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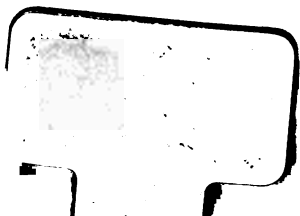
WOODGATE'S
ABNORMAL CONDITION
OF THE CHURCH.

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*ANOMALIES IN THE ENGLISH CHURCH
NO JUST GROUND FOR SECEDING;*

OR,

THE ABNORMAL CONDITION
OF THE CHURCH

CONSIDERED WITH REFERENCE TO THE
ANALOGY OF SCRIPTURE AND OF HISTORY.

BY

HENRY ARTHUR WOODGATE, M.D.,
HONORARY CANON OF WORCESTER, RECTOR OF BELBROUGHTON;
LATE FELLOW AND TUTOR OF ST. JOHN'S COLLEGE, OXFORD.



*Δεῖ γὰρ καὶ αἰρέσεις ἐν ὑμῖν εἶναι, ἵνα οἱ δοκίμοι φανεροὶ γένωνται
ἐν ὑμῖν.—1 COR. xi. 19.*

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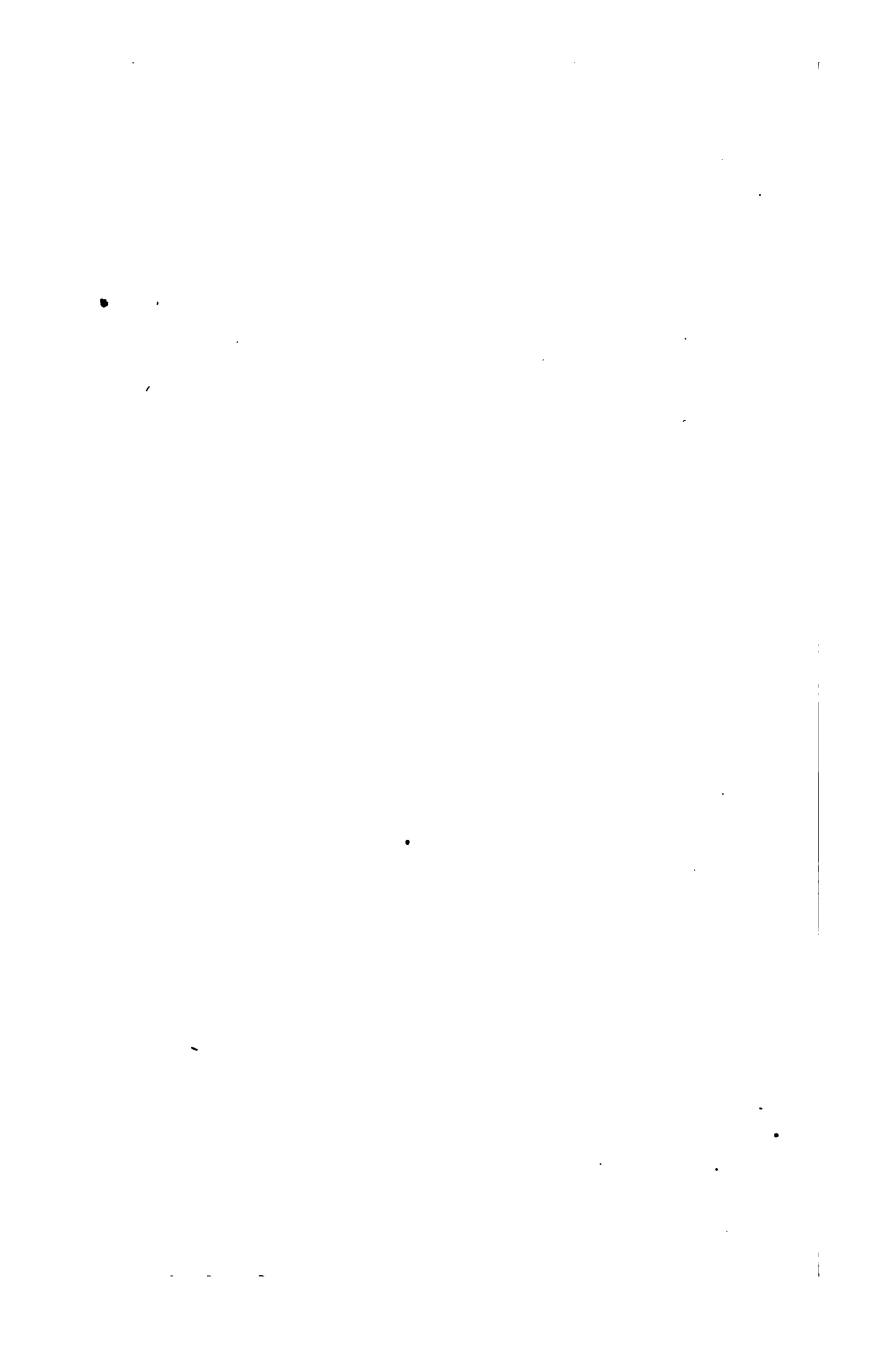


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P R E F A C E.

ON SECESSIONS TO ROMANISM.

THE subject of the following little treatise is argumentative and historical, rather than strictly theological. Its object is chiefly to meet the arguments drawn from the disorganized and abnormal state of the English Church, compared with the more perfect and normal system which the Church of Rome ostensibly offers, which have been, and are still, used with success in causing secessions among our own members, lay and clerical, whether as suggested by their own minds, or as brought before them by Romanists. These arguments are not, strictly speaking, of a theological character; but are rather suggested by the state of the Church, viewed externally; or if internally, viewed in relation to its practical working and inherent difficulties, rather than to doctrinal differences.

That, in the present state of the English Church, some should have deserted her communion for that of Rome, is less to be wondered at, when we consider the various causes which have been in operation to produce that result. Of the

latter, there are several which mere argument will not reach; especially those which arise from some morbid temperament, predisposing the mind in that direction, to which any trifling incident, apparently, happening at a suitable time, may give the final impulse. But there are also many circumstances which operate upon minds of a more solid and fair-judging character, especially those connected with what may be called the external view of the question,—circumstances to which Romanists triumphantly appeal, as shewing the want on our part of those notes of a Church, the possession of which they so confidently claim for their own. These circumstances, I would fain hope, may be represented in that light which would divest them of much of the force with which Romanists invest them, by assigning to them their proper place in the economy of God's dispensations,—especially by pointing out their analogy to other undeniable cases, of which we have the authority of Holy Scripture for saying that no deductions can be drawn from them analogous to those which Romanists draw from the abnormal condition of the English Church. If we have no reason now to fear further secessions, it will be something if we can allay or soften the feelings of dissatisfaction which our present condition excites in the minds of many of our members. To those who regard this abnormal

condition as of no account under any circumstances, these remarks are not addressed.

The present age has witnessed the novel spectacle of a partial revival of Romanism in this country, after an interval of nearly two centuries, and of educated members of the Anglican communion leaving their own Church and joining it. The evil effects of this have doubtless been very great. To our own members, they are calculated to create a want of confidence, and to lead to misgivings as to our own position: while to our Romanist and Protestant opponents alike, they afford a ground of exultation;—to the one, as indicating that our position is untenable; to the other, as exhibiting, as they imagine, in the principles previously held by those who have seceded, only Romanism in a more modified form. Yet nothing can be more illogical or unjust. These events furnish no just ground either of despondency on the one side, or of triumph on the other. If we consider the circumstances of the English Church for the last century and a half, we find nothing in this which need cause any surprise. No great movement can take place without excess being displayed by some party or other. When the first revival of religious earnestness took place in the Church in the last century, after the long and dreary torpor which followed the Revolution, how many who joined in it were

carried on by it further than in their cooler judgment they would have allowed, and were precipitated into the ranks of dissent. How many, feeling the want of something which the Church, as it then was, did not supply, sought those sectarian communities where they thought their excited feelings would receive their gratification. How many, without this unhealthy longing of "itching ears," feeling legitimate wants awakened within them which the general tone of public teaching did not meet, betook themselves to unauthorized teachers, whose earnestness led them to expect that they would there find what they sought; and the more so, since, having been taught to view the English Church in its political relation of the established religion of the realm, rather than as the Church of Christ, they regarded a separation from it as involving the forfeiture of a civil right rather than of a spiritual privilege.

Yet, although the authors and promoters of this former movement were so far to be blamed, that they depreciated the blessings and privileges of Church membership in their zeal to promote a more spiritual state of religion, no one would say that the movement was in itself to be regretted, or that those who threatened, persecuted, or otherwise maltreated its authors, were to be excused. The fault, if it lay partly with the

latter, lay also with the existing Church, which did not, in its public ministrations, offer a legitimate means of gratifying these yearnings; and part is also to be ascribed to human nature, which, when strongly aroused and carried on by a powerful impulse, is always marked by some degree of excess: the long pent-up stream must, when set free, in part overflow its banks.

In like manner, when it pleased the great Head of the Church, in more recent times, to supply that which was wanting in the former movement, — to recal us to a sense of the great blessings, privileges, and responsibilities involved in our membership of the apostolic Church; to the vital importance of the Sacraments, as the means and pledges of grace; to the necessity of a sound faith, especially a belief in the Godhead of the Son and Holy Spirit, and the hollowness and danger of any profession of faith divested of these essential articles of belief; to the authoritative teaching of the Church as the keeper and interpreter of Holy Writ, and as placing a barrier on those wild excesses of private judgment from which such grievous errors had sprung; to the Divine appointment of the three orders of the Christian ministry, and its connection with the due administration and efficacy of the holy Sacraments; to the sinfulness of men taking upon themselves to minister the Word and Sacra-

ments without being "lawfully called, and sent to execute the same," and the defective title to grace thereby conveyed, to those who received them so administered,—it was to be expected that excesses, the natural result of a strong re-action, would arise, analogous to those which had accompanied the other movement at the close of the last century. Nay, it may be said that, whether or not suggested by the experience of the former movement, such a result was actually anticipated. When the attempt was first made, upwards of twenty years since, to recall the attention of English Churchmen to the nature and constitution of their Church, as a branch of the Apostolic Church of Christ, and to rekindle the spirit which animated our standard English Divines, it was foreseen, and I well remember hearing it observed at the time, that it would probably have the effect, at first, of leading some to join the communion of the Roman Church; that it would awaken feelings which the English Church, in its then disorganized state, would fail to satisfy on the part of many, who wanted the faith and patience to seek what they required in their own Church, and who would turn to the Roman Church, which seemed to offer at once to satisfy their yearnings: but that if such should be the result, it would only be analogous to what had occurred in the former movement, in leading

many to seek, in the excitement of Protestant dissent, the gratification of feelings which had been called forth by the religious movement of the day, and which the English Church, in its then state, had failed to meet. It was not in the nature of things, in either case, that a great and sudden movement would take place without being attended by an overflow. When was it ever found to be otherwise, either in the religious or political history of mankind ?

Moreover, if the matter were fully enquired into, it would be found that those who have been led by what is popularly termed Evangelical preaching to throw themselves into the ranks of dissent, far outnumbered those who have been led by the revival of the Anglican system to join the Church of Rome. Those who fail to see this, or are unwilling to acknowledge it, keep out of sight the fact that those who join the Roman communion do so once for all. They take their departure; and as the discipline of the Roman Church does not allow them to pass to and fro at pleasure from one communion to the other, and to retain a nominal membership of each, their numbers are manifest, both as seen in their transit, and from the place they have respectively voided on the one side and filled on the other.

But in the case of secessions to Protestant dissent this test does not apply. Owing to the want

of discipline in the Church on the one hand, and the latitude which is implied in Protestant dissent on the other, one who joins the latter does not thereby void his nominal and legal position in the English Church. He may walk in and out of either body at leisure, and unrebuked. Yet in strict justice, in estimating the comparative numbers which have been respectively led to Romanism and Protestant dissent by the two movements referred to, these amphibious religionists, if they may be so termed, must be placed in the opposite scale as a set-off to the secessions to Rome.

To those who think lightly of Protestant dissent, and who would obliterate the distinctive marks between it and the Anglican branch of the Catholic Church, merging them in an assumed common Protestantism, this argument will have little weight. But to those who believe that objective truth in divine things is not a mere fancy or a name, but an awful reality; that the English Church has a definite creed and definite terms of communion, founded on that revealed objective truth; and that no external impediments to enforcing those terms of communion can affect the privileges and blessings annexed to their observance, or absolve from the responsibility involved in their violation or neglect,—the case is widely different.

Therefore, that the recent movement in the

English Church, which has recalled the attention of her members to her high gifts, privileges, and responsibilities, awakening that spiritual life which she has been the means, under grace, of fostering, reviving her neglected ritual, restoring apostolic "decency and order" in the performance of divine worship, repairing her dilapidated fabrics, banishing the irreverent and unsightly excrescences and rubbish which had so long defaced them, assigning their due importance to the holy Sacraments as divinely appointed means of grace, and rekindling in her ministry the spirit which animated her Reformers, and knit them in fellowship with the early fathers of the Church,—that this should, among its various accidents, have carried some onwards to an excess she would have herself condemned, is anything but a matter to excite surprise. When, in the history of the world, especially in the history of progress or revival, did a movement of this magnitude ever take place without a corresponding overflow from re-action? When, for example, after an oppressive tyranny, was the revival of liberty unattended by a certain amount of licentiousness? When, after the reign of democracy, and its accompanying tyranny, was the restoration of order and government unattended by a re-action on the side of power,—kingly, military, or other? In these corresponding cases in civil government, the wise statesman

sees that the best preservative against these reactionary excesses on either side, is the establishment of a firm constitutional government, which may combine rational liberty with the due protection of life and property. And there can be no question that if the English Church had been enabled to act up to her own principles, as set forth in her authorized formularies, and as she in a great measure did until overrun by the corruptions of the eighteenth century, many of those who have joined the Roman communion would have had little temptation to do so. But when they were told, even by bishops, that the distinctive doctrines and features of the English Church did not really belong to her, and that to hold and profess them was inconsistent with their allegiance to her, it was not unnatural that those who mistook the unauthorized opinions of individuals for the voice of the Church, should be led to feel that the Church of their baptism was no longer a home for them.

And what, after all, has been the number of those who have seceded to the Church of Rome? Say, of the clergy, a hundred, or even two hundred^a; of the laity, more: yet what are these

^a I find it impossible to obtain any approach to an accurate return of the number of clergy who have seceded. (The Roman Catholic documents are in no way to be relied on.) But it seems agreed on all hands that two hundred far exceeds the amount.

among twenty-two thousand clergy, or the hundreds of thousands who constitute the educated laity of the English Church?

Really, when we reflect on the circumstances under which the movement took place, and those which marked its further progress, so far from feeling surprise, or finding anything to shake our faith in our own Church, the wonder is that the secessions were not more. Nothing gives to my mind a stronger proof of the stability of the English Church, than that so great a movement should have been marked by so little excess or overflow. When we reflect on the character of the leading men among those who have left us, their personal influence, rare endowments, previous spiritual life, the combination of the highest intellectual gifts and extensive learning with holiness of character, self-denying lives, and unfeigned devotion, we should, I think, be the rather inclined to ask how it was that so few accompanied them in their departure, if, as many say, the principles which guided this movement tend so directly to Romanism. It is said that the most distinguished among these seceders have been grievously disappointed to find that they carried so few with them.

But even the importance attached to the secessions, such as they were, is still further diminished when we reflect how many other causes were in operation, in addition to the existing condition of

the English Church, and the discrepancy between her theory and her practice. There were morbid temperaments at work, and discontented spirits; the love of novelty, the temporary applause which greeted their arrival, and other feelings, which combined to carry them onwards, and which the healthiest state of discipline in the English Church would probably have failed to counteract.

I trust that, in warning others, I am guilty of no breach of charity in adverting, in corroboration of this, to circumstances which have characterized many of these individuals since their departure. Several persons who have been brought in contact with them, have had occasion to remark a singular intellectual declension in them since their secession, especially in those points where the intellectual powers are affected by the moral tone. But a sadder spectacle, and one which suggests a mournful train of thought, is the moral and spiritual declension which shews itself in the mode and tone in which they speak of the communion they have left, and in which many of them have exercised spiritual functions. One would have thought that the society in which a man had been born, in which he first drew his spiritual life, and in which, even if he repudiated the latter, he was nurtured and brought up, which did not beguile him from any other communion, but in which his lot had been cast by God Him-

self, would, even if afterwards found or presumed to be in error, have had claims on some kind of filial feeling, and to be remembered, though with sorrow, yet with respect, if not with reverence. In our relations after the flesh, a man who had been brought up by one whom he had always been taught to regard as his mother, and who had performed, as far as lay in her power, a mother's part to him, would regard her through life with a certain feeling of filial reverence and affection, even should he have subsequently discovered that she was not his natural parent: the foster-child will love and respect the foster-mother. It is said, too, that those who, like Romulus and Remus, have been suckled by animals, retain an affection for their rude foster-parents. What are we to think of men and women (for it is not confined to the former) who can speak in the disparaging, contemptuous, and bitter tone in which these persons speak of the Church which they had been taught from their earliest years to regard as their spiritual mother!

Nor less painful is the utter indifference with which they seem to regard the fact of having long exercised ministerial functions in the English Church. Every Catholic, Roman or other, who believes in the Apostolic succession of the Christian ministry, must believe that one who takes upon himself to minister the Word and

Sacraments, without being lawfully “chosen and called to this work by men who have public authority given unto them so to call and send,” is doing that which, viewed abstractedly, would be deemed a great sin^b. Even Wesley told his followers that if ever they presumed to administer the Sacrament of Christ’s Body and Blood, they would be guilty of the sin of Korah :—a sin, be it observed, which is in Scripture placed before idolatry, and when cited as a standard of wickedness, is associated with the sin of Cain, and that of Balaam. The assertion of this principle is perfectly compatible with the most unbounded charity, and the most indulgent allowance for those who, having been born and educated in an erroneous system, have been led into this act through ignorance, not of their own creation, and consequently so far irresponsible. And, doubtless, every one who, having thus ministered in the English Church, afterwards deems her to be no Church, or heretical, would derive allowable comfort, in looking back on his past ministrations, in the thought that he literally “did it ignorantly in unbelief^c.”

But our hope of forgiveness for an involuntary sin is one thing ; the feeling with which we regard

^b See Article XXIII. ; also the Preface to the “Form and Manner of Making, Ordaining, and Consecrating of Bishops, Priests, and Deacons.”

^c 1 Tim. i. 13.

the mere fact that we committed it, is another. A pure and single mind does not test its acts by the intention, nor weigh the responsibility by the motive. In morals, a pure-minded woman who had been unknowingly living in a state which, if known, had been one of sin, would not feel relieved in mind by the mere thought that she did it in ignorance, and would henceforth do so no more. It is not thus that the instinctive delicacy of a pure mind reasons; its feelings are not capable of being reduced to rule and measured thus. And in the analogous case (for the analogy is a Scriptural one) of tampering with the purity of Christ's Church, one who had been led into such acts, however ignorantly, would not quiet the instinctive remorse to which the most innocent are liable, by the thought that he was unconscious of it at the time, and would not for the future do it again.

Others, again, have observed with pain the secular spirit which has shewn itself in the dress, habits, and amusements of some of those seceders who have not been re-ordained.

Now when persons shew themselves wanting in the better feelings of our nature, as some of these do in the instances referred to, may we not, without being open to the imputation of want of charity, say that they exhibit a moral defect, at

variance with that high tone of moral feeling which a pure Catholic spirit and true Catholic teaching is calculated to promote, and that it may be fairly questioned whether they are, or ever were, Catholics at heart? May it not be inferred that their wilful abandonment of the Church of their baptism, has arisen from other and less worthy predisposing causes than the natural yearning after that which their own Church ought to supply, which it does supply to those who have faith to receive it, but which they have impatiently thought to satisfy in a communion which unduly addresses itself to sight and sense? Whether their present moral tone was among the predisposing causes which led to their secession, or whether it is the result of the erroneous system into which they have thrown themselves, or whether it partakes of both, may never be known. If the former, it suggests the question whether the removal of such from our own communion is to be deplored, save for their own sakes; if the latter, it affords a solemn warning to those who are tempted to follow them. In what estimation they are held by the Roman Church, we have no means of judging, beyond the fact that few, if any of them, have since been placed in offices of trust or importance. But it is admitted that Romanists themselves have been no less disappointed at the

small number who have followed these seceders from the Church of England^d.

It is very important that we view these events in their true light, and assign to them no more weight than they are fairly entitled to. They naturally attract attention as they pass, and occupy for the time a considerable space in the mind, whether of friends or foes. But what are they, after all, in reference to the eventful history of the Church as a whole, or even of this branch of it? They no more affect its destiny, or even its onward course, than the hills around us, great as they are in our eyes, affect the spherical form of the earth. As regards their practical relation to us, in the effect which they seem to have of retarding the growth of sound principles and a right faith, and of creating a re-action in favour of latitudinarianism and dissent, would it not be more consistent with faith to assume that the

^d These remarks refer to the clergy and educated laity who have seceded from the Anglican communion. They do not apply to those greater numbers whom the Roman Church has drawn from the uneducated masses, and who have been obtained by very different means. Of those for whom their large churches are built, many are attracted by the music and showy ritual of the Roman Church; others are those before whom the subject of religion has been brought for the first time by members of the Roman communion—persons whom, in our crowded cities, as with many now found in the ranks of Protestant dissent, our parochial system, with the scanty means at its disposal, has been unable effectually to reach.

seeming check thus interposed awhile to the progress of Church principles, may be designed for their ultimate advancement? A cause, however good and true, if unmarked by opposition, if unattended by partial disappointments and trials, loses many of those opportunities and means which analogy and experience point out as desirable for promoting its ultimate growth; and faith ought to see, in all these checks and hindrances, instruments for the ultimate advancement of apostolic truth and order. The tree of rapid growth is not the most enduring.

But with all this, there is no ground for asserting that the course of the stream thus set in motion has been really arrested. It would be more true to say that other processes, less likely to attract notice at the time, but no less necessary to its growth and development, are actively going on. It is impossible not to see the gradual and silent, though no less certain, influence of these principles on many who seem to be hardly conscious of it themselves, and who were formerly among the strongest opponents. It seems to act upon them as unconsciously as the pressure of the atmosphere does upon their bodies. The present lull of opposition, save from a small party whose violence indicates a consciousness of a bad cause and a sense of weakness, and the co-operation of earnest-minded men, hitherto opposed, in pro-

moting objects of common interest, are no uncertain tokens of unity of spirit where strife formerly prevailed. In nothing, perhaps, is this more seen than in the change which has taken place in the minds of many on the subject of the revival of Convocation, and of synodal action generally. Many who viewed this at first with jealousy and alarm, who wrote and spoke against it, and who opposed it by every means in their power, have since been found among its warm and most useful supporters. To those truly zealous for the success of truth and the advancement of Christ's Church, these silent and gradual accessions are of far greater value than a triumph over a noisy and unscrupulous opponent. Nay, the very excesses into which the ill-judged zeal of some indiscreet advocates of Church principles has betrayed them, have so far been productive of good, in that, by giving an apparently extreme character to that against which the popular outcry is raised, they have as it were widened the ground for cautious and timid men to draw nearer to Church principles in their true character, without the risk of being classed with those indiscreet partizans, or identified with the principles which they are presumed to represent.

At the same time, while attaching little importance to these defections, either as regards their number or the general tone, both now and before,

of many of those concerned in them, it is our duty to remove, as far as we can, any stumbling-blocks which may offend not only the weak, but others also who may have temptation placed in their way.

Notwithstanding the outcry which has been raised by some against what are termed Church principles, and their alleged tendency to lead persons to Romanism, I am convinced that they are, under grace, the best preservative against popery. That some whose attention has been called to them for the first time, who have been awakened by them, and who wanted faith and patience to realize in the English Church the feelings thus awakened, have been carried on to Romanism, cannot be denied. But it will be found that most of those who were thus carried on had their minds unoccupied, in the first instance, by any Church principle whatever; that they had previously formed part of what are commonly called the extreme Low Church; and that when Church principles were first presented to them, they came before them not only with the force of truth, but with all the attraction of novelty, without any ballast in the mind to check their onward impulse.

For example: a person of this class who has been brought up with the notion that Scripture, as interpreted by private judgment, is the sole

rule of faith, and has been taught to regard it as an axiom which it is a sin to question, has at length his attention called by some Romanist to the fact that such a notion is not only negatively unsupported by Scripture itself, but is positively contradictory to Scripture; that if he refers to Scripture itself, he will find that the Christian Church and the Christian doctrines are by several years antecedent to the Christian Scriptures; that the latter are written for and addressed to Christians; that they presuppose the reader to have been previously instructed in the things of which they speak; and that they consequently require the latter, as the key to understand their full meaning. He is further told that the English Church does not possess or profess to have this previous teaching to which the Christian Scriptures refer, (which is not true,) and that the Roman Church does possess it; and accordingly, in the absence of any other, he is tempted to accept it, as such, from them.

Now it is obvious, that if such a person had been previously taught the true relation of Holy Scripture to the teaching of the Church, as stated above, and had been also taught that the English Church does possess that teaching in the Book of Common Prayer, that she is ready to join issue with the Roman Church on that question, and on all others involving the witness of primitive anti-

quity, but that the Roman Church had abandoned this ground for one whither we care not to follow her—that of development; he would, as regards this argument, have been armed against the Romanist.

And in like manner, with regard to Tradition and the witness of the Church generally:—a person who has been brought up to regard it not only as unnecessary, but as antagonistic to revealed truth, —who has been told that it is regarded by the Roman Church as of equal authority with Scripture, but that it is altogether repudiated by the English,—falls in with some clever Romanist, well practised in controversy and in the art of gaining converts, who begins by asking him how he knows that the Scriptures, of which he makes so much account, as opposed to tradition, are what they profess to be, and on what ground he receives them as genuine and authentic; or, (in which brief form the question is probably put to him,) “how he knows that the Bible is true?”

This question at first elicits a burst of honest indignation, at the bare supposition that there could be any question on that, the belief of which is associated with his earliest impressions, and has grown with his years. Still the question is not answered, and he feels that it is not. It has raised in his mind a feeling of uneasiness, assailing his previous notions, and doing the work

which it was designed to do,—to make him admit the necessity of tradition, whether under that name, or historical evidence, or witness of the Church, or any other of like import. This being admitted, and allowed to work gradually in his mind, half the Romanist's object is accomplished: the wedge is fairly inserted.

But if such a person had been taught that the English Church does not repudiate tradition; that she relies on its testimony for the genuineness and authenticity of Scripture itself, “understanding in that name those canonical books of the Old and New Testament *of whose authority was never any doubt in the Church*”^e; that she teaches that “the Church hath authority in controversies of faith,” and is also “a witness and a keeper of Holy Writ”^f, and that she is willing to join issue with the Roman Church on any point which rests on the witness of the Church and tradition; that she first instructs her children in the fundamentals of the Christian faith by means of the Creed, Catechism, and other formularies; and that when they have been so taught, she further, after the apostolic rule, places in their hands the Holy Scriptures, that they “may know the certainty of those things wherein they have been instructed”^g—it is clear that the Romanist would lose that on which he now fastens the first link in the chain

^e Article VI.

^f Article XX.

^g Luke i. 4.

he would weave for him. Therefore, although it is true that many have passed to Rome more immediately, and as the final step, from what are usually termed High-Church principles, it must be borne in mind that, though they *passed through* them in the various phases of their course, they did not originally *set out* from them, but from the other extreme. Those who travel from one pole to the other must necessarily pass the equator. Some may pass it rapidly in their flight, others may linger there awhile in the hope of finding a resting-place; but neither can be said to have started thence.

Popular Protestantism, which repudiates every approach to a Church principle, and denies all objective truth, is the best friend which popery (and I fear we must add infidelity also) possesses.

But in addition to these arguments, there are other temptations placed in the way of our members, not trifling in themselves, and magnified and turned to account by Roman controversialists. Of these temptations, I believe that the principal are afforded by the abnormal and irregular condition of the English Church, rendered still more so in their eyes by the exaggerations resorted to by Romanists, and the fictitious normal state exhibited to them as that of Rome. Persons, in particular, of an imaginative turn of mind are attracted by what is termed the poetical symmetry of the Roman

Church, and the absence, as it is presented to their view, of those irregularities and anomalies which the laxity of discipline, with the absence of all concealment, exhibits on our part. It is to persons thus acted upon that I have endeavoured to point out that this abnormal condition of the English Church, with all its irregularities and discrepancies, so far from furnishing an argument against her claims as a branch of the Church Catholic, is not other than might be expected from the analogy of God's dealings as set forth in Holy Scripture, especially in the actual condition of the Jewish Church and polity, and the practical working of the Christian Church, as exhibited in the scriptural narrative of each.

Our own theories of what things ought to be, and our expectations of what they will be, are seldom borne out by the reality; and least of all in those things which pertain to the moral government of God and our own moral probation. Yet it does not follow that we should check these theories, nor banish from our minds those systems of perfection with which they are concerned: we should rather retain them as that at which we should aim, as the standard to which we should look, and by which we should measure our acts; looking to our shortcomings as tokens of our own weakness, the effect of which should be, to humble us at the thought of our deficiency, not to disgust

us with the state to which it has pleased God to call us, and to lead us faithlessly to abandon our allotted work.

In my remarks on the Roman Church, I have not entered on doctrinal questions, save accidentally, but have rather confined myself to those abnormal features in her system which stand in striking contrast to the normal perfection which she arrogates to herself. It is by means of the latter, as contrasted with the irregularities and discrepancies which the English Church presents, that she assails our members, and endeavours to seduce them; and I trust there is no breach of charity in pointing out that the like discrepancies exist in the Roman Church also, however carefully concealed and boldly denied.

I admit that in our present state of being these discrepancies are, to a certain extent, unavoidable in all religious communities; and it is therefore for no unworthy purpose of recriminating that I have adverted to them, but solely to protest against the inferences which others would draw from them to our prejudice, while refusing to apply them to themselves.

I would not be supposed to deny the high gifts possessed by the Roman Church, notwithstanding her own suicidal misuse of them, nor the examples of holiness afforded by individuals within her pale. My object is not to disparage these, but to defend

our own Church from the false inferences drawn by Romanists from circumstances which owe their origin solely to the external accidents of her position. Still less would I be supposed to justify or exalt, at her expense, that profane ultra-Protestantism which exalts itself against the institutions and ordinances of Christ, denies all objective truth, and repudiates the external authority which reason and Revelation alike offer as the check upon the pride of the human heart, and the wild excesses of human passion;—a system which, by making the individual judgment, no matter how distorted by sin or impaired by self-indulgence, the last court of appeal in matters of religion and morals, is, under the specious names of religious liberty and the rights of conscience, training large masses of our population for a wide-spread immorality and a hopeless infidelity.

Neither, in speaking of the discrepancies of Romanism, have I adverted to those of former times, but have rather confined myself to those which present themselves at the present day, and which therefore form a fairer subject of comparison with the discrepancies and defects which Romanists charge on us. Else, if we refer to past times, it may be fairly asked, what does the history of the English Church present, in the way of anomaly, which can offer any comparison with the great schism in the Roman Church in the fourteenth century?

I will only now add, that if it be objected that what is said in these pages is calculated to give us a low standard, to make us take erroneous and defective views of what the Church is capable of attaining to, and to lead us to rest satisfied with this imperfect and abnormal state of things,—it may be said in reply, that the same argument would lead us, in our personal religion, to be satisfied with a very imperfect state of grace, and to abstain from aiming at our Lord's perfection, or from any endeavour to follow the blessed steps of His most holy life, on the ground that it was beyond our reach, and utterly hopeless to attain. To any feeling or reasoning of this kind, as regards the individual spiritual life, a decided and awful answer is given in the words addressed to the unprofitable servant, in the parable of the Talents. And if the same awful words apply, as they undoubtedly would, to any relaxation of efforts to extend the kingdom of Christ, or to purify His Church, on the presumed ground that those efforts must at the best be attended with but partial success,—we have the comfort of knowing, on the other hand, that our imperfect endeavours, if prompted by a firm faith and a spirit of love, will be measured by the same evangelical rule by which our imperfect personal obedience, under the covenant of grace, is mercifully accepted for Christ's sake; and faith, by the same merciful covenant, is reckoned unto us for righteousness. Those

efforts may be met by the scorn and contempt of the world, and the taunts and ridicule of the faithless. But they may be approved and accepted by Him in whose service they are made; and small as may be their visible fruit here, they may meet with the same acceptance with her work of love, performed in the face of the like worldly opposition and contempt, of whom Divine love declared, "She hath wrought a good work on Me; . . . she hath done what she could^h."

^h Mark xiv. 68.

P A R T I.

THE ABNORMAL STATE OF THE CHURCH

CONSIDERED WITH REFERENCE TO ANALOGY.

CHRIST'S PRAYER FOR UNITY.

IN the solemn and affecting prayer which our blessed Lord offered up for His Church immediately before the commencement of His passion, both for the ministry which He had already appointed, and "for them also which should hereafter believe on Him through their word," He adds, as one of the closing petitions, "that they all may be one; as Thou, Father, art in Me, and I in Thee, that they also may be one in Us;" and then adds, as one of the objects for which such unity was prayed for, "that the world may believe that Thou hast sent Me^a."

Such was the connection between this blessed unity and the reality of the Church as proceeding

^a John xvii. 20—23.

from God Himself, as set forth in that divine prayer, ere yet the Church had been founded and placed under the guidance of the Holy Spirit: Unity was to be one of its chief notes.

For a time was the unity preserved, whether we regard the glowing description given of the Church's infancy, when "the multitude of them that believed were of one heart and of one soul: neither said any of them that ought of the things which he possessed was his own; but they had all things common;"—or whether we turn to a later period, when, notwithstanding various errors which had from time to time arisen, the Church, by her repudiation of these, and the ejection from her communion of those who held them, shewed that she had not as yet lost, even to human eyes, that note which her Divine Founder's dying prayer ascribed to her.

Will any one say that the present state of the Christian Church realizes this prayer or exhibits this note? Or will they answer the question in the affirmative, by conceding the claim to be called the true Church to such portion only as can exhibit, or profess to exhibit, this note? On the answer to be given to this question an important train of consequences depends.

In entering on the consideration of it, the question seems to divide itself into two parts:—

I. Whether such a visible note does enter

essentially into the authorized notion of a true Church?

II. Whether any branch of the Church professing to possess it does so in reality? For that the universal Church does not at this time possess it as a whole, must be admitted by all who regard the Greek and Anglican Churches, no less than the Roman, as integral parts of the Catholic Church.

To these two questions are appended various collateral ones. To the first, for example, that arising out of the consideration of *time*: whether the note should be at all times of one unchanging kind and aspect? To the second, what accidental causes, other than those connected with the fulfilment of our Lord's prayer, may have required and contributed to, for a time, an apparent, or even real, uniformity; and, in connection with this, whether the branch of the Church on which these accidental and external causes were brought to bear in times past, had in itself, independently of these, anything on which such a claim could be justly rested. These last collateral questions, which involve the historical facts connected with the establishment of the papal supremacy in Europe, will be considered in their proper place^b.

I. The question of unity, viewed as the note of a true Church, must rest either —

^b Part II.

1. On some definite promise ; or,
2. On some *à priori* argument founded on analogy.

To take the first of these. It will not be denied that there are promises to this effect of considerable force, as well as other passages bearing more or less upon it. We may notice, among these, our Saviour's prayer to that effect referred to above, in which he appears to identify the visible unity for which He prays with the tokens of membership with Himself: "That they all may be one ; as Thou, Father, art in Me, and I in Thee, that they also may be one in Us ; that the world may believe that Thou hast sent Me. And the glory which Thou gavest Me I have given them ; that they may be one, even as we are One : I in them, and Thou in Me, that they may be perfect in one ; and that the world may know that Thou hast sent Me^c."

Allowing this and similar passages their full force, yet they must be interpreted, and their meaning determined, by the analogy of God's dealings, whether as seen in holy Scripture or out of it. In considering this analogy, as interpreting the meaning of the Divine promise, I should also be in a great measure answering, at

^c See also John x. 16, xix. 23, 24 ; Acts ii. 47, iv. 32 ; Rom. xv. 6 ; 1 Cor. x. 17, xii. 12—20 ; Ephes. i. 22, 23, iv. 3—6 ; Philipp. i. 27 ; Coloss. iii. 15.

the same time, the second question referred to above—how far this unity itself, as a note of a true Church, rests on grounds of antecedent probability.

Let us first take the analogy of Scripture itself. Here, one of the first things which strikes the attentive reader is the discrepancy between Divine principles as framed by and issuing from the mind of the Almighty, and those same principles as realized and carried into effect by human agents. The one bear the type of perfection; the other, of imperfection and failure. So uniformly is this the case, that we do not meet with a single exception.

Take, for example, the Jewish polity as delivered to Moses, and by him to the people, and compare it with the same polity as realized in practice in the history of the Jewish people. Or take its several parts—the Theocracy, for example, or the Levitical or Aaronic priesthood,—and compare these with the actual form of government under the kings in the one case, and in the other with the schismatical worship and unauthorized priesthood under which ten of the tribes lived during a considerable portion of their political existence. Take, further, the toleration accorded to these abnormal states, and the favour shewn to individuals living under them. But still more striking is the fact that these very things, however

sinful, abnormal, and a violation of the Law, were yet contemplated in the provisions of the Law itself, as though this departure from its purity and strictness were in some way a condition of its existence among men. A remarkable instance of this is to be seen in the appointment of the kingdom. Great as was the sin of desiring a king, "when the Lord their God was their King," yet the institution was contemplated and provided for at the very time of the delivery of the law, and provision made for it in the law itself⁴.

There is nothing in this to cause any surprise or difficulty. It is only an illustration of a principle which pervades all God's dealings with mankind under revelation, and which has ever regulated the extent of Divine interference with the free agency of men in reference to their moral probation. It appears to have been the principle in the Divine economy, to deliver to men in its purity the declaration of the Divine will, and with it such institutions founded upon it as were best suited to their moral probation and spiritual advancement. The first introduction of these, under whatever dispensation, was accompanied by miracles and the exercise of an extraordinary providence by way of sanction; but when once launched forth, they are left to take their chance, if the expression may be allowed, among the ele-

⁴ See Deut. xvii. 14—20, xxviii. 86.

ments of human society, supported awhile, but only temporarily, by an occasional manifestation of the same extraordinary providence, during what are termed the infant stages of the community to which they were given. As the community advanced, this extraordinary providence was more rarely exercised, and at length totally withdrawn. If men were bent on going wrong, they were allowed to do so, and to find, in the more remote consequences of disobedience, the warning which was no longer given at the commencement.

But with all this, the divine institutions remained unimpaired in themselves, nor were the objects for which they were founded ever lost sight of. Man's abuse of, or non-application of, the divine principle, did not affect the vitality of the principle itself; that remained until a different phase of human nature, among which it had been cast, should allow of its proper development; that is, if ever such development should be feasible or practicable. If the Jewish Church was designed to be a type of the Christian, and that by which those who lived under it were to frame their lives, it must necessarily have been perfect, not indeed in itself, but in its typical character, and in relation to that which it foreshadowed.

And this brings us to another stage in the question, which will serve to explain more fully

what has been said thus far, as well as what may be said hereafter, and will also contribute much to strengthen the cause of the Anglican Church, by shewing the uniformity of error in those who, while opposing her on diametrically opposite grounds, are led into that error from a similar faulty process in the interpretation of the promises of Scripture.

Everything proposed by the Almighty to man for his obedience and imitation, whether in the form of precept, type, model, or any other, must necessarily be beyond his reach and unattainable. Considering the infinite purity and holiness of God, and the corruption and weakness of man, it would seem to arise out of the very nature of the case. But beyond this, if it were otherwise, —if the rule were not beyond his reach,—if man could attain to or overtake it, it would practically fail of its object, not only with reference to a state of probation, but also as connected with a covenant of grace and the doctrine of the Atonement. Such was the case with the law of Sinai. Viewed in its spirit and interpreted by the law of love, its obligations were without limit. Ever becoming more and more expanded and spiritualized, opening new spheres of duty, disclosing new obligations to those who fulfilled the obligations which lay more immediately before them, shewing at every step the impossibility of fulfilling it, it

brought home to the faithful servant of God the practical conviction that it could not be fulfilled,—that if his acceptance depended on his mere obedience, it was hopeless; or, in the words of the apostle, that “the law worketh wrath,” and “by the law is the knowledge of sin^e,” and thus prepared him to receive with thankfulness the glad tidings conveyed in the covenant of grace, which it was hopeless to look for from the law.

Nor is this confined to Revelation. The moral law, as written by the Almighty on the conscience, until erased by disobedience, is also interminable in its obligations. Its expansive purity, ever developing fresh obligations as those immediately before them are fulfilled, is recognised by the light of nature and the law of Ethics; and while its violation led to those frightful sins recorded in profane history, and enumerated by St. Paul at the beginning of his Epistle to the Romans, its fulfilment, so far as it could be fulfilled, led those who acted up to their light, to the practical conviction of the inexhaustible nature of its obligations, and made them yearn for some “better hope.”

But if either Jew or Gentile could have fulfilled the law,—if to either there had been a law given which could have given life, so that

* Rom. iv. 15, iii. 20. See also 1 Cor. xv. 56; Gal. iii. 10, 19; 1 John iii. 4.

righteousness had been by the law, whence had been the ground of that better hope? whence the foundation of the Gospel-scheme of salvation?

Take, again, our Lord's precept, "Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect." No one would for a moment imagine that this rule is capable of fulfilment, or that one trying to fulfil it indulged the presumptuous hope that he could succeed in doing so. It is only another illustration of the principle, that the rule, in order to be effectual, both as keeping us ever striving and as making us feel our own weakness and insufficiency, must be beyond our reach. The same remark also applies to our blessed Lord, viewed as our "ensample of godly life." God forbid that all those who fell short of that perfect model should be excluded from the class of His faithful people. The model must necessarily be beyond our reach.

Another striking instance is to be seen in the description of the Christian character given by St. John: "Whosoever is born of God doth not commit sin; for his seed remaineth in him: and he cannot sin, because he is born of God^f." Of no son of Adam can this be said literally. Again: "We know that whosoever is born of God sinneth not; but he that is begotten of God keepeth himself, and that wicked one toucheth him not^g."

^f 1 John iii. 9.

^g Ib. v. 18.

Again: "There is no fear in love; but perfect love casteth out fear: because fear hath torment. He that feareth is not made perfect in love^h." Did any mortal man ever realize this state while in the body? or, which is a more important question practically, are those who do not realize it to be set down as out of the pale of the covenant? I say that this is an important question, because persons have been led to question their being in a state of grace, from feeling that they did not realize this description, and also to deny that blessedness to others for the same cause. Yet there is no ground for this. St. John is not describing the Christian life as it really is *practically*, but as it is *in itself*, and what it would be were all the conditions necessary to its existence granted, which, in our present weak and corrupt state, it is needless to say is impossible.

What is here said respecting the individual Christian life—the difference between the abstract rule, model, or precept on the one hand, and the Christian character as realized even by the holiest on the other—applies with equal force to the descriptions, whether prophetic or other, of the Christian Church, compared with the state of the Church, past or present, as realized in practice. The model has been given, and the promises at the same time. But, though placed un-

^h 1 John iv. 18.

der the immediate guidance of the Holy Spirit, no greater amount of extraordinary providence has been accorded to keep it from the errors incident to its being composed of human beings, than in the case of the individual Christian. The same rule by which we interpret our Lord's precept to "be perfect," applies equally to His prayer for the visible unity of His Church. Whatever may be said of St. John's abstract picture of the Christian character, and the unreasonableness of denying communion with Christ to those who do not realize it, may be said with equal truth of those strong passages expressive of Christ's promises to His Church, and the continual abiding and guidance of the Holy Spirit, on which are founded not merely its claims to indefectibility, provided all the conditions necessary to it existed, but the claims of the Roman Church to the possession of that indefectibility and the other promises, as exhibiting a (fictitious) fulfilment of the conditions to which the promises are annexed. The other branches of the Church Catholic have more or less lost sight of the office with which they were collectively invested,—that of witness of the truth; and the Roman branch has stepped in and appropriated to herself, not this office only, but the novel one,—and one subversive of all catholic tradition and the witness of antiquity,—that of determining, through the doctrine of develop-

ment, new articles of faith. Now this power of determining new articles, even as a witness, could only be claimed for the Church throughout the world, and exercised through an œcumenical council. The Church of England, at the Reformation, settled the fundamentals of the faith, not on her own testimony, or by her own authority, but on the testimony of the Church while, as yet undivided, she could speak as the ground and pillar of the truth through a general council.

And here let us note the remarkable providence over the Church for the preservation of the truth, as shewn in the division of the Church into East and West. This schism would naturally present itself at first sight in the light of a great calamity; and such, viewed in itself, it must doubtless be regarded. Yet as regards the preservation of catholic truth in its integrity, it was a providential act of mercy. Had the Church continued as before, one and entire, it might have been made the instrument, if the supposition may be allowed¹, of giving an awful sanction to error—a sanction binding on the consciences of her members. As long as there were important doctrines which required to be authoritatively settled, so long did the Church retain that unity, and with it the powers requisite for determining them;

¹ See page 33.

and those powers were exercised in the decrees of the first six general councils.

But when the Church itself began to lose its purity, and when those same powers, if exercised under the then circumstances, might have been employed to give a fatal sanction to error and false doctrine, it pleased the Divine Ruler of the Church, that by this division she should be deprived of the powers she was not in a condition to be trusted with, or to exercise with safety. She could no longer produce an œcumenical council; she was deprived alike of the power to rescind former decrees, or to enact new ones. The voice of the Church, save so far as it spoke antecedently to the division, was silent for good or evil. Its several branches might henceforth decide, in their subordinate jurisdiction, and for the guidance of their respective members, what the Church had said, and might frame their terms of communion accordingly; but the voice of the Church, as the living interpreter of God's Word, was hushed, except so far as it spoke in the decrees of the past.

If this appears too strongly to represent the Church as powerless to decree, it should be remembered that it also exhibits her as powerless to rescind. The one was no longer required after the last œcumenical council; on the evils of the other it is unnecessary to enlarge. If I might

reverently venture to illustrate the wisdom of this merciful provision by an analogous example in human affairs, I might do so by that of Lycurgus, who, having bound his countrymen by an oath not to change his laws until his return, adopted the expedient of absenting himself for ever. In this respect, however, the analogy does not hold,—that the time may yet come when the Church may be again in a condition to be entrusted with these momentous powers; when the want of internal holiness, which has been the cause of this as well as of subsequent and smaller divisions, may give place to renewed holiness of life, from which real unity can never be disjoined.

For this is a point which it most materially concerns us to bear in mind,—that real unity is the adjunct of internal holiness, at once the consequence, and in part the cause of it. Without that holiness which is inseparable from unity of spirit, unity of faith and doctrine can rest on no sure foundation. Yet unity of faith, and the wholesome discipline by which departures from it are visited, are thus brought to bear on holiness of life, by the censures enforced against the doctrinal errors which engender want of holiness; while, on the other hand, the censures and punishment with which, in a healthy state of discipline, the Church visits ungodliness of life and

conversation, are in their turn made to act upon the purity and unity of faith, by checking the immoral and unspiritual mode of life from which heresies and false doctrine commonly take their rise. To expect a real, or even visible, unity in the present moral and spiritual condition of the Christian world, would be to expect what neither the provisions of the Gospel nor the analogy of God's dealings, whether in Scripture or in the world, afford us the slightest ground to expect.

The same rule applies to the want of unity among ourselves, on which, as contrasted with the assumed existence of it in their own Church, Romanists profess to found so strong an argument in favour of their own claims, to the utter denial of ours: an argument which, unhappily, they have wielded with too much success in persuading persons to leave our communion for theirs. This want of visible unity is the necessary result of our moral and spiritual condition. As real unity arises from unity of spirit and true holiness of life, so is the absence of these fatal to unity, however the semblance of outward conformity may be continued awhile from other causes. With the total absence of ecclesiastical discipline for the greatest offences against moral purity, and the self-sufficient pride so opposed to the spirit of the Gospel, with which every one

claims to himself, and is allowed by the popular voice, the irresponsible right to determine the most vital doctrines, what ground is there for expecting unity of faith? This disunion is the consequence and the symptom of a great moral and spiritual disease; and if it is to be removed, it must be by assailing that of which it is the result and symptom. As in medicine, however we may deplore the symptoms or sympathize with the sufferer, we yet do not make the treatment of those symptoms the chief care, but use them as guides in applying correctives to the habit of body of which they are the indications, knowing that if the one is corrected, the other will disappear; so is it in the moral and spiritual diseases both of individuals and communities. Such has been the principle pursued in the training of mankind under revelation, though more fully carried out under the Gospel than under the Law; and such will be the course pursued by the wise legislator in all attempts at reformation, whether of individuals or of communities.

Therefore, lamentable as our divisions are, they are to be regarded as the accidents and symptoms of an unhealthy state of religion and morals, which must first be remedied before the other will disappear,—especially the utter want of charity which characterizes religious controversy in these days.

II. With regard to the unity professed by the

Roman Church, I deny its existence. Its outward conformity, to a certain extent, may be admitted; but only to a certain extent. For beneath this outward conformity there is a vast amount of unbelief and dissent, which the Church is compelled to wink at, if it would not lose a considerable portion of its members. The apparent unity is purchased by connivance at a considerable amount, not only of immoral and ungodly living, but also of actual dissent and unbelief. But they dare not notice it. The Gallican Church, though nominally a part of the Roman, has always been more or less in a state of opposition, if not of partial independence; while several of its most distinguished members have not scrupled to avow their dissent from those terms of communion or practices which they deemed sinful: but the Roman Church has not dared to exclude them from her communion. Now, whatever may be the doctrinal errors of the Roman Church, the moral delinquency exhibited in the connivance at immorality, as well as what they must deem heterodoxy, for the sake of gaining converts or retaining their members, is one of the worst features in their system. Surely holiness of life and purity of conversation are as much among the notes of a true Church as outward unity of doctrine. What reply, then, can the Roman Church make to the argument founded on the unblushing vice and immorality which

meets the eye in every capital in Europe where the Roman faith is professed, even among her own avowed members. Do they say that they cannot prevent it? True. But they might excommunicate such, or lay them under ecclesiastical censure. But this they dare not do. They prefer retaining them in nominal communion, at the expense of one of the chief notes of a Church. Proselytism on almost any terms seems their rule; and I question whether the most ultra-Protestant society in this country is more unscrupulous as to the means by which they may attain their end. I believe, and I have heard others who were competent to form a judgment aver the same, that if any individual of high rank or influence, or one of great celebrity and influence from other causes in a different class of life, were to offer to join them, he would be allowed, as regards the points which separate them from us, to make his own terms of communion, if he would engage to hold his tongue, and could be relied upon for so doing^k.

^k There is in Sicily, and I believe in some parts of Italy, a considerable body, called "United Greeks," members of the Greek Church, who, on condition of their acknowledging the Pope's supremacy, are admitted into the Roman communion, with the liberty of having their own priesthood, and of retaining all the essential characteristics of the Greek Church, including the reception of the Cup by the laity, and the omission of the *Filioque*.

At this very time, the ecclesiastical system at Rome itself is only kept together by an armed foreign force. Remove that, and the whole system becomes one chaos of confusion and anarchy. There is, or was but a few years since, a great amount of profligacy and infidelity among the Spanish clergy. Yet the Papal See dares not exclude, or lay under ecclesiastical censure, what it has not the power to prevent. It is as much a slave to its own people as the elected government of a republic.

A more striking instance of this disingenuous procedure is seen in the mode pursued with their English converts. Those who are familiar with the errors and practices of the Roman Church in their worst form, as they exist in continental countries, express their astonishment that educated Englishmen and Englishwomen should adopt these, or give their sanction to them. Some of the latter, indeed, when this question is put to them, will tell us that with them the question is not one of *detail*. The great questions of unity, and of the necessity of a living interpreter of the word, are with them paramount, and supersede every other; and it would seem that they are not required to give too precise an account of their faith in these matters of "detail." They are told, that if they embrace the main features of the Roman system, such as the Supremacy, &c.,

they need not trouble themselves at present with those details, as they are called, which stand so much in their way,—such as Mariolatry, and others.

But the fact is, that the faith taught to the educated English converts, especially the laity, is not that held by the continental Romanists. When I have asked English Romanists how they justified the invocation of saints and of the Blessed Virgin, the reply has been, that they only asked their prayers, as you would ask those of the living saints or living friends, and that they sought the prayers of the Virgin only as being the chief of departed saints; but that if we think that they pray to the saints in any other way, or beseech the Virgin as having any authority or power of her own, we are greatly mistaken. And such, I have no doubt, is the way in which the invocation of the saints is presented to English converts, and such the view they take of it; a view which, however dangerous in the hands of the ignorant and uneducated, who would be apt to lose sight of the distinction between the intercessory prayer thus sought and the intercession of the great Mediator Himself, might possibly be unattended with evil consequences to the educated few, however unauthorized by Holy Scripture. I need not say, however, that this doctrine and view of the intercession of saints

and the Blessed Virgin, is not that held and taught in Roman Catholic countries; and that a person giving open utterance to such a view in Spain or Italy, even in the present day, would be speedily silenced. And it is equally clear that the doctrine taught and believed by the mass of the people in Spain and Italy would not be received by the educated Englishman. Consequently, to him a different view is presented. Such a proceeding may be necessary, if they wish the doctrine to be received. But what, in that case, becomes of this boasted unity of doctrine with the want of which they taunt us, and by the pretended possession of which they seduce our members?

In the miserable state of discipline in the English Church, surrounded as it also is by pseudo-liberalism, which displays an undisguised hostility to faith and all objective truth, making each individual the judge of truth and falsehood, doubtless great latitude has crept in, and fearful discrepancies exist between those who have made the same profession of faith, whether bishops, clergy, or laity. But this is not done with the sanction of the Church, or by her act, but in despite of her. Even the protection afforded by the laws to heresy does not commit the Church to heresy: it is but a decision on the part of the civil power, with which the ultimate decision must rest, where

property and endowments are concerned,—that such heresy shall not be followed by deprivation or other punishment. Moreover, we see all this, and know the worst. There is no concealment: the total absence of discipline renders it unnecessary. Romanists are not slow to take advantage of this, and to place it in the most unfavourable light before those whom they wish to seduce. But their own discrepancies are numerous, and on important points; though they are less obvious, both because they have a discipline which can check the tongue, if it cannot control the heart, and because they know that their success depends on their being able to present to the world the appearance at least of unity. If these discrepancies are referred to, they will coolly deny them; and as the evidence of them is not to be found in books or authorized formularies, but in the variety of belief allowed in individuals, it is not easy to produce, on the instant, the proof required to disabuse the minds of those whom they are trying to attract by glowing pictures of their own unity and of our divisions. If, however, you adduce indisputable proof of their existence, you will be told that the Church does not sanction them. If you ask why the Church does not therefore shew her disapproval and disclaim her participation, by placing the parties under ecclesiastical censure, you

receive no more satisfactory reply¹. They will say, perhaps, that the opinions and misapprehensions of an ignorant multitude do not represent the Church, and that the latter is not responsible for them; that the view presented to the English convert is the correct one^m. Be it so. But why do they charge on the English Church the schismatical and heretical practices of many of her nominal members, over whom the civil power prevents her from exercising wholesome discipline?

Or to take another example: Does the Roman Church sanction all the acts of the Jesuits? If she *does not*, why has she not disavowed them? and how does she reconcile her not having done so with her censures on the English Church, for the unchecked irregular proceedings of individuals

¹ The evasive procedure of Romanists in these and similar instances, claiming persons as their members, yet disclaiming all responsibility for their errors, reminds us, in its degree, of the conduct sometimes pursued by the government of the United States of America. If one of the federal states insults, defrauds, or invades the rights of a foreign power, and complaint is made by the latter to the central government, the answer is that it has nothing to do with the internal regulations of the separate states of the Union, or with the acts of individuals. If the party aggrieved should proceed to redress itself on the offender, the central government at once starts up, and warns them not to interfere with the members of their Union, or with their citizens.

^m It is to be feared that books and other documents published and put forth with the sanction of the Roman Church, are at variance with this charitable supposition.

or particular societies ostensibly within her pale? Why is the English Church more committed by the acts and opinions of the latter, than the Roman by those of the Jesuits? If she *does* sanction them, how does she reconcile with her censures on our want of uniformity and discipline, the retention in her communion of one like Pascal, after his strong condemnation of them, and the absence of censure on his works, which have been for so long a time before the world? No reasonable man will deny, on the one hand, that the Jesuits, notwithstanding the objectionable features of their system, and their still more objectionable practices, effected much good; nor will say, on the other, that Pascal was unjust in his strictures on them. Neither will it be affirmed, on the one hand, that the Roman Church could altogether have effectually prevented these practices; or, on the other, that Pascal ought to have been censured for condemning them. These several circumstances, however anomalous and contradictory, were unavoidable; yet could they not be justly charged on the Roman Church as a defect affecting her validity. Why then should the like anomalies in the English Church be held up by them as invalidating her claims?

In fact, the main difference between the divisions in the Church of Rome and those which

exist in our own, is, that the latter are freely canvassed and made public, while the other are studiously hushed up and unscrupulously denied.

What is here said of the difference between members of the Roman Catholic Church in different countries in the same age, according as they vary in civilization or ignorance, applies equally to the difference between those living in different ages in the same country. There will be found the same discrepancies, arising from the same causes. The floating opinions of the mass are ever changing according to their condition, and will ever differ, more or less, from the authorized confession of faith. For this the Church is not responsible, save negatively, in not exercising a stricter discipline, until it formally adopts these floating opinions, and embodies them, as the Roman Church has done, in its formularies or confessions of faith. And even then will the same process be going on in the fluctuations of the minds of the many. But there is this difference between the Roman and the English Church,—that the one, if it cannot suppress, will conceal and deny, these discrepancies; in the other, owing to our want of discipline, people not only do not conceal them, but seem to make a point of giving them prominence, and even arrange themselves in parties and under particular designations having reference to them.

We labour, therefore, under this great disadvantage in our controversies with the Roman Catholic Church,—that with us, all our discrepancies are seen and exposed; with them, they are studiously concealed, and even denied, by those who feel that they cannot prevent them, yet are equally unable to sanction or to recognise them. I do not mean that these differences exist in the same degree in the Roman Church, but quite enough to vitiate the claims they would set up over us on the ground of their professed unity. Not that this in itself forms any valid objection to the just claims of either Church; the real note of each consists in holding the Creed and the two Sacraments, and in preserving the Succession. This both alike do, though they will not allow it to be true of us; and herein will consist the unity of the two, as parts of the Catholic Church,—an unity which, though they scornfully repudiate it, we believe still exists, and will exist, until forfeited by one or the other through some direct act of apostasy.

But as regards the seeming separation of these two branches of Christ's Church, as well as the divisions existing between the several parts of each, such a state of things, abnormal as it is, is only what might have been expected from the moral and spiritual condition of the Christian world. However opposed to the theory of the Church, however far removed from the fulfilment

of our Saviour's prayer respecting it, it does not affect the reality of either Church in relation to the holy Catholic Church throughout the world, from which they are at present outwardly severed, or in relation to the component parts of each. Neither does it affect the fulfilment of the promises given to the Church, nor the hope of ultimate re-union and victory, so far as these may reasonably be expected, consistently with the general analogy of God's dealings, and the requirements of creatures in a state of moral probation.

Take the English Church in its worst aspect, as represented, unhappily with too much truth, by those who would thence endeavour to deny to her the notes of the true Church: her synodical action suspended, and with it her power of internal legislation; her chief offices often filled by men who have been selected from their known hostility to her distinctive doctrines; the decision in the highest civil court, that there is no moral disqualification for the office of bishop which can supersede the royal prerogative to appoint; that the honest refusal, for conscience' sake, to be a party to the election or consecration of such a person, though a mere negative act, subjects the individual not merely to deprivation, but to penalties which attach to the highest offence known to the law,—that of high treason; that the bishop of one diocese, or the minister of one parish, will be found

to hold and teach doctrines the opposite of those held and taught in an adjoining one; that discipline over the laity is forbidden by the law under heavy penalties; that the most ungodly liver may claim to be admitted to the Holy Communion; that those who through life have not only absented themselves from the courts of the Lord's house, but openly renounced all communion with the Church, and displayed the most bitter hostility to all connected with it, may claim to be buried within the Church's consecrated precincts, and to have performed over them the service which, while living, they held in scorn, and which, even in death, they thus hold up to the mockery of others and the scandal of religion. All this, however great the guilt which attaches to the state and the nation, as the author of it, (and doubtless the guilt is very great, and the responsibility fearful,) does not commit the Church. It is not done with her sanction, but in despite of her; neither does it furnish any valid ground to her children for deserting her^a.

^a "This explanation (i. e. as given in Art. XXXVIII.) must be considered as the true measure of the king's supremacy; and the wide expression in the former laws must be understood to be restrained by this, since posterior laws derogate from those which were first made. This is all that supremacy which we are bound in conscience to own; and if the letter of the law, or the stretches of that in the administration of it, have carried this further, we are not at all concerned in it. But in case

Or take Christendom as a whole,—its disjointed state; its palpable and melancholy contradiction to our Saviour's prayer for its unity; its feebleness in grappling with the foes which it was appointed to encounter and to subdue; the flagrant personal wickedness of myriads of its members in every branch of the Church, and their continuance, notwithstanding, in visible and acknowledged membership. In all this, much as there is to grieve and shock us, there is nothing which need shake our faith. Unhappily, the course of God's providence, both as seen in Holy Scripture and out of it, furnishes us with too many analogous cases. Take the whole history of the Jewish Church, the awful contrast between its theory, if we may so term it, and its reality. Or, to take detached portions for illustration: take its condition under the Judges, when, for four centuries, scarcely a trace is to be seen of their national existence—in bondage first to this nation, then to another, hiding in caves and dens of the earth. Who, in all this long and dreary period, would have re-

any such thing were made out, it would amount to no more than this,—that the civil power had made encroachments on ecclesiastical authority. But submitting to an oppression, and the bearing it till some better times may deliver us from it, is no argument against our Church: on the contrary, it is a proof of our temper and patience."—*From a Pamphlet published in Holland in 1688.*

cognised, in this oppressed race, the chosen people of God, in possession of a civil and ecclesiastical polity given direct by God Himself, and having promises such as no people ever had before? Yet in all this, whatever the apparent dissolution of the outward fabric, the promises were as sure as when they were first given, and were assuredly working their way to fulfilment°.

Or take another period, removed by a long interval of time,—the long and wicked reign of Manasseh, when even the record of God's word was forgotten among them, and His worship well-nigh abolished and superseded by false worship.

• This peculiar feature in the Jewish history, observable at various periods, but especially at the period here referred to, is noticed with much poetical aptitude by Professor Stanley, in his interesting work on Sinai and Palestine. After speaking of the caves which had served at various times as hiding retreats and places of refuge to the Israelites from the surrounding powers which oppressed them, he adds, "They [the caves] continue from first to last what has been truly called the cave-life of the Israelite nation. The stream of their national existence, like the actual streams of the Grecian rivers, from time to time disappears from the light of day, and runs underground in these subterranean recesses, to burst forth again, when the appointed moment arrives; a striking type, as it is a remarkable instance, of the preservation of the spiritual life of the chosen people, burning, but not consumed, chastened, but not killed."—(*Sinai and Palestine*, by the Rev. A. P. Stanley.)

The application of this to the circumstances of the Christian Church at various times, and to our own branch of it in particular, though not falling within the scope of the writer's remarks, will be sufficiently obvious.

Yet even this did not affect the promises, which remained secure both then and in the long captivity which followed. Whatever judgments befel the nation, the promises remained unimpaired; while the blessing of God attended the remnant who remained faithful in the general apostasy. And although the nation was eventually cast off when it had gone beyond its day of grace, yet at that time, and for centuries after, the return to God's favour was open to them; while at all times faithful and holy persons, who formed exceptions to the general wickedness, found favour with God, and received His blessing. Does Christendom present an aspect more unfavourable or discouraging than that which the Jewish Church and nation must have presented at the periods referred to? Can anything which is alleged to exist in the English Church be at all compared to it?

Or to refer, by way of further illustration, to the Christian Church itself, even in the apostolic age: what a contrast presents itself between the Church of Corinth, as it existed even at the period when St. Paul wrote his Epistles to it, and as it ought to have been according to the scriptural theory of the Church! Yet in the salutation contained at the opening of the Epistles, the Church is addressed as though it realized the latter, and as if the corruptions against which the apostle speaks so strongly in his Epistles, and

to remedy which they were partly written, had no existence. In the Second Epistle in particular, what a striking contrast do the opening and concluding salutations present to the tone of sorrowful reproof which pervades almost every other portion of the Epistle! It is true that the evils there spoken of existed in violation of the law of the Church, and that, by the wholesome exercise of discipline, the apostle was able to direct ecclesiastical censures against them, proceeding, if necessary, to actual excommunication. Still the state of things at Corinth seems to illustrate further the point here contended for—the striking contrast between the principle and theory as framed in the Divine counsels and issuing from them, and the same as realized in practice, when brought in contact with corrupt humanity, and made dependent on it for their practical working and application.

Still more glowing is the language of St. Peter to the converts in Asia Minor; though we have no reason to suppose that the Church there was more pure, or less free from the evils incident to a community of that extent:—"But ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should shew forth the praises of Him who hath called you out of darkness into His marvellous light: which in time past were not a people, but are now the

people of God^p." The apostle's object in thus addressing them was doubtless to stir them up to holy living, by reminding them of the high and blessed privileges which had been bestowed upon them ; the same argument which St. Paul also uses to the Corinthians: "What? know ye not that your bodies are the members of Christ? . . . What? know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost^q?"

Yet it would not be right to infer from this that every individual member of the Churches thus addressed answered this description; nor, on the other hand, to say that any portion, for that reason, forfeited its membership of the Church as a whole. The apostles speak of the Church as it would be if all the conditions annexed to its completeness were fulfilled,—as it would be, in fact, if it were what it ought to be. But this discrepancy between the description and the reality, between the theory and the practice, meets us at every point in the history of revelation ; and, as we cannot infer the perfection of the one from the perfection of the other, so neither are we justified in denying to the same the claim of genuineness on account of its imperfection, any more than we should be in denying a state of grace to all those who do not realize St. John's description of the perfect Christian character, nor

1 Pet. ii. 9, 10.

^q 1 Cor. vi. 15, 19.

fulfil our Lord's precept to be "perfect, even as our Father which is in heaven is perfect."

In short, irrespectively of revelation, our whole moral system is one of imperfections and contradictions—of contrasts between things as they ought to be, and as they would be but for the weakness and corruption of our nature, and things as they are practically. In our present state of being it cannot be otherwise. The abnormal state is the natural one—the necessary consequence of our present nature. Pure and perfect as God's grace is in itself, yet since, by God's appointment, it does not overpower, but co-operates with, our nature, (else our free agency and probation would be superseded,) its acting is necessarily limited in its operation, and imperfect in its results. We do not see it as it is in itself, but as it is in its work and its effects, the work of the truest life struggling for the mastery in a body of death.

In reply, therefore, to the assertion of the Romanists, that, in addition to the ordinary gifts conveyed by Christ to His Church, there was given the power of an ever-living interpreter of His Word—that this power has never been recalled—that it must still exist in the Church—that the Roman successors of St. Peter have continued to exercise this power—that no other branch of the Church has laid claim to it, and that if they

did, they could not establish it—I maintain that it by no means follows that this power still exists in the Church, in the sense in which the Romanists hold that it does. I do not say that it is extinct,—the gifts of God are without repentance; but I maintain that it is *in abeyance*. The conditions essential to its active exercise do not at this time exist, especially that of unity, and the holiness on which unity itself in part depends for its existence. I do not say that those powers could not be called into life to-morrow, nor that the Church would not then speak with authority, were the antecedent conditions fulfilled; but in the absence of the latter the others are dormant. Whether these powers will ever again exist in active life, must depend on the conditions here spoken of; and whether these will again exist, is more than any one not gifted with the power of prophecy can take upon himself to aver. Our Lord may have referred to the improbability of such an event in that mournful question,—“Nevertheless, when the Son of Man cometh, shall He find faith on the earth?” It may be safely maintained that they do not exist in active life at this time, and that they have ceased to do so since the separation of the Church into its Eastern and Western portions—not to mention the subsequent subdivision of the Western por-

† Luke xviii. 8.

tion—rendered it impossible to convene an œcumenical council through which the *consensus* of the whole undivided Church could be collected, and her voice be heard. And, as was observed before, it is a providential circumstance that it has been so ordered, that when the moral and spiritual condition of Christendom no longer afforded a ground to hope that such decisions would be for the edification of the Church or the maintenance of the purity of the faith, the powers were then suspended which could no longer be exercised with safety. Meanwhile the living interpreter, which Romanists maintain must exist somewhere, is practically secured to us in the decrees of the œcumenical councils on all points necessary to salvation.

Some persons have at this day been rash enough to express the wish that a general council could at this time be called together to determine points of controversy^s. I cannot conceive any

^s Even Mr. Gresley, in his "Present State of the Controversy with Rome," asks, "when the three great powers, England, France, and Russia, the representatives of the three great branches of the Church Catholic, shall be again at peace, what need prevent the summoning a general council for the settlement of the affairs of the Church?" Mr. Gresley says also, that it was a providential circumstance that the Creeds were settled before the division of the Church into East and West. Would it not be more correct to say, that after the Creeds were authoritatively settled, it was a providential circumstance that the separation took place, thereby rendering it impossible to unsettle them?

measure, supposing it were possible, fraught with more danger to the faith. Besides the improbability, in the present state of ignorance on matters ecclesiastical and doctrinal, and in the present temper of men's minds, of coming to any sound decision, the danger would be (unless prevented by the divisions which would render the council itself nugatory) not only that a sanction would be given to errors of the worst description, but that even vital truths, settled anterior to the division, might be assailed and impugned. This might appear to some to denote a want of faith. It is not so, however. Strictly speaking, the case may be regarded as an abstract one, not likely to occur. For there is this self-correcting principle in the matter, that, with the decrease of holiness and purity of faith which would render an œcumenical council dangerous, there arise simultaneously those divisions which would render it impossible to convene it; or, if possible, would prevent its coming to any decision. Still, admitting that a really œcumenical council, supposing it could be called, would be protected from fundamental error, we might, not inconsistently, fear the result of one ostensibly called in the present state of the Christian Church. We may picture to ourselves a council which, without being sufficiently œcumenical to claim that title and the powers presumed to accompany it, might be sufficiently

general, in the eyes of many, to give a sanction and force to its decrees which they would not like to contravene, and which might cause serious embarrassment. Without claiming for an œcumenical council more authority than our Article is disposed to concede to it, it cannot be denied that its decisions would have a power which cannot be regarded without awe.

I do not say that the case might not possibly occur which the Roman Church contends for and applies to her own circumstances ; viz., where the larger portion of Christendom had put themselves out of the pale of the Church by tampering with the Creeds, renouncing the Succession, denying the Sacraments ; and that, as in the case of Judah, the small remnant who cleaved unto the Lord their God would still inherit the promises and continue to possess the powers. But as long as these bonds of union and conditions of Church-membership continue, it is contrary to the analogy of God's dealings to imagine that any one branch can justly arrogate to itself exclusively an identity with the Church of the apostles and of the first ages, and deny the same to others, on tests not received from the apostles, but created by themselves.

III. Let us now advert briefly to another argument derived from our abnormal condition, which is much used by Romanists, and not without success, in unsettling the minds of our members, if not in leading them to secede.

They will point to the popular declamations, so common in these days, even among members of the Church, on the rights of conscience and private judgment, and on Scripture, as interpreted by private judgment, being the sole rule of faith; and assuming, most unwarrantably, that the ravings of popular Protestantism, or the unauthorized statements and private opinions of individual bishops or presbyters, represent the voice of the Church and are entitled to speak in her name, they draw the conclusion (not altogether illogically from such premises) that "the English Church does not teach truth to be received as a matter of conscience,—that is, with authority; but merely propounds it as what she believes to be truth, deduced from Scripture, but of the reality of which the disciple is first to satisfy himself by searching the Scriptures,—that is, as probable only; so that since the office of the Church, as a witness of the truth, is not to propound probable opinions, but to require belief in that truth, the Church of England fails in this most distinctive mark of a Church; and to her people, the Godhead of the eternal Word may be only a matter of probable opinion."

Now this is a complete misrepresentation of the relation in which the English Church places her teaching to Holy Scripture. She does not, any more than the Church of Rome, allow an appeal to Holy Scripture, as interpreted by private judg-

ment, to the prejudice of her own claim to be heard as an authoritative teacher. She enunciates, as a general principle, the statement contained in the sixth article, that "Holy Scripture containeth all things necessary to salvation; so that whatsoever is not read therein, nor may be proved thereby, is not required of any man that it should be believed as an article of the faith, or be thought requisite or necessary to salvation." This axiom, if it may be so termed, (for it does not rest on any express declaration of Scripture itself to that effect,) is by no means confined to the Church of England, but has been held in the Church from its earliest days; a postulate, as it were, which has come down to us with the Canon of Scripture itself. Nor, even without this testimony, were it an unreasonable assumption that one part of God's Word would harmonize with another; that the New Testament, which was written for and is addressed to Christians, and assumes that the reader has been previously instructed in the fundamentals of the faith,—the faith once for all delivered to the saints, before a line of the New Testament was written,—would be a confirmation of that faith; that what the apostles wrote would contain in substance, though not in form, what they had previously taught; and that, however incidental, apparently, were the immediate circumstances which from time to time

called it forth, yet, as regarded its *final* cause, it would be designed to serve as a repository whence, in every age, proof might be drawn of the Christian verities committed to the Church's keeping †.

But it never was intended by this to imply that those who thought that what the Church taught was *not* proved by Holy Scripture, were so far free to accept or reject it, as thereby to acquire an immunity from the anathemas uttered against unbelief and the consequences attached to it,—as though the truth taught by the Church were *subjective* only, depending for its existence on its reception by the individual conscience, or the perception of the individual judgment. The article in question is the English Church's assertion of an ancient Catholic principle, and her vindication, in the face of Christendom, of her teaching, as regards those differences which divide her from Rome; and the principle which it enunciates is the great comfort of all her members. But in enunciating it she does not relinquish her own

† Indications of this, sufficient for the faithful and docile mind, would be found in such passages as Luke i. 3, 4; 1 Cor. xi. 23, xv. 1—8; 2 Pet. i. 12—18, iii. 1, 2, and the like; all of which, it is to be noted, while pointing to the final object of the Christian Scriptures, carefully abstain from anything which would imply that they were designed to supersede the "form of sound words" by which the reader "had been *previously* instructed," and which contained and transmitted the *form* of the Christian verities, as the Scriptures did the *substance* and *proof*.

dogmatic teaching, nor abandon her authority as the propounder of truth and as the interpreter of Scripture, or the "authority in controversies of faith" which the twentieth Article attributes to the Church. She does not say, as some would represent,—“All that I teach can be proved by Holy Scripture; but if you think otherwise, be it so: use your own judgment; I am content: I do not ask you to believe it.” But she virtually says, “This I believe and teach; this is the message which I am commissioned to deliver; the belief in this constitutes my terms of communion; and to this, as far as I am authorized to offer them, are the promises and blessings annexed. If you reject it, you forfeit that communion. I believe that it is capable of proof from Holy Scripture; were it otherwise, I should not have called on you to believe it, (and herein I differ from the Church of Rome). But if you think it is *not* capable of such proof, and therefore reject it, you put yourself out of communion with me. I am not concerned with the grounds of your rejection.”

As an instance, among others, how little she abandons her dogmatic teaching by referring to Holy Scripture in confirmation of it, we may notice the Athanasian Creed. Although she states in the eighth article that the Athanasian Creed “ought thoroughly to be received and believed, for it may be proved by most certain warrants of

Holy Scripture," she does not make any exception, as regards the anathemas pronounced against those who reject it, in favour of those who think that it may *not* be so proved.

But with all this assertion of her "authority in controversies of faith," she allows all reasonable liberty to the exercise of private judgment in numberless matters that do not touch controversies of faith, nor involve her terms of communion,—far more, in fact, than any class of Protestant Dissenters.

And here it would not be out of place to observe, that even those sectarian bodies who profess to found their system of faith on Scripture exclusively, as interpreted by private judgment, adopt the same course. If any one should think that their system is not borne out by Scripture, he is, of course, at liberty to do so by the law of the land, or by any other law, save those of the community in question. In that respect the community allows no private judgment whatever. They may allow it, as the Church does, in matters of detail and of minor importance, which do not touch the terms of membership or the distinctive tenets of the sect; but on those which do touch these, the Church of Rome is not more dogmatic than they are. The authority of Scripture itself is recognised so far only as it is subject to their interpretation.

It is a mistake, therefore, to suppose that the Church either of Rome or England stands alone in requiring submission to its dogmatic teaching. However other religious communities may differ from them in the original grounds of their faith, in claiming for them, as they profess, a more scriptural origin, yet, from the moment they are received as such systems, they claim for them the same deference. And although by the laws of the land, in a free country, they cannot deny to others the right of exercising their private judgment in accepting or rejecting them, yet if that judgment is exercised on the side unfavourable to their presumed truth, it is followed by the penalty (the only one which they have the power to enforce) of exclusion from the community. Nay, many dissenting bodies, and even parties ostensibly in communion with the English Church, will go further, and deny salvation, or the being in a state of grace, to those whose interpretation of Holy Scripture differs from their own, though in strict accordance with the Prayer-book and formularies of the Church.

Therefore, that the English Church should teach authoritatively and dogmatically what she does teach, would naturally result thus far from the necessity of the case, as being a religious community having her own terms of communion. But this does not constitute the authority in which

the Roman Church taunts her with being deficient. While, in common with Protestant sects, she claims the authority which all bodies have a right to claim over her own members, and in framing her own terms of communion; and while, in common with them, she maintains the scriptural character of her teaching,—she does not claim authority for it on that ground alone, but in her office as a branch of the Church Catholic, inheriting that teaching, with the succession of her ministry, from the apostles. Though allowing the supremacy of Scripture, she does not abandon her office as a witness, nor her “authority in controversies of faith.”

The Romanist argument, therefore, that the English Church teaches without authority, because, in addition to her claim to be heard as a witness of catholic truth, she maintains the accordance of her teaching with Holy Scripture, rests on no solid foundation; nor does the assertion that she appeals to Scripture in a sense which allows those who differ from her in that appeal to maintain their position in her communion, or to be free from the consequences of heresy and unbelief, rest on any better ground: in other words, that she allows the irresponsible right of private judgment. In fact, the term *appeal*, as popularly understood, is a misnomer, as applied to the sense in which the English Church

refers to Holy Scripture as containing all things necessary to be believed for salvation. An appeal implies a joint reference of two disputants to a third and external authority, by whose decision they mutually bind themselves to abide. And to such a referee the English Church is willing to appeal, as against the Church of Rome, in Holy Scripture as interpreted by the voice of the Church Catholic. But in the popular sense of the word, in which the *disputant* or *appellant* is also to be allowed the office of *judge* in deciding the sense of Scripture, the Church of England allows no such appeal. In the name of the Church Catholic she proposes the creeds authoritatively; the alternative being acceptance of them, or exclusion from her communion and the promises annexed to it. And in doing this, she only follows the course pursued by every other community in the world, whether political, religious, social, domestic, or any other. A man may, without violating the laws of the realm, deny or declaim against the inspiration or sufficiency of Holy Scripture, or the doctrines of the Incarnation, Atonement, Trinity, or any other truth taught by the Church of England: with reference to the laws of the realm he has a right to do so; he does not thereby violate the statute law; but with reference to the laws of the Church of England he does not possess that right; and to

do so virtually involves a renunciation of his membership.

That this is not practically carried out; that the Church of England is unable to exclude from her communion those who violate her terms of communion; that a man may violate every law and ordinance of the Church, and yet, under the protection of the civil power, may profess Church membership, and claim her ministrations, does not affect the validity of what is here said. Such an abnormal state of things, bad as it is, does not vitiate the principle, nor give any sanction to the Romanist assertion that the Church of England teaches without authority. It arises out of the relation in which the Church stands to the State, on the one hand; and the violation, on the part of the State, of the duties involved in that relation. To the exercise of her own discipline, and the application of her own laws on the part of the Church, the State attaches civil penalties of the severest kind; extends its protection over the most abandoned profligates and systematic violaters of every Church law. Yet these are not the acts of the Church, nor done with her sanction, but in despite of her and of her laws. They exhibit the Church in a state of bondage, but not, as yet, in one of sin; whereas every abuse which exists in the Roman Church, she has, or professes to have, the power to prevent or remove, yet does not.

With what justice, therefore, can Romanists taunt us with the existence of evils which we are powerless to prevent, and which do not affect our credentials as a true branch of the Church? For any reason here given by the Romanist, a Jew might, on the same principle, have renounced his Church and nation under the Judges or in the Babylonian captivity, with as good ground as that on which persons are exhorted, on the analogous ground before spoken of, to forsake the Church of their Baptism.

Whether, as people are now asking, circumstances may hereafter arise—such as the Church giving her formal authoritative sanction to these things, or otherwise making them her own—which may render it a duty to depart from her, and seek or establish some other communion where these evils do not exist, is an abstract question which it is not only idle but wrong to entertain. We cannot be too careful in avoiding anything which seems to cast a doubt on Christ's overruling care for His Church, or to question His promise, that "no temptation hath taken us, but such as is common to man: but God is faithful, who will not suffer us to be tempted above that we are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that we may be able to bear it."^a

^a 1 Cor. x. 13.

All such abstract questions and supposable cases it is inconsistent with Christian faith to entertain, until they are absolutely forced upon us practically, especially if they are called in to test, by its presumed or supposable inapplicability, an important Christian rule. We cannot protest too strongly against that pernicious practice, so frequently resorted to in these days, of testing important principles of moral obligation, or of Divine appointment, by abstract supposable cases, to which their practical application is presumed to be impossible. Such a practice is objectionable enough in morals, but in questions connected with revelation it is positively sinful. In every case of Divine precept or institution, and even in cases where, without direct precept, we may reasonably presume that the mind and will of God can be gathered, (a class of cases which comprises no inconsiderable portion of a Christian's duties,) it is our duty to assume that the rule is one which we *are* able to follow, and to act accordingly, without speculating on the course to be pursued in some supposed exceptional case. No man has a right to speculate on the presumed inapplicability of an important principle to such supposable cases, who has not already, in the spirit of faithful obedience, applied it in practice to those cases to which it *is* practicable, and which come before him in the regular path of duty.

None are at liberty to censure the system under which providence has cast their lot, still less to desert it, until they have done all within their reach to enable it to fulfil the legitimate end of its existence. None have a right to complain of *impossibilities* in cases which may never occur, and which faith is slow to acknowledge ever will occur, until they have first performed the *possibilities* which lie before them. And it is no less our duty to believe that, if some such exceptional case should be permitted to arise, a way out of the difficulty will be opened to us in due time, and that strength will be given us commensurate with the emergency. But this baneful habit of speculating on abstract imaginary contingencies, and on our course to be pursued with reference thereto, is destructive of faith. Difficulties faith expects to meet with in her walk, but not impossibilities: the one are necessary for her development and growth, the other are destructive of her existence, and she refuses to recognise them.

Would that persons could be brought to see and act upon this more than they do. I believe that many of those who have left the English Church for that of Rome have been influenced more by the state of things to which they think the former is fast *progressing*, than by her present *actual* condition, anticipating a course which they thought must be taken, sooner or later,—a procedure

analogous to that which would have led the Israelite, in his faithless fear, to drown himself in the Red Sea in order to escape the vengeance of Pharaoh, instead of "standing still to see the salvation of God."

Nothing short of the adoption by the Church herself, speaking through her authorized synod, of false doctrine, or a denial of the faith; nothing, in fact, which does not commit her to an act of sin, or otherwise forfeit the note of being a true branch of the Catholic Church, would justify her children in abandoning her in this her hour of trial. The permission, on the part of the state, to teach false doctrine with impunity, the persecution of those who maintain the truth, form no valid ground for leaving her communion. And as regards the clergy, even should the civil power affix the penalty of deprivation to the maintenance of the truth, we must continue to hold and to teach the truth. Let the deprivation, if it must needs come, be the act of an external power: we may not voluntarily abandon our trust. "The form of sound words," which we have received and inherited from the apostles, we must "hold fast in faith and love which is in Christ Jesus." "That good thing which has been committed unto us," we must "keep by the Holy Ghost which dwelleth in us^x." The renunciation of this by the

^x 2 Tim. i. 13, 14.

Church herself would alone justify our voluntary departure; and whether such a renunciation will take place, and what should be our course in such a case, whither we ought to go, to whom join ourselves, where seek or exercise the means of grace;—these, I say, are abstract questions, imaginary cases (however possible), which pure, single-minded faith forbids us to entertain or take thought for, until they are actually forced upon us; believing that, if ever the day should come, “sufficient unto the day will be the evil thereof;” yet at the same time, “as our days, so will our strength be;” that no temptation will be allowed out of which there will not be provided a way to escape; nay, that deliverance may come, as it did to Hezekiah, when least expected; when apparently hopeless, may be in truth most nigh. Meanwhile, in reference to the possible alternative of being severed from the Church of our Baptism, or the temptation to forsake her because of her present and coming troubles, may we not reverently apply the words once addressed to Him of whom she is now to us the visible representative on earth,—“To whom shall we go? Thou hast the words of eternal life.” Amid the seductions of the world, the persecutions of foes, the tyranny of those who should have been her friends, the treachery of false friends, the malice of open enemies, the

† Deut. xxxiii. 25.

* John vi. 68.

scorn of the scorner, the ribaldry of the profane, she still retains, blessed be God, the precious inheritance bequeathed by her Lord—His true and living Word, His Sacraments, the means and pledges of grace, effectual to the salvation of all who partake of them, save through their own fault; and, above all, His unfailing promise to be with us always, even unto the end of the world. Bondage is not sin: but to think that bondage, whether as a punishment or a trial, is otherwise than with God's permission, and by His appointment, and to doubt that in His own time He can effect a deliverance, is unquestionably a sin; and how much greater the sin, if, through that doubt, we sink beneath the trial!

P A R T II.

THE PAPAL SUPREMACY VIEWED ACCORDING TO THE ANALOGY OF HISTORY.

IT would be foreign to the object of the present treatise to enter at any length into the grounds on which the Roman Church rests the claims of the papal supremacy, a subject which is only accidentally connected with the one now before us^a. These claims, and the grounds on which they rest, have been amply refuted by history and the witness of the early Church. Of this Roman controversialists are fully aware; though, when the question is fairly reduced to one of historical evidence, they will, with the greatest effrontery, deny or evade the facts themselves. But as the object of these remarks is not to convince them, but to warn and protect others, the reader is referred to that array of historical evidence, irrespective of the denial or equivocations of Romanists^b.

^a See page 3.

^b For a general view of this evidence, those who have not the time and opportunity will for a fuller investigation of the subject, cannot do better than consult Mr. Palmer's "Treatise on the

And here we may notice the difference in the mode pursued by the Romanist and ultra-Protestant respectively, in a controversy of this kind,—the evasiveness and denial of facts on the part of the one, and the illogical inconsistencies of the other. The one, having to deal with history and with facts, have no alternative but to distort or deny them; the other, sheltering themselves under a principle of their own assumption, the unlimited right of private judgment, are led to discard it the instant it tells, as assuredly it must, against themselves. It requires little observation to enable us to see that, in their maintenance of or opposition to authority, the generality of persons are actuated by no fixed principle of action or of reasoning. They will advocate authority, as against their opponents, until it mounts above themselves and claims that deference from them which they have so strenuously urged upon others; they will advocate the right of private judgment and liberty of conscience, until it descends below their own scale, when none are found to be more tyrannical or exacting in claiming obedience to that very authority which, while it bore on themselves, they were so eager to resist.

This inconsistency is natural enough. It is

Church of Christ," Part VII.; and the late Professor Hussey's short but condensed work on the Rise of Papal Power; also the first book of Bowden's "Life and Pontificate of Gregory VII."

that which, though we may see through it, we cannot get rid of. But it is a thing to be carefully noted and borne in mind in all controversy, in order that we may not be discouraged at the little success which apparently attends our arguments in the way of convincing our opponents. We cannot expect to do much in that way. Convictions are not to be set aside thus. They are neither caused by argument nor removed by it. Many things enter into them of far more powerful agency, pre-disposing and influencing the will, which mere argument, however sound, will fail of reaching. Persons would be surprised, could they be made aware of it, how little the soundness or otherwise of an argument has to do with their convictions. When once the passions are roused and the will enlisted, the reason has but little weight in decisions. It gives, or seems to give, its sanction to judgments already formed and conclusions previously arrived at; and seems to occupy, among the grounds of those conclusions, a share very disproportionate to that which it really possesses.

To return. Though not entering into the question of the Romanists' ground in defence of the papal supremacy and the powers with which it claims to be invested, there is one question which calls for consideration, and which does not appear to have been discussed with the attention to which

it is entitled, though occupying a prominent place among the sources from which the Romanist draws his weapons in his controversy with ourselves, and in unsettling the minds of our members, and drawing them aside. I mean the mere fact of the authority which the Roman see exercised for several centuries in the West. From this circumstance, a plain historical fact, the Romanist deduces a strong presumptive argument in favour of the supremacy itself, as though such extensive dominion could never have arisen, could never have been claimed on the one side or conceded on the other, unless it had some strong foundation in truth, either in the form of a Divine promise, or some inherent fitness in the case itself.

It seems to be by many taken for granted, that the extensive dominion which the Roman see once unquestionably possessed,—almost universal as regards the Western portion of Christendom,—was the necessary result of a Divine promise, the fulfilment of a Divine provision respecting its supremacy; and, arguing from effect to cause, they deduce, from the *fact* of this dominion, a meaning and a force in favour of this supremacy, which the passages of Scripture to which they attach it do not in themselves convey, nor were intended to convey. It may be questioned whether the Roman Church would have urged any claim, or

have suggested any *à priori* argument, in favour of the supremacy, antecedent to the fact of the vast concessions made to it. As regards the argument from Scripture, the subsequent history of the Roman see would seem to have suggested the meaning assigned by Romanists to such passages as Matthew xvi. 17—19, and John xxi. 15—17, by way of justifying the claims then advanced by it. There is not only the negative testimony furnished by the fact that no such meaning was attributed to them during the first three centuries, but, which is remarkable, the positive testimony of St. Augustine, who speaks of both the passages referred to as applied by our Lord to the apostles collectively, and explains the "Rock" on which the Church is said to be built in the former, to mean the great truth just before enunciated in the confession of St. Peter. This testimony of St. Augustine is remarkable, as having been given before these extravagant claims of the Roman see had been put forth, and therefore not likely to have been given in direct reference to them. The indirect way also in which he introduces the subject, on two occasions, renders his testimony still stronger. He is not commenting on the particular passage itself, but cites it, with this meaning attached, to illustrate the meaning of another passage under consideration; implying that the meaning which he attributes to the former was

the one commonly received at that day^o. No less strong, though different in kind, is the testimony of Gregory the Great and Pius II., especially the strong and indignant repudiation by the former of the title of Universal Bishop, as being not only unauthorized, but dangerous to the safety of the Church, and destructive of the honour of the other bishops.

But though the meaning attributed to these passages by Romanists may be accounted for by subsequent events which required that meaning for their justification and support, still there remains the fact, that for many centuries the Roman see did both claim and exercise that supremacy in the West; and that the supremacy was in the main, though with occasional resistance and protest, acknowledged and acted upon: an argument which has much weight with many, who deem that so wonderful a fact in the history of God's Providence would not have existed without having some foundation in the original design of Christ for the constitution of His Church. It is to this fact, viewed *as a fact*, as well as the circumstances which led to and account for it, viewed histo-

^o Homil. (on John) l. 12, cxviii. 4; Sermon xxvi. 76. [Oxford translation]. See also the array of testimony to the same effect cited by Laud, [*Conference with Fisher*, 33. IV.], from Ignatius, Hilary, Gregory, (*Nyssen*), Isidore, (*Pelus.*), Cyril of Alexandria, Theophylact, Basil, and others.

rically rather than theologically, that I wish now to address myself.

But although the Roman error, as regards these passages of Scripture, has arisen from ascribing to St. Peter officially what was spoken of him personally, and of confining to him individually what was addressed to him as representing, for the time, the whole body of the apostles, it is evident that St. Peter did possess among the apostles a personal pre-eminence, if not precedence. The principal cause of this is probably to be found in the peculiar features of his personal character, which both qualified him for, and led him into, a more prominent and active part in the foundation and extension of the Church, as it had before led him into a more prominent display of zeal towards our Lord personally, and had also betrayed him into those sins and inconsistencies which hang like a cloud on the brightness of his character.

But there is nothing to denote that his precedence and prominence were other than personal, or that they were to be transmitted to those who might succeed him in the particular offices to which he might be hereafter appointed. So far from that, it is to be noted, that the more prominent work assigned to St. Peter in the first propagation of the Gospel, was antecedent to his connection with the see of Rome, and was confined

to a totally different quarter of the globe, and was, moreover, brought to a termination before his person is referred to in connection with the Church at Rome. Here also, as in the case of the texts before referred to, the prominence of St. Peter in the first establishment of the Gospel, as bearing on the future question of the Roman supremacy, would seem to be referred to *retrospectively*, in later times, when the question of the supremacy required all the support that could be procured in its favour from collateral and other considerations; while the precedence which was undoubtedly accorded to the Roman see from a variety of accidental causes, if they may be so termed, was assuming the form and powers of a supremacy claiming the authority of a Divine appointment. But if a precedence is to be conceded to any see from its mere connection with St. Peter, surely Antioch would have a prior and stronger claim than Rome.

It cannot be denied that such a precedence was accorded to the Roman see from other causes; and naturally enough. And the more it can be shewn that this precedence was natural and legitimate under the circumstances of the case, and that the subsequent supremacy grew naturally out of this precedence under other and external circumstances connected with the history of the times, the more do we weaken the claims of the

Roman see to a Divinely appointed supremacy, and the triumphant appeal which they make to the presumed *fact* of the supremacy in corroboration of such an appointment. The fact of the precedence, as well as the circumstances which led to it, ought to be unhesitatingly admitted, and to have their due weight and importance assigned to them, as furnishing the most natural solution of that singular phenomenon—the papal power from the sixth to the sixteenth century. The importance of this is far greater than many persons would imagine, from the apparent weight which it gives to tests and arguments cited by Romanists in defence of the supremacy, and which, without this, they would never have possessed. The case is somewhat analogous to that of the fulfilment of prophecy, which, by the very fact, elicits the design of the prophecy, and gives to it a meaning it did not before exhibit. Many prophecies would have passed unnoticed but from their meaning having been thus drawn out by the retrospective light thus shed upon them. So has it also been with the so-called Roman supremacy, viewed in relation to the various causes which led to it, and which have given to the several arguments, whether scriptural or other, an appearance of antecedent force to which they are not, strictly speaking, legally entitled. No one of these causes would of itself have been sufficient to produce this result, though, when viewed together, and their

collective force is considered, the existence of the papal power to so great an extent, and for so long a period, is not difficult to be accounted for, without any concession, on our part, of a supposed inherent claim.

Whatever may have been the causes which led to the pre-eminence of St. Peter himself,—whether his age, his being first called, his zeal, his love of Christ, the many and great labours to which they led him, the prominent part assigned to him in the first establishment of the Gospel, especially in the great mystery of the admission of the Gentiles,—it is undeniable that he possessed that pre-eminence; and it is no less clear, both from Scripture and the testimony of primitive tradition, that the pre-eminence was *personal* only; that nothing of an *official* character was attached to it which would descend to those who might hereafter succeed him in any particular office. There is no intimation that it was assigned for any permanent object, or was to be transmitted to others.

With regard to the pre-eminence accorded to the Roman see, many causes present themselves sufficient to account for it; among which may be mentioned its apostolical origin, the purity of its faith, the number of its clergy and people, its wealth, and consequent power for works of charity^d; but, above all, the temporal pre-eminence of the city of Rome itself, as the imperial city,

^d Palmer.

and the metropolis of the civilized world. And, on the same principle, when Constantinople began to rival Rome in temporal dignity and political importance, she also began to dispute with her ecclesiastical precedence,—being to the East what Rome was to the West; and at the final separation, the ecclesiastical position which the two cities respectively occupied, corresponded with that which they had previously filled, and for a time continued to fill, politically. Let any one observe, with ordinary attention, the foundation and early progress of a Church in more recent times, whether in this country, or, more recently still, in our colonies or elsewhere; and he cannot but see how the various causes just referred to as having given a preponderance to the Roman See, have contributed to give, in their degree, a like preponderance to any more modern see on which their influence has been brought to bear. To what causes are we to attribute the precedence, in whatever it may consist, accorded from the earliest times to the sees of Canterbury, York, London, in the English Church; or, more recently, to that of Calcutta in India; or of Sydney in Australia*? Nothing is more natural, con-

* At present there is no primacy in the American Church, nor any metropolitcal see in Canada. Yet in both is the inconvenience felt, and the want frequently complained of. In Canada, some time ago, it was agreed by the bishops to recommend to the government to invest one see with archiepiscopal authority; but

sidering the circumstances connected with their original foundation and subsequent history, than that such precedence should have been accorded, without ever having been claimed or desired in the first instance^f.

nothing has yet been effected. In the American Church, the practice resembles that of the ancient African Church, in which the primacy was not fixed, as in other places, to the civil metropolis, but was always vested in the oldest bishop of the province, who succeeded to it by virtue of his seniority, whatever place he lived in.—[Bingham, Book II. ch. xvi. § 6.] In the American Church, the presiding bishop is the senior.

^f “The city which formed the political centre of the world could scarcely fail, when Christianity had spread itself over the world, to become its religious centre also. The Church has ever adapted, and, in fact, could not well do otherwise than adapt, her geographical and statistical arrangements to those of the civil world around her. The apostolic seats, indeed, were naturally fixed, for the most part, in cities of the greatest name and consideration. The size and importance of the imperial city would of themselves invest its pastoral superior with a certain pre-eminence over his brethren in other places. . . . As the Church extended itself through the rude and distant regions of the West, it was in most cases from Rome that the bishops who founded her new sees would receive their orders and their mission; and to them, when these spiritual settlers in the waste stood in need of guidance or control, the Roman patriarch could speak in the tone of parental as well as of apostolical authority. They were bound to him by a tie similar to that which now connects our colonial prelates with the successors of our English Austin; at the same time that they felt, in common with the whole of Christendom, the abstract right to their veneration possessed by the see which had been founded, and originally governed, by St. Peter.”— [Bowden's Life and Pontificate of Gregory VII.] See also Bingham, Book IX., containing “a geographical description of the Ancient Church; or, an account of its division into Pro-

As St. Peter had pre-eminence among his brethren, so had his successors among theirs. But the pre-eminence possessed by the latter would appear to be derived from that of the see over which they presided, and not from any primacy of honour or power inherited from him personally. The writings of the fathers, even those passages cited by Romanists themselves, in defence of the supremacy, (those, at least, which are not spurious,) speak of the precedence as a question of *fact* only, without reference to any *divine appointment* to that effect, which they could not have failed to refer to on so important a subject, had it any existence, or even been by them believed to exist. And this question of *fact* we are not disposed to dispute. On the contrary, its very existence, taken in connection with events and circumstances hereafter to be noticed, afford the readiest explanation of the power subsequently gained by the Roman Pontiffs, and exercised with little or no check for so many centuries.

Even with regard to the personal precedence of St. Peter himself, it would have been strange if there had not been a personal precedence of some kind somewhere. Let twelve men be selected in

vinces, Dioceses, and Parishes; and of the first original of these :” and especially the first chapter, on the state and division of the Roman Empire, and the Church’s conforming to that in modelling her own external polity and government.

any part of the world for any given purpose, religious or other,—it would be a very unusual circumstance if, among this number, there were not one or more distinguished among their brethren for those qualities which cause precedence among men. Natural disposition, education, strength of mind and character, earnestness of purpose, bodily or mental activity, habits of business, intellectual powers, to say nothing of the force of external circumstances, will always be found to draw out, and place in a more prominent position, one or more in any given number of persons associated for a particular purpose, and to invest them with a degree of influence over their fellows, irrespective of any design to that effect in the circumstances under which they were associated. This is human nature; and we must expect that the same result would have shewn itself in the society of the apostles, unless specially provided against in the supernatural wisdom which guided their original selection; a fact of which we have no intimation in Scripture, nor anything to point out its necessity, or even its probability.

St. Peter's character, from the very first, seems to have marked him out for this precedence, which, as it arose from personal qualities, and not from any appointment to that effect, was one of a purely personal character,—in no way official or hereditary. The fact that he was afterwards ap-

pointed to take a leading part in the revelation and development of the great mystery of the calling of the Gentiles, would seem to have arisen, if we may presume to trace the counsels and designs of God, from the same causes; while the circumstance that, in the prosecution of this great work, he was afterwards betrayed into one of those weaknesses and inconsistencies^g to which the greatest minds are liable, while it gives an air of natural consistency to the narrative, seems to warn us against the notion of any undue exemption from personal fallibility, and shews how the same weakness of character which had led him to deny his Lord in former years, still remained,—subdued, indeed, by grace, and not allowed, but liable to break out at any time, without great watchfulness and prayer.

The circumstances which led to the precedence of the Roman See, though entirely unconnected with St. Peter's personal character and history^h, were yet, in many respects, analogous to them.

^g See Galatians ii. 11, 12.

^h It is not improbable that a greater interest may have been attached to the Roman See from its connection with St. Peter,—similar, though on a larger scale, to that which is associated, in the memory of the English Church, with Sodor and Man, through Bishop Wilson; or with Winchester, from the pious gratitude with which the memories of William of Wykeham and Waynfleet are cherished by many; or with that of Bath and Wells, through the memory of Ken.

As was observed just now, in the establishment of the Gospel, whether in ancient or modern times, there have always been circumstances connected with certain localities, which, having given to them a political or other importance over others, have also invested them for the time with a precedence in ecclesiastical matters. And if Rome, at that time mistress of the world, and first in political importance, had not stepped into the position open to her, it would have been an anomaly, even without reference to those other causes, internal and external, which combined to place her there. In whatever aspect we regard it, the precedence accorded to the Roman See was most natural under the circumstances.

This precedence, however, must be distinguished from the supremacy, though the gradual way in which the one assumed the character of the other may render it not always easy to do so. The history of the transition from precedence to supremacy is that of all similar encroachments. We find the need of guidance and sympathy on the part of lesser states or individuals; the occasional want of protection against some external danger, or of an arbiter to determine some point in dispute; the natural turning, for these objects, to that person or state whose already established pre-eminence in dignity or power seems to mark them out as the fittest objects of appeal; the in-

crease of moral weight and real power which each successive appeal seems to confer; and the increased recognition of right instead of deference. The same circumstances which, on a smaller scale, gradually convert the leader of a republic into an absolute monarch, as in the instances of Deioces and Augustus, tended, on a larger scale, to convert the precedence with which various circumstances concurred to invest the Roman See in the first ages of the Gospel, into the despotic supremacy of the middle ages. There were the judicial appeals, the exercise of legislative and judicial functions, sometimes solicited from, sometimes claimed by, the Bishop of Rome; yet always more or less under protest on the part of some portion of the Church, as though it were the design of the Great Head of the Church that these usurpations should not take place without a witness against them.

The precedence which the internal circumstances of the Church were thus gradually building up for the Roman See, prepared the way for her ultimately occupying that position which external circumstances seemed to call for, and of which they opened the door. In fact, this precedence, and the circumstances which led to it, must be viewed with reference to their final cause, that of providing some temporary centre of unity, which was required for the Church's well-being

during the troubled times which were approaching. For not only must the precedence of the Roman See be granted as a matter of fact, but the actual supremacy it possessed seems to have had a special, though temporary purpose, in the history of God's providence, and in the designs of Christ for His Church. This we not only may, but we ought, to concede to it, provided we regard their special purpose, like others of an analogous kind in history, as special and temporary only, called for to meet a particular exigency, and abandoned when the necessity for it had ceased. Although the use which God, in His providence, made of the Roman supremacy, does not justify the assumption of it on the part of the Roman pontiffs, nor diminish the arrogance and sin involved in it, it is not to be denied that the Roman Church had, in the history of God's providence, a special mission,—as had been the case with other great powers of a purely secular character, which had long since passed away.

The necessity which the times created for a leadership of this kind, irrespective of the circumstances which placed it in the hands of the Roman pontiffs, might be compared to that which existed among the Grecian states after the retreat of Xerxes, throwing into the hands of the Athenians that precedence which, however salutary at first, grew, by degrees, into an intolerable tyranny; and

eventually, instead of uniting the several states against the common foe, arrayed them against herself and against each other. Nor are the wily and unscrupulous means by which Athens converted that leadership into a supremacy, and also sought to perpetuate it, without their parallel in the history of papal Rome. The mission of the papal power would seem to have been chiefly to form a centre of unity, to which the disjointed branches of the Christian Church might look for guidance and support, amid the general dislocations of the social and political state of Europe which ensued upon the breaking up of the Roman Empire. Amid the chaos which followed the dissolution of that overgrown and unwieldy mass, it is not easy to trace the probable fortunes of the Church, degenerate as it then was from its original purity, and no longer held together by the stronger bond of charity and holiness, without the spiritual ascendancy which the Roman Church had at that time considerably established, and which was little affected, in comparison, by the political convulsions of the times. Although an institution which has been permitted for corrective purposes, cannot be defended as abstractedly good, or of Divine right, yet it is taking a very narrow and unphilosophical view of things to deduce arguments against an institution from the abuses, or other circumstances, which may have

attended its decay, or may even have been instrumental in causing its downfall, after it has fulfilled the purpose for which it was raised up or allowed to exist. And it is most unwise to deny to the papal power the beneficial place which it occupied in the history of God's providence, from the corruptions of which it was guilty in later times. To the Church itself it was an unquestionable benefit; and it seems to have been wisely permitted, that in the dark ages, and in the confusion which pervaded the political state of Europe, the ecclesiastical power should have been embodied and concentrated in a single chieftain, who could control and direct its operations. Nor were the benefits confined to the Church. The very circumstances which contributed to its elevation and ascendancy, enabled it, at the same time, to confer no slight advantages on the social condition of Europe, broken and disjointed as it then was. It established one central point, to which the several nations might look with respect and deference; and it formed a bond of union by which rude, jealous, and intractable states, who might have been beyond the reach of other influences, could be connected and brought into something like one general system. In this work the monastic orders also had their part assigned them in the scheme of God's providence, which will be denied by no one who will regard the subject, not

through the medium of modern prejudice and party spirit, but with fairness and candour; taking their view from the point from which all history ought to be regarded, if we would form a just estimate of the events of which it is the record.

In fact, it may be said that the papal power had, in the dark ages, a mission as clear and undoubted as that of those other institutions, whether kingdoms, or of a lesser kind, whose peculiar work in forwarding the designs of the Almighty no one has ever thought of questioning; and of this mission, the conversion of the heathen, its influence in mitigating the horrors of war and the cruelties of slavery, and in restraining the passions of those warlike barbarians who constituted the physical strength of Europe, formed no unimportant part: and this influence owed much of its real power to its concentration in the hands of a single chief; while the visible centre of unity which the papal system afforded, and in which it may in one sense be said to have consisted, effected, in that abnormal and disorganized state of society, what no other instrument, as far as we are permitted to see, could have effected.

In short, the more we admit the peculiar mission of the papal power, the more force that we give to the circumstances which called for such an institution, irrespective of the actual causes which gradually led to its formation, and the

more we can point out how temporary and transient were those causes,—the more we can do this, the more effectually do we assail the Romanist's argument in favour of that supremacy which he draws from the very fact of its existence, as though that very fact implied a permanent Divine appointment; an argument which has been used with considerable force towards proselytes from the English communion.

Neither is it just to charge on the institution itself the corruptions which, in process of time, grew out of it, and which were instrumental, in connection with other causes, in working its downfall. It may be said that such has been the ordinary course of God's providence in other parallel cases;—that when an institution has fulfilled the purpose for which it has been raised up, the Almighty, who executes His designs by ordinary and secondary causes, has allowed its fall to be precipitated by some internal corruption, which may or may not have been inherent in its original constitution, but which may, in many cases, be traced, as far as we are allowed to trace them, to the abuse of irresponsible power.

Let us briefly compare this mission of the papal power with that of other institutions of greater or less magnitude. Of these, one of the most striking is that of the Roman Empire itself, whose mission, though proceeding from causes entirely indepen-

dent, apparently, of the Gospel, was obviously framed with reference to the establishment and propagation of the Gospel.

Whatever may have been the final cause, in the designs of Providence, of the earlier phases of the Roman Republic in connection with the contemporary history of its several epochs, the circumstances of the Empire had an immediate reference to the planting and establishment of the Gospel. The fact of the whole world being under one government, and of universal peace at that time reigning upon earth, was of incalculable value in aiding the propagation of Christianity. The means which were thus secured to the apostles of free access to various parts of the civilized world, which they were thus enabled to visit and to sojourn at, as in their own country, afforded opportunities of conveying the glad tidings of salvation, and of planting and strengthening Churches, the value and efficacy of which can scarcely be estimated in these days, when the humanity of modern times, and the recognised laws of modern warfare, offer no serious obstacle to the religious intercourse of hostile nations. But if we would form some notion of the difficulties which would have attended the preaching of the Gospel, had the component parts of the Roman Empire consisted of states independent of each other, if not in actual hostility,

we may do so by observing the difficulties which beset the path of modern missions in various countries of the East, where the religious hostility to the new faith is not checked or softened by the sympathy of a fellow-citizenship, and where the presence of the preacher, unwelcome as the setter forth of strange doctrines, has not the protection of a civil right¹.

But when the Christian faith had been planted in the various countries which collectively formed the empire, and had become the recognised religion of the empire itself, the circumstances which required the continuance of the empire had no longer the same force; its mission, so to say, was ended, and it was allowed to yield to the influence of those second causes connected with its internal corruption, which had long been undermining it, and which rendered it powerless to meet the shock which eventually shivered it to atoms.

Of the part assigned to the Church in the political and social state of society which ensued on the breaking up of the Roman Empire, I have before spoken. But the times which followed bring before us another institution, not of a territorial, local, or political nature, which may be cited as furnishing another example of institutions allowed by Providence for a particular object, which had a

¹ St. Paul owed his protection on two occasions to his rights as a Roman citizen. (Acts xxii. 25—29; xxv. 9—12: see also xvi. 36—39.)

particular work assigned them, enduring for a time, and then, when the object was accomplished, passing away. I allude here to the case of Chivalry, which, though not assuming the form of a regular or organized institution, yet, as a system and a principle, was more or less embodied in the whole political and social system of Europe.

It is not necessary, even were it possible, to assign the causes which led, humanly speaking, to the establishment of this singular phenomenon in the moral and social history of mankind. Whether its germ was introduced by those wild hordes who brought from their native forests the spirit which was destined to renovate and reinvigorate the effete nations of Europe, or from whatever cause it sprang, it filled a gap in the social and political system, and occupied a part in the historical drama of the times,—supplying a want which no other institution, as far as we can see, would have adequately met. I speak not now of the principles of limited monarchy or of representative legislation, for which modern Europe is indebted to the conquerors of the Roman Empire, but of those moral peculiarities which characterized the age of chivalry; among which we may notice a principle of loyalty, personal independence, boldness, purity of morals, courtesy, and, more especially, a respect for the female sex, which had a powerful influence in softening the

iron character of the age¹. In the absence of any regular dominion of law, in the ignorance of letters, it is difficult to say how the effect produced by the spirit of chivalry would have been otherwise accomplished. In fact, chivalry had a mission; and with the revival of letters, and the recognised dominion of law, its mission was ended. Men had no longer occasion to seek at the point of the lance the protection for life and property, or the redress of injury, or the protection of female purity, which was now accorded by courts of law, and a more regular administration of justice.

In the same way it may be said that the Roman Church, especially that feature in it which consisted in the papal supremacy, had its appointed work in the scheme of Divine Providence, as referred to above—a work which, for its own part, it discharged effectually; but that work done, its mission was ended: nor can any argument be urged for its revival, which might not be also urged for the revival of the Roman Empire or the age of chivalry.

I have cited these two last-mentioned institutions in particular, because they respectively furnish the best parallel to the two aspects in which the Roman Church presents itself in history, whether we view it as a spirit and a system,

¹ See some interesting remarks on this subject in Dean Chandler's Bampton Lectures.

or as a positive institution possessed of actual powers, government, and laws. But history furnishes us with many more cases which might be adduced as parallel ^k. The other three monarchies

^k Among these, the feudal system occupies no unimportant place, presenting also in detail many features analogous to those of the papal system. The same may be said, though on an infinitely smaller scale, of the practice of duelling—a practice which, though indefensible in itself, may be here cited as having a definite, though temporary work, arising out of a corrupt state of society, and occupying, for a time, in the social system of Europe, a place in regard to presumed offences against personal honour, analogous to that which chivalry held in the greater matters of life and property. As, in the latter, the absence of the regular dominion of law led men to seek by the sword, or at the point of the lance, the redress of injury which was not afforded by the law, so in the other, in the absence of a healthy state of public opinion, have they sought through the duel the supposed vindication of their honour against outrages or contumelies, which society did not afford them. As this feature of chivalry gradually declined in proportion as the law asserted its dominion, and men were no longer obliged to seek by an appeal to arms the redress which was afforded by courts of law and a due administration of justice,—in like manner, as society has gradually taken upon itself to lay its censure on those who violate its conventional laws, whether of good breeding or of honour, it has been rendered superfluous for individuals to seek personal redress for wrongs or insults received through a violation of those laws by others. In nearly all the cases in which, a century ago, it would have been deemed imperative on a person to fight a duel, if he would retain his position in society, corrupt as it then was, it may be said that society would now take the matter into its own hands, and extend its protection to the party aggrieved, placing the offender under its ban—that is, provided the former, for his part, has not put himself out of the protection of the social code by infringing its laws himself. The practice of the Bar affords a striking illus-

—Assyrian, Persian, and Grecian—each had their mission, both as regards the secular progress of the human race, and more especially in reference to the revealed designs of the Almighty in connection with the Jewish people and the Holy Scriptures¹. In short, the same may be in one sense said of every power or institution that has

tration of this principle. Any transgression of the legitimate freedom of speech on the part of an advocate, reflecting on the opposite counsel, is never allowed to be made a personal matter by the latter, but is referred to and taken up by the other members of the circuit, who adjudicate on the matter amicably, requiring, if necessary, the suitable apology or customary fine from the offending party. The authorities have only been able to banish duelling from the army by themselves taking the matter into their own hands, and punishing the offender.

I trust this will not be construed into any defence of the barbarous and unchristian practice of duelling. I merely cite it as another illustration of the fact that abnormal states of society necessarily give rise to abnormal institutions and practices; that the seeming necessity or utility of the latter does not change their moral character; and that, without being formally annulled at any given period, or on any particular occasion, or by any particular authority, they are gradually absorbed and wither away, as the circumstances to which they owed their origin disappear and give place to a healthier state of things.

¹ It has been suggested to me that Romanists may, perhaps, be not unwilling to accept this analogy, as inviting them to appropriate to themselves the fifth kingdom spoken of by Daniel. Whatever argument they can draw from it in favour of that claim they are welcome to avail themselves of, provided they take the *whole* analogy, and number themselves among those kingdoms which, bad in themselves, were raised up for temporary and corrective purposes, as instruments of chastisement in God's hands, to be cast aside when their work was finished.

existed from the beginning of the world ; but I would now confine it to those already referred to, as they are brought into more or less immediate contact with the religious history of mankind. But in all these there is one circumstance especially to be noticed,—that in proportion to the interest we take in these institutions as exhibited to us by history, so is our natural regret at their extinction, and our desire, however undeveloped or unexpressed, for their revival. What interest do many take in the past history of the Assyrian and Egyptian empires ! What thrilling interest is awakened by a visit to the ruins of Nineveh, Babylon, or Thebes ! I speak not of the interest excited in the mind of the mere antiquarian, but of that which swells the mind of the student of history, who remembers their intimate connection with sacred history, and recognises, in their present condition the manifest hand of God, and the fulfilment of ancient prophecy. What wishes obtrude themselves for the time, that these desolate cities would again start into life,—not in the garb of modern civilization, but as they were in the zenith of their pagan splendour and barbaric magnificence, when Sennacherib went forth with his myriads for the conquest of Palestine ; or when Babylon witnessed the completion of her stupendous temple and palace at the hand of the great king Nebuchadnezzar. Nor is there, in this

passing wish, any treason to their Christian allegiance; it is the natural (may we not also say allowable?) enthusiasm at the visionary revival of that on which an interest of no ordinary kind has been identified with their earliest associations of history and its accompanying romance.

Hardly less intense, though different in kind, are the feelings with which we view the ruins of the ancient cities of Greece. It is no mere antiquarian interest which in fancy leads us to restore their ruined temples, and to raise up their fallen and mutilated statues; to fill their ports with shipping, their Forum with a living multitude; to listen to Pericles, now rebuking, now flattering, the fickle multitude; or to Plato or Aristotle discoursing in the groves of Academus; to witness the solemn procession slowly winding its course to the celebration of the Eleusinian mysteries or the Panathenaic festival. Nay, the mind of the Christian scholar will sometimes dwell on these ancient localities with a feeling of interest more solid and real than that suggested by mere fancy or romance, and will picture to itself, as a not improbable event, this ancient people, reviving from the torpor of centuries, raised from their present moral and social dégradation, again displaying their moral and intellectual energy, and taking their place, as a Christian people, among the great family of nations.

The revival of the Roman Empire, at least the Eastern portion, has been more than a dream with one nation comprising no inconsiderable portion of the civilized world. It has formed the basis of a deep-laid policy, a vast political project, on which much has been, and probably still will be, risked and attempted. Since the days of the Empress Catherine, the revival of the Eastern Empire, with the ancient city of Constantine for its capital, as in time past, has been a leading object of Russian policy—the favourite and deeply cherished scheme of the Russian Empire. It is with reference to this, it has been said, that the practice has arisen of naming the second son of the reigning sovereign for the time being, after the great Christian emperor who gave his name to the imperial capital of the East.

More chastened in their nature, more holy in their character, yet of the same kind in the desire which they create to revive objects of ancient interest, are the feelings with which many regard our ancient monastic institutions. How many among us, in viewing these monuments of the piety and munificence of former times, have, with mingled feelings of sorrow and righteous indignation, mourned over the sacrilegious rapacity which first plundered and then left them to perish? How many, in contemplating these splendid ruins, have been led, with no great effort of

the imagination, to restore them, as once they stood, the glory of our land, and to re-people them with those multitudes who, day and night, as the brethren or as guests, thronged their now deserted halls and cloisters, and joined in the song of prayer and praise in their now ruined, though once splendid, sanctuary. How many have pictured to themselves these devoted brethren discharging faithfully those duties, not only to God's poor, but to the community at large, for which the half-civilized and turbulent spirit of the times afforded no other provision, performing those duties of the owner of the soil for which the feudal lord was incompetent, and for which his habits of life, and the demands which War made on him, left him neither the time nor the inclination,—feeding the hungry, relieving the poor, tending the sick, receiving with Christian hospitality the way-worn and wearied traveller, and offering an asylum to the soul weary of the world, bound down by sin or sorrow, and seeking the solace of Christian sympathy and the privacy of religious retirement.

So, likewise, in reference to the system or spirit, or by whatever term it may be designated, (for it was not an institution,) which was before spoken of as having exercised a powerful influence on the moral and social condition of Europe during the middle ages—chivalry. What a powerful im-

pression has this left on the historical mind; what an interest it excites at this very day in the minds of numbers! How strongly it appeals to the imagination, and those parts of our moral system which are acted upon by it! Those ancient baronial strongholds which, to one class of unimaginative minds, are identified with a state of things most opposed to what they consider social progress and the better interests of the human race, often characterized by violence, rapacity, and cruelty,—and, even in their more peaceful and domestic avocations, marked by barbaric social habits from which modern refinement turns with distaste, and whose very ruins are regarded with complacency as the tokens of a new and very different order of things,—are very differently regarded by another and numerous class, whose imagination is strongly acted upon by the other side of the picture which history, on its poetical side, presents of those times. On these their imagination loves to dwell. In fancy they transport themselves back to those days, and live in the scenes with which they have been made familiar by the chronicles of the times, viewed through the medium of imagination and romance. Many of those now living will be able to call to mind the strong impulse which was given to this feeling by the most powerful writer of fiction in modern times^m;—how, at the

^m Sir Walter Scott.

touch of his wand, ruined castles rose from the ground in their pristine strength and feudal grandeur;—how from their portals issued forth kings and queens, followed by trains of nobles, knights, esquires, and high-born dames, either for the chase, the tournament, or the military pageant;—how at night the baronial hall assembled within its walls for the splendid banquet the same goodly array of noble persons, adorned with all the magnificence, and grouped with all the skilful taste, which the same creative fancy so well knew how to portray;—how the refinements of modern art and luxury were compensated by lavish hospitality, not unattended with knightly dignity and courtly grace;—and how the deficiencies of intellectual culture were supplied by a keen sense of personal honour, and of more than respectful deference to the female sex. How many have wished those times to come over again, ignorant or forgetful that they view them through a false colouring, and how incompatible they would be with the duties and requirements of modern society.

Now, looking at the various institutions of which I have been speaking, whether political, ecclesiastical, or social, and the interest which, even at this distance of time, attaches to them, and lingers in the minds of many,—an interest which would only receive its full gratification in their total or partial restoration,—can we be surprised that the

really devoted member of the Roman Church, knowing what it once was, and seeing no reason, in the (to us) extraordinary circumstances which called it into being, why it should not be so again, should rest satisfied with nothing short of its complete restoration to the place it once occupied? If this strong feeling is found to exist towards institutions of a more or less secular nature, how much more powerful must be its action where the strongest of all motives, giving to natural feelings the sanction of a presumed religious duty, come into play! The feelings of the Romanist, and of those who sympathize with him in regard to his Church, his regrets for its departed greatness, and his eager desire for its revival, will partake more or less of all the feelings with which men view the defunct institutions before spoken of. The interest of the antiquarian, the enthusiasm of the scholar, the excitement of romance, the force of classical association, all enter largely into the feeling with which he regards his Church. Add to these the feeling of filial reverence, religious duty, the deep and lasting personal interest which he has in it; and I fear we must add, the *odium theologicum* which more or less actuates all religious communities, and gives additional force to the desire which all have to promote the ascendancy of their own.

Yet all these yearnings, however innocent, or even laudable, in themselves, are doomed to disappointment. The restoration of Athens in her ancient intellectual supremacy and military vigour; the rebuilding of Thebes or Babylon; the re-establishment of the Eastern Empire; the revival of chivalry; the rekindling into life of our monastic institutions; the restoration of the papal supremacy—are alike dreams and projects of the same visionary nature. They belong to the past;—with the future they have little relation. Their mission, however faithfully executed, has been fulfilled, and is passed away for ever.'

A partial exception, however, to this rule, must be made in regard to the Roman Church. Irrespective of the position it must always occupy as an important apostolic see, the momentum it has acquired in the course of history, though materially checked, is not likely to cease suddenly^a. Moreover, a grave question suggests itself, whether the state of Christendom does not, at this time, present circumstances favourable to the extension of the papacy, analogous to those to which it owed its first increase. The latter were described above

^a "In tracing the papal empire over mankind, we have no such marked and definite crisis of revolution. But slowly, like the retreat of waters, or the stealthy pace of old age, that extraordinary power over human opinion has been subsiding for five centuries."—*Hallam's Middle Ages*, chap. vii.

as being mainly the disorganized state of Europe, which naturally led the several Christian states to turn for guidance to the see which already possessed a marked precedence, and was invested, from various causes, with a certain degree of authority. Are there not, in the present day, circumstances analogous to this, especially in the latitudinarian and irreverent spirit, fast verging towards an extensive infidelity, which characterizes the age;—the authoritative teaching of the Church scornfully repudiated and denounced as an infringement of the rights of conscience; the very existence of objective truth denied; the individual conscience made the last court of appeal in all matters of ethics and conduct of life, and, still more, in the interpretation of Holy Scripture; the supremacy of the latter being only so far acknowledged as it commends itself to the private judgment of individuals, subject to no external authority or check? How often do we hear men say that they hardly know what to believe amid all this disorganization and contrariety of belief, and that they long for some better guide.

It is to persons who feel thus that the Roman Church offers such strong attractions, by presenting a definite system of teaching, which it professes to have received from the apostles, with a professed uniformity of doctrine and discipline unchanged and unchangeable; while the English

Church, which possesses also the body of doctrine, the form of sound words received from the apostles, has every obstacle thrown in her way of acting on her high credentials, and is held up to obloquy and persecution if she attempts to assert them.

This state of things not unnaturally leads many to take refuge in a Church which to them appears to be free from this anarchy. As, in secular government, men who are in fear for their lives, or otherwise suffering from the miseries of anarchy or the licentiousness of democracy, will take refuge under a despotic government which affords them security, or will gladly see their own democracy converted into absolutism or a military despotism; so is it in religion and matters of faith. Feeling the want of some external authority to which they may appeal, they will fly from harassing doubts to a communion which gives to the individual conscience and its difficulties that relief which no one, however he may proudly vaunt himself, was ever yet found practically to dispense with in every form. As, in politics, the best friends (however unintentionally) to absolute monarchies are to be found in those democratic developments which make ordinary men turn to anything which affords a protection from their tyranny and other evil consequences, so are the ultra-protestants and latitudinarians

of the present day the best friends of popery, and the great feeders of its ranks. Finally, as in politics men at length find out that those who have been most prominent in upholding the rights of the people, and in denouncing privileged classes, frequently do so from no real regard to popular rights, but use them as an instrument against a rival, or to promote their own interests, and that if any one, taking them at their word, attempts to act on these rights in opposition to their own views, he is denounced as an enemy to the people; so is it in religion. Men see that those who have most strongly declaimed against dogmatic teaching and the authority of the Church, and have claimed the right of unlimited private judgment in the interpretation of Scripture, have been frequently actuated by a strong hatred of an existing system, or a desire to establish some system of their own; and that if any one has ventured to act on their principle, and to judge for himself, and to form conclusions different from their own, he is denounced as spiritually blind, and a stranger to scriptural and evangelical truth.

If, therefore, in our day the Roman Church appears to be regaining its former ascendancy, it is not from causes connected with its original establishment, but from other analogous ones, which those ultra-protestants who dread that revival would do well to look to. But these

causes bear no relation, save that of analogy, to those which led to the original establishment of the papal supremacy, and which were connected with its mission spoken of above; nor do they form any argument for its revival, stronger than that which would be afforded for the revival of the relative power of ancient Egypt or Assyria from the necessities of our intercourse with our East Indian possessions, and the wealth which it may be the means of pouring into Egypt or the valley of the Euphrates. The vices only of Christendom can now tend to re-establish partially the ascendancy of the Roman see. It is no longer required for its protection, or to direct its movements.

One more institution of the past remains to be noticed, which it is better to consider separately, both from its magnitude and its immediate connection with Divine revelation; and no less because, unlike those before spoken of, whose origin is more connected with human causes, and which have confessedly passed away, it is regarded by many to be dormant only, whose suspended existence will in due time revive, with more momentous results than those which marked the day of its former glory. I allude to the Jewish Church and polity, and its connection with the land of Palestine. Although persuaded, in common with many others, that this too, like other institutions

of less importance, has seen the end of its earthly existence, yet, as many hold a totally opposite view, it would seem better, for the present argument, to consider it separately, merely reminding those who think otherwise of the future destinies of the Jewish race, that the rejection of this, as an additional illustration, does not impair the force of those previously used, nor affect the main argument.

Yet if we consider attentively the Jewish dispensation, its origin, the cause for which it was ordained, and divest ourselves of the feelings before spoken of, which make us unwilling to abandon, as irrevocably lost, any object on which our interest has been deeply fixed, there is no valid reason for regarding its restoration as more within the limits of reasonable probability than those other institutions before spoken of. I allude more to the restoration of the Jews to their own land, and the re-establishment, in some other form, of a visible, theocratic government at Jerusalem; for the revival of the Jewish Church and polity, in its original form, no one, of course, dreams of. But there are many who, transferring their interest in the ancient Jewish polity to the new form in which they believe the restoration of the race will be effected, look forward to that restoration as an event on which no doubt

can exist, to question which is to disbelieve the Word of God itself.

Yet the *real* cause of this feeling is the interest in the past before spoken of, in conjunction with an unhealthy longing for the visible accomplishment of unfulfilled prophecy; the *accidental* cause and the alleged reason, the authority of Holy Writ. They will adduce, in support of their theory, numerous prophecies bearing on the subject, which, if literally interpreted, would doubtless afford ground for the theory. But, without entering into a critical examination of these passages, it may be said of them all, that clearly as they seem to speak of the restoration of the Jews, and of the visible government to which its advocates look forward, (for such, after all, it really is,) they are not more explicit on the subject than those prophecies which spoke of the temporal greatness of the Messiah's kingdom, on the strength of which the Jews rejected the Lord of Life when He appeared as the lowly Nazarene, and on the strength of which they reject Him at this very day. That the future conversion of the Jewish race to the Gospel, with all the blessings and privileges annexed to it, should have been foretold under the figure of the glories and blessings connected with their possession of the land of Palestine, and that the kingdom of Heaven should

have been spoken of under the name of Jerusalem, was only natural, both from the typical relation which Palestine and Jerusalem bore to the spiritual blessings of the Gospel, and because any direct reference to purely spiritual blessings, disjoined from that which was to them the height of their ambition and desires, would have had no attraction, and would have brought little comfort, to so gross-minded, unspiritual a race. But it no more follows from this that these figurative descriptions are to be literally fulfilled, than those figurative and highly-wrought descriptions of Messiah's person and kingdom, for not realizing which the Jews rejected and slew Him. Do the prophecies now speak of the re-gathering of the scattered tribes from all the countries into which God has driven them, with the promise that they shall dwell in their own land? But are these more explicit than those which spoke of the temporal greatness of that kingdom, those glowing descriptions of Messiah's greatness, for not realizing which they rejected and crucified Him? Every argument which the advocates of this theory adduce, furnishes the Jews with a plea for their rejection of their Saviour then, and, what is equally to be deplored, tends to confirm them in their rejection of Him still. Such arguments confirm them in their obstinacy, and prepare them for receiving false Christs, who may offer

themselves with these appendages, if it should be so permitted, of earthly greatness. If the unfulfilled prophecies concerning the restoration of the Jews are to be interpreted literally, why do we blame the Jews for applying the same rule to those which we believe to have been fulfilled spiritually? If the fulfilled prophecies are to be interpreted spiritually, on what authority can we expect a literal fulfilment of those that remain? The feeling which led even the apostles, as yet unenlightened, to ask the question, "Lord, wilt Thou at this time restore again the kingdom to Israel?" was at least as natural as that which leads so many at this day, not only Jews, but also Christians, to believe that the temporal restoration to which that question pointed will yet take place. Surely we may say, on the authority of Scripture itself, interpreted by the analogy of God's revealed Word, that the object for which the chosen nation was raised up has passed away, as much as that of any other institution to which a part has been manifestly assigned in the history of God's providence; that any possible, or even probable, restoration to the land of their fathers, is irrespective of any Divine promise to that effect; and that even their continued isolation among the most frequented abodes of Christendom, so far from being an indication, as some think, that they are thereby held in readiness to

be transported at the fitting moment to their own land, is but the fulfilment of the ancient curse which so often meets us in Scripture as the punishment of their great sin, realizing the apostle's words, that "blindness in part is happened unto Israel, until the fulness of the Gentiles be come in ;" and that then, at the last, "all Israel shall be saved^o;" not by being restored to the earthly Jerusalem, with Christ reigning over them as their visible ruler bodily present, but by being merged in the great body of His spiritual subjects, the subjects of that kingdom which He founded when he ascended into heaven ; into which He is daily gathering those who shall be saved^p.

Now it is to be observed that the Judaizers who thus confidently expect the local restoration of the Jewish people, are of all others the most opposed to the restoration of the papal supremacy, as a probable event. True, they hold the one to be in conformity with Holy Writ, the other opposed to it. But to the calm observer of the course of Providence, who considers either expectation to be equally unsupported by any Scriptural promise, yet regards both as institutions in one sense of Divine appointment, whereof the

^o Rom. xii. 25, 26.

^p The few references which the *New Testament* makes to the restoration of the Jews to God's favour, afford little sanction to the notion of a local and temporal restoration. St. Paul speaks of it above under the designation of being "saved."

object of one is clearly revealed in Scripture, while that of the other is deduced from the part it has occupied in the history of the past, and who regards the object of each to have been temporary, and the need of it long passed away,—the revival of the one will appear as visionary as that of the other. A Divine appointment does not necessarily imply perpetuity. In itself it would do so, unless it were otherwise intimated or implied, as in the case of the Jewish polity, which was avowedly subservient and introductory to another dispensation, at whose coming it was to cease, as announced from the very first[¶]. Had the Roman supremacy been an express Divine appointment, either so stated in Holy Scripture, like the two sacraments, or shewn to have been so from the practice of the apostles acting under the immediate inspiration of the Holy Ghost, like the appointment of the orders of the Christian ministry,—the presumption would doubtless have been in favour of its perpetual continuance. But the Roman precedence, though doubtless permitted, and in that sense appointed, by God for a particular object in the scheme of Divine Providence, yet does not rest on any recorded express appointment, but grew, after the apostolic age, out of the circumstances in which the Church was then placed, as many other institutions have done,

[¶] Deut. xviii. 15—19; Matt. xvii. 5; Acts iii. 22, 23.

secular, as well as religious; nor does it suggest, from the mere fact of its existence and obvious utility for the time being, any argument in favour of its perpetuity, which may not be adduced for that of the ancient monarchies, or of any other institution which has been raised up for a particular purpose, or filled a particular place in the history of God's providence.

Yet had the Roman supremacy engaged the sympathies of those now so strongly opposed to it, they would probably have found, in the circumstances of its origin, sufficient grounds, in their own view, for contending for its continuance as a Divine institution. Even with Romanists themselves, as I had occasion to observe before, the Scriptural proofs which they allege of its Divine appointment have really no connection with its origin, nor were so regarded for a considerable period; but have been brought forward subsequently to support a foregone conclusion already determined on other grounds, and have been invested with a meaning and importance which, for more than two centuries, no one thought of attributing to them; nay, which one distinguished father who flourished long before the existence of this supremacy, prophetically, as it were, disclaimed for them:—so much does the force of Scripture proofs depend on the previous bias of the persons using them. A striking in-

stance of this is seen in the circumstance that those who apply so rigidly St. John's description of the ideal Christian, as to exclude from the pale of salvation all those who do not come up to its standard, yet pass over as unimportant those strong passages on visible unity as the note of a true Church, and a test of Christian communion, which form so prominent a feature in our Lord's solemn prayer, as well as in other parts of Scripture; while the Romanist, who attaches so much importance to the latter, concerns himself little in comparison about the other. Those who apply so literally St. John's description of the ideal Christian life, ought, on their own principle, to regard more charitably the Romanist's application to his own Church, to the exclusion of other branches, of those strong references in Scripture to visible unity as a note of the Church.

But on this point it is unnecessary now to enter again, further than to observe, that when we find two parties so much opposed to each other on most questions of theology, yet both resting the principal features of their systems on the literal application of particular texts which seem to favour it, but which are respectively held of little account by the other, it is the more incumbent upon us to fall back on those rules for the interpretation of Scripture which the Church Catholic has ever held, and which are essentially

connected with the circumstances under which its several parts were written.

In concluding these remarks on the papal supremacy, and its analogy, in respect of its undoubted yet temporary mission, to other institutions which history, sacred and profane, exhibits to us, a few words of caution seem to be called for by the disparaging way in which persons are often led to think and speak of these by-gone institutions, from their inapplicability to the existing state and requirements of human society, and still more from circumstances connected with their decline and final overthrow, which are made, however unjustly, to throw a shade over the institution viewed as a whole from its commencement. It is very important, for the sake of truth and justice, as well as for the moral effect on our own minds, to keep these questions distinct.

No feature is more common in the history of the world than this,—that when an institution has fulfilled the purpose for which it has been allowed to exist, or (which to one who believes in a superintending and overruling Providence, comes to the same point,) has been raised up, the Almighty has allowed or caused it to fall through its own fault and decadence, however some external cause may seem to have given the blow which caused its overthrow. Sacred history records many examples of this truth; and those which

uninspired history presents, faith will measure by the same rule. But it by no means follows that those vices, moral or political, which led to its final overthrow, were parts of its original constitution, or essentially connected with its being. On the contrary, it will be frequently found that they arose out of the circumstances in which it was subsequently placed, especially its exaltation, which brought it more immediately within the reach of temptations incident to humanity as a whole, but which bear with accumulated force on those who are able to yield to them awhile with impunity, and whose moral power to resist them has been impaired by a long enjoyment of irresponsible power, and that absence of self-denial which such possession engenders. The vices which led to the gradual weakening of the Roman Empire, and which made it eventually an easy prey to the invading hordes of the North, exhibit to our eyes no connection with those public institutions and personal qualities of its citizens to which, under Providence, it owed its previous greatness. Great as were the vices inherent in the old Roman system, (and they were indeed great,) they were assuredly not those which caused its overthrow. Nay, one of its chief features, the public-spirited selfishness, (if the paradox may be allowed,) which characterized the old Roman citizen,—that union of public spirit and selfishness

which would lead him unhesitatingly to sacrifice his own life for the good of his country, and make him as ready to sacrifice the interests of the whole human race to promote the interests of Rome, (how emblematic of the spirit of Papal Rome!) is above all others the quality which we most miss in the national character as it presents itself to us in the latter days of the Empire.

If we except the squabbling spirit which at all times characterized the states of Greece, and the petty-minded jealousies which always made them the more ready prey of any external foe, we see little, in the internal circumstances of weakness which preceded their final overthrow, which can be called a development of inherent vices traceable at an earlier period.

The decline of chivalry was the necessary result of its utter incompatibility with the regular dominion of law and a settled state of society. Its continuance might excite a smile among the good-natured, or a feeling of contempt with the more selfish portion of the matter-of-fact, unromantic English people; but if tested by the way in which it fulfilled the part assigned to it in the historical drama of human society, we find nothing to lead us to speak of it in other terms than those of respect.

And so in regard to that other great phenomenon, with reference to which these other insti-

tutions have been mentioned, from the analogy which they seem to present in having a mission assigned to them in the history of God's providence—the Papal power. Whatever may have been the evils—nay, the abominations, which characterized it in the zenith of its worldly prosperity, they have no essential connection with its original constitution, or the circumstances which, humanly speaking, called it into being, and tended to its advancement. It cannot be denied that it occupied an important position in the scheme of God's providence, which no other institution that history presents to us would have adequately filled, and for which, as far as we can see, no other provision was made. Neither can it be denied that, for the purpose for which it was more especially raised up, and at the time when it was most needed, it adequately performed its work. With these, the monstrous claims and practices which afterwards deformed it, and led to its overthrow, had no necessary connection. They arose out of the vast irresponsible power which it exercised,—the bad passions of our nature suggesting that which, unhappily, the possession of a power such as the world has never before or since witnessed, enabled it to carry into effect. But the moral character of such a state of things can hardly be judged by the feelings of the nineteenth century, nor by persons who are happily removed from the

like temptations. There is nothing, however, in the religious tone of those who so vehemently declaim against the abuses of the Papal system, to lead us to infer that, were they placed in the same possession of irresponsible dominion, with strong religious antipathies, and the unlimited power to gratify them, surrounded also by an atmosphere of public opinion, such as it was, which, so far from representing persecution as a sin, regarded it as "doing God service,"—they would not have been actuated by the same spirit, followed by the same results.

The feelings which many seem to entertain towards institutions of former times, are not primarily directed against those institutions themselves, but against those of their own day, towards which, as well as towards the persons connected with them, they entertain a deep-seated hostility, but against which they can bring no valid ground of complaint such as may commend itself to the minds of impartial and fair-judging men. But if they can associate this with any institution of former days with which it has anything in common, and can trace in the history of the latter any of those evils which more or less precede and attend the decay of all institutions, having no essential connection with them, but arising, as we before observed, from the possession of irresponsible power, they will substitute for the

useful essential features of the ancient institution the accidental deformities which arose when its work was done; and, by a violation of all the principles of fair reasoning, represent these deformities as essential parts of the modern institution which happens to be the object of their dislike, however sacred its origin, however faithfully performing its allotted task.

It may be questioned whether the outcry raised of late years against Popery in this country really is directed against the Church of Rome. Generally speaking, men do not feel very strongly against institutions which, by exhibiting abuses, afford justification or a handle for attack. They feel far more strongly against those institutions and principles which, while they arouse their hostility, present no valid ground of objection. Men who hate religion are better pleased with an indolent and negligent, it may be an immoral minister, than with an earnest, devoted one, whose life affords no ground for an attack which may serve as an outlet for their ill-will. Disloyal and rebellious men prefer a bad king, whose vices or bad government give a seeming sanction to their principles, to a good one, whose life is a rebuke to them. So is it with the English Church now. As long as she was in the comparative torpor of the last century, she excited little hostility. But from the moment she began to put forth her

vigour, and more especially since she asserted her distinctive doctrines, particularly those which interpose an obstacle to human pride and self-will, she has been assailed with a degree of bitterness frightful to behold.

But presenting in herself few points of attack, her enemies have first excited the popular feeling, by directing its attention to the vices, present or past, of the Roman Church, and then turned it, when thus excited, against those features in the Anglican Church which, inasmuch as they are both branches of the one Catholic and Apostolic Church, it must have in common with Rome, or any other branch of the same, albeit one may be in excess and abuse, the other still preserving its legitimate form, and fulfilling the purpose for which it was appointed*.

But not thus reason those who view history

* Mr. Hallam, who views the Church, if not as an enemy, at least externally only, and with the feelings (and I may add the ignorance) with which men of the world usually regard it, observes with unconscious *naïveté*, evidently meaning what he says,—“It ought always to be remembered that ecclesiastical, and not Papal encroachments, are what civil governments, and the laity in general, have had to resist; a point which some very zealous opposers of Rome have been very willing to keep out of sight. The latter arose out of the former, and were perhaps in some respects less objectionable. But the true enemy are what are called High Church principles, be they maintained by a pope, a bishop, or presbyter.”—*Middle Ages*, book vii.

The opposition of Dissenters to real reforms in the Church are to be ascribed to the same principle.

with the eye of a philosopher and with the spirit of a Christian. They will learn to view things in their proper light, to distinguish essentials from accidents, inherent vices from abuses which have arisen from external circumstances. How many are there among the better and more charitably-minded of the English people, who, unscared by the senseless war-cry of "No Popery," and the brute violence of which it is frequently the forerunner, are ready, if they were but allowed, to hold the existing Roman Church guiltless of the abominations and cruelties of which Rome was guilty in former times. Why, they would gladly ask, should the Rome of the nineteenth century be held responsible for these, any more than the English of the present day for the misdeeds of former kings or Parliaments? But Rome herself precludes them from entertaining this charitable view. By committing herself to those fatal decrees; incorporating into her system, and adopting as her own, what had otherwise passed as the sins or excesses of individuals; and assuming to herself the indefectibility which only belongs to the whole Church Catholic, she compels us, against our wishes, to identify her with the Rome of the middle ages, and to regard her as sharing its responsibilities.

At the same time, the corruptions which have attended the decline of ancient institutions, from

mighty empires to those of smaller magnitude, are not to be lightly regarded. Their history is pregnant with solemn warning to all, and to none more than to the members of our own communion. I believe the Apostolic Church of England to be charged with a high and important mission by her Divine Head, and one which, in spite of all the obstacles placed in her way by the malice of her enemies, the treachery of false friends, the timidity of some, the lukewarmness of others, she is yet able to fulfil, and which, if only true to herself, she will fulfil. Abnormal, more or less, her condition will ever be, and beset with difficulties trying to the faith of many. When, in the history of Christ's Church, was it otherwise? When, if the past is any guide in forecasting the future, can we expect it to be otherwise? Let us rather strive and pray that our faith may not give way beneath these trials. May God grant that when that mission is fulfilled, we may not be found to be departing from our principles and forfeiting the favour of God; that if our pre-eminence among the branches of Christ's Church is diminished, it will not be because we have betrayed our trust, or receded from the position to which God had called us, but because other branches have, through our instrumentality in God's hands, been called to the like blessedness; and that, as regards the judgment of posterity,

those who may come after us may not be able to point to our corruptions and defects hereafter, as invalidating our high calling now ; but that when the mists of ignorance and prejudice are cleared away, and things which now occupy so large a share of men's thoughts, shall be reduced to their proper dimensions as they recede into the distance of antiquity, and take up their relative position in the great chart of man's history, our name may be held in honour by the truly wise and good. And more especially in those great empires, both in the Old and the New World, which the Almighty has placed in our hands to be peopled with immortal souls, and to receive the means of grace and the knowledge of salvation by Christ Jesus, may the myriads who shall hereafter in those vast regions profess the name of Christ, never have cause to think of the English Church as Rome compels us to think of the successors of those who sent Augustine to the shores of Britain ; nor to speak of the Church of their father-land but in the language of filial piety and reverence, and of gratitude to their common God and Saviour, for the inestimable blessings which she has been the instrument of transmitting to them.

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