



CHRISTIANITY

COMPARED WITH POPERY:

A LECTURE,

DELIVERED BEFORE THE LAUNCESTON CHRISTIAN
UNION, JUNE 17, 1846.

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LONDON:
PUBLISHED BY J. MASON, 14, CITY-ROAD;
SOLD AT 66, PATERNOSTER-ROW.

1848.

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London : R. Needham, Printer, Paternoster-Row.

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CHRISTIANITY COMPARED WITH POPERY.

WE are to bring before you this evening the contrast which subsists between Christianity and Popery. We designate the system of religion taught by the Church of Rome "Popery," not from a disposition to employ a reproachful epithet, but because we know not of a term more expressive, and less objectionable. The term "Catholicism," assumed by that Church, we ought not to employ, as it inflicts a wrong upon those apostolic churches that were never in communion with the Church of Rome, and that protested against her schismatic assumptions in calling her chief Pastor the Universal Bishop, and herself the Catholic Church. It may be thought invidious and illiberal to contrast Christianity with Popery; but we believe the defection of the Church of Rome to be so extensive, as to divest her of the essential properties of the Christian institute. We are to consider Popery as a

system. We do not wish to dwell upon its professors. We should be sorry to conclude that no Papists are Christians; but we do think that they are so in spite of the stumbling-blocks and trammels of the system. We do not say that the system itself contains no Christian truth; but we shall have to allude to a cumbrous load of heresies, which buries and paralyses the faith once delivered to the saints, and presents a form of anti-Christian error and spiritual despotism, against which every lover of truth ought firmly to protest. We have no uncharitable feeling towards the members of the Romish Church: it is not to grieve them that we would show the dangerous labyrinth in which an assumed and despotic priesthood has involved them; the circumstances of the times demand that a warning voice should be uplifted, and that the members of our churches should be guarded against the encroachments of error.

The time allotted for this service will compel a limited line of contrast to be drawn, and demand brevity in adverting to the various positions we lay down. In our statements of what Popery is, we shall confine ourselves to their authorized standards of doctrine and discipline,—the Decrees of Councils—Bulls of Popes—the authorized formularies

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of devotion, as explained by some of their most eminent advocates. This test is peculiarly applicable to a Church claiming infallibility. Butler, in his book of the Roman Catholic Church, declares it a tenet of their creed, "that what their faith ever has been, such it was from the beginning, such it now is, and such it ever will be." Drs. Doyle and Murray, in their evidence before the House of Lords, declared, "that the most approved and authentic summary of the Roman Catholic Church is found in the decrees of the Council of Trent, and in the profession of Pius IV." Dr. Milner also stated, that Pope Pius's creed is everywhere recited, and professed in the strict letter. We cannot, therefore, be charged with misrepresenting the system, while we confine ourselves to documents of this class; and *our quotations from Scripture will be from the Douay Bible.*

The first point of contrast we would institute is in the **RULE OF FAITH**. Christianity furnishes an apostolic foundation for maintaining the purity of faith and morals. Popery has substituted a fallible, unauthorized, and uncertain rule of faith, which tends to progressive corruption.

Christ is the author of our faith. On the Mount of Transfiguration he was proclaimed

by his Father the sole Prophet and Lawgiver of mankind. He selected twelve Apostles, to whom he committed the truth. On completing his personal ministry, he said to them, "All things whatsoever I have heard of my Father I have made known to you."* In his sacrificial prayer, alluding to these chosen Apostles, he said, "The words which thou gavest me I have given to them, and they have received them, and have known in very deed that I came out from thee, and they have believed that thou didst send me."† He commissioned these Apostles to be the authorized expounders of the divine will; pledged the immediate inspiration of the Holy Spirit to bring to their remembrance all things that he had said to them, and to teach them all saving truth;‡ and the miraculous gifts of the Spirit, to attest the validity of their commission. The authority they received was absolute. Christ gave to them "the keys of the kingdom of heaven;" said to them, "Whatsoever ye shall bind on earth shall be bound also in heaven, and whatsoever ye shall loose on earth shall be loosed also in heaven."§ "When the Son of Man shall sit on the seat of his Majesty, you also shall sit on twelve

* John xv. 15.

† John xvii. 8.

‡ John xiv. 26.

§ Matt. xviii. 18.

seats, judging the twelve tribes of Israel.”* After his resurrection he said to the Apostles, “As the Father has sent me, I also send you. When he had said this, he breathed on them, and said to them, Receive ye the Holy Ghost: whose sins you shall forgive, they are forgiven them; and whose sins you shall retain, they are retained.”† They were thus empowered to declare those truths by which the salvation of mankind should be regulated, the terms on which alone divine forgiveness and grace should be bestowed. It was with reference to this absolute apostolic authority that St. Paul declared, “God shall judge the secrets of men by Jesus Christ according to my Gospel;”‡ and in his Epistle to the Galatians i. 9, “If any one preach to you a gospel, besides that which you have received, let him be anathema.” Hence the church is represented as “built upon the foundation of the Apostles and Prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner-stone.”§ “The twelve foundations of the New Jerusalem have in them the names of the twelve Apostles of the Lamb.”|| To settle the canon of divine truth then was their *exclusive prerogative*. When endued with power from on

* Matt. xix. 28. † John xx. 21—23. ‡ Rom. ii. 16.

§ Eph. ii. 20.

|| Rev. xxi. 14.

high, they proclaimed this truth, appealing to their miraculous gifts, and their power to confer those gifts on others, as God's seal to the truth of their doctrines. They have left us these truths in writing, and thus afforded an incorruptible means of their preservation, that after their decease, as St. Peter says, we may have whereby we can keep a memory of these things.* The four Gospels contain the life and teachings of Christ; the Acts of the Apostles give the substance of their sermons, the truths by which persons were converted to the faith; and the Epistles contain expositions of the same truths, and of those taught to converted individuals. The Jewish Scriptures were authorized by both Christ and his Apostles, and were appealed to to establish doctrines. So that in the Old and New Testaments we have God's authorized word, the only foundation for faith and morals. We call it the *only foundation*, because there are no other writings by individuals bearing these *divine credentials*. The different churches planted by the Apostles carefully collected these writings together, and affixed to them their testimony to their authority; and these apostolic records were incessantly appealed to by the early Fathers as being the

* 2 Pet. i. 15.

only ground of legitimate appeal to determine divine truth. When we refer to the Scriptures as the only foundation for faith and practice, we do not mean that this is the only means of instruction and edification. Christ has instituted a stated ministry,—a succession of pastors and teachers,—and he blesses the communion of saints with each other, and renders their various talents mutually edifying; but the Bible is to furnish the material for the pulpit, and is a test to which we are authorized to bring all doctrines and precepts. Ministers are to “preach the word,” and the people are to reject those who “bring not this doctrine.” The written word secures the orthodoxy of oral instruction, and protects the people against being turned aside unto another gospel; and thus Divine Providence has afforded a brief, simple, and comprehensive means of preserving the purity of faith and morals.

Popery, however, has not been contented with God's written word. The key of knowledge has been snatched out of the Apostles' hands, and buried in a fallible, unauthorized, and uncertain rule of faith, which admits of progressive corruption. Several uninspired books have been interwoven with the canonical Scriptures; the traditions of men have been placed in the same rank with the oracles of

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God; and the authority of the Church (or Clergy) is claimed to fix the only meaning that is to be attached to the word of God itself.

The Council of Trent, in the 4th session, after enumerating the books of Tobit, Judith, Wisdom, Ecclesiasticus, Baruch, and the 1st and 2d Maccabees, with the books of Scripture, issues the following decree:—"Whoever shall not receive as sacred and canonical all these books, and every part of them, as they are commonly read in the Catholic Church, and are contained in the old vulgar Latin edition, let him be accursed." These books are intermingled with the writings of the Old Testament, as though they had ever been acknowledged as canonical; whereas they never formed a part of the Jewish Scriptures: they are not contained in the catalogue of the inspired books given by Josephus the Jewish historian; they were never alluded to by our Saviour or his Apostles; nor are the Jews charged with mutilating the sacred volume, which they would have been had they excluded canonical books then existing. The early Fathers, on whose authority the Church of Rome lays so much stress, exclude them from the canon. According to Du Pin, an eminent Popish historian, they were not admitted into the sacred canon during the first 378.

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God, as embracing the Scriptures, and unwritten tradition preserved by the Catholic Church in continued succession ; and demands for tradition an equal veneration with the Scriptures. The Douay Bible, on 2 Timothy iii. 16, contains the following note :—“ Every part of divine Scripture is certainly profitable for all these ends. But if we would have the whole rule of Christian faith and practice, we must not be content with those Scriptures which Timothy knew from his infancy, that is, with the Old Testament alone : nor yet with the New Testament, without taking along with it the traditions of the Apostles and the interpretation of the Church, to which the Apostles delivered both the book and the true meaning of it.” Dr. Milner, in his *End of Controversy*, says,—“ The Catholic rule of faith is not merely the written word of God, but the whole word of God written and unwritten : in other words, Scripture and tradition,—and these propounded and explained by the Catholic Church.” “ This implies that we have a two-fold rule or law, and that we have an interpreter or judge to explain it and decide upon it in all doubtful points.” * Dr. Wiseman, in his lectures on the Catholic Church, † says, in substance, that by the unwritten word of God

* Lect. x. p. 53.

† Lect. iii. p. 60, 61.

they mean a body of doctrines which, in consequence of express declarations in the written word, they believe not to have been committed to writing, but delivered by Christ to his Apostles, and by the Apostles to their successors. These doctrines are received from the Church, (that is the Clergy,) with implicit credit, as the authorized teaching of Christ; because of Christ's promise to be with the Apostles and their successors. He says we are not to suppose that these doctrines are nowhere recorded; for if a doubtful point arise, a Council of the Church is convened, and the Fathers of different countries and ages are consulted, and a decision is arrived at; that decision he considers cannot be false or incorrect, as it would argue the failure of Christ's promises to his Church. Hence the Creed of Pope Pius contains the following declarations:—“I acknowledge the holy Catholic and Apostolic Roman Church, the mother and mistress of all churches; and I promise and swear true obedience to the Roman Bishop, the successor of St. Peter, the Prince of the Apostles, and the Vicar of Jesus Christ.” “I also profess and undoubtedly receive all other things delivered, defined, and declared by the Sacred Canons and General Councils, and particularly by the holy Council of Trent; and likewise I

also condemn, reject, and anathematize all things contrary thereto, and all heresies whatsoever, condemned, rejected, and anathematized by the Church."

The Popish rule of faith, then, is Scripture, including the Apocrypha, Tradition, Canons, and Decrees of Councils; and all as interpreted by the Clergy. The tradition itself is in the hands of the Clergy; and its correctness is to be determined by the writings of the Fathers, and especially by the Bulls of Popes, and the Decrees of Councils. The warrant the people have for receiving them is, the infallibility of the Church. The foundation of this superstructure is baseless: the Apostles were infallible in their teaching, but there was no promise that their successors in the ministry should be, only so far as they abide by apostolic truth. The Scripture passages on which the claim to infallibility rests, are insufficient to afford proof; and there are scriptural and historical facts which completely annihilate the Popish construction put upon them. Our Saviour's address to Peter in his confession of faith is adduced: "Thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it."* Instead of the church being built upon the doctrine of

* Matt. xvi. 18.

Christ's deity, which Peter had confessed, it is contended that it was upon Peter's person, as a reward for this confession; that he was thus constituted the supreme Pastor in the church of Christ, and that a plenitude of authority to determine matters of faith and discipline was vested in him and his successors; and that the gates of hell not prevailing against it, alludes to the *infallibility* which would always characterize the church under this pastorate. That this view was never intended by our Saviour, or understood by the Apostles, is evident, from the fact, that after this circumstance, the dispute arose who should be the greatest; and our Saviour emphatically condemned such ideas of lordship, and asserted their equality under him as their sole Master. An allusion is also made to our Saviour's address to Peter after his resurrection:—" Lovest thou me more than these? feed my lambs; feed my sheep." It is argued, that his chief pastorship required a larger amount of love, and that he was set over Pastors and people. The address, however, had evident allusion to his self-confident assertion, "Though all men forsake thee, yet will not I." Peter, instead of being flattered, was grieved at this pointed and repeated challenge of his love, because he felt its allusion to his grievous fall. . It was

his personal restoration to office as an Apostle and Pastor in the church. It would be a monstrous application of the language to consider the rest of the Apostles as sheep, and the church as lambs. We are expressly informed that Judas, by transgression, fell from his apostolate. Peter, by transgression, fell also; but, in this instance, we have his formal restoration to office.

That Peter never assumed the supremacy, is evident from the Acts of the Apostles. James presided at the meeting of Apostles at Jerusalem, and gave the decision in the case respecting the Gentiles, although Peter was there, and spoke on the occasion. The other Apostles sent Peter and John forth on a mission; they called Peter to account for preaching to the Gentiles. The Apostle Paul says, he was not a whit behind the very chiefest Apostles; and alludes to Peter, James, and John, as seeming to be pillars. He withstood Peter to the face, and reprehended him for his momentary weakness, and unfaithfulness in dissimulating.

And while there was no supremacy ceded, it must not be from that passage we date Peter's *personal infallibility*; for, immediately after, he erred so grossly on a matter of faith, that our Lord rebuked him strongly for the worldliness

of his conceptions. We allow that Peter was infallible on the day of Pentecost, and, in accordance with his constitutional temperament, a prominent Apostle of the Lord; but it was in connexion with his brethren, and by virtue of a common commission, the signatures of which were evident, to give binding importance to their testimony.

That the churches planted by the Apostles were not infallible in their Pastors, although the immediate successors of the Apostles, and only could be preserved from heresy by a faithful adherence to apostolic teaching, might be illustrated by every epistle addressed to them. The Galatian Churches are charged with being turned aside to another gospel. The Thessalonian Church had erred respecting the second coming of Christ. The Colossian Church is warned to beware, lest any man spoil them through philosophy and vain deceit, after the traditions of men, after the rudiments of the world, and not after Christ. The Apostle in addressing the Bishops of the Church at Ephesus, predicts that of their own selves men should arise speaking perverse things. Was the Church of Rome less fallible? Read the eleventh chapter of St. Paul's Epistle, and you will discover that the apostasy of the Jewish Church is alluded to in terms of emphatic

warning ; and the Apostle declares that nothing but faithfulness can preserve her from a similar apostasy, and dreadful abandonment. The seven Churches of Asia, in the Apocalypse, are addressed, not as being under one chief pastorate, but as separate and independent Churches, under their one Master, Christ, who is head over all things to his church ; and they are all either charged with defection, or warned as liable to it.

If we leave the word of God, and investigate the channels through which the stream of infallibility is said to flow, we shall find a mass of contradictions, displaying the utter falsehood of the claim. The Church of Rome knew nothing of any superiority in her Bishop in the first ages of the Church. St. Jerome, in his Epistle to Evagrius, speaks of the Church of Rome as merely occupying a place amongst the other churches, and declares the Bishops of each to have equal authority : he strongly condemns practices which had crept into the Church at Rome. He refers to the Presbyters of Alexandria from the time of Mark the Evangelist, as choosing their own Bishop, and ordaining him, in order to maintain unity in their midst ; Stillingfleet adduces a passage from Eutychus, the Patriarch of Alexandria, to the same effect.

It is not yet decided authoritatively where the seat of infallibility centres. Some say in the Pope, as the successor of St. Peter; others in the Pope, at the head of a Council; others, in a General Council alone. Take either definition, and history annihilates the claim. Is it in the Pope, as St. Peter's successor? The lineal descent cannot be traced up by the Church of Rome. It is questionable whether Peter ever resided in Rome, or had any special oversight over the church there: the mass of scriptural evidence is against it. His successors are variously stated;* but supposing Peter was at Rome, and the succession-list could be satisfactorily made out, they could not inherit his apostolic qualifications, and so can furnish no proofs of infallible guidance. If we refer to the list of Romish Bishops, we shall see Pope arrayed against Pope, and some of them

* "Respecting the first Bishops of Rome, authors are not agreed. Eusebius, writing in the fourth century, complains, that, being the first to venture upon the inquiry into the successions of the Apostles, he felt like one that was 'attempting a desert and untrodden path,' and that he was utterly unable to find even 'the bare traces of those who had gone before him, save here and there some slight marks discernible like signals from afar.' And in the latter part of his work, speaking of the labours of St. Peter and St. Paul, he admits that he knows nothing of the persons who laboured with them, especially in Asia, except what may be learned from Paul's epistles."—*Dublin University Magazine*.

characters so depraved as to deny to them any scriptural claim to divine connexion. Pope Gregory VIII. decreed that whoever assumed the title of Universal Bishop was the forerunner of Antichrist: three years after, the title was assumed by Boniface III. Sixtus in the year 1590, published an edition of Jerome's Vulgate, to change, or add to, or omit any part of which was forbidden, on the pain of the greater excommunication; yet within three years of this decree Clement VIII. suppressed the edition of Sixtus, and brought out one of his own, in which there were more than 2000 variations. Eleutherius and Victor both sanctioned the heresy of Montanus, who declared himself to be the Paraclete whom our Lord promised to send to his disciples. Marcellus relapsed into heathenism, and for a season sacrificed to Pagan idols. Liberius and Felix were both Arian deniers of Christ's Deity. Zosimus was a Pelagian, denying original sin, and the necessity of renewing grace. Vigilius obtained the see by bribery, banished the Bishop who had been canonically elected, favoured the Servian heresy, and changed his opinions four times. Honorius I. determined in favour of the Monothelite heresy, and condemned the orthodox Bishops. John XII., although not in holy orders, at the age of 378.

sixteen was placed by Alberius his father, a Roman Consul, in St. Peter's chair. Cardinal Baronius designates him "a monster of iniquity:" he was convicted of simony, perjury, sacrilege, murder, and blasphemy; and deposed by the Emperor Otho, who appointed Leo VIII. in his room. He attempted by force to resume the chair; but while the Emperor was preparing to make an example of him, he fell a sacrifice to the vengeance of a dishonoured husband. John XVIII. was a layman. His successor, Benedict IX., bought the Papacy in the tenth year of his age; and after being expelled by the Romans for his awful profligacy, and again securing it, finding his seat endangered, sold his right and title to infallibility to the ignorant and unlettered Gregory VI. John XXIII., after purchasing the cardinalate, poisoned his predecessor Alexander V. He was eventually deposed for his various crimes. Alexander VI., after disgracing himself by various debaucheries and cruelties, by a righteous re-action of Divine Providence, poisoned himself through taking by mistake something he had prepared for his Cardinals, who were invited to an entertainment with him. Onuphrius, a learned Italian, in his Chronicles of the Popes, acknowledges no less than thirty different schisms in the Papal see. And

Macguire the Priest, in his discussion with Pope, admits that there are eleven Popes, whose conduct and lives can be arraigned as absolutely criminal. Were there fewer, view them in connexion with God's declaration in in the 50th Psalm: "But to the sinner God hath said, Why dost thou declare my justices and take my covenant in thy mouth, seeing thou hast hated discipline, and hast cast my words behind thee;" with our Saviour's command,—“Beware of false prophets who come to you in the clothing of sheep, but inwardly they are ravening wolves; by their fruits ye shall know them;”* and with the declaration that Judas by transgression fell from his apostleship:† and it must be seen that if there had been a promise of infallibility, it must be conditional, and cannot apply to the Church of Rome.

If we turn from Popes to General Councils, there is the same fallibility. The Council of Laodicea, held in the year 360, rejected the Apocrypha; the Council of Trent has pronounced an anathema on all who do not receive it. The Council of Ephesus, held in the year 438, forbade the setting forth of any other but the Nicene Creed; the Council of Trent, in addition to this, has enjoined all the

* Matt. vii. 15.

† Acts i. 25.

dogmas of Popery, on pain of excommunication; and Pope Pius immediately after formed these dogmas into a formal Creed, and thus stamped the Church of Rome with novelty in her articles of faith. She asks the Protestant Churches tauntingly, "Where was your religion before Luther?" Were they disposed to retort they might ask, "Where was your religion before the Council of Trent? Where your confession of faith before Pius IV.? where is that Creed to be found in the canonical Scriptures?"

The Councils of Constantinople and Elvina decreed against images in worship; the second Council of Nice as positively enjoined them; and the Council of Frankfort, according to Baronius, decided against them both. Not merely have we Council against Council, and Pope against Pope: but rival Popes have for a length of time been occupants of the Papal chair, ordaining their Cardinals, and these having their Bishops and Priests; and saints from both have been canonized. The Council of Pisa, held in 1409, excommunicated Gregory XII. and Benedict XIII., who had been long contending for the chair, and elected a third Pope, Alexander V., in their stead; and they refusing submission, all reigned at once, and for a length of time the schism continued. The sixth General Council declared Honorius I. a heretic.

If Popes have erred and Councils have erred, it will not be pretended that the Pope can impart to a Bishop an infallibility he does not possess, or that a Bishop can convey to a Priest that which he has not received; and yet implicit submission to the teaching of the Church is demanded! How fearful is a system which under such circumstances claims for the Clergy the right of withholding the inspired volume, and designates them the only authorized expounders of the divine will! And yet in the fourth rule of the Congregation of the Index we have this authoritative statement:—
“It is in this point referred to the judgment of the Bishops or Inquisitors, who may by the advices of the Priest or Confessor permit the reading of the Bible translated into the vulgar tongue by Catholic authors to those persons whose faith and piety they apprehend will be augmented and not injured by it, and this permission they must have in writing. But if any one shall have the presumption to read or possess it without such written permission, he shall not receive absolution until he have first delivered up such Bible to the Ordinary.”
When such permission is granted Pope Pius’s Creed is binding:—“I also admit the Sacred Scriptures according to the sense which the holy mother Church has held, and still does
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hold, to whom it belongs to judge of the true sense and interpretation of the Holy Scriptures; nor will I ever take or interpret them otherwise than according to the unanimous consent of the Fathers." Of what use is a Bible with a chain clasped round it and padlocked thus? Where is the unanimous consent of the Fathers to be found? There never has been a combined and authorized commentary sanctioned. We would not undervalue the early Fathers of the Church: their piety and talent, so far as they appear in their writings, ought to be profited by; but they were not authorities while living, and how death and the lapse of ages can canonize their writings, we are at a loss to conceive. Few of the early Fathers wrote; we have but fragments of their writings; and both Protestant and Roman controversialists charge each other's Churches with mutilating and dismembering those that have come down, when they are not found to accord with their systems. Why they should be supposed to understand the Scriptures better than theologians in the present day, is hard to conceive: they were not inspired; the Scriptures are the same; and every age, having the advantages of the biblical criticism of former ages, ought to be better fitted to display the treasury of truth.

We are asked how it is that we receive the canonical Scriptures on their evidence, and yet deny the authority of their writings. There is an essential difference between receiving the evidence of a witness to the authenticity of a will, and admitting the authority of that witness, irrespectively of the will, to interfere with the disposition of the property. We are thankful for their evidence of the fact that such books were written by such inspired persons, and were received by the churches as inspired records; but they do not claim to be infallible teachers, nor can we elevate them to that position. And the system that binds a people not to understand the Scriptures in any other way than according to the unanimous consent of the Fathers, hoodwinks them, and forbids their forming any judgment of them at all. How can a member of the Romish Church tell the sense she puts upon them? She has given no infallible Commentary? The one printed and circulated is not binding; it has been altered in successive editions; notes are omitted that were originally published. A learned author, in allusion to this subject, says, "In addition to the Scriptures, take the Apocrypha, Tradition, Acts and Decisions of the Church, embracing 8 folio volumes of Popes' Bulls, 10 folio volumes of

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Decretals, 31 folio volumes of Acts of Council, 51 folio volumes of Doings and Sayings of Saints; add to these at least 35 volumes of the Greek and Latin Fathers; to these 135 folio volumes, add the chaos of unwritten traditions, which have floated down from the Apostles' time, and then add the exposition of every fallible Priest and Bishop;—and what a sea of uncertainty you are launched upon!" What Romanist under such circumstances can have any definite rule of faith? He is taught to believe by proxy. By what authority is the word of God thus bound to traditionary record, and not allowed to move without a living interpreter? The Apostle's address to the Thessalonians is adduced: "Therefore, brethren, stand fast and hold the traditions you have learned, whether by word or our epistle;"* so also in Gal. i. 9,—“As we said before, so now I say again, If any one preach to you a gospel besides that which you have received, let him be anathema.” This only proves that the Apostles' personal teaching was as binding as their epistles: he does not allude to a gospel brought by a successor as the binding one. We have no other proof of the gospel thus preached than their writings afford. Not a

* 2 Thess. ii. 14.

single sentiment can be authorized as delivered by them which their writings do not contain ; and hence we are bound to abide by their records. It is urged that several books of the Old Testament are lost, and some of the Epistles ; if so, the Church's infallibility as a keeper of holy writ is demolished. But the sacred books have been in other than human hands. There is no proof that a single book is lost : the mere allusion to other books is no proof of their being canonical. The Apostle alludes to and quotes from heathen poets, but that does not rank their writings with the Scriptures. The Epistle " to Laodicea " might be rendered from Laodicea : it was customary to send copies of the epistle round to the different churches, so that there is no evidence that a scrap of inspired truth has been lost. If a loss had been sustained, we have no means of supplying it : traditions of men would not supply the place of the word of God. The Apostle's address to Timothy,—“ Hold fast the form of sound words,”—“ the things which thou has heard of me by many witnesses, the same commend to faithful men who shall be fit to teach others also,” is adduced. These passages show who are the only lawfully qualified successors of the Apostles,—faithful men, possessing a knowledge of

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apostolic truth ; men with the Bible in their head and heart, and with gifts suited to the ministry. Will any be prepared to say that the boasted apostolical succession of the Popes, &c., will bear the test of this divinely inspired rule, and that there exists a succession of Bishops of this class in unbroken unity ? Where is this form of sound words which was committed to Timothy, and has been handed down ? It cannot be produced, and we are therefore compelled to go to the written record to find it. While the Apostles lived, they were legitimate sources of appeal in any controversy ; after their death, their writings supplied their place. We could adduce numbers of passages from the early Fathers in proof of the fact that the Scriptures were considered sole authority in matters of faith ; but time will not admit, as there is scriptural evidence of the fact, that they were intended to occupy this position. We just adduce one for the sake of its brevity : Irenæus, who flourished in the second century, says, " The Gospel which the Apostles preached, afterward by the will of God they delivered to us in the Scriptures, that it might be the foundation and pillar of our faith. " *

* Irenæus *Advers. Hæres.*, B. iii., c. 1, p. 169, 1570. Stamp's edition of Elliott, p. 37.

In all ages since the written revelation was given, it has been the only warrant of doctrine, unless the immediate and miraculous sanction of God attended the individual. Joshua, although the companion of Moses, was commanded to make the written law his study and guide, as he valued prosperity: the people were commanded to study it,—to teach it diligently to their children and domestics; it was made their birthright. The 119th psalm (the 118th in the Douay Bible,) proves the estimate formed in that day of the written word, as perfect, and suited to make wise the simple, and convert the soul. In the time of Jehoshaphat the itinerant instructors, and in Ezra's time he and his pious associates, used the written law to instruct the people. The people were permitted to test the Prophets by the Scriptures:—"To the law and to the testimony." Our Lord recognised the inspired writings as occupying this position: he declared that if he had not done among the people the works that no other man did, they would not have had sin in rejecting his testimony. When he sent the seventy, he gave them miraculous powers to warrant their demand upon the submission of the people to their teaching. To prove to the Apostles his own authority to abrogate the ceremonial and typical parts of the Mosaic

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ceremony, the voice came from the cloud of the excellent glory on the mount,—“ This is my beloved Son, hear him.” The Scribes and Pharisees had exactly the same views of oral tradition from the time of Moses, that the advocates of Popery assert to have existed from the time of Christ: but when they were appealed to, he emphatically condemned them as teaching for doctrines the commandments of men, and making the commandments of God of no effect by their tradition. To guard the people against such unauthorized teaching, our Lord assured them that they were blind leaders of the blind, and both would fall into the ditch. A passage is frequently appealed to as rendering even their teachings binding:—“ The Scribes and Pharisees have sitten on the chair of Moses: all things whatsoever they shall say to you, observe and do.”* But this alludes to the seat of legislation. The Romans permitted the Jews to administer their own government; and, as good subjects, our Lord enjoined upon his disciples the duty of reverencing the powers that be; as religious teachers, he warned his disciples against their leaven: in his own discourses a constant appeal was made to the written word, or to his miracles, as authority: “ how readest thou—it

* Matt. xxiii. 2.

is written—have ye never read—ye search the Scriptures and they testify of me.” From the writings of Moses, and the Prophets, and the Psalms, (an enumeration embracing the whole of the Jewish Scriptures,) he explained to his Apostles the things respecting himself. We might adduce numbers of such instances from the addresses of the Apostles, all tending to show that instead of the Scriptures coming in as a secondary means of instruction, the people were addressed as knowing the Scriptures; and on their knowledge of the Old Testament the truths of the New were grafted. The Bereans are praised for taking the sermon they had heard, and searching the Old Testament to ascertain the accordance. The Apostles declared their writings were intended to furnish saving instruction: St. John declares “these things are written that ye may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing you may have life in his name.” St. Luke writes that we may know the verity of the things that were believed and preached. These writings are declared to occupy the same position with the Old Testament. St. Peter ranks his Epistle with the Scriptures of old, and designates it a more sure word of prophecy, to which we do well to take heed. He also classes the Apostle Paul’s Epistle with the

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other Scriptures:—"As also our most dear brother Paul, according to the wisdom given him, hath written to you: as also in all his epistles, speaking in them of these things; in which are certain things hard to be understood, which the unlearned and unstable wrest, as they do also the other Scriptures, to their own destruction."* This passage has been strangely urged as a reason for withholding the Scriptures as dangerous: whereas it recognises them as possessed by the members of the church, and written expressly for them. It is true it alludes to injury sustained; but it is by unfaithful wresting, in the case of unstable spirits. And this allusion is made, not to deter them from reading, but to guard them against unfaithfulness in reading: they are exhorted to diligence in reading; for immediately the Apostle urges them to grow in grace, and the knowledge of Christ. His Epistles, and in fact all epistles addressed to the churches, are expressly declared to be the inalienable right of the people, to all the saints, and even to children; so that no authority but that which inspired and sent them forth has a right to limit their diffusion. The declaration of Dr. Milner, that "the whole business of the Scriptures is with the church," (that is, the Clergy,)

* 2 Pet. iii. 15, 16.

“that they alone authoritatively explain them,” is an invasion of the rights of the people,—a right ceded to them by the address of the Apostles to them in their Epistles, and by our Saviour’s recognition of their right to possess them, and their capacity to understand them. We are aware that the members of the church are commanded to “obey their Prelates” (or Pastors) “who speak unto them the word of God;” but the same authority has said, “Believe not every spirit, but try the spirits if they be of God, because many false Prophets are gone out into the world.”* “If any man come to you, and bring not this doctrine, receive him not into the house, nor say to him, God speed you; for he that saith to him, God speed you, communiceth with his wicked works.”† So that while rebellion against the discipline of a faithful church, as administered by an orthodox Pastor, is a sin; so countenance afforded to those who adulterate and forsake apostolic truth is a registered sin. How can the members of the Church of Rome escape this sin? Where is the possibility of detecting heresy, and rejecting the teachers of false doctrines, if a mental and spiritual despotism has been entrusted to the ministry, which authorizes

* 1 John iv. 1.

† 2 John.

them to forbid a religious opinion that is not moulded into form by their tuition? Surely, if the members of the Church are held responsible for the orthodoxy of that ministry they sanction, they have a right to form a judgment of apostolic truth from the standards the Apostles themselves have left. We contend, therefore, that Popery, in denying to her people the free and unfettered use of the Holy Scriptures, has taken away from them the apostolic foundation which Christ appointed for maintaining the purity of faith and morals; and in referring them to the *exposition of their Pastors* of the testimony of the Scripture and to *tradition*, she has substituted a fallible, unauthorized, and uncertain rule of faith, which admits of progressive corruption. Her claim to infallibility is baseless; and hence her claim to absolute control over the faith and practice of her people is a wicked assumption, an unauthorized despotism.

Our next point of contrast shall be a **CHRISTIAN DOCTRINE**. Christianity proclaims a simple and gracious method for a sinner's justification by God. Popery has instituted one, which, while it invades the Divine prerogative, furnishes numerous obstacles to the sinner's attainment of Divine acceptance.

We have selected the doctrine of justifica-

tion, because of its vital importance. We need not dwell long upon the scriptural view of it. The following passages present it:—"Be it known unto you, therefore, men, and brethren, that through him forgiveness of sins is preached to you, and from all the things from which you could not be justified by the Law of Moses, in him every one that believeth is justified."* "But now without the law the justice of God is made manifest, being witnessed by the law and the Prophets. Even the justice of God by the faith of Jesus Christ, unto all and upon all them that believe in him, for there is no distinction: For all have sinned and need the glory of God. Being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus, whom God hath proposed to be a propitiation through faith in his blood, to the showing of his justice for the remission of former sins, through the forbearance of God, for the showing of his justice in this time, that he himself may be just, and the justifier of him who is of the faith of Jesus Christ."† "Now to him that worketh the reward is not reckoned according to grace, but according to debt. But to him that worketh not, yet believeth in him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is reputed to justice according to the

* Acts xiii. 38, 39.

† Rom. iii. 21.

purpose of the grace of God. As David also termeth the blessedness of a man to whom God reputeth justice without works. Blessed are they whose iniquities are forgiven, and whose sins are covered. Blessed is the man to whom the Lord hath not imputed sin.* "Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us; for it is written, Cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree. That the blessing of Abraham might come on the Gentiles through Christ Jesus, that we may receive the promise of the Spirit by faith."† From these passages of God's Word we deduce the following positions, which might be further illustrated by numerous other quotations:—All men are concluded under the curse of God's law, guilty, corrupt, helpless, and justly exposed to God's everlasting displeasure. The justification of the sinner is the pardon of all his former sins,—not making him just, but fully releasing him from the penalty of sin, and admitting him to the privileges of righteousness. This justification is the act of God as the lawgiver and moral governor. The meritorious consideration, that which makes the act of mercy a strictly honourable and righteous transaction, is the blood of Christ. The sole condition, or the instru-

* Rom. iv. 21.

† Gal. iii. 13.

mental cause of this justification, is faith, as apprehending and appropriating this meritorious sacrifice. How simple, how gracious, and yet how strictly accordant with the perfections of the divine nature, and the rectitude of his administration, is this method of reconciliation! Popery, however, has changed its whole character. In the first place, the justification of the sinner by God the Father is confounded with the regeneration of the soul by God the Spirit; and the condition of justification is changed into one of human merit. The Council of Trent, in her sess. on Original Sin, can. 11, says,—“If any one shall say that men are justified either by the imputation of Christ’s righteousness alone, or only by the remission of sins, to the exclusion of grace and charity, which is poured into their hearts by the Holy Spirit, and which is inherent in them; or that the grace by which we are justified is the favour of God alone, let him be accursed.” In the 12th can.,—“If any one shall say that justifying faith is nothing else than a reliance upon the divine mercy remitting sins for Christ’s sake, or that it is such a reliance alone by which we are justified, let him be accursed.” Justifying faith, instead of being a penitent trust in Christ, exercised by the ungodly, is represented as an

incipient grace, the first commencement of the regenerate life, giving a fitness for divine acceptance, and by "obedience to the commandments of God and the Church" they are "justified more." It is decreed in the 24th can.,—"If any one shall say that the righteousness received is not preserved, and even is not increased before God by good works, but that the works themselves are but fruits only, and signs of the justification obtained, and not the causes of its increase, let him be accursed." "If any one shall say that the good works of a justified man are in such sense the gifts of God, that they are not also the good merits of the justified person himself; or that the justified person himself by the good works which are done by him through the grace of God and the merits of Jesus Christ, of whom he is a living member, does not truly merit increase of grace, eternal life, and the attainment of the same eternal life, if only he depart in grace, and even an increase of glory, let him be accursed." We have only to request you to recall to mind the Scripture passages which so clearly express the doctrine of justification by faith alone in Christ's blood, and compare them with these declarations of the Council of Trent, and you will see that human ingenuity could not have framed language more flatly

contradictory. The Apostle lays an anathema upon an angel from heaven if he brings any other gospel. The Council of Trent supports her every contradiction to his gospel, with a solemn anathema, and demands that every member of the Church of Rome shall stand by her artillery, and proclaim, "I embrace and receive all things and every thing which have been defined and declared in the holy Council of Trent, concerning original sin and justification." It would be well for them seriously to ask themselves which curse will take effect at the bar of God. If ever they are justified, it must be through Christ's blood applied to their souls in answer to their penitent faith. "In whom," says the Apostle, (Ephes. i. 7,) "we have redemption through his blood, the remission of sins, according to the riches of his grace." "For by grace you are saved, through faith, and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God. Not of works, that no man may glory."* Where then are those merits of the justified person himself that are the causes of his being "justified more," and that truly merit eternal life?

The mediation of Christ is the only ground of our acceptance at the throne of grace, and the blood of Christ will be the burden of

* Ephes. ii. 8, 9.

our song, if we mingle with the redeemed in heaven.

In the next place, Popery has made the act of justification human, instead of divine. A secret confessional is appointed, which supplants the penitent's approach to God at the throne of grace; and a Priest is made to occupy God's place in the transaction, by judicially pronouncing the absolution. This sacrament of penance is rendered binding upon the members of the Church, at least once a year. The Council of Trent, in the 14th sess., can. 6, says,—“ If any one shall deny either that sacramental confession was instituted by divine command, or that it is necessary to salvation, or shall say, that the practice of secretly confessing to the Priest alone, as it has ever been observed, is foreign to the institution and command of Christ, let him be accursed.” In the declaration of the Catholic Bishops, after expressing their belief that God has granted to the Priests of his Church power to forgive sin in the sacrament, they say,—“ Without the voluntary confession of the penitent, the power of forgiving or retaining sins could not be exercised with discretion and judgment, by the Minister of the sacrament of penance.” “ The confession of sin could never have been introduced, had it not been received from the

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beginning as a divine ordinance." The Council of Trent, sess. xiv., c. 6, declares,—“That person would not be otherwise than most negligent of his own salvation, who knew that the Priest was absolving him in jest, and did not diligently seek for another who would act with sincerity.”

We have before alluded to the despotic reign over the understandings of her people, which Popery sways. The confessional presents a fearful tyranny over the conscience and feelings: confession is necessary to salvation: the absolution may be pronounced in jest, and hence it depends upon the intention of the Priest. How absolute the power which such a conviction must yield! How unwarranted by the slightest vestige of scriptural authority, is this interposition between God and the soul! “Confess therefore your sins one to another, and pray one for another, that you may be saved,” is referred to in the Douay Bible as enjoining confession to a Priest, on the ground that it would be useless to confess to one who could not forgive sins; and that the Priests alone have authority. The passage, however, refers to mutual confession, in order to united prayer to God for salvation: there is not the slightest allusion to forgiveness by man. The recent advocates

plead primitive antiquity ; but here there is no foundation. In the early church, those who apostatized, were compelled publicly to confess their sin before being readmitted to church privileges ; but the practice of auricular confession to a Priest was not introduced into the church until the thirteenth century. The Scriptures invariably represent the penitent sinner, when seeking forgiveness, confessing his sins to God. Who but God can know the real penitency of the heart ? How tremendous is the power claimed by Popery for her Clergy, when she authorizes them to put any question, on the most indelicate subjects ; and demands, as a condition of absolution, that an explicit and unreserved answer be returned ! It is no wonder that flagitious crimes, induced by correspondence at the confessional, have on one occasion demanded the explicit condemnation of the Papal chair. In the most enlightened state of society, such a power endangers both the confessor and the applicant.

The act of absolution is a bold invasion of the Divine prerogative. The Scriptures are full of statements expressive of the fact, that He alone against whom the sin has been committed, can release the transgressor. Jehovah has assumed the prerogative in language that

forbids the idea of transfer : " I am, I am he that blot out thy iniquities for my own sake ; and I will not remember thy sins. Put me in remembrance, and let us plead together."* " It is God that justifieth." The Jews considered it blasphemy, in our Redeemer, to forgive sins, because they were ignorant of his Deity. Our Lord did not condemn this idea ; but he exerted his divine nature in the cure of the sick man, in order to prove to them, that possessing the divine nature, it was no assumption to exercise a divine prerogative. Had he not possessed that nature, the charge would have been authorized by their Scriptures. The passages appealed to by the Church of Rome to warrant this assumption, are those we adduced, which our Saviour employed in giving the apostolic commission authoritatively to declare the terms by which God would regulate the distributions of his grace, and the admission of individuals to eternal life : " I give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven :—whose sins you shall forgive, they are forgiven :—the power to bind and loose," &c. There is not, however, the shadow of a pretext from the context to apply this language to any other than the Apostles : these passages are generally associated with

* Isa. xliii. 25, 26.

our Saviour's commission to his disciples to go and teach all nations; but they were not delivered together, and have no connexion with each other. A succession of teachers and Pastors was to exist; but the canon of the gospel, being once fixed, would want no succession of authority of this class; and hence the apostolic office ceased in the Apostles. The Apostles did not understand the passages as giving them authority to absolve sins against God. The only instance of personal forgiveness, is the case of the Corinthian, and that alluded to his re-admission to church privileges; and even this originated in the Apostles' demand for his excommunication, and was made to depend upon their satisfaction with his state of penitence.

The Sacrament of Extreme Unction is liable to the same objections, and is equally unscriptural. The Council of Trent decrees,—“If any one shall say, that the sacred unction of the sick does not confer grace, nor forgive sin, nor relieve the sick; but that its power has ceased, as if the gift of healing only existed in past ages, let him be accursed.” The Council goes on to curse any who shall say that the elders mentioned by James, were aged persons, and not Priests; or that the practices of the Church may be altered or

despised ; or that it is not a true sacrament, instituted by Christ, and published by the blessed Apostle James. Peter Lombard, in the 12th century, was the first to enumerate this amongst the sacraments ; Pope Eugenius in the fifteenth confirmed it ; and with this introduction, the Council of Trent did not hesitate to establish it as an article of faith. The passages of Scripture urged in its defence, are one in St. Mark, alluding to the Apostles' casting out devils, and anointing with oil those who were sick, and healing them ; and one in James's Epistle, in which he directs the sick to send for the elders of the church, and let them pray, and anoint him with oil in the name of the Lord, " and the prayer of faith shall save the sick man ; and the Lord shall raise him up, and if he be in sins, they shall be forgiven him."* There is an evident allusion to the gift of healing conferred upon the Apostles, and bestowed by them on others, by the laying on of their hands. The object of the anointing was the recovery of the body, in answer to the prayer of faith ; and if sin had brought the affliction as a chastisement, the removal of the affliction was to afford evidence, that God had pardoned the sin. If this gift of healing still exist in the Church, let it be exercised in this

* James v. 14, 15.

apostolic mode, and we shall have a shadow of evidence that the Apostles have successors; but this cannot be shown. The sacrament of extreme unction is essentially different in its character; and hence has not the shadow of a connexion with these passages. It has no design for the restoration of the body. It is not administered until all hopes of recovery are gone. It is professedly intended to confer grace on the soul; to forgive sins, and fit the soul for its entrance into eternity. In it we have another instance of daring interference with Divine prerogatives; the forgiveness of sins being the act of God the Father, and the communication of grace the sole work of the Divine Spirit. This system, so fearfully supplanting the simple method of salvation, is thus made to follow the soul to the very verge of its probationary existence; and sends it to the bar of God, with the lie of the Church in its right hand.

There is just another point demanding remark on this subject, and that is,—the act of forgiveness is mutilated. God is represented as only remitting the eternal punishment due to sin, and still charging against the sinner a personal satisfaction to be rendered in penal sufferings of a temporary duration, and venial sins are to be thus personally expiated. The Council of Trent, sess. vi., can. 30, says,—“ If

any man shall say, that after the grace of justification, his fault, and the guilt of eternal punishment is so remitted and cancelled to the penitent sinner, that there remains no guilt of temporal punishment to be paid by him, either in this life, or hereafter in purgatory, before he can attain to the kingdom of heaven, let him be accursed." In the abstract of the Douay Catechism, it is said,—“Whither go such as die in venial sin, or not having fully satisfied for the punishment due to their mortal sins? To purgatory, till they have made full satisfaction for them, and then to heaven.” The satisfaction in this life alludes to the penances imposed by the Priest, when he grants absolution. Bishop Baines, in his sermon on “Faith, Hope, and Charity,” in alluding to the conditions of absolution, after referring to contrition and confession, says,—“Nor is even this all: the sinner must, moreover, submit to make such atonement to his offended God, by prayer, by fasting, by works of self-denial, and the like, as may be required of him.” The Council of Trent in her 25th sess., says,—that “there is a purgatory;” “the souls detained there, are assisted by the suffrages of the faithful, but especially by the acceptable sacrifice of the mass.” He therefore commands,—“Let the Bishops take care that the suffrages of the

living faithful—namely, masses, prayers, alms, and other works of piety which the faithful have been accustomed to perform for departed believers—be piously and religiously rendered according to the institutes of the Church; and, whatever services are due to the dead through the endowments of deceased persons, or in any other way, let them not be performed slightly, but diligently and carefully by the Priests and Ministers of the Church, and all others to whom the duty belongs.”

Two or three portions of divine truth are employed as giving sanction to this limitation of God's mercy: the sin of Adam is referred to as not merely deserving eternal punishment, but the sufferings of this mortal state, terminating in the death of the body. And it is argued, that, although the guilt of eternal punishment is remitted in the regenerate, they pay the penalty of bodily sufferings and death. But the death of Adam's body would immediately have resulted had not a remedial plan been appointed, and the sufferings of God's people are referred to, not as penalties for sin, but as a course of moral discipline, which furnishes the seeds of imperishable glories in eternity. David's child being taken, though his sin was pardoned, is adduced to show that, after the act of pardon, a penalty was imposed:

this, however, was not in wrath, as a satisfaction to justice, but an act of mercy, both to himself and the people. This child was the offspring of adultery, and had been the occasion of murder: it was known to be thus. Had not the child been taken, a powerful means of moral discipline would have been withholden, both from David and the people. The fact that God pardoned the Israelites, and yet sentenced them to wander in the wilderness, is referred to. In answer to the prayer of Moses, God passed by their personal guilt, in withholden the pestilence, and giving them space for repentance; but as in their national capacity they thus sinned against him, he resolved that that generation should forfeit their national privileges, and not enter the promised land. These instances of reservation for moral discipline are stated in the declarations of forgiveness. Is it thus in the doctrine of justification as proclaimed in the New Testament? Are temporal punishments reserved? are personal satisfactions, penal payments for sin, alluded to? Far from it: "from all things we are justified; Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law." "There is now, therefore, no condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus."*

* Rom. viii. 1.

The distinction between venial and mortal sin is a bold tampering with the character and claims of the Divine law. Bishop Baines, in the sermon before referred to, alluding to the doctrine of purgatory, says,—“It is the belief of the Catholic Church, and the same I presume is yours, that all sins are not equal in malice and guilt; that a passing angry feeling is not so great a crime as murder, nor an idle word as blasphemy. Hence we believe that God does not punish all sins equally, but renders to every one according to his works;* that whilst he punishes the wilful, deliberate, and mortal offender with the extremity of severity, even with everlasting fire, he inflicts upon the minor and more venial sinner chastisements less severe and of limited duration.” It would be a curious calculation for a mathematical student at Maynooth to take a venial sinner, and ascertain the comparative amount of his guilt with that of a mortal offender; and then try from the eternity of punishment in the one case, and the comparative guilt in the other, to deduce the extent to which his limitation of punishment would reach. There would be poor consolation for the man dying in venial sin. Where is the warrant for the idea that any sin against God only merits a punish-

* Matt. xvi. 27.

ment of a limited duration? Not in that book which represents the partaking of a forbidden fruit as blasting this fair creation, and inflicting such a curse upon Adam's latest posterity as to invite the incarnation and expiatory sufferings of the Son of God. He who came to bear the curse of sin did not thus estimate its character. You have heard the teaching of the so called Catholic Church on the distinction that subsists between an "angry feeling" and "murder." Now hear the lawgiver of the Christian Church. "You have heard that it was said to them of old, Thou shalt not kill: and whosoever shall kill shall be in danger of the judgment. But I say to you, Whosoever is angry with his brother is in danger of the judgment."* The whole of his teaching served to annihilate the unwarranted distinction between any sins, as venial or mortal. He admits of different degrees of guilt, and declares that there will be final awards proportioned to the guilt of the offender; but he never insinuates that a sin against God is not mortal, and only demands a limited period of punishment. He shows that all the minutiae of this divine law are stamped with the majesty of the divine character, and that the least infraction deserves eternal wrath. So say Apostles and

* Matt. v. 21, 22.

Prophets: "Whosoever shall keep the whole law, but offend in one point, is become guilty of all."* "All iniquity is sin."† And, "The soul that sinneth, it shall die." Every transgression then demands eternal death; and to die in sin is to perish everlastingly.

The existence of such a place as Purgatory has no warrant from Scripture. Many passages in a darker age used to be quoted in proof of it; but the most talented writers of the present day admit their uncertainty, and insufficiency to establish the doctrine; and hence we need not allude to them. Dr. Wiseman founds his argument for the existence of purgatory on the fact that he finds traces in the writings of the Fathers, which warrant the conclusion that they held it lawful to pray for the dead. He contends that these prayers could not be offered for the dead in heaven, or for the dead in hell; and hence must be for the dead in the intermediate state. His quotations commence from the third century; and we need not again stay to show that such writings are no authority: the whole analogy of faith is utterly opposed to the doctrine. Our Lord in his sermon on the Mount represents mankind as divided into two classes, pursuing two ways, which terminate in two states of eternal exist-

* James ii. 10.

† 1 John v. 17.

ence. His parable of the rich man and Lazarus expresses the same truth: immediate and interminable happiness or misery resulted on their death; there was an impassable gulf, not an intermediate state, between. If any person would have had a demand for temporary punishment as a personal satisfaction, it would surely have been the penitent thief; but what was the result of his pardon? "This day thou shalt be with me in paradise."* The Apostle declares that to depart would be to be with Christ; and hence concludes that although to live was Christ, to die would be gain; and he represents the church as saying, "We know if our earthly house of this habitation be dissolved, that we have a building of God, a house not made with hands, eternal in heaven."† The voice from heaven commanded John to write, "Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord: from henceforth, now saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their labours, for their works follow them."‡ "The redeemed have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb,"—not in purgatory. If, then, purgatory has no existence,—if forgiveness of sins is complete,—if Christ's blood, applied by the Holy Spirit, is the only source of pardon and purity,—what are we to say of a Church.

* Luke xxiii. 43. † 2 Cor. v. 1. ‡ Rev. xiv. 13.
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that enjoins various prayers, alms, and fastings, as personal payments for unremitted sin? that encourages her people to leave their property to the Church for masses in behalf of their suffering souls? that has her Purgatorial Societies, that mutual help may be afforded to the suffering members in their fiery prison? that holds out offers of indulgences, or remissions of their temporal punishment, if crusades against infidels are undertaken, or saints' shrines are visited, or contributions are afforded to build splendid temples? What can we say stronger than the Apostle Peter predicted respecting them in his 2d Epistle, 2d chapter?—"But there were also false Prophets among the people, even as there shall be among you lying teachers, who shall bring in sects of perdition, and deny the Lord who bought them, bringing upon themselves swift destruction: and many shall follow their riotousness, through whom the way of truth shall be evil spoken of, and through covetousness shall they with feigned words make merchandise of you." We need not stay to apply the language, and show how literally the prophecy has been fulfilled. Surely this cumbrous traffic in immortal souls ought not to be recognised as the Christian system: the doctrine of the Gospel respecting a sinner's justification is annihilated;

and that must be a vigorous mind that can burst through the trammels of so complicated a system, and find its way to the mercy-seat.

We might show how the Confessional, Extreme Unction, and Purgatory, tend to lower the sanctions of the Divine Law, and thus relax the stringent discipline which should bind the heart to the cross, and deter from sin : but we must pass on to notice our last point of contrast, and that shall be a CHRISTIAN INSTITUTE. On this we must necessarily be brief.

Christianity has instituted a sacrament to commemorate the death and sacrifice of Christ, until his coming again : Popery has changed it into an idolatrous substitute.

We cannot do better, in order to briefly show the design of this institution of Christ, than refer to the language employed on the occasion. St. Matthew* says,—“ And whilst they were at supper, Jesus took bread, and blessed, and brake, and gave to his disciples ; and said, Take ye, and eat : this is my body. And taking the chalice, he gave thanks, and gave to them, saying, Drink ye all of this : for this is my blood of the New Testament, which shall be shed for many unto remission of sins. And I say to you, I will not drink from henceforth of the

* Matt. xxviii. 26.

fruit of the vine until that day when I shall drink it with you new in the kingdom of my Father."

The other Evangelists afford the same testimony. The Apostle Paul, also, in his first Epistle to the Corinthians, states the account he received from Christ of its institution :—" For I have received of the Lord that which I also delivered unto you : that the Lord Jesus, the same night in which he was betrayed, took bread, and, giving thanks, broke, and said, Take ye, and eat : this is my body, which shall be delivered for you ; this do for the commemoration of me. In like manner, also, the chalice, after he had supped, saying, This chalice is the New Testament in my blood : this do ye, as oft as ye shall drink, for the commemoration of me. For as often as you shall eat this bread and drink the chalice, you shall show the death of the Lord until he come. Therefore, whosoever shall eat this bread or drink this chalice of the Lord unworthily, shall be guilty of the body and blood of the Lord. But let a man prove himself, and so let him eat of that bread, and drink of that chalice : for he that eateth and drinketh unworthily, eateth and drinketh judgment to himself, not discerning the body of the Lord."*

* 1 Cor. xi. 23.

From this language we gather that the design of this institution was, in the first place, to commemorate Christ's death until his second coming, and thus to furnish the world with a standing evidence of the fact, with all its extraordinary circumstances, and of the faith of the church in his second coming. In the second place, to afford a special means of grace, by reminding them of the design of his death, and urging them by faith to realize its benefits. Bread and wine—the articles of food—are to be received as emblems of the spiritual blessings which flow to us from his sacrifice; and, in partaking of them, we are called upon by faith to apprehend the body of Christ, as delivered for our offences,—the blood of Christ, as shed for the remission of our sins; and, by personally trusting in him to realize the salvation he has procured. It is thus his body is meat indeed, and his blood is drink indeed: it is by thus recognising and acting upon the doctrine of his vicarious sacrifice in the ordinance, that we discern the Lord's body. In the third place, it was to be a covenant service: "This cup is the New Testament in my blood." The ordinance is a sign and seal on God's part that he will bestow upon us all the blessings registered in the new covenant: the partaking of this ordinance is a solemn engage-

ment on our part to recognise his covenant relation and claims, and to fulfil the duties incumbent upon us. In the last place, it is the bond of Christian fellowship: it is a sacred meal in which all the members of Christ's Church are to participate: "Drink ye all of this;" "This do in commemoration of me." At that time, eating together was a sign of fellowship; so much so that Trypho the Jew thought it a fatal objection to the Gospel history, because it declared that Judas ate with Christ on the very night he betrayed him: he considered it an enormity of which a man could not be guilty. As eating together was thus a strong token of fellowship, how appropriate was the appointment of a sacred meal, instituted to remind them of their common covenant relation to God, through Christ, to bind them together in the bond of a holy brotherhood!

This sacred ordinance for commemorating Christ's sacrificial death, and for mutual fellowship, has been changed by Popery into an idolatrous substitute. The Council of Trent in her 13th sess., can. 3, says,—“This faith has always remained in the Church of God; that immediately after the consecration the true body of our Lord, and his true blood, together with his soul and divinity, do exist under the species of the bread and wine; his body under

the species of bread, and his blood under the species of wine, *by virtue of the words of consecration*; his body, also, under the species of wine, and his blood under the species of bread, and his soul under each species, through that natural connexion and concomitance by which all the parts of Christ our Lord, who has risen from the dead no more to die, are closely connected together; and his divinity, through the wonderful and hypostatical union thereof with his body and soul. Wherefore it is most certain, that all is contained under either species and under both; for Christ, whole and entire, exists under the species of bread, and in every particle thereof, and under the species of wine, and all its parts." "Since, therefore, Christ our divine Redeemer affirmed that it was truly his body which was presented under the species of bread, the Church of God hath always held, and this holy Council doth now renew, the declaration that, by *the consecration* of the bread and wine, the whole substance of the bread is converted into the substance of the body of Christ our Lord, and the whole substance of the wine is converted into the substance of his blood, which conversion is by the Holy Catholic Church fitly called transubstantiation." In her canons she pronounces an anathema on all who shall say that entire

Christ, body and blood, soul and divinity, is not contained in the sacrament: or any who shall say that any substance of the bread and wine remains, or deny the wonderful conversion of the whole substance into his body and blood: or any who shall deny that Christ entire is contained in each species or in any part of each. In the Creed of Pope Pius is a summary of the above statements: it commences with, "I profess likewise, that in the mass is offered to God a true, proper, and propitiatory sacrifice for the living and the dead."

The Council of Trent, in her 22d sess., anathematizes all those "who shall affirm that a true and proper sacrifice is not offered to God in the mass;" "that by these words, 'Do this for a commemoration of me,' Christ did not appoint his Apostles Priests, or did not ordain that they and other Priests should offer his body and blood;" "or who shall affirm that the sacrifice of the mass is only a service of praise and thanksgiving, or a bare commemoration of the sacrifice made on the cross, and not a propitiatory offering for the living and the dead, for sins, punishments, satisfactions, and other necessities."

The argument in favour of this doctrine is taken from the literal meaning of the words

of institution. It is contended that he was understood literally by the Apostles, and that the Church has always held the doctrine. It is not true that the Church has always held this doctrine : the early Fathers sometimes expressed themselves unguardedly when speaking in glowing terms of the ordinance, but other parts of their writings prove that they did not hold the doctrine of transubstantiation. The heresy was first broached in the 8th century, and sanctioned by pretended miracles ; and it was not until the year 1215, that Pope Innocent, in the Council of Lateran, published it as an oracle. It is impossible that the Apostles could understand the language literally : it would absolutely contradict their senses. They were commanded each to drink the cup ; and you will readily perceive that the idea of each swallowing the cup would not be more repugnant to their consciousness than to understand that Christ gave each of them his whole body, soul, and divinity, to eat and swallow, and all the while continued to sit and establish the other part of the ordinance. The Apostles always maintain Christ's true humanity : this doctrine denies it. Bishop Baines says, " I grant that in mere mortal bodies these things are not naturally possible ; but the question is here not of a mere mortal, but of a glorified mortal."

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fied body : and not of the glorified body of a mere man, but of a man God : may not such a being be present in more states than one?" Christ established this ordinance when he was in the flesh, and to commemorate a sacrifice made in the flesh ; and hence the question is with a mere mortal body. If Christ was truly man, he had a real body and soul ; and if so, his human nature cannot be in two places at once ; he could not be at the head of the table, and in the hands of the Apostles ; and he cannot now be in heaven, and on a Popish altar. We are assured that this is a mystery of religion ; but God has revealed no mysteries which contain palpable absurdities. Christ feeding the thousands is alluded to in support of this view ; but there is no accordance : he could create and multiply material, but he did not cause each in the five thousand to eat the whole of the seven loaves : it could not be,—the same piece could not be eaten by two of them. Our Lord did many things with humanity : he passed through a crowd unseen ; he walked upon the water ;—but he never appeared in two places at once. The Apostles, therefore, could not understand him to speak literally. It was ordained as an ordinance during his absence, until his coming again ; and hence, could not convey the idea of

his bodily presence. Our Lord called the *cup*, the fruit of the vine, after he had told them to drink it; and the Apostle directs us to eat of *this* bread, and drink of *this* cup. The passover was spoken of in just the same terms: it is the Lord's passover, for it *represents* it. The Apostle, in speaking of the Israelites, tells us they all drank of that spiritual rock, and that rock was Christ. Such figurative language was common both with Christ and his Apostles.

The representation of this ordinance as a propitiatory sacrifice, is at utter variance with the whole argument of the Apostle, in his Epistle to the Hebrews, where he proves the unlimited dignity, perfection, and sufficiency of the *one offering* presented by the great High Priest of our profession, Jesus Christ, made once for all.

If the doctrine of transubstantiation is unwarranted, what are we to conclude respecting the character of a Church that issues the following decree?—“No room is left for doubting that all Christ's faithful people, according to immemorial usage in the Catholic Church, should pay to the most holy sacrament in the way of worship, the same adoration of Latria which is due to God; nor is it less to be adored, that it was instituted by

Christ our Lord that it might be taken; for we believe that he the same God is there present in it, of whom the Father when he brought him into the world said, 'Let all the angels of God worship him.'" Surely, such a decree sanctions positive idolatry. We have before shown how the character of truth has been changed, and divine prerogatives have been invaded; but in this instance there is the impious profession of changing a wafer into an incarnate God. The Priest professes, "by virtue of the words of consecration," to change the elements; yea, every part of each element, into the body and blood, soul and divinity, of Christ; and then elevates the Host, and invites the people to offer to it the highest worship. You will not therefore now wonder that we have contrasted Popery with Christianity. Surely there is as great an act of idolatry in such worship as can be found in any part of Heathenism. We may charitably wish to excuse the worshippers, on the ground that they believe the elements no longer to remain, but that Christ is there. If, however, we allow the opinion of the individual to be the rule of his culpability, such a sin as idolatry does not exist. Where, throughout Heathenism, would you find an individual who worships his carved image under the idea that the image

itself is God? The Brahmins in the East Indies protest against the charge of such folly: their followers are taught to believe that after the priestly incantation the God takes possession of the image, and they worship the idol because they believe it to be possessed by God. Does this idea clear them of the charge of idolatry?—ought they to believe thus? Far from it. They are charged in the inspired volume with folly and wickedness in bowing before the workmanship of their hands, the god of human formation. Is there not the same folly and wickedness in bowing before a wafer as “whole Christ?” Is not the wafer human workmanship; and can anything warrant the idea that it ought to be worshipped? The system that teaches so monstrous an idea is idolatrous and dangerous,—it is essentially opposed to Christianity.

We might have introduced other points of contrast, and dwelt on other aspects in those we have brought under your notice; but we were reminded that we must conclude within reasonable limits. We cannot, however, conclude without reminding you, that we live in eventful times,—times which demand vigilance. This fearful system is struggling for ascendancy; is multiplying her agents; and we need to be on our watch-tower, lest any

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connected with us should be beguiled from the simplicity of the Gospel. The rising generation ought to be well instructed, and thus protected against the insidious advances of error. Let us establish in their minds the fact, that this sacred volume is the only divinely authorized rule of faith. Let us imprint on their minds a register of its leading and vital truths. Let us plead with God, that their hearts may be brought under the saving influence of his grace, that they may be prepared to go unscathed through that conflict of mind which seems to be gathering around us. Let us cultivate a prayerful interest while contemplating the perilous circumstances of the members of that fallen Church, whose defection we have been considering; and let us be frequent and earnest in prayer, that they may discover her awful corruptions, and have strength to "come out of her, that they partake not of her plagues."

London: R. Needham, Printer, Paternoster-Row.

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