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THE BIBLE

AND

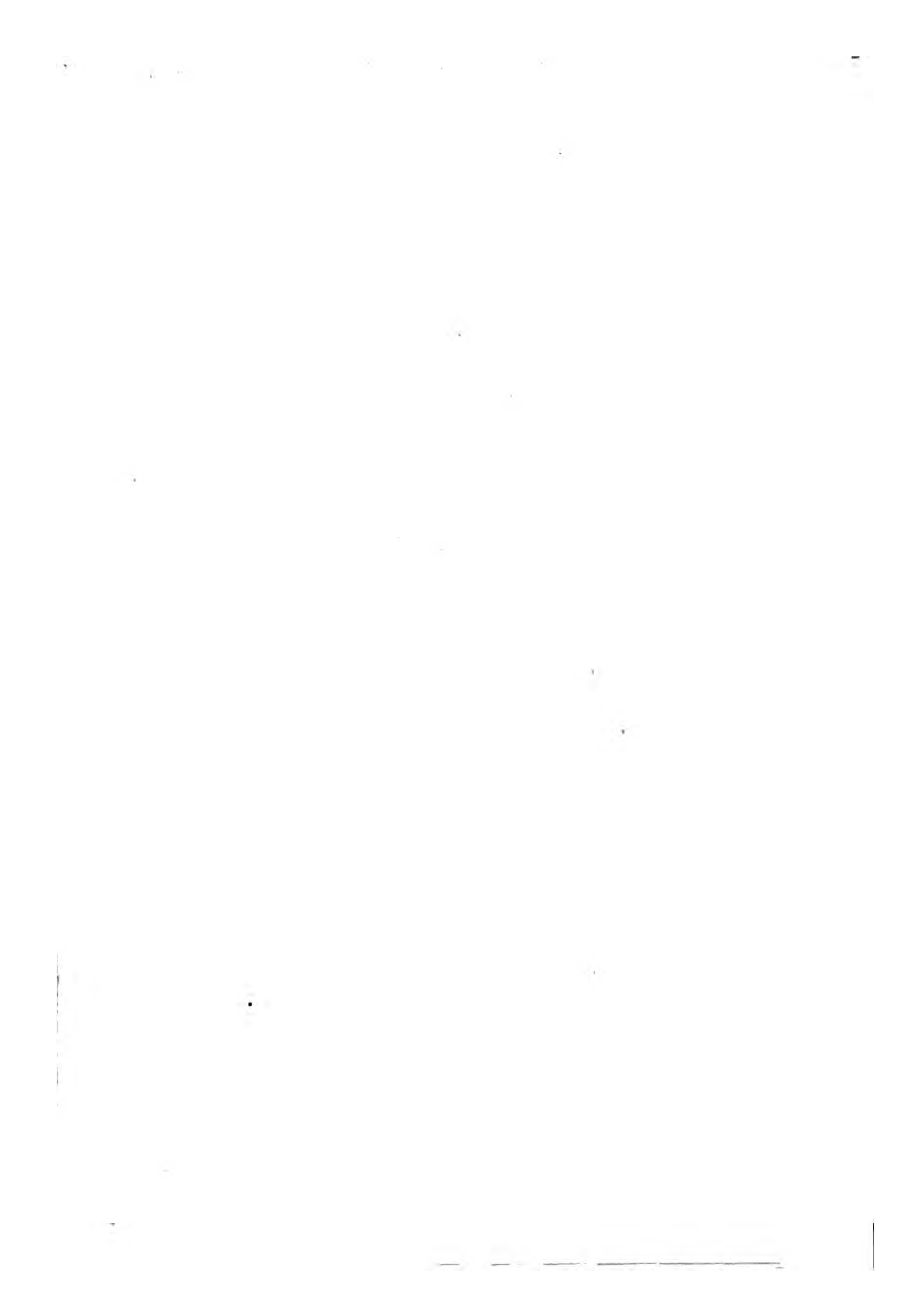
THE PRAYER BOOK

WILLIAM MARSHALL

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THE BIBLE
AND
THE PRAYER-BOOK
COMPARED AND CONTRASTED.

BY
WILLIAM MARSHALL.

‘The time is come for judgement to begin at the house of God.’
1 Peter iv. 17.

SECOND EDITION.

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RESPECTFULLY DEDICATED

TO

THE ENGLISH PEOPLE.

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PREFACE.

A GREAT battle on behalf of Protestantism and Evangelical religion must soon be fought in England if the Church and the nation are to be preserved, or rather delivered, from the blighting power of Priestcraft and the baleful influences of Romanism.

What is Romanism in its essence? It is a terribly corrupted and perverted embodiment of the religion of Jesus Christ—an embodiment which could never have been fashioned and developed by Popes and Councils, or tolerated by the peoples, if only a genuine loyalty to the sacred Scriptures had been steadfastly manifested and maintained. And if a return to the Word of God could now be everywhere effected in Christendom, the fearful errors and debasing superstitions of Rome would

speedily be put to flight, like the obscuring mists of morning before the rising of the sun. But Rome hates the Bible. In a very definite and awful way, she exemplifies the words of Jesus when He said: "This is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil. For everyone that doeth evil hateth the light, neither cometh to the light, lest his deeds should be reprov'd. But he that doeth truth cometh to the light, that his deeds may be made manifest, that they are wrought in God." Herself refusing to come into the light of Truth—the light of Divine Revelation—she naturally keeps the Bible away from her deluded votaries; and because she does so, Romanism is the curse of every nation in which it is permitted freely to exercise its power, as it does in down-trodden Italy and in dying Spain. It feeds the peoples under its influence with the empty husks of human tradition, and not with the Bread of Life provided by God in His Holy Word and Gospel. The words spoken by our Lord to the Pharisees might also be appropriately addressed to the representatives of the

Roman Church: "Full well ye reject the commandment of God, that ye may keep your own tradition." But Romanism in Europe is everywhere in decline. Strangely enough, the only country in which it is lifting up its head with courage and hopefulness is England, and its most effective propagators are not the Romish priests, but the Ritualistic clergy. These men remain in the Reformed Church of England, and yet in an altogether dishonest and disloyal manner they teach the doctrines and inculcate the practices of Rome. This fact is now generally recognised, and it has created a large amount of uneasiness and painful apprehension throughout the whole country. In many quarters an anticipated struggle is being quietly prepared for, and yet when the struggle comes, it is not improbable that most of the people may content themselves with demanding from the Bishops or from Parliament only this—*that the clergy shall be loyal to the Book of Common Prayer.* "Back to the Prayer-book," is now the general cry. Lord Salisbury has declared that "no man is fit for office in the Church who is not resolved to stand by the Prayer-book as it is."

Mr. Balfour, in his recent speech at Bristol, said : “ It is obviously the plain right of every member of the Church of England to have a service in accordance with the Prayer-book of the Church ; and that equally manifestly is it the duty of every clergyman of the Church of England to give the laity a service in accordance with the Prayer-book.” And in one of his admirable letters to the *Times*, Sir William Harcourt says : “ As long as an establishment subsists, it is not for Bishops, or Priests, or Synods to change the law, or to recast the Prayer-book according to their own ideas. Their duty is a more simple one ; it is that the clergy should obey the law as it stands, and the Bishops should enforce it, and that both should, in the words of Lord Salisbury, ‘ stand by the Prayer-book as it is.’ The Prayer-book is the Parliamentary law of the Church, and to depart from that, as a large number of the Bishops and clergy have done, is lawlessness.”

Now, it is chiefly for those who cherish the desire and hope that a loyal return to the Prayer-Book may speedily be effected that the following pages have been written. We wish to show

them, with all courtesy and kindness, but also with all possible plainness, that while the Prayer-book contains a great deal which is true, good, and beautiful, there are also in it many unscriptural teachings, the influence of which is not only injurious, but also, in large measure, the cause of the Church's present distress. Indeed, the greatest of all the evils which are now afflicting it, and that out of which most of them have arisen, is *the doctrine of the Priesthood*, and that utterly false and unscriptural doctrine is plainly taught in the Prayer-book, as we shall see. The great thing needed by the Church for her spiritual purification and well-being is a quick return and a steadfast adherence, not to the Book of Common Prayer, but to the God-given revelation of unchanging and eternal truth. The former is a compilation of merely "human writings," which are confessedly a compromise; but the latter is God's own Word, which makes no compromise, either in rites or doctrines. Its rites require no alteration, and its doctrines are true eternally; therefore "*back to the Bible*" ought to be the earnest and united cry of all the faithful

followers of Jesus. That this demand is entirely right and reasonable is frankly conceded by the Prayer-book itself: "Holy Scripture containeth all things necessary to salvation, so that whatsoever is not read therein, nor may be proved thereby, is not to be required of any man that it should be believed as an article of the faith or be thought requisite or necessary to salvation" (Article 6). Grievous Popish errors have stealthily crept into the Church during the last fifty years—errors which are not only unscriptural, but also undoubtedly contrary to the Prayer-book, and unless they are promptly checked and removed, it is next to certain that Disestablishment and Disendowment must soon come; for "a house divided against itself cannot stand." In view of the happy experience of the Disestablished Church in Ireland, such a result need not be anticipated with anxious foreboding; and the fact that the Christian Church was never so pure, progressive, and prosperous as before it was wedded to the State by Constantine, may help us to hope that it will not lose any of its activity or usefulness even though it may be separated from the State.

Indeed, the possibility of this event need not disturb the mind of any Churchman; but to see our reformed Church of England practically changed into a Roman Catholic institution, is an event terrible to contemplate. We have seen too much of the doings and effects of Romanism in Ireland, France, and Italy, and even in Rome itself, to regard the existence and growth of ritualism with any other feelings than those of detestation and dread. The latter will inevitably lead to the former, and as another has most truly said: "*Popery is a counterfeit Christianity. It has its counterfeit high priest, the Pope; its counterfeit sacrifice, the Mass; its counterfeit Bible, tradition; and its counterfeit mediator, the Virgin, Saints, and Angels.*" It will be a dark day for England if her people, to any large extent, should be brought by the insidious teachings and influence of ritualism under the darkening, degrading, and destructive power of Romanism.

What hope may we venture to cherish for the immediate future? We frankly confess our inability to place any large amount of reliance on the action of the Bishops. The most of their

official utterances and doings in recent times have abundantly testified to their sympathy with the Ritualistic party—the members of which are nothing less than traitors both to Church and State. To appease the strong Protestant feeling of the country, and allay the agitation which threatens to grow greater and greater, like the gradual rising of a storm, they may shortly be expected to make some effort to check and partially remove the rampant lawlessness of which many of the clergy have been guilty. But will they make this endeavour unitedly and energetically, and with an earnest and wholehearted desire to come back themselves, and bring others back, to a loyal conformity with the Book of Common Prayer? And will that conformity be real and inward, or only an empty profession and mere appearance after all? What would be the value of a merely external obedience to the laws of the Church, if meanwhile their opinions and convictions remain unchanged? And yet, such an outward obedience is neither impossible nor improbable. Having already been grievously disloyal, both to the Prayer-book and to their own

Ordination vows, what assurance have we that they will not become untrue to themselves by consenting to teach what they do not believe in order to retain their livings and enjoy the varied advantages which their official service secures? When men have acted a dishonest and dishonourable part in the past, it is not easy to trust them fully for the time to come, whatever promises they may give.

But supposing that all the Bishops should act unitedly and energetically, and that all the clergy should faithfully promise to be true to their Ordination vows—what then? Will the Church be thereby set free from all the unscriptural doctrines and practices which now so largely corrupt and weaken, divide and distress her? We fear not, and why? Because many of these doctrines and doings are taught and sanctioned by the Book of Common Prayer. It is to a large extent out of harmony with the sacred Scriptures, as we shall clearly show; and while it continues to be so, it must necessarily mislead both clergy and laity and produce results which are evil.

Fellow Protestant Christians, do we really

approve and appreciate the simple Evangelicalism which has done so much for the good of our country and the world? If we do, is it not our desire that it should be preserved and purified and made more than ever an instrument of manifold blessing to mankind? Then let us earnestly resolve—for the sake of Christ and the Church, our country and our race—to make it *Scriptural*.

Humbly commending our work to the approval and benediction of God, and fervently praying that it may prove an enlightening and stimulating help to many anxious souls now preparing for the coming conflict, we issue this little book.

LONDON,

February, 1899.

CHAPTER I.

THE BIBLE AND THE PRAYER-BOOK.

WE purpose in this opening chapter to let the Bible and the Prayer-book speak for themselves, that the *claims* of each may be clearly apprehended and steadily kept in view by every reader of the following pages. Let no one take the following quotations as read, but carefully peruse and ponder them, that the full weight of their testimony may fall upon the mind and heart.

1. *What do the Scriptures testify concerning themselves?* (R.V.) ‘The law of the Lord is *perfect*, restoring the soul; the testimony of the Lord is *sure*, making wise the simple. The precepts of the Lord are *right*, rejoicing the heart; the commandment of the Lord is *pure*, enlightening the eyes. The judgments of the Lord are *true* and righteous altogether. More to be desired are they than gold,

yea, than much fine gold ; sweeter also than honey and the honeycomb' (Ps. xix.). 'For ever, O Lord, Thy word is *settled* in heaven. Thy testimonies have I taken as an heritage for ever ; for they are the rejoicing of my heart' (Ps. cxix.). 'Heaven and earth shall pass away, but *My words shall not pass away*' (Matt. xxiv. 35). 'If ye *abide* in My word, then are ye truly My disciples ; and ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free' (John viii. 31, 32). 'Every Scripture inspired of God is also profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for instruction which is in righteousness : that the man of God may be complete, furnished completely unto every good work' (2 Tim. iii. 16, 17).

2. *What does the Prayer-book say regarding itself ?*

"It is but reasonable that upon weighty and important considerations, according to the various exigency of times and occasions, such changes and alterations should be made therein, as to those that are in place of Authority should from time to time seem either necessary or expedient. . . . In which review we have endeavoured to observe the like moderation as we find to have been used in the like case in former times. . . . For we are fully persuaded in our judgments (and we here profess it to the world) that the Book, as it stood before established by law, doth not contain in it

anything contrary to the Word of God, or to sound doctrine, or which a godly man may not with a good conscience use and submit unto, or which is not fairly defensible against any that shall oppose the same ; if it shall be allowed such just and favourable construction as in common equity ought to be allowed to all human writings, especially such as are set forth by authority, and even to the very best translations of the Holy Scripture itself. . . . Yet we have good hope that what is here presented, and hath been by the Convocations of both Provinces with great diligence examined and approved, will be also well accepted and approved by all sober, peaceable, and truly conscientious sons of the Church of England ” (*parts of Preface*).

“Of such ceremonies as be used in the Church, and have had their beginning by the institution of man, some at the first were of godly intent and purpose devised, and yet at length turned to vanity and superstition ; some entered into the Church by indiscreet devotion, and such a zeal as was without knowledge ; and for because they were winked at in the beginning, they grew daily to more and more abuses, which not only for their unprofitableness, but also because they have much blinded the people and obscured the glory of God, are worthy to be cut away and clean rejected : other there be which, although they have been devised by man, yet it is thought good to reserve them still, as well for a decent order in the Church (for the which they were first devised), as because they pertain to edification, whereunto all things done in the Church (as the Apostle teacheth) ought to be referred” (in the chapter *Of Ceremonies*).

The *claims* of the two books are vastly different. The Bible declares concerning itself, that it is

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‘perfect,’ ‘sure,’ ‘true,’ ‘right,’ ‘settled,’ unchanging and eternal, for did not Jesus say: ‘My words shall not pass away’? The Prayer-book, on the other hand, frankly acknowledges that its writings are *human* and *alterable*, and can only express a belief that they do not contain anything “contrary to the Word of God or to sound doctrine.” Therefore, while using the Prayer-book as an aid to devotion, let us never regard it with the same respect and reverential awe which we accord to the Scriptures, nor accept its declarations as of equal authority with theirs. ‘To the law and to the testimony! if they speak not according to this word, surely there is no morning for them’ (Isa. viii. 20).

In one of his recent Visitation Charges, the Archbishop of Canterbury said :

“ And if we think of deserting our Prayer-book, let us but remember how much this Church of ours has owed to it during the last two hundred years, how it has steadied us, animated us, held us in the true track. Has it not been the means of reviving our energies when we had fallen into slackness? Has it not seemed to answer our call when we longed for more inspiring worship than we had been accustomed to? I believe that we could not find anything better suited to the genius of the English nation, anything

more sure to make us grow in devotion and in that sober enthusiasm which is our special characteristic, anything which will bring men such as we are to love God in our deep but undemonstrative fashion. *I pray with all my heart that we shall not undervalue the great blessing that God has bestowed upon us in giving us that book, and I pray that we shall be very slow to press our own opinions, however earnestly we hold them, in such a way as to lower that book in the eyes of our people and of our own eyes.* I pray that God may be with us in all times of perplexity and anxiety, and that he may keep us straight in the path in which He has already placed us. *I have the deepest conviction, that of all the instruments that we can use for the true progress of the work that we have to do, both at home and abroad, there is none that we can put by the side of that which by God's providence has been to us so great a blessing."* (The italics are ours.)

It is the belief of all true Christians that the Scriptures were given to us by God, but to say that the Prayer-book also was "bestowed" by Him is surely a declaration which ought not to be unquestioningly accepted. This opinion of the Primate, however, may be very widely held in the Church, with this result, that the Prayer-book may be regarded as of almost equal value to the Bible itself, and may even be more frequently perused. Oh, for a resurrection of the Bible in our beloved country! It is the great instrument

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with which the Holy Ghost works, and by which He effects all spiritual results in the hearts and lives of men. He is 'the Spirit of the Truth,' and it is by the Truth as it is in Jesus that He convicts and converts, saves and sanctifies, comforts and upbuilds, the believer in Jesus. And it is by the Truth, also, that He Christianizes homes and churches, institutions and nations, and seeks to deliver the whole human race out of the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God. However good the Prayer-book may be, it is infinitely inferior to the Bible, and if only the latter were more fully and generally known, the former would not be so highly esteemed and trusted as it is, neither would the people be so easily led astray by the teachings and doings of the so-called Priesthood. The Archbishop says: "*I pray that we shall be very slow to press our own opinions, however earnestly we hold them, in such a way as to lower that book (the Prayer-book) in the eyes of our people or of our own eyes.*" No right-minded person would wish unnecessarily "to lower that book in the eyes of our people," but if, by pointing out its mistakes and shortcomings,

we can exalt the Word of God to its rightful place, and impel Christians to go to the fountain-head of all spiritual truth and life, no better blessing, we believe, can be conferred on the English Church and nation of to-day. We earnestly hope that this little book may be Divinely blessed to effect, in some measure, these great and most desirable ends.

CHAPTER II.

CONCERNING THE CHRISTIAN MINISTRY.

I. *WHAT* are we taught by the *New Testament* regarding this? 'He gave some, *apostles*; and some, *prophets*; and some, *evangelists*; and some, *pastors* and *teachers*; for the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ' (Eph. iv. 11, 12). 'Paul and Timotheus, the servants of Jesus Christ, to all the saints in Christ Jesus which are at Philippi with *the bishops and deacons*' (Phil. i. 1). 'This is a true saying: If a man desire the office of *a bishop*, he desireth a good work. And let these also first be proved; then let them use the office of *a deacon*, being found blameless. For they that have used the office of a deacon well, purchase to themselves a good degree and great boldness in the faith which is in Christ Jesus' (1 Tim. iii. 1, 10, 13). 'The *apostles*

and *elders* and brethren, send greeting unto the brethren which are of the Gentiles in Antioch and Syria and Cilicia' (Acts xv. 23). 'Ordain *elders* in every city, as I had appointed thee' (Titus i. 5). 'The *elders* which are among you I exhort' (1 Pet. v. 1). 'Consider the Apostle and *High Priest* of our profession, Christ Jesus' (Heb. iii. 1). 'Ye also as lively stones, are built up a spiritual house; *an holy priesthood*, to offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God by Jesus Christ' (1 Pet. ii. 5).

2. *What are the teachings of the Prayer-book concerning the Ministry?*

"When the day appointed by the Bishop is come, after Morning Prayer is ended, there shall be a Sermon or Exhortation, declaring the Duty and Office of such as come to be admitted *Priests*; how necessary that Order is in the Church of Christ, and also how the people ought to esteem them in their Office."

"When this Prayer is done, the Bishop with the *Priests* present shall lay their hands severally upon the head of every one that receiveth the Order of Priesthood, the receivers humbly kneeling upon their knees, and the Bishop saying :

"Receive the Holy Ghost for the Office and Work of a Priest in the Church of God, now committed unto thee by the imposition of our hands. Whose sins thou dost forgive,

they are forgiven ; and whose sins thou dost retain, they are retained. And be thou a faithful Dispenser of the Word of God and of His holy Sacraments. In the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. Amen.”

“When all things are duly prepared in the Church, and set in order, after Morning Prayer is ended, the Archbishop (or some other Bishop appointed) shall begin the Communion Service,” etc.

“Then shall the Archbishop demand the Queen’s Mandate for the Consecration, and cause it to be read. And then shall be ministered unto them the Oath of due Obedience to the Archbishop as followeth :

“In the Name of God. Amen. I. N., chosen Bishop of the Church and See of N., do profess and promise all due reverence and obedience to the Archbishop, and to the Metropolitan Church of N. and to their successors : So help me God, through Jesus Christ.”

In passing from the Scriptures we have quoted to these selected passages from the Prayer-book, we seem to have entered into an altogether new world of ideas. The most special things in the latter are not even mentioned in the former, and they certainly introduce us to offices and arrangements which were utterly unknown in Apostolic times—“Priests,” “Archbishops,” “The Queen’s Mandate for the Consecration,” and “The Oath of due Obedience.” We do not read of any of these persons or things in the New Testament.

In "*The Form and Manner of Ordering of Priests*," there are two points which deserve special attention:

1. "*I present unto you these persons present, to be admitted to the Order of Priesthood.*" When, where, and by whom was this "Order" created? Not certainly by Christ, or by any of His Apostles. We find no mention of it either in the four Gospels, or in any of the Epistles. We read of Apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors, teachers, bishops, elders, and presbyters; but never of "priests." The only priests in the New dispensation are Christ Himself, 'the great High Priest of our Confession,' and His believing followers who are appointed and Divinely ordained to be '*a holy priesthood to offer up spiritual sacrifices to God through Jesus Christ.*' As Bishop Lightfoot says in *The Christian Ministry*, "The only priests under the Gospel, designated as such in the New Testament, are the saints, the members of the Christian Brotherhood." We have sometimes been reminded by clergymen who were desirous of justifying the use of the title "priest" that *priest* and *presbyter* mean the same thing. This is true, but it is also

true and very significant that the term 'bishop' or 'elder,' and not that of 'priest,' is invariably used in the New Testament. Had it been a matter of no moment which term was employed, they would no doubt have both been used by the Apostles. But there was danger in the use of the one term, and not of the others, while Judaism, as a priestly system, was still clung to, in measure, by the Jewish Christians; therefore the innocent synonyms were alone employed. But to-day, in our Anglican Church, many of the very men who tell us that priest and presbyter are synonymous refuse to follow the example of the Apostles in the use of titles, and glory in thinking of themselves as members of a special "Order of Priesthood."

In a sermon entitled *The Priest in Absolution*, preached by Canon Knox Little, and published by request, there is the following passage :

"If you give me a Church which denies the Priesthood, then that Church is not in any adequate sense a part of the visible Church of Jesus Christ. So I stand or fall, according to the falsehood or truth of this indictment. I maintain that the doctrine of the Priesthood is the doctrine of the Church of England, and that *therefore* the doctrine of Confession and Absolution is and *must be* her doctrine; as these are only the practical and individual expression of this power

which she wields from her Master and Teacher according to His teaching, viz., the power of the Keys. To prove my assertion, I have merely to ask you *honestly* to examine your Prayer-books. Look at them. Is it not true—incontestably true—that the Prayer-book explicitly speaks of and teaches in every part of it, so to speak, from cover to cover, the doctrine of the Priesthood in the Church, and recognises her own clergy of the second order in that capacity? I can understand an honest Dissenter saying, ‘I do not agree with your Prayer-book; it ought to be altered.’ I say I can understand that, and can respect the feeling which dictates it, though I lament the imperfect grasp of the truth that it indicates; but I cannot understand a man taking his Prayer-book and denying, as the teaching of the English Church, the doctrine of the Priesthood, *and therefore* the power of Confession and Absolution.”

This is a very brave and outspoken contention, and no one can deny that the Prayer-book explicitly teaches “the doctrine of the Priesthood in the Church.” So much the worse for both the Prayer-book and the Church, for the doctrine of a special or class Priesthood is certainly not that of the New Testament Scriptures. *This unscriptural doctrine is the root and source of all the other evils which have arisen in the Church*—the Consecration of the Bread and Wine of the Lord’s Supper, the Sacrifice of the Mass, Auricular Confession, and the Absolution of Sins. Let the man-made Priest-

hood be abolished, and with it you will get rid of all these false teachings and baneful practices of Ritualism. Dr. Arnold was right when he said: "Ecclesiastical officers of Christianity are not Priests by God's appointment, for there is only one Priest, and all the rest are brethren; none has any holiness of person or race more than another, and none has any exclusive possession of Divine knowledge."

2. "*Receive the Holy Ghost for the Office and Work of a Priest in the Church of God, now committed unto thee by the Imposition of our hands. Whose sins thou dost forgive, they are forgiven; and whose sins thou dost retain, they are retained.*" There are three points here of great importance, which require consideration in the light of New Testament teaching:

First: "*Receive the Holy Ghost.*" When our Lord uttered these words over His disciples, He gave them a special and specific gift of the Spirit. What was that gift? It was not the gift of *power* to prepare them for their public ministry, but the gift of *peace* for their own personal comfort and well-being—"Peace be unto you; as My Father

hath sent Me, even so send I you' (John xx. 21). But the time for going forth to serve had not yet come; therefore He afterwards said unto them: 'Behold, I send the promise of My Father upon you; but tarry ye in the city of Jerusalem, until ye be endued with *power* from on high' (Luke xxiv. 49). It was not the gift of *power* which Jesus conferred when He said, 'Receive ye the Holy Ghost,' but only the gift of *peace*, of which at that time the disciples stood greatly in need. They had all been utterly confounded, and terribly perturbed by His death on the cross; and now that He once more appeared in their midst, they 'believed not for joy, and wondered.' Their faith required to be confirmed, and the tumult of their hearts hushed into a holy calm; therefore He said unto them, 'Peace be unto you.' And from that moment they had peace—the peace of a settled trust and a holy joy: 'Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace whose mind is stayed on Thee, because he trusteth in Thee.'

It was on the Day of Pentecost that the gift of *power* was given, and no audible words were spoken over the disciples when they received it; and not

only so, but by the *power* which was then bestowed upon them, they not only boldly faced all the world-forces of evil, and preached the Gospel fully and faithfully, but they also performed many miracles as Jesus Himself had done.

Now, when the Bishop says, "*Receive ye the Holy Ghost for the Office and Work of a Priest in the Church of God,*" what is the gift supposed to be bestowed? It is not the gift of *peace*, but of '*power*'—the Pentecostal gift; and if the supposed bestowment were a reality, then surely all the results of the Pentecostal effusion ought to be perpetuated. But they do not appear. "The age of miracles is past," they say; but no New Testament ever told them so. And as for results which are purely *spiritual*, these do not exclusively follow the preaching and work of a priestly class who claim to be the Divinely-ordained successors of the Apostles.

Second: "*By the Imposition of our hands.*" Let us take all the instances related in the New Testament when this act was performed, and we shall see what it signified.

We notice, first, that when Jesus gave to the

Apostles and the disciples the gift of the Holy Ghost, He breathed on them, but *did not lay His hands upon their heads.*

When the members of the Church in Jerusalem chose seven men to 'serve tables,' they set them before the Apostles; and when the Apostles had prayed, *they laid their hands upon them.* For what purpose? Not to confer the gift of the Holy Ghost, but only to dedicate them to their work. Instead of laying hands upon them, that they might *receive* the Holy Ghost, it was because the seven were already men of great faith, and full of the Spirit, that they were elected by the Church, and ordained by the Apostles for the fulfilment of the duties of their office (Acts vi. 1-6).

'When the Apostles at Jerusalem heard that Samaria had received the Word of God, they sent unto them Peter and John, who, when they were come down, prayed for them that they might receive the Holy Ghost; for as yet He was fallen upon none of them, only they had been baptized into the name of the Lord Jesus. *Then laid they their hands on them,* and they received the Holy Ghost' (Acts viii. 14-17). These Samaritan be-

lievers were not ordained to any office by this act, but remained only converts and disciples.

‘Ananias departed, and entered into the house, and, *laying his hands on him*, said : Brother Saul, the Lord, even Jesus, who appeared unto thee in the way which thou camest, hath sent me that thou mayest receive thy sight and *be filled with the Holy Ghost*’ (Acts ix. 17). But who was Ananias, who thus ordained Paul for his Apostleship ? He was not one of the twelve, nor even an officer of the Church, but only ‘a certain disciple.’

‘The Holy Ghost said, Separate me Barnabas and Saul, for the work whereunto I have called them. Then, when they had fasted and prayed and *laid their hands on them*, they sent them away’ (Acts xiii. 2, 3). This was an ordination for missionary service, and the men selected by the Holy Ghost did not receive any new gift through the laying on of hands.

‘Neglect not the gift that is in thee, which was given thee by prophecy with *the laying on of the hands of the presbytery*’ (1 Tim. iv. 14). ‘I put thee in remembrance, that thou stir up the gift of God which is in thee through *the laying on of my*

hands' (2 Tim. i. 6). What may we suppose was 'the gift of God' here referred to? There is no mention of the Holy Ghost in either passage, and had He been the gift spoken of, it is most unlikely that Paul would have asked Timothy to '*stir up the gift.*' Such language would have been both inappropriate and irreverent. It is much more likely to have been *a spirit of earnest zeal and whole-hearted consecration* resulting from the Divine call to the great work of the ministry—a call which came to Timothy through the prophets, and which Paul and the presbytery recognised and confirmed.

'For this cause left I thee in Crete, that thou shouldest set in order the things that were wanting; *and appoint elders in every city*, as I gave thee charge' (Titus i. 5). Titus was not an Apostle, nor even a Bishop, and yet Paul charged him to appoint elders (or bishops) in every city of Crete. In his essay on the synonyms 'bishop' and 'presbyter,' Bishop Lightfoot says: "It is a fact now generally recognised by theologians of all shades of opinion that in the language of the New Testament the same officer in the Church *is called indifferently 'bishop' and 'elder,' or 'presbyter,'* so

that Titus in ordaining 'elders' in all the churches was really providing them with *bishops*."

There is surely no basis in any of these Scriptures upon which to build up the tremendous doctrine of Apostolical succession; indeed, we can find no foundation for it in the New Testament. In his *Christian Ecclesia* Dr. Hort tells us that "Jewish usage, in the case of Rabbis and their disciples, renders it highly probable that *laying on of hands* was largely practised in the Ecclesia of the Apostolic age as a rite introductory to ecclesiastical office; but as the New Testament tells us no more than what has been already mentioned, *it can hardly be likely that any essential principle was held to be involved in it.*" This is true both to Scripture and common-sense, but it is not in harmony with the doctrine of Apostolical succession, nor that of the Priesthood as taught by the Prayer-book. Is it really believable that the Holy Ghost can be given by such a merely mechanical act as the laying on of hands by a Bishop, an act which has frequently been performed by un-Christian and even immoral men? The very idea is a terrible presumption, which seems to be little

short of blasphemy against the Holy Ghost. It is true *that the Gospel may be preached by bad men,* and yet be effective in saving sinners and edifying those who believe, because it is the grace of God through the medium of the Gospel which effects these sublime results; but the bestowment of the Holy Ghost through the imposition of hands *is a personal matter,* and cannot therefore be independent of individual character. The Gospel is a holy medium for the operation of grace, but a wicked person can never be a suitable medium for the bestowment of the Holy Ghost. The devil cannot be thus taken into partnership with God for the realization of spiritual ends. Some of the Roman Pontiffs, for instance, through whom Divine grace and power are supposed by some credulous persons to have descended, were among the worst of men. That such moral monsters as Sixtus IV., Innocent VIII., Julius V., Leo X., and Alexander VI. could be Holy-Ghost-conferring successors of Peter, John, and Paul, must be an utter delusion and a lie.

“ The great body of thoughtful men will never accept as the only representatives of Him who came to seek and save,

the Popes who blessed Philip of Spain as he set up his Council of Blood and sent fire and sword through the Netherlands ; who gave benediction to that King of France who organized and relentlessly carried out the massacre of St. Bartholomew ; who smiled upon the Inquisition ; and beneath whose favour the valleys of Piedmont were desolated with cruel slaughter. It is useless to say these men were only acting in the spirit of their time. They themselves created that spirit, and created it even while they were claiming to be the sole keepers of that Church whose aim and mission is to set up God's kingdom of the heavens upon this earth of ours."

The Apostles had no successors according to the Roman and Anglican claim, for as another has truly said :

"The very essence of the Apostolic office was the work of *bearing witness* to that series of supernatural *facts* on which the whole structure of Christianity rests. If so, as witnesses to fact, from the very nature of the case they can have no successors. If it is not so, if their one distinctive function was, as the theory of Apostolic succession assumes, the mechanical transmission from hand to hand of special commission and supernatural grace, *how is it that this is not so much as indicated?*"

Third : '*Whose sins thou dost forgive, they are forgiven ; and whose sins thou dost retain, they are retained.*'

Who were the persons to whom these words

were addressed? They were spoken to all the Apostles (except Thomas), and also to all the disciples 'who were with them.' We know who two of these disciples were, for Luke, when referring to the same gathering, says, regarding Cleopas and his companion: 'They rose up that very hour (in Emmaus) and returned to Jerusalem, and found the eleven gathered together *and them that were with them*, saying: "The Lord is risen indeed, and hath appeared to Simon"' (Luke xxiv. 33). And when Jesus came, breathed on them, and gave them the Holy Ghost as the gift of peace, and also the great commission to forgive sins, there is no hint given that any were excluded. Here, then, are the facts of the case: *The eleven and all who were with them* received the same gift and the same commission. And yet Dr. Moberly, in his *Ministerial Priesthood*, repeats the old fallacy that the gift and the commission were given *only to the Apostles*. Such an unfaithful declaration is very reprehensible. Bishop Westcott—a safer guide—is correct when he says: "There is nothing in the context to show that the gift was confined to any particular group (as the Apostles) among the

whole company present. The commission, therefore, must be regarded properly as the commission of the *Christian Society* and not as that of the *Christian Ministry*."

Now, *what was the nature of the commission itself?* Had it in view the forgiving of sins *against God*? We cannot believe so, for two reasons: First, the Apostles never refer to it in any of their Epistles; and second, there is not one single instance recorded of such a fulfilment of the commission. They preached the Gospel and performed many miracles, but never do we read that on any occasion they forgave sins against God. These two facts are quite enough to discredit utterly the claim of our "priests"—the would-be successors of the Apostles—that Christ "hath given power and commandment to His Ministers to declare and pronounce to His people—being penitent—the Absolution and Remission of their sins." Is it really believable, in the light of these facts, that the Apostles received from Christ a commission to forgive sins *against God*—all sins? We think not.

But the forgiving and retaining of sins *against*

the Church lay naturally before all the Apostles and disciples as the organizers and guides of the new brotherhood of the spiritual life.

Think first of the use of *the keys*. Jesus saith unto His disciples: 'Whom say ye that I am? Simon Peter answered and said, Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God. And Jesus answered and said unto him, Blessed art thou, Simon Bar-jona: for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but My Father which is in heaven. And I say also unto thee, That thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build My church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it. And I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth shall be bound in heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven' (Matt. xvi. 15-18). What was '*the rock*' to which our Lord referred? It was Peter's great confession: Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God! Christ Himself is the Church's one foundation (I Cor. iii. 11), and Peter's confession is the great foundation-truth of the Gospel. And what is '*the kingdom of heaven*' spoken of by

Christ? It is not the eternal kingdom of the great hereafter, but the temporal kingdom of heaven upon the earth of which the Christian Church is the visible embodiment. Jesus often spoke of this earthly kingdom of God, as for instance when He said: 'The kingdom of God is come unto you'; 'The kingdom of God is at hand'; 'Thou art not far from the kingdom of God'; 'Behold, the kingdom of God is within you'; 'Verily, I say unto you, That the publicans and the harlots go into the kingdom of God before you.' The keys of this kingdom of heaven on earth were used by Peter on the day of Pentecost, when he proclaimed for *the first time* to the *Jewish* people the glorious Gospel of a finished Redemption, and of a free and full salvation for them all; and also afterwards in Cæsarea, when he preached the same glad tidings for *the first time* to the *Gentiles*, and when upon them also was poured the effusion of the Holy Ghost. When the keys had thus been used for the opening of the whole world to the entrance of the Gospel, their purpose was accomplished. It was to this that the Apostle himself referred in the Council at Jerusalem, when

he said: 'Men and brethren, ye know how that a good while ago God made choice among us, that the Gentiles by my mouth should hear the Gospel, and believe. And God, which knoweth the hearts, bare them witness, giving them the Holy Ghost, even as He did unto us' (Acts xv. 7, 8). *The power of binding and loosing* also conferred on Peter likewise referred to those who had professedly accepted the Gospel and were members of the visible Church; and because he would use this power under the direct and immediate guidance of the Holy Ghost, his acts would be ratified in heaven (Matt. xvi. 19). All the other Apostles and the disciples who were with them received from the risen Christ the same power and commission, as we have seen, therefore no *conditions* were attached to their use, because the Holy Ghost would be their teacher and guide. And instances of the *fulfilment* of this commission are recorded in the Acts and in the Epistles. Peter himself 'bound' Ananias and Sapphira his wife (Acts v. 1-11); and also Simon, who, when he 'saw that through laying on of the Apostles' hands the Holy Ghost was given, he offered them

money, saying, Give me also this power, that on whomsoever I lay hands, he may receive the Holy Ghost' (Acts viii. 13-24). Other instances of both 'binding' and 'loosing' occurred in connection with the ministry of Paul. For instance, he wrote to the Church in Corinth regarding a great wrongdoer in its membership: 'For I verily, being absent in body, but present in spirit, have already, as though I were present, judged him that hath so wrought this thing. In the name of our Lord Jesus, ye being gathered together, and my spirit, with the power of our Lord Jesus, to deliver such an one unto Satan for the destruction of the flesh, that the spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus' (1 Cor. v. 3-5). This was an example of *binding* and *retaining*. Regarding the same erring brother the Apostle afterwards wrote: 'Sufficient to such an one is this punishment, which was inflicted by the many. So that contrariwise ye should rather forgive him, and comfort him, lest by any means such an one should be swallowed up with his overmuch sorrow. Wherefore I beseech you to confirm your love toward him' (2 Cor. ii. 6-8).

This was an act of *forgiving* and *loosing*; and it was done, not only by Paul himself, but also by all the members of the Church in Corinth. Says Dr. Hort: "Nothing, perhaps, has been more prominent in our examination of the Ecclesia of the Apostolic age than the fact that the Ecclesia itself is the primary body, and it would seem *the primary authority also.*" Undoubtedly! and the Apostle Paul always honoured the "primary authority" in all organized churches. In other cases he acted personally and alone, as when he delivered unto Satan Hymenæus and Alexander, 'that they might be taught not to blaspheme' (1 Tim. i. 19, 20). But in these latter days the Church, alas! is not "the primary authority," but Parliament and the Bishops, and the so-called laity are merely a flock of sheep, to be driven hither and thither as their lordly shepherds please.

And now let us see what is the place appointed to a sin-absolving Priesthood *in the Prayer-book.*

In the beginning of Morning Prayer the officiating clergyman is called the *Minister*, but when *the Absolution or Remission of Sins* is reached he

is designated the *Priest*—a very significant alteration. And in the “Absolution” itself, we read :

“Almighty God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who desireth not the death of a sinner, but rather that he may turn from his wickedness and live ; and hath given power and commandment to His Ministers to declare and pronounce to His people, being penitent, the Absolution and Remission of their sins : He pardoneth and absolveth all them that truly repent, and unfeignedly believe His holy Gospel.”

Now there are two things here which deserve special attention. There is first the important declaration that “*He pardoneth and absolveth all them that truly repent, and unfeignedly believe His holy Gospel.*” This is true, and in perfect harmony with the teaching of Scripture ; for who can forgive sins, but God only ? ‘Who forgiveth all thine iniquities’ ; ‘If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins’ ; ‘Who is a God like unto Thee, that pardoneth iniquity’ ; ‘I acknowledged my sin unto Thee, and mine iniquity have I not hid ; I said, I will confess my transgressions unto the Lord, and Thou forgavest the iniquity of my sin.’ Yes, truly, “He pardoneth.” And then, second, there is this statement, that

God “*hath given power and commandment to His Ministers, to declare and pronounce to His people, being penitent, the Absolution and Remission of their sins*”—a statement for which there is no warrant in the Word of God. It is grounded on the words which our Lord spake to His followers after He rose from the dead: ‘Whose soever sins ye remit, they are remitted unto them; and whose soever sins ye retain, they are retained’ (John xx. 23). But these words were addressed—as we have already seen—not to the Apostles only, but also to *the disciples*; and therefore not to “Ministers” merely, but to all the faithful. No *condition* was attached to the commission, such as we find in the Prayer-book, “being penitent”; and there is no reason to believe that it had reference to sins against God, inasmuch as none of the Apostles have recorded a single instance of its fulfilment in this way. We never read that they forgave sins. But now, look at the claim of the Priesthood, and consider what it implies. God has called upon us to repent of our sins and make confession of them—not to “priests,” but to Himself; and everywhere in His precious

Word He has given us assurance that ‘if we are faithful in confessing our sins He also is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.’ Is not God ‘the faithful Promiser’? Has He not given His promises to be believed? Do we require an “Order of Priesthood” to come in between Him and us “to declare and pronounce to His people, being penitent, the absolution and remission of their sins”? Are we unable to accept the precious promises of God without their priestly pronouncements? Is it easier to believe their declarations than those of our God and Father? The whole pretension is a monstrous absurdity and a huge impertinence. ‘Who can forgive sins but God only’? and if He has promised to pardon the penitent believer in Christ, it is surely a daring thing for any mortal man to step in before the face of God and declare to His trustful children that His words are believable. Look at the “priest” by the bedside of the dying. When confession to the priest has been made by the departing spirit, he says: “Our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath left power to His Church to absolve all

sinner who truly repents and believes in Him, of His great mercy forgive thee thine offences: *And by His authority committed to me, I absolve thee from all thy sins,*" etc. How can he know that the man has truly repented and believed? Or if either ignorantly or perversely he has failed to do either, what benefit can a priestly absolution be to him even if we were to admit the priestly claim to be a reality? And if he says that he has done both, would it not be better for his ghostly counsellor to assure him of the *Divine* forgiveness rather than give him an absolution of his own? Such an absolution, if not necessary, is an insult both to God and man. It practically assumes that it is both easier and more comforting to the dying penitent to accept the words of a priest than those of God. If any of the Apostles had exercised the function of pardoning sins against God (of which not a single instance is recorded) they were under the immediate inspiration and special guidance of the Holy Ghost; but men-made priests have no such inspiration and guidance, and may therefore do a vast amount of evil by professing either to forgive or retain sins.

In “*the form of ordaining or consecrating of an Archbishop or Bishop,*” we find several things which have no equivalent in the New Testament.

1. The presiding Archbishop is thus addressed by the Bishops, who present to him the Bishop elect: “*Most reverend father in God,* we present unto you this godly and well-learned man to be ordained and consecrated Bishop.” Now, no such title is given to anyone in the New Testament. James and John would as utterly have rejected such a designation as Peter would have repudiated the title of Pope. And why? Because the Lord had given to them—and through them to all His disciples in all ages—this express injunction: ‘Call no man your *father* on the earth, for one is your Father, which is in heaven’ (Matt. xxiii. 9). A fatherhood of *vital relationship*, either natural or spiritual, is a beautiful and blissful reality, but a fatherhood of mere officialism is an empty sham. Paul wrote to the Corinthian believers: ‘For though ye should have ten thousand tutors in Christ, yet have ye not many *fathers*, for in Christ Jesus *I begat you* through the Gospel.’ He called Timothy ‘My

beloved child,' and Titus 'My true child after a common faith,' but he never accepted the title "father" from those who were not thus begotten by himself. But now, in the Anglican Church, as well as in the Roman, we have many so-called priests (and all of them are not aged and reverend) who accept the title of "father," as a mere title, in direct contradiction to Christ's express command. The most of the evils in the Christian Church have arisen out of the vanity and ambition of men, and the worst offenders have been the would-be successors of the Apostles, and the chief representatives of the lowly Jesus.

2. "In the name of God. Amen. I. N., chosen Bishop of the Church *and See of N.*, do profess and promise," etc. We find no mention of *sees* in the New Testament. And why? Because there were no *diocesan* Bishops in the days of the Apostles. Says Dr. Hatch: "There was a Bishop in the early Christian era wherever in later times there would have been a parish church. From the small province of Proconsular Asia, which was about the size of Lincolnshire, forty Bishops were present at an early Council." In other words,

each Bishop was simply the pastor of a congregation, and nothing more. Even Canon Gore has acknowledged that "The Bishop, according to the early ideal, was by no means the great prelate; *he was the pastor of a flock*, like the Vicar of a modern town, in intimate relations with all his people." Such definite declarations as these by eminent Churchmen ought to be carefully considered and remembered. And of this we may be sure, that if there were no diocesan Bishops in the early Church, neither certainly were there any *Lord* Bishops either in Church or State.

3. Of course, when there were no sees and no diocesan Bishops, *Archbishops* were not needed, and had no existence. This highest office in the Anglican Church, like that of Pope in the Roman, was *invented* long after the days of the Apostles, and St. Jerome has told us why and how this great officer was created. He says:

"Before factions were introduced into religion by the promptings of the devil, the churches were governed by a council of elders; but as each man began to consider those whom he baptized to belong to himself and not to Christ, it was decided throughout the world that one elected from the elders should be placed over the rest, so that the care of

the Church should devolve on him, and the seeds of schism be removed."

It is abundantly evident from this statement that the Church had sadly declined from the purity and unworldliness of her early days, and that selfishness and ambition, to a large extent, had entered into her spirit and activities when even her officers had become corrupted by these evil principles. Of course, one Archbishop was utterly unable to care for all the churches and remove the seeds of schism when sown within them, therefore other Archbishops had soon to be made, and districts appointed to them like the sees of modern times. Thus we find that a fully-developed Episcopacy arose out of a decadent Church in which abuses and evil rivalries had arisen—abuses and rivalries, alas! which were not cured by the creation of Archbishops, and the setting aside of the simple Apostolic form of Church government. In his dissertation on *The Christian Ministry*, Bishop Lightfoot says: "It is clear, then, that at the close of the Apostolic age the two lower orders of the threefold ministry were firmly and widely established, but *traces of*

the third and highest order—the episcopate properly so called—are few and indistinct.” This is an important admission; and what does it imply? It implies that whilst the two lower orders of the ministry were firmly and widely established by those *who were under the direct and immediate guidance of the Holy Ghost*, the third and highest order was left to be evolved in after-time by men who did not receive any such special inspiration and guidance as the Apostles and first disciples enjoyed. Is this credible? Can we really believe that the creation of this so-called “highest order” in the way we have just seen was as much of Divine appointment as that of Bishops and Deacons in the days of the Apostles? As to “the few and indistinct *traces*” of the episcopate in the New Testament to which the Bishop refers, we fail to recognise them, and many of the ablest expositors in all the churches have failed likewise. The real truth of the matter seems to be this: Just as *Revelation* was *finished*, and the Gospel wholly revealed before the decease of John the Beloved, so also the churches were fully organized, and needed no further development. Each separate

Christian community was an independent Church, and was ministered unto only by Bishops and Deacons. We only require to read the third chapter of Paul's first Epistle to Timothy to see that it was so. Bishop Lightfoot also says :

“ History seems to show decisively that before the middle of the second century each church or organized Christian community had its three orders of Ministers—its bishop, its presbyters and its deacons. On this point there cannot reasonably be two opinions. But at what time and under what circumstances this organization was matured, and to what extent our allegiance is due to it as an authoritative ordinance, are more difficult questions.”

To this we reply: *First*, that the *three* orders had been “matured” since the death of the Apostles, as the Epistles of Paul abundantly testify; *second*, that the changes effected in the ministry after the Apostolic age had no Divine authorization; and, *third*, that being made only by ordinary Christian men, no “allegiance” from us is due to them. All the offices, rites, and ceremonies brought into existence after Apostolic times have no Scriptural authority, and ought never to have been sanctioned. Let this contention be denied, and the idea held that the

churches were left free to organize themselves as they pleased, then no fault can properly be found with the organism or the organization of the Roman Catholic Church. For although that paganized institution was developed with violence, and under numerous and frequent protests from many bishops and churches, yet these had no authority which it was bound to obey. We must either accept all the churches of Christendom as legitimately organized, or return to the model Apostolic churches, with their simple, beautiful, and all-sufficient offices and forms. We say all-sufficient advisedly, for churches might be formed and governed as they were in every country under heaven and in every age of time as sections of the universal Church and parts of the one great brotherhood of believers. But great *organic* churches tend to become exclusive, self-involved, and pharisaical in spirit, as history abundantly testifies. They have travelled far away in many respects from the early churches. Oh that the Church of England, with all its social power and splendid possibilities, would consent to go back to her Apostolic models! Her officers might

thereby lose, in large measure, their position and prestige in the world, but the Church herself would mightily gain in moral purity and real spiritual power, by which her grand and glorious mission would be furthered and the nation greatly blessed. *Archbishops* and priests would cease to be, and all priestly pretensions, which find their embodiments in consecrations and absolutions, incensings and sacrifices, would be left behind for ever. Masses for the living and the dead would no longer be offered unto God, and all such unscriptural doctrines as those of Baptismal Regeneration, Transubstantiation and Consubstantiation taught no more. We fervently pray that the day may soon come when all this shall be realized, and when to all the truly faithful in the Church—faithful, not to the Church as it is, nor to the Prayer-book as it is, but to Christ Himself and His unchanging Gospel—the delightful summons may be joyfully addressed: ‘Arise, shine, for thy light is come, and the glory of the Lord is risen upon thee.’ Meanwhile, let them do what they can to check and remove the evils which “the Order of Priesthood” are encouraging,

that their own spiritual life may be developed, the Church purified and strengthened, and our adorable Saviour and Lord, the great and only Head of His Church, truly served, worshipped, and glorified. If they fail to do this, and passively allow the baneful influences of ritualism to be propagated and perpetuated in the Church, we may ere long (as we have elsewhere said*) awake to the recognition of the awful fact that the work of the Reformation has been practically undone, and that England is once more, to a large extent, a Roman Catholic country. The ritualists are determined to hold on to their "six points" if they possibly can, and the Bishops are too much in sympathy with them to drive them to extremities. The Evangelical party ought to arise in the spirit of such men as Luther, Knox, and Chalmers, and resolutely resist such a calamity; but rather than jeopardize the Establishment they will probably content themselves with protesting in the press and on platforms, and appealing to the Queen, at all of which the ritualistic Bishops

* *The Nature of Christ*, 2nd edition, pp. 199, 200.

and priests will simply laugh. The Protestants in the Church have too long tolerated the "Order of Priesthood" and its utterly unscriptural teachings and practices to be able now to gird themselves with power and deal effectively with the evils which are leading the people to Rome. Oh, England! England! the land of light and liberty, the land of the open Bible and a freely-proclaimed Gospel, the land of power and progress, the land of reformers, martyrs, and heroic defenders of the faith, the sun of your greatness and glory will soon decline towards its setting if you foolishly permit your so-called great men and the national Church to lead you back into the arms of Rome, and place you again under the blighting and soul-withering influences of Papal priestcraft! The Anglo-Roman unity, for which many long and pray, is a delusion and a snare—a unity of uniformity and tyranny, a unity of Papal supremacy and priestly power, a unity which may glorify the Pope and mightily aggrandize the Church over which he rules with an authority which claims to be infallible, but a unity also which will shut the Bible and open the Catechism,

corrupt the Gospel and weaken the ministry,
erect the Altar and establish the Confessional,
destroy the fruits of civil and religious liberty,
and woefully hinder the progress and happiness
of mankind.

CHAPTER III.

CONCERNING THE SACRAMENTS.

WHEREVER in any Church there is an "Order of Priesthood," there you are certain to find that the simple, spiritual, and beautiful ordinances of the Gospel have been more or less perverted to priestly uses, priestly power, and priestly purposes, and these have never been found to further the spiritual and sublime ends for which the Ordinances of Baptism and the Lord's Supper were instituted. This, in measure, is as true of the Anglican Church as it is of the Roman. Baptismal Regeneration and Consubstantiation may have their place in the Prayer-book, but they certainly have no place in the New Testament Scriptures, as we shall see. And a large number of the priests are not content to believe and teach the doctrine of Consubstantiation, but

are bent on popularizing the doctrine of Transubstantiation in the Church, and along with that most of the unscriptural errors taught and practised by the Church of Rome. Some of the Bishops have tried to persuade us that ritualistic lawlessness is very limited in its extent, but we have only to read the *Guide* recently issued by the English Church Union to see that it is not so. During the last two years the churches in which the Eucharist is celebrated have increased from 474 to 613, and those in which priestly vestments are worn have risen from 1,632 to 2,026. It is surely high time to look facts in the face and deal with them as such instead of shutting our eyes to them, as the Bishops appear to have done, or to say, as they still seem inclined to do: 'Let us observe them gravely *and pass on.*'

Let us now consider the Sacraments, and learn what the Scriptures and the Prayer-book say regarding them.

I.—BAPTISM.

1. *What saith the New Testament?* Said John the Baptist: 'I indeed baptize you with water

unto repentance: but He that cometh after me is mightier than I, whose shoes I am not worthy to bear: He shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost and with fire' (Matt. iii. 11). 'When therefore the Lord knew how that the Pharisees had heard that Jesus was making and baptizing more disciples than John (although Jesus Himself baptized not, but His disciples), He left Judæa, and departed again into Galilee' (John iv. 1-3). 'Except a man be born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter into the Kingdom of God' (John iii. 5). 'I thank God that I baptized none of you, save Crispus and Gaius; lest any man should say that ye were baptized into my name. And I baptized also the house of Stephanas: besides, I know not whether I baptized any other. For Christ sent me not to baptize, but to preach the Gospel' (I Cor. i. 14-17). 'Having been buried with Him in baptism, wherein ye were also raised with Him through faith in the working of God, who raised Him from the dead' (Col. ii. 12). 'One Lord, one faith, one baptism' (Eph. iv. 5). 'Wherefore *let us cease to speak of the first principles of Christ*, and press on unto perfection, not laying

again a foundation of repentance from dead works, and of faith toward God, of *the teaching of baptisms*, and of *laying on of hands*, and of resurrection of the dead, and of eternal judgment. And this will we do, if God permit' (Heb. vi. 1-3).

2. *What saith the Prayer-book?*

"Seeing now, dearly beloved brethen, *that this child is regenerate*, and grafted into the body of Christ's Church, let us give thanks unto Almighty God for these benefits, and with one accord make our prayers unto Him, that this child may lead the rest of his life according to this beginning." . . . "We yield Thee hearty thanks, most merciful Father, that it hath pleased Thee *to regenerate this infant* with Thy Holy Spirit, to receive him for Thine own child by adoption, and to incorporate him into Thy holy Church."

This is Baptismal Regeneration plainly taught. Do all the Bishops and priests accept this teaching? Some do, and others do not. *What is the mental attitude of the latter towards it?* This is what Dr. Ryle, the Lord Bishop of Liverpool, says in his *Principles for Churchmen* :

"I wish to urge on many of my fellow churchmen the dangerous tendency of extravagantly high views of the efficacy of baptism. I have no wish to conceal my meaning. I refer to those churchmen who maintain that grace invariably accompanies baptism, and that all baptized persons are in baptism 'born again.' I ask such persons, in all courtesy

and brotherly kindness, to consider seriously the dangerous tendency of their views, and the consequences which logically result from them. They seem to me, and to many others, to degrade a holy ordinance appointed by Christ into a mere charm, which is to act mechanically, like a medicine acting on the body, without any movement of a man's heart or soul. Surely this is dangerous! They encourage the notion that it matters nothing in what manner or spirit people bring their children to be baptized. It signifies nothing whether they come with faith and prayer and solemn feelings, or whether they come careless, prayerless, godless, and ignorant as heathens. The effect, we are told, is always the same in all cases—the infant is born again the moment it is baptized, although it has no right to baptism at all except as the child of Christian parents. Surely this is dangerous!"

Who are the persons upon whom my Lord Bishop of Liverpool urges this dangerous tendency of extravagantly high views of the efficacy of baptism? They are those who *honestly* use the language of the Baptismal Service, and believe what they say when the words are uttered: "This child is regenerate." They are loyal to the teaching of the Prayer-book concerning baptism, and the fancied fact which the Church has ordained them to declare. The objection of the Bishop, strangely enough, is not to the baptismal formula itself, but to the belief that "all baptized infants

are born again." He asks those who hold this opinion to "consider seriously the dangerous tendency of their views, and the consequences which logically result from them." They, we think, might fairly reply: 'We cannot read the motives and purposes of the parents' hearts, and are therefore unable to distinguish between those children who (according to your idea) have the right to be baptized and those who have not. If we were not convinced that *all* whom we baptize are at the same time regenerated by the Holy Ghost, we could not be sure about *any*, and ought not therefore to make the declaration at all: "This child is regenerate." But we fully believe what the Prayer-book teaches, and therefore unhesitatingly declare the certain regeneration of every child we baptize.'

But what about the Bishop himself in relation to the Baptismal service? When he baptizes an infant, does he not say: "This child *is* regenerate"? The law would not permit him to say anything else. And there are no perhapses in connection with the solemn declaration, nor even the expression of a hope; it is the language of

certainty which is used. And yet he is not sure in any case that the child is really regenerate. Have we not here a glaring inconsistency? Nay more, have we not also such a dealing with sacred words and things as might justly be regarded as impiety towards God and untruthfulness towards men? What is it but impiety to give God hearty thanks that it hath pleased Him to regenerate a child in baptism, when there is no assured confidence in the mind of the baptizer that that great and radical change of nature has really been effected? It is a fearful thing thus to mock God with empty words, and to utter as prayer and thanksgiving language which may represent no reality. And are not parents deliberately deceived when they accept from the Church an assurance that their baptized children are regenerate, when even the baptizer himself is not certain that they are so? Surely, if any persons ought to be urged to "consider seriously the dangerous tendency of their views and the consequences which logically result from them," it is the Bishop himself and the clergy of the Evangelical party.

But the Bishop defends himself—*thus*. In his

able and interesting, but sadly illogical, work on *Principles for Churchmen*, he says on page 21: 'The utmost you can make of the expression ("This child is regenerate") is, as Bishop Carleton says, that "*it is the charity of the Church*"; or as Bishop Downname, Archbishop Usher, and Dean Durel say, "*the judgment of charity.*"' What is this "charity," when honestly judged by the ordinary laws of morality? Is it not simple untruthfulness and speaking falsely in the name of the Lord? If everybody played with religious words in this fashion, our country would soon be ripe for a heavy judgment from the Almighty. What a curious thing this charity of the Church is! While refusing to bury an innocent baby when it dies unbaptized, it freely pronounces every baptized infant "regenerate," and has no hesitation in burying all baptized persons, however they may have lived and died, "in the sure and certain hope of the resurrection to eternal life." It may not be wrong for "the judgment of charity" to express wishes and hopes, but it certainly cannot be right to declare as facts things which cannot be verified.

And what about those who *accept* the teaching of the Prayer-book regarding baptism? They believe that baptism with water and the baptism of the Holy Ghost *always go together*. Is that in harmony with Scripture? What do we read? ‘*When the Apostles which were at Jerusalem heard that Samaria had received the Word of God, they sent unto them Peter and John : who, when they were come down, prayed for them, that they might receive the Holy Ghost : for as yet He was fallen upon none of them : only they had been baptized into the name of the Lord Jesus*’ (Acts viii. 14-17). We have here plain facts to deal with, and these facts are conclusive. The Samaritan believers were first of all baptized with water by Philip, and then with the Holy Ghost when Peter and John prayed for them and laid their hands upon them. The two baptisms were *at different times* and by different persons, and though Philip was only *an evangelist*, yet the Apostles did not repudiate his work by re-baptizing with water the disciples in Samaria. The contention that baptism with water and the baptism of the Holy Ghost *always go together* is clearly contrary to Scripture. And not only so,

but it is equally contrary to the every-day facts of observation and experience. There are thousands of genuine Christians in England—the Quakers, for instance—who have received the Holy Ghost though they never were baptized with water, and there are multitudes of others who have both been baptized and confirmed who are not Christians at all, and make no profession of being so. On this point Bishop Ryle speaks truly when he says :

“It is a perilous and soul-ruining delusion that a man may have grace in his heart which can never be seen in his life. Multitudes of our worshippers have not a spark of religious life or grace about them, and yet we are told that they must be addressed as ‘regenerate,’ or possessors of grace, because they have been baptized. Surely this is dangerous !”

Yes, truly it is dangerous, for these same “multitudes”—or many of them, at least—may believe that, having been baptized and confirmed, all is well with them. The most of the *sermons* also to which they listen take it for granted that they are Christians. It is possible to attend churches for months together without ever hearing an appeal to sinners to repent of sin and believe the Gospel, or listen to an urgent entreaty to professing Christians to examine themselves to see whether

they be in the faith. Real evangelical and Holy Ghost preaching is rare, and, we fear, is becoming rarer; and it is not surprising that it should be so, when all baptized and confirmed persons are regarded as "regenerate" and possessors of the Holy Ghost. When great spiritual truths and facts are linked to mere mechanical observances, the religious life is in danger of being reduced and degraded to merely ritual acts, which have 'the form of godliness, but deny the power thereof.'

On the occasion of a "*Confirmation*" Service, the following prayer is offered by the Bishop :

"Almighty and ever living God, who hast vouchsafed *to regenerate these Thy servants by water and the Holy Ghost*, and hast given unto them forgiveness of all their sins, strengthen them, we beseech Thee, O Lord, with the Holy Ghost the Comforter, and daily increase in them Thy manifold gifts of grace, the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of counsel and ghostly strength, the spirit of knowledge and true godliness, and fill them, O Lord, with the spirit of Thy holy fear, now and for ever. Amen."

After all these statements about regeneration, forgiveness, and increase of grace, it is not wonderful if multitudes of comparatively ignorant and careless worshippers conclude that all is right with them in relation to God and eternity, and if they

should also manifest a great deal of contentment with a low religious state. Neither is it surprising that the Ritualist clergy should regard *preaching* as a very subordinate matter, to be disposed of as quickly as possible, in order that fine music and elaborate ritual may be all the more carefully and lengthily attended to. It is much more easy to arrange a performance than to preach the Gospel faithfully, and thereby become an efficient helper of the Holy Ghost. The root of much evil lies in the doctrine of Baptismal Regeneration, which, tested both by Scripture and experience, is found to be a fiction, a monstrous perversion of a simple and instructive rite. The only *real* baptism is the baptism of the Holy Ghost, of which baptism with water is merely a symbol—‘one Lord, one faith, *one baptism.*’ If it were not so, is it believable that Paul would have said to the Corinthians: ‘I thank God that I baptized none of you, save Crispus and Gaius’?

II.—THE LORD'S SUPPER.

We have now come to a point of peculiar interest and importance, which deserves and demands the most careful consideration. And

I. *What do the Scriptures say regarding it?* 'As they were eating, Jesus took bread, and blessed, and brake it; and He gave to the disciples, and said, Take, eat; this is My body. And He took a cup, and gave thanks, and gave to them, saying, Drink ye all of it; for this is My blood of the covenant, which is shed for many unto remission of sins. But I say unto you, I will not drink henceforth of *this fruit of the vine*, until that day when I drink it new with you in My Father's kingdom' (Matt. xxvi. 26-29). 'I received of the Lord that which also I delivered unto you, how that the Lord Jesus in the night in which He was betrayed took bread; and when He had *given thanks*, He brake it, and said, This is My body, which is for you: this do in remembrance of Me. In like manner also the cup, after supper, saying, This cup is the new covenant in My blood: this do, as oft as ye drink it, in remembrance of Me.

For as often as ye eat *this bread*, and drink the cup, ye proclaim the Lord's death till He come. Wherefore whosoever shall eat the bread or drink the cup of the Lord unworthily, shall be guilty of the body and blood of the Lord. But let a man prove himself, and so let him eat of the bread, and drink of the cup. For he that eateth and drinketh, eateth and drinketh judgment unto himself, if he discern not the body' (1 Cor. xi. 23-29).

2. *The Prayer-book.* In the Prayer of Consecration, the priest says :

"Almighty God, our Heavenly Father, who of Thy tender mercy didst give Thine only Son Jesus Christ to suffer death upon the cross for our redemption, who made there (by His one oblation of Himself once offered) a full, perfect, and sufficient sacrifice, oblation, and satisfaction for the sins of the whole world ; and did institute, and in His holy Gospel command us to continue, a perpetual memory of that His precious death until His coming again : hear us, O merciful Father, we most humbly beseech Thee, and grant that we, receiving these Thy creatures of bread and wine, according to Thy Son our Saviour Jesus Christ's holy institution, in remembrance of His death and passion, may be partakers of His most blessed Body and Blood."

The Rubric says :

"Whereas it is ordained in this office for the Administration of the Lord's Supper that the Communicants should

receive the same kneeling (which order is well meant for a signification of our humble and grateful acknowledgement of the benefits of Christ therein given to all worthy Receivers, and for the avoiding of such profanation and disorder in the Holy Communion as might otherwise ensue), yet, lest the same kneeling should by any persons, either out of ignorance and infirmity, or out of malice and obstinacy, be misconstrued and depraved, it is hereby declared, That thereby no Adoration is intended, or ought to be done, either unto the Sacramental Bread or Wine there bodily received, or unto any Corporal Presence of Christ's natural Flesh and Blood. For the Sacramental Bread and Wine remain still in their very natural substances, and therefore may not be adored (for that were Idolatry to be abhorred of all faithful Christians)."

In the 28th Article it is also said :

"Transubstantiation (or the change of the substance of Bread and Wine) in the Supper of the Lord . . . is repugnant to the plain words of Scripture, overthroweth the nature of a Sacrament, and hath given occasion to many superstitions."

These quotations are all true, and in perfect harmony with the Word of God. Entire loyalty to their teachings would have made the acceptance of the chief doctrines of Ritualism impossible.

But a vast amount of rampant lawlessness, alas! has arisen in the Church in recent times, of which the Ritualistic clergy are chiefly guilty. When

they were ordained, the Bishop inquired: “*Will you, then, give your faithful diligence always so to minister the Doctrine and Sacraments, and the Discipline of Christ, as the Lord hath commanded, and as this Church and Realm hath received the same?*” And every one of them replied *ex animo* (as was supposed): “*I will do so, by the help of the Lord.*” But instead of fulfilling their vow, they are openly teaching the people to believe in the Sacrifice of the Mass, the Real Presence, and other Popish errors—errors which are not only contrary to Scripture, but also opposed to the Book of Common Prayer.

The word “Altar” is never applied in the Prayer-book to the Lord’s table, neither is the Sacrament of the Supper anywhere spoken of as a Sacrifice; and Article 31 says:

“The offering of Christ once made is that perfect redemption, propitiation, and satisfaction for all the sins of the whole world, both original and actual; and there is none other satisfaction for sin but that alone. Wherefore the Sacrifices of Masses, in the which it was commonly said that the Priest did offer Christ for the quick and the dead, to have remission of pain or guilt, were blasphemous fables and dangerous deceits.”

But in spite of all these facts and most definite declarations, the clergy everywhere are now freely discoursing about "the Altar" and "the Sacrifice of the Mass"; and the Bishops either minimize the evil, or cry "Peace, peace," where no peace is.

Let us now go, in imagination and thought, to the Upper Room in Jerusalem where the Supper was instituted, and carefully observe and consider the actions and words of our Lord.

'*As they were eating, Jesus took bread, and blessed, and brake it.*' These words are all simple and easily understood, except one, viz., '*blessed.*' What does this term signify? The Romanists and Ritualists reply, "It signifies *consecration*"; but St. Paul tells us that it was *the giving of thanks*. Put the words of Matthew and Paul together, and the term 'blessed' becomes luminously clear—'Jesus took bread, and *blessed*, and brake it'; 'The Lord Jesus, in the night in which He was betrayed, took bread; and when He had *given thanks*, He brake it.' There was no priestly consecration of the elements, but only giving of thanks.

'*He brake it.*' By this act Jesus *symbolized* the approaching crucifixion of His body. "Oh, no,"

say the priests; “the bread had been changed into His body, and it was indeed, and of a truth, His own very flesh that was now broken.” If so, then Jesus was crucified before He reached the cross; His body was ‘*broken*’ in the Upper Room. If the words, ‘This is My body,’ must be taken literally, then the atoning Sacrifice was already offered before He went to Calvary. The idea only requires to be fairly faced, and clearly apprehended, to be at once rejected as utterly untenable.

‘*Take, eat; this is My body.*’ ‘*This is My body, which is for you.*’ When Jesus uttered these words, the disciples had no idea of any change of the bread into His own flesh; for did He not visibly sit in the midst of them, even while He uttered the words? And the words themselves did not confound their minds, for they had become familiar with their Lord’s method of teaching. They remembered what He had previously said unto them, ‘I am the Door’—‘I am the Vine’; and were therefore prepared to understand His meaning when He said, ‘Take, eat; this is My body.’

‘And He took a cup, and *gave thanks*, and gave to them, saying, Drink ye all of it; for this is My

blood of the covenant, *which is shed for many* unto remission of sins.' 'This cup is the new covenant in My blood; this do, as oft as ye drink it in remembrance of Me.' The poured-out wine was a beautiful emblem of the shedding of His blood which was soon to take place on the cross; but if the wine had already been changed into His blood in the Upper Room, then His great Redemptive work was *finished*. If 'This is My body' is to be taken literally, then these words also, 'This is My blood of the covenant, which is shed for many,' must also be taken literally: and if His body had been '*broken*,' and His blood '*shed*,' then the great Sacrifice had been already offered. The conception is an absurdity, and ought to be impossible to every intelligent student of the Gospel.

'But I say unto you, I will not drink henceforth of *this fruit of the vine*, until that day that I drink it new with you in My Father's kingdom.' 'For as often as ye eat *this bread*, and drink this cup, ye proclaim the Lord's death till He come.' It was *after* He had said, 'This is My body'—'This is My blood,' that He uttered these words—words which plainly declare that the '*bread*' was *bread*

still, and that the *wine* continued to be '*the fruit of the vine.*'

And how is it now possible to transmute bread and wine into the Body and Blood of the glorified Saviour, when His Body is no longer natural, but *spiritual*, in its nature, and is not a Blood-filled Body at all? A clear apprehension of these two facts—that 'flesh and blood cannot inherit the Kingdom of God,' and that the nature of the ascended Christ is not flesh and blood—reduces the fearful doctrine of Transubstantiation to an utter and monstrous absurdity. And what is true of Transubstantiation is equally true of the Lutheran doctrine of Consubstantiation. The former teaches that the bread and wine are changed into the veritable body and blood of Christ, and the other that His body and blood are in some mystical manner "in, with, and under" the outward forms of bread and wine. They are equally unscriptural, because the glorified body of Christ is not flesh and blood, but a perfect *spiritual* humanity.

How, then, do we eat the flesh and drink the blood of the Son of Man, when we partake of the

Ordinance of the Supper? This is a question of much importance, and a question which deserves and demands (especially in these times of lofty priestly pretensions) to be thoughtfully pondered and very clearly understood. When Christ became incarnate, He did not become "Man" in the proper meaning of that word, but 'was made *in the likeness of sinful flesh.*' He became a flesh-and-blood man that He might suffer and die: 'Forasmuch as we are sharers in flesh and blood, He also Himself in like manner partook of the same; *that through death,*' etc. He was 'made for a little while lower than the angels, *for the suffering of death.*' 'He put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself,' and 'He is the propitiation for our sins; and not for ours only, but also for the whole world.' The bread broken at the Supper represents His broken Body, and the wine outpoured represents the shedding of His blood, and the eating and drinking of the emblems represent *the spiritual appropriation* on our part of all the blessings obtained for us by the great sacrifice on the cross. If, therefore, we believingly 'discern' the body and blood of our crucified Saviour in the broken

bread and the outpoured wine, we spiritually partake of the former, while we receive the latter. The *physical* eating and drinking of Christ's *natural flesh and blood*, even if these could be put before us, could neither quicken *spiritual life* in any human being, nor nourish that life in those in whom it is already quickened. Hence, Jesus said to the Jews, when they were perplexed by the thought of an *actual* eating of His flesh and drinking of His blood, 'What, then, if ye should behold the Son of Man ascending where He was before? It is the spirit that quickeneth; *the flesh profiteth nothing*: the *words* that I have spoken unto you are spirit, and are life' (John vi. 62, 63). Therefore Jesus said, 'This is My body,' and 'This is My blood.' 'I am the Bread of Life; he that cometh to Me shall not hunger, and he that believeth on Me shall never thirst.' 'Verily, verily, I say unto you, he that believeth hath eternal life.' These declarations make it abundantly clear that '*eating*,' '*drinking*,' and '*believing*,' are synonymous actions, and that therefore it was a mental and spiritual appropriation to which Jesus referred, and not a *physical* eating and drinking of His actual flesh and blood.

In one of his recent Visitation Charges, the Primate said concerning the Eucharist :

“ There are two distinct opinions which have for a long time divided Christians from one another. There are those who hold that no special gift is bestowed in the Sacrament, but that the value of it mainly, if not entirely, resides in the effect produced on the soul of the receiver by the commemoration of that wonderful act of love—our Lord’s sacrifice of Himself on the cross. Nothing more they think is needed, and nothing more they think is given. The spiritual effect, according to this view, is great. The memory of the Cross works on all the being ; it softens, purifies, elevates, kindles, and this to such a degree that possibly no other influence can be compared with that which is exercised through this great sacrifice. But there is no special gift, no supernatural interposition, any more than in prayer. The Sacrament, in fact, differs from prayer in degree but not in kind. *On the other hand*, there are those who believe that the Sacrament conveys to the receiver a special mysterious gift, uniting us to Christ in a special manner and degree, giving new power, new cleansing, new life, and even new insight into spiritual things, leavening the whole being with a heavenly infection. This gift is something far beyond the natural working of our own minds. We cannot define it. It belongs to the same order as the things expressed by the familiar but mysterious phrases, ‘ The Communion of Saints,’ ‘ The indwelling of Christ,’ ‘ The Church of the Lord’s body,’ and the like. The bread and the wine are no doubt figures, but they are figures which imply realities. *Now between these two opinions there can be no question at all that the Church holds the latter. The inward part of the*

Sacrament is declared in the Catechism to be the Body and Blood of Christ, which are verily and indeed taken and received by the faithful in the Lord's Supper. The communicants are told in the Communion office that if with a true penitent heart and lively faith we receive that holy Sacrament, then we spiritually eat the flesh of Christ and drink His blood ; we are one with Christ and Christ with us, and the teaching of the Article is precisely the same." (The italics are ours.)

What the ultimate effect of this extraordinary deliverance may be, who can tell? Meanwhile, it is abundantly evident that it has not met with the approval of either the Ritualists on the one hand, or of the Evangelicals on the other, although the former, we think, have the most cause to welcome it. The latter have never believed that the doctrine of Consubstantiation is taught by the Prayer-book, and possibly they may not believe it now, in spite of all that the Archbishop has declared concerning it.

When we worthily partake of the Sacrament, we are thereby brought very near to our Lord, and are impelled both to sorrow and rejoice—to sorrow for our sins which nailed Him to the accursed tree, and to rejoice over the great love which brought Him from the Father's bosom to

Gethsemane, Calvary, and the Sepulchre. We spiritually appropriate His flesh and blood—the flesh and blood which were crucified and shed *on the cross*—when we recognise the nature of and the necessity for His great atoning sacrifice, and personally receive in faith and love the spiritual and eternal benefits which that sacrifice secured for us. And as we thus eat and drink, praise and pray, under the sacred shadow of the cross, the whole of our inner being is opened to the inflowings of the Divine fulness, by which we are spiritually enlightened and uplifted, enriched and sanctified. But where are we told in Scripture that “the Sacrament conveys to the receiver *a special mysterious gift*, uniting us to Christ in a special manner and degree”? Or where are we taught to understand that “there is *a Real Presence* in some way attached to the elements *at the time of consecration* and before the reception”? The New Testament does not say a single word about any such ‘gift’ or ‘Presence’; they were invented by the priests for priestly purposes. “The Real Presence” is somehow “attached to the elements *at the time of consecration*,” and consecration, of

course, *must* be the work of a priest. Just here *is the root and source of the error*. Had there never been any men-made Priesthood in the Christian Church, we should never have heard of such unscriptural and absurd fantasies as the twin doctrines of Transubstantiation and Consubstantiation. We repeat: When the Sacrament was instituted by our Lord, He “gave thanks” for the bread and wine, but offered no prayer, nor performed any act of “consecration”; and *after* He had given thanks, He called the bread ‘*bread,*’ and the wine ‘*the fruit of the vine.*’ “The *corporal* presence” of the glorified Christ in the Sacramental bread and wine is impossible, because the glorified body of Christ is not flesh and blood; and “the *spiritual* presence” in, with, and under the forms of bread and wine is equally impossible, because the *spiritual* presence of a Body is absurd. And then as to the “mysterious gift” spoken of by the Primate — what is it, and how is it received? His answer is: “We cannot define it.” If so, is it wise to be so sure that it is a reality? We are not surprised that he cannot define the supposed gift, for it were easier to describe infinitude or

paint a soul than to give the definition of a thing which has no reality. As the late Dean Alford truly said : “ *The figment of sacerdotal consecration of the elements by transmitted power is as alien from the Apostolic writings as it is from the spirit of the Gospel.*” And Dean Farrar the other day in Belfast with equal correctness said : “ *Consubstantiation is a mere metaphysical, incomprehensive, meaningless conception, a jargon of unmeaning words, illustrations only of the pride, the want of common-sense, in theological speculation.*”

CHAPTER IV.

CONCERNING DOCTRINES.

IN this chapter we shall briefly examine *the Creeds* and *the Articles*. We need not quote them all, but only the parts which can be shown to be unscriptural.

1. In the so-called *Apostles' Creed*, it is said regarding the crucified Saviour that "*He descended into hell.*" Now, the word 'hell' is an old mistranslation of the Greek term *Hades*, which refers to the intermediate state between death and the resurrection, and not to Gehenna, which shall be the abode of the lost after the day of Judgment. When our Saviour died upon the cross, His spirit passed into Hades—first into its *paradise*, and then into its *prison*. What do we read? 'Jesus, remember me, when Thou comest in Thy kingdom. And Jesus said unto him, Verily I say unto

thee, To-day shalt thou be with Me in *paradise*' (Luke xxiii. 42, 43). 'Put to death in the flesh, but quickened in the spirit; in which also He went and preached unto the spirits in *prison*' (1 Pet. iii. 18, 19). 'He foreseeing this spake of the resurrection of the Christ, that neither was He left in Hades, nor did His flesh see corruption' (Acts ii. 31). Jesus did *not* descend into hell. As the author of *Our Life after Death* says: "It were well if our Church removed this antiquated blunder from her Prayer-book." Intelligent persons may know that Hades is the right word; but multitudes of others are ignorant of this fact, and humbly accept the teaching of the Creed, which is not true.

2. In the *Nicene Creed* we find these words: "*I believe in one Catholick and Apostolick Church.*" If the words in Article 19 are remembered—"The visible Church of Christ is a congregation of faithful men"; and also those of the Litany, "*That it may please Thee to rule and govern Thy holy Church universal in the right way*"—no objection need be urged against the statement in the Creed. But if this belief is restricted to an *organic* Church,

as it frequently is by narrow-minded bigots, then assuredly we ought to refuse assent to any such faith—a faith which unchurches other churches, introduces schism into the Body of Christ, and nourishes an exclusive and pharisaical spirit, which is thoroughly anti-Christian both in its nature and action. When Paul wrote to the Galatian believers, he sent his Epistle to the churches, not to the Church. And when John wrote the Revelation, he sent it to the seven churches in Asia, not to the Church. The one Church of Christ embraces all the churches, by whatever names they may be known, because the great brotherhood of believers in Him is the Church.

3. In the *Athanasian Creed* there are several points which demand notice. It begins thus: “*Whosoever will be saved: before all things it is necessary that he hold the Catholick Faith. Which Faith except every one do keep whole and undefiled: without doubt he shall perish everlastingly.*” And thus it ends: “*This is the Catholick Faith: which except a man believe faithfully, he cannot be saved.*” These are awful declarations for men to make to men, even if every word of the Creed were

indisputably true and Scriptural; but it is still more awful to make them when at the best it is only an embodiment of human opinion and interpretation, and when one or more of its statements may be fairly questioned by Bible-loving Christians. We unhesitatingly assert that *it is faith in Christ Himself*, and not in any doctrine or doctrines about Christ, which saves sinners. The New Testament Scriptures abundantly testify to this. Take the following: 'The free gift of God is eternal life, through Jesus Christ our Lord.' '*He that hath the Son, hath the life; and he that hath not the Son of God, hath not the life.*' 'These things have I written unto you, that ye may know that ye have eternal life, *even unto you that believe on the name of the Son of God.*' These passages are plain, indisputable, and conclusive: that it is a personal faith in a personal Saviour which makes a man a Christian. And we do not hesitate to add that there is not a single verse in the New Testament which teaches that the understanding and belief of the *doctrines* of the Gospel are necessary to salvation. What a mercy for the poor and ignorant that it is so!

In the Creed itself we are thus instructed concerning *The Person of Christ* :

“The right Faith is, that we believe and confess that our Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of God, is God and man : God, of the substance of the Father, begotten before the worlds ; and Man, of the substance of his Mother, born in the world ; Perfect God and perfect man ; of a reasonable soul and human flesh subsisting.”

There are three important points here which deserve careful consideration :

1. That in His pre-incarnate state the Son was “*God, of the substance of the Father.*”
2. That when He became Incarnate He was “*Man, of the substance of His Mother.*”
3. That in His Incarnate condition He was “*perfect man.*”

We shall not attempt to controvert these statements, but simply quote the Scriptures which refer directly to the pre-Incarnate, Incarnate, and Glorified natures of Christ ; and when the words of Scripture and those of the Creed are compared, the intelligent reader will see for himself how great is the disparity between them. Let us take the three points in their order.

1. *Concerning the pre-Incarnate Christ.—The Creed*

says : He was “ *God, of the substance of the Father.*” In other words, He was *Divine* and *Divine only*.

But what do the Scriptures tell us? The Son, as the *Wisdom* of God, declared regarding Himself: ‘ The Lord *formed* Me in the beginning of His way, before His works of old. . . . Then I was by Him as a master workman, and I was daily His delight rejoicing always before Him : rejoicing in His habitable earth, and My delight was with the sons of men ’ (Prov. viii. 22, 30, 31). And Paul says : ‘ The Son of His love. . . . Who is the *image* of the invisible God, the *firstborn* of all *creation* ’ (Col. i. 15). ‘ Have this mind in you, which was also in Christ Jesus : *Who being originally in the form of God*, counted it not a prize to be on an equality with God ’ (Phil. ii. 5, 6). How vastly different these declarations seem to be from that of the Creed ! Read them together, and allow them to produce their natural effect upon the mind. They appear to suggest that a great change was effected in the eternal Son before Creation—that He then became what He had not previously been—‘ the *image* of the invisible God,’ and ‘ the *firstborn* ’ (not of God, but) ‘ of all

creation, and ‘the *form* of God.’ These marvellous words cannot surely apply to a Being who was *purely Divine*. They seem to refer to One who was *visible*, and whose visibility had both a *beginning* and a ‘*form*.’ This same Being made the first of our race in His own image and *likeness* (a word which is never applied in Scripture to anything *invisible*), and also appeared on very many occasions in Old Testament times, *always as ‘a Man.’* This extraordinary fact, and the very remarkable Scriptures we have quoted concerning the pre-Incarnate person of Christ, can neither be covered nor explained by the words of the Creed—“*God, of the substance of the Father.*”

2. *The Incarnate Christ.*—*The Creed tells us that the Son of Mary was “Man, of the substance of His Mother.”*

The Scriptures, on the contrary, never say that the Incarnate Christ was “*Man*” in the sense expressed by the Creed. This is a noteworthy fact—a fact which greatly surprised us many years ago when we first recognised it through the careful study of the New Testament. What does it tell us? ‘The Word *became flesh*, and tabernacled

among us' (John i. 14). 'God, sending His own Son *in the likeness of flesh of sin*, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh' (Rom. viii. 3). 'God sent forth His Son, born of a woman, *born under the law*, that He might redeem them which were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons' (Gal. iv. 4, 5). 'Have this mind in you, which was also in Christ Jesus: who, being originally in the form of God, counted it not a thing to be grasped to be on an equality with God, but emptied Himself, taking the form of a bond-servant, *being made in the likeness of men*'—yes, in the likeness of men *as they are*, who are not truly and perfectly human, being flesh and blood (Phil. ii. 5-7). 'Since then the children are sharers *in flesh and blood*, He also Himself in like manner *partook of the same*' (Heb. ii. 14). '*It behoved Him in all things to be made like unto His brethren*' (Heb. ii. 17). The language of the Creed—"Man, of the substance of his Mother"—is also the language of theology; but it is not the language of the Scriptures, and the difference between them is very striking. The former tells us that when the Son became Incarnate "*God became Man*";

but instead of saying "Man," the New Testament persistently insists that He became '*flesh*' and the terms are not synonymous. The Jehovah of the Old Testament was 'a Man'; the Jesus of the New Testament was '*flesh*,' and now in the heavens He is once more the Man and no longer flesh and blood as He was when here.

3. That in His Incarnate condition He was "*Perfect*"—"Perfect God and perfect man."

Here, again, how strikingly different is the language of Scripture! Jesus said: 'Behold, I cast out devils and perform cures to-day and to-morrow, and the third *I am perfected*' (Luke xiii. 32). 'It became Him, for whom are all things, and through whom are all things, in bringing many sons unto glory, to make the author of their salvation *perfect through sufferings*' (Heb. ii. 10). 'Though He was a Son, yet learned obedience by the things which He suffered; *and having been made perfect*, He became unto all them that obey Him the author of eternal salvation' (Heb. v. 8, 9). 'The word of the oath, which was after the law, appointeth a Son, *perfected for evermore*' (Heb. vii. 28). There is not a

single verse in the New Testament which speaks of Jesus as the "Perfect Man." He had no *defect*, being sinless; but neither was He perfect in His nature, being flesh and blood. He had to be '*made perfect*.'

And what about the nature of Christ, as it is to-day *in His glorified state*? There is nothing about this in the Athanasian Creed, but in the Rubric on the Communion we find a very definite declaration regarding it.

"The natural Body and Blood of our Saviour Christ are in heaven, and not here; it being against the truth of Christ's natural Body to be at one time in more places than one."

This is a very gross and grievous mistake, regarding the nature of our ascended Lord. What saith the Scripture? 'Flesh and blood cannot inherit the Kingdom of God' (1 Cor. xv. 50). 'Even though we have known Christ after the flesh, yet now we know Him *so no more*' (2 Cor. v. 16). Having shed His blood on the cross, His flesh was progressively *spiritualized* from the moment of His resurrection 'until He was taken up'; and now *He is no longer flesh and blood*; but God's Ideal Man—spiritual, perfect and unchang-

ing. And because we shall be made 'like Him' when 'we see Him even as He is'; therefore we rejoicingly exclaim with Paul: 'Our citizenship is in heaven, from whence also we wait for a Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ: who shall fashion anew the body of our humiliation, *that it may be conformed to the body of His glory*' (Phil. iii. 20, 21). 'So also is the resurrection of the dead. It is sown in corruption; it is raised in incorruption; . . . it is sown *a natural body*, it is raised *a spiritual body*' (1 Cor. xv. 44).

When the statements of the Prayer-book and those of the Scriptures concerning the Person of Christ are thus put together and compared, we see that the disparity between them is very great. Indeed, they seem to have no resemblance, and when this is clearly apprehended, then loyalty to Christ forbids that we should prefer the former to the latter. We must never honour the changeful opinions of men as we do the eternal truth of God. There is no subject which more imperatively demands the reconsideration of our theologians than *the nature of Christ*, and it ought to be studied afresh, not in the light of creeds and the

teachings of the Fathers, but in the light of Divine revelation only.

THE ARTICLES OF RELIGION.

For the sake of brevity we shall not refer to the Articles which are Scriptural, but only to those which seem to be out of harmony with the Word of God.

Article 2 :

“ Of the Word or Son of God, which was made *very Man*. . . . The Godhead and Manhood were joined together in one Person, never to be divided ; whereof is one Christ, very God and *very Man*, who truly suffered,” etc. (The italics are ours.)

Now, the New Testament never says that the Son of God became man when He became incarnate, or that He was “very Man” in the days of His flesh. Its language is altogether different. What it says is this: ‘The Word became *flesh*’; ‘God sending His own Son in the likeness of *sinful flesh* or *flesh of sin*’; ‘It behoved Him in all things to be made like unto His brethren’; ‘Who in the days of His flesh,’ etc.; ‘Flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God.’ The glorified Saviour in the heavens to-day is “very Man,” the

perfect Man, but here He was only flesh and blood, and therefore had to be made perfect through sufferings. The teachings of the Article and those of the Scriptures regarding the nature of Christ are very different.

In Article 3 we are told that

“Christ died for us, and was buried ; so also is it to be believed that *He went down into hell.*”

But the New Testament says: ‘To-day shalt thou be with Me in Paradise’; ‘Being put to death in the flesh, but quickened in the spirit, in which also He went and preached unto the spirits in prison’; ‘Neither was He left in Hades, nor did His flesh see corruption.’ Jesus did not go down into *hell*.

Article 8 says :

“The Three Creeds, Nicene Creed, Athanasius’s Creed, and that which is commonly called the Apostles’ Creed, ought thoroughly to be received and believed, for they may be proved by most certain warrants of holy Scripture.”

This we believe to be a mistake, as we have already shown when dealing with the Creeds.

Article 20 tells us that

“*The Church hath authority in controversies of faith.*”

We do not know of any Scriptures which warrant this assertion. The Church is not infallible, and has no more authority than any individual Christian.

Article 21 :

“General Councils may not be gathered together without the commandment and will of Princes. And when they be gathered together (forasmuch as they be an assembly of men whereof all be not governed with the Spirit and Word of God) they may err, and sometimes have erred, even in things pertaining unto God. Wherefore things ordained by them as necessary to salvation have neither strength nor authority, unless it may be declared that they be taken out of holy Scripture.”

The latter part of this Article is admirable and true, and it would have been well with the Church if she had always acted upon it ; but the first part is wholly incorrect, inasmuch as some of the General Councils were not gathered “by the commandment of Princes,” and also because the only Head of the Church has given no authority to Princes to rule or guide His Church.

Article 23 :

“It is not lawful for any man to take upon him the office of public preaching, or ministering the Sacraments in the congregation, before he is lawfully called and sent to execute

the same. And those we ought to judge lawfully called and sent, which be chosen and called to this work *by men who have public authority* given unto them in the congregation to call and send Ministers into the Lord's vineyard."

This Article may be according to the law of a Parliamentary Church, but it is wholly out of harmony with the teaching and spirit of the Gospel. Was Paul thus chosen to be a preacher? And have not many of the greatest preachers all through the Christian ages, and even in our own time, been directly called into the Lord's vineyard by the Lord Himself, even as was the great Apostle of the Gentiles? Has the Lord limited His own power and authority to give authority and power unto men to call and send ministers into His vineyard? Assuredly no. He is still the Head of His own Church and the Ruler of all His people.

Had the Articles come to us only as a *Declaration of Faith*, an embodiment of the opinions of the Church's officers centuries ago, we might gladly and gratefully have accepted them for ends of instruction, guidance, and help in the religious life. But coming as a *Creed*, backed by royal warrant and imposed by royal will, the will of

“The Defender of the Faith, and Supreme Governor of the Church within these Our Dominions. . . .” “Requiring all Our loving Subjects to continue in the uniform Profession thereof, *and prohibiting the least difference from the said Articles,*” it is our bounden duty to resent and reject it as an instrument of oppression and tyranny, that we may ‘stand fast in the liberty wherewith Christ has made us free.’ And if we clearly apprehend and properly appreciate our privileges as the Lord’s freemen, we shall carefully see to it that we are not again entangled in the yoke of royal or priestly bondage. ‘The bondservant abideth not in the house for ever: the son abideth for ever. If therefore the Son shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed’ (John viii. 35, 36).

CHAPTER V.

CONCERNING SIN.

WE now come to a vastly important matter, *the right apprehension of sin*. There is probably no subject about which the children of God need more enlightenment than the nature of sin and sinning, and there is, we think, no subject about which the Church is more vague and unsatisfactory in its teachings than this. And when men are wrong in their conceptions of moral evil, they are also likely to hold defective views of the purpose and possibilities of the Christian life and the work of the Holy Ghost. How and where are the right ideas to be obtained, if not by the devout reading and study of the Word of God? Only God can tell us what sin and sinning really are, for it is against Him and His holy laws that we have all transgressed. And that He *has* told us in

His Word is abundantly evident from this fact—that it searches and reveals the very innermost parts of our being. ‘The Word of the Lord is living and active, and sharper than any two-edged sword, and piercing, even to the dividing of soul and spirit, of both joints and marrow, and quick to discern the thoughts and intents of the heart.’

What is sin? ‘Sin is lawlessness.’ ‘Everyone that doeth sin, doeth also lawlessness.’ ‘All unrighteousness is sin.’ ‘To him, therefore, that knoweth to do good and doeth it not, to him it is sin.’

All men are sinners. ‘All have sinned and fall short of the glory of God.’ ‘There is none righteous, no not one.’

Because we have sinned, we are all sinful. Our nature is in a sinful state, and that state necessarily taints all the operations and outgoings of our whole being. Article 9 truly says: “This infection of nature doth remain, yea, in them that are regenerated.” A clean thing cannot come out of an unclean. The fountain being corrupted, the streams must be impure.

Jesus is a Saviour from sins. ‘The Father sent

the Son to be the Saviour of the world.' 'Thou shalt call His name Jesus, for it is He that shall save His people from their sins.' 'Christ Jesus came to save sinners.' 'While we were yet sinners Christ died for us.' 'Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many.' 'When He had made purification of sins, He sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high.' 'Wherefore also He is able to save to the uttermost them that draw near unto God through Him, seeing He ever liveth to make intercession for them.'

When does Jesus save His people from their sins? When they truly repent and believe the Gospel, or, in other words, when they accept Him as their personal Saviour. 'Sirs, what must I do to be saved? Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved.' 'He that believeth shall be saved.' 'Come now, and let us reason together, saith the Lord; though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool.' 'I will be merciful to their iniquities, and their sins will I remember no more.' 'As far as the east is from the west, so far hath He removed our transgres-

sions from us.' 'Thou hast cast all my sins behind Thy back.'

But even when our sins are all forgiven, *sinfulness remains*; and out of that sinfulness new *sins* may arise. What sort of sins? for all sins are not of the same nature and quality.

1. *Sins of Ignorance*.—'If anyone shall sin *unwittingly* in any of the things which the Lord hath commanded not to be done.' 'As children of obedience, not fashioning yourselves according to your former lusts *in the time of your ignorance*.'

2. *Sins of Shortcoming*.—These may be sins either of omission or of commission, but they are not sins of conscious and intentional wrong-doing. The best of Christians may be 'overtaken in a fault.' 'Cleanse Thou me from secret faults.' 'If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us.' When 'secret faults' come up into our consciousness, we pray, 'Forgive us our trespasses'; and when we stumble and consciously fall through inadvertence and carelessness, we also pray, 'Forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive them who trespass against us.' There may never come to any Christian upon earth a time

when he shall have no occasion to present that petition unto the Father. And oh, how blessed it is to know that, 'if we confess our sins, He is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.'

3. *Sins of Wickedness.*—*These are sins of intentional and wilful wrong-doing*, as all the Scriptures which refer to them abundantly testify. The term 'wickedness' is never applied either to sins of ignorance or to sins of shortcoming. What, then, about sins of wickedness *in the Christian life*? We answer first that *they are absolutely forbidden*. When God says to the penitent and believing sinner: 'Thy sins, which are many, are all forgiven thee,' He also says: 'Go and sin no more.' 'Be ye holy, for I am holy, saith the Lord.' We also answer that what is thus Divinely forbidden *need not be done*. There is no necessity that any Christian should commit sins of wickedness, or, in other words, that he should intelligently and voluntarily do what he knows to be wrong. It is a sin to sin, and therefore it cannot be a necessity. It is true that we live in a world of temptation, and that when brought into its presence it is easy to yield to its power. But what do we read? 'There

hath no temptation taken you but such as man can bear; and God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able, but will with the temptation make also *the way of escape* that ye may be able to endure it.' 'Blessed is he that endureth temptation.' The whole of the sixth chapter of Romans was written by Paul to show that conscious sinning is not a necessity, and also to dissuade believers in Christ from committing wilful sins: 'Shall we continue in sin that grace may abound? God forbid! *We who died to sin, how shall we any longer live therein?*' 'Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal body that ye should obey the lusts thereof.' '*Sin shall not have dominion over you, for ye are not under law but under grace.*' 'Being made free from sin and become servants to God, ye have your fruit unto sanctification, and the end eternal life.' No possible statements could show more clearly or definitely than these of our Apostle the non-necessity of sinning, and the imperative duty of every Christian to cease from the doing of evil. And John's declarations concerning this great matter are just as plain and strong as those of Paul. This is what he says: 'My little children,

these things write I unto you, *that ye may not sin*. But if any man sin, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous.' 'We know that whosoever is begotten of God *sinneth not*, but He that was begotten of God keepeth him, and the evil one toucheth him not.' 'Whosoever *abideth* in Him *sinneth not*.'

We never find that sins of wickedness were confessed by the Apostles themselves. When James says, '*In many things we all stumble*,' he is not referring to sins at all, but only to *defects in teaching*, as the context clearly shows: 'Be not many *teachers*, my brethren, knowing that we shall receive greater judgment. For in many things we all stumble. If any man stumbleth not *in word*, the same is a perfect man, able to bridle the whole body also.' When Paul exclaimed: 'Faithful is the saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, *of whom I am chief*,' he was not describing himself as he then was, but what he had been when he was saved from his sins by the Saviour. As Bishop Ellicott truly remarks: "The Apostle alludes to his conversion and to his state pre-

ceding it.” And in like manner the whole of the seventh chapter of Romans is a vivid description of his life and experience *under the law*, and not under grace: ‘When we were in the flesh, the sinful passions, which were through the law, wrought in our members to bring forth fruit unto death. But now we have been discharged from the law, having died to that wherein we were holden; so that we serve in newness of the spirit, and not in oldness of the letter.’ . . . ‘O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me out of the body of this death? I thank God, through Jesus Christ our Lord.’ For what does he thank God in this triumphant outburst of joy and victory? It is clearly for the deliverance he had experienced out of the body of a carnal death, and consequently he proceeds to say: ‘There is therefore now no condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus.’ Hence, in his different Epistles, we find such testimonies as the following: ‘Our glorying is this, the testimony of our conscience, that in holiness and sincerity of God, not in fleshly wisdom but in the grace of God, we behaved ourselves in the world and more abundantly to you-ward.’ ‘The

life which I now live in the flesh, I live in faith ; the faith which is in the Son of God who loved me and gave Himself for me.' 'Ye are witnesses, and God also ; how holily and righteously and unblamedly we behaved ourselves toward you that believe.' 'Herein do I also exercise myself, to have a conscience void of offence toward God and men alway.' *And what was the nature of his prayers for believers ?* 'The God of peace himself sanctify you wholly ; and may your spirit and soul and body be preserved entire, *without blame* at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.' 'Now the God of peace who brought again from the dead the great Shepherd of the sheep with the blood of the eternal covenant, even our Lord Jesus : make you perfect in every good thing to do His will, working in us that which is well-pleasing in His sight, through Jesus Christ : to whom be the glory for ever and ever.—Amen.'

Having thus seen what the Scriptures say concerning sin, let us now inquire what are the teachings of the Prayer-book regarding the same grim reality.

It plainly teaches, first of all, that Christians

are called upon to live a holy life, and that such a life is possible to every one of them. At the close of *The General Confession* this request is offered : “ Grant, O most merciful Father, for His sake ; *That we may hereafter live a godly, righteous, and sober life, to the glory of Thy holy name.*” In *The Absolution, or Remission of sins* it is also said : “ He pardoneth and absolveth all them that truly repent, and unfeignedly believe His holy Gospel. Wherefore let us beseech Him to grant us true repentance, and His holy Spirit, that those things may please Him, which we do at this present ; and *that the rest of our life hereafter may be pure, and holy ;* so that at the last we may come to His eternal joy ; through Jesus Christ our Lord.” These are admirable prayers, and truly Scriptural. It also plainly teaches, however, by implication, *that Christians go on sinning all the days of their life.* At the very next service we attend the Priest shall say :

“ Dearly beloved brethren, the Scripture moveth us in sundry places *to acknowledge and confess our manifold sins and wickedness ;* and that we should not dissemble nor cloke them before the face of Almighty God our heavenly Father ;

but confess them with an humble, lowly, penitent, and obedient heart ; to the end that we may obtain forgiveness of the same by His infinite goodness and mercy.”

Now, these words may most appropriately be addressed to *penitent sinners* and *sorrowing backsliders* ; but surely they are not suitable to be spoken to earnest and loyal-hearted Christians. Since they last prayed that their life hereafter “*may be pure and holy,*” have they intelligently and wilfully committed “*manifold sins and wickedness*” ? If they have, they certainly ought not ; for why should they sin ? It is a sin to sin, and therefore cannot be a necessity. ‘ Shall we continue in sin, that grace may abound ? God forbid. *We who died to sin, how shall we any longer live therein ?*’ We may daily and hourly commit ‘*sins of ignorance,*’ and *fall far short* of the requirements of the Gospel, and even of our own ideal of a worthy Christian life ; but let no one fail to notice that these are not “*sins and wickedness*” according to the Scripture signification of the words. “*Sins and wickedness,*” if committed, must be done intentionally and with the consent of the will. To regard defects and shortcomings

as equivalent to sins and wickedness is to confound things which are wholly different, and also to misapprehend and misinterpret the teachings of the Word. Must the life of every Christian continue always and to the end to be a constant succession of falls and risings, sinnings and repentings? Surely not! Are we not Divinely assured that sin shall not have dominion over us 'if we walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit'? '*Being made free from sin, and become servants to God, ye have your fruit unto sanctification and the end eternal life.*' 'Having therefore these promises, beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all defilement of flesh and spirit, *perfecting holiness in the fear of God.*' All these passages, and many more that might be quoted, show indisputably that the new life of trust and love, obedience and aspiration, is Divinely intended to be a life of real, practical, and progressive holiness. What, then, about the declaration that "*The Scripture moveth us in sundry places to acknowledge and confess our manifold sins and wickedness*"? We affirm that, as addressed to true Christians, there are no such passages in the New Testament

Scriptures. When John says, 'If we confess our sins,' etc., he is manifestly speaking of those who, having been led into the presence of temptation, have yielded to its power; but that he expects them to go on sinning and doing wickedly is clearly inadmissible, seeing that he immediately adds: '*These things write I unto you that ye may not sin.*' The utter unnaturalness and incongruity of praying frequently and alternately for grace to live "a pure and holy life," and then for the pardon of "manifold sins and wickedness," would be felt by every enlightened and whole-hearted Christian Churchman were it not for the blinding and confusing influences of the teaching he receives from the Prayer-book.

But alas! multitudes attend religious services who are not whole-souled in their consecration to Christ; and the effect upon them of constantly mixing such petitions is likely to be very injurious. It may produce the impression, if not the conviction, that *they cannot cease from sinning*—that forgiveness is readily and easily obtainable, and that while holiness is to be constantly desired and sought after, it can never be attained in this

mortal life except in a very limited degree. Would it be wonderful if such mistaken ideas led them to think lightly of sin on the one hand and of godliness on the other, and made the Prayer-book a much more popular guide than the Scriptures?

Again, when the *Litany* is said, what are we taught to pray?

“O God, the Father of heaven, have mercy upon us miserable sinners. O God the Son, Redeemer of the world, have mercy upon us miserable sinners. O God the Holy Ghost, proceeding from the Father and the Son, have mercy upon us miserable sinners. O holy, blessed, and glorious Trinity, three Persons and one God, have mercy upon us miserable sinners.”

Now, is it possible that real Christians can offer these prayers with honest hearts? Are they “sinners” in the Gospel meaning of that term; and are they consciously “miserable” because they cannot cease from sinning? On the contrary, they are ‘saints’; and are able truly to declare with Paul—‘Being, therefore, justified by faith, let us have *peace* with God through our Lord Jesus Christ’; and not only so, but we also *rejoice* in God through our Lord Jesus Christ.

And what is the Apostle's exhortation to all such?—' Rejoice in the Lord alway; again I will say, Rejoice.' True Christians are no longer "miserable sinners," but rejoicing 'saints'; and for such persons to be constantly called upon to declare before God that they are what they are not is unreal and hurtful. Speech ought always to be sincere and simple, and most of all when we speak to Him who is the searcher of hearts. For God's sake and our own let us put away from us at once and for ever all empty unrealities in our religious worship and service!

Worldly Christians may offer such prayers with consistency, for they often intelligently leave undone those things which they ought to have done, and do those things which they ought not to have done. Their religious life is *half-hearted* and grievously mixed; and just because it is so they are "miserable." They walk from day to day between hedges of restriction, instead of delighting and disporting themselves in the flower-covered fields of a loving obedience, under an open sky, and in the enjoyment of 'the liberty of the glory of the children of God.' Conscience

is always saying unto them, 'Thou shalt not, Thou shalt not;' and when they break through a hedge and are bitten by the serpent of remorse or suffering, then they return to make confession of " manifold sins and wickedness " and also to acknowledge that they are " miserable sinners." Their experience is thus described in one of the grand old Psalms: ' Fools, because of their transgressions and because of their iniquities, are afflicted. Then they cry unto the Lord in their trouble, and He saveth them out of their distresses.' Oh how much better it would be if with all their hearts they turned unto the Lord and ceased to do evil! ' These things write I unto you, *that ye may not sin.*'

In a sermon in *The Christian World Pulpit* of September 14, which was preached in St. Paul's Cathedral the previous Sunday by H. S. Holland, Canon of St. Paul's, we find the following :

" Our Prayer-book assumes in the plainest manner that the life of a citizen in the Church will be one of habitual and continual confessions and absolutions. In every solemn act of public worship—Eucharist, Matins, Evensong—this form invariably recurs: the congregation confess, the priest absolves. And if this be not enough, everyone is free to

seek at a priest's hands in private an especial and individual absolution. So in that attitude of recurrent confession the Christian is to live, unceasingly prostrating himself before the Divine judgment, and owning himself a miserable sinner."

And he justified the doing of this on the following ground :

"As a child of love, as a son of grace, he wails and weeps and confesses how little he has responded to the heart of his Father. All that that Father has is his, and yet he, the elder son, has forgotten it, and not believed it. He has even grumbled because some fatted calf has not been killed for him. So his whole life of sonship, as it grows, is a process of discovering how deep his shame is seated. The more he knows that glorious life of the sons of God, the more bitterly he acknowledges his collapse, the more passionate the grief with which he desires to fling himself at the Father's feet and pour out all his penitence, and endure the scourge of discipline. That is the life of grace, the life of free pardon. It is a lifelong process of ever-increasing repentance and ever-recurring confession." "He (Christ) puts forth His sacred hands through the ministry of reconciliation, through the organized functional members ordained for His office, and His priests, as the social instruments of the whole body (the Church), absolve."

We see here the evil effects of Prayer-book instruction. The Canon unwittingly confounds things which are wholly different—*shortcomings*

and *sins*. It is quite true that the pardoned Christian still retains a sinful and corrupted nature, and also true that as he enters more and more fully within the radiant circle of the Divine glory, and sees with ever-increasing clearness of vision the beauty of the All-Beautiful One, he recognises increasingly his sinfulness and failures; but if at the same time he is earnestly and honestly cleansing himself from all defilement of the flesh and spirit, he will not be conscious of any “*collapse*,” nor feel impelled to confess “*manifold sins and wickedness*.” And if these are neither realized nor acknowledged, how can the “priest” absolve him? This continual acknowledgment of “*manifold sins and wickedness*” on the part of devoted Christians is not true either to Christian experience or to the teachings of God’s Word, and the absolution given by a man-made priest is nothing less than an empty unreality. Who can forgive sins but God only? “He pardoneth.” We would offer on behalf of all our Christian readers the prayer of Paul for the Philippians: ‘That your love may abound yet more and more in knowledge and all discernment; so that ye

may approve the things that are excellent; that ye may be sincere *and void of offence*, unto the day of Christ; being filled with the fruits of righteousness which are through Jesus Christ, unto the glory and praise of God.'

CHAPTER VI.

CONCERNING WORSHIP.

GOD made man for Himself, and therefore man is naturally a worshipping being. God is the worshipful One, and seeks true worshippers to worship Him, for His glory and also for their own highest good. His reconciled and loving children alone can truly worship Him; and because they are social as well as spiritual in their nature—the brothers of Christ and brethren in Him—they rejoice to worship together, and realize the communion of saints.

I.—PRAISE.

I. *What saith the Scriptures?* ‘Great is the Lord, and highly to be praised. It is a good thing to give thanks unto the Lord, and to sing praises unto Thy name, O Most High; to show

forth Thy lovingkindness in the morning, and Thy faithfulness every night. O come, let us sing unto the Lord : let us make a joyful noise to the Rock of our salvation. Both young men and maidens, old men and children : let them praise the name of the Lord, for His name alone is exalted ; His glory is above the earth and heaven ' (The Psalms). ' The hour cometh, and now is, when the true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and truth : for such doth the Father seek to be His worshippers. God is spirit, and they that worship Him must worship in spirit and truth ' (John iv. 23, 24). ' Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom, teaching and admonishing one another with psalms *and* hymns *and* spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts unto God ' (Col. iii. 16). ' Ye are an elect race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for *God's* own possession, that ye may show forth the excellencies of Him who called you out of darkness into His marvellous light ' (1 Pet. ii. 9).

2. *The Prayer-book.* What are the themes of praise provided in the Book of Common Prayer for Public Worship? They are not only the great

verities of the Gospel embodied in Hymns and Spiritual Songs, but also and chiefly the Old Testament Psalms. Now, the Psalms are sublime poetical effusions of faith and hope and varied spiritual experience, and they cannot be too highly appreciated, or too frequently read and pondered by Christian people; but it is also well to remember that they give expression, for the most part, only *to the religion and morality of Judaism*, which were of a much lower type than those that are Christian. The Psalms could all be chanted in their entirety by the Jewish people in olden times without any sense of incongruity or impiety; but large portions of not a few of them cannot thus be presented in praise to God by an intelligent Christian congregation. To *read* them in the Morning and Evening Services is right and good, remembering when and by whom they were written; but to sing them all in praise is surely a mistake. We have not done so for many years, and to listen to the doing of it by others is not edifying. Out of many examples which might be quoted, take the following :

‘ Plead Thou my cause, O Lord, with them that

strive with me: and fight Thou against them that fight against me. . . . Let them be confounded, and put to shame, that seek after my soul: let them be turned back, and brought to confusion, that imagine mischief for me. Let them be as the dust before the wind: and the angel of the Lord scattering them. Let their way be dark and slippery: and let the angel of the Lord persecute them' (Ps. xxxv. 1-6). 'Let their table be made a snare to take themselves withal; and let the things that should have been for their wealth be unto them an occasion of falling. Let their eyes be blinded, that they see not: and ever bow Thou down their backs. Pour out Thine indignation upon them: and let Thy wrathful displeasure take hold of them. Let their habitation be void: and no man to dwell in their tents. For they persecute him whom Thou hast smitten: and they talk how they may vex them whom Thou hast wounded. Let them fall from one wickedness to another: and not come into Thy righteousness. Let them be wiped out of the book of the living: and not be written among the righteous' (Ps. lxxix. 23-29). 'Set Thou an ungodly man to be

ruler over him : and let Satan stand at his right hand. When sentence is given upon him, let him be condemned : and let his prayer be turned into sin. Let his days be few : and let another take his office. Let his children be fatherless : and his wife a widow. Let his children be vagabonds, and beg their bread : let them seek it also out of desolate places. Let the extortioner consume all that he hath : and let the stranger spoil his labour. Let there be no man to pity him : nor to have compassion upon his fatherless children. Let his posterity be destroyed : and in the next generation let his name be clean put out. Let the wickedness of his fathers be had in remembrance in the sight of the Lord : and let not the sin of his mother be done away. Let them always be before the Lord : that He may root out the memorial of them from off the earth ' (Ps. cix. 5-14).

It ought to be impossible for Christians to sing such awful words as these, in prayerful praise to the God of Love—the Universal Father. Did not Jesus say :

‘ Ye have heard that it was said, Thou shalt love thy neighbour, and hate thine enemy : but

I say unto you, Love your enemies, and pray for them that persecute you ; that ye may be sons of your Father which is in heaven : for He maketh His sun to rise on the evil and the good, and sendeth rain on the just and the unjust. For if ye love them that love you, what reward have ye ? do not even the publicans the same ? Ye therefore shall be perfect, as your heavenly Father is perfect' (Matt. v. 43-48).

To receive such injunctions as these, and then present as praise the frightful maledictions we have quoted, is altogether wrong and un-Christian. If they could be *honestly* sung by any persons, our Lord might well say to them, ' Ye know not what manner of spirit ye are of'; and if they are sung *without intending to express what they say*, then the service is meaningless, or worse ; because the reflex influence of singing such words cannot be other than spiritually deteriorating and morally injurious. Selections from most of the Psalms may be sung with all propriety and much benefit ; but to sing them all in praise, just as they stand, is neither reverent nor profitable. It is going back to the beggarly elements of Judaism, and the low

morality of ancient times, and giving expression in worship to thoughts, feelings and desires which are not Christian.

II.—CONCERNING PRAYER.

1. *The Scriptures*: 'It came to pass, as Jesus was praying in a certain place, that when He ceased, one of His disciples said unto Him: Lord teach us to pray, even as John also taught his disciples. And He said unto them: Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you. For every one that asketh receiveth; and he that seeketh findeth; and to him that knocketh it shall be opened. And of which of you that is a father shall his son ask a loaf, and he give him a stone? or a fish, and he for a fish give him a serpent? Or *if* he shall ask an egg, will he give him a scorpion? If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more shall *your* heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask Him' (Luke xi. 1, 9-13). 'And in praying use not vain repetitions, as the Gentiles do: for they think that they shall be heard for their much

speaking. Be not therefore like unto them: for your Father knoweth what things ye have need of, before ye ask him' (Matt. 6. 7, 8).

2. *The Prayer-book.* What are its teachings concerning prayer? It teaches, by implication, that repetitions are *not* vain; and that worshippers *may* be heard 'for their much speaking.' For instance, in every service the Prayer which our Lord taught His disciples is recited twice. When *The Litany* is said, it is repeated again; and should any of the worshippers remain to the Holy Communion, they will be called upon to say it a fourth time. Is not this 'vain repetition'? And does not this frequent repetition of the Model Prayer tend to make the offering of it formal and lifeless? It is not improbable that this is the reason why it is so often read with irreverent haste and unedifying lack of emphasis. Both clergy and people become utterly weary of offering the same words in prayer two or three times in every Service. Whatever plausible reasons may be given for this frequent recital of the so-called Lord's Prayer, it is still 'vain repetition' and directly contrary to the Lord's express command.

Then again, if we turn to *The Litany*, what do we read? It ends thus :

“ *Priest* : O Christ, hear us.
People : O Christ, hear us.
Priest : Lord, have mercy upon us.
People : Lord, have mercy upon us.
Priest : Christ, have mercy upon us.
People : Christ, have mercy upon us.
Priest : Lord, have mercy upon us.
People : Lord, have mercy upon us.”

Again we inquire, Is not this ‘vain repetition’? Is the Lord unwilling to hear and be merciful, that He must thus be importuned? What saith the Scriptures?—‘The Lord passed by before him and proclaimed: The Lord, the Lord, a God full of compassion and gracious, slow to anger and *plenteous in mercy* and truth’ (Ex. xxxiv. 6). ‘The Lord is slow to anger and *plenteous in mercy*, forgiving iniquity and transgression’ (Num. xiv. 18). ‘For Thou, Lord, art good and ready to forgive, and *plenteous in mercy* unto all them that call upon Thee’ (Ps. lxxxvi. 5). ‘The mercy of the Lord is from everlasting to everlasting, upon them that fear Him’ (Ps. ciii. 17). ‘Who is a God like unto Thee, that pardoneth iniquity and passeth by

the transgression of the remnant of His heritage? He retaineth not His anger for ever because *He delighteth in mercy*' (Mic. vii. 18). 'I said, I will confess my transgressions unto the Lord, and Thou forgavest the iniquity of my sin' (Ps. xxxii. 5). 'Thou hast in love to my soul delivered it from the pit of corruption, for *Thou hast cast all my sins behind Thy back*' (Isa. xxxviii. 17). 'The law came in beside, that the trespass might abound; but where sin abounded, *grace did abound more exceedingly*' (Rom. v. 20). 'God, being *rich in mercy*, for His great love wherewith He loved us, even when we were dead through our trespasses, quickened us together with Christ' (Eph. ii. 5).

We have examples of repetition in prayer in the New Testament. We do not know what Paul's thorn in the flesh was, but believing, as he doubtless did, that it would not only be a sore trouble to himself, but also a great hindrance to his usefulness, he says: 'Concerning this thing I besought the Lord *thrice*, that it might depart from me.' The very fact of his mentioning this is a proof that he was not in the habit of offering repetitions in prayer. His request was not granted,

but he received something better; for the Lord said unto him, 'My grace is sufficient for thee, for My power is made perfect in weakness.' In the Garden of Gethsemane, our Lord Himself also offered one prayer *three times*; but in that thrice-repeated cry there was no 'vain repetition'—and why? Because there and then He was in an agony of sorrow, and besought His Father *for a specific blessing*. 'If it be possible, let *this* cup pass from Me.' What was the cup to which He referred? It was not the Cross, but the *mental anguish* from which He there and then suffered—'My soul is exceeding sorrowful *even unto death*.' *And His prayer was answered*, for 'an angel was sent to strengthen Him'; and from that moment, His mental anguish was removed. What are we told? 'Who in the days of His flesh, having offered up prayers and supplications with strong crying and tears unto Him that was able to save Him from death, *and having been heard for His godly fear*,' etc. (Heb. v. 7). Any Christian man or woman suffering, in measure, a similar anguish would be justified in repeatedly imploring God to take it away; but there is no reason in these

examples *why a congregation of people in ordinary circumstances should plead for a general mercy which contains no special request at all.* To pray for nothing in particular is not true prayer. The truth of this is brought out very clearly in the following passage of Scripture: 'It came to pass, as Jesus drew nigh unto Jericho, a certain blind man sat by the wayside begging: and hearing a multitude going by, he inquired what this meant. And they told him that Jesus of Nazareth passeth by. And he cried, saying, Jesus, thou Son of David, *have mercy on me.* And they that went before rebuked him, that he should hold his peace: but he cried out the more a great deal, Thou Son of David, *have mercy on me.* And Jesus stood, and commanded him to be brought unto Him: and when he was come near, He asked him, *What wilt thou that I should do unto thee?* And he said, *Lord, that I may receive my sight.* And Jesus said unto him, Receive thy sight: thy faith hath made thee whole.' The poor sufferer was intensely earnest in his cry for 'mercy,' but the prayer was general in its nature and therefore defective. Jesus asked him to make it specific, and no sooner did

he do so than his request was granted. There are no vague petitions for 'mercy' in the great Prayer which Christ taught the disciples; and when Christians have learnt to make their prayers specific, they will cease to repeat with unmeaning iteration such general cries for 'mercy' as we have quoted from *The Litany*. We are not heard 'for our much speaking.' Thus saith the Lord: 'Before they call, I will answer: and while they are yet speaking, I will hear.'

Our task is ended. We have endeavoured to show, with clearness and simplicity, the great disparity which exists between the Prayer-book and the Bible; and we have done so with the hope that when that disparity is recognised, all our readers will pledge anew their loyalty to the Word of God. It would be well if the Prayer-book could once more be revised, and brought into harmony with the Scriptures; but if this cannot be done, then let all who make use of it as an aid to devotion take care that it does not lead them away 'from the simplicity which is in Christ.' In matters of doctrine, let us always appeal to the New Testament, and not to the opinions of the

so-called Fathers, or to creeds formulated by Councils; and in all questions concerning the Ministry, the Sacraments and Ritual, let us ever do the same. There is no safe guidance anywhere, either in beliefs or practices, but in the New Testament. May the word of Christ dwell in us richly, in all wisdom! Amen.

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