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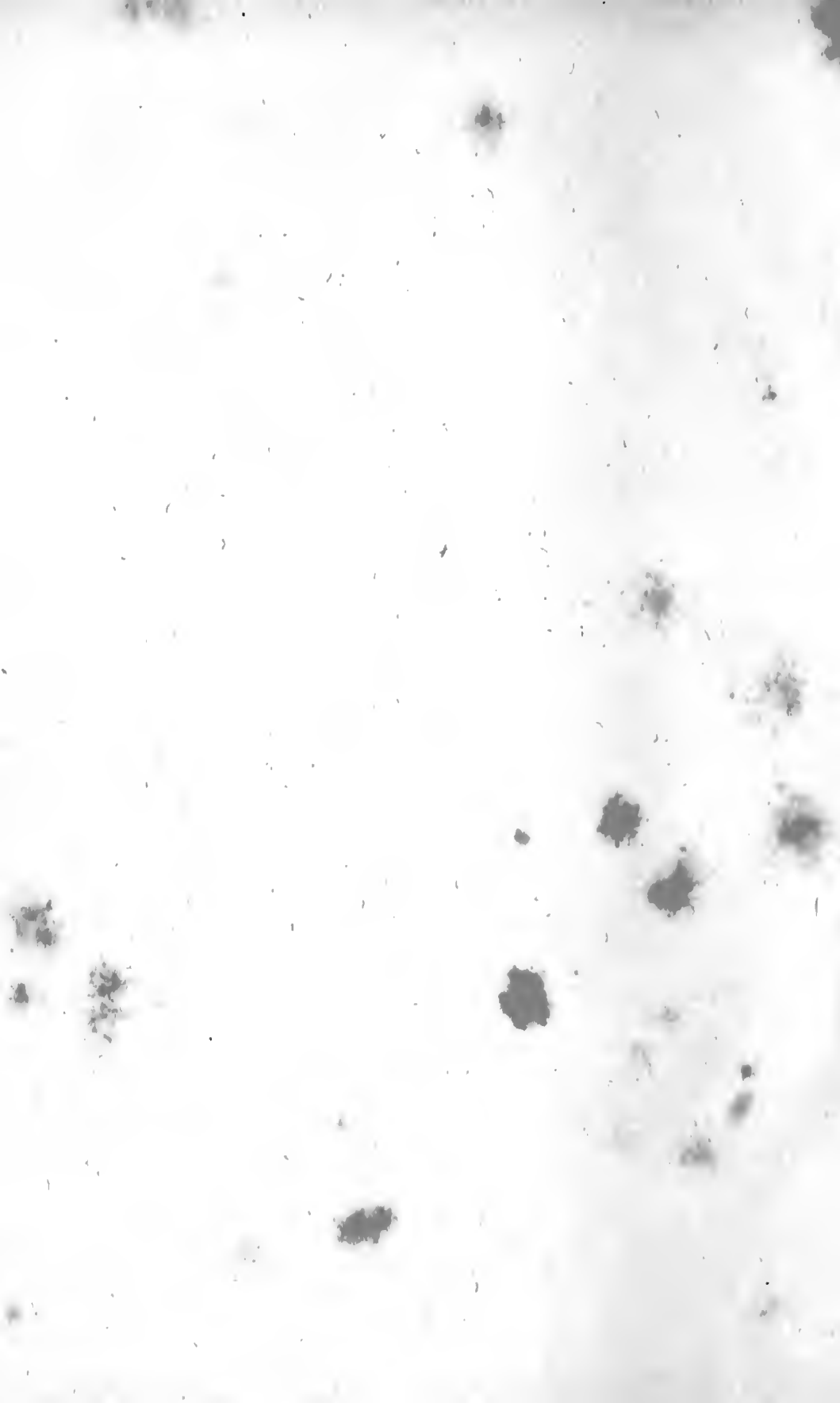
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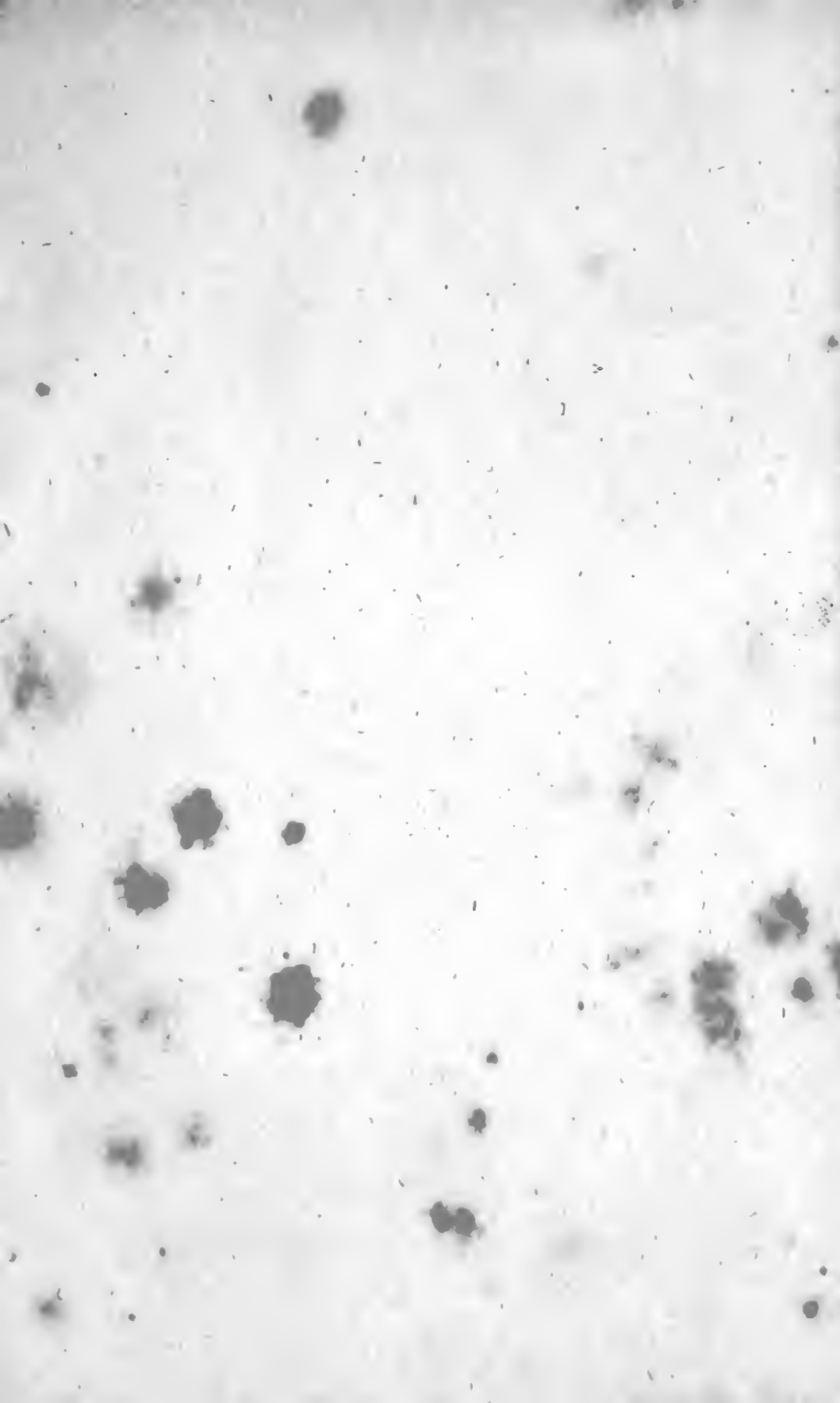
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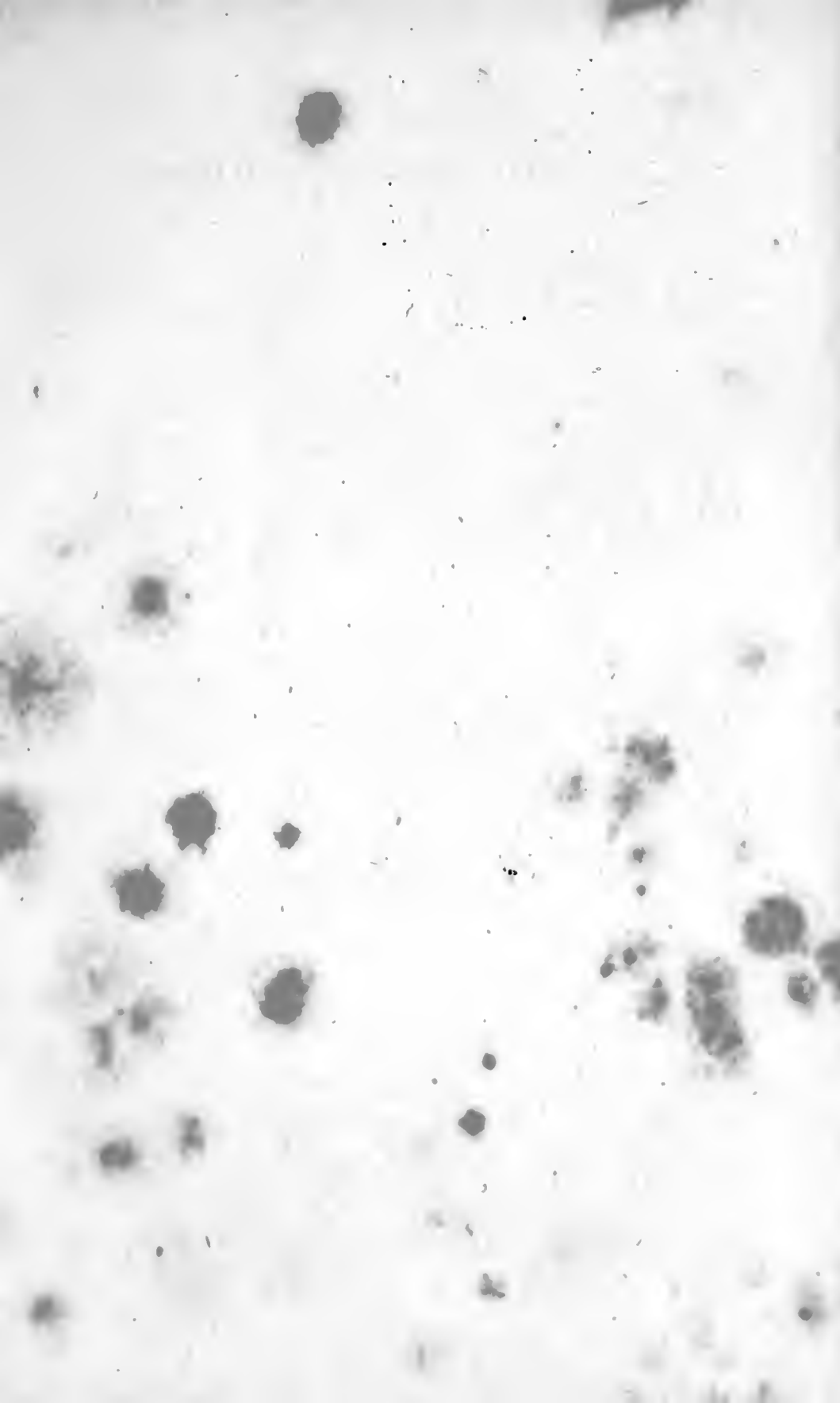
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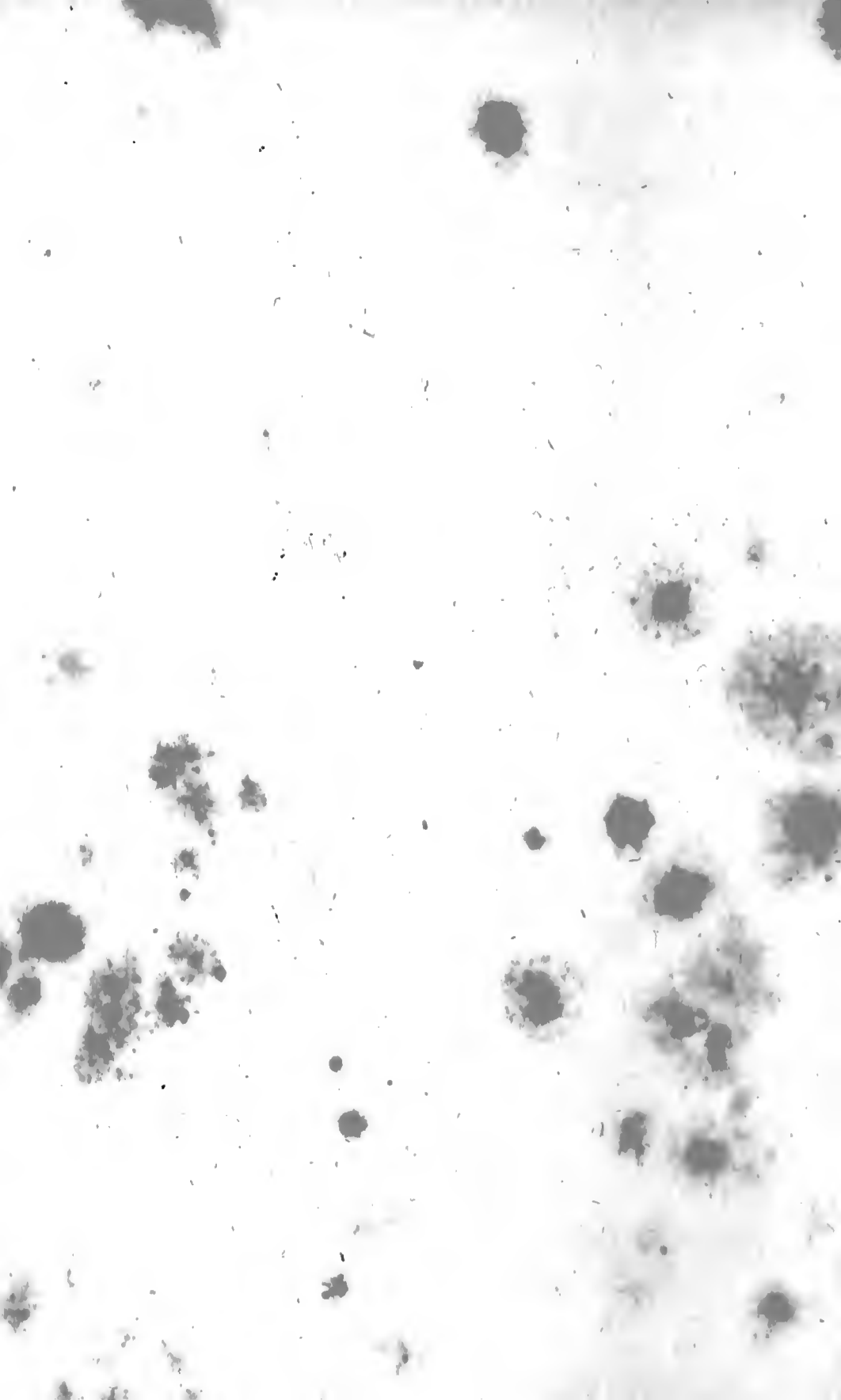






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THE
CONDITION AND PROSPECTS

OF THE

PROTESTANT EPISCOPAL CHURCH.

BY

✓
B. P. AYDELOTT, D. D.

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TO THE MINISTERS AND MEMBERS

OF

THE PROTESTANT EPISCOPAL CHURCH.

Never was there a time since the organization of our church, that called more loudly for serious reflection, and prompt, energetic action, than the present. *The enemy has come in like a flood.*

We have seen the doctrine of Justification by faith only, and nearly every other great principle of our Protestant church, openly denied and opposed. We have seen leading men among us publicly arraying themselves on the side of Popish corruptions, and giving to them their official sanction. We have seen our most important institutions lending their aid to diffuse these evils far and wide. We have seen introduced into our ministry men professing their attachment to Romish errors, and rejecting the most precious truths of the

gospel of the grace of God. All these, and many similar evils have we seen; and yet we have not seen a single instance of their authors and abettors being called to account. So far from this, their treachery to Protestantism has been their glory, and their wickedness against God the very ground of their exaltation.

As the result of all this, those among us who earnestly contend for the faith once delivered to the saints are loaded with obloquy and contempt; our missionary and other benevolent societies become more and more feeble; a painful and paralyzing mistrust prevails through the whole length and breadth of our church; religion daily declines among us; a check is put to our extension; and while christians of other evangelical denominations look upon us with deep sorrow of heart, papists glory in our waning Protestantism, and exult at their accessions from our ranks.

What a humiliating, sinful spectacle! And yet every observing, thoughtful man will see that we have sketched a mere outline of the present condition of our church, and that faithfully to fill it up, would but add a deeper darkness to the picture.

Are we, then, to despair? By no means. Is it not written — “*When the enemy shall come in like a flood, THE SPIRIT OF THE LORD SHALL LIFT UP A STANDARD AGAINST HIM?*” There is life, there is light, there is piety, there is strength enough among us, were they only faithfully put forth, to work out for us even now, under heaven’s blessing, a great deliverance.

Let us then quit ourselves like men, and be strong. Let but our evangelical ministry consider "the great treasure committed to their charge,—that it is their solemn duty to drive away from the church all erroneous and strange doctrine contrary to God's word;" let but each one of us, ministers and people, in his several place faithfully lift up his voice and put forth his hand, and we have no reason to fear the result. The truth as it is in Jesus will triumph. Popery will be exposed and cast out, and a pure Protestantism be established throughout our Zion.

It is a great and very injurious mistake to suppose that our present evils have been of sudden growth. The seeds of them were long since sown, and they have gradually taken root, and grown up "*while men slept*," till the dreadful harvest is now visible in all parts of our church. It is important to be well aware of this fact, in order that we may see the duty and necessity of searching deeply into the causes of our troubles, and making a thorough reformation work. Peradventure some of us—even the best friends of a Protestant christianity—may find that we are endeavoring to reconcile impossibilities; that we are cherishing, or at least are very little concerned about, certain things which will be sure to bring upon us future invasions of the papal antichrist, even should we now be able to cast him out.

Oh brethren, is it not a time with us for close, faithful self-searching; a looking down deep into our foundation; a thorough scrutiny of the whole superstructure; and a full,

honest expose of the results? We must, in this our day of trial, rise above the fear and the favor of man; we must resist every desire of ease; we must quench every ambitious aspiration; we must be very faithful for Christ and his gospel.—or as a church, we are LOST, LOST,—and if, individually any of us are at last saved, it will be as it were by fire.

Such being our sad condition, what must we think of those who endeavor to cover up the whole matter, and “cry peace, peace, when there is no peace?” What must we think of such men? Is it not to be feared that the character of too many of them may be learned in the parable of the tares—“While *men slept* the enemy came and sowed tares.” These professed friends of the church wish us to sleep on. “Why,” say they, “disturb the peace of the church? There is no reason for apprehension; all is well; or, at least, will turn out well, if we only keep still.” Thus do they, with good words and fair speeches, deceive the hearts of the simple. And when this smooth course fails, and men cannot be cajoled, but will lift up the voice of honest alarm; why then they must be branded as disturbers of the church, and their influence in this way be destroyed. Thus do these men endeavor to quiet every fear, hinder all investigation, and suppress every faithful remonstrance. What, then, must we think of such professed friends of the church? If it was the *enemy* that sowed tares while men slept, certainly they must be *his friends* who would prolong this fatal sleep. The Lord awaken

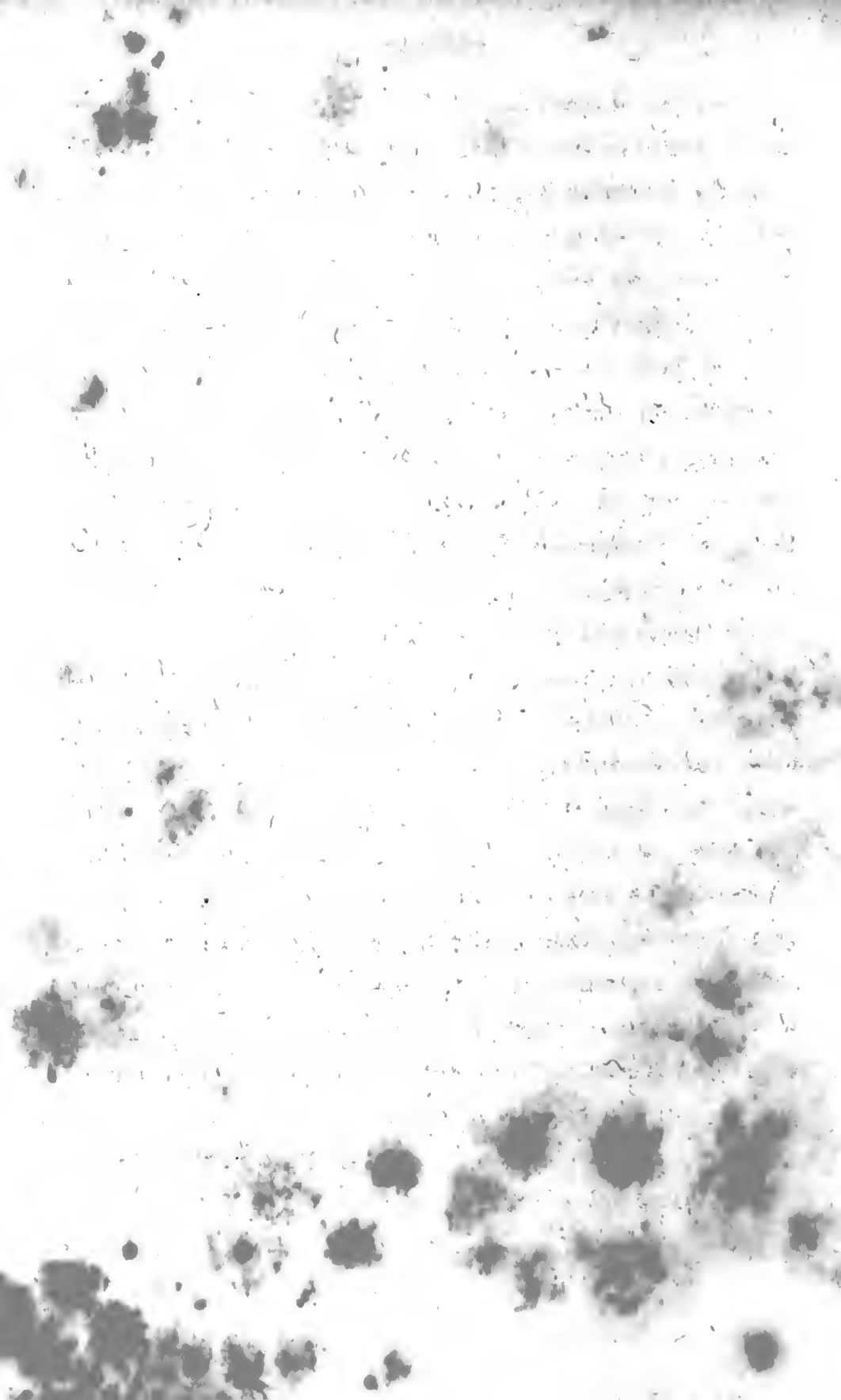
us to a sense of our danger before it be too late! Very many of us, it is to be feared, have already slept the sleep of death.

In the following pages an attempt has been made to point out some of the more prominent evils of our church, and the remedy for them. While the writer has sought to do this in all kindness of spirit and language, he trusts that he has not been wanting in plainness and fidelity. Had he consulted his own ease or interests he would certainly have never again taken up his pen, however strongly solicited. But personal ease and interest ought to be with us a very small thing, when weighed in the balance against the cause of Christ and of never-dying souls. He has endeavored to write with the judgment seat full in view.

The different Essays, as they originally appeared in the Episcopal Recorder, of Philadelphia, and were copied into other periodicals, both in this country and in England, the writer has reason to believe were read with serious attention, and were not unproductive of beneficial results. They are republished in their present form, upon the suggestion of valued christian friends, with the hope that they may have a still wider circulation, and contribute, with the blessing of Heaven, yet more largely to advance the gospel of the grace of God among us, and thus bring, in rich abundance, a true peace to our now troubled church.

B. P. AYDELOTT.

CINCINNATI, Oct. 1, 1847.



C O N T E N T S .

ADDRESS TO MINISTERS AND MEMBERS, &c.

Dangerous condition of the Church,—Necessity of vigorous action,—Startling facts,—Faithfulness may yet save us from total apostacy, &c.,—Seeds of Romanism long since sown among us,—A thorough reformation called for,—Policy of Romanizers to cover over their designs and doings, &c. 3-7

INTRODUCTORY CHAPTER.

Popish errors and practices rampant,—All our benevolent operations embarrassed and enfeebled,—Distrust and alarm universal,—Causes of our evils must be thoroughly investigated. 13-15

CHAPTER II.

Want of carefulness in admitting to the ministry,—Literary and theological requisitions quite high, but religious character and spiritual fitness for the work little regarded,—An alarming fact. 16-21

CHAPTER III.

To preach the Gospel, the great work of the ministry,—The Gospel a simple, clear, definite message,—Its great truths,—Man's natural character and condition, God's counsels of grace and mercy, man's obligations, &c.,—The Gospel altogether peculiar,—Is it faithfully preached among us?—An interesting case, the testimony of a converted lady. 22-29

CHAPTER IV.

A most important scriptural principle,—To spiritual men belong spiritual things,—This principle almost entirely overlooked in our organization,—Vestry,—Diocesan and general convention,—Hence we are continually liable to be flooded with error and worldliness,—*An infidel may sit in our general convention*,—The world and Popery fast friends,—Hence much of our troubles. 30-43

CHAPTER V.

The Lord's supper,—Exercises of the converted man in view of it,—Confirmation, qualifications for it,—Abuses of confirmation and evils growing out of these,—A significant case,—The communion office,—Repentance, faith, holy character essential to the communicant,—Great unfaithfulness here, and the mischievous consequences,—Puseyism and Romanism the natural results of lax communion. 44-54

CHAPTER VI.

The church of Christ,—Her duty, honor, position, &c.,—The Roman Anti-christ,—Its character, &c.,—The Bible lost sight of, universal corruption and despotism,—The dark ages,—The true radical principle of Popery,—The same principle at the foundation of High Churchmanship,—Bishop Hobart's theology, its Romish character and tendencies,—Rev. Dr. —,—his conversion and faithful preaching,—The history of a candidate, his painful discoveries and anticipations,—These last now mournfully realized,—Our only remedy. 55-69

CHAPTER VII.

A cunning device of Satan, to fix men's minds on forms and ceremonies, and draw them off from truth and piety,—Have we been thus deluded?—Justification by faith,—Letter of a candidate indicating a sad state of things,—Another Carey ordination,—A bishop denying justification by faith,—Regeneration, or a change of heart,—A faithful bishop assailed,—Looseness of discipline,—A shocking case of wickedness,—We must return to Scriptural discipline and preaching,—This alone can save us. 70-83

CHAPTER VIII.

What is idolatry?—Idolatry a great besetting sin of human nature,—Rome, baptized heathenism,—The idolatry of the church, its power among us,—He is no churchman who will not bow down to this idol,—The idolatry of the Prayer Book,—No work of man perfect,—The idolatry of Episcopacy,—The miserable results of this idolatry,—We must be honest and above the fear of man, we must tell the truth plainly,—The times demand such faithfulness from us,—How this idolatry has grown to such a height among us,—Selfish men, and ambitious men, and easy men, all help on this idolatry,—Hence, *so many small men in our high places, they exalt the Bishop and the Bishop exalts them*,—Manliness specially called for in these days,—The Apostle Paul an eminent example of manliness,—our idolatries are driving us rapidly onward to Rome. 84-104

CHAPTER IX.

The wisdom and piety of our Reformers, they were far from supposing the Prayer Book perfect,—They made it as good as a corrupt, civil government and the ignorance of the times would let them,—It is reasonable to suppose the Reformers did not themselves get rid of all Romish influences, facts show that they did not,—We are now troubled with these remnants of popery left us by the Reformers,—The communion office in the American Prayer Book changed for the worse from the English Book,—The absolution, two-faced,—The baptismal office admits three interpretations,—Baptismal regeneration, ecclesiastical regeneration, spiritual regeneration,—Its aspect and the impression it is calculated to make, are, to some extent, Popish,—We must reform this office or be continually liable to Popish outbreaks. 105-119

CHAPTER X.

An opponent commended,—The Churchman,—Bishop Meade and baptism,—High church views of baptism, the church, &c.,—Totally opposite to those of evangelical Christians,—Occidentalis,—His candor and manliness,—Two entirely different gospels and kinds of religion among us,—If the one is true, the other must be soul-destroying error,—The great cause of our present troubles, a want of candor and manliness in evangelical men. 120-136

CHAPTER XI.

The danger of power,—to be carefully guarded,—Are not our bishops almost totally irresponsible?—Imperfection of our legislation,—A case in point,—Exemplification of grievous oppression,—No adequate remedy for episcopal oppression—A bishop, again and again, under aggravating circumstances, and with *more than impunity*, grossly assails the character of others from the press,—A bishop guilty of lewd conduct could not be called to account,—Episcopal veto upon the diocesan convention,—Hints at the entire exclusion of the laity from our conventions,—Secret sessions of the House of Bishops—A Judge's opinion of this,—It is utterly opposed to all our civil institutions,—It must result in despotism,—Our present evils naturally grow out of episcopal irresponsibility. 137-151

CHAPTER XII.

Necessity of deep earnestness,—What ought we to do?—Preach the gospel,—False gospels,—Reformers to be carefully studied,—Prayer, special, fervent prayer needed,—The press,—Its power for evil,—The duty of ministers and intelligent laymen here,—Wilberforce's Practical View,—Our religious periodical press,—The wickedness and mischief of a selfish, unfaithful editor,—An error to be corrected,—The inconsistency between high church views and evangelical principles,—One or the other soon given up,—Sad examples,—Bishop Hobart's theology leads to Popery,—Bishop Wilson's (of India) noble testimony against high churchism and Puseyism,—Our evils ought to be brought up at every convention,—The policy of the enemy to prevent discussion,—If the friends of the gospel are silent, all is lost,—The authors of Popish outrages to be called to account—A general correspondence between the friends of the gospel,—Consultation, &c.,—The necessity of a revised book of common prayer,—The need of eminent personal piety,—A general revival of religion is our great want,—This would speedily destroy Puseyism, &c.,—Division perhaps necessary,—False views of unity,—A Popish idol,—The prospect bright for the friends of the truth, if only candid, manly, faithful,—Our present deplorable evils long foreseen and predicted. 152-176

CONDITION AND PROSPECTS

OF THE

PROTESTANT EPISCOPAL CHURCH.

INTRODUCTORY CHAPTER.

The heart of every good man in our Zion trembles for the Ark of the Lord. Troublous times have come upon us. Popish errors, both doctrinal and practical, supposed to be long since dead, never to be revived again, have become rampant, while truth languishes in our midst, and the Spirit of God withholds his refreshing influences. All complain of the little fruits of their preaching; a deadness seems to have come over the whole Church; while here and there a voice is heard to protest against the fatal errors, openly but most often covertly attempted to be spread through our borders. The enemy shows himself in the pulpit, in the Sunday-school, in

the periodical press. Hence the universal alarm and distrust, and in very many cases, despair of better things.

Who does not see that such a state of things must embarrass our missionary and all other benevolent operations, prevent the extension of our church, which has grown so much till recently, and ere long cause too many of our best members to quit us in despondency. These evils have already been painfully manifested, and they will soon, it is to be feared, so thicken about us that even the most blind and unconcerned cannot remain insensible to them.

What has produced this state of things? Whence have these calamities come upon us? But a short time ago none made such strong claims to true Protestant character as we; none made more encouraging advances in enlightened piety, and none more largely extended their borders. But what a disastrous change has come over us!

Is there no hope for us? Must we ever sit by the rivers of Babylon? And never again take our harps from the willows? There is hope, mercy is not clean gone for ever! Let us only be faithful to ourselves, and we shall find a very present help in this our time of need.

But what to is be done? Yes, what is to be done? Let every friend of Christ and his Church among us, think deeply upon this question, and pray much in view of our evils, and he will assuredly get eyes to see, a heart to feel, and a spirit strong to do—what is to be done.

When the faithful physician has a case committed to him, he first endeavors to find out the cause of the disease, with the strongest confidence that if he can get light here he can scarcely fail of bringing relief to his patient. This is wise, all experience confirms it. Let us then imitate it. Is the whole head sick? and the whole heart faint? And is there not a cause? And what hope can we have of a restoration to spiritual health till this cause be thoroughly searched out and faithfully exposed?

CHAPTER II.

In a former number the writer strove to turn the attention of his readers to the importance of faithfully examining into the causes of the present deplorable state of our Church. This he did with the deep conviction that unless these causes were thoroughly understood we could have no reasonable hope of deliverance. He now proposes briefly to point out some of these causes.

But before proceeding to this task, let him disclaim all intention to speak reproachfully, or in the spirit of fault-finding. He is too sensible of his own defects and unfaithfulness, to dare do this. And the occasion calls rather for sorrow than anger.

He would also ask his readers not to judge of his opinion of the different topics by the order in which they are presented. He must take up each one as his circumstances admit.

And, lastly, he would have no one suppose that there are no other causes, or that the writer sees none, besides those brought forward in these short essays. Doubtless many more will occur to other and more experienced minds; and should

his imperfect attempts be the means of calling out such to take a part in this painful but necessary work, he will think, should he see no other fruit, that his labor has not been in vain.

Let our first inquiry then be—

Has there been sufficient carefulness among us in admitting candidates to the ministry?

It is not in respect to literary, or theological qualifications this inquiry is made. As it regards these there are few denominations whose standard is so high as ours, and only one or two who, perhaps, are somewhat in advance of us. Neither is it in respect to merely moral character, we ask the question. Here also, our provision is, we believe, sufficiently ample.

Neither is it concerning the office of ordination the inquiry is suggested. That is full and scriptural, and he who sincerely and with an enlightened mind assents to the demands which it makes upon him at the solemn moment of presenting himself before God and his people, to be invested with the ministerial commission—such a candidate cannot but be properly qualified for the holy office. Not one of these things, then, important as they are, have we now in view. It is concerning another matter, and a matter which if neglected or only slightly regarded, will render all

the rest, however carefully attended to, of no avail. Our question has reference to the *spiritual character and call* of the candidate. Have we been sufficiently careful to ascertain, so far as man in the light of God's word can judge, whether those who apply to be admitted to the ministry are really themselves regenerated men, and called by the Holy Ghost to preach the Gospel? Do we faithfully examine them whether they give scriptural evidence of a work of grace in the heart, and whether they have those views and feelings in respect to the work of the ministry which the spirit of God will certainly impart to all, whom He calls to so high and holy an embassy? The one grand object of the Gospel ministry is to persuade men to be Christians. And is it not a great thing to be a Christian?—to be born again?—to be turned from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God? "If any man be in Christ, he is a new creature; old things are passed away, behold all things are become new." But of all this work of grace the unconverted man knows nothing, as he ought to know it; he is an utter stranger, experimentally, to this spiritual, glorious transformation, without which none is fitted for, none can enter, the kingdom of heaven. Surely, then, he who is admitted to the Christian

ministry ought himself to be a Christian—a truly converted man. Without this, all his literature, all his theology, will be but “as sounding brass, or a tinkling cymbal.”

How carefully then ought those concerned in admitting men to the ministry—how *carefully* ought they to examine, not merely into the ability and learning, and morals of the candidate, but, above all and before all things, into his spiritual character and meetness for the work. What folly—to say nothing of the sin and danger—what folly to send a man forth to preach the gospel, who never yet experienced himself its transforming power in his own heart! What folly to expect one to feel for the souls of others who never yet realized the worth and the ruin of his own soul;—to expect him to “know nothing among men, but Christ and him crucified,” in whose own heart Christ has never yet been revealed as “precious—able and willing to save unto the uttermost all who come unto God by him!”

Are these things so? Are these things so? Every faithful minister, every truly pious man, knows that they are;—he knows them by a heart felt experience to be inexpressibly important, solemn realities.

Have we then been sufficiently careful in this

matter? Would that we could say, we had! But multitudes of facts at this moment crowd upon the mind of the writer, all bearing alarming testimony to past unfaithfulness. But one will he here state. He has been somewhat conversant with examinations for the ministry in various parts of our church; and never, except on a single occasion, has he known a question put to a candidate the object of which was to ascertain whether he had proper views of the sacred office and of a call to it, or had been himself the subject of that spiritual, holy change which is essential to Christian character.

The writer cannot but fear, therefore, that there has not been sufficient carefulness in this matter. He cannot but fear that many unconverted men—men who know nothing spiritually of the truth and grace of the Lord Jesus, have been admitted to the ministry of our Church.

If this be indeed our sad case, who does not see what a flood-gate of evils has thus been opened? It is a divine maxim—“*Like priest like people.*” Can we be surprised then at the rapid spread of Puseyism and other Popish developments throughout our borders? Why Romanism in all its forms is just the religion of the natural man: an unre-

generate heart is the very hot-bed in which it will most thrive.

Does it not behoove us all seriously to ponder this matter? It may be, as the writer fears, that we have not been sufficiently careful here in times past. If we have not, certainly we may see in this oversight one main cause of the existence and growth of our present troubles. Let each minister then "commune with his own heart;" and let the "spirit of the people make diligent search." Let all remember the injunction of the Apostle, "Lay hands suddenly on no man," and resolve to do nothing which will promote the introduction of any man into the ministry, unless we are persuaded that he feels the necessity of a change of heart, and has passed through such exercises of mind, as one taught and called of the Spirit of God might be expected to have. Surely, "God hath not forgotten to be gracious." He will "guide us by his counsel" if we faithfully seek him.

CHAPTER III.

It will not be denied by any consistent protestant that to preach the Gospel is the great work of the Christian Ministry. "Christ sent me not to baptize, but to preach the Gospel." Neither will it be denied that he whom Christ really sends, will fulfil his mission,—he will preach—not "another gospel" but—"the Gospel." He will not come as the advocate of any scheme of man's devising, however true and good in its place; or as the promulger of any of the thousand and one forms of error which Satan so successfully uses to beguile and ruin unstable souls; neither will he be satisfied with a vague, indefinite statement of the gospel, or rather of something which, for all that appears, is not positively at variance with the gospel; but he will endeavor, with "simplicity and godly sincerity," to declare unto men that peculiarly *definite* message emphatically denominated by an inspired Apostle—"The gospel of the grace of God."

To preach the gospel is, then, the great work of the Christian Ministry; and it is only in doing this with plainness and fidelity they have any

scriptural warrant to expect the blessing of heaven upon themselves and the souls of their hearers. "Sanctify them through thy truth; thy word is truth," this is a part of the Saviour's last intercessory prayer on earth. God no where promises to bless error; but his word is full of encouragement to believe that wherever the truth is faithfully dispensed, it will prove "the power of God unto salvation."

And is it only through belief of the truth that men can be saved? The truth must therefore be worth to each one as much as his soul is worth. The latter will always be the exact measure of the preciousness of the former. Hence the solemn admonition of the wise man, "Buy the truth," (give any price for it) "and sell it not," (take nothing in exchange for it, hold fast to it.)

As then a minister values his own soul and the souls of his hearers, it becomes him to preach "the gospel," just because the gospel is "*The truth*,"—the divinely appointed instrument of sanctifying and saving men.

What an awful moment was that in the career of the Roman governor when, looking down upon the then despised, but now glorified "messenger of the Lord of Hosts," he put the question to him—"What is truth?" Would that Pilate had

evinced any feeling befitting the solemnity of the occasion! Would that he had not so abruptly turned away, and thus perhaps for ever lost, the opportunity of knowing the things which belonged to his peace!

We also ask, "what is truth?" And whilst consulting only "the oracles of God," we would humbly pray "the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, to give unto us the spirit of wisdom and revelation, in the knowledge of him: the eyes of our understanding being enlightened, that we may know what is the hope of his calling, and what the riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints, and what is the exceeding greatness of his power to usward who believe according to the working of his mighty power."

What then is truth? The natural character and condition of man,—God's counsels of grace, and mercy towards him,—and his obligations in relation thereto;—these are the unspeakably important subjects of the gospel. Now *the truth is just what God tells us concerning these things*; and, blessed be his name, it is written as with a sun-beam upon the pages of the Bible. But few testimonies, therefore, are required to establish it.

I. In respect to the first point—man's natural character and condition,—hear God's own testi-

mony—"God saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually,—they are all gone out of the way, there is none that doeth good, no, not one. Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things which are written in the book of the law to do them,—and, the soul that sinneth, it shall die."

II. In respect to the second point—God's counsels of grace and mercy to man—"thus saith the Lord,—God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law, to redeem them that were under the law. Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth,—a man is not justified by the works of the law, but by the faith of Jesus Christ,—being justified freely by his grace, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus. Therefore, being justified by faith, we have peace with God, through our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom also we have access by faith into this grace wherein we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God. Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God." And once more, "If any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold all things are become new."

III. But what, lastly, are man's obligations in

view of this amazing grace and mercy? This is our third inquiry. "Jesus preached—repent ye, and believe the gospel. God commandeth all men everywhere to repent. Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved. Put off the old man which is corrupt,—put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness." And to close our examination: "As he who hath called you is holy, so be ye holy in all manner of conversation."

The doctrines here so explicitly and fully set forth are—man's apostacy from God and utter ruin through sin, redemption by the obedience unto death of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the application of this in God's justification of the penitent sinner by faith only on the sole ground of the Saviour's merits or righteousness, and in his regeneration or change of heart by the sanctifying influence of the Holy Spirit; and lastly, that every truly penitent believer, all who are thus justified and sanctified will, through grace, walk in the way of holy obedience, "looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life."

This, then, is "*the truth*"—"the gospel." And does it not lay the axe at the root of all man's pride, and teach him to ascribe the whole glory

of his salvation to the love of God, through Jesus Christ? "You hath he quickened who were dead in trespasses and sins. For by grace are ye saved, through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: not of works, lest any man should boast: for we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before-ordained that we should walk in them."

How very plain and simple a thing the gospel is! How few, grand, and peculiar are its doctrines! It stands out clearly and perfectly distinct from all false religions. It is not idolatry, it is not Romanism, it is not man's morality; neither is it any of those vague, indefinite, misty systems of religion with which so many nominal Christians have unhappily deluded themselves,—systems however widely differing from each other, yet all agreeing in their acceptableness to the unhumbled heart of man.

The writer would now ask with a deep and solemn feeling of the importance of the question, and in the spirit, he humbly trusts, of a true charity,—is "*The gospel*" always faithfully preached in our pulpits? There can be no difficulty in this question to any really honest mind. The gospel is so plain that "the wayfaring man,

though a fool, need not err therein." Let each member, then, of our *troubled* Church put his hand on his heart, and say, as in the presence of Almighty God, whether the gospel, as presented in the Scriptural Lessons and breathed in the Liturgy, is set forth in the sermons he usually hears, or whether the pulpit and the reading desk are not too often sadly at variance. The writer has vividly in his mind at this moment the recollections of a noble-minded woman, well educated and of high rank. She had been baptized in our Church in her infancy, in youth confirmed, and then admitted to the Lord's Supper. Afterwards, in another part of the Church, it pleased God to open her eyes to her unconverted state and the perilous delusion in which she had so long lived. Upon looking back upon the unfaithful preaching which had so nearly ruined her soul, she exclaimed with deep emotion to her then Rector,—
"O, sir, *it was neither Law nor Gospel!*" For one thus mercifully awakened, alas, what multitudes sleep on insensible to their sin and danger!

"*It was neither Law nor Gospel!*" How emphatically descriptive! And is such indeed the character of much of our preaching? If it be, it will go far to account for the troubles that have come upon us. Why the pulpit is the very heart

of the Christian Church, and if it be paralysed, what wonder that the members sicken and die! The Ministry are the appointed sentinels of the Lord's host, and if the spirit of slumber have come over them, the enemy will certainly steal into the camp! And is he not already among us? Has he not gotten even into our high places? And is he not spreading himself far and wide among us, doing his work of darkness and destruction?

We are all deeply, vitally interested here. It is therefore our duty and our safty to look faithfully into this matter, Let each minister, then, "take heed to himself and to his doctrine." And let the people, like the noble Bereans, not only "receive the word with all readiness of mind," but also "search the Scriptures daily whether those things are so;" that is, let them "take heed" not only "*how* they hear," but "*what* they hear."

Where error prevails to any considerable extent in a church, it is certain that the pulpit has not been faithful. Troubles, such as ours, cannot come upon a people, and the Ministry be entirely without blame.

CHAPTER IV.

“Except a man be born again, he cannot see the Kingdom of God. If any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of His. The natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God; for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned. But he that is spiritual judgeth all things, yet he himself is judged of no man. The Kingdom of God is not meat and drink; but righteousness and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost.”

What do these and many similar passages of Scripture teach? Certainly it must be important to understand them. They are a part of God's word. They concern Christian character, the Christian Church, and the things of Christ generally. What then do they teach? Let us seek, so far as our present purpose is concerned, to know their import clearly and exactly, that we may faithfully obey them. In doing this we consult our own highest interest and that of the Church. To neglect, or but slightly regard these

divine testimonies must be wrong; and such wrong as will certainly be followed by fearful consequences to ourselves and others.

We suppose that these and such like passages of God's word plainly teach that a spiritual, holy change must take place in the character of men before they can be truly said to be subjects of Christ's Spiritual Kingdom, or members of his holy catholic Church, and that only such have a spiritual knowledge of this Kingdom, or can exercise a right judgment concerning its affairs. How much more instruction these verses may contain, we need not now inquire. What we have deduced from them, we doubt not, will be assented to by every intelligent, serious reader of the Bible.

Now as the chief object of the visible Church is to promote Christ's Spiritual Kingdom, so, if we have rightly interpreted the foregoing Scriptures, we are authorized to say that they who undertake to manage the affairs of the Church, ought themselves to have a right apprehension of the spiritual nature of that Kingdom and its concerns. To this great practical principle will not every pious man at once assent? Indeed, we suppose that no one, who professes a respect for God's word, and regards his own character for candor

and consistency, would be willing, directly and in words, to deny it. The principle here presented as Scriptural, is simply this,—to *spiritual men belong spiritual things*.

Now have we, as a Church, kept this plain Bible principle ever in view, and been duly careful to carry it out in all our arrangements? Or have we too often overlooked it, and by this neglect laid ourselves open to many and sore evils? There is here required both in the writer and his readers, not only much of charity and candor, but that unflinching fidelity to Christ which can look facts right in the face, honestly interrogate them, and simply report results. Let us endeavor thus to scrutinize some of our ecclesiastical arrangements. And first—

I. *How it is with our Vestries?* These are not, as many unthinking, or ill informed persons suppose, merely stewards of the temporal affairs of the Church. They have many other and very grave duties to perform. In almost every parish they choose the minister, and, of course, must judge of his character and preaching, whether these are suited to the spiritual edification and oversight of the church. They generally elect delegates to represent their congregation in the Diocesan Convention. To them, as an organized

body, it ordinarily belongs to take one of the first steps towards the admission of a candidate to the holy office. Without their certificate to his piety, he cannot be received. In some dioceses they are required, also, to judge of the conduct of members of their parish; and in all cases it would be generally and justly expected of them, should the pastor appear unworthy on account of heresy, immorality, or unministerial conduct, to present him for trial, that in case he be proved guilty, the congregation may be delivered from so great an evil. And, to say no more,—their office must ever make them prominent before the people, and give to their character and example much influence in the Church and in the world about it.

Here then, are very important duties, and without a faithful attention to them it is impossible for the parish to flourish. They are, nearly every one of them, more or less spiritual in their nature, and demand spiritual qualifications for their due discharge. If not performed aright, how must the spiritual interests of the parish, and the Church generally suffer! If a body of pious vestrymen is a rich *blessing* to any congregation, and certainly none will deny this, how dreadful a *curse* must an irreligious vestry be! They will hang as a dead weight upon the feet of a faithful min-

ister. They will neutralize nearly all his influence. Hence, for the most part, the cause of Christ will languish in a parish so situated; or if, through God's special mercy, it be revived, it will be sure to reform or sweep away such a vestry. The latter we have known it, in some cases, silently but efficiently to do.

Now, are we careful to provide that none but pious men should be chosen to so important an office?—men of spiritual character, spiritual discernment, spiritual judgment? At least, do we provide that only professors of religion should be vestrymen? Scarcely ever is this done. The writer knows of not a single diocese in which, if his recollections are correct, the vestry must be chosen from among the communicants of the Church.

The evils which have grown out of this unhappy neglect, it would not be possible in our limited articles to enumerate, much less fully to lay open. What faithful pastor, what pious member of our Church, has not mourned over them? Let any serious man read the certificate required of a vestry before a candidate can be admitted to the office either of Deacon or Presbyter—how weighty and solemn the things there asserted! Surely it demands no small share of spiritual

discernment and spiritual judgment to decide wisely and safely in such a case. How dreadful an injury must carelessness or ignorance here bring upon the Church! And yet, alas, how often does this important instrument proceed from a body of men, very few, if any, of whom give the least scriptural evidence of piety, and the most of whom make not even a profession of religion! Would that we could add that this was the worst aspect of the case! But surely enough has been said, to show the need of reform here, if we would get rid of our present troubles, and prevent their recurrence in future.

II. *And what is the Constitutional safeguard of our Diocesan Conventions?* This body elects a Bishop, and it alone, in the diocese, has power to present him for trial. It chooses the Standing Committee and the Representatives of the Diocese to the General Convention: and, not to go further into detail, the internal or municipal concerns of the diocese are all under its legislative control.

Surely such a body ought to be composed of wise and good men, in the highest, the *Christian*, sense of the terms. And yet the writer, after many years acquaintance with most parts of our Church, can find but two dioceses in which mem-

bers of the Convention are required to be communicants. He is confident indeed of only one ; it is to be hoped, however, that there may be others. But certainly in a great majority of our dioceses, owing to this evil, business of vital importance to all our Churches, and much of it of a spiritual character, is thus placed in the hands of those who, neither by Constitution nor Canon, are required to be professedly men of spiritual discernment or spiritual judgment.

With the knowledge of this sad oversight who can be surprised, however grieved he must be, at what has at times transpired at our Diocesan Conventions? Let no one suppose that the humiliating scenes witnessed within a few years past in the New York Convention, and which so shocked the public mind, are without a parallel. But we forbear,—and yet we can scarcely suppress the conviction that the present awful crisis in our Church imposes upon each one of her members a moral necessity of holding up this subject in all its length and breadth. The soul of piety would indeed weep over it, but the most blind and prejudiced could not long shut out the salutary feeling of our need of reform. ●

III. *How is it with our Standing Committees?* Their duties are almost entirely spiritual. They

are the authorised counsellors of the Bishop. No one can be ordained without their permission; and many other duties equally important to the spiritual interests of the Church are imposed upon them. It would seem, then, to admit of no question that they upon whose judgment it so largely depends who shall be admitted to the Gospel ministry—to say nothing of their other duties—ought themselves to be spiritually-minded, indeed eminently wise and holy men. It is fearfully dangerous, and no small sin, to commit such a trust to any others. And yet, are there more than two or three dioceses whose legislation requires the members of this body to be professors of religion? The writer knows not of so many; but he is very happy to be able to add, that there appears to be a quite extensively felt propriety that the lay members of the Standing Committees should be communicants. Hence they are, he believes, for the most part of this character.

One fact, however, in connection with this subject, he will mention, and that because it has in a few years past excited so wide and deep an interest among us. It is a legislative provision of our church that the election of a bishop by a diocese must ordinarily be submitted to the Standing Committees of all the other dioceses for their

concurrence before he can be consecrated. Now such is the state of things among us, or at least was our state not long since, that it became a matter of complaint even in some of our religious periodicals, and among them the Episcopal Recorder, that whenever a minister reputed evangelical was presented to the Standing Committees as a Bishop-elect, every possible difficulty was thrown in the way of his consecration, so as to occasion long, vexatious, and most injurious delays. But in the case of others no such trouble was experienced. The one seemed to go in upon a flood, wafted onward by every propitious breeze; the other had to pass through a perilous succession of rocks, and straits, and adverse gales, so as "scarcely to be saved."

IV. We now come to a most important body—the *General Convention*. This is the grand council of our Church. It is our supreme legislative body. The Book of Common Prayer, the Homilies—in a word, the faith and worship of our Church, much of its discipline, and a great variety of other matters of vital interest to the whole Church and each member thereof, are subject to the authority of the General Convention. There can be no appeal from it. Its decisions are final and universally binding.

Here, will it not naturally be expected by every intelligent, pious person, that we shall find in our Constitution, the most clear, careful and strong provisions made to guard against the admission of any into this body; but men of eminently religious character—men full of faith and of the Holy Ghost? Would that it were so! But let any one closely examine the last edition of the Constitution and Canons of the General Convention, as published in Swords' Almanac for 1845, and he will discover not a single line, not a word, requiring even a profession of religion as necessary to membership in that body. So that a layman, without even the form of godliness, a perfectly worldly man, even an infidel, may take his seat in this our grand Ecclesiastical council, and thus exercise a controlling influence in the most vital matters affecting our whole Church. The writer has never yet met with a plain, pious communicant, or even with a person of the least serious reflection, who could believe this fact, when first stated in his presence. He would express astonishment and incredulity; he would suppose that there must be some mistake in the matter; that it could not possibly be so! And all this would be changed into deep grief when assured that it was really the fact.

And have we such *organic* evils among us,—evils not merely in one or two parts, but running through nearly the whole of our Ecclesiastical fabric, from the Vestry *upward* to the General Convention? We are aware, indeed, that the natural mind—the unregenerate man—however wise in this world's wisdom, may see nothing in all this to disapprove, nothing to excite apprehension. But can the enlightened Christian, the spiritually-minded man, who seriously reflects upon these things, fail to discern here many and widely open doors at which Romanism, and almost every other form of error, may not only creep in, but stalk in with form erect, and unblushing face, setting at defiance the paralysed arm of truth and godly discipline? And can such a man wonder, in view of these things, that a Vestry, and a Standing Committee, and a Bishop, and his Presbyters, were all found ready and willing—and that in the very face of a solemn, righteous protest before God and his people—to introduce into our ministry a candidate who had openly avowed his adherence to the doctrinal decrees of the Council of Trent? Strange would we have thought it, as things are, had this Bishop hesitated to vindicate what he had done at the subsequent Diocesan Convention, or had that Convention censured his doings.

And yet were we Church-loving and confiding enough to hope that the next General Convention would set the whole matter straight, and fix deeply its brand of righteous condemnation upon such an *unprotestant*, unhallowed procedure. But how was our simplicity rebuked! and all our high hopes—so reverentially cherished—cast down to the ground!

It ought to be to us all, and certainly to every enlightened, pious member of our Church, it will be, a matter—not of envious reflection but—sincere thanksgiving to the Great Head of the Church, that scarcely any, if any, of the various other evangelical denominations have been betrayed into our *organic* error. Whatever their practice may be in regard to admission to the ministry, or to the preaching of the Gospel, or to Church discipline—they have at least kept the management of these things in the hands of professedly religious men. Sessions, Associations, Presbyteries, Councils, Synods, Conferences, Consoziations, or by whatever name the different denominations may designate their several ecclesiastical bodies,—these must all be composed of communicants—men who claim spiritual character, spiritual discernment, spiritual judgment, and to whom their Church, in the exercise of a chari-

table hope, has accorded this high claim. Doubtless there are many other things which make us to differ in many respects from our fellow Christians of other names; but no one, we think, of ordinary intelligence and piety, can reflect upon our peculiar *organic* defects without seeing how closely connected these are with our present *peculiar* troubles. Are not the World and Popery fast friends? And is not the only real antagonist of the latter, and consequently its most effectual preventive—a true, spiritual Christianity? The Church, therefore, that has unhappily not been careful to entrust her spiritual interests exclusively to the hands of spiritual men, but left almost every door open to the world,—cannot reasonably expect to escape frequent visitations of the “man of sin.” How many of these disastrous intrusions can we count since the days of Edward VI.? And how long before we shall shut them out? The Lord give us wisdom and strength for this necessary reformation work!

We say *necessary* reformation work, for, unless we close our eyes against the teachings of God’s Word, and all experience, what expectations can we cherish so long as such *organic* defects are suffered to remain? Were it possible for us this moment as a Church, “to wash ourselves with

snow water, and make our hands never so clean," how long could we preserve our purity with these flood-gates of evil opening in upon us?

He is no true friend of the Church who seeks to cover over these things, instead of honestly lifting up the voice of warning. He is not worthy to approach her communion, much less to minister at her altars, who, in this her most awful crisis, can stand selfishly counting the cost of faithfulness to her, instead of being ready and determined to peril all but the salvation of his soul, for her welfare.

CHAPTER V.

At what a crisis did every enlightened Christian feel he had arrived when about to make a profession of religion! How important, how solemn, how awfully responsible the step! It is a great thing to be a Christian; it is a great thing also, to *profess* to be a Christian. He who does it, ceases from that moment to stand alone; he becomes one of a company which no man can number; he involves the best interests of millions, he involves Christ's cause, in his individual career. Greatly may he benefit, or greatly must he injure, these interests and this cause.

That a man who has reached such a point should therefore pause, and reflect, and search inwardly, and look upward with deep solicitude, is to be expected. To be without these thoughts and feelings, these hopes and fears, would argue a sad state. The mere formal professor of religion—the man who has never known the plague of his own heart and the preciousness of a Saviour, may indeed doubt their sincerity, or despise them as the day-dreams of a weak but honest fanaticism:

but every child of God, every truly converted soul, knows them in the experience of his own heart, and by the higher teachings of God's word and Spirit, to be solemn, inexpressibly solemn realities.

Every regenerate soul knows, also, that "the heart is deceitful above all things;" and therefore dreads self-delusion, and therefore desires nothing so much as to be faithfully dealt with. He knows how much he may grieve the hearts of God's people, how much injury he may do to the world about him, how much dishonor he may bring upon the name and the Church and the cause of Christ, by an unsound profession, and its consequence, an inconsistent, unholy walk; and therefore, when such a man, after much thought and prayer, goes to a minister to open his mind to him, and to ask counsel of him in respect to a profession of religion, he determines that he will freely and fully unbosom himself, state his whole case just as it is—all God's dealings with him, all his thoughts and feelings, all his hopes and fears, since first brought seriously to reflect upon "the things which belong to his everlasting peace. And he will expect the minister—as he feels for his eternal interests, as he values his own soul, as he regards the purity and welfare of the

Church, as he desires the best interests of men—to deal honestly with him, to search him thoroughly and faithfully. So that if he have deceived himself, he may be undeceived before it be too late, and put upon the right path; and thus he himself, and the Church, and the world, may be preserved from the injury and the perils of an unsound profession.

Such, we believe, will be, in a greater or less degree, the views and the exercises of every truly enlightened Christian when about to make a public profession of religion. But *has he been usually met in a corresponding spirit by our ministers?* How has it been with us in—

I. *Confirmation?* No intelligent Christian can read the office of Confirmation and fail to discern that the qualifications for that rite are “repentance toward God, faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ,”—in other words, true piety. He who is not fit in point of spiritual character for the Lord’s Supper, is not fit for confirmation. And he who has been worthily confirmed ought to approach the table of the Lord at the first opportunity. Not to do so, is to neglect a solemn duty.

And yet is it not a fact, that of those confirmed, many never come to the Lord’s Supper at all, and many put it off for years? It will be found upon

inquiry into such cases, that their neglect frequently arises from a conviction that they are not prepared for the Communion. And unhappily these convictions are too often well founded. But how happens this? Does it not proceed from the fact that ministers are frequently not careful enough to explain the true nature of Confirmation, and those spiritual qualifications which are indispensable to a worthy and profitable participation in it? One incident the writer will relate in illustration of the errors and evils which he fears are too common upon this subject.

The Rev. Mr. — had notice of an Episcopal visitation of his parish. The Bishop arrived, and when the list of candidates was handed to him, appeared much chagrined that the number was so small. He added, however, "Never mind, never mind, I recollect that in the diocese of —, the Bishop, in the course of his visitation, once came to a Church, where he found to his great disappointment very few to be confirmed. He appointed another day, a few weeks after, to hold a second confirmation, and upon returning he had the satisfaction of confirming over a hundred more. And as I intend to stay here another Sunday, we can then have a larger confirmation." "Ah, Bishop!" replied the Pastor, "Such cases as

you speak of, it is to be feared, have been too common. The thoughtless, the worldly, and the self-deceived have been pressed forward in throngs to the altar! But have not these occurrences brought great evil upon our Church, and lowered her character in the eyes of serious people of other denominations? The list I have given you, with my name appended thereto, in obedience to the Rubric, comprises all in the parish not confirmed, of whom I can entertain a charitable hope that they possess the spiritual qualifications required by the Prayer-book. I have labored for some weeks among my people with a special reference to this solemn service, and I can see no reason to expect that the catalogue will be much, if at all, increased by next Sunday."

II. Have we been faithful in regard to the *Lord's Supper*? That Christian character, or true piety is essential in a worthy communicant, is manifest from the Scriptures, and with equal clearness is required by our Church. Repentance and faith, and an entire consecration of heart and life to the Saviour, are most plainly and fully insisted upon in the Communion Service. Indeed it would, we believe, be scarcely possible for the pen of man to frame anything upon these points more solemn, searching, and heart-affecting. Un-

doubtedly the Communion Office, like all other of man's productions, has its defects; there is no perfect book but God's; still may we not safely assert that the principles and spirit of this Office are in most impressive harmony with the views and exercises of the pious heart in relation to the Sacrament?

But have the principles and the spirit of this service been duly carried out by us? We do not say that the service is of no avail without such pastoral fidelity; for doubtless, even under the most untoward circumstances, it has, of itself, at times, been the means, under divine grace, of awakening the consciences of impenitent men, of directing the inquiring, and exciting the humble believer to increased diligence in his holy calling. But this we do say, that if our ministers have not in times past been faithful in this matter, very many unconverted men have found their way into our Churches—some thoughtless, some self-deceived, and others still worse, but all *worldly*; *worldly*.

The influence of such communicants is peculiarly disastrous. Their spirit, their character, their daily walk, discourage faithful ministers, greatly impair their influence, hinder sincere inquirers, and prove terrible stumbling blocks to the

worldly and the wicked. Thus they hang, at least, as dead weights upon the cause of Christ, and in too many cases, are its most efficient and malignant opposers. Better, we have often thought, better go out into the highways and hedges and preach the gospel, than minister in a Church where a large majority of its communicants are of such a character. The openly impenitent and wicked will generally treat a faithful minister better than such communicants usually do; they will be more accessible to his endeavors to do them good, and more likely to find a blessing under his labors. (Matt. xxi. 31, 32.) And when such a minister has, in the course of Providence, been placed in a Church so unhappily situated usually, one of the first, if not the most salutary, effects of his preaching and pastoral labors, is the falling off of the communion. Some will openly quarrel with the truth, and quit in anger; others will quietly cease to approach the table of the Lord, because honestly convinced that they ought not in their present state ever to have gone to it. When the Church has been thus purged, another and a better state of things will be almost sure to follow. The tone of piety will become elevated. Those left will appear in quite a different light, both to themselves and to others. They will more deeply

realise their responsibility; and exert a more decided influence for good. And the result of all this can scarcely fail to be large accessions, both to the congregation and the communion, and such accessions, in the latter case, as will bring increased spiritual strength and holy influence to the Church, and thus lay the foundation for a much greater prosperity than it ever before witnessed.

Have we, then, been generally faithful in regard to the Lord's Supper? From long, and careful, and quite extensive observation, the writer is compelled to express his convictions that we have not been. Few things, indeed, are more painful to him than to reflect upon his own personal experience in this matter. He himself was admitted to the communion by one of the most distinguished ministers of our Church without the slightest examination, either as it respected his views of the Gospel, or his experience of its power. He might have been not only spiritually dead, but utterly ignorant of the truth as it is in Jesus, and even an infidel, for aught his Pastor knew. And such, he is pained to add, has been the fact with multitudes, also, with whom he has been conversant since that day, in different parts of the Church. He thought, indeed, at first, that his own case was peculiar, and was surprised and

grieved at its occurrence; but he quickly found that he was not alone; and the thirty years that have since elapsed, while they enlarged to a sad extent his sense of the evil, have prepared his mind to view, without surprise, certain very painful results that have frequently forced themselves upon his notice, a few of which we may here just glance at. The first, is the fact that the religious world about us, very generally suppose that the standard of piety is lower in our Church than in the other orthodox denominations; that it is comparatively an easy thing to get into our communion; and consequently that such a position is but equivocal evidence of piety. Again: it is usually thought among us of little importance to give or require certificates of good standing in the case of those who are about to leave one of our churches, or be admitted to another, in the same, or perhaps a distant diocess. Hence such certificates are seldom asked or given. What a sad state of things does this indicate! How easy the access to communion! And of how little worth the privilege! Indeed, so much a matter of course has this looseness of religious profession become among us, that the writer has known the bare asking for a letter by a pastor in the case of a professed communicant, who had applied to be received as such, to be treated as an insult. Pastoral fidelity,

here, instead of being expected and rightly appreciated, was regarded as so remarkable an exception, that it called forth angry remonstrance. One other fact we will mention; it is the difficulty of making our shrewd, frank, non-professing churchmen feel the importance of requiring a profession of religion in those to whom the affairs of the Church are to be intrusted as vestrymen, members of Convention, or of other ecclesiastical bodies. They cannot see such a difference between professors of religion and themselves, as would make it a matter of much importance which of them should manage these affairs.

Great, however, as these evils are, it was not with a primary reference to them we commenced these essays. It is an ulterior evil we have mainly in view. It is the fact, that if, through the want of a faithfully administered spiritual discipline large numbers of unconverted men—men strangers to the truth, and grace of the Lord Jesus—have been admitted to the communion of our Church,—if these things are so, the wide spread of Puseyism is at once accounted for. Why, such is just the foundation on which any Popish development would choose to build. The religion of sacraments, and priestly assumptions, and ecclesiastical pomp, finds a congenial home in the

blindness and self-righteousness of the unregenerate professor of religion. The Gospel faithfully administered would speedily expose the unsoundness of such a professor, and lay all his proud hopes in the dust; but Popish darkness, and Popish superstitions are the very element in which he can breathe and move most freely.

And thus it is, that loose views of Confirmation and of the Lord's Supper, and the loose practices growing out of these views, could not but largely lay us open to the sore troubles that have come upon us; and hence, till we reform these views and practices, we cannot get rid of our troubles.

Let each Pastor, and let each member of our Church, lay these things to heart. Do not the times call for close, searching inquiry, and frank, faithful acknowledgment? The writer has spoken plainly, but, he trusts, in the spirit of kindness, and with a hearty desire to do good to the Church of his childhood, and the Church in whose weal and whose wo Providence has so long and so largely wrapt up his own.

CHAPTER VI.

The Church of Christ was at first gathered by the preaching of the Gospel, and the obligation rested upon her, from the first, to extend the preaching of the Gospel as widely and as rapidly as possible. This is the Church's mission; it is the great work which her divine Head has called her to do; and it can never be said to be accomplished till "the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea." "Go ye into all the world, and preach the Gospel to every creature."

The Gospel itself is the church's peculiar treasure, her true glory. She should guard it with the utmost care; see to it that nothing dims its lustre; and never cease her efforts to make it known to others, so long as there is one spot on earth, one heart not illumined by its heavenly beams. After her own growth in grace, and indeed as a means most effectually subservient to it, this is the Church's first calling, her chief duty.

How great, then, how transcendent, the honor put upon the Church! Her chief concern is with things spiritual and eternal,—the truth, God,

Christ, the Holy Ghost, immortal souls! In these matters, indeed, her part is merely a ministry,—she is to make known the Saviour in his person, offices, work and glory. But she has the promise of the Holy Spirit to render her ministry of the truth effectual to the salvation of souls, and the advancement of God's kingdom on earth. Christ is indeed the only law-giver or source of power to the Church, and therefore what he has been pleased to reveal by his spirit, is all the Church is bound to believe or do, and all she is to require of others, or they are bound to receive at her hands. This revelation is contained in the Bible which is therefore to the Church, and through her to the world, the only standard of faith and practice.

If these things be so, the true position of the Church is then one of entire subserviency to Christ, and only so far as she faithfully occupies this humble position, is she really honorable in the sight of God and of all holy beings, or can she prove a blessing to the world.

So important, then, is the *duty*, so precious the *treasure*, so high the *honor*, and yet so lowly the *position* of the Church.

But suppose, instead of this lowly position of a “witness and a keeper of holy writ,” this ministry of perfect dependence upon Christ and entire

subjection to him, there should be assumed by some, professing to be members of the visible Church, an exclusive power—exclusive so far as other human agency is concerned—to legislate for men's consciences, and to dispense the grace of the Gospel at their will, so that all who submitted to them were really regenerate, and partakers of the blessings of the Gospel; but that all others, however penitent, believing, and holy, had no part nor lot in the covenant of mercy. Arrogant and blasphemous as such an assumption would be, it has been made. What we have stated, as an hypothesis, it is well known, is really historical fact. Just the power above supposed is claimed and exercised by her who "sitteth on the seven mountains." From Rome there went forth the decree—not that the authority of the Bible was to be denied, O no! but—that the Church had a *co-ordinate* authority to bind men's consciences; that all who bowed before this claim were of the true fold of Christ and partakers of his blessing; but that all others, whatever they might profess, were really schismatics and heretics under the indignation of Almighty God and of his blessed Apostles, St. Peter and St. Paul. Thus instead of being a divinely constituted "witness and keeper of holy writ," a servant of Christ, and

of men for Christ's sake, Rome made herself a sovereign legislator and judge—a "lord over God's heritage,"—dispensing life and death, temporal and eternal, at her will and pleasure. In a word, *Rome ceased to be a Church of Christ—she became Antichrist.*

And need we say, when this other foundation than the Bible was laid; what a monstrous fabric of despotism was built upon it? To the power of the Roman Antichrist almost all the nations were compelled, sooner or later, to submit. And to secure their allegiance, while she enchanted their senses by her gorgeous ceremonial, and gave indulgence to their lusts, she used all her art and power to put out the light and enfeeble the energies of every people, and thus bring a second childhood of ignorance and imbecility upon the world. The Bible became a sealed book, the fountains of knowledge were dried up, and that long night of abject submission, barbarism and wretchedness followed, emphatically termed "the dark ages."

Neither need we speak of the mighty efforts of Luther, Calvin and Cranmer, and their noble compeers, to enlighten, and elevate, and purify the nations so long benighted, and crushed down, and corrupted by "the man of sin." They em-

ployed one chief instrument, but that was "mighty through God to the pulling down of strong holds." They restored the Bible to its rightful authority. The Reformation of the sixteenth century was emphatically the work of the Gospel; and it continued to prosper and extend itself so long as the Church relied simply upon the preaching of "the truth." The blessings of popular instruction, freedom and happiness, went hand in hand with the work of the Reformers, and have been transmitted to the nations of our day, just so far as each one has faithfully cherished the spirit and the truth of the Reformation.

Let us here pause to inquire what it is that constitutes Popery, or rather what is the *essence* of Popery, its fundamental principle—that from which all its other errors and evils flow.

It has been generally thought to consist in the exaltation of the sacraments, of sacerdotal power, and of the merit of works, because these errors naturally introduce that long train of gorgeous ceremonies, debasing superstitions, self-righteous penances, and oppressive exactions which make up practical Popery, or the body of "the man of sin." That these corruptions naturally grow out of the errors of Popery, in respect to the sacraments, the priesthood, and human merits, there

can be no doubt. But do not they stand related to each other only as the fruit to the tree?—for the root must we not look more deeply?

There is, among the many prophecies of the Bible upon this subject, one which, if we mistake not, sounds the very depths of “the mystery of iniquity.” It is as follows:—“Let no man deceive you by any means; for that day shall not come except there come a falling away first, and that *man of sin* be revealed, the son of perdition, who opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God, or that is worshiped; so that he, *as God, sitteth in the temple of God*, showing himself that he *is God*.”—(2 Thes. ii. 3, 4.) Here the dark abyss is clearly opened up, and we may look down into the very heart of “the man of sin.” He first begins with usurping the throne of God,—sitting in the temple of God,—and then puts forth such claims as belong only to God. How opposite is all this to true Christianity! In the latter, God is the only Lord of conscience, and therefore his revealed will, the Bible, is our only rule of faith and practice, and the Church is merely “a witness and a keeper of holy writ.” As Christ’s servant, her duty is to publish his Gospel to all nations. Here her power and her obligations alike end. Hers is merely a ministry.

She cannot add to the truths and precepts of God's word; she dares not diminish them. She has no *sovereign* authority over men's consciences; she claims none; she is merely their servant for Jesus' sake.

Now let it be carefully noted that the Church in this her rightful, her scriptural position, in whatever age, or whatever part of the world we regard her,—the CHURCH is uniformly found, as a faithful witness and keeper of God's word, to hold up the *doctrines of grace*, the obligations of the *law of holiness*, and the sacredness of human rights, and especially of the *rights of conscience*. But when any particular Church begins to usurp the throne of God, to sit in the temple of God, and to claim the subjection of men's consciences to her decrees, the Bible sooner or later becomes a forbidden book, and the power of her priesthood, and the efficacy of her sacraments, and the merits of her members are really made to supersede Christ and the Gospel of his grace.

Is it not the root of Popery, then, the claim of divine authority, the usurping of God's throne, the sitting as God in the temple of God? From this naturally grow the whole idolatry of the priesthood and of the sacraments; the assumption of infallibility; the doctrine of penances and of

human merits, so opposite to the gospel of the grace of God; and that all-comprehensive, crushing despotism: which, taken together, constitute the full development of Romanism, the complete body of "the Man of Sin." Wherever, then, we discover this impious claim, however feebly put forth, there we may be certain that Popery is begun, and that unless in some way mercifully checked, it will go on unto perfection: it will attain unto "the measure of the fulness of" Anti-Christ.

Suppose, for example, that in certain parts of a Church whose doctrinal standards were essentially protestant, there should be put forth not only the claim of a power to bind men's consciences, but, along with this tremendous assumption of an authority co-ordinate with the word of God, a denial also of the doctrine of justification by faith only, and of other great evangelical truths, and the claim of an exclusive possession of sacerdotal authority and of Church ordinances. Now who cannot see with the Bible in his hand and the volume of ecclesiastical history before him—who cannot see in such an anti-evangelical party and its lofty pretensions, all the elements of a genuine Popery? It requires only time and favoring circumstances to grow up to the full proportions of

the man of sin, and to stand forth in deadly antagonism to "the gospel of the grace of God," and the liberty wherewith Christ has made his people free.

But has such an *unprotestant* claim ever been put forth among us? And have any been found in our borders seeking to carry out these unscriptural and exclusive views? He must be but little conversant with our past history or present state, who can be ignorant that what we have supposed to take place somewhere, has really occurred in our church. Let any one look into the writings of Bishop Hobart, the distinguished oracle of a well known party among us, and he will there find the grand fundamental principle of Popery unhesitatingly laid down—the *power to bind men's consciences with the awful force of the highest moral obligation*, a power clearly *divine*, for what more than this as a Lawgiver does God himself ever do? And he will find it also maintained, as was to be expected, that we are not justified by faith only; that the sacraments are exclusively in the hands of the Episcopal ministry, and that, as administered by them, they are necessary and efficient to our regeneration, justification, and salvation;—and therefore that the churches of other denominations, however evan-

gical in doctrine, are no churches; their sacraments, no sacraments; their ministers, no ministers; and that both ministers and people, however penitent, believing, and holy, have neither part nor lot in the covenant of mercy. Now, who cannot see that the ground here occupied is far away from the scriptural position of our protestant church, and scarcely a stone's cast off from the territory of our "Lord God the Pope?"

That very many who embrace this system of *Churchism* should, sooner or later, run up into Puseyism, will therefore surprise no one who considers that the relation between cause and effect is just as fixed in the moral as in the natural world. What element of Puseyism does not the Hobart theology contain? Some of them indeed quite largely developed. It is, in fact, but a step or two, and those very short ones, from the New York school to that of Oxford. No one who stands at the first point has a right to find fault with those who have gone onward to the second. The latter are, so far forth, the consistent men: they have merely carried out their principles a little further. We would not, indeed, have the others do this, for we may not wish for evil that good may come. Neither would we counsel

the latter to throw themselves *openly* into the ranks of Rome, though this would be much more honest than their present position, and take away much of the power they now possess to do mischief to the cause of Christ. We would rather exhort them both to abandon their errors altogether, and embrace a scriptural Christianity, and thus be really Protestants.

Even should the disciples of the Hobart school not generally run into Romanism, but remain stationary, we could not but regard it, on their own account at least, as a *happy inconsistency*. But can they remain long in their present position? Must they not fall back on the Articles and Homilies of the Church, or go onward to Rome? Would that wisdom and grace might be given them all to follow in the footsteps of one whom we well knew and loved, and who was early associated with them—the late Rev. Dr. ——. He had been brought up at the feet of the great Master, and began his very popular career anything but a preacher of the Gospel. It pleased God, some years afterward, to open his eyes to his miserable spiritual destitution, and lead him to a saving knowledge of “the truth as it is in Jesus.” He immediately became a new man, and a true minister. But highly honored as he was

from that time as a most successful laborer in the Lord's vineyard, he never lost the humiliating recollection of his early dark and unprofitable days. In speaking of these things to the writer, on a very solemn occasion, he added with a sorrowful sigh—"In the first years of my ministry, *I preached Bishop Hobart and not Jesus Christ?*"

Another narrative may not be here out of place, nor without its use. Some thirty years since a young man commenced the study of Theology in New York. Though brought up in our Church, he had been converted to Christ by the blessing of God simply upon the reading of the scriptures. When he began his preparations for the ministry, it was without the least idea of the state of things in the Church. He scarcely thought that there could be such a thing as an unconverted professor of religion, or an unregenerate minister. The Gospel of the grace of God was so clear to his mind and so precious to his heart, that he verily supposed that all, both ministers and people, who named the name of Christ, saw and felt as he did. In this simple, fervent state of mind—the living impress of God's own word devoutly studied—he commenced his theological course.

But he had not proceeded far before he discovered that what he had embraced and cherished in the very depths of his soul as the truth and grace of the Lord Jesus was, in the eyes of his instructors, a thing to be despised and abhorred,—a weak, mischievous fanaticism. This became daily more and more manifest to him as the Bishop Hobart theology was spread out to his view, and he was led through its unscriptural mazes. He was at first astonished, almost stunned; he supposed that he must misunderstand his teachers. But they soon left him no room to doubt. They made their meaning perfectly clear. He soon rallied, and from that time his probation was almost one continued contest with what was manifestly “another Gospel.”

He was ordained. But before this it was too plain that he must, when he came to the work of the ministry, give up either “the truth as it is in Jesus,” or the friendship of his teachers. It was a painful alternative. On many accounts he felt attached to them, but by the grace of God he was enabled to hold fast to “the faith.” And many, very many are the prayers he has since poured out for them, that God would open their eyes and change their hearts before it be too late.

Though it was always with pain he alluded to

New York theology and the state of things there, yet when the occasion seemed to require it of him, he freely expressed his convictions and fears; what he knew was the fact, and what, he apprehended, must be the result. When placed by Providence in the control of a religious periodical, and harshly assailed by Bishop Hobart, he felt it his solemn duty to lay bare his unscriptural theology and to demonstrate, as he believed, that Romanism must be the fruits of such churchmanship.

In a conference, on a most important occasion, some twelve years since, with a highly esteemed brother, now living, he remarked—“We are approaching a dreadful crisis. The cloud may appear to many no larger than a man’s hand, but soon will it overspread our whole ecclesiastical heavens with the darkness of Popery? My only hope is that when the hour of trial does come, there will be found among us truth and piety enough to be aroused into such an energetic reaction as will sweep away these evils for ever.” Scarcely any, however, in those days could sympathize with him in the full extent of his fears, though all acknowledged that there was too much ground for apprehension. His only answer was wont to be:—“Well, brethren, time will reveal the

whole matter. You may see, sooner than I fear, the great calamity upon us !”

The black vapors which he then saw steaming up from the infernal pit, have now diffused themselves far and wide among us, obscuring the light of the truth in our own borders, and bringing a disastrous eclipse over our good name in the eyes of all about us. And the man, who for many years lifted up his voice almost alone, has lived to see the day when multitudes in different parts of the Church are waking up to a sense of the danger; and the cry of alarm is heard in almost every direction; and his own writings, of former times are sought after and republished by others, not merely as plain testimonies to Gospel truth, but exact predictions of the terrible evils which were then before us, and have now come upon us.

To sum up the whole matter. Has not *Churchism*, by a perfectly natural process, produced *Puseyism*? And is not *Puseyism* rapidly running into *Romanism*? And for all these deplorable evils, the legitimate results of the pride and blindness of unrenewed human nature, have we not, under God's blessing, a plain, but sure remedy in *Bible views of the Church* as “the witness and keeper of holy writ,”—the servant of Christ and of men for Christ's sake?

CHAPTER VII.

Satan would, if possible, keep men indifferent to religion. When he cannot do this, and the sinner breaks through every hindrance and comes to Christ, the adversary, though baffled, is yet not discouraged. He will strive to win the soul back; or, at least, retard its growth in light, holiness, and usefulness. And, alas, how great has been his success! How much injury has he done to individuals! And how grievously has he in the same way marred the purity, the peace, and the efficiency of the Church!

The devices of the arch-enemy are subtle, ever varying and innumerable. But we must here limit our attention to a single one; for this is all our present occasion requires us to notice. It is the particular device brought to view by the searching rebuke of our Lord contained in Matt. xxiii. 23. "Ye pay tithe of mint, and anise, and cummin; and have omitted the weightier matters of the law, judgment, mercy, and faith: these ought ye to have done, and not to leave the other undone." Here we are taught that while the smaller

matters of religion—its forms, proprieties, and external observances generally, ought to be attended to, its vital doctrines and moral precepts should yet occupy that superior place in our regard to which their paramount importance entitles them. Both are indeed duties. The consistently pious man will neglect neither.

But the great adversary of souls knowing the deep depravity of our nature and consequent aversion to the duties presented by the holy law of God and the purifying truths of the gospel—"Judgment, mercy, and faith,"—and knowing also that in the pride and blindness of our hearts we would be exceedingly prone to self-righteousness;—he artfully endeavors to fix our minds upon the forms, proprieties and external observances of religion—the "mint, anise, and cummin," all of which may be most strictly attended to without any real humiliation. Thus would he furnish us with an easy foundation on which to build a righteousness of our own, and in this way, too, keep us entirely off from that spirituality and holiness of character which make up true piety. A master stroke this of Satan's policy! Few devices has he ever practiced more frequently, or more successfully. It was the very snare in which he had caught by far the larger part of

the Church at the time of our Lord's advent; and against which, therefore, on very many occasions, we hear the Savior directing his clearest and strongest rebukes. And no one at all acquainted with the history of the Church needs be told how much she has always suffered from this stratagem of her great enemy.

Would it not, therefore, be unwise and inexcusable, in searching into the causes which have brought our wide-spread calamity upon us, to overlook this grand device of our spiritual adversary? Has he practised it upon us? And if so, has it in any measure laid us open to our present dreadful evils?

We have said that an attention to the forms of religion, its proprieties, and external observances generally, and to its vital doctrines and moral precepts are both duties; that neither is to be neglected. Now in respect to the first class, are we not conspicuous for our carefulness? Certainly none will deny us this character. We have a minute and very extensive code of legislation for externals, and so attentive are we to its observance that it has rendered us, as a Church, altogether peculiar. Hence, while it would be very possible in most other Protestant denominations, to be present on an occasion of public wor-

ship without being sensible in what particular church we were, whether Congregational, Baptist or Presbyterian, in any of its very numerous subdivisions, it would be altogether impossible to confound any of these with an Episcopal Church, so strikingly peculiar are we. Our many rules and punctilious observance of them, keep us intirely distinct. Seldom, very seldom, do our most zealous sticklers for Rubrics and other ceremonial laws complain of any observed laxity, or want of conformity, and still less frequently is there any real ground for such complaints. Well were it with us, could we as successfully endure a scrutiny by the second class of requirements.

Have we, then, been as careful in respect to the vital doctrines and moral precepts of the Gospel as we confessedly are in all that concerns Rubrics and other ceremonial laws? Do we, for example, hold up with great plainness, clearness, and fulness, in all our teachings, both in the pulpit and from the press, the great Bible doctrine of justification by faith only? Would that this were the case! But the writer would be unfaithful to all his observations and convictions, were he not to express his fears that we have come far, very far, short of our duty in this matter. The true method of justification is so important, that not only

ought it to be frequently taken up by itself and preached upon, but in every discourse it should be plainly implied. It is not sufficient that nothing appear contrary to it, but every thing said should be, to any hearer of the least reflection, so obviously consistent with it, and so suggestive of it, that he could receive nothing from the discourse without perceiving that he must also assent to the doctrine of justification by faith only. In a word, no hearer should be permitted to go away, without wilful blindness on his part, in ignorance of this fundamental truth of the Gospel.

And yet have we never heard this doctrine positively denied from the pulpit?—and more often so obscured and mystified by being mingled up with the works of the law and sacramental observances, as to convey quite other impressions than those of God's word, to the mind? Who, that loves the truth as it is in Jesus, has not been very often grieved to see such unsound teachings sent out from the press? But when and where has a godly discipline ever been brought to bear upon them?

One fact we will here mention which occurred some years since, and which affords additional and most sad evidence of our want of fidelity in respect to this great scriptural doctrine. A young

man connected with one of our Theological Seminaries, wrote to an Evangelical minister, a rector of a city parish, frankly and very earnestly requesting of him to state what was the scriptural doctrine of justification; and added that a compliance with this request would, he hoped, greatly benefit himself and not a few others. Alas, thought the minister, and is it so in our schools of the Prophets! What must be the state of our Church!

Thus far had the writer proceeded when a pamphlet reached him by mail, announcing another CAREY ORDINATION,—or rather worse; the dark indications of *that* having been hopefully relieved by public, solemn, manly protest, but *this*, it seems, was suffered to pass off with only a *secret shake of the head!* How long, at this rate, before as a Church, we “shall *die without a sign?*” What are we coming to? Can such things be much longer endured? If a godly discipline cannot reach the evil and prevent its recurrence, very soon must the whole body of the Church become utterly and hopelessly corrupt. Certainly it would seem that an awful crisis is rapidly approaching, when the sound must separate from the unsound, or all perish together.

It would seem that in this case the great truth

of the Gospel and the grand distinctive principle of Protestantism, the doctrine of justification by faith only, (a doctrine, be it noted, against which the Fathers of Trent directed the utmost efforts of their art and strength,) this great doctrine of the Bible and Protestantism, was positively and unequivocally denied by the candidate, and he a deacon applying for presbyter's orders. After repeated interviews and long discussions with him by one of the examiners, the author of the statement, he persisted in his denial. The Bishop, notwithstanding, determined to ordain, and carried out his decision. No protest, public or private, was made! The reverend author of the statement gives us to understand that he supposed he did his duty in this unexpected and most painful position; by simply giving a secret sign of refusal to lay his hand upon the candidate's head; and he seems, in part at least, to have satisfied himself that this was all he was called to do by having previously discovered to his great surprise and regret; that neither did the Bishop himself believe that we were "completely justified by faith." But so far from making a public objection unnecessary, was not this fact an additional and vastly sorer evil, and a most emphatic call for solemn protest before God and his people?

Why, did it not show that the present instance was not the result merely of misunderstanding? That it was knowingly and wilfully brought about? And that there was no reason, therefore, to suppose that it would be the last? Nay, that we might look for just such outrages upon our Protestant Church whenever such candidates chose to present themselves? Surely, if ever there was an occasion when the voice of remonstrance should have been lifted up louder than seven thunders, it was then. Nothing but such hurricane blasts will be likely to clear our ecclesiastical atmosphere of that creeping miasma which has already proved fatal to so many in high places and low. Said the Bishop to the reverend author of the Expose, "you ought to have concurred in the ordination, or publicly objected to it at the time!" And so say we; for, in the language of the Expose, it was a "*vital*" matter,—the difference between the parties was "*radical, fundamental*,"—if the one held precious gospel truth, the other was in fatal error.

Another essential truth of the Gospel, is the doctrine of the Regeneration, or the new birth, or, as it is commonly called, a *change of heart*. Have then the nature, the necessity, and the evidences of a change of heart been so clearly, fully, and

solemnly set before our people, that there is no possibility of any considerable number of them, of ordinary sense and candor, remaining in error or in ignorance respecting it? Or, has the subject of Regeneration been too often altogether identified with Baptism, or at least so mingled up with it as to bring over the mind of the hearer such a dark cloud of superstition as effectually to shut out the light of truth from him, both in respect to the ordinance itself, and to that holy change of heart of which it is a symbol or representation? Whatever be the cause, it is certainly the fact that there are those in almost every part of our Church, who regard every pretension to a change of heart or conversion as the vile cant of hypocrisy, or the driveling of a weak though honest fanaticism. It is not long since we read a printed communication from the lay officers of one of our parishes, insinuating a charge of error against their Bishop, and an untimely zeal, and a cruel disregard to the feelings of their candidates for confirmation, because, forsooth, he very plainly and solemnly urged upon these *baptized* persons, then before him, the subject of spiritual regeneration, or that holy change of character without which none can see the Lord! How must such a people have been instructed? And what must

be the character and influence of a religious periodical which would notice and commend such an attack upon ministerial fidelity?

And how is it, also, with us in respect to the *moral precepts* of the Gospel? Have these been inculcated throughout our borders with Scriptural plainness and fulness? And in consequence of this fidelity have our communicants generally been men "diligent in business, fervent in spirit, serving the Lord;" "owing no man any thing, but to love one another;" though in the world, yet living above the world; ordering their households with prayer and godly discipline;—in a word, exemplary in all relative duties? And has the administration of discipline among us been such as to reform or put away unworthy ministers and communicants? Or are our altars too often thronged with the lovers of pleasure, more than lovers of God;—with parents without family altars; with men of lax views and still more lax practice in business transactions, who show no conscientious sense of the obligation of debt where they can find the shelter of law against its claims? And have our Ecclesiastical authorities either not noticed at all, or, at the most, inflicted such slight and temporary punishments upon transgressors, clerical and lay, as seemed but a

mere mockery of justice? In one instance it was remarked by a merchant to a member of an ecclesiastical court which had just decided upon a case:—"Well, you have acquitted him. Had any one among us been guilty of such conduct, we would have been—off of change!" In another case, the offender after having been convicted of lewd practices,—such as any faithful pastor would have thought abundantly sufficient grounds on which to excommunicate a layman,—the offender was still left in the ministry, and merely suspended from the exercise of its functions.

If any thing could add to the dark features of such a case, it is the fact that the Church afterwards, as we learn from the public prints, voted him a pension—perhaps for life! If this was not, in effect holding out a premium for wickedness, it would be difficult to say what is. We have never yet met with a simple-hearted, pious man, or even a pure-minded worldly one who could take any other view of it. How then do we appear, as a Church, in the light of our Lord's searching rebuke? "Ye pay tithe of mint, and anise, and cummin, and have omitted the weightier matters of the law, judgment, mercy and faith?" Have we been as careful and zealous in respect to the

vital doctrines and moral precepts of the Gospel, as we are about Rubrics and Canons? As much concerned for the life and substance of religion, as for its forms? If we have not, what marvel is it that Romanism has come in like a flood upon us? That the views and practices growing out of such a want of fidelity to the Gospel are entirely congenial with Popery,—the very state of things it desires; and indeed that this poisonous exotic could not flourish, or even live in any other atmosphere, must be manifest to every intelligent, pious mind. Only let the Scriptural doctrines of Justification by Faith only, and a holy change of heart by the Spirit of God—to say nothing of other vital doctrines of the Bible—only let these truths be generally and faithfully preached throughout the Romish Church, and an evangelical morality be enjoined by its discipline,—and how long could the Papal Anti-Christ stand? Here and there, it is to be hoped, that some among them might be found to endure the Scriptural test; and others would doubtless, by God's blessing, open their hearts in honest and glad submission to its requirements; but the multitude would be speedily dispersed like chaff from the summer's threshing floor. Rome would be regenerated, or destroyed by such a pro-

cess:—she would, in the one way or the other, cease to be Rome.

They, therefore, who have kept out of view, or corrupted the great Scriptural doctrines of Justification by Faith only, and Regeneration by the Spirit of God, and the moral precepts growing out of these, have not merely prepared the way for Popery, but in truth they have laid its sure foundations, and already is the edifice going up, and soon will it rear its proud turrets to the very heavens, and exhibit, inside and out, all that is cunning and gorgeous to captivate the senses, and enslave the souls and bodies of men.

Would we then escape our present calamity? Let us “earnestly contend for the faith once delivered to the saints;”—let us hold fast with an honesty and a vigilance, which cannot be deceived, and admits no compromise—“the holy, just, and good commandment,” that law which rebukes alike the sins of the ministry, and the people,—which weighs with the same divine and perfect justice both the doings of ecclesiastical bodies and the conduct of individuals. A course so Scripturally wise and decidedly Christian must, with God’s blessing, bring to repentance, or, if needs be, put off that Romish development, which, with shameless front denies the very doc-

trines it has sworn to support; apes those fooleries it is bound to reject, and reviles that glorious Reformation which it is pledged, before God and man, to honor and uphold.

CHAPTER VIII.

To have any other object of supreme regard than the true God, is to be guilty of idolatry. This regard may be manifested in very different ways, and the objects of it may be as countless as the creatures God has made, and the imaginations and desires of man's heart. It may be "the kissing of the hand to the sun when it shineth, or to the moon walking in brightness,"—a very ancient form of idolatry; or we may come down to the earth, and deify the hills and the valleys, the groves and the fountains; or we may render divine honors to fire, to the winds, or to animals and vegetables, even the most trivial, as the learned Egyptians did to cats and leeks. One step lower in this humiliating abyss, and we have done,—the enlightened Greeks and Romans deified some of our very infirmities, diseases, and baser passions, as paleness, fever, fear, wantonness, &c.

When one contemplates the idolatry of the heathen, ancient and modern, it is hard to say which most painfully impresses us, its folly or its

wickedness. And the classical student who, while admiring the genius of the great writers of antiquity, has often shrunk back with horror and disgust at the scenes they unfold, cannot but be struck with the perfect delicacy with which, without at all sacrificing his fidelity, the Apostle Paul, in the opening of his Epistle to the Romans, portrays the idolatry of the Gentiles and its darkly clustering vices.

But we are not to suppose that because in a large part of the earth the preaching of the Gospel has cast out the idols of wood, and stone, and other such forms of heathenism—that idolatry has there come to an end. By no means. If idolatry is the exercise of supreme regard for any other object than the true God, how manifest is it that the heart itself may become an idol temple, in which worship is daily offered at the shrine of pride, covetousness, sensuality, ambition, or some other corrupt affection. This is as really idolatry as was ever exhibited in the Pantheon, and as such we are solemnly warned against it in the word of God. Neither are we at liberty to suppose that idolatry has always been confined to the world,—that it has never entered into the Church of God. Far from this. Idolatry is the grand, besetting sin of fallen human nature. Hence the

many delineations of this sin, and the almost innumerable prohibitions, warnings, and threatenings against it, and the varied and affecting exhibitions of its miserable results, to be met with on the pages of the Old Testament. Every attentive reader of the Bible knows that these make up no inconsiderable part of that portion of the inspired volume. It is needless, therefore, to quote any particular passages.

But, what is still more painful and humiliating, even the preaching of the Gospel, such is the deep depravity of human nature, has not always been a sufficient barrier against idolatry. The Apostles had scarcely been called from their labors to their reward, before we find many idolatrous practices creeping into the Christian Church. Many plain and solemn warnings against these, had indeed been left by the sacred penmen of the New Testament. And yet the evil continued to grow and strengthen till it reached that fulness of development usually termed the Grand Apostacy. Rome became little more than baptized heathenism. Hence it was impossible to reform it. It might be destroyed, but not reformed. They, therefore, who would escape its evils, must reform *from* it. "Come out of her, my people, that ye be not partakers of her sins, and that ye receive not of her plagues,"—

was the Divine injunction. And this is just what Luther, Cranmer, and Calvin did. They could not reform Rome, and therefore they reformed from her.

But alas! sin is not so easily got rid of, and especially this inveterate sin of idolatry. Has even the Reformation completely excluded it from the Protestant Churches? It requires but little acquaintance with their history to compel us to answer this question in the negative. We have all, at times, shown ourselves more or less infected with the sin of idolatry. But in this evil, as in that of persecution, we Protestants have one great advantage. It is that our religion forbids both. If we give in to any form of idolatry, or if we ever persecute, we act in the very teeth of our professed principles; and, therefore, there is always hope that we may be brought to see the error of our ways, and forsake it. But the consistent Papist is a conscientious idolater, a conscientious persecutor, an idolater and a persecutor upon principle; and therefore he will have his idols, he will persecute whenever he has the power. There is no hope of him till he ceases to be a Papist.

Since, then, idolatry is the great "besetting sin" of human nature, so that whenever nations have, in the holy, but inscrutable providence of God,

been left to themselves, they have invariably run into idolatry; and since the tendency to this sin is so strong that the presence of true religion cannot prevent its reigning in the world, and even intruding itself into the Church,—is it wise, is it safe, for any body of professed Christians to suppose themselves entirely exempt from it?—Certainly our only security here, as a Church, is in never-ceasing watchfulness, and close, faithful self examination. If the first approach of the enemy call not forth a note of honest alarm, it will become, at every step, more and more difficult to make effectual resistance.

We propose in this essay to confine our remarks to three particular subjects of inquiry, which have engaged much attention among us. Have we been betrayed into idolatry in respect to these?

1. THE CHURCH. Is there nothing like *idolatry of the Church* among us?

The true scriptural character and position of the Church is that of “a witness and a keeper of holy writ.” Her voice is therefore to be reverently attended to. The Bible is perfectly clear on this point, and all the best feelings of the Christian’s heart are in unison with its teachings. He regards the testimony of the Church, therefore, as *prima facie* evidence of truth; and in re-

spect to things really indifferent he considers it wise and proper ordinarily to walk "by the footsteps of the flock."

Still he acknowledges no sovereign authority in the Church, no right of her own to bind men's consciences. Just so far as the Church follows Christ, will the Christian feel himself under obligation to follow her. Should she be found, after careful inquiry, to come into conflict on any point with the Bible, the great fundamental law of God's household, the Christian must consider her unfaithful to her high trust as "a witness and a keeper of holy writ." In all such cases his allegiance to his only sovereign head, the Lord Jesus Christ, requires the believer to follow Him in preference to the Church. Not to do this, would be to act the part of a traitor to his divine Master; and the whole Church, the Christian knows, would be utterly powerless to save him in the last day from the terrible consequences of such conduct.

So long as it is written, "Every one of us shall give an account of himself to God—To his own Master he standeth or falleth,"—it is equally the right and the duty of every one to read "the law of the Lord," and judge for himself. It follows, therefore, that all creeds, confessions of faith, and laws of the Church, derive their whole binding

authority from Christ; and, if they are not according to his mind, they have no authority whatever; they are to be resisted, as we value his favor to whom alone we owe allegiance, and before whom each one must at last stand in judgment. Such is, we believe, the clear, simple teaching of God's word on this important point. And in exact accordance with it is the language of the Sixth Article of our Church,—“Whatsoever is not read in Holy Scripture, nor may be proved thereby, is not to be required of any, that it should be believed as an article of faith, or be thought requisite or necessary unto salvation.” Surely it is of the greatest importance to have clear, scriptural views of this point, and a mind well settled upon it, if we would not be betrayed into apostacy from Christ, and become the victims of an idolatry as debasing as it is crushing. But yet is it not the fact that too many among us often speak and act as though the Church really had sovereign authority in all matters of faith and practice?—They seem to think that they have given sufficient proof of a point when they have shown, or rather asserted, that the Church maintains it; and that to seek any farther, is presumption; that all are bound to acquiesce without question or hesitation

in these assumed teachings of the Church; and should any dare, however respectfully, to look for higher authority,—they are at once branded as—*no Churchmen!* We take but a single specimen of this sort of idol worship from a single discourse of a distinguished divine of our Church, one whom a large class among us acknowledge and glory in as their representative and leader,—or rather, as the oracle of the Church. “The Church *provides*,—the Church *prevents*,—the Church *regulates*,—the Church *guides*,—the Church *justifies*,—the Church *fortifies*, &c.”—and all this glorification of the Church in the space of only twenty-two consecutive lines! Great is Diana of the Ephesians! And, be it specially noticed, that these alleged “*prescriptions*,” of the Church are all, forsooth, so many arguments for a more than half popish theology, and a system of churchmanship utterly at war with the doctrines of grace and the liberty wherewith Christ hath made his people free.

Such teachers first assert that the Church says so and so; or, what is in their eyes the same thing, that certain favorite authors whom they set up as mouth-pieces of the Church do; and then, forthwith, require that all bow down to this authority “with a submission that knows no limits.” The

man who dares, however humbly and conscientiously, to appeal to the Bible, does so under the ban of these self-constituted *oracles of the Church*. He is pronounced henceforth no Churchman. And let not any suppose that this ban is mere *brutum fulmen*. Far from this. So tremendous is its influence, that when it does not altogether silence, as it generally does, it rarely fails to reduce to the most timid, ineffective whisper. And thus have very many among us sunk down into mere abjects, ecclesiastical tools, solemn echoes of some chief priest of the idol.

II. The PRAYER-Book. Have we no *idolatry of the Prayer-Book* to confess? The writer is very far from being insensible to the great value of this little volume. He was baptized in its words. Often since, as he trusts, has he wept in penitent gratitude under its ordinary ministrations in the Sanctuary, and, times without number, devoted himself to God in its solemn offices at the table of the Lord. He has thus lived under its influence in joy and in sorrow, in sickness and in health, through a life now drawn out beyond its meridian; and looks forward to the day, not far distant, when his grave shall be blessed in its words, so full of light, and hope, and holy

comfort. This much is said in justice to his position and feelings.

Still, with all his attachment to the Liturgy, he cannot, as he fears too many do, fall down and worship the book. It is man's work, and therefore imperfect. He sees not many, indeed, but certainly some very serious defects in this venerable volume—permitted, perhaps, as in the case of Patriarchs, Prophets, and Apostles, and the Church itself, as a providential warning against superstitious reverence for a creature, and a rebuke to those who might be betrayed into such idolatry.

But who cannot see evidence of this *idolatry of the Prayer-Book* in that language of unmingled, indiscriminate, extravagant eulogy so often poured out upon it?—in the continual refusal, even by those who have confessed its defects, to put forth the hand of reform, however conscientiously and reverently urged?—and above all, in the frequent attempts and systematic efforts to limit even the preaching of the Gospel and the circulation of God's word, by the willingness of the destitute to receive the Prayer-Book? Surely such exaltation of our own work, and virtually of ourselves, must be highly offensive to Him, who hath said that He will not give his glory to an-

other. Either, then, we must renounce this idolatry, put this obstacle out of the way of God's cause, or He will be provoked to say, "Ephraim is joined to his idols, let him alone!"

III. EPISCOPACY. How is it here? That we have run into the sin of idolatry in this matter, is beginning to be so obvious to every unprejudiced mind of ordinary discernment, and the least serious feeling, that it needs neither arguments nor instances to prove it. Some have spoken of it in sorrow, and some in sarcasm; and yet has not the evil gone on with giant strides? But of all the forms of idolatry is not this the one which admits of least excuse? The antiquity of the Church, its blessings to the world, its martyrs, confessors, and holy men, its labors and perils for Christ; the general evangelical soundness of the Prayer-book, its meek, calm, devout spirit, breathed on almost every page, its venerable compilers sealing their testimony with their own blood:—all these, though they form no justification for worshipping the Church or the Prayer-Book, are yet adapted to inspire a reverence so strong, that it would not be wonderful were this reverence occasionally to run into a superstitious, idolatrous veneration.

But with one given to his cups, another wal-

lowing in filthy wickedness, and others, again, advancing doctrines and pursuing measures so opposite to the Gospel of the Grace of God, and subversive of the liberty wherewith Christ hath made his people free ;—how could any one, with such miserable spectacles of immoral, heretical, and self-arrogating Bishops, before his eyes, fall down and worship Episcopacy? Questions so plain it might be neither wise nor proper to promulge, were not the facts themselves so notorious and did not the awful crisis at which our Church has arrived, demand “plain speaking.” Nothing but close, faithful self-examination as a Church, and an out-spoken honesty can now save us. Verily these are the times that try our professed love for the Church. A true attachment will enable us to rise above every thought of personal ease and selfish interests, and inspire us with a spirit alike frank and fearless, solemn and kind-hearted. Is it asked what has produced this *idolatry of Episcopacy*? Some of the causes of it are as manifest as they are painfully humiliating; others, again, are more obscure, but equally certain in their results.

In the Church, as in most other of life’s social positions, it requires but very little sagacity to discover “the thrift of fawning.” “To nosle about the knees of power,” is a much easier, and,

as things unhappily now are, a much surer way to reach the high and desirable places of the Church, than to gain these by labor, study, and ministerial fidelity. All this is perfectly clear. Hence, even where the ability for the latter effort is possessed, recourse is too often had to the former means. Hence, also, we have so many exceedingly small men in our high places. They exalted the Bishop, and the Bishop exalted them; a process, this, which throws no little light upon the progress of Episcopal idolatry.

Again, there are a large class who, though not ambitious, are yet very fond of their ease. Now, quietly to acquiesce in the evil of which we are speaking, and occasionally to lend it a *little* aid, will secure all their desires. They can thus "swim in smooth waters;" while a manly Christian course would require no little exertion, and expose them to many troubles. And thus this class also, help on the idolatry of Episcopacy.

But, perhaps the largest source of this evil, and that without which all others could have very little efficiency, indeed, could not long exist at all—is the unhappy state of many of our people. Partly from the want of due care in admitting men to the ministry, partly because the Gospel is too often not faithfully preached in our pulpits,

or rather not preached at all, and in part from the want of a Scriptural discipline in regard to admission to the communion;—from all these and other similar causes, it has come to pass that we have very many among us who profess and call themselves Churchmen, but who, it is mournfully manifest, are utter strangers to the truth and grace of the Lord Jesus Christ. Now who, with only a tolerable knowledge of human nature, cannot see that in the eyes of many such men, Episcopacy, as too often exhibited among us, will be likely to present itself with peculiar attractiveness? They lift up their eyes to the idol, and are bewitched with its enchantments. Having no spirituality of mind whatever, and without any Scriptural ideas of the Gospel ministry, they are prepared to listen with pleasure to every proud claim and superstitious view of the Episcopal office which may be advanced in their hearing. They are thus ready and eager themselves to bow down to Baal, and will henceforth favor, with all their hearts, those measures and those men, and only those, that favor this idolatry.—The minister therefore, who would get along peaceably with such Churchmen, and be advanced by them, must help on the current in this way set in motion. And thus the prophets

and the people mutually corrupt each other, and the idolatry of Episcopacy grows and strengthens by their means.

How often have we witnessed, in years gone by, the movements of such churchmen with sad misgivings for the future. The mornings of Sundays might ordinarily find them in church; but further than this, they gave little heed to public worship. Family religion was, of course, a matter of little concern with them. In a word, the world ruled supremely in them, and in their households. Thus was it with them nearly all the year round. But what a change an Episcopal visitation wrought, or rather seemed to work in them! It was quite a time of revival with them. None more alive and active than they on the occasion. Were one to judge of their piety by their devotion to the Bishop, they must pass for saints indeed. The simple-minded, every-day Christians of the parish, they whose prayers, and whose warm hearts and liberal hands were the life and support of the church—these humble, unobtrusive parishioners would be thrown quite into the background by the new-born zeal of their now officious neighbors. Hence the Bishop, almost as a matter of course, would go away with anything but a true impression. The pious,

practical members of the church, its real supporters, would scarcely be known to him; and he would place the very hope of the parish in those who really cared nothing about religion, and manifested scarcely the semblance of concern on the subject, except during those periodical revivals of zeal which always happened to coincide with the period of the Bishop's visitation.

One, and only one other of the sad influences of this idolatry of Episcopacy will our present limits permit us particularly to dwell upon. It is its power manifested in *unmanning* the ministry. We believe that government is of God,—a divine institution; and thoroughly disapprove of that radical, atheistic spirit, which rises up in haughty defiance of all authority, or turns away with contemptuous indifference from “the powers that be.” This is as unreasonable, and mischievous, as it is unchristian. It is equally at war with the Bible and common sense; and is alike destructive of the interests of time and eternity.

And yet there is such a thing as a *manly* spirit,—a spirit which, recognising equally in one's self, as in all others, the great attributes of a common human nature, refuses to bow down in abject servility to any; and dares to attempt any thing to which Providence calls, whatever diffi-

culties may lie in the way. It is to this spirit the Apostle exhorts us,—“Quit yourselves *like men*, be strong.” And Paul himself was pre-eminently an example of it. We see it in him when standing before chief priests and councils, kings and governors,—always respectful, and yet always frank and faithful. If he never lost sight of what was due to others, it is equally manifest that he always felt what was due to himself. He dared to be a man, and desired to be nothing more. Hence while he never crouched down to any, either oppressors or evil-doers, he would not receive for himself such idolatrous prostrations from others. The same Paul, who rejected with abhorrence the sacrifices attempted to be offered to him by the priest of Jupiter at Lycaonia, withstood the Apostle Peter to the face, before the whole Church of Antioch, for countenancing a departure from the great doctrine of justification by faith only, and boldly preached of “righteousness, temperance, and a judgment to come,” to Felix, that most corrupt Roman governor.

Without this manly spirit nothing great, nothing noble was ever done, ever attempted. Human nature, stripped of it, sinks down into a poor, creeping thing.

Now we charge upon the idolatry of Episco-

pace just this evil, that its continual tendency is to *unman* the ministry of the Church,—not merely a part, but the whole ministry. In proof of this, we take a single fact out of the painful and most humiliating number that crowd upon our memory at this moment. And we take it because it is related by the individual who is himself the example.

Not long since a candidate for the second order of the ministry had, during his examination, shown himself “radically, vitally, fundamentally” unsound in the faith. A presbyter, who was present, both at the examination and ordination, refused to unite in the imposition of hands, and published the whole matter to the world. How could he do otherwise?—though this was ruin to the young man in the estimation of all enlightened, pious people. But the examiner, the author of the statement, had discovered that the Bishop also, by his own avowal, had equally departed from the Gospel. Here, then, was a still more sad and fearful fact. Surely the spirit of the man was stirred to its very depths, and he lifted up a voice of warning so loud and solemn, as to make every ear to tingle in the congregation, and throughout the Church! Not at all. Listen to the unhappy witness himself,—“*I was confound-*

ed. It seemed, for the moment, either that I must remain silent, or appear to question the orthodoxy of my Bishop. It would be presumption in me to discuss that point at all,—with that I can have nothing to do.” How profound the prostration! What a pitiable predicament for an otherwise estimable and excellent minister of the Gospel to present himself in before the public! The very self-same thing, which in his view was “*radical, vital, fundamental,*” against the candidate, a Deacon, and of course an insurmountable obstacle to his ascent, must not afford the slightest ground even to question the orthodoxy of the Bishop. Is this the “wisdom which is without *partiality?*” Surely a simple-hearted, manly, unperverted piety would have thought and felt very differently! But here the same conscientiousness, which refused, with a resolution not to be shaken, all concurrence in the ordination of an unsound Deacon, shrunk back with a mysterious and insuperable dread from the bare thought of questioning the soundness of the Bishop ---the patron and ordainer of this very Deacon! O what sad havoc does this idolatry of Episcopacy make of the conscience, the heart, the whole spirit of a minister! How like a secret current it sweeps him along, often insensibly to himself, far away from the

true position of duty and of dignity ! Verily, we are persuaded that this one evil has done more to *unman* our ministry than all other causes combined !

The unhappy influence of the idolatry of Episcopacy upon the individuals themselves who are the objects of it :---its effects upon their personal religion, their ministrations *generally*, and their whole tone of character ;---its tendency to produce a grasping after power, and to lead to measures and to practices, which in others, had they dared to attempt them, would have called forth instant and stern condemnation :---these things we may only glance at just now. 'They deserve an extended notice, and the deplorable state of the Church imperiously calls for it. To blink at them any longer is treachery to Christ and his cause. But we must here close for the present and our conclusion needs be but brief.

If the idolatry of the Church, the idolatry of the Prayer-Book, the idolatry of Episcopacy,—to say nothing of other forms of this great besetting sin of human nature,—have so sadly infected us, is it wonderful that many have already gone to Rome, and multitudes more are moving in the same direction ? Why, Rome is little other than *baptized heathenism*,—the perfection, if we may be allowed

an expressive, but inconsistent combination of terms,—*the perfection of Christian idolatry*. He who takes the first step in superstition, is just so much nearer to mystical Babylon, the mother of harlots and abominations. No honest, clear-headed man who duly-reflects upon these things,—certainly no enlightened Christian can fail to see, however painful the prospect,—the issue to which our sins have brought us. Either we must shake off the *idolatries* now so rampant among us, or be driven onward by them with rail-road speed to the Grand Apostacy.

CHAPTER IX.

The Reformers of our Church gave evidence of enlightened piety when they claimed not perfection for the Book of Common Prayer, and intimated that future changes might be required. It is indeed wonderful that men brought up in the darkness of Popery should have been able to put forth a volume so evangelical in its doctrines and spirit. We would naturally have expected, in such men, that much of their old errors would cling to them, and not a little of the arrogant, persecuting spirit in which they had been nurtured. But, to their yet higher honor be it spoken, had they been permitted fully to carry out their views and wishes, we would have had a still better book. Such, however, was the corrupt despotism of the civil government of their day, and the ignorance and superstition of the multitude, that these men of God were continually held back, and even, at times, compelled to recede. Hence they did—not what they *would*, but—what they *could*. They had fondly hoped to be able to do more, and only this hope overcame the reluctance of some of them to accept

the high places of the Church. But they were necessitated, after all, to their shame and great grief, to leave to those who should come after them, to complete the good work they had begun.

Noble men! little did you foresee how germinant of mischief would be those weeds you were not allowed to pull up; and that your humble piety, which shrunk back at the bare thought of claiming perfection for the work of your hands, would be succeeded by a proud idolatry impiously prostrating itself to *the Book*, and casting out as evil the names of all those who should dare, however reverently, to suggest the slightest change, even those which you yourselves had wished to accomplish! But so it is. And the day is now come, when the bitter fruits of this idolatry have so fearfully developed themselves as to make it alike dangerous and criminal any longer to sit still. They must be met, meekly, but firmly met, and put away from us, or, as a Church, our light and life will go out in utter darkness and spiritual death. "The Episcopal Church," said a distinguished layman, on a recent occasion, with a simplicity of diction eminently befitting so solemn a truth, and exactly expressing, we doubt not, the mind of very many

in every part of our Zion, "The Episcopal Church must be *purified, divided, or destroyed!*"

We purpose at this time very briefly to notice a few of those things in the Prayer-book which, if we mistake not, require the hand of reformation. The welfare, indeed the very existence of our Church, as a sound and efficient member of the great Christian body, demands attention to this subject. - We must either be brought closer to the standard of God's word, or perish in our own corruption. If this work be not speedily done, many will leave us in despair of better days, and seek a purer Christianity elsewhere; and the unsound among us be borne onward the more rapidly to Mystic Babylon, the mother of harlots and abominations. But let us yet hope, and endeavor to come to this necessary reformation work with a wisdom and a fidelity which only God's word and spirit can supply.

In the task now before us, we begin with two general remarks, the correctness of which, we suppose, will be acknowledged by all who have carefully and candidly considered the position and writings of our Reformers.

First, it was no more possible for them than for Luther and Calvin to get entirely rid of their old errors. More or less of Rome would still

cleave to them. It would be a miracle were it otherwise. And what is this but merely saying that they were not perfect men?

Secondly, with the mass of the people around them, and not only this, but with much the larger part of the clergy involved in Popish darkness, prejudices, and superstition, the Reformers of our Church would naturally feel themselves constrained to yield as much as possible to Popery, and to *seem* to yield a great deal more.— Now to suppose that they never gave way to this impulse unduly or unconsciously, would be, manifestly, to hold them up as perfect men, a character which they themselves never claimed, and indeed would have disclaimed in the strongest terms, had they supposed that any could be so foolish as to ascribe it to them.

These remarks, so probable in themselves, and so abundantly supported by the testimony of history, will, if candidly and charitably reflected upon, enable us to come to the examination of the work of our Reformers with a Christian faithfulness which, while it shrinks from no demand of truth, will dispose us to regard with undiminished, yea increasing, reverence and gratitude, those who achieved so much under circumstances so trying and perilous.

I. Are not the *Communion Office*, and the *first form of Absolution* in the morning and evening Prayer so drawn up that, while they contain the evangelical doctrine—the former indeed with great fulness and impressiveness,—they present so much of a Popish aspect also as tended at first to reconcile Romanists to our communion, and now affords a seeming ground for the Romish errors of Puseyism? And this policy, be it noted, as it respects the first effect aimed at, was eminently successful. The Romanists continued in the communion of the Church till the twelfth year of Elizabeth, when they quit, not from any objection to the service, but in obedience to a bull of Pope Pius IV. And yet like all other compromises of principle it turned out in the long run a most unhappy policy. For the Romanists themselves, the party courted, continued in the Church only for a time, but Romanism, thus favored, has ever since more or less troubled us.

In respect to the communion office, it is remarkable that the work of reform, since Edward VI., has been in some measure thrown back. For example, the words used at the distribution of the bread and wine were simply, “take and eat this in *remembrance*,” &c., and “drink this in *remembrance*,” &c., implying that the Supper was

merely a eucharistic commemoration, made efficacious only by faith. Thus the service stood at the death of Edward and at the accession of Elizabeth. It was then, however, changed into the present form, "The *body* of our Lord," &c., and "the *blood* of our Lord Jesus Christ," &c. This, with other changes of a similar character, all favoring the idea of transubstantiation, or the real presence, was well adapted, and in fact avowedly intended, to reconcile Romanists to their position in the Church, and affords too much, at least seeming, support to their Puseyite successors of our day.

It deserves also, to be noticed in this connection that, when our Church was organized in this country, after the Revolutionary war, what is called the oblation and invocation, were incorporated in the consecrating prayer of the communion office, from the first Prayer-book of Edward VI., and that of the Scotch Episcopal Church. For this change we see no necessity in the Scriptural account of the institution of the supper, and though it may not be irreconcilable with Protestant views, yet it could not but be acceptable to men of Romanizing tendencies, especially as the declaration in the English Prayer-book, guarding against a popish interpretation of the communion

office, was, at the same time, omitted. It is calculated also, in no small degree, to countenance Romanism, that in the communion office the Apocrypha is quoted in the same connection with the sacred Scriptures, thus apparently commending it to us as of equal authority with the inspired writings. Those who are aware of the grounds which the Apocrypha affords to Popish errors, cannot but lament such an amalgamation in our Prayer-book.

But one remark will our limits permit us to offer, on the first form of absolution. Its opening sentences appear in a most imposing manner to present the Popish claim of priestly power to pardon sins; though in the latter half it suddenly comes down from this high claim, and sets forth the Protestant doctrine of divine forgiveness upon repentance and faith. The second form of absolution is, however, entirely consistent with the simplicity and purity of Protestantism, and ought alone to be found in a Reformed Liturgy.

II. *The Baptismal Office.* There is certainly no part of the Prayer-book so open to objection as this; none that has so grieved the hearts of good men from the very first. In a ministry, little short of thirty years, the writer has never conversed upon this service with an intelligent, pious

lay member of our Church, whether male or female, who did not express regret at some of the expressions employed in it; neither has he met with a clergyman, at all evangelical in character, who did not profess a desire to see some change in it. And it is a well known fact, that other evangelical denominations around us when they speak of us at all, almost invariably set down the baptismal office to our discredit. That it has kept out of our Church many serious people of such denominations, who have been otherwise disposed to come into it, is also a fact of which few faithful pastors among us, of much observation, can be ignorant.

Such being the character of this office, it is not surprising that it has, from the time of the Reformation down to our own day, called forth so much discussion. Let us here very briefly notice the three constructions which have been most commonly put upon it. One of these explains it as teaching that every subject of baptism is thereby *spiritually regenerated*. This, it need hardly be added, is the Romish view. It is the doctrine of *opus operatum* applied to baptism;—a doctrine, though essential to the system of Romanism, yet equally at war, we believe, with the Bible and all Christian experience. The regene-

ration of the Holy Scriptures is a spiritual, holy change, exhibiting itself, as opportunity allows, in repentance, faith, and newness of life. The latter cannot be found where the former does not exist. And, on the other hand, to speak of a regenerate person as an impenitent, unbelieving, wicked man, would be alike unscriptural and absurd. But that thousands and tens of thousands, who have been baptized, never give the slightest evidence of spiritual regeneration—remain, all their days, impenitent, afar off from Christ, and worldly, if not openly wicked in their lives, is a fact as notorious as it is painful. Further, how few real Christians are there who, though baptized in infancy, do not know that there was a time when, so far from being regenerate and children of God, they were unreconciled to God in heart and life, and enemies to Him by wicked works, and had they died in that state, they must have perished. And they bless and praise God for that radical, holy change in the spirit of their mind, of which they have through the riches of grace, as they humbly trust, been made the subjects.

Others view the baptismal office as teaching only an *ecclesiastical regeneration*; that is, a change of circumstances, a transfer by this solemn

rite from the world to the visible Church. They hold that though the subject of this ordinance is not thereby made holy in the spirit of the mind, yet is he taken into covenant relation with God; and to be brought into this state, or covenant relation, is to be regenerated in the sense of the baptismal office. Both these classes, then, hold that regeneration always takes place in baptism; but the one considers it a spiritual, the other only an external change; the one, a change of character, the other, of condition; It has, indeed, been objected to the views of the second class—those who maintain merely an ecclesiastical regeneration in baptism, that the office itself speaks of the change as a spiritual regeneration. And yet this class has, doubtless, numbered among its advocates very many excellent men from the time of Ezekiel Hopkins, Bishop of Londonderry, to the present day. By thus construing it, such persons are enabled to reconcile, in their minds, the language of the service, which certainly teaches a regeneration of some kind, with their views of spiritual regeneration and its kindred truths of the Bible. In no other way could they consistently use the service.

There is a third class, however, who maintain that neither a spiritual nor an ecclesiastical regene-

ration is taught in the baptismal office, as taking place at the administration of the rite. The language, they say, is clearly *hypothetical*, as any one must see who reads the questions put to the sponsors. The *infant* is there considered as answering by the sponsors—its mouth-piece. It, the infant—thus professes, through them, repentance and faith, and the purpose to lead a godly life. And what else, ask they, could the Church do in such a case than speak of the subject of baptism, after such a profession, as regenerated by the Holy Spirit? They who repent, and believe, and purpose through God's help to lead a new life, must certainly be born again. In virtue of this profession the subject of baptism is taken into covenant relation with God, and is thus brought under additional obligations to be and to do all that the Gospel requires of him. This view of the baptismal office has a large number of supporters; and is the one, we believe, most in accordance with the Articles, the Homilies, and the general teaching of the Prayer-Book. And yet we cannot but confess that, we regard a form of baptism involving such an hypothesis as, to say the least, very perilous. Carefully thinking, pious men may not be placed in much hazard by the use of it; but the great mass of the people will,

we fear, be continually liable to put a *positive* construction upon the service, and thus be in danger of either running into the Popish doctrine of baptismal regeneration; or, of rejecting the service as Popish, and ultimately quitting the Church altogether; or, after struggling for light on the subject a while in vain, of settling down contented with no clear, definite views whatever. In this last state we have reason to apprehend that the great mass of our people, and not a few of our ministers, really are at this moment.

Doubtless the baptismal office—we repeat it—has kept very many enlightened, serious Christians out of our Church, who would otherwise have gladly come into it. With no part of the Prayer-Book have we ever heard so much fault found as with this, by pious persons, both ministers and people, in our Church and out of it. It is a standing reproach to us, and a stumbling-block in the way of multitudes.

Such, then, are the three views of this service which have been widely held among us. And although we doubt not, but that there is ground sufficient in the service for the favorers of the ecclesiastical and the hypothetical construction to stand upon, and thus honestly continue in the communion of our Church; yet we do greatly fear

that the general impression made by the baptismal service upon our people is favorable to the views of those who teach baptismal regeneration. Nothing, perhaps, hinders the quite general prevalence of these views among us, but the power of the Bible and enlightened Christian experience. Indeed, so strongly impressed are we with this conviction, that we must frankly say that were we sitting in judgment on a minister charged with an offence against the Church because holding the doctrine of baptismal regeneration, we would be compelled, in conscience, to vote for his acquittal; on the ground that, though we believed it a most unscriptural and dangerous error,—a prime element of Popery—yet the baptismal office was not so clearly against him as to warrant his condemnation. We might, indeed, have a very poor opinion of him as a pious man, and a minister of the Gospel, yet, as a functionary of our Church, holding his position on the platform of her standards, we think we can see in these some honest ground for him to stand upon. Certainly the evangelical view of our Articles must be, at least, as offensive to the advocate of baptismal regeneration, as his views of the baptismal office are to evangelical men. And, if it be said that the proof of the first class of views is clear and abundant,—

this we deny not—yet, as in the latter case there is, at least, a doubt, we would feel bound, in accordance with the well known forensic maxim, to give the accused the full benefit of that doubt.

As our present object is merely to call the attention of serious, thinking men to the evils above noticed, and others of a kindred character, and not to write a complete treatise upon them, we must here close with a few brief remarks upon the influence of these evils.

While, then, we would acknowledge with deep thankfulness, that the great truths of the Gospel,—man's sinfulness and ruin by nature and practice, the divinity and atonement of the Lord Jesus Christ, the influence of the Spirit, the necessity of repentance, faith, and holiness,—are all set forth with a most impressive simplicity, earnestness, and solemnity in both these offices, as well as throughout the Prayer-book; yet, if with this our spiritual food, such unwholesome ingredients are mingled up, as many have always complained of, and we have attempted to show,—can we for a single moment be at a loss to account for the various outbreaks of the Popish plague, with which our Church has been visited since the Reformation? And can we reasonably hope for deliverance from that most fearful visitation of it

which now "walketh in darkness, and wasteth at noon-day," throughout our borders, so long as we cherish the seeds of it in our very formularies? The times demand of us not only "the spirit of wisdom and of counsel, the spirit of love and of a sound mind;" but a most disinterested, fearless zeal, a God-given determination to sacrifice every thing, if need be, for Christ, and the purity of his Church.

CHAPTER X.

It is pleasant to find something to commend in those with whom, in many respects, you are obliged to differ. It is pleasant, because such commendation may show, to the comfort of your own conscience and to the conviction of others, that you have been influenced by no unkind feelings when, on other occasions, you have been compelled to censure. Who has not experienced this gratification in seeing some instance of justice, truthfulness, kindness, or magnanimity exhibited by an opponent? It would argue a very unhappy state of mind not to be conscious of peculiar pleasure in such a manifestation. Indeed, so strongly do some persons desire this kind of happiness, that, not merely for fear lest they may fall short of doing full justice to an adversary, but apparently for the pure pleasure of the thing itself, do they often give credit to such an one for good qualities which he by no means possesses. We have seen instances of this, and have not felt inclined to undeceive the real magnanimity which could thus feast on fancied excellence.

Better err, we have thought, in this direction, than the opposite. And yet we must not lose sight of the fact, however humiliating, that fallen human nature is usually not very quick to discern the good qualities of an opponent.

We were led into the foregoing train of reflections by the perusal of an article in a late number of *The Churchman*. It is in some respects admirable, so much so, that we can take little credit to ourselves for discovering its rare qualities and applauding them. They would force themselves upon any one not totally blind; and most parsimonious of praise must he be, who could withhold commendation from such extraordinary excellencies.

The article which we have in view, is contained in *The Churchman* of April 10th, 1847, published in New York,—a paper preeminently devoted to the propagation of Puseyism. As the piece is quite brief, and for fear that we might be suspected of partiality or injustice, to the writer, we will here copy it *verbatim*.

“ BISHOP MEADE AND BAPTISM.

Dear Mr. Editor,—I have just been reading attentively Rev. Mr. Ten Broeck's reply to Bishop

Meade's "Second Letter." And what a state of things does it reveal! I confess it requires no little faith to see one's way through such scandals. Here is a Christian *Bishop* daring openly, throughout the Church, to impugn the Church's teaching upon Baptism—a doctrine, as we all see, necessary to the slightest glimpse into the practical teachings of the New Testament—testified to, without exception, by every writer of the Primitive Church, that has come down to us—taught most undeniably and conspicuously throughout the Prayer-book. I say a Christian Bishop dares do this, and no one dare present such a man for trial. It is a grievous offence, I assure you, to many, that such things should be suffered—that our branch of the Church should have no voice to raise on such a subject. This principle of Baptismal grace is fundamental and cardinal to the existence of a *Church*—so universally held too, that like the eternity of future punishment, and the Apostolic Succession, the Church has never thought necessary to bind it formally upon her members in the Creed; it being not so much a doctrine as a first principle, and means of her life and existence.

If these things are suffered to go unrebuked, I, for one, must look, not certainly at any thing

see, for evidence of vitality and genuineness in such a body. Has not the time come, when these matters should be brought to some *issue*?

How can I live in a Church where the foundation, that I am seeking to lay this year for the spiritual life of my flock, may, next year, through the agency of such a man as Bishop Meade, be entirely overthrown and set at naught? What a temptation is this to infidelity among the simple-minded!

One or the other of us, *must be* wrong, and why not have it declared at once *which* of us it is? The Christianity of him who holds the principle of Baptism, consistently, is, throughout, a *different religion* from that of such men as Bishop Meade. *There is no reconciling them*—they cannot live together, except, in the end, the house that holds them fall. If our Church is going to allow such teaching in her *Bishops*, I fear I must at some time question her validity [vitality?] It is the *glazed* eye that has only one vacant stare for every passing object,---it is the *dead* body that can utter no voice when torn in pieces by contention.

Is the Church the mere relic of by-gone times, the Repository and Mausoleum, merely, of what *has been* said and done before? Or is she herself now, what she ever has been, *really*—and not

commemoratively only—a living body, with the right and the power to *condemn* false teachers in her midst, and to grapple with the age as she finds it? Yours very truly,

OCCIDENTALIS.”

Who Occidentalis is, we know not; he may be a personal friend; he may be an entire stranger. We shall go into no criticism upon the style of his piece—its clearness, simplicity, and directness; for however important these qualities, and deserving of high praise, they are all lost in the resplendence of other and superior attributes. Let us notice a few of these loftier excellencies. An honest, serious consideration of them may not be without its use in helping us to discern some of the sources of our present troubles.

I. The *CANDOR* of Occidentalis. He has no reserves, no concealment. We have read of a robe among the ancients of a texture so exquisitely delicate as to be appropriately termed *woven air*. Just such is our author's piece. Its candor renders it perfectly transparent from beginning to end. Look at a single point, how it shines out as in a noon day's sun—the doctrine of Baptismal Regeneration. This doctrine is so manifestly part and parcel of Popery, that those professed

Protestants who had unhappily fallen into it, have heretofore very seldom plainly avowed it; perhaps they have not always suspected it in themselves. But however this be, they have been wont to put it forth under various guises, at times so complicated and obscure as to make it difficult to prove it upon them. Hence the mass could not understand them at all; could get no definite idea whatever of their teachings upon this subject; and the simple have often been deceived. Thus these writers are not unfrequently able to escape the odium of Romanizing, and to raise the cry of uncharitableness against those who bring such a charge against them.

But not so our auther. He seeks no dubious phrase to cover over his meaning in whole or in part. He most evidently understands himself, and is determined to be understood by others; or rather, he does not seem to suppose it possible for any to misunderstand him. This doctrine, he tells us,—the doctrine of Baptismal Regeneration, or “Baptismal Grace,”—is so essential, that without it we cannot have “the slightest glimpse into the practical teachings of the New Testament.” He assures us also that it is a doctrine unanimously held by the Primitive Church,—“taught most undeniably and conspicuously

throughout the Prayer-book,"—yea, "so fundamental and cardinal to the existence of a Church that she has never thought necessary to bind it formally upon her members in the Creed."

It may indeed be objected, in respect to the last position, that if the term *Creed*, be used in its most narrow, technical sense, then the argument of our author is without force; for certainly there is much not in the Creed, thus understood, far from being fundamental, but which every member of our Church must believe. But if the term be employed in its most comprehensive import, to express the standards of the Church generally,—does not our author, in this case, destroy his own cause? For certainly none will contend that the doctrine of Baptismal Regeneration is a truth of Natural Theology, or a dictate of common sense; if, therefore, continues the objector, the Church has not formally bound it upon her members, either she must have been very unfaithful, or the doctrine cannot be fundamental and cardinal, as the author asserts.

Very true, all this may be, but let it be borne in mind that we are not now defending either his logical consistence, or the theological soundness of our author; it is only his *candor* we are holding up, and this excellence certainly none will

deny him. Whatever our opinion of his views of Christianity or the Church, we ought not to withhold from him one jot or tittle of merited commendation. We may indeed regret that candor so rare were not found in a different association, still, for its own sake, who can help admiring it? Would that it had been more generally exhibited among us! How different might have been our state at this moment. What a world of darkness and misunderstanding, and controversy, and still more deplorable evils, might have been avoided!

Let our author, then, have the high meed of a rare and most transparent candor awarded him. But he has another, and, if not a more noble, yet a more rare and impressive excellence. It is,

II. MANLINESS. Candor and manliness generally, indeed, go together, but not always. It is possible to acknowledge a principle, and yet shrink back from its consequences. But Occidentalis has no such weakness. How like a man does he take his position! "The Christianity of him who holds the principle of baptism" (Baptismal Regeneration,) "consistently, is throughout a *different religion* from that of such men as" do not. "There is no reconciling them." Certainly not; we join hands with you here, Occiden-

talis. The religion of Spiritual Regeneration, and Justification by faith, and their kindred elements—in a word, Evangelical religion—is a totally different thing from the religion of Baptismal Regeneration and Justification by works, and whatever else goes to make up the religion of forms. They have no one point in common. To hold both is impossible. He who attempts to harmonise them, shows himself a stranger to one or both. And what a deal of trouble would it have saved us, and what a different position would our Church have been in at the present moment, had others generally exhibited, in this matter, but a tithe of the manliness of our author.

But, again, the results of this difference, however painful and appalling, Occidentalis does not hesitate to hold up to view. "They," that is the religion of Baptismal Regeneration, and the religion of spiritual regeneration, or Evangelism and Formalism, "cannot live together, except, in the end, the house that holds them fall." Most true, this; Occidentalis; and most manfully spoken. The Church that is made up of such heterogeneous materials must get rid of the one or the other, or come to nought. There is no possibility of two such systems always living together. They are mutually destructive. Just

as the one flourishes, must the other go down. The Church that attempts to comprehend both, instead of being a garden of the Lord exhibiting throughout fruits fair to the eye and good for food, must, sooner or later, become little else than a vast moral desert, full of noxious* beasts and all unclean things—a hideous spiritual Aceldama.

Rightly then, and right manfully does our author avow that if such an association is to be allowed, he must question the “validity,” [vitality?] “of the Church;” that she is only a Church in appearance, but really a dumb carcass,—a Mausoleum full of dead men’s bones and all uncleanness. And let no one think that all this is mere flourish. By no means. Occidentalis is for action, right onward, manful action. He would have the matter settled at once, as between systems of religion entirely opposite there can be no compromise; one or the other must be fatally wrong. “Has not the time come,” he asks, “when these matters should be brought to some *issue*? One or the other of us *must* be wrong, and why not have it declared at once *which* of us it is?” This is candid; it is more—it is manful. It is not merely acknowledging what is true; but looking the truth right in the face.

And yet had our author stopped here, would there not have been something wanting, something to complete the proof of a perfectly manly spirit? But he does not. He not only puts his finger upon the *offence*, but boldly points out the *offender*, that he may be forthwith arraigned, and the whole matter at once and forever settled.

“How,” he asks, “can I live in a Church where the foundation, that I am seeking to lay this year, for the spiritual life of my flock, may, next year, through the agency of such a man as BISHOP MEADE, be entirely overthrown and set at nought? It is a grievous offence, I assure you, to many that such things should be suffered—that our Church should have no voice to raise on such a subject. Here is a Christian *Bishop* daring openly, throughout the Church, to impugn the Church’s teaching upon Baptism. I say a Christian *Bishop* dare do this, and no one dare present such a man for trial.” How candid! How like a man! Who can doubt the honest, intrepid, straight-forward consistency of Occidentalis?

But do any complain that we have not dealt out a full measure of justice to this writer? Were we to stop here, certainly we would be open to such a charge. But having given all due commendation, and not a whit more, we believe, let

us now look at the matter in quite another point of view.

A most candid, manly bearing all must concede to Occidentalis. This we have most freely accorded to him. But how does his piece appear when looked at as the production of a minister of the Church? Is there not much in it to excite the most painful reflection? Does it not manifest throughout a settled and most determined hostility to Evangelical truth, and the religion which is the fruit of it, and all those who profess it? Had Occidentalis his own way, he would tolerate nothing but the religion of Baptismal Regeneration with its dead and deadly results; all else would be speedily cast out, as speedily as Stephen was dragged out of Jerusalem, and very much in the same spirit too.

How sad the state of things which such a piece as that of Occidentalis discloses. Our Church, with her Evangelical Articles, Homilies, and Liturgy, has in her midst—who can now doubt it?—men who rancorously hate her doctrines, and all who believe and faithfully preach them. Why is this so? How did such men get among us? How is it they can remain with us? Can our discipline be Scriptural? Or is it that we do not faithfully carry it out? There is certainly great

fault somewhere. And till this evil be remedied by the exercise of a true Christian faithfulness, what hope can we have of deliverance from our present troubles? But it is not chiefly with reference to this evil that we have called attention to the piece of Occidentalis. It suggests to us another and a far more painful evil, one without which we could have had but little of our present troubles, or might have soon been relieved from them. We allude to the sad deficiency in better men of just that candor and manliness which so strikingly characterise Occidentalis.

Were we asked, to what more than to all other causes combined do we owe our present troubles? we would be compelled to express the conviction that it was to a want of candor and manliness in the Evangelical portion of our Church. We do "esteem these brethren very highly in love for their works' sake:" during a ministry of nearly thirty years, we have acted in most responsible and endearing association with them; and we have no other expectation nor wish than to live and die with them. It is, therefore, with shame and deep grief we have given utterance to the confession now made. But our convictions are the result of many years of painful experience, and we are persuaded that nothing, in the long

run, is ever lost by a frank avowal of truth, however humiliating. A wisdom far above man's policy has taught us—"He that covereth his sins shall not prosper: but whoso confesseth and forsaketh them shall have mercy."

We are well aware, indeed, that there is something in the truly pious heart which prompts it to think the best even where appearances are strongly the other way; and to shrink back from the avowal of what implies the condemnation of those who are of "the contrary part." And, to a certain extent, this, we grant, is right; it is a manifestation of that "charity which thinketh no evil, and hopeth all things." But is it not a violation of genuine Christian charity when, by silence, or soft speeches, or compromising courses, we give our sanction to men and measures that must be radically, vitally wrong, if the gospel gives not an uncertain sound, and our profession of religion be not all a delusion? Now this is just the blame we take to ourselves. We have professed to believe in the utter ruin of man through sin, his justification by faith only in the Lord Jesus Christ, the necessity of a spiritual regeneration or a radical, holy change of heart: these we have professed as the great, distinguishing truths of the glorious gospel of the ever-blessed God; and we have pro-

fessed, too, that only in the cordial reception of these truths is that character formed and that life produced which mark the child of God, and give a "meetness for the inheritance of the saints in light." All this we profess; and yet have we not for years heard and seen every one of these precious truths opposed and denied, and a system of religion exactly the opposite, one utterly destitute of the Gospel and of every thing which the pious heart holds dear, not only insidiously urged, but openly and authoritatively promulged and pressed upon us? Now have we candidly and manfully, as became us, exposed and resisted these errors? We greatly fear that we have not. A few honorable exceptions, and especially of late days, there doubtless are, such as the excellent man whom Occidentalis particularly denounces, and a few others of like spirit; but as a body have we not greatly erred in this matter?

Had we on every proper occasion, meekly and charitably, but frankly and firmly, on the floor of Conventions, from the press, in the pulpit, and in our social intercourse, set forth the deep convictions of our hearts in respect to the gospel and the position of our opposers, very different, by God's blessing, might have been our present state. By such an honest, faithful course, we would at

least have cleared ourselves of the guilt of giving sanction to those who oppose the truth ; the worldly among us, both professors of religion and non-professors, would have been compelled to see the difference and to judge between us, instead of being so mystified as they very generally now are by our more than dubious conduct ; and who knows how many even of those now most zealous in the ranks of Puseyism might have been converted to Christ ?

Occidentalis, we have seen, does not hesitate to say that the gospel and the religion of his party are totally at variance with those we profess, that there is no reconciling them, that they cannot live together ; and who of us does not know this to be so, and has not at times expressed the same thing ? But why have not these expressions been candidly and manfully made where and when they would be likely to be of much profit—in our preaching, in our writings, at our Conventions, in our intercourse with those, both ministers and people, whom the Word of God and our own consciences compel us to regard as opposers of “ the truth as it is in Jesus, ” unregenerate men, strangers to the power of godliness ?

From a candid, manly course, we have every thing to expect. Much odium it would doubtless

excite, though not more so than it did of old, but if like the faithful of those days we shrink not back from this cross, we surely would, as they did, behold the same blessed results. Many, "both men and women, would be daily added to the Lord," and even "a great company of *Priests* be obedient to the faith."

But if unchristian timidity—a sheer moral cowardice,—or love of ease, or ambitious aspirations, and above all, *a hankering after the mitre*, be suffered to suppress a faithful testimony, and lead us to unholy compromises—verily we shall have our reward, though Romanism continue to sweep over us, and its waters prevail exceedingly so that all the *high hills* under the whole heaven be covered, and all flesh die, in whose nostrils is the breath of life.

CHAPTER XI.

There are few possessions more dangerous than that of power. Dangerous to those who hold it, dangerous to the subjects of it. A very large portion of the ills under which mankind have groaned since the fall, may be clearly traced to the abuse of power.

And yet power must be possessed by some; inasmuch as government is a divine institution, and absolutely necessary not only to the welfare, but to the existence of the human family. As a means therefore of doing good, power may be properly desired and obtained. But no truly good man will covet it for its own sake; and he must have little self-knowledge and still less wisdom, who would accept it without a plain call of duty.

If therefore all men were wise and good, power might, perhaps, be safely left to abide with little restriction where Providence seemed to direct its course. Few would wish it; still fewer would need it; and all would be blessed by its exercise. But, unhappily, this is not the case with us. Scarcely anything is more greedily sought after

than power ; and the selfish, and the ambitious—those least fit to possess it—will be sure to get much the larger part of it. Thus it certainly has hitherto been in the world. Hence so great a portion of the thoughts, the anxieties, and the efforts of men has ever been employed to devise and apply the necessary restrictions upon power, to punish the abuses of it, and to relieve the evils which it has occasioned.

And let no one suppose that this hankering after power, and the abuses of power, have been confined to the world ; that these evils have never entered into the Church. Certainly there are much stronger securities in the latter against troubles from this source ; and yet it is not to be denied that there are in the Church peculiar and very strong temptations to the love of power, and that the evils of its abuse are there vastly more to be dreaded. He who enslaves my body does me a great wrong ; but death will speedily deliver me from his chain. Not so the Spiritual Despot. His ills are commensurate with the soul ; they go with it into eternity, and too often, it is to be feared, drag his victim down with him to his own miserable doom. Hence the Bible has not left us without many plain and solemn warnings upon this subject. “I will punish all that oppress

The Lord will execute judgment for all that are oppressed.”

But we must draw these introductory observations to a close ; and we do so, with the general remark, that a regard for the character and happiness of those to whom she is obliged to intrust power, as well as a regard for her own welfare, requires that the Church proceed in this whole matter with the utmost degree of Scriptural wisdom, firmness and fidelity.

Have we, then, as a Church, been duly careful here ? If we have not, certainly we have laid ourselves open to many troubles. And is there not much, at the present time, to awaken us to a serious consideration of this subject ? It ought not to be any longer overlooked : but for its full discussion a volume were required. And few things, we are persuaded, could be just now of more benefit to us than such a volume, if faithfully written. In this essay we can only offer a few remarks upon a single point—this, however, is one of chief importance. May the Sovereign Head of the Church give us grace to discuss it meekly and charitably, but frankly and firmly !

As our object is neither individual aggression nor individual vindication, but a far higher one—the Church's welfare—we will name no one,

whether the unfaithful trustee or the unhappy victim of power ; we will refer to no fact of recent occurrence, except perhaps to one or two, so notorious that our mention of them cannot make them more so, and we will expose no more of these evils than duty to a troubled Church, seems most solemnly to demand of us. We must speak, and how can we be more guarded, more careful to avoid unnecessary offence ?

ARE NOT OUR BISHOPS ALMOST TOTALLY IRRESPONSIBLE ? We mean not so much theoretic, as practical responsibility. And it is important that this distinction be here kept in view, for although our legislation on this subject is exceedingly meagre and defective, practice under it, as might be expected, is too often far worse.

As it regards the legislation, our limits, of course, forbid a particular examination of it. A single fact, however, will be sufficient to show its imperfection and the necessity of a careful revision of it, if we wish, as a Church, to avoid that violent disruption which accumulated abuse of power will be sure ultimately to produce.

At the trial of a Clergyman some years ago, when the several members of the Court were called upon to give their views, one, the first who spoke, expressed it as his clear, solemn con-

viction, that the offender ought to be degraded; but the other members, while they denied not the justice of this sentence, were in favor only of suspension, and justified themselves for deciding upon apparently so inadequate a punishment, by the fact that it would be really tantamount to degradation, because *the Bishop hated the accused so much that he would keep him for ever suspended.* And such was the judgment rendered! We do not find fault with the punishment in this case for its severity; but we do complain of that legislation which puts it in the power of any man to gratify his vindictive feelings with impunity. Public justice, and not private passion, should be the ground and reason of punishment; otherwise a flood gate is opened to most enormous corruption and oppression. In this case indeed the accused happened to be a very bad man, and richly deserved all the ills inflicted upon him: but had he been of exactly the opposite character, he could have had no remedy. The innocent and the guilty may alike be crushed under such a state of things.

But perhaps some will say, if there is no law by which a Bishop is held responsible in such cases, why not have recourse to the convention? Surely The assembled Clergy and the Lay-representa-

tives of the Church would not permit the humblest member of our communion, much less a minister, to be oppressed. All this may seem very plausible, but experience has proved it to be only plausible; experience has proved how totally inadequate such a body is to afford redress. One of the grossest outrages—not excepting even the famous Duer case in the New York Convention—which the writer ever witnessed, occurred upon an occasion of this sort. A Clergyman of the highest respectability both for character and position, once attempted, in the most kindly and respectful manner, to bring up the case of a suspended minister before the Convention of the Diocese; and what was the result? A torrent of the most malignant invective was immediately poured out upon him. He repeatedly appealed to the Bishop, as President of the body, to protect him against personalities so gross. But the Bishop permitted the storm to rage on, apparently as a terror to all who might hereafter be disposed to venture upon that way.

Take a case of a different kind, which has occurred, and may very often occur hereafter. A Clergyman, called to an important pastoral charge in another Diocese, waited upon his Bishop to procure the usual canonical letter of dismissal.

The Bishop refused to give it to him. After some mild expostulation upon the hardship of his case, and finding the Bishop immovable, the Clergyman then said, "the dimissory letter is not an expression of individual opinion or feeling—it can never rightly be so understood—it is purely an official act, declaratory of the official standing of him who bears it. Now I am not sensible of having at any time fallen into an offence, either in doctrine or conduct; but if it is believed that I have, let me be at once lawfully presented and put upon trial. I refuse not to meet a public accusation; but I am unwilling to be the victim of private dislike. I ask, therefore, not as a favor, but as a matter of simple justice, either a canonical dismissal, or a canonical trial." The Bishop would grant neither, and gave no other reason than his disapprobation of the Presbyter's ecclesiastical course. And yet this minister was regarded with the strongest confidence and affection by the flock which he was just about to leave, and by all others among whom he had before or has since ministered. His standing has never been impeached. The plain truth of the case is—the man was openly and uniformly evangelical, and the Bishop had an insuperable dislike to all such men and their ways.

But here it may be asked—why not have the Bishop presented for such manifest and high-handed despotism? Such an attempt there was every reason to believe would have been perfectly in vain. At least, so the aggrieved Clergyman was constrained to regard it. He knew that there was not the least probability of obtaining justice in this way; and even had there been, he had no means of sustaining himself and family till the result could be accomplished by such a process. He and they must starve. He felt that he was helpless, and had all power arrayed against him. He was compelled, therefore, to submit in silence to this monstrous injustice and oppression.

But this is not the whole case; it involves still another feature of Episcopal irresponsibility.

The aggrieved minister removed to the Diocese to which he had been called, and presented himself to the Bishop, and was received without the required document. The Bishop saw at a glance the nature of the Presbyterian's case, and admitted him into regular standing without any canonical warrant whatever. How may Episcopal irresponsibility vault over all legal barriers! Here the one Bishop trampled the law under foot in refusing to give the required testimonial; and the

other manifested equal disregard in receiving the applicant without it. But in either case, the innocent may be crushed, or the guilty escape; and irreparable evils be brought upon the Church.

We have seen in the case just related, what a Bishop may refuse to do, either because there is no law, or in spite of it; but it is not merely negative acts of injustice he may be guilty of without the possibility, as things now are, of being called to account. He may inflict also positive injuries, and these of the most serious kind with the like impunity.

We have known a Bishop assail from the press, the characters of individuals in such a manner as would subject him in any civil court in Christendom to an action for slander. Certainly in such a case, the way to justice in the Church should be so open and direct that the injured party could have easy and immediate access. But they well knew that they had nothing to hope for here; that their only hope was to repel the attack in the way in which it was made, to publish to the world—however painful to their feelings and injurious to the Church—a refutation of the Bishop's misrepresentations. Accordingly, a refutation so clear and abundant was presented, as completely to prevent his success.

Three Conventions decided against him,—not that he should be disciplined for his assaults upon individual character; no, for that point was not up, and there was no way in which it could be brought up,—but that he should not be permitted, so far as the Church was concerned, to reap the fruits of his policy.

Here, would it not be supposed, that the matter was at an end?—that having failed in his main object, he would cease to persecute those who, he supposed, once stood in his way? But as if to show how utterly irresponsible a Bishop is, how far he could go with impunity, in violation of all that is truthful, and just, and christian, he republished years afterwards, without the least provocation, and with additional aggravation, his former charges, and all this as though nothing had been said or done to disprove them. Do we speak thus to repel these misrepresentations and expose the spirit that produced them? Not at all. This was done long ago; and the individuals assailed felt that rejoinder was altogether unnecessary to their characters. We have now but one object in view,—one which duty to a suffering Church compels us to attempt,—it is simply to call attention to the irresponsibility of Bishops as

a sad evil, *an evil lying very largely at the foundation of our present troubles.*

Another case we must present, proving still more strongly, if possible, the almost total irresponsibility of Bishops.

Some years since it came to the knowledge of a professional gentleman of high standing, and a member of our Church, that his Bishop had been repeatedly guilty of lewd conduct, under very aggravating circumstances. Having obtained legal proof of the facts, he determined to present the whole matter to the next Diocesan Convention. But supposing it discreet and proper to consult some other members, clerical and lay, before taking so important a step, he did so ; and was advised by them, to his utter astonishment, not to bring the matter up at all, on the ground that such a procedure would be productive of much evil, without the least prospect of doing any good. There was not, in their opinion, however conclusive the evidence of the Bishop's guilt, the slightest reason to hope that the Convention would present him. Convinced at last that they were right in this view—however painful and humiliating such a conviction was—he dropped the whole affair. And the public would probably have never been informed of it, had not this same Bishop on another

occasion, in a moment of infatuation, assailed the character of this gentleman, and made it necessary for him to publish unto the world what, it was supposed, it would be worse than useless to present to the Convention. How dark the state of things disclosed by this case! How imperfect the legislation, or to what a depth of corruption must we have sunk, when such wickedness could be practised without being called into judgment! But to turn to less disgusting, though equally perilous facts.

What but this Episcopal irresponsibility has produced so many efforts to give to the Bishop of the Diocese a *veto* upon the proceedings of the Convention thereof? A measure more destructive of "the liberty wherewith Christ hath made his people free," and more ruinous to the interests of religion among us, it would be scarcely possible to imagine. It would effectually and deservedly put a stop to the extension of our Church, and not only so, but speedily cause her to dwindle into utter insignificance in point of numbers and efficiency. Our people must become vastly more ignorant and abject than they now are before such a measure can generally prevail. We believe that it has been carried hitherto in only a single Diocese. But would such a thing

ever have been attempted without the concurrence, if not the direct agency of the Bishop, open or secret? And what but a feeling of almost total irresponsibility could have ever encouraged a Bishop even to countenance an attempt so unwise, unscriptural, and ruinous? And what else—just to glance at a similar evil—was it but this feeling of irresponsibility that dared in an Episcopal address, on a recent occasion, to hint at the entire exclusion of the Laity from our Conventions? One other matter of a like character demands at our hands a fuller notice.

During the session of the last General Convention, when a deep and painful interest was generally excited by the course it would take in reference to the Puseyistic defection and the outrages it had already inflicted upon us, a distinguished judge of one of our state courts, and a prominent member of our Church, remarked to a friend,—“I have been carefully looking at all the tidings from our General Convention to see what the House of Bishops are doing.” “Are you aware,” answered his friend, “that the proceedings of the House of Bishops are all secret? That nothing is ever permitted to come before the Church, but such results as they may see fit to make public?” “Sir,” replied the Judge, with

evident surprise and concern, "I was not aware of any such thing!"—and then added with deep emotion, "can it be possible that such a thing exists among us? The doings of the most important branch of our General Legislature all conducted in the dark! Well, nothing more is now necessary than to secure an Episcopal Fund in each Diocese, that the Bishop may be independent of the people, and then—with these secret sessions of the House of Bishops and these Episcopal Funds, we shall have fastened upon us a despotism which no power on earth can ever shake off!"

Who, not altogether ignorant of human nature, and unacquainted with the workings of government and the progress of power, can doubt the truth of the judge's predictions? What would be said were Congress, in either of its parts, or our state legislatures, to close their doors, and habitually hold secret sessions? How long could our liberty stand?—how long the purity of our institutions be maintained under this Star Chamber system? There can be no sufficient security for truth, justice, or rights, if legislative bodies, as well as courts of law, are not open to public view. The common corruption of human nature, the downward tendency of even the best governments, the uniform disposition of power to ex-

tension and concentration, must all be carefully guarded against, if we would not, as a Church, make shipwreck of every thing precious, for time and eternity? Certainly if a dear-bought, hoary experience has taught mankind any thing, it is that the public eye, continually upon all its departments, is the best and only sufficient conservative influence in any government. Without this, an irresponsibility almost total, working corruption and disaster, openly and covertly, will be felt through all our borders.

What else,—to notice only one other of our *legion* evils,—but this sense of Episcopal Irresponsibility has dared of late to open the doors of our Protestant ministry to such Romanizing candidates? Indeed it requires but little reflection to discover how largely our present troubles are connected with this great and growing evil of Episcopal Irresponsibility; and to see the utter impossibility of escaping them, so long as this evil is permitted to continue.

CHAPTER XII.

“Lord what wilt thou have me *do* ?” This was the inquiry of an earnest man. He had been carefully trained in the religion of his fathers, and had zealously professed it many years. He had *said* prayers daily, and, in appearance, devoutly ; but now he really *prayed*—“Lord what wilt thou have me do ?” He had done much hitherto which he thought right and wise, much that commended him to those about him ; he was thus on the high road to distinction among his own countrymen : but now, for the first time, he really sought to know what the *Lord* would have him to do. He had arrived at a most momentous crisis in his career. He had begun to see that vain were the wisdom and power of man to guide and satisfy an immortal soul ; that he must be divinely directed if he would really advance God’s cause on earth, and be saved himself.

Saul was indeed, and by natural temperament, a zealous man before this ; but now he became vastly more zealous. Or rather, his zeal assumed altogether another character. There can be no

earnestness like that of religious earnestness ; its sources, its objects, its motives, its ends are altogether peculiar. Its fire is enkindled from heaven, and all its motives and aspirations are heavenward. It is therefore disinterested, lofty, all-comprehensive. It has an intensity and an endurance which nothing in this world can supply.

It was this earnestness which made Paul what he was,—a holy, benevolent, fearless, self-sacrificing, eminently useful servant of Jesus Christ. It elevated him to glory, honor, and eternal life. But necessary as this earnestness was to him, it was equally necessary, at that time, to the Church of God. The Church had also arrived at a deeply important crisis in her history ; and Paul, now renewed to a true christian earnestness, was just the man to carry her safely and triumphantly through her difficulties. God's sovereignty is indeed all-powerful ; and the tallest archangel, much less "man, that is a worm," can add nothing to its efficiency. But it is also an infinitely wise sovereignty, and having determined to work by means, carefully selects those means most fitted to its high designs. Now, a true christian earnestness is just that instrumentality which God usually employs and most delights to honor. When was it otherwise ? When will it ever be other-

wise? The Scriptures, even in their boundless grace, give us no reason to hope that the Church will ever prosper and be made a praise in the earth unless this blessing be earnestly desired and earnestly sought after.

And is not our Church, at this day, in a most perilous state? To what a momentous crisis have we arrived! Shall the dark clouds which now spread far and wide over our ecclesiastical heavens, completely cover us? Is a long night of ignorance, superstition and corruption about to settle upon us? Are we, professedly Christ's freemen, soon to become poor, miserable serfs of Rome? Certainly, if ever there was a time when there should go up from the heart of every minister and every member of our Church, the cry of an agonizing earnestness—"Lord, what wilt thou have *me* to do?"—it is now. And if we do thus wake up, and call upon the Great Head of the Church, we shall all find enough to do. God will, in his providence, point out to each one of us, his peculiar part in the mighty work before us; and He will so bless our earnest effort and co-operation as to disappoint the devices of the enemy. Surely He will yet "save us by a great deliverance."

With such a renewed earnestness for Christ and

his Church, will we not see the necessity and duty of increased fidelity in—

1. PREACHING THE GOSPEL? “Great swelling words of vanity” about the Church, the Church, the Church,—its ministry, sacraments, holy days, and goodly order, with sneers against dissenters; or a morality little better than that of the world; or a mere sentimentalism, mistaken for spirituality; or some other partially developed form of Romanism;—in other words, the not preaching the Gospel at all, or, as an inspired Apostle describes it—“the preaching of another Gospel, which is not another;”—this is not the only evil that has, in these days, crept into our pulpits.

Even those who professedly hold the great truths of God’s word, as—man’s utter ruin through sin, justification by faith alone in the Lord Jesus Christ, spiritual regeneration or a radical, holy change of character, the perfection and immutable obligation of God’s law, the necessity of repentance and evangelical holiness,—even those, we say, who professedly receive these great truths of God’s word—do they hold them up continually in the pulpit, and from house to house, with that clearness, deep solemnity, and earnest affection, which so strikingly marked the Apostle’s preaching, and which, one would suppose, must charac-

terize the whole ministry of all who really believe these truths and feel the power of them in their own souls? We fear that there is a great fault here. Even where the Gospel is not altogether absent, yet is it too often preached in a manner so indistinct, feeble and pointless, or so mingled up with other things as to make scarcely any impression. The hearer goes away little instructed and still less moved. Having no definite conception of what the Gospel is, his heart remains almost totally unaffected. Hence he is poorly prepared to meet and resist those false Gospels which confront him at every turn. No wonder then that so few are truly converted to Christ; that revivals of religion are so rare among us; and that such numbers fall a prey to Puseyistic and other Romish deceivers.

Must not then our evangelical ministry recur afresh to the writings of the Reformers, and learn what they saw and felt Popery to be, and with what weapon they fought against it, and achieved their glorious victories for Christ and his Church?

Anti-christ has again come in like a flood upon us, and unless we meet him with the plain, undiluted, all-powerful Gospel in our hands, and in the honest, manly, self-sacrificing spirit of the Reformers, we shall speedily lose those precious

blessings which came to us through their toil and blood. But if our ministers bring all their sermons up to the standard of God's word, thus exemplified and illustrated by the lives and writings of the Reformers, and by the Articles and Homilies of the Church, they will wield a weapon which neither Puseyism nor any other form of Romanism can resist,—a weapon wherewith they will be able to put to “flight all the armies of the aliens.” It is a good rule, that every sermon, whatever be the particular topic, should so plainly present the great truths of the Gospel, that if there be any soul present who never yet heard them, and never will have another opportunity of doing so,—he may not be able to perish for lack of knowledge, unless he wilfully close his eyes against the light. Who knows indeed whether there are not always some such present, and if so, how can the minister, who fails thus to preach the Gospel, escape the guilt of their blood?

Again,—with a renewed earnestness for Christ and his Church, will we not see the necessity and duty of increased fidelity in—

II. PRAYER? Is it not a time with us for special, fervent prayer? Should not each one of us daily wrestle with God in his closet in view of the sore evils that prevail among us? “Let the

priests, the *ministers* of the Lord, weep between the porch and the altar, and let them say, spare thy people, O Lord, and give not thine heritage to reproach." And in every congregation, even if there are only two or three in it who mourn over the desolation of Zion,—should not these meet together at least once weekly to cry mightily to God for deliverance from the troubles that have come upon us? In such a case, surely, God would hear, and answer, and revive, and bless his people. Error would speedily flee away, and superstition hide herself in the pit, and truth shine out again among us, and piety be honored in our high places.

But to be more definite,—suppose each minister and each member of our communion, who has a heart for the duty, devote an early hour of every Sunday morning to secret prayer; and that there be in every congregation a special prayer-meeting on every Monday, till this, our "calamity, be overpast." "Ye have not, because ye ask not." If we "stand fast in one spirit, with one mind, striving together for the faith of the Gospel," certainly "the Lord will arise and have mercy upon Zion."

With a renewed earnestness for Christ and his

Church, will we not see the necessity and duty of increased fidelity in our use of—

III. THE PRESS? The press, as an instrumentality for evil in religion, is already very powerful, and is daily becoming more and more so. It has deluged us with error, and exerted an influence incalculably mischievous far and wide through the Church.

It is obviously, therefore, the duty of the friends of the Gospel among us, both Clergy and Laity, to make the press still more subservient to the propagation and defence of truth. But that what they write and publish may be wisely adapted to the times, they ought to make themselves thoroughly acquainted, not merely with evangelical truth and its almost infinitely diversified bearings and applications, but with those peculiar errors and evils also which in all their protean forms now so grievously trouble us. They will thus be best prepared to uphold the Gospel and beat down Antichrist.

But to be more particular,—let each minister publish every year, if possible, at least one thoroughly digested discourse, setting forth some particular doctrine or duty of Christianity, or pointing out and refuting some of the prevalent errors. Let his pen also be frequently engaged

in giving increased light and interest to the columns of our religious periodicals.

But this is not exclusively the work of the ministry. The laity have here an important part to perform. There are some things they can say from the press better than the Clergy; some with more propriety; and some certainly with more effect. How few ministers, whatever their position, or however great their ability, could have produced a work so admirably adapted to its purposes, and so eminently efficient as Wilberforce's Practical View. If our Church is to be saved, the laity must do much towards it with their pens. But, above all, let us look well to the editorial department of our religious press. That this has been, in times past, too much wanting in fidelity to Christ and his Church, all who have even a moderate share of true earnestness for these, must feel. Error has not been as boldly confronted, bad measures as vigorously grappled with, truth as honestly and faithfully put forth, as they ought to have been. Had our religious press only come up to its duty, candidly and manfully, we could not possibly have sunk, as a Church, into our present deplorable state. The writer well remembers the unutterable disgust with which, years ago, he threw down a

letter he had just received and read. It was from an editor of one of our religious periodicals, and such was its strain:—"those nuisances," alluding to certain anti-evangelical Bishops, "those nuisances Providence will in time remove from his Church,"—and yet in his weekly columns this same man was continually "nosling about the knees of power."—In *private*—"THOSE NUISANCES!" in *public*, "OUR RIGHT REVEREND PRELATES!" and so on through every form of interested adulation.—O the mischiefs such editors inflict upon our bishops!—the terrible mischiefs they bring upon the Church! But what may not a faithful, ably conducted, a truly sanctified press, do for our deliverance!

But here we would remark, that there are certain errors into which some good men among us have fallen, and which they must shake off, or we can never escape those plagues of Popery with which we are now so deeply infected. The evil which we here have in view may be, and indeed has been, thus expressed. "It is of no importance how high a man's churchmanship may be, provided he preach the evangelical doctrines of our faith,"* &c. *Provided!* Truly so, my good friend; but has it never occurred to you, to ask yourself how many such High Churchmen you

have ever seen? In all his ecclesiastical residences, North, South, East and West, the writer has never met with a single one—one such; who preached distinctly and unequivocally the evangelical doctrines of our faith. He will not say indeed that there are none such; but suppose that there is one here and there to be found in some humble position; how long will it be before, as his views enlarge and his theological knowledge increases, or, especially as the way may open to his ambitious aspirations—how long will it be before such a man arrives at a point where he will feel that he must give up either his evangelism, or his High Churchmanship? And which most commonly falls the sacrifice, let the sad history of too many in our Church declare. It never can be otherwise. For the man who embraces high-church views of the ministry; the sacraments, or the Church, if he only has logic and moral courage enough, would be sure to end at Rome, were it not for the restraints of Providence. There is really no consistent point, no reasonable half-way stopping place between such High-Church Theology as Bishop Hobart's, for example, (and we mention this because less offensive than its kindred systems,) and downright Popery.

Let no one then be so captivated with the desire of a character for liberality, or yield so much to a love of ease, or give way so far to a feeling of moral cowardice, or so greedily covet "the pre-eminence," as to be willing to concede a single hair's breadth to the false and arrogant claims of High Churchmanship. There can be no compromise with such a system. He who receives a single element of it has just so much poison in his soul that will either kill it, or, at least, greatly impair his piety and usefulness. High Churchmanship is *essentially* Popery. Puseyism and Romanism are merely increasing developements of the same radical evil—High Churchmanship. And we cannot rid ourselves of the two former, if we do not openly and faithfully contend against the latter. Listen to a plain, fearless testimony upon these errors and dangers, recently put forth by the pious and able Dr. Daniel Wilson, Bishop of Calcutta. "In the present day the invasion of a semi-popish spirit has deluged our Church; a system of uncommanded human traditions has been obtruded upon us; *one and one only rigid form of Church discipline and polity has been magnified extravagantly, and made essential to the being of a Church; an apostolical succession has been feigned in a sense in which it never existed; the all-sufficiency of*

Christ for our salvation has been sapped by overstatements about the sacraments, ceremonies, fastings, genuflexions, garments, and subdivisions of sacred edifices, &c. The entire ground on which we stand is shifted. The Church is shifted from the body of Christ, united to him by faith, to *an external union founded on the figment of apostolical succession.* Justification is shifted from Christ's only merits, &c. Sanctification is shifted from Christ's raising us by his Spirit from the death of sin, &c. All is desolation, destruction, pride, idolatry, superstition, a spirit of bondage. We no longer "hold the head," and being cut off, and severed from that, our salvation is impossible."—Lect. on Coloss. pp. 139, 390.

Were we writing in almost any other country, we might here stop, because there would, perhaps, be nothing else left that we could do. But such is the organization of our Church in this free, happy Republic, that there are still other ways left us of "contending for the faith;" still other duties to which we are called. Providence has given to all orders among us, Clerical and Lay, a part to perform in the councils of the Church. She is therefore just what we choose to make her; and for this we must all, in our several stations, be held to a solemn responsibility. What then can we

here do, which it may seem wise for us to do, to benefit the Church, and prepare for our reckoning in the great day? Ought we not, strenuously and perseveringly, to endeavor to *bring up Puseyism and every other Romish error with which we are troubled, before our public bodies, that they may examine and condemn them?* We know indeed it was declared by the last General Convention that it had nothing to do with these matters. But we know also that multitudes, all over our Church, received this declaration with equal astonishment and grief. They could scarcely believe it possible that such an utterance had proceeded from such a body. Why, if the General Convention of our Church,—her highest tribunal, her ultimate authority, her sovereign head on earth, has nothing to do with a matter which is rending her unity, destroying her peace; and exposing her alike to pity and scorn,—whither shall we go for redress? We must perish in our corruption.

But the case is not hopeless. “Great men are not always wise,”—this was not left for us uninspired moderns to discover. Even a General Convention may err. That body must yet look this matter fully in the face. Neither the cunning policy of the great adversary, nor an unchristian timidity, can always keep our troubles out of it.

The voice of the Church, as well as the injunctions of her Divine Head, calls aloud upon the future members of the General Convention, whoever these may be, to be faithful to their high trust; not to shrink back from any duty, however painful; but to “quit themselves like men, and be strong.” And wo to those who neglect such a charge!

Again: why have not all the *agents, principal and subordinate*, in our late Popish ordinations, been called to account for these monstrous outrages against our Protestant Church? Let no one say hereafter, as has been said,—“Why bring up these troubles before our tribunals and public assemblies? Nothing can there be done against them.” How can we be certain of this until the experiment be thoroughly tried? And even should every court, every council, every functionary prove faithless to their trust,—which is not at all likely,—still such attempts cannot be in vain. They will sound abroad as so many solemn protests against evil, and they will be heard, and ultimately prevail. In the meanwhile they who make them will have discharged their duty, and may look forward to the reward of faithful servants. But what will become of those who do nothing?—the lovers of ease, the faint hearted, the

selfish, the aspiring? What will their crafty devices of expediency, their hollow compromises, in which they now wrap themselves so securely,—what will these avail them in the great day? Have they not reason to fear the awful doom of traitors against Christ and his Church?

Ought there not to be a *general correspondence* among the friends of our Protestant faith throughout our Church, in order to united and correct action? Many now are feeble and dispirited just because they feel alone. Like the prophet of old in apostate Israel, they are ready to exclaim—“They have forsaken thy covenant,—and I, even I only am left; and they seek my life to take it away!” They have none to look to for counsel and encouragement. But in union there is strength; and we doubt not there are left even now more than “seven thousand—all the knees which have not bowed unto Baal.” Let then the friends of evangelical truth, all over the Church, open a correspondence with each other, and compare views and get ready for combined action.

And especially ought there not to be just before the next General Convention, a *meeting of those members of that body who grieve over our present troubles*, that they may go into it prepared to act together wisely and efficiently?—and not,

as it too often has been in times past, suffer themselves to be defeated by a crafty minority, through their own want of mutual understanding and settled views in respect to the course which ought to be pursued. Such a meeting might also draw up and put forth a thoroughly digested *testimony* to the great truths of the Gospel now so obscured and endangered in many parts of our Zion; and a clear, solemn *protest* against those popish errors which are daily spreading their poisonous influence all about us, and destroying immortal souls. Such a testimony and protest, calm, faithful, moderate in tone, could not but awaken general attention, and do much, with heaven's blessing, to arrest our downward course. Another great duty devolves upon the friends of evangelical truth. Ought they not, with much and careful consultation, to prepare and publish a *revised* Book of Common Prayer? This idea was first suggested to us in a private letter from a distinguished Lay-member of our Church in one of the New England States; and it is certainly worthy of serious thought. There are too many, at least apparent, grounds for Popish error-ists to stand upon in some parts of the Prayer-book. It is vain to deny this. Puseyites confidently appeal to these grounds, and the friends of

evangelical truth cannot here make a perfectly triumphant defence. Honesty is always the best policy. It is ever wise and right to acknowledge our errors and reform them. Rome's Bohan Upas has been permitted in times past to spread its poisonous shade over us, and what hope can we *have* of escaping its deadly influence so long as we cherish its roots in our very soil? If we lop off its branches this year, they will shoot out again the next. We must go down to the bottom of our evils, and make thorough reformation work. Certainly this requires much wisdom, courage, and piety; but God will not withhold these if we seek Him arightly; and if we do not, Rome must at last get entire dominion over us, and we, as a Church of Christ, be deservedly blotted out.

But amid all our efforts against error, and to advance the Gospel in our Church, there is one object never to be lost sight of, because if we fail in this, we can do little good to the holy cause in which we are engaged, and may miserably perish ourselves. We mean an *eminent personal piety*: this we ought ever to keep in view, but especially at the present time. Controversy, though a most important Christian duty, is always beset with great incidental dangers. It is very apt to

injure the spirit, fill the bosom with hurtful prejudices, and draw off the affections from things heavenly and divine. It becomes us, therefore, to make personal religion in this our hour of trial, a matter of peculiar concern. Let us be much in prayer; let us cultivate a meek, humble, and loving temper—such a temper as will supply us with soft words for our hardest arguments, and lead us to treat our opponents with all due kindness and respect, while we faithfully expose their errors and resist their pernicious influence. With such a spirit, we shall have peace within while war is raging without, and we, ourselves are manfully performing our part in it as “good soldiers of Jesus Christ.” And whatever else may be our success, we shall certainly achieve the greatest of all victories—a victory over ourselves. But such a spirit, with the holy walk and character which will be sure to accompany it, will likewise add power to all our other weapons, and give us such wisdom and efficiency in the use of them, as nothing else can supply, hence it will do more to convince and to convert those “who are of the contrary part,” than all other means we can employ. Even could we succeed without such a spirit, success would be any thing but a blessing to us.

Who does not see that in the faithful use of the means above briefly pointed out, viz.: preaching the Gospel, prayer, the press, mutual correspondence and consultation, a solemn testimony and protest, a kind and respectful, but decided and firm stand for the truth in all our Church councils, a manifest growing personal piety—who sees not that in the faithful use of these means we may expect, under God's blessing, a *revival of religion* among us—a revival of “pure religion and undefiled?” And is not this pre-eminently our present want? The Church of Christ has always been beset by two great evils—on the one hand rationalism, on the other superstition—in other words, Socinianism and Popery. With the first, we have been little troubled; our besetting sin has ever been the last. No one who carefully studies the history of our Church, can be ignorant of this fact, or the causes of it. Now, while we by no means undervalue sound argument and earnest effort against errors on the right hand and on the left, yet nothing will so effectually drive these off and deliver the Church from their influence, as a revival of religion. They will flee before it as venomous serpents before a fire in the prairies. They can indeed stand any thing but a revival. Such a heaven-enkindled flame will either cleanse or con-

sume the whole host of errorists. Hence every great reformation in the Church has always been accompanied by a revival of religion—it was indeed the revival that constituted its power. When the Spirit of God moves upon the hearts of a people, and makes them to see their guilt, their helplessness, and their wretchedness, and discloses to them a holy, sin-hating God, and the terrors of a coming judgment—the poor hollow figments of Popery sink into nothing before these awful realities. Miserable comforters are they all felt to be at such a time, and the awakened sinner turns from them and finds peace and satisfaction only in “the Gospel of the grace of God.” A revival of religion—one general out-pouring of the Holy Spirit, would be the salvation of our Church at this moment. For this, let us one and all, live, and labor, and pray. “O Lord, revive thy work in the midst of the years, in the midst of the years make known, in wrath remember mercy !”

But, “suppose,” some will say, “that every effort should fail, that notwithstanding all we may do to promote “pure religion and undefiled,” and throw back the tide of Popery, things go on from bad to worse, and the dark polluting stream continues to roll its desolating waves over us—*what then shall be done?*” There is but one

course left—it is to *divide*. If you cannot reclaim unsound men, if you cannot put off their errors and corrupt practices, you must separate. There is no other alternative. And to continue in alliance with them, is to become partakers of their sin. Such a union is not Christian union; it is an unholy compromise of Anti-christ. A Church thus made up is not one, living, sanctified, and sanctifying whole; but a dead, heterogeneous, corrupt, and corrupting mass.

But have we not too much lost sight of what is true Christian union? Have we not confounded a lifeless, stagnant uniformity, the effect of worldly wisdom and external pressure, with that vital union which can result only from a cordial reception of the truth? Yes, it is to a *Popish idol falsely called unity*, we have, too many of us and too long bowed down; and thus lost sight of the all-important fact that Christian union, so far from being preserved, is necessarily lost, when attempted to be gained or maintained at the sacrifice of truth. *There and there only is Christian union, where the truth is held in simplicity and godly sincerity, and meekly but firmly held up before the world*, all else is but “a covenant with death, an agreement with hell.” Very many of us, there is reason to hope, are beginning to

waken up to right views of this subject. Hence division is now quite frequently spoken of,—and at times, even in our high places,—as that painful, solemn alternative to which both duty and safety will in all human probability, soon shut us up. Should the day come, as come we fear it will, let us “quit ourselves like men; and be strong.”

“But *what*,” it has been asked, “*will be the prospect before us in case of division?*” We can judge of the future only by the past. The great principles of human nature, and of the government of Providence already developed in the history of the Church, will still continue to operate. A consideration of these is the only clue by which we can guide our way into the labyrinth of the future. Judging thus—we believe that in *case* of a division among us, the leaders of the Puseyite body, then unrestrained, will speedily travel forward to Rome, their longed for goal; but the rank and file who, whether in Church or State, are almost always honest, will soon discover how shamefully they have been deceived, and will fall back again upon the *truly* Protestant part of the Church; while *that* freed from the dead load of Popery which now enfeebles and embarrasses it, and having with it the cordial

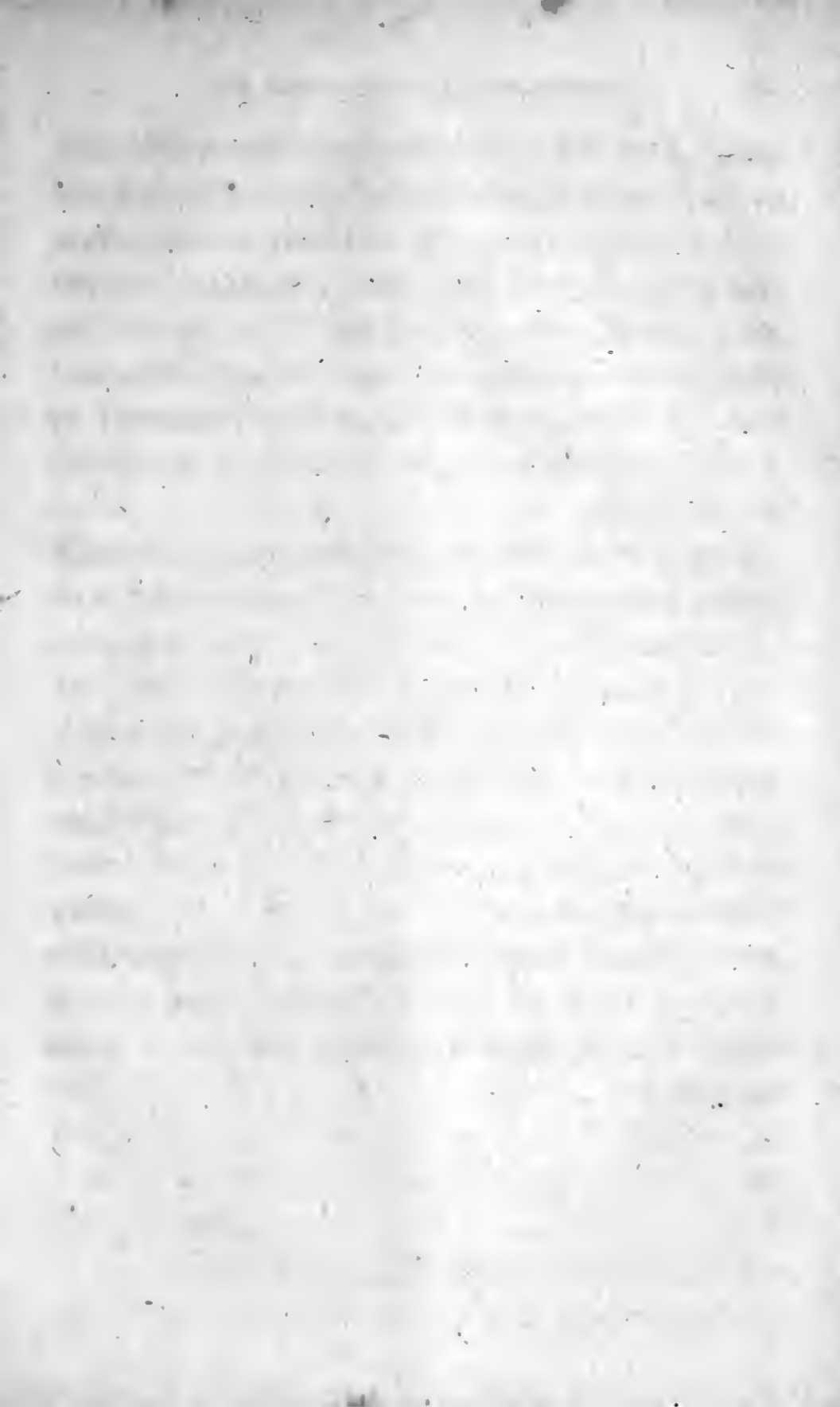
sympathies of the whole Protestant world, and, we doubt not, the blessing of heaven, will at once press forward in the Christian course with renewed vigor, and grow and prosper beyond all past example. How glorious a body would be such a Reformed Church! Few denominations, as the world now is, could do more to advance the kingdom of Christ on earth. It would "arise and shine" among the brightest constellations of those "new heavens," in comparison with which "the former shall not be remembered, nor come into mind."

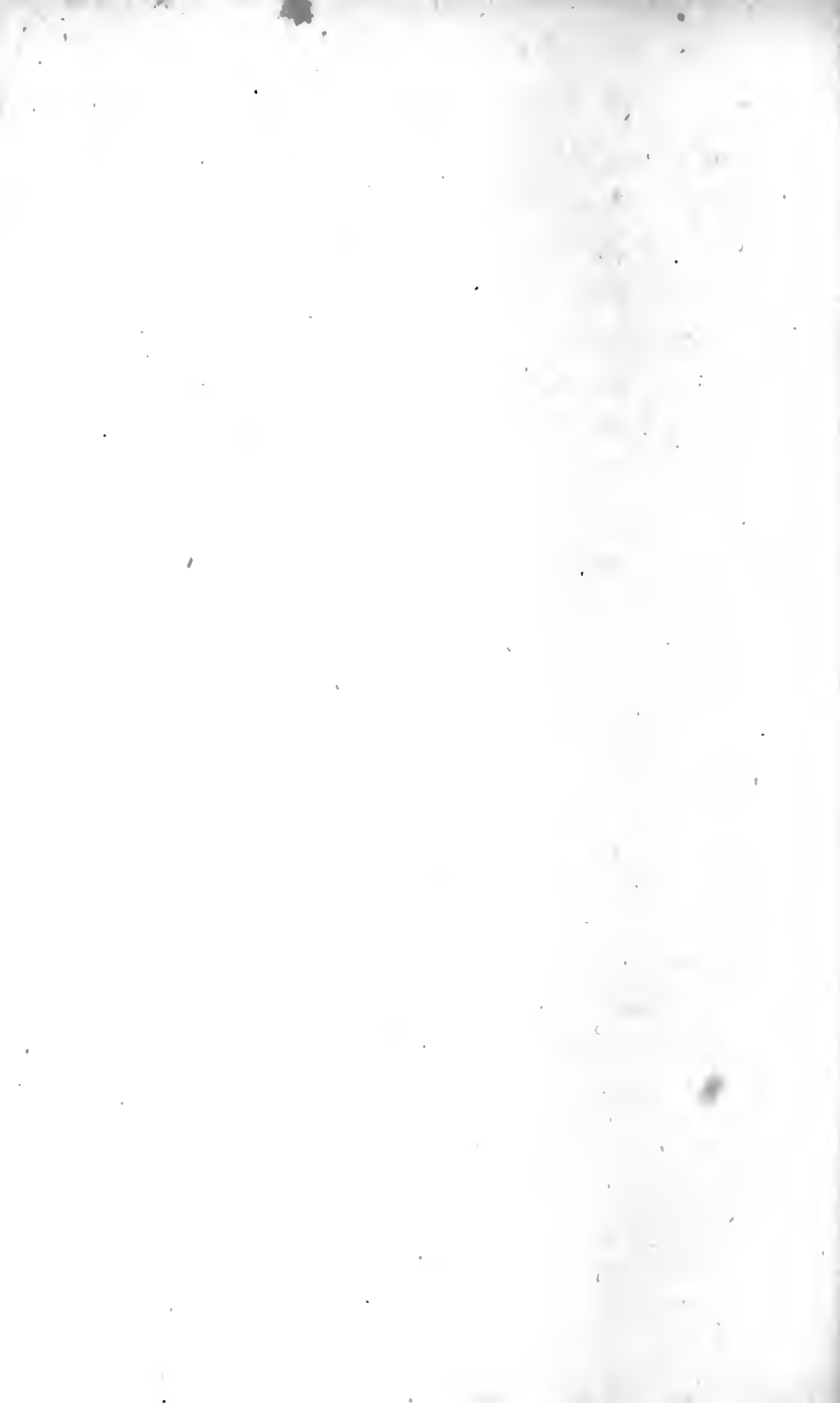
The writer is done,—not because the subject is exhausted. Far from this. In each essay his greatest difficulty was to be brief. Facts continually crowded upon him, but of these he could select only those most fitted, as he believed, to do good, and least likely to give offence. Many *evils* he has been compelled to pass over entirely; and of those noticed, he is deeply sensible that they have been feebly, very feebly presented. He could only touch the surface, and not go down into the heart's core of the corruption, or follow its deadly streams throughout their wide circulation.

More than twenty years have now elapsed since the writer first endeavored to expose these deplo-

rable evils. But his voice was then too feeble, or the Church's slumbers too deep. Few heeded the warning. And our troubles, at that time, chiefly prospective, have since been fearfully realized, and in some parts of our Zion the tide has already spread so far, and risen so high, that only here and there a great Protestant land-mark, or a faithful traveller, is visible above its desolating flood.

It was only after repeated and urgent importunities, public and private, the writer again took up his pen. In what he has now done he is painfully conscious of having fallen below his own wishes, and very far short of what the present awful crisis demands. But amid no ordinary trials, discouragements, and domestic afflictions, he has persevered in doing the little he could. May it not be said of him *again*, some twenty years hence, by any of Zion's faithful friends, then weeping over her RUINS—Alas! Alas! “the writer showed himself no loose reasoner, no vain alarmist!”

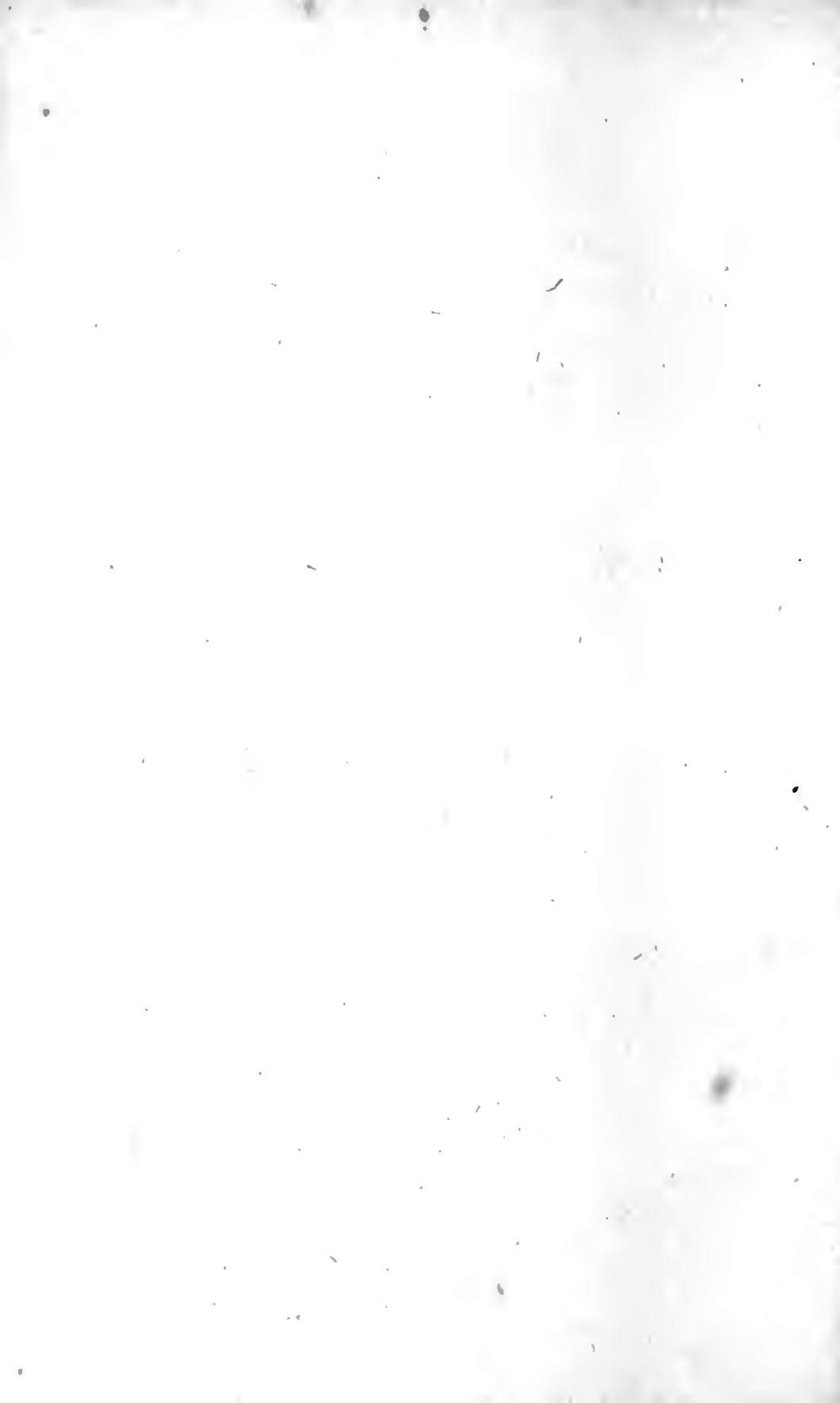






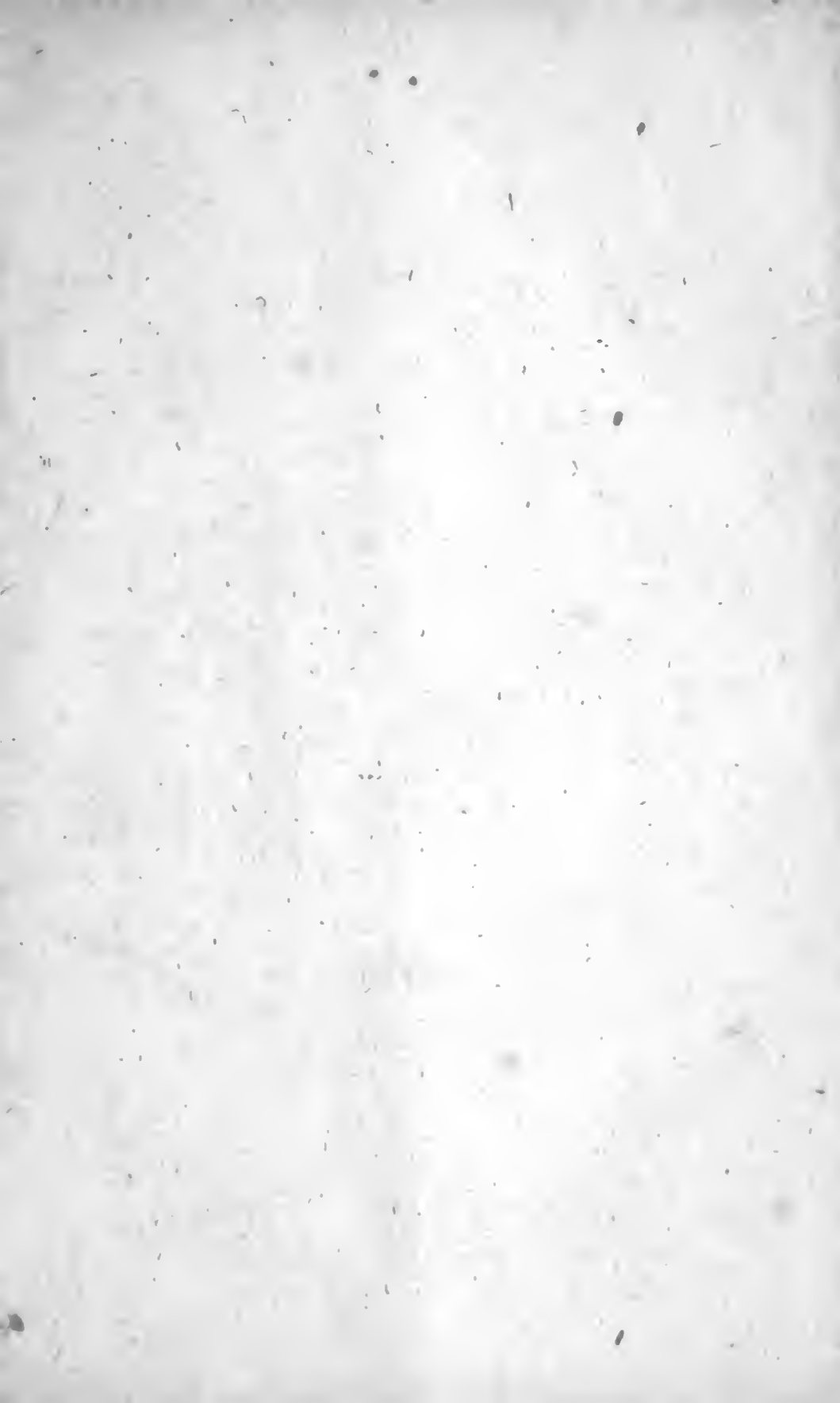

















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