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Douglas

ΣΡΕ

LONG RESISTANCE
AND
ULTIMATE CONVERSION.

Ch. of Engl.

LONG RESISTANCE

AND

ULTIMATE CONVERSION.

[Douglas] —

'Serò te amavi, pulchritudo tam antiqua et tam nova, serò te amavi.
Et ecce intus eras, et ego foris. . . . Mecum eras et Tecum non eram.
. . . . Vocâsti et clamâsti, et rupisti surditatem meam. . . .'

St. AUGUSTIN, *Confess.* lx. cap. 27.

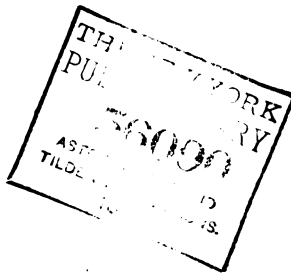
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PREFACE.

“ Il n'y a ni accusation, ni consolation,
Si fortes que celles de la Conscience.”

THE following pages were not written with a view to publication, but rather for the convenience of privately distributing a few copies amongst those friends whom I hope to convince that I have taken some pains to form my opinions ; and for the purpose of showing that I have not acted on them hastily, nor until I had exhausted every means in my power to satisfy myself that the Church of England as by law established is the ‘*one Catholic and Apostolic Church* ;’ I cannot but

hope, that if on the perusal of this short account it shall appear that I have given as much time and careful attention to the consideration of religious doctrine, both Protestant and Catholic, as they have to that, which *they* profess, they will be the less inclined to blame a step which separates me in religious faith from all those I hold most dear, and that they will find some excuse for its long delay, consequent on endeavours to remain in the Church to which they belong.

Every one educated as a Protestant ought to feel that it is his first duty, after he comes to years of discretion, to satisfy himself which is 'the true Church;' and no one can deny that, when once convinced he has found it, he is bound to 'receive faithfully and obediently what it delivers:' if that duty be neglected

upon what ground can he hope to find comfort in the hour of need in a Church which, in that case at least, he owns only because he was born in it? That duty, no doubt, involves much distress and difficulty; but having discharged it to the best of my ability, I must say, that (if I except the pain which I naturally must suffer on account of the separation in religious faith from my wife and my only remaining child), the step which that duty obliged me to take has given me such peace and rest, as I never before at any period of my life thought it was possible to find.

Another object in writing these pages, is to show how my reason has been persuaded, and so prove the fact that, with reference to my conversion, no one else shares in the least

degree my responsibility. I hope the reader, Catholic or Protestant, will consider that all the instruction in religion I ever received was derived exclusively from Clergymen, or other members, of the Established Church; and will observe that I have avoided saying more than sufficient to convince, that I have not neglected so to apply my mind that my conscience might rest on my conclusions.

With respect to my 'long resistance,' I know it is open to criticism, and I feel it deserves to be severely censured by any one who can truly declare that, under similar circumstances, the temptations of the world would not have had some such effect on himself. But with regard to my 'conversion,' I have to request that, before any one condemn it, he will undertake to say that he has himself

made as full and as impartial an examination as I have endeavoured to make, not only of the religion I have abjured, but also of that which I have adopted: for in that case only can any one have a right to be my judge. To any such I confidently appeal; and, provided that they will view my object, motives, and conclusions in the same light as they would wish me to regard theirs, if on the question of conversion their position and mine were reversed, I have no hesitation in submitting the following pages to their consideration and judgment.

December, 1867.

Since this book was printed for private distribution, a few weeks ago, I have consented to publish it, in consequence of

being strongly urged to do so by those friends who have read it, to whose opinions I think it right to defer.

I regret now that I never contemplated such a contingency ; for, although I could not in any respect have altered it in *substance*, I certainly should not have put it in the *form* in which it now appears. However, if the reason which each friend has given for recommending publication be proved to be well founded, by *their* expectations being realised, even in the slightest degree, I shall not regret having surrendered my opinion to their judgment.

February, 1868.

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LONG-RESISTANCE
AND
ULTIMATE CONVERSION.

CHAPTER I.

**THE PROTESTANT READER INVITED TO TAKE AN
UNUSUAL COURSE.**

LET no Protestant who may read these pages denounce the inference to which they will lead, unless he can say, in all sincerity and truth, that he has, in a generous spirit, fully, fairly, and repeatedly studied the principles, doctrines, and ceremonies of the Roman Catholic Church, and, also, those of 'the

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Church of England and Ireland as by Law established;’ nor unless he can, *ex animo*, declare that he has made such an examination WITHOUT A FOREGONE CONCLUSION in his mind, calculated to bias his judgment.

On the Catholic the same condition cannot properly be imposed; for a Catholic, studying any controversial matter, must, from the very nature of his case, do so with the invincible conviction in his mind, that his Church, and his alone, is the only true one, and, therefore, the only one which in essentials cannot err. Indeed, to ask the Catholic to inquire into and to judge between the Established Church and his own, without the full conviction in his mind that his own is the only true Church, is an insult to him, which he might justly resent. For to suppose a Catholic capable of surrendering such a previous conclusion, is to assume that he must be dishonest in his profession, if not of the whole, at least

some part of his *creed and worship*; inasmuch as it is self-evident that on such a subject a reasonable being, honestly believing that which is in its nature incomprehensible, although he may be brought to believe more, can *never of the same thing* believe less: in other words, the man who believes that which is contained in either of the three Creeds, which is in its nature incomprehensible, except by faith, can never afterwards justify his disbelief of a portion thereof, on the ground that his reason cannot comprehend it. For example: no reasonable being can say, “ I do believe in “ ‘ the Trinity in Unity and Unity in Trinity,’ “ and in ‘ the conception of God the Son by the “ Holy Ghost of the Virgin Mary,’ although “ each is incomprehensible to my reason : but, “ I *do not believe* in the Communion of Saints, “ or that baptism remits sin ; I do not believe “ that Christ having died descended into hell, “ and, after three days, appeared corporeally “ on earth for many weeks, and then cor-

“poreally ascended into heaven; *because* none
 “of these are comprehensible by my powers
 “of reason!” To a man born partially blind,
 the *full* glory of light must be incomprehen-
 sible; but he may *believe* there is *more* light
 than he sees, and, by improved power of vision,
 he may be enabled to know and enjoy its full
 splendour. But no one, having once seen the
 least glimmer, can ever honestly believe that
 light itself does not exist, even though he
 become totally blind! So it may be said with
 regard to the Catholic—that the faith instilled
 into his mind from his birth, in the infallibility
 of the Church, is necessarily of such a nature as
 reasonably to justify convictions in him which
 in a Protestant as necessarily demand other
 and far different grounds of belief; for the
 faith instilled into the Protestant from his birth
 obliges him to admit the fallibility of his
 Church, by allowing him to believe, and
 leaving on him the responsibility of deciding,
 what is right and wrong in matters of faith

and doctrine, according to his own private judgment.

I fear, however, there are but few Protestants who, on the above condition, will feel disposed to proceed further; for my long experience leads me to believe there are not many, who can say they have not, from first to last, practically denied themselves every benefit arising from the right of private judgment, inasmuch as they have taken their religion only upon the credit of others, and if ever they have studied the articles and doctrines of their Church, it has been with the foregone conclusion which that very right of private judgment ought to prevent.

However, be they few or be they many who may be willing to endeavour to comply with the above condition, of this I am convinced, that no one will deny it is reasonable to believe that *one* Church only *can* have been founded by Christ; that unity must

be essential to it, and that unity exists in none, if not in the Roman Catholic: whatever amount of internal evidence as regards unity the Established Church may possess, is only that which *is* possessed by the Roman Catholic Church, while the latter has so much more which is inherent in it, which is rejected by, or is inconsistent with, the origin of every other denomination.

What Protestant, seeking the truth, can possibly, by himself, decide which, if any, of the many Churches or Sects, originating within the last three hundred years, is *the one* against which 'the gates of hell shall not prevail?' I leave to the reader to decide. Failing that decision, the alternative must bring him either to the Church against which all Protestants are united, or to a hopeless state of alarming *infidelity*. I have a strong impression, that many well-intentioned Protestants have been prevented from pursuing, beyond the threshold, any real endeavour to

justify to their reason the faith in which they happen to have been brought up, because, as soon as they are able to feel honestly that their minds are open to the idea that their Church is not, and that possibly the Roman Catholic may be, the true one, from that moment prejudice or interest prevails over the boasted right of private judgment, and forbids any further investigation !

CHAPTER II.

CONFIRMING PREJUDICE, LED TO INQUIRY.

MANY years ago, two books—one by the Rev. G. S. Faber, Rector of Long Newton, on ‘The Difficulties of Romanism,’ and the other by the Rev. Blanco White, called ‘The Poor Man’s Preservative against Popery,’ were published: the latter was circulated, amongst their tenantry, servants, and children, by those who then vehemently opposed Catholic emancipation; and both were placed in my hands by my father, as calculated to foster those Protestant pre-

judices which I had been accustomed to hear expressed respecting the Catholic religion; and I read them with interest. The effect, however, on my mind, instead of confirming prejudice, led to inquiry; and I well remember being impressed with the idea, that purity of motive could hardly have instigated the author of the latter at least, because his assertions went so far as to render it impossible for any good Roman Catholic to be a good man; and it therefore led me to ask, 'Can such assertions be all true? Is there not *another side* to this, as to all other questions?' I soon found, however, that for me to suppose there could be *two sides* would not be tolerated! I felt I had no right to entertain an opinion, because I then certainly had no means of forming a correct one: but my mind became disturbed; I knew no one to whom I could open it on such a question; and the consequence was, that to make an inquiry, sooner or later, became my object.

I had received, with all the care and tenderness which could be lavished on an only child, as perfect a religious education as the best of fathers or mothers could possibly give. No child could have been more perfectly trained in the religion of the Established Church before I went to school; and afterwards no boy, at Eton or Harrow, was ever more carefully kept up to its principles during the holidays (alas! neither religion nor morality, nor any thing except Latin and Greek, was then cared for at any such school). The tutor, a clergyman, with whom I was next placed for two years, was charged to prepare me for the University, with the view of my entering his own profession; and to my private tutor, when I went up to Cambridge (a gentleman having clerical preferment in the neighbourhood), I was in the same way specially recommended by my father. Thus, up to the period when Mr. Blanco White's works reached my hands, I did not doubt that the religion as by law

established was the right one; nor had I thought whether anything worthy even of argument could be urged 'on any side.' I had never been taught to consider that a Catholic was a Christian, nor to entertain any other feeling except pity for the ignorance which rendered him the easy victim of a 'damnable and idolatrous superstition;' and I had always heard that it was as unsafe to hold any intimate communication with him, in social life, as it would be dangerous to the State to admit him into Parliament. Everything I was told, and all I was allowed to read, was calculated to impress me with the belief that every religious Catholic was either a fool or a fanatic—excepting the priest, who, presuming on ignorance, encouraged superstition, that he might the more easily prostitute a sacrament by making Confession the means of furthering his sordid interests! To inculcate and promote similar views was the object of Mr. Blanco White. He had

been a Catholic priest—he was then a Protestant parson. Is it surprising that his works led even a young mind to ask, if all he asserted could be *true*? He and his books are now probably generally forgotten, and I allude to him only as having been the primary cause of my inquiry into the religion to which he was a convert, and in which I had been brought up.*

Of course, I had no idea that there could exist any serious errors in the Church of which I was then as sincere a member as any one who, naturally as it were, in the absence of inquiry, concludes that that is the true religion in which he has been born and educated: probably no one, at first, ever entered on an examination of any religious question with a better founded belief in the

* The two books by Faber and B. White, above named, were met and refuted at the time, in two works entitled, 'Faberism Exposed and Refuted,' and 'Defence against Blanco White.'

principles and doctrines of the Established Church than myself; and it was only in consequence of an innate leaning to the maxim, ‘*Audi alteram partem,*’ which was natural to me, that Mr. Blanco White’s works first led me to make that inquiry, for which I shall always be grateful. It is remarkable, but literally true, that *no one*, directly or indirectly, had anything whatever to do with the determination to which they led me—to inquire into those differences which divide the Catholic and Established Churches. Indeed, at that time I had not any Catholic acquaintance; and now, after the lapse of more than forty years, I can declare, most unequivocally, that from first to last no Catholic ever tried to convert me. In the first instance, my object was only to satisfy myself that Mr. Blanco White told the whole truth. I soon found he did not; and little thinking that I was likely ever to lessen, and still less to eradicate, my belief in the truth

of those doctrines of the Established Church in which she differs from the Catholic, in consequence of his *falsehood* as its champion, I began an examination into the faith which I professed; and I was, beyond measure, astonished when I first found that 'the Articles of my belief' were, *totidem verbis*, those of every Roman Catholic!* I remember well my conclusion, 'There must be *something* to be said on the other side!' I therefore resolved to make myself fully acquainted with the religion of the Catholic Church: but I had much difficulty in making such an attempt, for Catholic resources I had none; and as at that time of life any such resolution is easily shaken, or, at least, action thereon willingly postponed, some years elapsed before I made much progress in those inquiries, which ended in my entertaining convictions which subsequently, on repeated

* *i. e.* The Apostles', Nicene, and Athanasian Creeds.

consideration, were entirely confirmed, and ultimately led me into the Catholic Church.

That such result has not, at least, been hastily arrived at, is unquestionable; for three times, at long intervals, I have, to the best of my ability, examined all the important questions involved in the doctrines both of the Established and the Catholic Churches; and I may go further, and say that my conclusions could not have been so satisfactory to my mind as they are, if my examinations had not included the doctrines of the Greek Church, and also of various Protestant denominations, Calvinist, Lutheran, and others.

Now, although since I first took the subject into consideration I have repeatedly allowed it to be, as it were, in abeyance—and have been, if not indifferent, at least careless to it, as I fully admit; still I think, that if it shall appear that I have, at three distinct periods, carefully made three separate and

full examinations, and that my impressions have on each occasion led me to similar conclusions, no one can doubt they ought to guide my conduct. It is too true that I repeatedly became neglectful of, if not insensible to, the gravity and importance of the question, 'Which is *the* right religion?' as well as careless of religious duties generally; and further, that I have been not less—perhaps much more—the victim of the temptations and excitements with which the pleasures and occupations of social and public life abound, than my neighbours: but I can with truth affirm, that I have very frequently given up my mind from time to time to the consideration of religion in its broadest sense, and that I have done so with the single motive of arriving at the truth. No man who ever trod such a path can say that he did not find it beset with difficulties which troubled his conscience as regards the future, as well as every obstacle, with reference to all worldly matters, which considerations respecting

friends and relations could impose ; for prejudice generally exists in the inverse ratio to the proportion of examination on which religious convictions have been founded, the Protestant's first principle being generally ignored, which requires every educated person to hold his religious faith rather by the exercise of the right of private judgment stimulating full inquiry than because his family before him have professed the same.

That doubt or carelessness should sometimes possess any young man seeking the truth while studying the facts, inferences, and opinions, with reference to the Protestant religion, which are to be found in Hume and Gibbon, Paley, Butler, and Addison, and similar authors, as regards history and evidences, can surprise no one ; but the inquiring Protestant, anxious to account for holding the faith in which he was educated, applying Protestant history and Protestant evidence, studying the Bible and following the Book of

Common Prayer, will assuredly never arrive at any satisfactory conclusion if he exclude from his consideration Catholic grounds for the Catholic faith; and if to such works of former times he add 'Essays and Reviews,' and others, which have lately emanated from the Protestants of Germany and Protestant divines of the Established Church, he may well hold up his private judgment as a guide to the rest of the world, if in that combination he find aught but confusion or infidelity.

CHAPTER III.

THE CAUSE OF PROTESTANT VIEWS OF CATHOLIC
DOCTRINE.

No one will deny that, speaking generally, the people of this country are, from infancy to manhood, brought up with such impressions that they sincerely believe that the Catholic religion is a mass of error and superstition. It is undeniable that in every form of religion there are to be found bad or ignorant men who abuse its best and most holy precepts ; and that, however perfect any one may believe his own religion to be, he cannot suppose that its doctrine and practice are not grossly abused

by many, both of its ministers and of their flocks. It is beyond dispute, that while all the abuses of the Establishment and every other form of the Protestant religion are never brought to the consideration of any of the people of this country, the abuses by bad or ignorant men, professing to be Catholics, are always so magnified and prominently represented to the mind, under Protestant education, that it is insensibly led to the conviction that the Catholic Church teaches error, sanctions superstition, and promotes every abuse of which religion is capable! The nurse and the schoolmaster, who know nothing of the Catholic religion, bring up the child in the dread of Popery, and tell him that its doctrine is 'damnable and idolatrous;' and when he leaves school I will venture to assert, that all the knowledge which he possesses, of the religion, which his own Church professes to have reformed, has been gained from novels and romances, composed for the

purpose of pandering to Protestant prejudice. The power of early impressions is great, and, where they are erroneous it requires the hard trials of life to give such experience as will efface them; that experience does not await the Protestant, until society, careless about all religion, has done its best to promote every prejudice which has been so instilled into the mind of the youth against the Catholic Church : for, long before any man will study a subject he has been so taught to hate, he will have found that the power of relations and the example of friends have combined, with all the interests of social life, to convince him that no act is so very likely to forfeit every chance of advancement in the world as exercising the Protestant's right of private judgment, should it lead to his seeking to save his soul in the Communion of the Catholic Church.

That it is considered all-important to Protestantism to keep the people in igno-

rance of the true doctrines, and the real meaning of the forms and ceremonies, of the Catholic Church, must be apparent to any one who, as a member of the Established Church, has reflected on the almost invariable tone of her ministers in the pulpit. Who has not heard in Protestant pulpits invectives against the Catholic religion, which could only be justifiable if directed against such bad men as have or may abuse it? What is more common than to hear a Protestant minister describe the doctrine or worship of the Catholic Church to be in reality such as *abuse* alone could be able to make it, rather than argue against it, as laid down and explained by those who truly preach and purely practise it? The reason is obvious. If, in the Protestant pulpit, the Catholic religion were fully and fairly presented to the consideration of any congregation, many would be inspired with a desire for knowledge of the truth, rather than be satisfied with the ridicule and

insult with which they naturally treat those professing a religion of which they have no knowledge, excepting its abuses. Who is there that has not, from a Protestant Pulpit, heard the Catholic Church called the 'Whore of Babylon;' the Pope, 'Antichrist;' Catholic priests, 'hypocrites;' and their congregations, 'idolaters?' Has any one ever, as a rule, known Protestant ministers tell their congregations that Roman Catholics believe *all* that is contained in the *three creeds* taught to Protestants? Would it not show more Christian charity to state such a truth sometimes, rather than, in the most insulting terms, to accuse them of a belief they deny, of doctrines they repudiate, and of practices they detest? If it were possible with truth to reply, that Catholic priests and bishops are to be found, who, on the other side, use language as opprobrious and intemperate, and who distort Protestant forms and doctrine, it would be but a poor answer from that Church which obliges

every one of her ministers to solemnly declare that 'in his heart he is truly called according to the will of Christ,' and that he will 'maintain quietness, peace and love, among all Christian people.' Surely ministers of any Protestant Church ought rather to select their language in no other spirit than that of truth and charity, and so seek 'a better way of showing themselves, either worthy to live or fit to die within its pale,' than by distorting the true opinions of Roman Catholics, for the purpose of making imputations of idolatry and superstition, which have no other foundation than in the ignorance or malignity of (I trust) bygone times.

CHAPTER IV.

THE DOCTRINE AND PRACTICE OF CLERGYMEN RESPECTING
THE BOOK OF COMMON PRAYER.

THE course of education generally given by the authority of the Established Church leaves on the young mind the double impression, that *everything* taught and practised in the Catholic Church is *bad*, and that *nothing* is *good*; and also what is, if possible, worse, that every *other* Church or sect, being *Protestant*, even although not 'established by law,' has so much in it that is good, and so little that is bad, that every member of the Church of England, not finding a service carried on as

established by law, may worship in a Lutheran or Calvinist, a Presbyterian or Methodist, or other dissenting Chapel, whichever he fancies : for, as they are all *Protestant, that*, he has been taught, is sufficient for any member of a Church which is latitudinarian enough to be careless whether its members worship God under any form of religion *except* the *one* which adheres in their entirety to the three Creeds which the 8th Article declares 'ought thoroughly to be received and believed.' Is it not a matter calculated to awaken in the mind of any one such doubts as ought to lead him to make an impartial inquiry, when he finds that Protestant authority will rather sanction his joining in the worship of God with *any* sect professing Christianity, which may either ignore altogether, or differ from, a portion of either of the three Creeds, than adore the Blessed Trinity in the Catholic Church, by the authority of which those three Creeds were compiled and established? That such impres-

sions on the young mind may not easily be effaced, a very large majority of the bishops, clergy, and other authorities of the Established Church (with the few exceptions of later years called Puseyites, or Ritualists), take care, that as the Book of Common Prayer was so composed that everything good in it is of Catholic origin, and more or less conformable to Catholic practice, the directions it contains shall be followed as little as possible. It may be safely affirmed that no Church authority ever re-proved any clergyman with a cure of souls, or any schoolmaster, for having allowed his flock or pupils to remain in total ignorance of much contained in the book which they hold to be second only to the Bible, and the authorised exponent of their doctrinal belief and ecclesiastical polity; indeed it may, with equal truth, be stated, that the general practice of the vast majority of clergy and laity is to disobey 'The Order of the Book of Common Prayer, Daily throughout the Year;'

and thus it is that Episcopal sanction has been given to clerical custom, not only to ignore much which that book contains, but also never to encourage any such following, or examination of it, as the right of private judgment *ought* to demand, lest its Catholic origin should lead those seeking the truth to doubt the efficacy of its Protestant application. No doubt some rare exceptions to the general rule may be found, where men from some good motives endeavour to obey the Rubric; but it is equally certain that, no matter what may be the motives or what the practices of such men, they never have had, and never will obtain, the unanimous approbation of the Bench of Bishops of the Established Church. But, with those rare exceptions, where is the parson and where the congregation believing or practising *all* the doctrines contained in the Book of Common Prayer? If it be true that (speaking generally) no one can *really believe* in *the truth* of religious doctrine without endeavouring to reduce

it to practice, I never yet have seen, or even heard of such a congregation or such a clergyman, who so proved their reliance on the Thirty-nine Articles of the Established Church. On the other hand, it is but justice to Protestant *Dissenters* to add, that, free as they are from 'Acts of Uniformity' and 'State control,' their ministers and members successfully endeavour to reduce *their* belief to practice. But it is notorious that neither Vicars nor Rectors, in general, prove their belief in the contents of the Prayer-book by their public use of it 'daily, throughout the year.' So far from it, except for a money payment to themselves or their officers as a marriage or funeral fee, or to gratify curiosity, their churches are closed from Monday morning to Saturday night, 'daily, throughout the year.'

It is very remarkable that Protestants frequently ridicule Catholics for keeping saints' days, although they have so many ordered

by their own Church to be kept holy. For the Book of Common Prayer commands twenty-nine 'Feasts to be observed in the Church of England throughout the year,' and sixteen 'Vigils, Fasts, and Days of Abstinence to be observed in the year;' and also 'Days of Fasting and Abstinence,' viz. forty in Lent, twelve Ember-days, three Rogation, and 'all Fridays in the year except Christmas Day.' There are services for Saints' days, Bishops' days, Martyrs' days, and Virgins' days; days for the 'Invention of the Cross,' 'Visitation of Mary,' the 'Annunciation of Our Lady,' the 'Purification of the Virgin Mary,' the 'Conception of the Virgin Mary,' the 'Nativity of the Virgin Mary,' of the 'Holy Cross,' of 'All Saints,' and 'The Transfiguration.' There were also services for the 'Popish Conspiracy,' the 'Nativity and Restoration' of the king *who died a Catholic*, and also for the only sanctified martyr which the Protestant Church has produced; but he use

of these services was discontinued by Royal Warrant, issued in 1859. I may observe also, that the service with reference to the great miracle in which Protestants formerly believed, viz. the touch of the King curing a constitutional disease, was withdrawn from the Book of Common Prayer only two years after Queen Anne's intention of touching publicly to cure the evil was announced in the Gazette of 1712. What, I ask, is the use of a parade of vigils, fasts, and abstinence, Martyrs', Virgins', and Bishops' days, Holy Cross, Conception, and All Saints' days, in the Book of Common Prayer, if they are to be ignored by the great body of the clergy and laity of the Church of England; and if those of that body who pay the smallest attention to them are to be ridiculed as Puseyites by many, and stigmatised as *quasi*-Papists by the rest of the Protestant community? But it is a *fact* no one can deny, that because every direction to keep those days holy is derived from

Catholic doctrine and practice, the great majority of the clergymen of this country and their congregations consider the order for observing those days, as laid down in the Book of Common Prayer, more honoured in the breach than in the observance; and certainly no minister of the Church of England, or master of any Protestant school, has ever yet been able to explain on any reasonable ground, in accordance with Protestant opinions, why the celebration of such feasts, fasts, and saints' days, has been retained, under the sanction of a Church protesting against every Catholic notion and practice connected with either the one or the other! It may truly be said that no member of the Church of England is brought up with the idea that he is ever to fast in a physical sense if he have a shilling in his pocket; or that he ought to mortify his spirit, if at all, on any particular days; or that he may not feast on any or every day that he can: and as to any of the saints' days, if he ever

heard of one, he knows nothing more of them than that at Harrow or Eton an 'absence call' and copy of verses take the place of a school-day under the name of a holy-day.

However, as I never heard any Protestant discussion respecting a 'saint's day' which did not finish with the remark, 'But we don't keep them!' And as most Protestants not 'Ritualists' ignore them, I suppose that, when the Prayer-book shall again be *revised*, the State will Americanize that portion of it which relates to the English worship of saints.

Now, as the Church of England refuses to interpret the Bible with any authority to guide its members, so do her bishops and clergy carefully abstain from ever calling attention to a consideration of the Book of Common Prayer, or the various directions it contains, whether 'of ceremonies, why some are retained and others abolished,' why 'the Act of Uniformity' is introduced into it, or

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why the texts, 'Judge not, that ye be not judged,' 'With what measure ye mete it shall be measured to you again,' were so forgotten by the compilers of that book, that it contains a service in which every one 'curses' somebody, instead of the more 'godly discipline of the Primitive' (*i.e.* Catholic) 'Church.' Is it not notorious, that (although some individuals, whose attention may have been prompted by curiosity to the Rubric, and other directions the Book of Common Prayer contains) no one is ever taught anything respecting that book beyond what may be collected by attending the ordinary Sunday service? The reason is, that all the various members and ministers of the different sections of the Established Church, condemn some part or other, while *none* ever venture to teach, or to declare they approve of, the entire use of all prayers, forms, and ceremonies, in perfect accordance with *all* that book contains.

CHAPTER V.

DIVISION, THE CONSEQUENCE OF PROTESTANT
DOCTRINE.

I FIND, on referring to notes made when I first began to look into the subject of my inquiry, that authorities, including good Protestant divines, made a deep impression on me, and that the natural inferences which such quotations as the following suggested, led me, even at that early period, to foresee that an impartial examination might bring me to the conclusion that the Established Church is wanting (to use the strong ex-

pression of *Mr. Wix*) in ‘the very essence of Christianity:’—

‘Parmi tant de religions, qui se proscrivent et s’excluent, mutuellement—*une seule est bonne,*’ are the words of the *French philosopher, Rousseau!*

‘The Protestant Church permits every individual, “et sentire quæ velit, et quæ sentiat loqui.”’—*Watson.*

‘The Bible, and that only, interpreted *by our best reason,* is the religion of Protestants.’—*Bishop Hurd’s ‘Study of Prophecy.’*

‘The religious principle which emanates from God must be *uniform* and unchangeable.’—*Dr. Gray’s ‘Bampton Lectures.’*

‘Inattention about the discovery of the truth, is as real a moral depravity as is the neglect of religious practice.’—*Dr. Butler’s ‘Analogy.’*

‘Christ founded only *One* Church, and there can be but *One* communion in it.’

Again, ‘As the Church is but *One,* and

the promises of God are made only to *that* Church, so man's covenanted title to those promises must depend on his being a member of it, since it becomes a matter of importance with every one to be satisfied that he is *really* a member of *it*; for, should he not be *such*, the sincerity of his profession will not supply the deficiency of those privileges and blessings.'—*Dr. Daubeny's 'Guide to the Church.'*

'The principle of the Reformation was not so much the right of separation from the errors of a corrupt Church as that Christian liberty which gives *every man* a right to worship God according to his conscience.'—*Bishop Warburton.*

'The Protestant acknowledges no universal head, nor deems the *Church itself*, acting even by its legitimate rulers, to be either gifted with infallibility or vested with *such authority* as may annul the right of its *individual* members to *appeal* to the *Scripture* itself.'—*Dr. Van Mildert's 'Bampton Lecture.'*

‘Men despise all ecclesiastical subordination and discipline, all “*unity of mind and judgment,*” and adhere to such *practices and opinions* as are right in their *own eyes*, or rather such as are *agreeable* to their own *inclination and conceit.*’—*Bishop Mant’s* ‘Bampton Lecture.’

The paramount importance of such views, questions, and considerations, as the point of each of these various quotations must in combination bring before an inquiring mind, cannot, I think, be doubted by any one; and to reconcile with reason all that they contain, and yet be a member of any Church, professing Christianity, except the Roman Catholic, seems to me impossible. Certainly Bishop Mant’s description of the Protestant’s view of ecclesiastical subordination and discipline is not less true now than in his day: on the contrary, I think it is an unquestionable fact, that at the present time the divisions consequent on the first principle of

Protestantism as laid down by the united authority of Bishops Watson, Hurd, and Van Mildert, have brought forth the widest differences of opinion, of judgment, and, in fact, of faith itself, in each sect professing any religion departing from the Roman Catholic. And although those differences amongst members of the Establishment are innumerable, they are treated, by one Bishop or another of the existing Bench, as ecclesiastically lawful; while on High, Low, or Broad principles, they *claim* to be in communion with the Establishment; and so long as they profess *that* amount of unity, the law enables the patronage of the Church to be disposed of to either party, as the clerical or lay-proprietor thereof may deem most conducive to his own pecuniary or family interests, his political views, or his sectarian opinions.

Division is as inevitably the consequence of Protestantism, as Unity is the attribute of Catholicism. To any member of the

Established Church who has been taught the Apostles', Nicene, and Athanasian Creeds, it must be somewhat astounding when he realises the first principle of that Church, by making an honest endeavour to be convinced of the truths those Creeds contain, and to prove them to the satisfaction of his own private judgment only 'by the *most certain warrants* of Holy Scripture.' In the first place, his Protestant education has taught him that the Roman Catholic religion permits idolatry, promotes superstition, and is to be abhorred by all Christians; but it has also, as long as possible, concealed from him the fact, that the Roman Catholic holds identically the same faith, as expressed in the same three Creeds; and he is necessarily much puzzled to understand upon what authority it is that the Established Church can teach her members that these three Creeds express 'the Catholic faith, which except a man steadfastly believe he cannot be saved,' and yet that the

Roman Catholic Church, which *ab initio* adopted in their integrity, and still holds the same three Creeds in the same words, is no better than a damnable and idolatrous superstition! He goes, therefore, to his 'spiritual pastors and masters,' to the writings of past distinguished prelates of his Church, or to the existing Bench of bishops, and he is comforted by such further instruction, contained in another fact then brought to his conviction, viz. that upon the great truths those Creeds contain, as well as on the conclusions to be drawn from them, all the said authorities of his Church differ, more or less; and they only agree to tell him one thing, 'Read the Bible and judge for yourself!' Well, what can he do? He reads the Bible, and finds scarcely a passage relating to any one disputed question, which he can decide, or even comprehend, to his own satisfaction. He is perplexed: his Church has practically told him his own judgment is as good as hers; and if he be an

earnest man, his perplexity becomes intolerable. He consults others; but of his co-religionists he can find few who have studied the subject, and none who understand the Bible as he reads it, or who believe in all three Creeds alike. Indeed it is a well-known fact, that very many members of the Church of England go so far as to systematically abstain from being present in church on those days on which the Athanasian Creed is appointed to be used.* Such is the confusion, such the want of con-

* It is well known that George III., the head of the Church, would not respond when the Athanasian Creed was read; but when, to please him, the Apostles' Creed was substituted, the king answered loudly—which accounts to me why John Reeves, the king's printer, says, in his Introduction to the Book of Common Prayer, of the Athanasian Creed, that it only requires of us to hold the Catholic faith and the Doctrine of the Trinity, 'That is all that is required; and the rest of that famous composition requires no more our assent than a sermon does which is made to prove or illustrate a text.' He practically tells members of the Established Church that, like the king, they may respond to so much of that Creed as they please, and no more!

fidence, that the various Protestant Churches claim salvation in each and all, although the doctrine of the Lutheran and the Calvinist be as inconsistent with each other as both are with that of the Socinian. One will tell you that, according to his judgment, the whole Bible is inspired by God, *except certain books* which his understanding cannot admit; that he is satisfied that Christ is really present in the Eucharist, in the way *his* sense can understand: but then the other says that is a mistake, for his senses, reason, and feelings tell him that Christ is *not present at all*, either as a reality or mystery; and that bread is simply broken in remembrance of a certain ceremony performed by Christ: and the third will declare that *his* private judgment tells him *both* the others are in the wrong—neither of them understands the Bible: *his* reason satisfies him that Christ is not present really, or mystically; that neither Trinity nor Eucharist exists at all; and that Jesus Christ was but a

good man, important in history from the number of His followers! What remains for the truth-seeking Protestant? Will *his own* private judgment alone enable him to satisfy his conscience, that he or any mortal can *surely know* that each and all of these opinions are in the right, that each will therefore lead to salvation, and consequently that the Creed, which the Church established by law adopts, saying, 'Whosoever will be saved, before all things it is necessary that he hold the Catholic Faith,' is in direct contradiction to the only light by which that Church directs him to read the Bible? The more anxious he is to know the truth, the more conscientious he is in his endeavours to arrive at it, the more fallacious will he find every argument which presents itself to him, to the effect that more than one religion can be understood by '*One God, one Faith, one Baptism!*' In vain will he *try* to believe that he can so reconcile the profession of such a faith as he has been

taught, in the Church in which he was born, with his reason, on finding it leads only to division, and never to unity! In vain will he try to satisfy himself by making up in his own mind *a belief*, partly of this and partly of that, which the best of the preachers have brought to his mind in the churches, the High, the Low, or the Broad, of the Establishment, which he has frequented. For such a belief must be wholly unsupported by any authority on which he can rely! His own Church tells him that those of 'Jerusalem, Alexandria, Antioch and Rome, have erred, not only in ceremonies, but in faith;' and that she herself, so far from thinking she does not err, and that she, therefore, may not 'expound one place of Scripture contrary to another,' desires him to consider his judgment equal (if not superior to) hers, and tells him to be guided by it: he might as well be told to make, as it were, 'a Church' of his own! Where is the man, honest and

earnest in the pursuit of the truth, who, under such circumstances, will not find in the Bible, interpreted by his best reason, 'a Church' of uncertainty and confusion? And if, in addition to the many authorities of High Church and Low Church for Protestant doctrine, more or less Calvinistic, Lutheran, Socinian, Baptist, or Independent, he be introduced to a Bishop of that established by law, quoting chapter and verse of the Bible in behalf of this doctrine, that though '*God may be Triune*, there is no authority whatever in that Sacred Book for the worship of Christ or of the Holy Spirit'—will not that, which before was to him uncertainty and confusion, become the certain source of infidelity or despair?

CHAPTER VI.

SOME CONSIDERATIONS WITH REFERENCE TO THE
EIGHTEENTH ARTICLE.

AT the early period adverted to in the last chapter, my attention being directed to the Thirty-nine Articles, I found it impossible to reconcile with the instruction I had received, much which they contain, and I was especially struck by the difference between the law of the 18th Article, and the practice under it.

When I found that, upon some of the most important points, the various views of those to whom my education had from time to time been entrusted were, by some ecclesiastical authority or other, sometimes con-

firmed and sometimes contested, I was naturally puzzled ; for I could not see how all could be true, though I could see reason in Rousseau's observation, '*Parmi tant, de religions une SEULE est bonne.*'

I had been taught by one clergyman that the Sacrament of Baptism was 'Regeneration,' a 'saving from original sin:' another, with whom I was afterwards placed, taught me that such a view was 'Popish;' for, although it was a ceremony sanctioned by custom, it was unreasonable to suppose it ensured salvation ; I heard a Dean declare from the pulpit that to those receiving the 'Lord's Supper' 'rightly, worthily, and with faith,' the 'bread was the Body of Christ ;' and I afterwards heard a Bishop declare such a view was 'repugnant to Scripture.' I heard an eminent minister of the Establishment preach in Cambridge the so-called evangelical doctrine, that 'man is saved by Faith alone;' and in St. George's Church, Hanover Square, I heard it laid down

by high authority, that 'Faith alone availed nothing.' And yet they all agreed in the conclusion that, provided a man were honest in his convictions, he would secure salvation!

Now, with regard to this world, inasmuch as it is perfectly true that every sect acknowledges the principle of 'doing to others as you would they should do unto you;' and as acting fully up to it involves all that is good between man and man, it is so far of no importance of what sect any one may be a member. But, with regard to eternal salvation, such opinion contains an error, fatal to every religion professing Christianity; for if eternal salvation can be secured in each by diligently living according to the law thereof, no one religion can be of more value than another.

Those of the Established Church who entertain such a belief, clearly follow her practice, rather than obey her teaching. The

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former sanctioning that for which the latter would render them 'accursed.'

But I have known many, most earnest members of the Established Church, who had no idea that such opinions were in direct opposition to her teaching, so little did they know that by the 18th Article she declares, that even 'They are to be had accursed that presume to say every man shall be saved by the law or sect which he professeth, so that he be diligent to frame his life according to the light of nature; for Holy Scripture doth set forth only the name of Jesus Christ whereby men must be saved.'

The meaning of that Article appeared to me to be, either that every sect or section believing 'Holy Scripture doth set out only the name of Jesus Christ whereby men must be saved,' will find salvation; which is only saying that each section or sect may be in the right! Or it means that all are to be accursed who do not believe in the one right *way*, in

which by the name of Christ man must be saved. Now, I strongly felt that nothing could be more unreasonable than so to curse any one by the authority of a Church which, while claiming authority to give her own version of the Old and New Testaments, nevertheless disclaims all authority to define *how*, or in what sense, her members should read or interpret the same; and as, by her 20th Article, she pretends to 'power and authority in controversies in matters of faith,' it did seem to me the more unjustifiable to leave the question of the *way* in which to interpret the Scriptures to its members individually, and yet to denounce those 'accursed' who framed their lives 'according to the light of nature,' by which alone she so left them to seek the truth!

Looking to the principle involved in the 18th Article, it appeared to me to be consistent with the Catholic belief that there is no salvation out of the true Church, which led

me to endeavour to ascertain why Protestants (who differ upon almost every other point) agreed with singular unanimity in condemning Catholics for holding an opinion in strict conformity with the words of the Creed common to both, and also in unison with the principle of that Article; and the only reason I could see why Protestants censured the Catholic opinion was, because I found that their view of it was so far exaggerated, that they imagine that a Catholic *must* believe that every soul in the world, not in communion with the Roman Catholic Church, must inevitably be damned. To examine the difference, in principle or degree, between the Established and the Catholic Church upon that point, was my next object; and, looking to the fact that both Churches professed identically the same Articles of Belief; that they each held that 'whosoever will be saved, before all things it is necessary that he hold the Catholic Faith;' and 'except a man believe it (the

Catholic Faith) faithfully, he cannot be saved' —I could only conclude that *both* Churches must hold, in some sense or other, that a man not in communion with the Catholic Church will be damned. Upon looking further, I found that every Protestant took his own view as to what constituted the 'Catholic Faith' in the law or sect that he professed; and I could find none, by which I could be saved from being accursed by the Church, which gave me the liberty of belonging to any sect or section of it I pleased, leaving me to the 'Light of Nature.' I also found that to the Catholic view of the words above quoted, my reason and my faith equally compelled me to adhere; first, because if the Creed properly described the Catholic Faith, which except 'a man keep whole he shall perish everlastingly,' that alone could be the truth; and, secondly, because my faith in all which that Creed professes, includes perfect reliance on that truth. But if I had

been asked if it were necessary to believe that every soul not in communion with the Catholic Church must be damned, I should have said that my opinion, at the time above referred to, was, as it now is, to the effect that, if through his own fault any one adhere to error, who *would* not know (although he might know, and therefore *ought* to know) the truth, obstinately persisted in the error in which ignorance (originally excusable) had placed him, such a man is included in the words of the Creed—‘He cannot be saved;’ but I never believed that those validly baptized (and Baptism *may* be administered by Catholic or Protestant, lay or clerical), whose error in faith is not culpable, cannot be saved. And I hold that the difference between the Established and the Roman Catholic Church upon this point to be, that the former curses the man who does not hold a truth she does not define! while the latter declares that a man who is culpably in error as to

the truth which she does define, 'cannot be saved.'

Having been taught to believe that I should be 'accursed' if I thought that a man 'could be saved by the law or sect which he profeseth,' even provided he lived righteously 'according thereto;' and, also, that it was my duty to satisfy my own conscience as to the faith in which I had been bred, and that I ought to read the Bible for the purpose of being the more fully convinced that the religion of the Established Church was the right one, and therefore the only one in which I could be saved; I considered that it was the more incumbent on me to interpret it, and judge for myself, not only because that Church did not profess to be infallible, but because, as great latitude was allowed to her ministers to preach any doctrine on the most important matters, quite at variance one with the other, she held that each lay member, depending on his own private judg-

ment, ought to take nothing else for his guide.

Imagine the state of mind of a man who owed to early religious instruction that spirit which, amid all the temptations of vice incident to College life, led him to seek the truth in those moments of reflection which, even when we are young, will occasionally arise, on finding he had to subscribe the Thirty-nine Articles, and might be liable to be called on to take the oaths to which reference has been made !

I well remember it was a state of pain and difficulty, by no means relieved when I found, in the great authority of Mr. Hallam's Constitutional History, that his opinion with respect to those who usually compose the Legislature, when they swore that the Catholic religion was idolatrous, was similar to that which I entertained of those ministers and tutors who wished to inculcate on my mind a belief in the truth and efficacy of such oaths ;

viz. that they, like the 'legislators of a great nation, set off oddly, by solemnly professing theological opinions about which they knew nothing!'

Is it to be supposed that in any but rare exceptional cases, a youth will pursue the truth continuously until he find it? Experience answers in the negative! The Protestant is taught that all other Churches have erred, and that his own is not infallible: and that he must ascertain for himself if the religion he has been taught be true. The pleasures, temptations, follies, vices, which few try to overcome, and which fewer, if any, successfully combat, more easily, perhaps, exert their power over a mind which, even from the best of motives, viz. a desire for the truth, becomes subject to much pain and difficulty. The natural result is, that (the Established Church admitting it has no authority capable of giving rest) uncertainty and confusion prevail; that indifference succeeds; that, if

the mind were to be probed, infidelity would be found latent; and, to meet the religious 'Mrs. Grundy,' deceit is so far called in aid that the youth drops into the easy and comfortable worldly position, ensured, amongst relatives, friends and acquaintance, of escaping observation by doing, or appearing to do, with regard to religious observances, whatever may be done or omitted with perfect immunity, so long as he may profess to be a member of the Established Church, or of any other *Protestant* denomination!

CHAPTER VII.

' COMPROMISE OR COMPREHENSION.'

THE mind which has ever once endeavoured to direct its unbiassed attention to the pursuit of the truth cannot remain satisfied with such ease and comfort as the world may afford, while it has recourse to carelessness and indifference. Either cruel injustice, bodily illness, or deep calamity, will most surely renew an earnest desire for knowledge of the truth; and perhaps no one more than myself owes to each a greater debt of obligation for having, at different periods of my life, stimulated me to renew such a pursuit; and, if it be with shame that I acknow-

ledge how *repeatedly* I was so far the victim of worldly temptation as to shrink from carrying such intention to a conviction alike conscientious and final, I have the more reason to be grateful for those visitations, which led to renewed efforts to seek the truth, and which have at last enabled me to obtain such rest as the conviction that I have found it alone could give.

My difficulties have been very different from those which, judging from published works and such information as society affords, have been the causes of delaying or preventing many conversions to the Catholic Church. One was this—that when I determined to examine the grounds of Protestant condemnation of Catholic doctrine, I found it was necessary rather to exercise my right of private judgment, in first satisfying myself of the truths of those principles laid down in the three Creeds which I knew to be common to both the Churches of England and

of Rome, than to confine myself to an investigation of the doctrines upon which they differ.

No one who has not attempted to reduce to practice the first principle of the Protestant Church can have any idea of the painful trial which he has to undergo who, having been brought up to believe, as regards 'eternal salvation,' that 'they are accursed who presume to say every man shall be saved by the law or sect which he professeth,' and at the same time that he not only has the liberty, but that it is his duty, to satisfy himself, by 'reading the Bible,' that his religion is the only true one. What has he to do? He must decide, in the first place, *what* writings constitute 'the Bible,'—a subject upon which professors of every Protestant sect have been divided: next, he must decide upon which of the readings given of those sacred histories be genuine, which translation is more correct, and which of the various interpretations put upon the most important

parts by those 'Churches which have erred,' or *may err*, be the right one. Such is the task imposed by that duty which it is incumbent on every well-educated Protestant to endeavour to perform; and I think it cannot fail to be painful in its result, which will prove that it is not necessary to have the authority of Saint Augustine to convince the inquirer that 'he who has not the Church for his mother will not have God for his father.' In other words, he who has to rely on his own reason, to the exclusion of faith in a Church as *the right one*, will find that the Protestant principle inevitably leads, first to doubt, then to confusion, and, finally, to infidelity or despair.

Now imagine what it is to satisfy yourself that the religion you have been taught by a Church, which tells you to judge for yourself and not to believe she cannot err, is the true one! You have heard the ministers of that Church preach upon the necessity of your sub-

scribing to the Thirty-nine Articles, but you never heard any two give the same meaning to each and all of those Articles. You hear, and see, and feel, that neither lecturers on divinity, the services of the clergy, nor investigation by the laity, have formed any other creed than that which the private opinion of any Protestant has not an equal right to lay down as equally true ; and where is he, layman or clergyman, who, having so decided on *his own religion*, can know it is the only true one, which was founded by Christ ?

You study, and labour to understand, upon what grounds you are to believe in the 'Trinity in Unity and Unity in Trinity : ' you try to be convinced that it is necessary to your salvation that you 'rightly believe the Incarnation.' No human being *can* find satisfactory grounds for believing either the one or the other by the light of his own private judgment. You use the whole power of your intellect to reconcile the articles

of religion which you have been taught, with a belief which you may feel, but which will vanish when you find that *all* is to depend on *your own* reading and interpretation of the Scriptures, because you can rely implicitly on no unerring authority; and your mind will therefore be distracted, and its powers be as it were paralysed, by reasoning every bit as good as your own, on every view shadowed forth by your Church (which dissented from the Catholic Church), as well as by readings and interpretations differing from your own: in fact, either by the doctrines of Calvin or Luther, or any variety to which, while honestly trying to fix on the right one, the mind guided only by reason will from time to time incline. If, however, you seek for the help of even such authority as the Established Church might in your mind, *à priori*, be supposed to claim, you find it useless, for you ask yourself this question,—Why exercise my private judgment and my reason upon Protestant principles if I begin

to examine, under the influence of the *foregone conclusion*, that the Established Church has authority to decide that I am to believe something inconsistent with *my* reason and against my judgment? She told me she was not infallible: she declared me to be ‘accursed’ if I presumed to think I could be ‘saved by the law or sect I might profess,’ unless it were the right one; desiring me to read the Bible, and rely on my reason and judgment. I find, of those who do so, many quoting text after text to warrant the belief *they* are ‘elect,’ to prove *they* are already saved, and that their neighbours who do not so see their salvation are irrevocably damned! and I find those who apparently are the best and the most learned members of the Established Church differing on essential points of the Christian religion; and I further find moral and earnest men denying the Divinity of Christ, rewards and punishments, a future state, and every other truth except, perhaps, the existence of an

Almighty Power. I was taught to believe much which is perfectly unintelligible to human reason, however truly it might be depended on as the doctrine of a Church which (being of Divine origin) is infallible; but at the same time I was told not to believe in the *traditions* of that Church (which had preserved 'the Bible' by tradition), although I was expected to support conclusions in consonance with the doctrines common both to the Catholic and also to the Established Church, for which the latter had no proof more convincing than that they were held by the former.

No one educated in our public schools and universities will say I have not fairly stated the case, or deny that it is a fearful trial for any one to undergo, to try to satisfy his reason that he has been taught the truth, upon incomprehensible matters, by pastors of a Church which says he must nevertheless rely on his own powers of mind so to read Holy

Scripture as to 'escape those' laws or sects under which he could not be saved, however 'diligently he might live according to them.'

My 'difficulty' consisted in feeling the responsibility of satisfying myself upon incomprehensible matters, on finding that the Church in which I had been brought up, and which I had, as it were unconsciously, supposed possessed Divine authority—not only professed she might err, but also called upon me to take the Bible only for my guide, to judge for myself, and yet at the same time to adopt her interpretation! Now, before I entered on such questions, I was strongly impressed with the idea, which all subsequent examination has confirmed, that any and every dissenting sect professing Christianity has as much right to set up a Church, and can substantiate by as good reasons that it is the true Church, as the Church of England. In fact, as the professed basis of the Established Church was the reformation of abuses, and

bringing the Church of Christ to its original purity and simplicity by the lights of human reason, aided by the superior intelligence and thirst for religious liberty which were supposed to distinguish the 16th century from what were called the dark ages; it appears to me, that if it be true that the Church of Christ, established by the Apostles (and those saints who are acknowledged alike by Rome and England to have been their successors), could so 'err in matters of faith' as to sink into corruption, still that there is no reason whatever to suppose that the information which the world had attained at that time, (although guided by such holy and pious authorities as Luther and Calvin, King Henry VIII. and Queen Elizabeth), was so perfect as to be capable of eradicating error, blotting out corruption, and bringing back, in all its perfection, the true Church, as 'the witness and keeper of Holy Writ,' with 'authority in controversies!'

With the experience of three more cen-

turies, during which education has been so extended that almost every man feels competent to think for himself, and when the said Church, reformed by those authorities, has now within its establishment almost as many doctrines as preachers, and as much variety in 'living and ceremonies,' and of 'opinions in matters of faith,' as the abuses formerly asserted to exist in the 'dark ages' before her reformation; why, it seems self-evident that any or every sect now dissenting from the Establishment may, on grounds similar to those taken three hundred years ago, assert that reformation is more wanted now, and in these less ignorant and more enlightened times be able, by the power of human reason and in the exercise of the right of private judgment, to establish, more or less, a claim to be the true Church, in which 'if a man be diligent' he will not be 'accursed.' But all these views and reasons were only the more perplexing, as involving an examination of the various doctrines of different sects, and

the arguments by which they were supported; and I repeat, I could find none which had not reasons *as* good, and arguments *as* strong, each for its particular dissent from the Established Church, as any which that Church ever gave for protesting against the Catholic Church. Then, again, my difficulty was by no means relieved by my endeavours to understand and reconcile the Thirty-nine Articles, so as to arrive at conclusions consistent with such impressions and convictions as the Bible *alone* made on my mind. *That* I found to be impossible! and I was early persuaded of the truth of assertions, often made and never refuted, that the Thirty-nine Articles were compiled to meet the views and feelings of a bygone age—that no Convocation of bishops and clergy would ever think of framing such Articles in the present age, for there was no prospect of the Protestant bishops and clergy ever agreeing again upon any.

‘The Thirty-nine Articles’ of the Estab-

lished Church were purposely so worded as best to meet individual opinions; and all brought up in her bosom are taught to interpret them in a High, Low, or Broad sense, according to the fancy of each individual teacher, with a sort of reservation that, although any one may believe them each in his own sense, the bishops and clergy *ought*, nevertheless, to do what they never do, viz. agree upon them in only one sense! However, all differences are conveniently arranged both for clergy and laity, provided that, *as Protestants*, they make a declaration, whenever required by law, accepting the Thirty-nine Articles, whether in a natural or non-natural sense.

Mr. Froude, in his 'History of the Reign of Queen Elizabeth,' with reference to the Bill, in 1566, to make subscription to the Thirty-nine Articles a condition of tenure of a benefice, says:—'The Thirty-nine Articles, strained and cracked by three centuries of evasive ingenuity, scarcely now embarrass the feeblest

of consciences. The clergyman of the nineteenth century subscribes them with such a smile as might have been worn by Samson when his Philistine mistress bound his arms with cords and withes.' And, a Right Rev. Prelate (the Bishop of Oxford) was reported to have said in the House of Lords: 'It is no secret, and nothing would be gained by denying the fact, that there are in the Church of England men who go near to Rome and near to Geneva.' 'He denied the Church of England was one of *compromise*, but he avowed it to be one of *comprehension*, embracing within her fold men of every view, between those who absolutely denied her primary principles, and those who held the doctrines of the Roman Catholic Church, which she had expressly condemned.' 'A Church,' of such comprehension as the Bishop of Oxford describes, *must* be one of error! *more* than one doctrine, one faith, or one mode of worship, *cannot* be included in Apostolic religion.

That 'fact' was always, in my mind, a reason why any one educated in the 'fold' of the Established Church ought to give some consideration to the question, whether he should remain in it, on some better ground than because he was born in it. It seemed to me, that to establish a Church by law, so as to comprehend 'those near to Rome and near to Geneva' (with the infinite variety between each) within its fold, was to make a *compromise* of the doctrines of the Church of Christ an essential foundation of that Establishment. It appeared to me, that '*comprehension*' by that Church of such antagonism as 'views near to Rome and near to Geneva' involve; must, sooner or later, prove how 'a house divided against itself is brought to desolation.' It has already made the clergyman of the nineteenth century subscribe to its Thirty-nine Articles, with the smile so graphically recorded by Mr. Froude. Truth could not be better expressed, nor fact more concisely

stated, than he has put it; and it is almost a logical inference that 'such a smile' indicates the conviction that the Thirty-nine Articles of the Established Church contain the seeds of her own destruction.

How many Protestants in a hundred have ever read attentively the Thirty-nine Articles? I ask the reader of these pages: Have *you*? If you have, do you understand them? Do you believe fully and entirely in them? If you do so: in what sense? In that which is the more natural sense of language, or in that by which they can best be brought to your *own preconceived* notions, High, Low, or Broad? Have you read them, and so interpreted them, that they *can only* lead to a conclusion consistent with your own conscientious convictions of the truth of everything which, as a member of the Church established by law, you have solemnly declared to be your belief, when you said 'Amen' to

the Apostles', the Nicene, and the Athanasian Creeds? Whoever you are, I challenge you to prove,—nay even *to say*, that you *both believe and understand* all that those Thirty-nine Articles contain, and which, as a member of the Established Church, you are bound to profess. I have never yet conversed with any two persons, lay or clerical, who believed and understood them in the same sense, if at all.

Before *Puseyism* and *Ritualism* were known, there was a *uniformity* in the Church of England to this extent, that a general inclination to carelessness and indifference as to all forms and ceremonies prevailed. In Cathedral Churches you might hear the Psalms chanted and an anthem sung, but in all others music was hardly known, except singing a psalm before the Communion Service, and again before the sermon! The sermon never alluded to any differences of opinion *within* the Establishment, and of con-

troversy little was heard beyond denunciation of Popery; and, at an earlier period, warnings of the ruin of England should the Catholics ever be emancipated. Whoever would abuse Popery had an easy life in society, and if he occasionally went to his parish church was, as a matter of course, accounted to be 'a good sort of man.'

I found it impossible to surmount my first difficulty upon those incomprehensible matters of faith in the three Creeds, upon which the Catholic and English Churches agree, by any valid reason based exclusively on my own reading of the Bible; inasmuch as I found, in the reasonings of good and learned men, arguments in favour of Dissenters' views, of almost every denomination, quite as strong and valid as my own. I felt, for instance, that I could not resist many of their arguments against the Creeds, except upon the ground already occupied by the Church in which I was brought up; but then I knew that she herself had adopted

and could defend them *only* on the fact, that they had been formed and accepted by that Catholic Church to which she was more opposed than she was to any of those Dissenting denominations which denied them in whole or in part! The alternatives which seemed to be presented to my mind were coldness and indifference to all, a blind adherence to a fallible Church, or total disbelief. Now the sense of religion which had been so early instilled into me was such that I shrunk from the last; and having once endeavoured to seek the truth, my inquiry had proceeded too far to give me any chance of comfort in a faith professed, rather because I was born in it, than from my own conviction of its perfection. In such a state of mind, and well knowing that every prospect in this life would be annihilated; that I should be disinherited and disowned; that an aged father, to whom I owed a larger debt of gratitude than a son could repay, would feel his remaining years were rendered wretched by

my act, I was overcome by such considerations, and yielding more, as I hope, to filial affection and gratitude, than to the lower motive arising from the fear of losing all the fair prospects of such happiness as advancement in the world affords; I plead guilty to having adopted such apparent carelessness and indifference as to be able to pass with the average of that numerous class of young gentlemen, who, after taking their degree at Oxford or Cambridge, were as ready to swallow the Thirty-nine Articles, without any true belief in, or understanding of their meaning, as afterwards, on entering the House of Commons, they were ready to swear to the possession of a qualification of 300*l.* or 600*l.* a-year in land, well knowing that such possession was but a fiction, manufactured for fraud on Parliament, at the expense of perjury. The retrospect is somewhat terrible, when memory tells me how, even in those days, I felt I could not plead that ignorance which, more or less, might be con-

sidered an excuse or palliation of such indifference to religion on the part of those who had never asked themselves the question, respecting their Church, 'Is it true?' and consequently had never been alive to the possibility that it might be erroneous; and I feel it the more difficult to justify now the course I then took, because I must confess it was with more or less of deliberation, and in candour I must add, that it was with the presumptuous hope that I had plenty of time before me!

CHAPTER VIII.

A VISIT IN EARLY LIFE — LASTING IMPRESSIONS —
SUBSEQUENT COURSE.

How has that time been spent? is a question to which, with reference to my ultimate conversion, I wish to give a full and candid answer. It may be inferred from what I have already said, that the examination I had made up to the period when I yielded to such considerations as I have mentioned, led, if not to a decided conviction, certainly to a strong opinion in my mind in favour of the Roman Catholic, as against every form of any Protestant religion; such opinion has never been

effaced, during 'all the changes and chances' of the many years which have since elapsed; and it will appear, in another place, how nearly my general impressions on those matters of importance, which separate the Established from the Catholic Church, amounted to positive conviction. However, at the period when, presuming on the time before me, I finished my college life by taking my degree, and conforming to what I have called the easy, jog-trot religion of the day, I entered on those pleasures of the world which an indulgent father enabled me to partake, ready to seek in the army, or official life, some fashionable occupation, without leaving a comfortable and happy home, where I was in the midst, and fully enjoyed, the amusements of London life.

Shortly before Catholic Emancipation, viz. in October, 1828 (by a chance which I shall always consider most fortunate), I was invited to a country house, where, for the first time in my life, I became acquainted with the *home*

of a Catholic family. In consequence of a festival in the neighbourhood, my visit was prolonged beyond the 'two nights' for which I was at first asked. To the surprise of Lady —, I appeared in the morning at chapel: of course, she could not fail to see I had been accustomed to the forms of Roman Catholic worship, and that it was not curiosity which took me there. Perhaps, therefore, my attendance at mass excited some interest; for both Lord and Lady — must well have known the extreme anti-Catholic views of my father: but they did not ask me any questions. However, I took an opportunity of telling Lady — what I felt, and acknowledged all I thought respecting the Roman Catholic religion. I have never forgotten the kindness and sympathy with which, in the spirit of true charity, she entered into all I said, nor the deep impression which the views she expressed made upon me; and I well remember how much I was struck by the

conviction, that in all she said she was 'doing by another as she would be done by.' The immediate result, however, was, that my departure was not again delayed, and I left that Catholic house, where everything I saw and heard of the religion professed by that family was an example which I acknowledge with thanks had a serious effect on my mind, I have always felt, and which no doubt tended to confirm many of those opinions which had been the result of my own examination. I now, however, allude to that visit only to show how the accidental circumstance of my being at a public ball at — led to an invitation to pay a visit to a country house, which so recalled me from that indifference which otherwise perhaps would have become habitual, that at this distance of time I feel gratitude' to Lady — and her family for the example which was to me of so much value! I may here remark, that on the day after my admission

into the Church (thirty-eight years subsequent to that visit), I found myself, by accident, passing near to the present residence of a member of that family, whom during the last eighteen years I had not seen, and of whom during that time I had heard nothing. I wrote a note requesting, as an old acquaintance, to be allowed to call, 'if my name was not forgotten;' in which case, I only ventured to hope 'it might be yet remembered in prayer.' An answer, saying, 'I have not, indeed, forgotten you, and have often done what you only ask me to continue to do,' led to a visit; and thus, the *first person* with whom I *conversed* after my admission into the Church was a member of that family, (not one of whom I had seen for many years,) whose example, so long ago, had so much contributed to confirm the first Catholic ideas of my early life!

Time passed on: my friends, associations, and interests, were all opposed to Catholic

Emancipation ; my feelings and opinions were vehemently in its favour, and were not nursed the less carefully and warmly because I felt it was the cause of justice as against a cruel persecution. The question was carried, not from a sense of justice, but in obedience to fear ; and as it then soon ceased to be a matter of public interest, my Catholic opinions were more easily kept to myself, and they so far subsided, that without much exertion I gave an occasional attendance in the parish church at eleven o'clock on Sundays, sufficient to satisfy appearances, and conformity to the Established Church was so far convenient, that nothing I ever heard from the pulpit in St. George's, Hanover Square, or from that of the country parish church, led me to consider the doctrine, or discipline, of the Establishment was inconsistent with such practical carelessness about religion as is inseparable from indulgence in the pleasures of an idle life.

About this time I was sent abroad with an old school and college friend, who was to enter the Church on our return, in which by his father's patronage a good living had been long reserved for him. During the whole of my absence from England, the only churches I entered, and the only services I attended, were the Roman Catholic; and whatever good I acquired, or whatever evil I avoided, during that time, I owe entirely to those religious sentiments, which always were renewed within me, whenever I was enabled to hear Catholic doctrine and to witness Catholic examples of religious faith; and I returned to England with Catholic impressions so fully confirmed, that, but for the serious illness of my father, I should have sacrificed every prospect I had by making them known. He recovered; and about that time a member of the family having proposed to a Catholic lady, his expression of feeling thereon proved to my mind conclusively what I might expect, if



my Catholic tendencies should even be suspected by him : the consequence was, I felt forced, not only to avoid any declaration of my religious opinions, but to prevent, if possible, all suspicion of their nature entering his mind ; fortunately, the settlement of the Catholic question had rendered such a course much easier than formerly.

Some few years passed and I married. I then, for every reason which will be appreciated by those who value domestic happiness, did my best to act up to the tenets of the Church of England, and to discard those ideas and feelings in favour of the Roman Catholic religion, which, if not active, still remained within me; and while I did not conceal the fact from my wife, that there they had been and were not eradicated, I nevertheless *endeavoured* to be convinced of the truth of that faith in which she believed, and not only to profess, but to be really a member of that Church, under the sanction

of which we had been married. I am, however, little disposed to claim credit for such wish and endeavour; I had, some years previously to my marriage, entered on official employment, and that having terminated, I was not the less eager for the excitement of political life. To whomsoever I might look for assistance of any kind amongst my friends, it was certainly essential to my chance of advancement that the endeavour which, for the sake of my wife, I was making, should be more or less successful; and therefore *every* worldly interest then combined to induce me to remain in the Established Church. I abstained from entering a Catholic chapel—I have already said I never had any Catholic associates—I went to the parish church, or joined in the Prayer-book service with my wife at home; when away from home we lived in the families of those who were bright examples of Protestant piety, (although of the strongest anti-Catholic feel-

ing,) and sometimes I thought I had almost succeeded. Then again, if I searched my heart, I felt that I had deceived myself, for neither my profession of, nor practice in, religious duties as laid down by the Church of England, gave the least comfort to my soul. The best example in my wife which any daughter of that Church could afford was ever before me! Piety in herself and charity for the feelings of others was, in a religious point of view, her distinguishing characteristic, which, far more than the precepts of the best divines, did much to make me *continue to endeavour* to believe that her Church was the right one. The struggle in my mind was severe, and it was honest, but it never succeeded in making me think that the Church of England held *that* 'faith which, except a man steadfastly believe, he shall everlastingly perish,' and I could not ever feel the smallest satisfaction in partaking of any of her services!

Let it not be supposed that continual prosperity was now blunting my sense of religious feeling, or assisting me to 'presume on the time before me;' on the contrary, grievous domestic affliction and serious illness combined to lead the mind to seek consolation in religion. About this period, from motives of economy, we resided on the Continent, and if when there I found myself again in a Catholic Church, it was because (notwithstanding all my endeavours) it was the only place in which I felt any portion of that comfort in religious exercise which enables one the better to support misfortune and affliction. The interest and excitement of public life again absorbed my attention, and a combination of political associations and private friendships once more led to such a course on my part on religious matters as was compatible with the *liberty* allowed by the Established Church. And again, for some time, taking advantage of such liberty, I was satis-

fied with being (if Sunday church-going and tacit compliance with the usual habits of members of the Establishment may be looked on in that light) a member of the Church of England. I always expressed my opinions to be in favour of the utmost extent of religious liberty; and it was my rule to give, as I did give on all occasions, the utmost support in my power to perfect equality as between Churchmen, Dissenters, and Catholics. Although it is perfectly true that, at the time to which I am now alluding, comfort and happiness at home, and the interests and excitement of public occupation, combined to make my prospects sufficiently alluring, and to postpone entirely all serious consideration to the chances of the future; still there was a better reason why I was desirous of not then quitting the Church in which I was brought up, and it was this:—She of all others to whom I owed most, who had from my infancy ever been to me a refuge in every trial of life, was

then in advanced age, dependent on my care and attention; her whole of happiness consisting in the society of my wife and children, and such proofs as I could give of my everlasting gratitude: for to her, as I have already said, I owed whatever of good was in me. I well knew that she was a sincerely attached member of the Church of England, and entertained, not only the most honest, but most inveterate prejudice against the Catholic religion; I thought that, if fear and affection could have justified my former course respecting my own opinions of that religion, for the sake of my father, such gratitude as I felt towards her made it a thousand times more incumbent on me not to take a course which would effectually have destroyed her happiness, and probably have shortened a life which it was no less my interest than my duty, by every means in my power, to comfort and to prolong. And thus such feelings and such reasons confirmed me in again

putting off to the 'time before me' any further intention of a change of my religious faith and worship.

As I have no wish to introduce matter not perfectly relevant to my conversion, I will only observe, that six years of persecution having terminated in the most painful injustice, my mind needed distraction and relief, and I again became absorbed in studying the question, 'Is the Protestant religion the true one?' Again I endeavoured to satisfy my reason by reconsidering the doctrine and discipline of the Church of England, as well as that of the Church of Rome, without excluding the views of those who dissent from both. I re-perused, with intention free from 'foregone conclusions,' the controversial works which for some years I had not opened, and I gave full attention to such as 'Tract XC.,' and others, which the Oxford movement had then added to them. I did so with the hope of being able to satisfy myself, so as

to be in reality united with my wife and children in the religion in which they were, by her precepts and example, being educated. Looking back to that time, I feel that purer motives could not have influenced my reconsideration of the subject. But in truth and candour I must declare, that the more I read, the more I examined, the farther was I from being satisfied with a Church which upheld, or even allowed, amongst its members such a vast variety of forms, ceremonies, and doctrines, with interpretations of the works composing the Bible, according to the different opinions, if not of each individual, at least of each section of the Establishment; and I felt more than ever, that all attempts to be reconciled to her as *the true Church, according to her professed creeds and articles, and practice*, only confirmed my doubts and increased my confusion. I find now, by the notes I made then and previously, that my impressions from former study of the works I

re-perused, so far from being removed or shaken, were fully confirmed ; but still, with regard to whatever of difficulty or doubt remained, I yet so far presumed on 'the time before me,' as to seek a refuge in the idea, that whenever I might feel I was about to die I would send for a Catholic priest !

That such a state of mind was most unsatisfactory in every point of view I fully admit ; nor is it without shame that I acknowledge it was unjustifiable. And it is perhaps more candid than prudent to add, that I nevertheless continued to flatter myself that in such a refuge I might at last find peace. How vain and deceptive such an idea must be was, years after, fully proved, as will subsequently be shown.

On account of my health I was in the habit of going '*aux eaux*,' and again the only places of worship on the Continent to which my inclination ever took me were, as before, those of the Catholic Church. There alone I

felt any comfort or hope in offering my prayers to God. I was convinced the Church of Rome could not be entirely in error if that of England were at all in the right, inasmuch as the former held every article of faith which the latter declared necessary 'to everlasting salvation;' and I never could comprehend how one Church could be justified in condemning another for believing *more*, because it was incomprehensible, than herself, when so much of the faith which they held in common was equally incomprehensible to the reason of any member of either.

But I was still to be influenced by considerations of worldly interests, and I therefore continued to rely on the 'time before me;' for I confess that I shrank from taking a step, not only in opposition to my wife, but which (whatever might be my own convictions as to its propriety for myself), I was certainly not prepared to force, or even to persuade my

children to take also. Family, social, and political associations, conduced to make me willing to place, as it were, in abeyance controversial questions, and led me to accept the ease which can so easily be secured by such a course. During this period, however, I nevertheless made what efforts I could for the sake of my children, and in the vain hope of finding rest, not only usually to attend the services of the Establishment, but to convince myself that a '*Branch*' of it contained the essentials of the true Church.

CHAPTER IX.

INSTANCES OF MODERN PERSECUTION OF CONVERTS.

It is often said, that 'it is not so much the thing done as the way of doing it which produces irritation and opposition.' I hope that I have at least avoided giving cause to my friends and others as regards *the way* in which I have been converted, for either opposition or irritation; but yet I am afraid that, although not converted by others, some there are who will say I have *perverted* myself. It is very extraordinary that in a nation which at first was 'perverted' *by force* and fraud, any one who *returns* to the old religion should in

these days have to encounter a sort of persecution which, though of a different character, is as unjust as that which the friends of religious liberty formerly attributed to Catholics; for now, notwithstanding all the progress towards perfection of the last 300 years, toleration is extended only to those born and educated as Catholics; and the Protestant who, adopting for his soul's sake the boasted right of seeking heaven in his own way, may embrace the Catholic faith, has still to undergo many pains and penalties in social life.

I will exemplify what I mean.

If any one change his religion for any self-interested worldly motive whatever, I for one say that he deserves the severest censure which this world can inflict: in this country, such are the laws, the state of society, and the prejudices of the Protestant majority, that there is every inducement, every temptation, every encouragement, positively and

negatively, always going on to induce a Catholic to apostatize; while, on the other hand, the most insurmountable barriers which friends and society can raise, tend to prevent a Protestant becoming a Catholic: so that the former has everything to lose, and the latter every earthly advantage to gain, by a change of religion; consequently there is generally reason to suppose that, in this country, a Catholic who becomes a Protestant is moved by worldly interest; but it is not possible to imagine that a Protestant who becomes a Catholic can be influenced by any but the purest motives to make the sacrifice of so much that is dear to man in this world for the sake of salvation in the next.

A friend of mine on leaving Oxford entered the Church, and as his family connexions had the disposal of preferment, Church patronage soon left him nothing to want; and the occupation of parochial and other clerical duties, with all the bless-

ings of married life, gave him every thing calculated to make this world of trial one to him of ease and happiness. But before many years had passed, his conscience obliged him to examine the religion he had been taught and was preaching to others, and to ask himself the question, '*Is it true?*' After sufficient time for full examination, he was satisfied that the Catholic religion was *the true one*; and he proved the honesty of his convictions by resigning all Church preferment—which, in fact, was sacrificing all the luxuries and comforts, and, indeed, all that hitherto had been to him the necessaries of life, and he was received into the Catholic Church. Immediately the numerous friends and acquaintances of prosperity, with a few bright exceptions, more or less, turned their backs on him. He, happily, had the comfort of finding that his wife shared his convictions, and she also conformed to the Catholic faith. But having

accepted worldly poverty, to which they both from their birth had been strangers, as the *venalty* of their adopted religion, they had to endure the further *pain* of lost affections and friendships, to which even a reverend brother formed no exception; for the Christian principle of 'Do to others as you would be done by,' has no root in a bosom warmed only by worldly interests, and in which brotherly love when tested by Christian charity is entirely wanting. Although the convert has to endure such pains and penalties in this life, no one believing in those principles of Christianity which are common alike to both Protestant and Catholic would, I think, hesitate one moment when death comes to his door, could he then have his choice, but pray that his lot might be with the poor Catholic convert on whom those penalties and pains had been by the world inflicted; rather than with that Protestant Dives, who had 'fared sumptuously every day.'

The other instance is also remarkable.

A. B., the eldest son of a gentleman possessing a large territorial property, entered the fashionable world a few years since, and partook of all its amusements, which his father's position and fortune enabled him easily to obtain. London life, country sports, foreign dissipation, each in their turn possessed him. However, 'a change came o'er the spirit of his dream;' he was no longer seen by 'the world of fashion,' and then he was only heard of as the friend and companion of a young gentleman of High Church opinions, whose pursuits were as remarkable for their charity as the general tenor of his life was for its morality and religion. Some time later it was announced that A. B. was about to secede from the Established Church and to become a Catholic! If ever any one in this country had everything to lose and nothing to gain by conversion to the Catholic faith, he was the man.

However, neither interest, anger, nor persuasion availed even to delay what he considered necessary for his salvation, and he was admitted into the Catholic Church. From that hour it was said he was 'weak,' and as it was naturally supposed that, if weak, cruelty would succeed, he was threatened with disinheritance; and the house, which had been a happy and indulgent home through all the follies and indiscretions of youth, so long as all Protestant religious duties were performed, feigned, or neglected, was never to be his. Esau's birthright was to be transferred to Jacob — not by the fraud of the latter, but because the religion of the father had taught him that, in the case of his first-born, he ought to reverse the Christian's golden rule. As long as the thoughtless youth plunged into dissipation, careless alike of morality and religion, no threats were held out; but the moment he showed any disposition to know the truth, and act upon it for his soul's salvation, from

that moment he was so threatened, upon the ostensible ground, that, because he felt it right to embrace the Catholic faith, it became possible that the tenants on the estate might after his succession become Catholics also. No one who knows the father of A. B. has ever supposed that if his son had become a Dissenter of any Protestant denomination he would have threatened to deprive him of his inheritance; nor is there any reason to imagine, that if he had been of no religion at all, in a practical point of view, he would have ceased to be his favoured son. In heart *he* will forgive and pray for his father, when that unhappy man will not be able to forgive or even to pray for himself. May that charity and mercy such a father so wholly wants, be shown to him when his hour arrives!

The two instances to which I have alluded are well known, and I need add nothing more. If, in consequence of my own conversion, I were

obliged to forfeit (as in the former instance) all my means of living, or if (as in the latter) I were dependent on any one, I doubt not that worldly ruin would stare me in the face, while ridicule or pity would be the only consolation afforded. Whether I should have had the fortitude to face such a trial I very much doubt; however, as I do not think so ill of those few friends for whom I care, as to suppose that the course I have taken will occasion any loss or diminution of their affection or intimacy, I trust no such trial is before me; but be that as it may, I venture to hope I may at least have the respect and esteem of those who, on perusing these papers, shall be convinced that I have, after long and anxious consideration, acted on conscientious motives, to the exclusion of every self-interest in the world.

I may mention another instance which, I am sorry to say, does not by any means give an exaggerated idea of the prejudice which

still exists in society against the Catholic religion. I am afraid, if we look to the middle and lower classes, an almost equal amount of intolerance prevails ; but excuse for them may be found in the fact, that after the so-called Reformation every means was continually taken to ensure the continuance of pains and penalties on the Roman Catholic, by keeping the middle class in political bondage, and withholding education from the lower. During the present century the former have gained some rights, and the latter some education. The consequence is, that Catholics have been to a great extent politically emancipated, socially tolerated, and perhaps are now about to be justly treated by the mass of Englishmen, who begin to see that as, by nature, all men are equal, so, as regards religion, not only every one ought to be free to worship God as he pleases without offence to his neighbour, but no one should be called on to support a Church to which he does not belong. Nevertheless, in society

feelings of which I am about to give an instance still exist, where education, which wealth and rank have always commanded, ought to have taught better things!

Speaking to the head of a family in which a marriage was about to take place, my congratulations were refused because the bride (though of one of the best and oldest families in England) was a Catholic! it being added, 'If she were of any other persuasion, it would not signify; but to marry a Catholic, what could be so dreadful!' And having afterwards said, with reference to another marriage where the parties were of different religions, 'She was a *Jewess*, was she not?' 'No, my dear,' was the answer: 'WORSE!—she is a Roman Catholic! Indeed, *that* was as bad as could be: for not only is she a Catholic, but *one* of the *worst description*—she is a *pervert!*' Clearly showing in as good, and really pious, and charitable a Protestant lady as ever lived, and one, too, whose

natural kindness of disposition was such that she would not willingly pain any one, an instance of how inveterate is the prejudice which the progress of 300 years has not been able to eradicate from the Protestant mind of this country; further proved by the melancholy fact, that in Great Britain there are at present more *Jews* returned to represent Christians in Parliament than Catholics. That such prejudice will rapidly diminish, and finally disappear, is greatly to be hoped, if for no other reason than to remove a temptation to meet it in a manner in which I know it is now (1866) met, in at least one instance, by a gentleman who possesses a very large amount of public confidence, who has represented a large constituency for many years, and who has lately avowed to me, that 'but for his seat in parliament he would at once acknowledge the Roman Catholic religion.'

CHAPTER X.

JUSTICE TO A FRIEND.

As I cannot expect my friends and acquaintances to be exceptions to the general rule which leads society to attribute a conversion to the Catholic faith to some bad motive—perhaps to attribute it to what they call the cunning of some High Church or Ritualistic Jesuit in disguise, or to find in their charity no better excuse than a weakness of mind on the part of the convert, I am desirous of preventing, as far as I can, their doing injustice to a valued friend of mine,

who, as a Protestant minister of High Church opinions, would otherwise, perhaps, be supposed, in some way or other, to have been the cause of what many of them will call my perversion. The incumbent of the district church frequented by myself and family is the friend to whom I allude. I believe him to be as zealous, as conscientious, and as good a man as was ever ordained in, and performed the duties of a priest of, the Established Church! I have known him long—for many years intimately. I respect his character, and I value his friendship. Various circumstances have led me to esteem him highly; and the recollection of much kind sympathy for me and mine will always ensure feelings on my part of gratitude and affection. Such being the case, I the more fear that one of the penalties I have to encounter, for the course I have taken, may be a diminution, if not of his friendly feelings towards me, at least of those terms of intimacy of which I have so long had the advantage; however, so far from there

being any ground whatever for supposing that he, or anything connected with his church, has had, in the remotest degree, anything whatever to do with my conversion, I believe that his attachment to the Church of which he is a minister is such as to lead him to condemn, as strongly as any one could, the step I have taken; and I am perfectly certain he would have omitted nothing which he thought could have prevented it if he had seen the slightest reason for entertaining any idea of my intentions. I cannot in my conscience say, that either the forms or ceremonies or the doctrine which I ever saw or heard in his church (or in any other where High-Church forms and doctrines prevail), tended in the least to my conversion. If they had any effect at all, it was rather towards inducing me to try to remain a member of the Established Church, than to leave it! The life and character of the incumbent and his curates, and their performance of their duties in the

spirit of true charity, always appeared to me to be such as would best assist the endeavours of any one to find rest in the Established Church ; and I feel it but an act of justice to declare that, so far as I am concerned, everything I ever saw or heard in the church of my friend was calculated to prevent rather than to induce any secession from the Establishment. Now, lest it may be said by some good-natured persons, that though I was not influenced *in* his church I may have been biassed by his High-Church views stated in private *out of* it, I hereby declare that I never at any time held the least communication with him on any subject of a controversial nature ; and, while I believe that no one would be more ready to give his opinion and advice on religious matters than my friend, I am sure his taste is too good, and his discretion too sound, for him to intrude either where his professional duty did not demand it ; and, as it was always my care never to lead him

to a subject upon which I felt sure his ideas and my own would be at variance, I can truly say that I never heard him express any opinion, out of the pulpit, with reference to any Roman Catholic doctrine whatever.

I have no doubt, that *if it were possible* for any one in such a position as my friend to study the questions involved in Roman Catholic doctrine without any such bias, as must be almost the necessary consequence both of the education he received and the profession he adorns, he would be the man ; for his mind is by nature generous, and he is as free from prejudice as any one I ever knew. I have always thought that his first motives are founded in a devotion to the Established Church, arising from an education which led to a belief in her purity and divine foundation, necessarily excluding any such consideration on his part, so free from a foregone conclusion, as, in my opinion, alone can authorise any one to attempt to judge another for,

and still less to endeavour to prevent, such a step as I have taken. My only reason for alluding to my friend the incumbent of the church which my family have so long frequented, being to prevent any one supposing that he had anything to do with, or even knows of, my conversion, I have no more to say, except to express my earnest hope that, whenever I may think it right to communicate that fact to him, he may be disposed to view my course with not only that charity which he so well practises, but (while retaining, it may be, all his present views and religious opinions) with so much justice, at least, as will prevent him from withdrawing from me any portion of that cordial friendship which I feel I must, in any event, ever retain for him.

After what I have said, it will be seen that I must have thought that, if any 'Branch' of the Established Church could contain the truth, it must be the highest. To 'the

High,' as it seemed to me, both my wife and children naturally inclined; and I was the more anxious on their account to be satisfied with it. If, because I confess I did not succeed, I am told that my course was one more or less deceiving others, I answer, Such was not my intention; that my *attempt* was honest, my wishes were sincere, and I did my best to reconcile my reason and faith with the doctrine of the Established Church. I never concealed from my wife the true state of my feelings, and I took every pains in my power to prevent prejudice, *one way or the other*, in the minds of my children. How long this state of things might have gone on, if the blessings I enjoyed had continued as they were, it is useless now to inquire; no longer young, I often felt I stood on a fearful precipice! But cruelly as it had been my lot to suffer at different periods of my life, and fully experienced in sorrow, the deepest affliction was yet in store

for me, and all that I ever underwent was as nothing to that unmitigated trial, by day and night, for many long months together, terminating in the greatest calamity which my wife, my child, or myself could sustain: for we at last lost a blessing which, *I* feel, was the greatest which either of us could know. I cannot trust myself now to dwell on that awful visitation, which nothing in this world can possibly alleviate. But I have been obliged to allude to it, for, inasmuch as that which Providence seems to ordain as the consequence of affliction, viz. a deeper sense of religion than had been felt before, was thereby aroused.

I now tried once more to find the consolation I so much needed by partaking of those ordinances of the Church of England to which the better-disposed of her members most frequently have recourse—but in vain. No doubt there may be those who imagine they may find in them the comfort, rest, and happiness

which they seek. To me, however, do what I would, they afforded neither ; and after every endeavour I could possibly make to feel that I was, *ex animo*, a member of that Church in which I had been born, married, and brought up my children, I was perfectly convinced that (for me, at least), it was not the true Church, and that my remaining in it would only end in absolute despair. This (even at that time of affliction) was no hasty conclusion, for I gave ample reconsideration to my convictions ; but such were my feelings with reference to my son, that I almost believe I should not even then have made my mind up to the step I ultimately took (lest I might thereby interfere with *his* prospects) but for an *accidental* circumstance, which occurred many months after the period to which I am now alluding, and which afforded me a proper opportunity, or rather, I should say, imposed on me the obligation of making known my intentions to him ; when I was

convinced that he, at least, so far entered into my feelings, that he would always defend my course, though he might not follow it. How happy that circumstance made me, or how great was the relief it gave to my mind, I cannot describe, and I then resolved that, if health and strength were granted to me, I would further prepare myself for the final step, and that within twelve months I would seek a formal reception into that Church which, according to my reason and judgment, and the faith I felt in me, was the only one in which I could find rest.

To make due preparation to carry such a resolution into effect, I determined not only to review, as far as I could, the examinations which I have already shown I had made at two former and distinct periods of my life; but I proposed to myself to ascertain if the same works which I had on those occasions consulted would produce the same impressions again, and also whether, if assisted by Catholic, by

Church-of-England, and by Dissenting works which had appeared since my last examination, the same convictions would remain unshaken. Pastoral and Visitation discourses by Archbishops and Bishops, great authorities of the Established Church; speeches and pamphlets by the magnates of Exeter Hall; the writings of Dr. Pusey; the preaching (supported by the exemplary practice) of the clerical friend whose church I had attended generally; the works of Dr. Newman, of Dr. Manning, and other clerical converts; of Bishop Colenso, and other ordained members of the Establishment; also various works by Dissenters, including *What and How of the Eternal Worker?* together with others of more equivocal tendency, as *Essays and Reviews*; and more direct, as *Vie de Jésus*, par M. Rénan; may be named as specimens of the variety of works bearing on the great question, 'Is it true?' (in addition to those which had assisted my former examinations), to which I

had recourse for the purpose of finally satisfying my mind as to that 'faith in which unless a man steadfastly believe he cannot be saved:' and I do not hesitate to affirm, that if the result had not been so fully to confirm my impressions and convictions as to convince me that the course I was about to take was the right one, then, in that case, while I should perhaps have been doubtful of Christianity itself, I should have been persuaded that nearly every view of it could be maintained by better reasoning than that on which is founded the Church, 'comprehending those near to Rome and near to Geneva.'

CHAPTER XI.

**REPEATED EXAMINATIONS LED TO INCREASED DISTRUST
IN THE ESTABLISHED CHURCH.**

MANY of the works I have mentioned which had appeared within the last few years had been read by me as they came out, and if I were to try most briefly to express the combined effect produced on my mind by the efforts of their authors, I should say it was greater distrust of the Established Church than of any other, together with a fearful tendency to indifference towards all. The precept, 'Interpret the Scripture like any

other book,' however sound for the philosopher, appeared to me to strike a severe blow at Christianity itself; and I know of no more subtle inducement to an earnestly inquiring mind to arrive at a state of general infidelity, than such a development of the Protestant's right of private judgment as is to be deduced from that work, which states so forcibly the 'strange though familiar fact, of great differences respecting the interpretation of Scripture;'—'All Christians receiving the Old and New Testament as sacred writings, but not agreeing about the meaning they attribute to them;'—'The book in which we believe all religious truth to be contained, being the *most uncertain* of all books;' and that 'in the conflict of reasons *individual* judgment must at last decide;' with '*one* consideration borne in mind, that the Bible is the *only* book in the world written in different styles, and at many different times, which is in the hand of persons of all degrees of knowledge and edu-

cation.' If, in opposition to all these able and *reasonable* conclusions, consequent on such '*strange though familiar facts,*' one has not '*a faith* strong enough to rest in that degree of knowledge which God has really given,' one must either believe that Christianity was intended by the Supreme Power to be entirely dependent on human reason, or rest contented with Unitarian infidelity.

Although the result of the impressions made on me by the various works to which I have alluded had not placed me on the horns of that dilemma, nevertheless I admit, that when I made up my mind to review the opinions I had formed for the purpose of finally deciding on the step I then purposed taking, I felt the full force of the concluding passage of '*Tendencies of Religious Thought in England*' (by the Rector of Lincoln College, Oxford—Mark Pattison), viz. '*Whoever would take the religious literature of the present day as a whole, and*

endeavour to make out clearly on what basis revelation is supposed by it to rest, whether on authority, on the inward light, on reason, on self-evidencing Scripture, or on the combination of the four, would probably find that he had undertaken a perplexing, but not altogether profitless, inquiry.'

Now the result of all my endeavours to arrive at a conviction of the truth from a study of the various works I had previously, and did then consult, would have brought with it such perplexity as would certainly have rendered all my inquiry profitless, if it had not been that, taking it altogether, my deduction was, that the mind must be guided by the Supreme Being to find, as it were, a fulcrum on which to sustain convictions, so combining faith and reason as would direct it to that religious doctrine and form of worship in which the soul could find rest. That such support could be found, except in a Church to which a man could conscien-

tiously render implicit obedience, seemed impossible ; and I felt that unless reason and *faith* convinced me such a Church existed, my reason alone would never allow me to find rest. It is not easy for a man to prove his own identity, or even to understand his own existence ; but if he had not *faith* in either he would be a fool. The *Supreme Being* has given him *that faith*. Is it foolish to say that a man may have a similar feeling implanted in him which leads him to believe existing evidences that, under Divine inspiration, some chosen human beings founded and taught a system of adoration acceptable to the Divinity which was embodied as an institution, and expressed by the term ‘*Church?*’ Tell me a man is to believe *nothing* of religion but what he can *prove* by his *reason*, and I answer—He can be only landed in distrust and infidelity ; but grant to me that he is not a fool, whose reason on religion may be founded on some such *innate faith* as I

have attempted to describe, and I then bring you to the point where faith and reason combined will surely enable a man to satisfy his inquiring mind as to the existence of such a 'Church.'

Being once fully convinced by examination *free from foregone conclusions*, and by such an *innate faith* that but *one* such 'Church' could exist, I was satisfied that to find it would be to know where rest in religion could be obtained. My general observation, during the many years my attention was from time to time directed to form, doctrine, and practice, as regards the Church of England, obliges me to agree altogether with that able and honest Dissenter, the author of 'What and How of the Eternal Worker?' who says, 'To the higher and better-informed intellect of our day, whether lay or clerical, the *orthodox* formula of religious belief in England is now literally a mere shibboleth, used with occult and varying re-

reservation by each ostensible subscriber;’ and although no member of the various dissenting bodies, lay or clerical, requires any such shibboleth (inasmuch as there is amongst them no formula of Thirty-nine Articles, to which they are compelled to subscribe), the same author, in adding his publication to the other similar works ‘by ordained members of the Establishment,’ proves clearly that those whom he represents are not less free from ‘occult and varying reservation,’ when they endeavour to show that a religion is to be formed on ‘the Bible only,’ or that the belief of any particular sect is to be proved and justified by the light of reason alone, according to individual private judgment.

The review which I made of the education I had received, the works I had formerly consulted, together with the additional ones to which I have now alluded, confirmed in every essential respect early impressions and later opinions, and brought clearly, distinctly, and

decidedly, convictions to my mind which the most perfect member of any Protestant Church would admit imperatively demanded *my* conformity to the Roman Catholic Church.

Now, notwithstanding all care and caution may so far be successful as to enable any one to believe that he is about to take the right course upon the whole, yet he must have an extraordinary mind who could, when about to change his religion, decide on doing so without feeling that to effect his object he must as it were, to some extent, make a PLUNGE; because it must be impossible not to have some sense of hesitation when the moment comes at which, by your own act, you are about, on such an awful subject, to pronounce that in your judgment so many great, good, pious, and learned men, have been in the wrong; and by your own act to assert that you (however well supported by others, equally as learned, pious, and good) are in the right! I say, that to some extent, more or

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less, any change from any one religion to another must partake of the nature of a 'plunge.' It may be asked, then, what *can* justify that 'plunge,' if it indicate that you have a something to get over respecting the religion in which you were educated, and about which you are not *quite* convinced? The answer to these questions seems to me sufficient to justify the 'plunge!' If I try to believe that the religion in which I was bred be the right and true one, and have failed to convince myself that it be so; if, contrary to all my wishes and all my interests, public and private, I am led by my own repeated examinations to believe that the religion I was taught to condemn is the one nearest to truth; and if, especially, I have a conviction amounting to faith in the latter, which I never really entertained at all for the former; and if, in addition to all this, I feel that I could be a *better man*, as a member of the latter, than I was, or ever could be, as a member of the former;

why then, I say, it is justifiable to get over any such difficulty to conversion, as I have admitted might exist, by what I call *the plunge*. Let it not be supposed that I intend to include any *doubt* upon matters of faith, or of any dogma of the Catholic Church, or of any essential doctrine which that Church teaches: for I mean only such diffidence in acting on one's own convictions, as a proper consideration for the feelings and opinions of others ought to involve.

With regard to conversion itself, which has been well described by Dr. Döllinger as 'the decisive turning-point in man's life,' it always appeared to me to be indisputable, that although doubts might be entertained which would justify hesitation on the part of any one about to change his religion, still if, upon the whole, a man were once perfectly convinced that he should be a better Christian after such a change than he had been before, and having true faith, 'without which it is

impossible to please God,' duty would then require him to take the step; because, when one discovers anything *more true* than one has known before, it is evident that it becomes a duty to adopt it. In my own case, however, I cannot say I entertained any doubt on any one point of importance; and as the feeling I entertained, that I might be better as a Catholic than I could be as a Protestant, was founded in an honest desire to know the truth, I, at least, by what I call 'the plunge,' had to overcome nothing more than a dread of shocking the feelings of some of those whose friendship I value.

It may be, that if I had taken advantage of any opportunity in early life of gaining instruction from any good Catholic, Priest or Layman, I should not now lament having so long resisted my conversion; but yet, on the other hand, I feel that it must, at least, be admitted by any one inclined to criticise my change of religion, that, as I never availed myself of any such assistance, it was the more

imperative on me to act on whatever conclusion such examinations, as I have described, brought me : but whether that be so or not, I freely acknowledge that I always avoided any such opportunity, because I thought it was better to satisfy myself, than to be persuaded by others, and I, consequently, never consulted, or even conversed with, any Catholic on the subject ; always hoping that, if my conclusions were erroneous, my intentions would, sooner or later, insure their correction. It is enough for my object, however, to state, that they irresistibly led me to opinions wholly inconsistent with any reliance on any Protestant Church, and convinced me that the Roman Catholic Church is in truth the only one meant by the Athanasian, Nicene, and Apostles' Creeds. To show that such was my conviction, and the better to enable others to judge of the course which I have taken, I purpose shortly to state my views on certain points of importance, and (without pretending

to say that I am competent to assert them to be orthodox) to ask whether, if I arrived at the conclusions they indicate, I could honestly be a member of *any but the Catholic Church?*

CHAPTER XII.

ULTIMATE CONVERSION.

PREVIOUSLY to the most overpowering affliction with which I have ever been visited, I was alarmed by feeling that I had taken infection of a fever from which I thought I should not recover, and it would be in vain to attempt to describe how deeply I felt, having 'put off to the time (then apparently no longer) before me,' such practical decision as could alone give me comfort at the hour of expected death; and I suffered more in regretting the time lost than any one can understand who

has not been placed in a similar situation. Suffice it to say, that the motives which, when in health, I trusted might excuse the postponement of final conversion, failed utterly then to lessen the pain or to palliate the remorse with which I looked back to *time past*, or to mitigate the fear and trembling with which I beheld, as it were, eternity immediately before me. Bitter and sharp was remorse without any alleviation from such hope as, experience has since proved to me, the Catholic religion can afford! My fears were, however, most beneficial; for on recovery I found my mind had experienced a wrench which took effect. It led me, in the first place, to redouble all my endeavours to seek the consolation of a fixed religion, and therefore, with gratitude for whatever *time* might yet be spared to me, I determined to use it in a further trial to unite in worship in the same church with my wife and children; and I *again* made an attempt, which I con-

tinued for months, under the affliction I was destined to endure. To all this I have indirectly alluded before, and I recur to it now only because I wish to observe, that on a subsequent occasion, within a fortnight after my final conversion, I had reason to feel the greatest comfort and satisfaction in its accomplishment, under circumstances so far similar, that there was a probability for some hours that each moment might be my last: for it so happened, that I found myself most unexpectedly in the midst of a battle, where, in the course of about five hours, thousands were killed and wounded on every side immediately around me. Escape was impossible, and if shell had been added to shot, few, if any, of those in the place could have survived to tell the result.

I never can forget the sensations I endured during those five hours.

It is wonderful with what rapidity, and how accurately, the mind grasps as it were

a whole life, when it is forced suddenly to realize, and to dwell on, the prospect of immediate death, under circumstances in which one has no part, except as an unwilling witness of that destruction in every direction which at the next instant may probably reach one's self! How the conscience *then* strikes as it never struck before! How fearfully vivid is *then* the eye of recollection! and how terrific to its view are those past thoughts and actions, of which, after a long life, every one probably, more or less, has cause to repent, cannot possibly be imagined by those who have never been in that position; nor can any language express what *I know* by experience must *then* be endured.

That experience, however, gave to me a proof, than which none other could have been more satisfactory and convincing, that the Catholic Faith affords, in the hour of the greatest need, such comfort as I did not, and never could, find, in the Established Church.

Years had elapsed between the two periods adverted to above, and during that time (feeling the need more than ever of such rest in religious conviction as faith alone could give, and having proved by my repeated efforts that I could never find it in the Established Church), I had, after many months of re-examination of the whole subject, of which I have spoken, prepared myself for, and taken, the final step of formal admission into the Catholic Church.

I have said that, from the first, I had never concealed from my wife either my thoughts, wishes, or intentions; and as I shall have occasion to speak of the incalculable satisfaction and comfort which her support of my course, when I took the final step, afforded me, it is but right that I should (looking to what I fear will be the opinions of those whose prejudices may prevent a kind and fair, or even charitable, construction of her motives and conduct in supporting me at

all) state that, so long as she could entertain any hope of my ever feeling that the Established Church was, to say the least, a *branch* even, of the true Church, no pains were spared by her to prevent my secession from it ; and, what is more, I can truly say that, in addition to the natural disinclination I felt to separate myself from *her* Church, she had always supplied by her example reasons far more cogent than any I ever could see in the best writings of the best Protestant divines in behalf of the religion in which I had been born and bred up. The interior of home with reference to such a subject should be sacred, and I will not say more, therefore, than that, from first to last, her life was the continual practice of faith, hope, and charity ; and she thereby did more towards keeping me in her Church than all the preaching of its clergymen, the reasoning of its advocates, their interpretation of the Bible, or the Book of Common Prayer ; and I verily believe that,

but for such perfection of example on her part, I should never have persevered in repeated efforts to remain in, but should very many years ago have withdrawn altogether from, the Established Church. I am sure that the force of her example was to the last so great that, but for her willing consent to the step I took, it could never have been to me what it is, a source of such happiness, comfort, and rest, with regard to all religious considerations, as I never in my life knew before. It is only right that I should assert the fact that no wife could have taken more effectual means to keep a husband in her own Church than she did, and nothing I know could have reconciled her to my departure from it except the conviction, at which she after so many years arrived, that *I had no faith, and could have none, in any religion except the Roman Catholic.*

After I had finally completed my last examination of all I could find in behalf of the Establishment and of the views of Dissenters,

and after the best preparation I could make for the course to which I had made up my mind, I determined on seeking formal admission into the Church on the Continent; and my usual habit of going *aux eaux* for my health presented the opportunity.

To the only two persons in the world who could have either right or claim to know anything of my intention—namely, my wife and son—I stated it, and it was with equal gratitude and satisfaction that I could not trace the faintest shadow of objection on the part of either.

Excepting a man's wife or child, I consider that no one, under any circumstances whatever, has the least right *even to inquire* as to what his religious faith or opinions may be, provided that his conduct in all things be guided by the principle of 'doing to all men as he would they should do unto him.' On this point reason has at last prevailed: the legislature having lately abolished those oaths

which made a distinction between Protestants and Catholics.

There are still some persons whose prejudices are such that, although many of their own intimate friends and associates are *careless of all* religion, they can scarcely tolerate even the belongings of those whose conscience leads them to adopt the religion of the largest portion of the Christian world. So true is it that ‘dans ce siècle où l’on ne parle que de tolérance, on ne l’accorde cependant tout entière qu’à l’impiété ;’ and feeling the full force of the sentiment contained in the following quotation from St. Augustin’s account of his conversion :—‘Ne valait-il pas mieux patienter se retirer sans bruit, sans éclat, ne pas livrer au jugement des hommes une action qui ne devait être que de Dieu ?’ I thought it better to seek admission quietly on the Continent, rather than at home, and so thereby avoid bringing down prematurely on others those

observations which I must be prepared to bear myself.

I left England, and I sought the good offices of one whose blameless life and large experience were well calculated to enable me to carry my wishes into effect; and in due course, after being fully satisfied respecting my knowledge of, and belief in, the Catholic religion, he undertook to receive me into the Church; but he greatly surprised me by saying that he must first obtain Episcopal authority to the ceremony not being public.

It is very commonly asserted that Roman Catholics are continually endeavouring to make converts—an accusation to which it may, I think, be well for those who can plead guilty; but as Protestants generally go further, and charge them, and their clergy more especially, with being always ready, *per fas aut nefas*, to use any secret or enticing means to entrap youth or age, I must say that my experience proves such is not the

fact, but that, on the contrary, it is very difficult to obtain admission at all except in the most public manner.

The priest whose assistance I sought having informed me that it was his duty to apply for permission to receive any one privately, wrote to His Eminence the Archbishop of the Diocese for such a license: a formal refusal from his secretary, to the effect that I ought to be admitted on a public occasion, was the answer. Father C—— thereupon most kindly went himself to make a personal application in behalf of my object, but returned without success; His Eminence giving as a reason, that for a stranger without any recommendation from any English Catholic authority, no exception to the general rule could be made! However, I resolved to take no refusal except from the Cardinal himself. So I asked Father C—— to write a note requesting an interview for me, and with it I went by train to the town where the Cardinal

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resided. Soon after my arrival I was admitted into his presence, and I must say a more dignified, gentlemanlike old man, I never saw in my life. He listened attentively to me, and then in a kind, but firm tone, gave me a decided refusal. I felt hurt and greatly disappointed. I replied to this effect—My motives could only be the good of my soul; that if His Eminence persevered in his refusal, of course I was helpless, and my admission must at least be indefinitely delayed. Life itself was uncertain to us both, and upon him alone might rest the responsibility of my exclusion from that Church in which he hoped to be saved!—Making my bow I was leaving the room, when, with a benignant smile, he said, ‘I will do what I can;’ and taking up his pen he wrote a letter to the priest, giving him the required permission; adding the words, ‘*Pourvu que vous prendriez toute la responsabilité,*’ and giving it me to read asked if I were content. ‘Certainly,’ I said; ‘for, as

your Eminence has told me, Father C—— is a good man, I am sure he will be glad to take the responsibility of a good action.' Bidding His Eminence adieu, I hastened back that night to my priest, and the next morning he received me into the Roman Catholic Church.

I wrote accounts as matters proceeded to my wife, and before the day fixed for the event I read in her answer:—

'Your letter gave me much happiness, for so long as you think of your eternal welfare, and embrace the faith you believe to be the only true one, I can have *no other wish*.'

On the day of my admission I wrote again, saying all difficulty had been removed and my step taken. Her reply ran thus:—

'I have received your truly welcome (in *all* respects) letter of the 27th, a day never to be forgotten; I cannot tell you what a relief it has been to me to know you have taken the all-important step you have so *long*,

and I believe so unchangingly longed for! May God confirm and strengthen you in your good intentions, and make you feel a joy that nothing earthly can bestow. I thought of you every moment on Wednesday, and if your request had not been granted, I should have been miserable. You have, as ever for nearly thirty-four years, my humble and feeble prayers; and though we may be separated in faith, God grant we may both do our utmost to join our lost blessing in the world to come.'

In another, written after she had heard of the battle and of the danger to which I had been exposed, she said:—'I felt *very much* comforted, when I thought you might have been killed by accident, that you had crowned all your reflections of long standing, and carried out your good resolutions, by taking the step you had done. You can hardly believe the comfort this was to me.'

I have quoted these passages to show that

I had every support which the consent and approbation of my wife could afford, and for which on every account I have reason to be, as I am, most grateful.

CHAPTER XIII.

BAPTISM, AND HOLY EUCHARIST.

OBSERVING that I do not pretend to attempt to convince any one else, but only desire to give as it were an *apologia*, which may be intelligible to those who may take an interest in my conversion, I now proceed to show the conclusions to which I arrived with respect to Baptism and the Eucharist. The 4th and 27th of the Thirty-nine Articles show that, as to Baptism, the Catholic and the Established Church hold essentially the same doctrine with respect to the miracle performed by, and in,

that sacrament; and I never could understand why, if a properly ordained priest has the divine power of miraculously changing a child 'born into the world deserving God's wrath and damnation,' by the ceremony of Baptism, into an immaculate being which (dying before it commits sin) will be saved; the same priest may not have *equally the power* of miraculously effecting that *Transubstantiation* involving the Real Presence (by an act done 'in remembrance') of Christ on earth, in which Catholics believe, and which is essential for perpetual obedience to the command given by His words, 'Take ye and eat, this my body, which is given for you.'

Christ was careful to *explain*, whenever His figurative language, or parable, might be taken in other than its natural sense; therefore it is reasonable to conclude that the words, '*This* is my body,' were intended to be taken in their natural sense, because no interpretation or explanation of them was given

by Christ. To say the words explain themselves, because *what* He presented at the time was *only bread and wine*, is absurd, for it was a miracle or nothing; and if you deny Christ's *power* by a miracle to make it what He said it was, you may as well deny His power to realise His words, 'Thy son liveth,' or 'Take up thy bed and walk,' or all His other miracles, and then you may as well admit your being an unbeliever in everything contained in the Four Gospels, and, in fact, in the whole doctrine of Christianity. So far as reason can go, it is quite as comprehensible to the mind that, in receiving from a Protestant minister the 'inward spiritual grace' by bread and wine, 'signifying the body and blood of Christ, *which* is then *verily and indeed taken* and received by the faithful,' that, provided he be 'lawfully called and sent to execute' (see Art. 23), he should have the power of renewing the unbloody act signified by the words, 'Take, eat, this is my body,' for those who *faithfully*

partake thereof;’ and although it be in every respect that which a Catholic denominates ‘transubstantiation,’ it is neither more nor less *a miracle*, nor yet more or less *incomprehensible*, than that the same minister* should have the power of killing ‘sin,’ which is ‘by nature’ in a child, and so giving it a ‘new birth’ as to make it a ‘child of grace’ by the ceremony denominated Baptism. For upon what ground is reason to be convinced that for 1500 years the Catholic Church was right and faithful in one sacrament, ‘ordained by Christ Himself,’ while the other sacrament, equally ordained by Him, she distorted into superstitious idolatry? Now, seeing that both sacraments were so incomprehensible that by *faith* alone could either be brought within the limit of reason, surely the evidence which would convince that Christ founded a Church against which ‘the gates of hell should not prevail,’

* ‘Or any Layman Catholic or Protestant, who would (according to Catholic belief), in case of necessity, have the same power.’

would equally convince the mind of man that such Church would so far be protected by an Almighty power that it could not *err essentially* in one sacrament ordained by Christ, *and be perfectly right* in another—both being equally miracles, and incapable of support by any authority intelligible to reason, excepting by faith in that institution which, as the *Church*, preserved both.

If I am told, I ought to believe that ‘*bread and wine*’ were ‘commanded by the Lord to be received’ *only* ‘*in remembrance*’ of Christ having given it typically to His disciples at the last supper, and that there cannot be any such change effected as is understood by the word transubstantiation, by which ‘the body and blood of Christ can be verily and indeed taken and received’ by him who has *faith*; I say that any layman is as competent so to bring to the *remembrance* of any persons assembled for prayer the ceremony of the Lord’s Supper, as any *priest*

whatever! For, if it be *nothing more than bread and wine*, what possible *reason* can there be why any head of a family should not give it 'in remembrance' as often as he assembles his household for morning or evening prayers? And if he select the *latter* period, he may do so on the authority of those clergymen of the Established Church (whom I have known) who, by preference, then administer bread and wine as a better 'remembrance of the Lord's SUPPER!' But if I am also told that the Eucharist can only be properly administered by a *priest* 'lawfully called and sent to execute,' then I say it is a necessary consequence that a priest has a power which a layman has not, and such power can only arise in consequence of Apostolic succession, through which is derived authority to perform the ceremony 'ordained by Christ Himself,' and 'in remembrance' of Him, to present to the eye of faith His 'body and blood' under the form which He presented it when He said, 'Take ye and eat, for this

is my Body ; drink ye all of this, for this is my Blood of the New Testament which shall be shed for many for the remission of sins ;' and that under such a form the 'faithful' 'may take and receive the body and blood of Christ verily and indeed,' is as intelligible to *reason*, and as easy to faith, as that such priest (deriving all his powers from such authority) can and does, by the ceremony of Baptism, cleanse an infant from 'original sin,' and make it 'a partaker of the kingdom of heaven.' Indeed, *so far as reason* goes, it is more intelligible, because every one taking the 'body and blood' under the sacramental veil has *a direct* responsibility, which the infant in Baptism has not, but by its sponsors ; and also because Christ's own authority is, if possible, more direct in word and deed for the eucharistic, than the baptismal ceremony.

However, doubts respecting Baptism were to be solved by the authorities of the so-called Reformation, for men's minds then were not

less open to differences of opinion than now. It was, therefore, very difficult, but it was attempted, by the assumption, that Apostolic succession could be carried into the Church established by law by those who (having renounced that which had existed for 1500 years) were heretics ; and it was declared that men, made by force, and civil law, Bishops of a new Establishment, conferred the same miraculous power on the Protestant minister which priests had exercised in accordance with tradition, and by the authority of the Catholic Church, from the earliest times, with respect to that sacrament ! Well, why am I, who find in the traditions and authority of the Catholic Church grounds for my faith in the power of a priest to perform the miracle of transubstantiation, to be condemned as a superstitious idolater by my Protestant friend, who believes that by Apostolic succession so conveyed to a Protestant minister (ordained by a bishop whose valid consecration, to say the least, is

doubtful*), does perform a miracle, equally as incomprehensible to reason as transubstantiation, when he transforms a child born in sin into a child of grace and purity?

The fact is, that the Eucharist requires no priest, and has no saving power whatever, *unless* it be a miracle comprehending all which is understood by *real presence and transubstantiation*: nor has Baptism any power to cleanse from sin and to regenerate, except it comprise all which a *miracle* alone can effect. If my reason and my faith could not recognise the former, neither would they allow me to admit the latter, as necessary to salvation. What I trust has been an impartial examination has led me to believe fully in each, and therefore, so far, I totally dissent from the Established Church.

* Be it observed that my view is not affected by the fact, that the Established Church does not allow that (even in necessity, or under fear of immediate death,) *Lay* Baptism can perform the miracle by which her minister can save a soul.

CHAPTER XIV.

REAL PRESENCE.

REAL Presence and Transubstantiation. In no account of the Last Supper is any language used which conveys the meaning, that in the words used by Christ He intended to ordain that in the celebration of it, 'in remembrance' of Him, His successors were to perpetuate His words, 'This is my body,' and yet mean that His presence was to be *only spiritual*. All notions of '*Real Presence*' being *only* a 'Spiritual Presence,' are perfectly speculative and imaginary; but 'Real Presence,' as com-

prehended in the term Transubstantiation, is perfectly consistent with, and, as it were, inseparable from, the natural meaning of the words used by Christ. The fact that when Christ's language was to be taken in a figurative sense He explained it, and consequently that language which He did not explain should be taken in its natural sense, seems to me to lead to an almost logical conclusion with reference to the doctrine in question. The accounts of the language Christ used with reference to the words 'This is my body,' and, 'This is my blood,' by the three Evangelists, Matthew, Mark, and Luke, and also that of St. Paul (*vide* 1 Cor. xi. 23-26), are quite irreconcilable with the notion that Christ meant His words to be understood in any wise in the following manner:—'Eat this bread and drink the contents of this cup, imagining that it is my body and my blood—take care not to suppose that by a miracle it is my body

and blood, but only that I now call it by those terms, that hereafter, when “my blood shall have been shed for many for the remission of sins,” you and your successors, in commemoration of this my last supper with you, before the sacrifice of my mortal life, may, when offering up prayers, eat bread and drink wine simply in remembrance of me and the fact that my blood will be shed.’

Certainly there is nothing in the language of Christ Himself, or in the account by the Apostles of what took place with reference to it, to justify any other interpretation than the *obvious and natural sense* which His language signifies, as received and accepted by the Fathers of Christianity, without one exception, and the denial of which Martin Luther declared to be ‘blasphemy—an impeachment of the veracity of the Holy Ghost—an act of treachery against Christ, and a seduction of the faithful.’ *Although* that worthy said he ‘wished to have denied the Real Presence of

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Christ in the Eucharist *in order to incommode the Papists*; but so clear are the words of Scripture which establish it, that in spite of my inclination, and although I strained every nerve to do so, yet never could I persuade myself to adopt the bold expedient.' And still more certain is it, that there is no *reasonable* ground whatever to lead to the idea that Christ meant His words to be understood in the manner above mentioned, or to *any such* effect whatever. The questions of *Real Presence* and *Transubstantiation* are inseparable, except by a quibble on the meaning of words. Since the so-called Reformation, when 'every nerve was strained' 'to incommode the Papists' — even in this country, the prevailing belief of the members of the Established Church was in the *Real Presence*. Bishop Andrewes says, 'We believe a *Real Presence* as much as you do.' Bishop Montague says, 'The difference between us and Popish writers is only about

the manner of Christ's presence in the Eucharist.' And Archbishop Laud says, 'As for the Church of England, nothing is more plain than that she believes and teaches the true and Real Presence of Christ in the Sacrament.'

In no one view of the Holy Eucharist do the different sections of the Church of England agree, and, therefore, it is impossible to define with any approach to accuracy what is even her professed belief on this essential point; nor will she herself ever venture any attempt to do so: but this may be assumed, that a large majority of Communicants would on no account receive the Sacrament at the hands of any man except one 'lawfully called and sent to execute,' being a priest, either ordained in, or who had conformed to, that Church. If so, her members must believe that a priest has a power which no one else has, and which power originates in nothing, unless in virtue of, real, (or assumed?) true Apostolical succession. And if that be so this

follows, that in receiving the Eucharist at his hands, those who, in any sense whatever, believe that they ‘verily and indeed take and receive the Body and Blood of Christ,’ be it spiritually, or otherwise—must believe that, by the power possessed by the priest, SOMETHING is effectuated, which could not be done by any layman ; and consequently that he performs in virtue of authority, derived from Christ, nothing less than a miracle. Now, whether it be only such a miracle as ‘spiritually’ brings Christ before the eye of faith of *The Low*, or whether it bring to that of *The High*, the ‘real objective Presence,’ or whether it bring to *The Broad Section* ‘the comforting and refreshing of their souls by the Body and Blood of Christ, as their bodies are by the Bread and Wine;’ for each and all of these three parties of the Church of England, who receive the Eucharist from the minister, *something* is done by him for their benefit, as members of a Protestant Church, which none but a priest

could do. How, then, can those persons justify and bring within their own mental comprehension and religious faith, such a miracle as an act by the priest (so far unquestionably miraculous that none but a priest could perform it), and yet venture to assert that when the Catholic priest, in virtue of his Apostolical succession (which the Established Church admits), performs a similar miraculous act, and brings to the eye of faith, not of three sections differing in belief, but of one universal Church, the Body and Blood of Christ, 'verily and indeed to be taken and received' by its members, in a sense, although more comprehensive in belief, certainly not more incomprehensible to reason, than are most of the greatest truths which are admitted equally by the English and Roman Churches, that Catholics when they adore the Real Presence of Christ, and receive His Body and Blood, 'verily and indeed,' are committing idolatry, and practising superstition?

I may add, that nothing is more certain than that *if* the Church of England believe in the true and Real Presence of Christ in the holy Eucharist, *none* of her pastors and masters within my knowledge have, either at public, national, or Sunday-schools, or Universities, ever *taught what she believes!* In fact, what is *now* the belief of the Church of England with regard to the Real Presence no one pretends to know; inasmuch as on that point nothing can be more puzzling than the variety of interpretations which the bishops and priests of that Church sanction by their different precepts and examples. In the former age, as I have shown, they more or less as a body believed in the Catholic view of the true and Real Presence; in later and more puritanical times, its truth and reality they all but ignored: then, in the jog-trot times, they appeared to care but little whether its reality were believed in or not, so long as the Indemnity Bill was annually passed for the benefit of those

who declined to appear at *the Lord's Table!* Since then, as error is always changing, and as errorists in matters of religious faith must always be divided, the differences of opinion amongst the bishops, clergy, and laity of the Establishment are now so great, that every shade of the various opinions, Ritualistic, Puritanical, and Jog-trot, all find their ministers and congregations.

When I was an undergraduate, the Bishop of Peterborough and Professor of Divinity in the University of Cambridge (Dr. Marsh), said, 'On many points I am a Calvinist—I am a Calvinist in the doctrine of the Eucharist.' I had previously been taught that Archbishop Laud held opinions directly the reverse; and in the present age it is beyond dispute that the differences of faith amongst priests ordained by bishops of the Establishment are as wide as light from darkness; even on the 'two only Sacraments as are generally necessary to salvation;' and that on the bench

itself there are still wider differences than between Archbishop Laud and Bishop Marsh, even looking no farther than from the names of Bishops Bickersteth and Baring, to Phillpotts, Wilberforce, and Hamilton!

Amidst the confusion which naturally arises in a Church of which all its ministers swear to Articles of Religion laid down in language capable of, and intended for, every variety of interpretation, how is it possible that if Christ's words explained by him were to be interpreted in a figurative sense, that the reason of any man could be assisted by faith in the bishops and clergy of the Church established by law? Either it must be supposed that Christ intended to puzzle His Apostles and their followers by words of double meaning, or it must be believed by any human being having faith in His Divinity, that He deigned to explain in unmistakable language the most sacred of His miracles, which, as often as repeated, for ages to come, by His

representatives in Apostolical succession, would, 'in remembrance' of Him, administer to the faithful bread and wine, so transubstantiated, that after the manner of St. Paul, who, as he 'had received of the Lord that which he delivered,' took bread and brake it, repeating Christ's words, 'This is my body,' performed the miracle of transubstantiation, so comprehending Real Presence under the form of bread and wine, that the recipient might partake verily and indeed of the body and blood of Christ.

If it be true that a priest, having the power granted by Apostolical succession, can alone administer the Eucharist to ensure in any sense the Real Presence of Christ, and to give 'verily and indeed His body and blood' to a recipient having faith; surely it follows as a conclusion, logical in reason, according to a Christian's belief in the 'Trinity in Unity and Unity in Trinity,' that the Divinity is then and there present under the veil of bread and

wine ; and if so, adoration of God under that form is the natural, the necessary, and certainly the comforting consequence of the Christian faith.

Such are the views, such the opinions and convictions, which have led me to agree with the Catholic doctrine on the Real Presence, Transubstantiation, and Adoration of Christ in the Holy Eucharist. To those who deny all three *in toto* (beyond taking bread and wine to remind them that Christ met His disciples at supper before His crucifixion), I have nothing to say, except that I think the reasoning of a Socinian is far more intelligible than their opinions. With regard to the different views on those three points amongst Protestants, be they Lutherans, Calvinists, or others, I venture to observe, that but few of them who believe in the Divinity of Christ deny *every mode* of the Real Presence, but only such as the senses of sight and touch can comprehend. Now, believing in the

entire Catholic doctrine, as regards the Real Presence, I readily acknowledge that it acts neither on the sense of touch or sight; but while it is quite consistent with my reason to believe that the faithful and worthy recipient partakes miraculously, verily, and indeed of the body and blood of Christ; that His Real Presence there exists: it is altogether contrary to my reason, so to interpret Christ's words, as to justify the opinion of either Protestant sects, that whatever Presence there may be, is *only* spiritual. In *that* would not be the Real Presence of Christ, 'where His body and blood is truly and indeed taken and received;' not the Real Presence of Him who is, in the words of the Creed in the Book of Common Prayer, '*perfect God and perfect man, of a reasonable soul and human flesh subsisting.*'

Those who wish to strengthen their belief by any other justification than reason affords for taking Christ's words in a natural, and not a

figurative sense, might appeal to former Protestant authority as good and valid as any now on the bench, or of the priesthood of the Established Church, in behalf of every kind of doctrine asserting the Real Presence. Bishop Forbes on the Eucharist, says, 'I approve the opinion of the Wittemberg divines, who assert that the power of God is so great, that he can change the substance of the bread and wine with the body and blood of Christ;' and again he says, 'The sounder Protestants make no difficulty about adoring Christ in the Eucharist; it is a very monstrous error of certain rigid Protestants to deny that Christ is to be adored in the Eucharist, by any adoration, except that of the mind.' Bishop Andrewes says to Bellarmine, 'With Saint Ambrose, I also adore the *flesh* of Christ in the Eucharist.' Bishop Montague declares that 'the fathers from age to age attested the Real and *Substantial* Presence in very high terms, and they styled it Conversion, Transmutation, Transformation,

'Transelementation ;' but all Protestant authorities, past or present, when combined, only show they want the proof which unity can alone afford. Unity of opinion is impossible, when to be guided by the words of Christ, unexplained by Himself, you look to them in a figurative, rather than a natural sense ; and from that latter point of view, faith in the miracle expressed by the word Transubstantiation, can be the only consequence ; to that conclusion I so arrived, and by it I am convinced adoration is due to the real substantial presence of Christ in the Eucharist.

It appears to me impossible that any one believing the Catholic doctrine respecting 'Transubstantiation,' the 'Real Presence,' and 'Adoration,' can doubt that the celebration of the Eucharist is properly described by Saint Cyprian's words, 'The priest performs the function of vicar of Jesus Christ, and a sacrifice is offered to God the Father.'

'This is my body which is given for you ;

do this in remembrance of me,' were the words in which Saint Luke declared Christ expressed His command to the Apostles to perpetuate the holiest of His miracles.

It appears they were diligent in obeying, for the Acts of the Apostles, xiii. 2, tells us that (according to Catholic edition) as they, Barnabas and Simeon, were '*sacrificing* to the Lord, and fasting, the Holy Ghost said to them,' &c., &c. The word '*sacrificing*' in the Protestant edition is rendered, '*they ministered* to the Lord,' &c. Now, the Greek word is '*λειτουργουντων*,' which, as nearly as it can be translated, is '*ministering as a PRIEST*;' but '*more particularly in the EUCHARIST*:' therefore *sacrifice* is the proper translation, as there could be no *other* mere '*ministering*' (in the ordinary sense of that word) '*of the priest*.' This is evident, for the 1 Cor. x. 16, tells us '*The cup of blessing*' (Protestant)—chalice of benediction (Catholic)—'*which we bless, is it not the communion of the blood of Christ?*'

and the bread which we break, is it not the partaking of the body of the Lord?' How many passages conveying the testimony of those admitted to be the 'fathers of the Church,' equally by Protestant and Catholic, could be quoted as proving that the immediate successors of the Apostles celebrated the sacrifice of the Mass as practised to this day, it would be useless to enumerate; but no one who has given *any* attention to such questions will deny that there are more than enough (of those passages which are uncontested) to prove that the successors of the Apostles did, 'in remembrance' of Christ's sacrifice on the Cross, practise the *sacrifice* of the Mass, as it is to this day administered in the Catholic Church; and if my reason left me dependent on the judgment of others I would prefer to rely on the admissions of Protestants of former days in favour of opinions professed by Irenæus, Cyprian, Tertullian, Ambrose, and Augustine, rather than on those denials

and *quasi*-admissions of the continued renewal of a miracle in the Eucharist, which a disunited hierarchy of the Church established by law now endeavours to impose on those who, from any motive whatever, can be persuaded to subscribe the Thirty-nine Articles.

That, in principle, the Eucharistic ceremony is an unbloody sacrifice offered to God the Father by priests having all the authority which Apostolic succession can give to them, to renew in remembrance of Christ's miracle, the giving 'His body and blood verily and indeed to the faithful,' I have not the least doubt; and, further, I am content to rest on the practice of the Church to administer the blessed sacrament under one kind, seeing that, besides various other authorities, that of St. John tells us, that 'if any man eat of this bread he shall live for ever,'—'He that eateth this bread shall live for ever.'

Indeed, it is obvious that both in bread and wine our Lord is, by Transubstantiation,

equally present. Neither His body or blood can in *any* sense be there one without the other. The word 'concomitance' expresses the doctrine, and to suppose that in receiving our Lord under one species, we receive only in part is to assert that there is a separation of the body and blood of Christ into two parts — 'Christ, risen from the dead, dieth no more.' We cannot, in contemplation, receive him without receiving Him entire, as He is! It is simply a falsehood to say that the cup is refused only to the laity; the distinction is not between clergy and laity, but between the celebrant and all others: a bishop or the Pope even receives only under one kind if he be not the celebrant.

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CHAPTER XV.

CONFESSION—ABSOLUTION.

FOR what purpose the so-called Reformers, who retained in the Book of Common Prayer authority to *pronounce* Pardon and Absolution in public, and *move* a man to auricular confession, and to absolve him 'from all his sins,' in private, denied Penance and Confession to be a sacrament, except the better to render the new religion one of laxity and temporal ease, I never could see. It must be admitted that the words of Christ* were intended to apply only to those to whom He spoke,

* St. John, **xx.** 21, 22, 23.

or else to all included in what is termed 'the Apostolical succession,' as meant by the Established and Catholic Churches respectively, viz. their bishops and priests. If the former, all falls to the ground; if the latter—to me, at least—it is perfectly conclusive, that Penance and Confession is a sacrament ordained by Christ Himself; that the doctrine of the Catholic Church, founded on Christ's words—'Receive ye the Holy Ghost: whose sins you shall forgive they are forgiven; and whose sins you shall retain they are retained'—is the true doctrine; and my conviction is, that if there be truth in Christianity, and anything divine in any sacrament acknowledged by any Christian Church, it is the sacrament of Penance and Confession.

Most Protestants are brought up in total ignorance of the doctrine of Auricular Confession and Absolution. I certainly was no exception to that rule, for my teachers led me to believe that it was to be abhorred and

condemned as one of the most fearful errors of the Roman Catholic Church; and I never was told by any one of them that the Established Church claimed for her priests the same power, and could legally exercise it in the same form of words, for the salvation of a Protestant, as any Catholic priest possessed according to the authority of his Church. The examination of that doctrine, however, became particularly interesting to me at both the former periods of my consideration of Catholic and Protestant differences; and while no one is more ready than myself to condemn any result of that doctrine consequent on its *abuse*, I can conceive nothing more conducive to the good of man than its proper use; and I never had any hesitation, after making the best and most impartial examinations in my power, in bringing my mind to the conviction above expressed.

The abuse of Confession and Absolution by layman and priest has continually been

made a ground for attack, not only on the Catholic Church, but against the sacrament itself. Now it always has appeared to me, that if every alleged abuse could be substantiated, nothing thereby would be proved against the purity or efficacy of the Catholic doctrine religiously practised. The 'Power of the Keys' is neither proved nor disproved by showing that priests or parsons may be bad men; neither is the interpretation of the text, 'Confess ye your sins one to another,' affected, in the least degree, because there are people so wicked or so foolish as to suppose that an impure confession can be of the slightest eternal advantage; or that it is possible (even with unbounded wealth) to purchase in the Confessional the license to 'go and sin' again.

It is not my purpose to argue the question of Divine authority for Confession or Absolution, with those who ignore altogether the truth and efficacy of that doctrine; but rather to address myself to members of the

Establishment who, as it were, partly admit and partly deny it, and so, as it appears to me, the more seriously abuse it. Whatever can be advanced against the doctrine of Confession and Absolution by the former class of persons, may be urged with far greater force against such application of it as is retained by the Established Church. As I have already observed, all connected with the Establishment who are charged with the education of youth, in public or private tuition, either ignore both Confession and Absolution, or allude to it only as part of a 'damnable superstition;' so that ninety-nine out of every hundred youths, brought up as members of the Established Church, have never been taught that both Absolution and Auricular Confession are not only recognised, but enforced, by that Church, so as to become a power at the disposition of the Protestant parson, more fearful, if possible, than any which even hostility to the Catholic Church

could suppose was ever exercised by a Catholic priest. Such, at least, struck me to be the case, when, on studying the Book of Common Prayer, I was awakened from the ignorance on the subject in which my education left me, by endeavouring to find an answer to the question, 'Is all this true?' The view which I then took, and which subsequent examinations confirmed, I still take of the Rubric in the Visitation Service, now so generally familiar in consequence of what are called Ritualistic practices, which were unknown in the *jog-trot* days of the Church when my inquiries began, is this — that the Established Church not only admits Auricular Confession and Absolution by the priest to the full extent (and in identically the same words as the Catholic Church), but it requires its priesthood at times, and under circumstances when man is most helpless, to assert and carry into fearful effect a power unknown to any other Church or religious community in the civilised world.

For what does the Established Church do, when the bishop, ‘by the imposition of his hands,’ commits to the deacon the sacred office and work of a priest, saying, ‘Receive the Holy Ghost;’ ‘Whose sins thou dost forgive they are forgiven, and whose sins thou dost retain they are retained?’ What is the meaning of those words? Is there in the ‘Thirty-nine Articles, in the Book of Common Prayer, or in any other authority, any denial that the Established Church pretends thereby to give to a priest of that Church the *same* ‘power of the keys’ which is possessed by the Church Catholic? On the contrary, is it not manifest that such ceremony, by the authority of that Church, claiming to be Apostolic, and using those words, really and truly intends to give a power which becomes only a ‘mockery, a delusion, and a snare;’ inasmuch as the *practice* of that same Church, so far from sanctioning its use, forbids the priest either to ‘forgive’ or to ‘retain;’ and the course taken

by the Established Church in all her schools, in all her teaching by her ministers and masters, is not only carefully to prevent any of her children from believing in the efficacy of Auricular Confession and Absolution, but practically to direct them to ignore the unquestionable fact that she has given to her ministers the power of enforcing the former and of withholding or bestowing the latter.

The denial altogether of the truth and efficacy of the doctrine which involves what is called the 'power of the keys' may be quite intelligible; but that is not now the question; it is rather whether the consideration of the extent of that doctrine, *as held by the Established Church*, can lead any unprejudiced mind to any other conclusion than full belief in the doctrine as a whole, according to that held by the Roman Catholic Church, or its denial altogether. I have said that the Establishment requires its priesthood to assert a power unknown in any other religious com-

munity; for where, I ask, is the Church which, for the first time in the life of one of its members, comes down upon him when stricken with sickness so serious that prudence requires he should be 'moved' as to the disposition of all his worldly affairs, goods, and chattels, for the good of others, and then proceeds to induce him for the good of his soul to believe that salvation is to be obtained by auricular confession to, and absolution by, the priest, if, weakened by sickness and with death at his door, he can be made to feel something 'weighty' on his conscience? Aye, *then* he is all at once to be induced to believe the reverse of all the *practical* doctrine of his Church, of which during a long life he has been a member, and to rely on that at which he has been taught by example and precept to scoff, viz. the efficacy of the power of the priest to 'forgive' or 'retain' his sins. And how is this revolution of all his life-long convictions to be effected in the mind of the

weakly, dying man? Why, after measuring by some indefinable and unknown standard what it is which may be called 'weighty' on his mind, the priest is to 'move' him to make a special and auricular confession, that *he* may judge if *he* shall 'absolve him of all his sins,' or if he shall refuse 'to forgive' any of them. But how is he to 'move' him? It can only be in the exercise of the priestly office by hopes of the happiness of heaven, or fears of hell, in the various ways in which hope or fear may be so presented to the mind when age or sickness has brought it to the weakest point. Is the sick man *then* to find that a sacrament which he has always been taught to consider as not 'generally necessary to salvation,' but a fit subject for ridicule in Protestant society, and denunciation in Protestant pulpits, is nevertheless in the estimation of the Establishment of such holy origin, and of such paramount importance, that a duly authorized priest of that Church can, in

the last moments of his life, as much 'absolve him from all his sins' as some other priest of his Church had, when an infant, cleansed him from all 'original sin' in which he was born? It seems to me, that to 'move' a man by so bringing to his mind, for the first time, a truth which all schoolmasters and priests have always previously either concealed or distorted, does constitute a fearful power, unknown to any Church save that 'established by law.'

The Roman Catholic Church, teaching Penance as a sacrament, brings confession and absolution fairly, fully, and *early* to the knowledge and practice of every one born and educated in, or converted to, the Catholic faith. Her members, therefore, have the benefit of it whilst in vigour of mind and health of body, and they possibly may take such advantage of it as to 'go and sin no more;' but if so great a blessing be not theirs, they may at least know the comfort of absolution on a voluntary, and therefore more surely pure

confession, than can ever be obtained if all sense of that sacrament be delayed till it be forced on a dying man, when the priest is to 'move' him to confession by the last effort on his hopes or fears!

Laymen intentionally making imperfect, and therefore worse than useless, confessions, and priests selling absolution to the rich, and tyrannizing over the mind of the poor, undoubtedly constitute abuses, than which anything more wicked can scarcely be imagined. But, as I have said before, neither such nor any other *abuses* of the great and holy sacraments prove anything whatever against the true faith and doctrines of the Catholic Church. Protestants always argue against the abuses by wicked men of the sacraments, *as if* those abuses themselves were, if not a part of, at least consistent with, or the natural consequence of, the true doctrine of the Catholic Church. Now, putting the best construction on the doctrine and practice of Confession and Abso-

lution, as professed by the Established and practised by the Catholic Churches, it is clear that either during a man's life, or at some period of it, *both* hold *identically* the same belief; and my position is, that the Church of England claims the same power of giving to her priests the same authority to 'forgive' and to 'retain' which the Church Catholic does, and that while the latter by her preaching and practice makes Confession and Absolution the means of inducing her members from time to time to amend their lives while capable of amendment, the Church of England, on the other hand, never directs her priests to use that power for the same object, but, concealing her assumed authority to 'forgive' and 'retain,' she denies to her members every benefit during their lives: so that, however great the necessity of the sinner, she brings him no such comfort at all unless he be warned by sickness of approaching death; and, therefore, the necessary conclusion is, that

while the Established Church herself *abuses* by total neglect the power which she claims during life, she makes it the *more fearful*, when for the first and last time at the hour of death she has recourse to it, than any power known to any other Church.

Now it appears to me that no amount of 'faith' will enable a man to believe in a power of forgiveness which is *only* to be valid in sickness, and no reasonable being can possibly suppose that the priest having received the Holy Ghost, although he can absolve a man from all his sins '*if* his conscience be troubled with any "weighty" matter' (possibly involving a whole life of the deepest crime); yet he *either cannot* or *is not* to 'move' to confession, or to render the comfort of absolution to those who (though not troubled with the 'weight' of crimes) may, while yet in health, be sorrowful and repentant for having fallen under temptation into the errors and sins of this mortal life.

The Established Church by its priests has, or has not, 'the power of the keys.' If she have it, but repudiate its exercise till a man be dying or 'sick,' she encourages an accumulation of sin as long as she can, by never 'moving' to confession while yet there may be time for amendment of life; and if she have not that power, then by her mere affectation of it (for what is called the quieting of conscience of weaker brethren), she proves she has no faith in that great gift of God which her bishop pretends to bestow, when, with his hand on the priest's head he says, 'Receive the Holy Ghost;' and it is impossible to understand how any one can so reconcile such doctrine and practice as to feel safe in professing to be a member of a Church which so plays fast-and-loose with such a question!

It seems to me impossible to doubt that Confession and Absolution must be of Divine origin, and be practised in all its purity, or it is of no value whatever. If, in fact,

‘Confess your sins one to another,’ were the Christian doctrine to be inculcated by the Church claiming to be Catholic and Apostolic, and with Apostolic power conferring on her ministers the sacred right of ‘retaining and forgiving’ all sins so confessed; it must be conceded that it is contrary, as well to all our ideas of ‘faith which comes by grace,’ as it is to the reason which God has bestowed on man, to imagine that Christ and his Apostles ordained so holy a rite from which no benefit was to be derived, except in sickness! Is it not perfectly consistent both with faith and ‘reason,’ that if Confession and Absolution be vested in the Catholic and Apostolic Church, both ought to be practised throughout the life of man, rather than that he should abstain from either, accumulating sins till the accident which may induce a priest to ‘move’ him to make a ‘special confession’ in the last hours of his life?

I am not arguing with those who deny

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altogether the validity of Absolution and Auricular Confession; but what I do maintain is, that the Established Church equally recognises and abuses, both directly and indirectly, in doctrine and practice, that power which, with reference to both, she pretends to confer, and that no religious practice, if not abused, can tend more directly to make a man really and truly amend his life, by any more efficacious preparation for that which is to come, than Confession and Absolution! As regards the doctrine of the Roman Catholic Church on the subject, this is undeniable, that whoever obeys it in all its purity will more surely endeavour to free his conscience so that in his last moments he may not be oppressed with any 'weighty matter,' than he who has been taught either to deny its validity altogether, or to postpone its application till the last hour of his life.

CHAPTER XVI.

CONFIRMATION — EXTREME UNCTION — MATRIMONY —
HOLY ORDERS.

I CAN see no reason why the Established Church, which essentially adopts all which the ceremony of Confirmation implies, chooses to reject it, *as a sacrament*, except it be because the Catholic Church holds it to be one. It is simply foolish to say that a bishop can '*confirm*,' unless the imposition of his hands signifies that the Holy Spirit is bestowed (on a worthy object) in accordance with his words; and if that be the effect, surely it is a most unreasonable pretext for denying it

to have the merit of a sacrament because the Holy Ghost does not now visibly descend upon us. It is a sacrament taught by the Apostles, on the authority of Christ, *or* it is nothing. I look on it as founded by SS. Peter and John and Paul, and see no reason for its rejection by the Church established by law.

With regard to the sacrament of Extreme Unction, it has always seemed to me that if it were the boldest, so it was at least the more honest course which induced Luther to reject altogether the Epistle of St. James as an inspired work, than accepting it as the Established Church does, nevertheless to ignore the doctrine of extreme unction founded on it, and authorized by the tradition and authority of that Church which preserved that work of the inspired Apostle. For if that work be so acknowledged, the Established Church can only denounce the ceremony it ordains to be corrupt, because it is respected by the Catholic Church. How-

ever, as very few Protestants ever think of it, it involves less of angry controversy than most other points of difference. He who receives worthily, in his last hours in this world, a sacrament, of which not even Protestant history has given any well-known account of its abuse, will find alleviation and comfort.

The Catholic Church regards Matrimony as a sacrament. What can be 'corrupt' in such a view? Surely the more holy that ceremony may be considered, the better! The Established Church does not recognise it as a sacrament, but a much less religious ceremony. In what respect, by so regarding it, is the Protestant therefore a better man than the Catholic? Neither practically nor otherwise is there such an essential difference of opinion respecting matrimony between Catholics and Protestants generally as alone to constitute an impassable barrier between the two Churches; and I am satisfied in thinking, that, as Christ's words were sufficient to impart a new form to Matri-

mony, making it an emblem of His own eternal union with the Church, that the marriage of the faithful is sanctioned by Divine authority, and accompanied by the gift of grace, and that accepting the authority of the Church for regarding it as a sacrament may be an additional safeguard.

If the sacrament of Holy Orders be not of Divine institution, there can be no authority for considering bishops or priests of any Church in any other light than that in which the Established Church views the elected (or self-constituted) ministers of any Dissenting religious denomination. But it always appeared to me that the hesitating and inconclusive language of the 25th Article as to 'corrupt following of the Apostles,' with reference to considering 'Orders' as a sacrament, showed that the Established Church *practically* regards them *as a sacrament*, which like Baptism, can only be taken ONCE, by her recognition of any one who has received

Holy Orders in the Catholic Church to this extent, that on subscribing the Thirty-nine Articles he becomes, *ipso facto*, an ordained priest of the Church of England, with full power to administer its *two* sacraments, 'as generally necessary to salvation,' 'ordained by Christ Himself,' and also every other duty, as much as any clergyman of that Church having a cure of souls.

Now, if Holy Orders were not a *sacrament* of Divine institution, why is it that they are not required to be taken again by those who renounce an '*idolatrous worship*,' to become members of the *pure Church* of Christ? and why is it that the Church Catholic has never recognised the 'orders' of the Anglican Church? unless it be that though Established, she cannot have by Apostolic succession the power of administering that sacrament. Be all this as it may, a matter of fact, or of faith, reason will tell one, that either the Ordination of Priests is something more

than a ceremony of human institution, or the whole efficacy of ministers of a Church founded by Divine power, is as nothing; and then, so far from the existence of an Apostolic succession, so far as even such authority as the Established Church claims for her ministers goes, the whole system falls to the ground. The Established Church requires the priest to 'baptize,' to 'confess and absolve,' to 'forgive or to retain,' after 'moving' a dying man, *if* he have weighty matter on his conscience! She requires the priest to give, in *some* sense, the 'Body and Blood of Christ, verily and indeed to be taken and eaten by the faithful,' and to deal, as it were in some fashion, with the *real presence* of God! Does *reason* tell one that this *can* be done by a man endowed with any power less than that given by Holy Orders, as a sacrament? The Roman Catholic Church enjoins her priests to sacrifice, to confess, to absolve, and to baptize! The tra-

dition of ages brought down by the authority of that Church is the foundation thereof, as well as of all that is similar in the Established Church; and the whole, as regards either, rests on nothing, *unless* Holy Orders be all which the Catholic Church asserts—a sacrament of Divine origin and inspiration, continuing the power Christ gave to His Apostles to perform *such* miracles.

CHAPTER XVII.

TRADITION.

THE Clergy of the Church of England take care to teach (or at least to allow those they instruct in religion to believe) that the New Testament is a sacred volume containing a number of books *written* by the four Evangelists, St. Paul, and other inspired writers. The consequence is, that the Protestant mind is unguardedly and insensibly led to conclude that everything taught as his religion was *written*, that it has nothing on the authority of *tradition*, and also that all things authorised by

tradition in the 'Romish Church,' are 'unscriptural.' Such are the popular ideas respecting 'Scripture' and 'Tradition,' to which Protestant education leads. Might it not be better if clergymen said something more of tradition, and explained to the young mind, as best they could, the 6th and 34th Articles, even if in so difficult a matter they allowed that *any* interpretation of them might be admitted, provided that sufficient attention were paid to the words of the latter, viz. 'It is not necessary that *traditions* and ceremonies be in all places one and utterly like,' *so* as to exclude Roman Catholic doctrine and practice thereon. I remember when first I found out that, although the Church of England condemns 'tradition' where its authority will not support her, she respects it where it is convenient, I was struck by the fact, that while Christ's unwritten word was the first delivery of the rule of Christianity, the *tradition* of it did not lose any of its force

when the writings of inspired men were added to it; and I was led in the pursuit of my inquiry, long before I had any expectation that I should become a Catholic, to entertain a high opinion of the value of tradition, and I was early satisfied, that without it, much of the doctrine of the Christian religion common to the Greek, Roman, and Protestant Churches, would fail for want of written authority: for I could not doubt that *tradition* was itself the very authority on which the writers of the books of the New Testament relied. It appeared to me that it is to tradition we owe the Scriptures, and that it is by it alone we can feel certain of the authenticity of them. For the only proof we can have that any one of the books was written by Evangelist or Apostle is, that tradition convinces us it was received and read as such by the primitive and universal Church.

Nowhere in Scripture is a direction to be found whereon to justify the doctrine that

nothing is to be taken as a matter of faith, except what 'can be proved' by that which was *written* by its inspired authors; nowhere are we told by Evangelist or Apostle that what was written contained *all* that was to be believed. Christ never condemned any Jewish doctrine *because* it rested on *tradition*. On the contrary, it is essentially the belief of every kind of professing Christian, that He did not change or abolish, but that He fulfilled as well the traditional as the written Jewish law. Nor did He himself ever condemn any Jewish practice *because* it was founded on *tradition*; and nothing recorded of Him by Evangelist or Apostle indicates in the slightest degree that tradition of Him should have authority only when it could be *proved* to be true by what might be *written* of Him for the first time many years after His ascension!

It is unnecessary to support my conviction by any appeal to the Fathers, far-

ther than by stating that SS. Clement, Chrysostom, Augustine, Tertullian, and others, held the Catholic doctrine of tradition, and that it was supported by the great Council of Nice only 325 years after Christ. The Protestant may say, 'I accept some traditions, I reject others, and with the last, the doctrine that the Church cannot err.' But what proof can he have that those he accepts are true, beyond his own mere opinion and fancy? and what can he say to persuade Protestant Dissenters, who, interpreting the Scripture in a different sense, consider all the traditions he keeps as foolish and untrue as he considers those others which the Catholics retain and believe?

Various texts in the Gospels of Matthew and Mark, and in the Epistles of St. Paul, support the doctrine of tradition. In that to the Thessalonians he says, 'We charge you in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, that you withdraw yourselves from every brother

walking disorderly, and not after *the tradition* which they have received from us,' (1 Thess. iii. 6): also, 'Stand firm, and hold the traditions which you have learned, whether by word or by our epistle.' (1 Thess. ii. 14.) No passage in the New Testament will show that Christ ever commanded His Apostles to write, and, as it were, put together a code of faith; nor is there the least indication that each individual, Roman or Hebrew, Thessalonian, Corinthian, or other, might interpret sacred words as they pleased. So far from it, they were told by St. Paul to 'hold the form of sound words which thou hast *heard* of me in *faith*.'

It is also certain from the concluding words of St. John, xxi. 25, that much which the Apostles declared to be Christ's words and acts is not contained in the New Testament.

Many apostles did not write—*all* preached. 'Their sound went over all the earth, and

their words to the end of the whole world.’
Rom. x. 18.

St. John Chrysostom says, on the Epistle to the Thessalonians, ‘It is the tradition—do not ask, therefore, any further.’

The style in which Evangelists and Apostles wrote is so peculiar, that I am persuaded they intended that, when they could no longer preach themselves, what they wrote should be explained in the sense in which they delivered *it*, to be perpetuated—by a true succession of ministers in the Church, against which Christ had promised ‘the gates of hell should not prevail.’ By *tradition* alone could the Church have authority so to act. That it possessed that authority was never doubted by the early Christians, or afterwards, for ages during the continued existence of the Catholic Church, previous to the so-called Reformation.

Upon what authority the English Church

insists on Infant Baptism, or on making the *first* day of the week the Sabbath, I never was told; probably, because it rests only on *tradition*. Now if any one *tradition* be valid for the Protestant, how can he undertake to condemn any doctrine of the Catholic Church *because* it is founded on tradition, unless he be prepared to prove such tradition to be baseless? Tradition is the authority for believing that the Gospels and Epistles were of Divine inspiration. Neither Evangelist nor Apostle states that he is *writing* by Divine authority committed to him; but we do know *by tradition*, that what was written long after the ascension, as well as what was taught by the Apostles immediately after, was Divinely inspired. The Church was founded by oral teaching. The Apostles and their immediate successors, the early Fathers, practised and relied on it; and now, while we may as safely have confidence in the one *traditional interpretation* of Scripture by the Church, we

certainly cannot rely on the *varied* translations or readings by sects or learned individuals. I hold that the *authority* of *traditional* interpretation can alone preserve the *intended* meaning of those who, in what they wrote, referred to what they orally taught. That Christ intended His Church to exercise such authority is consistent with reason and faith; and neither will allow me to rely on any religion which, though established by law, repudiates such authority.

It has been a great satisfaction to me to find opinions on the value and importance of tradition, which resulted from my examinations so long ago, now confirmed by the authority of the learned Dr. Döllinger, in his *First Age of the Church*. I can hardly imagine how any one who has attempted to give his *free* consideration to the question of tradition, as between the Catholic and Established Churches, could fail to see the error of the latter, if he believed in the foundation of those

primary doctrines which are common to both. Nor can I conceive how he could fail to agree with Dr. Döllinger, who, as translated by Mr. Oxenham, thus speaks :—

‘ In no age of the Church, from Christ till now, could her faith and teaching differ from what it was yesterday. The continuity of the stream of tradition allowed neither the sudden nor the gradual submersion of a doctrine by its opposite. Never could a truth once accepted by the Church be lost, or sink from the dignity of an article of faith into a mere tolerated opinion. The right understanding of doctrine, and the corresponding interpretation of the Apostolical writings, passed on like the links of an unbroken chain. The criticism which guarded it belonged in principle to every faithful Christian, —pre-eminently to the organized hierarchy which inherited the Apostolic office. The rejection of every strange doctrine resulted simply from the perception that it directly,

or by implication, contradicted that handed down from their forefathers.'

It only remains for me to say, that upon grounds similar to those so well expressed, I long ago arrived at this conclusion,—that if those traditions of the Catholic Church which she has preserved for so many ages cannot be relied on, I could not rely on writings which, without those traditions, would never have been preserved for above eighteen hundred years.

CHAPTER XVIII.

INDULGENCES.

WITH regard to the Catholic doctrine of Indulgences I must acknowledge I was astonished when first I found that the Council of Trent proposes it as an article of faith. There is no point on which Protestants do not misrepresent Catholic doctrine or practice, and the word itself enables them the more easily to mislead on this point than on most others. Protestant teachers do all they can to persuade their pupils that 'granting an indulgence' means *a license to sin* for the future, or a *com-*

pensation for past transgressions. That the doctrine has been abused most fearfully, and consequently is obnoxious to a sophistical charge of causing sin, cannot be denied ; and certainly there is no point of Catholic doctrine which, by the generality of Protestants who take no trouble to be accurately informed, can be more easily condemned than that of Indulgences ; and I am free to acknowledge that I was, if possible, more prejudiced against it than any other question involved in the Catholic religion. But upon understanding what is truly the Catholic doctrine on the subject, all difficulty vanished, for I found that in reality it involves nothing but a powerful incentive to lead a good life ; and an unprejudiced examination showed that everything I had heard on the subject from Protestant teaching was false if not baseless.

The Catholic faith, as proposed by the Council of Trent, is, ‘ that Christ gave to His

Church the power of granting indulgences, and that the use of them is beneficial ;' and the Council adds this remark : ' Though the use of them be retained, it should be retained with moderation, lest by any unbecoming facility the force of ecclesiastical discipline should become enervated and relaxed.' Now, what is an Indulgence? It is nothing more than a remission, allowed by the Church, on certain conditions of practical piety, of some temporal punishments remaining due, after absolution.

But no indulgence can be of the least value, except to those whose pure confession and perfect intention of amendment of life have merited absolution, and whose hearts being perfectly free from a desire of deliberate sin for the future, comply with those conditions by acts of prayer, mortification, humility, and charity.

Those Protestant clergymen who consider faith alone can save, would have it sup-

posed that an 'indulgence,' if not a license, is at least an encouragement, to commit sin. That such may be the consequence when abused, I fully admit; but when not abused, the true doctrine of Indulgences constitutes a powerful antidote to the fearful and almost natural result, not only of the pernicious doctrine that we are saved by faith alone, and that, as Calvin said, 'No sin is imputed to a believer,' of which the advice, 'Sin, but believe all the more firmly,' was a fair deduction, but also to the later Protestant doctrine which leads some to believe that, whatever they may do they are already saved, and knowing, as it were, that they are of 'the elect,' exultingly repeat the text, 'Sin, that grace may abound;' or as Luther said, 'Believe firmly and sin courageously.'

I consider that any view of the doctrine that man can be saved by faith alone, is antagonistic to all good works. 'Faith, if it have not good works, is dead in itself,' saith

St. James, ii. 17 ; and I cannot understand how those who can subscribe the 11th and 12th Articles of the Established Church can object, with regard to the doctrine of Indulgences, to anything but their abuse.

I have only to add, with regard to 'Indulgences' and 'Satisfaction,' that *I* am satisfied 'the use of them is beneficial.'

Protestants know so little of the Catholic religion beyond those points, which, being most easily misrepresented and distorted, have been taken as the usual ground on which to attack Catholics as idolaters, that while few who may read these pages will know what 'Satisfaction' means, fewer still will think that it is a point on which any one need trouble himself. But as those who probably will most severely condemn the step I have taken, have the least studied the true doctrine of the Church on this (or any other) point, I am unwilling to pass it in silence.

I believe that Christ, as God and man,

was alone capable of offering atonement for sin ; that the benefit of His atonement was ordained by Him to be twofold, viz. by perfect absolution without punishment, or by forgiveness of extreme punishment in consideration of undergoing less ; namely, by heartily repenting, or (in other *words*) doing penance, in addition to faith proved by good works. I would illustrate what I mean by saying, that Christ ordained that the benefit of His Atonement might be thus applied : the forgiveness of all original sin by baptismal regeneration, and by the forgiveness of sin committed after baptism, which still, for the sake of that atonement, the real penitent might hope to receive by offering in satisfaction such temporal punishment as penance may imply.

Nothing appears to me more reasonable than that the Church should have the power of directing the penitent to perform such penance in this world as may be a satisfaction, which, for the sake of the Atonement,

will be accepted by God, and it is equally reasonable that the same Power may remit any such portion of such acts of penance in consideration of the good works of faith, hope, and charity; but if such views were not so fully supported, as I believe, by the authority of the early Fathers, it is clear that Scripture, as well as Tradition, proves the doctrine of Satisfaction to be sacred. (2 Kings, xii.) David sinned: he suffered the punishment of his child's death. He did penance by humiliation and 'fasting.' 'He went into the House of the Lord, and worshipped.' Such acts of satisfaction obtained the comforting conviction that he should see his child in heaven; for 'the Lord took away his sin,' and decreed he should 'not die.' 'The Lord saith, Be converted with all your hearts, in fasting, weeping, and mourning' (Joel, ii. 12). 'Be comforted: repent (*i.e.* do penance, &c.) your transgressions, and iniquity shall not be your ruin' (Ezekiel, xviii. 30); and St. Paul

says (Colossians, i. 24), 'I, who now rejoice in my sufferings for you, and fill up those things that are wanting of the sufferings of Christ *in my flesh*, for His body, which is the Church.' These passages appear to command, or at least to justify, the doctrine of 'Satisfaction,' and I certainly cannot understand any other sense in which they can so naturally be read. Upon what grounds it is that the Established Church denies that Scripture warrants the doctrine of Satisfaction, I never heard explained, but I can easily understand that prayers and good works may be promoted by that doctrine, and I cannot believe that it is in any sense whatever 'repugnant to the word of God.'

CHAPTER XIX.

THE BLESSED VIRGIN, ANGELS, SAINTS.

EACH of the inquiries into Protestant and Catholic doctrines, made at different periods of my life, led me to conclude that the main cause of the prejudice which exists against Catholics in this country is founded partly in ignorance, arising from neglect of such impartial examination of religion as ought to be the consequence of the right of private judgment, and partly (as I have elsewhere stated) from the erroneous assertions and explanations which all Protestant ministers and other persons give of Catholic belief.

I must observe, that the Articles of Faith which every member of the Established Church is taught to hold as essential to salvation, are also held by the Catholic. It is true, the latter believes *more* than the former; but nothing of that which he does believe (beyond the Protestant) is more irreconcilable with reason than are those matters of faith upon which the doctrine of the Established Church and the Catholic Church is identical.

It is some what remarkable that the word which, of all others, expresses the greatest possible amount of devotion, which any one word in the English language can convey, is almost ignored by Protestant Englishmen in their teaching with regard to religion; I mean the word *Adoration*. It seems as if it were so objectionable to them, that since the so-called Reformation, the use of it is far less frequent than the same word on the Continent; for instance, it is not only never heard from

the Protestant pulpit to express worship of God, but it is somewhat rare to hear it used in social life to express a sort of human worship, viz. Love. Whereas the meaning of the word *adore*, in all languages, is such as to oblige its use when the greatest possible amount of devotion, in either case, is to be expressed. And in English it certainly conveys to the mind, with regard to devotion to God, as much more than the word *Worship*, as it does, with regard to mankind, than the word *Love*.

It appears almost as if pains had been taken to lead Englishmen to use and understand the word *Worship* as being the only one capable of expressing a sense of the greatest possible amount of devotion. So that, except when applied to God alone, it would convey an idea of *Idolatry*, or, at least, of rendering some portion of a feeling to another which is due only to the Almighty. I am perfectly confident, that if half as much

pains were taken to *explain* the words Worship and Adoration, as have been to misuse and confound them, it would have been impossible to persuade Englishmen that the Catholic who readily admits he ‘worships’* the Blessed Virgin Mary, gives to her, or to any being, any portion of that supreme devotion which the Almighty demands, and which, while it comprehends everything which ‘worship’ can mean, cannot be adequately expressed by any word, except by *adoration*.

That which the Established Church calls ‘the Authorised Version of the Scriptures,’ uses the inferior word ‘worship’ so as to mean what could only properly be conveyed by the word *adoration*.

When I was a boy, I had reason given me

* Catholics do not, generally, use this word to express the veneration they pay to the Blessed Virgin and the Saints. The sense of the writer may determine the meaning. In the Protestant translation of the Bible it is used both for supreme and inferior honour in the same sentence—viz., “they worshipped the Lord and the king” (1 Chron. xxix. 20).

to recollect, that the translation authorised by the Established Church was not allowed by the master in pupil-room to be correct; for being detected in having learnt my Greek Testament by it, instead of by the Lexicon, in consequence of translating *ἐὰν*, 'if,' *πεσῶν*, 'falling down,' *προσκυνήσης μοι*, 'you will worship me;' I was told to write out the meaning of *προσκυνέω*, from the Lexicon (*Schrevelius*) five hundred times. I have not, therefore, forgotten that *osculo*, *adoro*, and *veneror*, are the translations by that authority; and I never afterwards was able to understand why the English translation made the Devil say, 'worship me,' when 'kiss me,' or 'adore me,' would convey the more powerful meaning of the word *προσκυνήσης*, until years afterwards, when I became aware that there was this difference between the Protestant Authorised Version and other translations, viz. the first says, 'If thou wilt fall down and *worship* me;' Jesus answered, 'It

is written, Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and Him only shalt thou serve,' while the Catholic and others have it, 'If thou wilt fall down and *adore* me,' and 'It is written, The Lord thy God shalt thou adore, and Him only shalt thou serve.'

I then thought, as it seems to me still, that there has been a tampering, as it were, with the word 'adore,' because its proper use would have rendered to Protestants generally the sense in which Catholics use *both* words, free from that misconception, which it suits the former to promote with reference to their assertion, that the Catholics give to the Blessed Virgin Mary that 'worship,' which in reality they give to God alone. It would be out of place here to contest the meaning and derivation of words; but I think this much will not be denied, that any one, at school or college, having his attention called to the translations in question, would consider, on referring to his Lexicon, and finding the

word *προσκυνέω* explained ‘to prostrate one’s self before kings and superiors, also of gods;’ to ‘adore;’ and *προσκυνήσις*, as ‘adoration;’ and on finding the Latin word *adoro*, explained, ‘to adore by prayer, derived from *ad* and *oro* ;’ and again, on referring to the word ‘worship,’ to find it given in Greek by the word *σέβωμαι*, and in Latin by ‘*colo*, *cultus* ;’ would at once conclude, that there was a distinction between *adoration* and *worship* ; that the former implied all contained in the latter ; while the latter word, although it meant veneration and honour, did not include, necessarily, all that prostration of every power of soul and body, which can only in one word be expressed by the former.

What I have said above respecting the translation of the Greek word *προσκυνέω*, is only intended to show that (whatever may be laid down by the most learned on such matters) there is a *primá facie* case for any young student to believe that in the Authorised Ver-

sion the word *worship* has been, more carefully than correctly, substituted for the word *adore*, and that the moment the student looked at the question with reference to Catholic and Protestant doctrines, it was natural for him to suppose that the latter endeavoured to gain something at the expense of the former by the less correct translation.

That the entire devotion of every power of the body, mind, and soul, with the capability of which the Almighty has endowed humanity, should not be rendered to any being but to the Trinity in Unity, and to the Unity in Trinity, is the natural, the reasonable, and the inevitable conviction inseparable from such Christianity as is embodied in the Apostles', Nicene, and Athanasian Creeds; and such prostration of every human feeling before God Almighty, is *adoration* which no *Christian* can offer elsewhere. To honour, to venerate, to worship the Mother of Christ, to solicit

her prayers and those of the Communion of Saints for the intercession of her Son with Almighty God, appears to me to be far removed from, but perfectly consistent with, that *adoration* which a Christian knows is due to *God alone*. Whoever has *faith* in the conception of Christ in the womb of the Blessed Virgin Mary, in the Trinity in Unity, in 'the Communion of Saints,' and in 'Life Everlasting,' cannot in reason doubt that if ever a miracle was performed by the Apostles or their successors, that if ever their prayers, or those of other saints or good men, *while they were on earth*, could avail at the throne of grace, *or*, that if it be no sin for men by *their* prayers to try to intercede with God for their fellow-men on earth, I say that such Christians cannot in reason doubt the efficacy of the prayers, because no longer here, of the same Mother of Christ, of the same Apostles, their successors, and other good men departed this life; who now of 'the Communion of Saints'

in heaven still seek by their prayers for the intercession of the same Christ for those yet on earth. If you tell me that I can offer no degree of honour, veneration, or worship to the Mother of Christ and the Communion of Saints, in asking still for those prayers, the efficacy of which was proved while they were on earth by miracles (some of which are believed in by Protestants), without detracting from that 'adoration' with which I am bound to 'serve God' *alone*,—I say you take from me the great comfort of the Christian religion; for you deprive me of the consolation which reason can deduce from faith, if you so cut off all spiritual communication by prayer between those yet on earth and the departed. What reason have you to suppose that the prayers, even of 'the just man who needs no repentance,' can, because he is yet on earth, avail for another? If you tell me I may not pray for the intercession with Christ of those Apostles, Saints,

and others departed this life, that I may be fitted for the future, I say it is a mockery to tell me that I ought to pray for others, and that I may beg my fellow-creatures, *who are yet on earth*, to intercede for me with the Son of God ! Prove all this, and you destroy the doctrine of the Communion of Saints ; and with it, all connexion between the Church militant on earth and the Church triumphant in heaven.

Reason, however, will defy such proof. It, no less than faith, tells me to *adore God alone*, to worship (*without any adoration*) the Virgin Mother of His Son, and to pray to her and to the Communion of Saints to intercede with her Son, for that forgiveness which, for His merits, the Almighty will grant to a truly repentant sinner.

The Catholic Church does not teach *any such worship* of the Blessed Virgin Mary as Protestants *imagine and preach* ! On the contrary, it would be as near the truth to say, that

if any one who was entirely dependent for everything in this life on a good and kind father, whom he loved and honoured with all his heart, but having, nevertheless, become a 'Prodigal Son,' were to beseech, and pray to some kind friend or relation to intercede for him with his justly-offended father, that son would thereby be giving to such friend or relation any portion of that love and honour, or other feeling, which he owed only to his offended father! When, in the first instance, my acquaintance with the real nature of such honour of the Blessed Virgin Mary as the Catholic Church does teach began to remove the prejudices in which I had been brought up, it appeared to my mind to be so natural and so comforting to pray for her intercession with her Son, it seemed to me so impossible that any one, believing in God, *could* thereby be lessening the adoration due to Him alone, that long before I ever thought I should become a Catholic I honoured, in the Catholic

sense, the Holy Mother of God ; and, wholly unlike a distinguished convert, and many others, I never felt that the question of 'Mariolatry' was, or would be, in the least degree, 'a difficulty' to my conversion, should I ever be convinced that it was my duty to conform to the Catholic Church. Similar feelings and ideas prevailed in my mind with reference to the Invocation of Saints, in which I never could see a particle of superstition ; and also with regard to a picture or a crucifix, with which I never could connect the idea of idolatry ; and it was not, therefore, unnatural that, when I realized the fact that members of Parliament and others were required to call God to witness, that the worship of the Blessed Virgin, the Invocation of Saints, or the use of the crucifix, was superstition and idolatry, I was disgusted with the idea that the constitution, the liberties of England, and the existence of the Established Church, were supposed to depend upon swearing to a condemnation of

religious practices which have been universal for so many ages in every other country where the name of Christianity was known.

Protestants (when alluding to any question concerning the Catholic religion) use words so as to suit such explanation as they choose to put on the religious convictions of Catholics, rather than on that application of them which a Catholic considers most fairly and most properly represents and explains what is really his faith or religious practice. For instance: the Protestant says, 'It is true the Catholic worships God, but inasmuch as he worships the Virgin Mary, and as God *only* ought to be *worshipped*, the Catholic renders to another being that, or a part of that, the whole of which is due to the Almighty alone.' But to make that position good, it must be proved that the word 'worship,' or that which is meant, signifies that one thing which is due to God Almighty only! Now, it is as obvious that the word 'worship' may be as

properly used to imply *two* things which are *distinct*, so as to have *no reference* one to the other, as the word '*love!*' Suppose a man to say, 'I love my father, my wife, my children;' would any one imagine he meant, that he gave the *same* feeling to *all*, or that he *intended* to give, or, with honesty, *could* give, the *same* feeling to *one* which was *due* to either of the *others*? Suppose the same man to say, 'I love God,' would any one think he meant thereby that he gave, or *could* give, the *same* feeling which, by the same word, he expressed with regard to either his father, or wife, or children? Ought he not to be understood to mean that he *loved* God with a different feeling, though he could declare he loved his father, wife, or children, with his mind, his soul, and his strength in a subordinate degree, and yet that he gave only what was due to each of the three last-named, without detracting in the least from that love which is necessary to the adoration of God? Then, why is it that Protestants persist

in asserting that the Catholic, who admits he worships the Blessed Virgin Mary, gives to her any particle of that adoration which is due to God alone? If the word *adoration* mean *only* that, the whole of which is due to God Almighty, and any portion of which given to any one else amounts to idolatry itself, and if the word *worship* mean *only that honour* (reverence, respect, or veneration) which is due and proper to be given to the Virgin Mother of Jesus Christ, His Apostles, or to the Communion of Saints; it is impossible not rightly to understand that, although adoration and worship may, either by grammarians or by Protestant preachers and teachers, *when* wishing to give to their flocks and pupils a *particular view*, be considered as convertible terms, that the Catholic may truly say that he worships God, that he worships the Blessed Virgin Mary, and also, as truly, that he denies to her *any* portion whatever of *such* worship as the Protestant declares

he renders to God ; and, in fact, that the Catholic worship of God is as whole, as full, as entire, as perfect, and exclusive, as the best worship which any Protestant can desire to give to the Almighty. It is only by a confusion of meaning that Protestant ministers so far impose on their weaker brethren as to be able to prejudice their flocks and pupils into the belief that Catholics *adore* the Blessed Virgin Mary as God alone is to be *worshipped*, or that by honouring her in any way, by any prayers whatever, they intend to offer, or, in reality, give to her any adoration which is due exclusively to the Unity in Trinity and Trinity in Unity. Such at least has, from first to last, been the distinction which has brought the conviction to my mind that the adoration of God, which, according to the Articles of Belief in the Established Church and of the Catholic Church, is identically the same, will (if as perfectly rendered as human nature permits) prevent the possibility of

giving any portion of what alone is due to Him to any other spirit or being ; and, consequently, that if whatever honour is paid to the Blessed Virgin and the Communion of Saints by Catholics be called '*religious worship*,' it can only so be called because the Godhead is its *first and last object*, absorbing altogether every power of adoration which man can devote to the Almighty Creator of all.

Whatever amount of *respect* some professing members of the Established Church have of late years shown towards the Blessed Virgin Mary, it is unquestionable that, speaking generally, so far as regards the instruction and education of youth, Protestants are not taught to regard her with any such homage as a believer in Jesus Christ must feel is, as a natural consequence, due to His mother. On the contrary, while (generally) Dissenters render to her no honour at all, scarcely any attention is practically given by the Established Church even to such mention

of her as the Book of Common Prayer still retains. The justification thereof I leave to those who desire so further to 'Protestantize' the Established Church as entirely to remove all proof contained in the Book of Common Prayer of its Catholic origin. I may add on this point, that to the entire neglect of all honour to the Blessed Virgin Mary by those to whom my education was entrusted, may be attributed those inquiries which, when I was a youth, first led me to say, 'Holy Mary, pray for me.'

I can understand that any one educated as a Protestant, from never being taught to give any serious consideration to that 'article of his belief' contained in the words, '*The communion of Saints,*' may not only have no faith whatever in the efficacy of their intercession, but must probably be perfectly indifferent to their very existence. I believe that (with rare exceptions) every Protestant teacher, knowing that the words 'Communion of Saints' are

omitted in the Nicene and Athanasian Creeds, *avoids*, as much as possible, all attempts to explain to youth the meaning of them in the Apostles' Creed, and that whatever explanation he may feel obliged to give, is never such as is calculated to convey any *comfort* in the belief of what they express ; and as certainly the last explanation a Protestant would give would lead to the idea that there can be any communion between souls in this world and another: so it is a natural result, that members of the Establishment should be largely prejudiced against 'Prayers to the Saints.' The 'Communion of Saints' is, however, an article of the Apostles' Creed, still professed to be held by the Established Church. I was taught it as a matter of faith ; and when I grew up I was satisfied it could be sustained, as meaning the spiritual communion between the Church militant, suffering, and triumphant ; and I never, therefore, was so presumptuous as to think it impossible for creatures on earth

to have a spiritual communion by prayer with the departed. Those who cannot bring a similar meaning of that article of faith they have repeated with their lips, in consonance with the reason of their minds, must be deprived of the greatest comfort which on earth they can know when they have suffered a loss which in this world cannot be replaced. Why is a Protestant, who, guided by the Prayer-book, invokes and prays to angels and saints, considered a good Christian,—while a Catholic, invoking and praying for the intercession of the same, is therefore called an idolater? Nine hundred and ninety-nine in every thousand of the members of the Established Church would say, that the question is not justified by the fact; and yet, if they follow their Book of Common Prayer, they invoke the ‘angels of the Lord’ to ‘bless,’ ‘praise,’ and ‘magnify Him for ever.’ They call upon, or pray to, the ‘spirits and souls of the righteous to bless the Lord.’ Is not this, in

principle and in fact, invoking the souls of the departed? Nay, what is more, they invoke the departed souls by name, viz. ‘Ananias, Azarias, and Misael!’ The Protestant also relies on, or at least hopes and prays for, the aid of angels to God’s people on earth; for on Saint Michael’s day, at least, if he prays as his Church directs him, he prays God to ‘*appoint holy angels to succour and defend him on earth!*’ And does not the Protestant teach his *child* to rely on angels’ succour and defence? and to pray thus,—

‘ I lay my body down to sleep,
 Let *angels guard my head,*
 And through the hours of darkness keep
Their watch around my bed?’

Is not this the doctrine of guardianship of angels? Surely all this shows that a *Protestant*, if he pray in accordance with the directions of *his Church*, does the very thing which in a Catholic, he says, is part of a damnable *superstition?*

Who is there, having faith in baptismal regeneration, that does not believe that the spirit which departs, before sin has taken possession of the body, may be received into heaven? To tell me, that although I am to 'believe in the Communion of Saints,' I am also to believe that such mortal death has cut off all communion by thought and prayer between the sinner left and the spirit received into heaven, is to deprive me of all the consolation and comfort which reason can derive from that 'faith' which St. Jude (in his general epistle, written only 70 years after Christ) exhorts us 'earnestly to contend for—the faith once delivered to *the saints*.' What is the meaning of Christ's words, 'There shall be joy before the angels of God upon one sinner that repenteth?' What is the meaning of Rev. v. 8, the 'golden vials full of odours, which are *the prayers of the saints*?'

Why is it that no Protestant is ever informed of the fact, that the Catholic religion

is not the only one which teaches us to pray for the dead, and for the intercession of those departed? The Established Church appears to dread the effect of making the whole truth manifest; or she would sometimes allow it to be known that the religion of that nation, once most favoured by God, protests against the doctrine that death ends all communion with those departed. In all respects, on this point Catholic practice is supported by such authority as is acknowledged by the Jewish religion, and no Protestant within my knowledge was ever taught that fact!

Whatever interpretation of Holy Writ be given by Protestants about the saints, or their prayers, I am satisfied to rest my belief in the benefit of their intercession upon this undoubted fact, that the Fathers of the Church—the immediate successors of the Apostles—invoked the prayers of the departed.

The Protestants' usual, practical view of the question, appears to me to be antagonistic

to all belief in the Communion of Saints, or at least to all the consolation it is calculated to afford. With him, death ends all communion with those we love, even though they die without sin! To think that one may here join in prayer with those we have loved on earth, now blessed spirits in eternity, and so hope to be assisted by their intercession that we may obtain grace to follow their footsteps, contains nothing repugnant to the language of Christ, is intelligible to reason, is most consolatory in the deepest affliction, and is consistent with my faith.

CHAPTER XX.

THE POPE.

IF what Protestants say respecting the Infallibility of the Pope were true, viz. that the Catholic is required to believe in his personal infallibility, I should be heretical on that point. But I have never yet heard that any such infallibility is an article of Catholic faith. On the contrary, it appears to me that Protestants have, by a mixture of truth and falsehood, largely tended to mislead the people of this country upon that subject; having gone so far as to assert that a Catholic is bound by his religion to do whatever the

Pope may command. Now my belief is this, that the Pope as head of the Church, when she solemnly defines an article of faith, cannot err. That as the Pope is the head of the Church, against which Christ said, 'The gates of hell shall not prevail,' it is natural that the expression should have become common, 'The Pope is infallible;' but that it is an error to suppose, that when he writes, or speaks, or acts as an individual, and not in his capacity as head of the Church, *he cannot* err. The foundation of the Church by Christ as the future instructor of man in the means of salvation, necessitates a Head or chief authority of that Church; and if the Church which He founded cannot be 'prevailed against by hell,' she cannot err. If so, her head or chief authority, viz. the Pope, is infallible *when*, acting as her chief head, he defines, with her authority, an article of faith.

It is commonly received in this country, *because it is properly understood*, that 'The

king can do no wrong,' and so understood, it is a good constitutional maxim. Any one who in a similar way *properly understands* what is called 'the infallibility of the Pope,' will see in it neither more nor less than this, that he can do no wrong when, as the head of the Church, he is called on to pronounce her definition of an article of faith. It is as far removed from truth and reason to say, that as 'the Pope is infallible,' therefore a Catholic is bound to do whatever he may command, as to say that because 'the king can do no wrong,' *therefore he must be a good man.*

If an Englishman be justified in his convictions that Victoria is 'Dei gratiâ Britannæ Regina,' that she 'can do no wrong,' surely a Catholic is not less justified in his belief that the Pope is, 'Dei gratiâ,' head of the Church founded by Christ; that, in the exercise of the spiritual power he thereby possesses, he is infallible when he pronounces a definition of any article of faith which the

Church holds. 'This must be clear, that any one who says he 'believes in one Catholic and Apostolic Church,' may consider a Roman Catholic justified in this conviction, viz. that the Pope, as head of the Church, has been elected under a direct Apostolic succession from its founder; and, therefore, that his spiritual power is *Dei gratiá*.

That the *spiritual power* of the head of that religion, *which is the true one*, should exist by Divine right, is intelligible; but that the head of *any other* religion, or that any *temporal power* should exist as such, except by that right which the people of a state choose to confer and to support, I hold to be impossible; and it also appears to me, that no Church which requires to be established by law, and professes to be capable of error, can, in reason, pretend that it exists by any Divine authority whatever, and still less, that it is the one true Church founded by Christ. If the Church err in any of its fundamental doctrines,

in any matter of faith, in anything essential to that perfection which can ensure salvation, 'the gates of hell prevail against it.' If the Church of England feel unable to assert its infallibility, no reflecting member of it can suppose that it is a 'Divine' institution. The Archbishops and Bishops and Clergy constitute '*the Church as established by law.*' They differ on matters of *faith*, and *doctrine*, and *practice*. Some must be *wrong* (*all* admitting they *may* err); *none* can know they are *right*. If Faith do not convince that the Church founded by Christ was intended by Him to be free from error, Reason alone will never do more than perpetuate the proof of the fallibility of man, as exemplified by the differences, in faith and doctrine, of its bishops and clergy. Can any one suppose that Christ founded a Church, which He intended to be governed by bishops and priests, some of whom were to teach that in the blessed Eucharist He is always (spiritually and cor-

poreally, *or either*, or else in *some way or other*) present, and that others were to teach that He is *not present at all*? Such a question can require no answer. But it is perfectly intelligible, that Christ should have founded a Church, of which there should be by succession a perpetual head, and that such head, in keeping up the faith of that Church, by declaring its doctrine, should never so err that 'the gates of hell should prevail against it.'

I must further observe, that it was not without due consideration I came to the conclusion I have indicated, namely, that although the government of Rome *may*, in temporal matters, be as good, as bad, or worse than that of any other country, yet that the Pope, as head of the Church founded by Christ, (when in the exercise of his spiritual functions,) cannot err in pronouncing what the Church declares must be held as an article of faith. It has been observed by a dis-

tinguished German author that ‘without
 ‘doubt the Church can subsist in itself, and
 ‘by itself, without any territorial possession,
 ‘but such a possession is rendered necessary
 ‘by the political situation of the world.’

To believe that the Almighty decrees that the Head of the Church may err in a matter of faith is to deny that Christ gave such power to Peter to ‘bind and loose,’ and to ‘feed his sheep’ as would prevent ‘the gates of hell’ prevailing against the Church he founded on that Rock, or else it is a denial of *all succession* to any such Power, and either I hold, would be to interpret the language of Christ by Socinian belief, instead of by the only meaning His words naturally bear—namely, that the Highest Power was thereby bestowed on the Head of the Church, so to be continued by succession, to the end, that ‘the gates of hell should not prevail against it.’

That meaning has been supported by the

weight of authority in the east and in the west, as well as by General Councils, from the earliest times; and it may be observed that St. Augustine (on whose day the Established Church appoints the Conversion of St. Paul to be read—Acts xxvi.), who is an authority even with Protestants, tells us that ‘*Supreme Power* always proved itself to be in the Roman Church.’

If there be no ‘infallible’ Power to guide the Church—if Christ’s ‘lambs and sheep’ cannot securely be fed by a Church, the Head of which, *as such*, is incapable of error—Christ’s language to Peter was antagonistic to every view of apostolical *succession*, inasmuch as if the Head of ‘one Catholic and Apostolic Church’ could teach error, Christ’s commands to Peter were confined personally to Himself. Now, as my reason would not permit such a view, which would destroy my faith, I must believe that an infallible Power was left by Christ so to guide His Church—

in the Person of its Head—in perpetual succession, that ‘the gates of hell should not prevail against it.’ And my conclusion is, that so long as ‘the situation of the world’ renders any *temporal* power necessary to the Pope as Head of the ‘one Catholic and Apostolic Church,’ it must be the duty of every Catholic to do his best to take care that his spiritual dominion be not weakened by its loss.

CHAPTER XXI.

PURGATORY.

To a reflecting mind, of all the attributes of the Almighty, that of infinite *justice* is the most awful, and that of infinite *mercy* the most consoling. Is it possible, according to the limited power of the human reason, to satisfy the mind by the assumed belief that *every* soul born into this world, and existing here under all or any of the trials and temptations of life, lasting for any period, until overtaken by death, is intended by the Almighty at the moment of death, to pass immediately

to everlasting torture, *or* to everlasting happiness? Is not *any such* belief in direct opposition to every notion and feeling which God has implanted in man, both of *justice* and of *mercy*? If I could *ex animo* have subscribed to every other Article of the Established Church, the 22nd would alone have driven me from her bosom, for it declares that the doctrine concerning Purgatory '*is repugnant to the Word of God.*' If *that* be so, *who can be saved*? Some will answer, '*The elect,*'—others may say, '*Those who have faith in the Atonement;*' but my belief in Almighty God brings me to the inevitable conclusion that if He has deigned to convey to mortals by the sense He has given them of justice in this world, *any* comprehension of what it will be in the next, it is impossible to suppose that mankind are *all* so bad or so good as to merit either eternal damnation or everlasting happiness. By the right of private judgment, I demur to the Protestant

view that the doctrine of Purgatory has 'no warranty in Scripture.' The English translation of the Apostles' Creed says, that Christ 'descended into *Hell*,'—but why the word 'Hell,' as the translation either from the Latin or Greek word (which in either of those languages signifies something *besides* a place of everlasting torture) is to be understood as excluding the possibility of such a place as Purgatory, I cannot imagine, except that such a signification of it has been cultivated by Protestants, for the purpose (as Luther would say) of 'incommoding the Papists!' St. Paul '*to the Saints*' at Ephesus, A.D. 61, does not say that Christ went down into Hell (Gehenna), but that before 'He ascended into Heaven He descended first *into the lower parts of the earth.*' I consider those words as a far more natural and intelligible translation of the Greek version given by St. Paul of Christ's descent than it is to convey by the English

term Hell, as a translation of Gehenna—an idea excluding the possibility of any place between everlastingly inextricable damnation and Heaven itself.

I will not here enter into a discussion of Greek or Latin words, as translated into what is called the Authorised English Version; but this I assert, that if those Protestant authorities, Burnet in his Exposition of the Thirty-nine Articles (Art. iii.) and Bishop Pearson in his Exposition of the Creed, see reason to say,—in the former, that Christ's 'soul was really removed out of His body and carried to those unseen regions of departed spirits, among whom it continued until His resurrection,'—and in the latter, 'that the soul of Christ really separated from His body by death did truly pass into the places below where the souls of men departed were,'—and again, 'He died in the similitude of a sinner, His soul went to the place where the souls of men are kept who die for their sins, and so did

wholly undergo the law of death;’ I at least am justified by such authorities in demurring to the doctrine of the Established Church, that the word ‘Hell’ in the Creed *excludes* a Purgatory; and that I am at liberty to assert my belief that the words ‘descended into Hell,’ may mean that Christ went into a place of departed spirits, from which, when purified, they may ascend to Heaven.

With regard to *the mere question of place*, if it could be established that beyond this world there be *none*, except Heaven and *Hell*, then Christ’s descent into the latter, after His death in this world, and before His ascension into Heaven, shows that, by a perfect following of Him in this world, (although no mortal might pass direct from Earth to Heaven, and there being no other place than Hell, must go there); to use the words of St. Paul (1 Cor. iii. 15): ‘As man himself shall be saved, yet so as by fire,’ the soul of the just man might

by descending into Hell, there make expiation so perfect as to purify it for ascent into Heaven. And upon such supposition as above the doctrine implied by the word Purgatory would be substantiated. But I hold any such supposition to be altogether as useless as presumptuous, and of no value, except to show how extravagant may be the notions of those who are taught that no reliance can be placed on Church infallibility in matters of faith; that they are to take the Scriptures alone for their guide; that they are to reject tradition, and then decide each by the light of *their* own private judgment!!

The 22nd Article, 'On the Doctrine of Purgatory,' practically asserts, that a Book, which the 6th Article declares '*the Church doth read for example of life and instruction of manners,*' is 'repugnant to the word of God,' viz. the Books of Maccabees, which be it observed, St. Augustine says, 'though not received by the Jews, was by the

Church, which chose rather to be directed by tradition from the Apostles, than by mere Jewish authority ;' and further it may be remarked, the General Council of Trent declared them Canonical. Now, *assuming* that, as the 6th Article says, the Book doth not 'establish any doctrine,' yet it is to be read for '*example* and instruction.' Well, what examples does it give? 'To *sacrifice* for the *sins* of the *dead*, thinking well and religiously of the Resurrection.' 'If the slain were not to rise again, it would be superfluous and vain to pray for the dead.' 'It is therefore a wholesome thought to pray for the *dead*, that *they* may be loosed from their sins.'*

It is to me clear, that if the Books of Maccabees be canonical, the above quotations establish the doctrine of Purgatory beyond a doubt. It is certain, however, that it is held to be good to instruct as an *example of life*,

* 2 Maccabees, xii. 43, 45-6.

as by order of the 6th Article; yet the 22nd Article of the same authority declares the example which can so be drawn from such instruction in Maccabees, viz. prayers for the dead and the doctrine of Purgatory, to be *repugnant to the Word of God*. It seems, therefore, that the Church of England declares that to be repugnant to the Word of God which is good as an example for men to follow! Is it possible for any earnest man to rely on a fallible Church, which puts forth such contradictions as Articles of Religion, and tells its members to rely on their own judgment? To those Protestants who believe that their *faith* in the atonement will carry them straight to Heaven; that they are, as it were, 'elect,' whatever they might do or say; and to those also who believe that the same everlasting damnation awaits every degree of sin, be it more or less, in every human creature, who at his death is not pure enough for heaven, it would be in vain to say a word. But to those

who, believing that Almighty God will, with infinite justice, tempered by infinite mercy, save or condemn mankind, reason will convince that the religion founded by the Saviour of the World gives full 'warranty' for the belief that, as He said, 'Every idle word that man shall speak he shall render an account thereof at the day of judgment.' So to such a man, neither infinite justice, tempered by mercy, will award everlasting damnation; nor yet will infinite mercy, controlled by justice, grant the blessing of an instantaneous transfer to Heaven at the moment of death. That religion should combine faith and reason, in proportion to the mental capacity of each individual, seems to me to be incontrovertible, and you must deprive me of the latter, before the former can rest content in the idea that it is '*repugnant* to the word of God' not to believe that the soul of a sinner *must*, to the exclusion of Purgatory, be everlastingly damned *or* saved at the moment his earthly

career ceases. The only alternative is a belief in the doctrine of Purgatory ; and if tradition were wanting to prove that the Fathers of the Church held that belief, and if I could feel that it is 'repugnant to the Word of God,' it must be at the expense of that reason which is consonant with my faith in the general principles of the Christian religion ; and I have no hesitation in declaring that to the Catholic doctrine, concerning Purgatory, I fully adhere.

That I may not be misunderstood as to anything I have said with reference to the doctrine of Purgatory, so as to warrant the supposition that I do not believe in the everlasting punishment of Hell, I distinctly affirm that to deny that doctrine is, in my mind, as contrary to reason as it is to deny either Purgatory or Eternal Happiness. In every age belief in eternal punishment has existed. The Greek and Latin poets largely drew from it ; and the ideas about Tantalus, Sisyphus,

Ixion, the Furies, &c. with which their works abound, prove the general opinion of those days to have been that there was a place of eternal fire. ‘*Ignis ubi ardebit nullo delebilis ævo.*’* The belief has ever been universal; and most probably it must have had the same origin. Certainly, although man cannot comprehend why the Almighty decreed life or death, purity or sin, he cannot find in sacred writing, or tradition, any reason to doubt that eternal punishment is but justice to him who deliberately rejects every condition which infinite mercy has provided for final salvation. The eye of God sees all; and if the soul of any being be *never* free in this life of trial, from intentional mortal sin, can it be consistent with His justice to suppose that even infinite mercy is to save such a soul from never-ceasing punishment? To deny that there can be a place of eternal punish-

* Lucretius, de Naturâ Rerum.

ment, is to say that for sinners mortal death is only annihilation of soul as well as body. If that be so, where is the difference of good and evil? Why not live and sin, as, and how you please? A belief in God implies the conviction that man was created for Him alone. If man serve God on earth with all his mind, heart, and soul, religion is nothing if it do not teach him that his bliss hereafter will be perfect; and, also, that if he always intentionally persevere to refuse to serve God here, his misery hereafter will be perfect (the former must be heaven, the latter hell); that the God of infinite mercy should have ordained that 'in a place below, where the souls of men are detained,' justice may be satisfied by purification, 'yet so as by fire,' and heaven thereby be obtained; while it acknowledges Purgatory is quite consistent with a belief that infinite mercy itself may not avail to save an unrepentant soul from everlasting punishment.

CHAPTER XXII.

PROTESTANT CONSECRATION.

I NEVER could understand by what right, in a religious point of view, the Crown deprived Catholic bishops of their spiritual authority, and put Protestants into their sees. Although temporal power effected the first act, certainly it could not justify the last, in any degree whatever, under any view of the Christian religion, written or traditional. The very nature of their appointment proved they were without any of the power or jurisdiction of legitimately consecrated bishops. Such power could

only be conferred, and such jurisdiction derived, from consecration by commission from the Church instituted by Christ. It may be the fact that a temporal king, or queen, or any nation, can set up a new Church because they think it good to do so; that, therefore, they can afterwards, by any means whatever, obtain a *valid* consecration of a dissentient from the Church they would destroy, and so make him a bishop in the Church they establish, having the same powers which bishops received by Apostolic succession; or that the Crown or nation can impart to such Protestant so-called bishop the *same* jurisdiction which was exercised under the authority of the Church which had existed from the time of Christ, appears to me to be contrary to common sense. I doubt very much if Protestants generally care at all whether there be a true, unbroken, and valid Apostolical succession in the Church established by law or not; certainly I never

heard of any systematic attempt being made at any public school, or either University, to show (even to those destined to take orders) *how* Apostolic succession was conveyed from that Church (which for 1800 years has possessed it, as admitted by all authorities, English ecclesiastical law included) to a Dissenter from it. That the validity of Parker's consecration was always a matter of dispute is notorious ; and it is certain that, even in the opinion of many Protestants, who have felt obliged to defend it, it was, to say the least, extremely doubtful. Of course, it would be beyond the intention of these pages to reproduce the controversy on that question, or whether Parker was consecrated or not, either at the Nag's Head, Cheapside, or at Lambeth Chapel ; of which last event no one even made mention, till it was discovered by Archbishop Abbott's chaplain, fifty-four years afterwards, in the register, dated Dec. 17, 1559, and which has been considered a forgery.

But, I may observe, it strikes one as strange, that an event fixing the foundation of a new hierarchy should not have been *indisputably attested* and *publicly* known. The consecration by Archbishop Parker of other bishops was denied to be valid at the time, on the ground that *he himself* had no consecration, and no answer was attempted, although his right could then easily have been proved, if a valid consecration had taken place at Lambeth! But even had that been so, still there was no proof that Barlow, the actual consecrator, was even himself consecrated a bishop! Burnet records that Barlow declared consecration an useless ceremony, and that the King's nomination only, sufficed to make a bishop! And, even if the Lambeth register be not a forgery, it only testifies that Parker was consecrated by the form of the Ordinal of Edward VI. That form said, 'Take the Holy Ghost, and remember that thou stir up the grace of God by the imposition of hands.'

This was quite a new form, unknown to the Catholic Church. It was seriously objected to, but all other Protestant bishops were consecrated by it for more than one hundred years, when *it was altered*, and the following made to precede it,—‘Receive the Holy Ghost for *the office and work of a bishop in the Church of God*, now committed unto thee by the imposition of our hands, in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost.’ This alteration, dated from 1662, implied the previous form was erroneous, and consecrations under it were invalid, and consequently Protestant ordination to this day is invalid. But by *law* Parker’s consecration itself was invalid, for the Ordinal of Edward VI. was repealed by Mary, and by statute of 25 Henry VIII. consecration of an archbishop required one archbishop and two other bishops, *or* four bishops; certainly not bishops who had been deprived! When Queen Elizabeth failed in tempting her prisoner the Archbishop

of Armagh, by promise of his liberty, to consecrate Parker, she commissioned six other bishops, four of whom refused to act. Barlow and Scorey complied, and they commissioned Coverdale and Hodgkins; but she overcame *spiritual* defect by *royal* authority,—‘Supplying by our supreme authority whatever is wanting in any one of you of those things what the statutes of this kingdom or ecclesiastical laws in this part are required or are necessary, the circumstances of the time and the necessity of affairs demanding it.’ Elizabeth *could* not give *spiritual* power. The Catholic prelacy never gave it to Protestants; the Anglican clergy, therefore, cannot possess it. The Established Church admits that Holy Orders in the Roman Catholic Church are valid; the consequence seems to me to be, that the former possesses no spiritual power of conveying Holy Orders by Apostolical succession!

The substance of what I have now said re-

specting the question of Parker's consecration is taken from a book published by the Rev. F. C. Husenbeth in 1829, because (while all subsequent study has confirmed the view on this point which I took when I was pursuing my examination about that period) I have not since met with any work which, with any authority, controverts what he so well and so *concisely* expresses.

It appears to me, that as no one now supposes the Crown possesses, or even claims, as even in the last century it did, any such *Divine* power, derived from Christ through Apostolical succession, as would enable the King to perform the miracle of curing disease by his touch, or any holy office whatever; the Anglican Archbishops and Bishops and Clergy, by acknowledging the King to be the supreme head of their Church, thereby admit that their Church is *only a temporal establishment*, made suitable to the political convenience of the times. But the Crown

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nevertheless still claims a power far greater, if not more miraculous, for it assumes to *direct and control* Apostolical succession itself—inasmuch as it vests and limits that succession to those only whom, to satisfy the Minister of the day, the King may nominate for the office of bishop, issuing his royal permission to the ministers of Christ to elect for consecration !

Now I agree with Mr. Froude, that ‘there is *no intelligible sense* in which a temporal sovereign can be head of the Church.’ In his graphic and interesting ‘History of the Reign of Elizabeth,’ his account of the consecration of Parker does not give any reason to conclude that it conveyed any such power or authority as Apostolical succession alone could give.

If it were possible, with the assistance of any or all of the authorities to which he has had access, for him to say a word to prove ‘*Apostolical*’ succession in Parker’s case, no one who has read his history can doubt

that his strong Protestant feelings would have prompted him to do so. But the Consecration which, he says, was 'duly accomplished,' he tells you was to some minds only 'a thing of this world, a convenient political arrangement,' while to others an 'act of Consecration was an event of great and transcendent moment, the readjustment of the ladder between Earth and Heaven, by which alone Divine grace could descend on the inhabitants of these islands.' Mr. Froude's language in the following passage, High Protestant though he be, I readily adopt, for if it say a word of truth, it expresses both fact and opinion, sufficient of itself to justify the conviction that *Apostolical succession* was not, for it could not be, conveyed by 'a convenient political arrangement,' by order of a temporal sovereign, to consecrate Matthew Parker from the Catholic to the Protestant Church.

Mr. Froude's words are as follows:—'A Catholic bishop holds his office by a tenure

‘ untouched by the accidents of time ; dynasties
‘ may change ; nations may lose their liberties ;
‘ the firm fabric of society itself may be swept
‘ away in the torrent of revolution ; the Ca-
‘ tholic prelate remains at his post : when he
‘ dies another takes his place, and when the
‘ waters sink again into their beds, the quiet
‘ figure is seen standing where it stood before ;
‘ the person perhaps changed, the thing itself
‘ rooted like a rock on the adamantine
‘ basements of the world. The Anglican
‘ hierarchy, far unlike its rival, was a child of
‘ convulsion and compromise ; it drew its life
‘ from Elizabeth’s throne, and had Elizabeth
‘ fallen it would have crumbled into sand. The
‘ Church of England was as a limb lopped off
‘ the Catholic trunk ; it was cut away from the
‘ stream by which its vascular system had been
‘ fed ; and the life of it, as an independent and
‘ corporate existence, was gone for ever. But it
‘ had been taken up and grafted on the State ;
‘ if not what it had been, it could retain the

‘form of what it had been, the form which
 ‘made it respectable, without the power which
 ‘made it dangerous. The image in its out-
 ‘ward aspect could be made to correspond with
 ‘the parent tree; and, to sustain the illusion, it
 ‘was necessary to provide bishops who could
 ‘appear to have inherited their powers by
 ‘the approved method as successors of the
 ‘Apostles.’

Mr. Froude says (when Bonner pleaded the illegality of Bishop Horne’s appointment to the See of Winchester, in 1563), ‘English bishops generally had been *so irregularly* consecrated, that their authority, until confirmed by Act of Parliament, was of *doubtful* legality, and the judges of the Court of Queen’s Bench *caught at* the plea to prevent needless cruelty.

Until the Established Church can claim for her bishops and clergy such powers, on some better ground than the proceedings by order of Queen Elizabeth, in what Mr.

Froude calls that 'little scene which took place in Lambeth Chapel, after which,' he says, 'there was an Archbishop of Canterbury once more,' I cannot see how any one who believes at all in the virtue or reality of Apostolical succession, can possibly suppose that she has any valid foundation whatever for her claim to that right, which neither the Crown could confer nor the omnipotence of Parliament could sanctify; and which, if it be not Divine, is nothing.

That Church (which Mr. Froude describes as 'the child of convulsion and compromise') when brought forth by Elizabeth, was cradled in cruelty, nurtured by spoliation, and established by force; begotten by Schism, she has for 300 years been true to her parentage; at one time encouraging puritanical severity, at another free-thinking laxity; and when sanctioning, by a religious service,* Protestant

* *Vide* 'Service,' in former editions of the Book of Common Prayer, 'for Touching for the Evil.'

credulity in the power of the Crown to effect, at will, miraculous cures! she vehemently denounced as superstition the Catholic belief that the Almighty power had not caused miracles to cease altogether. She sometimes leaned to Lutheran, at others to Calvinistic doctrine; theoretically condemning both, yet practically indifferent to either; and now she endeavours to comprehend all by an ingenious denial that any 'compromise' whatever can be found within her pale, if examined in such a *quasi-prismatic* point of view as enables Episcopal authority to declare, not only that *High* and *Low* are equally orthodox, but that, kaleidoscopically blended together, they so broadly include every shade of opinion as to present nothing to the inquiring eye but a 'comprehensive' unity!

What success may attend this last effort I will not presume to predict; but how those 'near to Rome,' earnest and conscientious clergymen, entertaining so many Catholic

views, that 'those near to Geneva' look on them, on account of the doctrine they preach and the forms they adopt, as if they were 'Jesuits in disguise,' can be content with a position which *obliges* them to *claim* Apostolical succession upon grounds which they know, even in the most favourable point of view, must leave its validity a matter of *doubt*, I cannot imagine! For if, under their sacred ordination, one thing more than another ought to be certain, and free from the possibility of error, it ought to be the perfection of their claim to direct Apostolical succession. It is, however, *only* the '*illusion*' of that succession which has been sustained, and *that* is probably one of the reasons of that want of real unity in the Establishment, which alone is sufficient to prove that it is not the 'one Church founded by Christ.'

CHAPTER XXIII.

PICTURES — IMAGES.

THE inconsistency which exists in the Established Church with regard to Pictures and Images is extreme: visit any number of churches you please, and you will find infinite variety and no uniformity respecting either, be they cathedral, collegiate, urban or rural. You may see even in those where Low, or Calvinistic forms prevail, the image of the Holy Ghost, or picture of the crucifixion; or you may see no vestige of ornament, the barest walls and the plainest windows; and

in others, where the forms and ceremonies are *Broader*, and again in those where they are *High*, you may find a cross, and pictures of Christ, of the Blessed Virgin, John the Baptist, the Holy Ghost descending, or of various saints; and you will be told that (provided you pay no attention to any of them) every picture you see is allowed by the Established Church if it be over 'the Communion Table,' although in any other part they are 'vain things, fondly invented, promoting idolatry and superstition.' And yet, as curious as true is it, that all such subjects may surround you on every side, and do in numberless instances, in Westminster, Cambridge, Oxford, Windsor, and elsewhere; and provided they be where they probably will attract most attention, viz. in the light, they are all perfectly lawful if they be painted on glass and serve as windows; and *then* they are incapable of promoting idolatry or superstition, being neither on canvas, panel, nor stone!

I know and have often attended a chapel, where those ministers who do the duty and those who worship, would not enter its walls, if the image which is over the Communion Table represented the Second Person, instead of (as it does) the Third, of the Blessed Trinity. I have known good members of the Established Church, priests and laymen, who believe in the Real Presence, and that the 'Body and Blood' is 'truly and indeed' taken by the 'faithful,' receive the Sacrament in that chapel when they have been kneeling before the image of the Holy Ghost; and (referring to Images only) I wish to know by what process of reasoning it is, that if members of the Catholic Church believe in the 'Real Presence,' and that the 'Body and Blood of Christ is verily and indeed taken by the faithful' when they receive the Blessed Sacrament kneeling before the image of the Second Person of the Trinity,—that the former are considered of the true Christian religion,

whilst the latter are condemned as superstitious idolaters?

Why is it that in one Protestant church, where the service is rather High, a Crucifix or image of Christ is not allowed, when at another (equally established by law, not a hundred yards from it in the same parish), where the service is rather Low, the image of the Holy Ghost hovers over you on entering into it?

Why is it that when a Catholic looks upon the image of Christ in his church, and feels that his attention is thereby the better kept to his adoration of Almighty God, he is condemned for worshipping an idol; but that a Protestant, when *he* sees the image of the Holy Ghost over the door or altar of his church, and does not feel that his attention is thereby the better kept to his worship of God, he is considered a passable Christian? Why, in other words, is it, that if one man look with veneration on the image of his

Saviour he is guilty of a crime ; and if another look on the image of the Holy Ghost with indifference he is an innocent man ?

Every one will admit that any man may be honoured or insulted in his likeness ; for instance, a statue or image bearing more or less resemblance to the individual in whose memory if dead, or to whose honour if living, it was erected, has in every age been considered the means of rendering homage to the good or great. Nor has any mode of expressing horror and detestation of a man been considered more insulting to him, in his absence, than that of burning, defacing, or otherwise destroying his effigy. Is any one fool enough to suppose that, in the one case or the other, mankind render any honour or insult to the stone or wooden image ? But Protestants insist that a Catholic worships or idolizes the stone or wooden image of Christ when he prays to God before a crucifix. Now, will any respectable professing member of

the Established Church say this, that he would not *feel* that it was a crime against Christ if he saw either a Jew, or a Unitarian, or a member of the English Church, kicking, destroying, or burning a crucifix, or any other representation of the Saviour?

Is this the *liberty* of the Establishment? Is this justice to your neighbour? I was taught to believe that 'Catholics worship images.' A little examination proved to me that such teaching had no foundation, except in error and falsehood. The Council of Trent forbids any one to believe there is any virtue in images which should appear to claim veneration; and it decrees that 'all honour paid to images shall be *referred* to the *originals*.' Who can look on a statue or picture of one he has loved without stirring up, as it were, his love for the creature so intended to be represented to him? If by praying before a picture or image your devotion is more fervent because your attention is

so the better kept fixed on things above, which otherwise would more easily wander to things on earth, surely that alone is a good reason why an image or a picture should adorn a church. That the abuse of such things is wicked, no one can deny ; that their use is beneficial, I think no one can doubt.

CHAPTER XXIV.

MARRIAGE OF PROTESTANT CLERGY.

I do not agree with the usual arguments in favour of marriage of the clergy, nor do I think that, in a professional point of view, it is beneficial either to the laity or to themselves. On the contrary, I have no doubt that a priest, *endeavouring to act up to all that is required of him*, who is unmarried, must be, in every respect, better able to perform all his duties as a priest, and will be more advantageous to his flock, in every point of view, than one who is married.

Now, be it observed that celibacy is not necessarily absolutely indispensable, for it is a law of the Church, which the Church therefore *can* alter, change, or abrogate. Priests of the Greek Church are generally married; but it is notorious that their marriage has impaired the just influence of the clergy, because their thoughts and feelings are divided: they have to think of serving God and pleasing their wives. It is, as it were, so natural that, while all their thoughts and energies ought to be devoted to the eternal and even temporal interests of their flocks, they are of course distracted by (aye, and more interested in) the temporal interests of their families. How can pastoral duties overpower the force of domestic ties? A wife's legitimate influence ought to be great; and a father's devotion to his offspring absorbing. The better the husband, the better the father; the *less* the power for good, the less the beneficial influence of the priest.

Who can doubt as to which the preference would be given by any true penitent, to the married or to the unmarried confessor? In the case as I presuppose, viz. purity on the part of either Catholic priest or Protestant minister, is it not undeniable that an unmarried clergyman is free from all cause of scandal and vexation as to the life of his wife or children, as to the diversion of his care and interest for his wife and family, in case of 'sickness, need, sorrow, or any other adversity?' Nothing, in fact, with a good, unmarried priest, *can* intervene between him and the properly required, entire devotion of his life, to the flock committed to his charge.

It is a fact beyond dispute, that many bad Protestant parsons lead such lives as prove that they practically acknowledge no such restraint as the vows of ordination and matrimony imperatively require; and it is equally a fact, that many Catholic priests there are, who, being equally bad, violate

their vows of chastity, and disgrace their sacred character. That the number of such persons is pretty much the same in proportion to the number of the Catholic to the Protestant clergy, I will not dispute; but this I assert, that it is as reasonable to argue that *because* any given number of English clergymen be guilty of adultery, the institution of matrimony is therefore the cause of their immorality, as it is to condemn the sacrament of Holy Orders in the Catholic Church as being the source of wickedness and crime, because any given number of Catholic priests have been guilty of violating their vows of celibacy.

Now with regard to the Catholic clergy: it will, I think, be universally admitted, that the number must be very small (if, indeed, any such can be found) who have *at first* entered their sacred profession for any purpose, or from any motive whatever, other than that of serving God; but be that as it

may, it cannot be denied that a large, very large, proportion of the clergy of the Established Church took orders for the purpose of getting a living to enable them to marry? and no one can deny that the greater number of those beneficed clergymen they have known, have, as good husbands and fathers, expended the greater part of the produce of their livings on, and given the largest amount of their care and labour to, the interests of their family, rather than to the aged poor, and uneducated children, or to those even more needing their constant attention, the sinners, whose eternal interests ought to command their special attention. Far be it from me to insinuate that there are not some married clergymen whose devotion to the duties of their profession is not as perfect as in the nature of their case is possible—bright and glorious exceptions to the rule—but still I say that, if such were the rule and not the exception, even such good men would be *better able*, than from the very

nature of their case is now possible, to be more perfectly, more exclusively devoted to the performance of all the duties required even of a Protestant clergyman.

I believe it to be generally admitted, that there are no good and valid instances of marriages of priests authorized by the Church between the first and sixteenth centuries, and celibacy was certainly the law of the Church from the time of St. Augustine to the 16th century. Respecting the marriage of Protestant ministers I say nothing; for their office differs essentially from that of a Catholic priest. The latter consecrates the body and blood of Christ, and offers the Holy Sacrifice. The former does not profess to perform either, and if he were, nine hundred and ninety-nine in every thousand of his flock would deny he had any such power. But as regards ordained priests, what says the impartial historian, Mr. Hallam? Why, that 'not a single lawful precedent has ever been

produced for their marriage from St. Paul to Luther, except under the modification of the Greek Church.' In the Greek Church, it is true, persons already married may be admitted to orders, but clergy cannot marry, and bishops must always be single men. Even Bishop Burnet (in his Exposition of the Thirty-nine Articles), great advocate of Protestant liberty as he was, says, 'There are some instances of bishops and priests who are supposed to have married after they were ordained ; but as there are only a few of these, so, perhaps, they are not well proved. It must be admitted, that the general practice was, that men once in orders did not marry.' Marriage is antagonistic to much of the duty incumbent on a Catholic priest, and I cannot believe that any one who thinks differently has ever studied the question, free from a foregone conclusion.

With rare exceptions, the whole priesthood of the Established Church have been

educated at the Universities of Cambridge and Oxford. They are essentially and inseparably connected with the Establishment. How many hundreds of thousands of men have not those universities compelled to swear, that ‘it is lawful for bishops, priests, and deacons, to marry at their own discretion as they shall judge the same to serve better to godliness?’ (32nd Article.) And how have those Universities practically illustrated that Article of the Establishment? by insisting, upon the pain of surrendering the means of the comforts, and in some cases the very necessities of life—that thousands upon thousands of their members (possessing Fellowships) *should* become *priests*, and should *not* be allowed to *marry*.

The Universities educating (generally) the whole clergy of the Establishment, presume to condemn the doctrine of celibacy, of the Catholic clergy, as if it were the cause of

vice and immorality ; but I make bold to assert, that immorality and vice have been more largely encouraged at those seats of the education of the Protestant clergy of the Establishment, by those laws and regulations respecting fellowships, which they have enforced on so large a number of that clergy. Oxford and Cambridge hold forth the inducement of Fellowships to English youth to enter the University ; but if obtained, then at the very age when a man first feels that he *cannot* in his conscience truly swear that he ‘ thinks in his heart he is truly called according to the will of Christ ’ to become a priest, he *must* become one, *or* give up the Fellowship, which, perhaps, is his only means of existence ! Is that no inducement to vice ? But what follows ? Necessity obliges him to keep his fellowship, and so the University forces him to become a priest. He has been made to swear to the Thirty-nine Articles, the 32nd of which gives him *discretion* to

marry 'for godliness.' But the law of the Protestant University compels him to give up his fellowship if he follow such 'godliness' as marriage. Such a penalty is too strong for him; he yields; and, to keep his fellowship, he does *not* marry 'for godliness.' Of what else he may do in his discretion the University takes no notice, but it is not too much to say it is notorious that the lives of many of those Reverend Protestant Divines, so cloistered in idleness, may be set against any of those abuses of celibacy amongst the Roman Catholic clergy which the Universities of the Established Church properly condemn. The truth, however, is, that with reference to all such questions it is the use, rather than the abuse, of any doctrine which we ought to consider; and I think no one will deny, that if Catholic doctrine be truly and purely believed and followed, a Catholic priest will perfectly perform all the duties of his holy office, having every energy of his mind

his body, and his soul, devoted exclusively to them. And I say no more, for I cannot conceive it possible that any one can suppose it could be otherwise. But with regard to the Protestant clergyman, while I can understand how he may, with his views, and according to the general opinion of his Church, well perform all his duties as a married man and father of a family, I think no one will deny that, if he were unmarried, the absence of all those feelings, cares, and interests, which would the most influence the best men, would conduce to enable him the better to minister to his flock all that spiritual consolation and temporal assistance which, by his ordination, he is bound to give them, as well in their prosperity as in need, sorrow, sickness, or other adversity.

So far as my experience goes, I never knew any respectable married clergyman whose wife or children did not interfere with his clerical duties. And every reason com-

bines to bring my mind to agree entirely not only with Bishop Burnet's quotation in his Exposition, that 'They who marry do well, yet those who marry not, do better,' but also with his opinion that 'Every man who dedicates himself to the service of God ought to try to live out of all the concerns and entanglements of life, and if he can maintain his purity in it, he will be enabled to labour the more effectually, and may expect both the greater success here, and a fuller reward hereafter.'

CHAPTER XXV.

CONCLUSION.

To make this Narrative of Conversion as short as possible, I have omitted much which would justify the length of time passed in 'resisting conversion,' trusting it may, nevertheless, be considered sufficient to show some of the motives by which I have been guided in delaying action, upon the only conclusion in which I could rest, after I was convinced *one religion only* could be of Divine origin, and, consequently, that there must be an unerring authority on which to rely.

I am well aware that, excepting so much as regards myself personally, these pages contain neither fact nor (in substance) any argument which has not been better stated over and over again, in almost every language ; but I hope whoever may be so good as to peruse them will see that my object has been rather to show, as fully and candidly as possible, the reasons by which I was fully and irresistibly converted, than to put forth any opinions or views of my own, with the object of bringing any one else to similar conclusions.

Of course those who have given any degree of such fair and impartial inquiry as the consideration of the questions on which the Catholic and Protestant Churches differ require, will find nothing of doctrine or controversy with which they ought not to be already well acquainted ; but of this I am very sure, that a large proportion of those who may be induced to read this book will find in the substance of it (as apart from that which refers to myself

personally), grounds for such inquiry as shall insure their being acquainted with the doctrines of the Catholic faith, in a Catholic point of view, before they venture to censure any one who, having exercised the first principle of Protestantism, has thereby been convinced that it was his duty to conform to the Catholic Church. I cannot admit that any one has a more correct knowledge of all those opinions and prejudices respecting the Catholic religion which are, as it were, inherent in the Protestant mind, than myself: for, having been most carefully educated and instructed in the tenets of the Established Church, and my whole life having been passed exclusively in the society of Protestants, it could not be otherwise; and I do not hesitate to say, that if any such abuses of the Christian religion as are laid to the charge of Roman Catholics by (with scarcely any exception) all educated Protestants in this country, really constituted any part of the Roman Catholic religion, I

would not have joined that communion. But this I also say, that if it were possible to prove that idolatry and superstition, and every other horror which so many Protestants try to fasten on Catholics, were really believed in and practised by Catholics generally, still, inasmuch as any such practice and belief would, nevertheless, be *only abuses*, they would have no such effect on my mind as would lead me to doubt that the Roman Catholic religion, such as I have endeavoured to show that it is, when purely practised, is the more perfectly and more entirely than any other in the world, to the exclusion of all other, the *one true Church* founded by Christ.

When, in the first instance, I was induced to ask myself the question, with reference to the religion in which I was born and educated, '*Is it true?*' of course I *felt* it might *possibly* be false; and what struck more deeply into my mind than anything else was, that it was not the *abuse* of any form of religious

faith which ought to exercise any influence over a mind seeking an answer to that question, but rather a conviction as to *that* religion which, if carried out in all the purity and perfection of the faith it professed, is the true *one*. My endeavours to answer the question were pursued on that principle, and I do not hesitate to avow, that if my inquiries had ended in any doubt upon any particular point of importance, as between the Catholic and Established Churches, on a matter of faith or doctrine, I should have been guided in my decision by whatever answer I could most reasonably find to *this* further question, viz. Which religion, if perfectly carried out in all that it professes to hold as a matter of faith (to the exclusion of all *abuses*, by either ignorant or fanatical following), will best enable me the more satisfactorily, according to my conscience, to adore Almighty God? Now, as I cannot for one moment doubt, after full consideration of all the doctrines and tenets,

both of the Catholic and Established Churches, that the former is the only true one, I was not reduced to the pain of deciding *only* by the test I have just above indicated. But I can most safely add, that in neither point of view have I the least particle of doubt, that (all abuses on either side being discarded as irrelevant to the question) the Roman Catholic religion is the only true one which, in every essential, is of Divine foundation, and by the help of which alone I can entertain the consoling hope of adoring Almighty God in that ‘true Catholic and Apostolic faith once delivered to the saints.’

In limiting the contents of these pages to the principles of, and most important differences between, the Catholic and the Established Churches, and saying but little respecting ‘Dissent’ on the part of other denominations of professing Christians, my object has been only to show how I became con-

vinced that I ought to conform to the former ; for as those who may read them will be indifferent to the grounds for conclusions with which they agree, although they may be interested in those from which they differ, I have not thought it necessary to enter on such examinations as have been more particularly directed to the views of those who, as Dissenters, are opposed to both the Catholic Church and the Establishment. My conclusions respecting them having left me as much opposed to their religious doctrines as to any of those which I have renounced. But this I may add, that my study of Dissenters' opinions, and my personal communications with them, whether as friends or with reference to religious questions of public interest and importance, have impressed me with a conviction that, in consequence of their dependence on the Voluntary Principle, they are more earnest, more zealous,

and I had almost said more honest, whatever their denomination, than any section of the Establishment! I do not mean to question the zeal or honesty of any individual, but I do say this, that in this country, under the influence of that principle, earnestness, zeal, and honesty increase and flourish with reference to religious opinions, while under the cold protection of forced contributions to a religion established by law they all three diminish and wither away in proportion as that law is enforced. May the day not be far distant when the Voluntary Principle will in this country be triumphant! I believe that the majority of good men of all denominations look forward to the time when such justice will prevail, that no one will be forced to support any religion from which he dissents. Every man, earnest and honest in that which he may profess, will then be content to abide the issue. For my own part,

with perfect faith in the motto, '*Magna est veritas, et prævalebit,*' and convinced what that truth in religion is which will prevail, I conclude in the words of the poet,—

'Let Thy command
Restore, Great Father, Thy instructed Son,
And in my act may Thy Great Will be done.'

THE END.

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