of them had very heavy duties connected with the administration of government.

We nowhere hear of penances except in one place, and there *strongly condemned*—Isaiah lviii. 3 to 5, "Behold, in the day of your *fast* ye find pleasure, and make an exaction of your penances." But one single expression is not enough. Read the whole chapter continuously in the original, and see whether it bears out such a view of religion as holy priestcraft teaches.



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