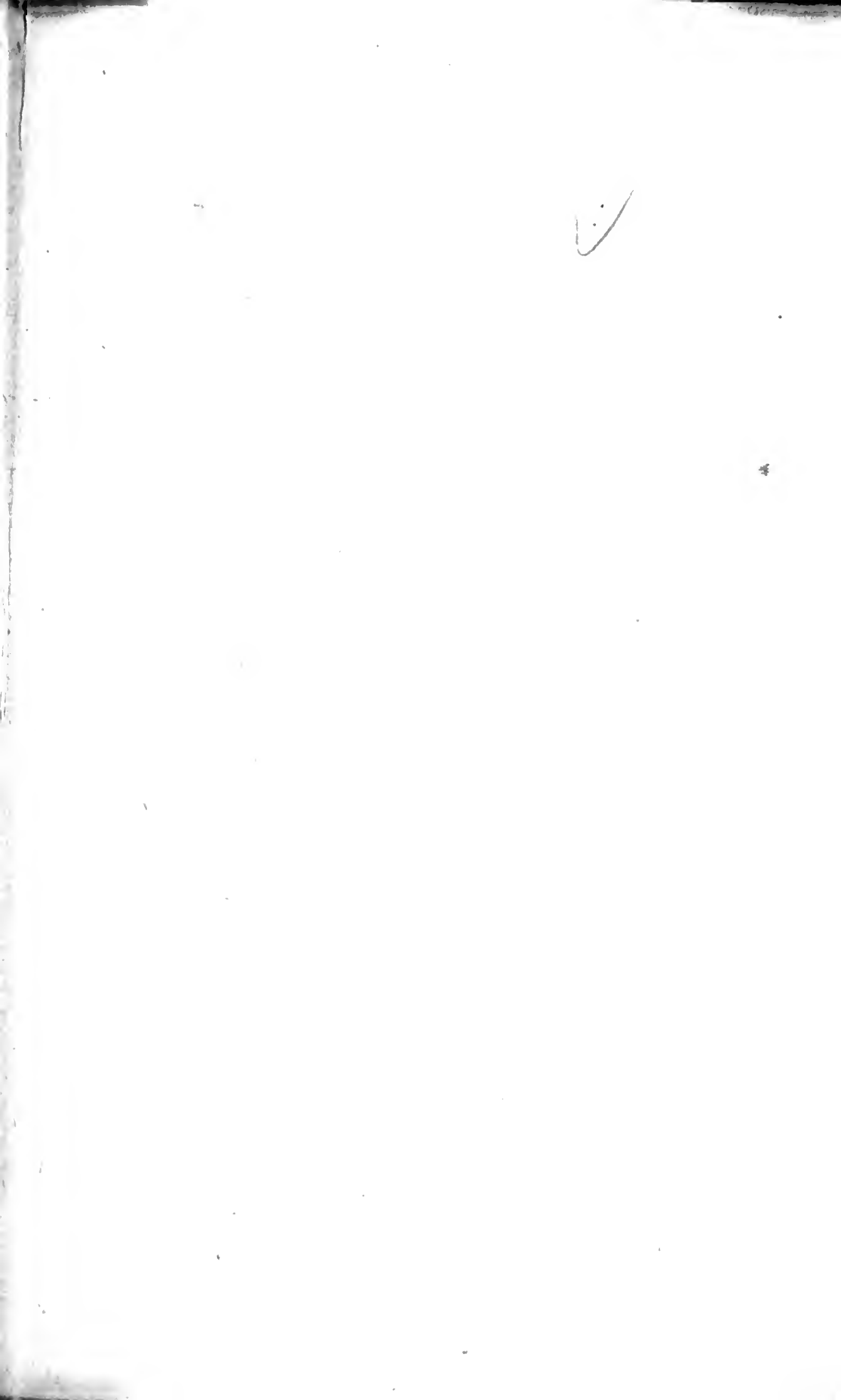


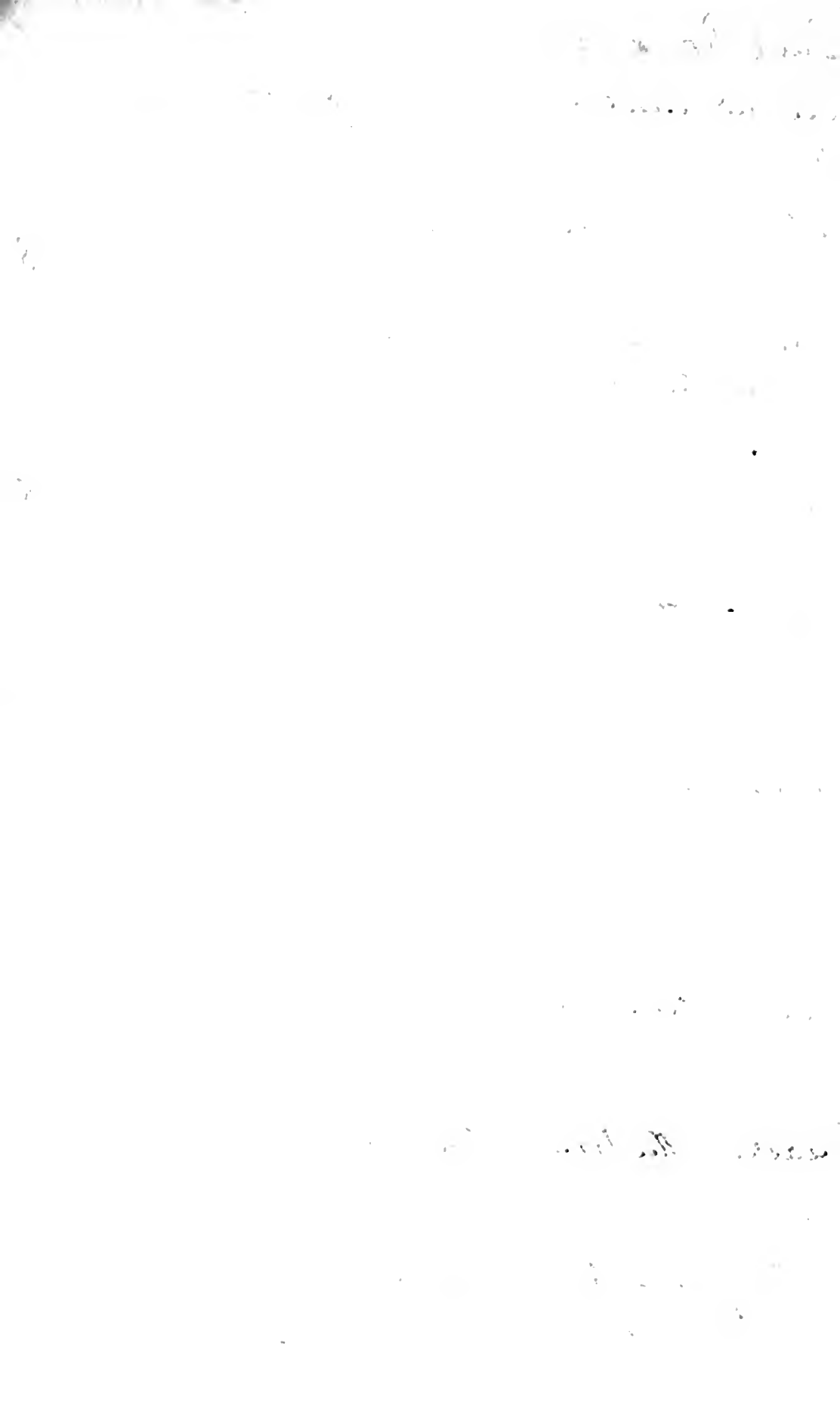


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| | |
|--|----|
| Quid Romæ faciam? By Rev. T. Bowdler. | 1 |
| { The judgment of Sir H. James Fust, in the case of Gorham against the Bp. of Exeter. } | 2 |
| { Letter to Archbishop Hare from Hon. R. Cavendish on the judgment in the Gorham case. } | 3 |
| { A few words on the spirit in which men are meeting the present crisis in the Church. by the Rev. Edward Moore. } | 4 |
| { Reasons for feeling secure in the Church of England by the Rev. Edward Moore. } | 5 |
| { A First Letter on the present position of the High Church Party by the Rev. S. Maskell. } | 6 |
| Queen's College, London. Letter by Rev. F. S. Maurice | 7 |
| { Gorham v. the Bishop of Exeter. Letter to Sir W. Farguhar, from Rev. S. F. Hook D.D. } | 8 |
| Why should the Bishops continue to sit in the H. of Lords? | 9 |
| What is the working of the Church of Spain? Rev. F. Meyrick. | 10 |
| { On the functions of laymen in the Church. Letter by Right Hon. W. E. Gladstone. } | 11 |
| Correspondence on St. Columba's College. | 12 |
| { Preaching the gospel to the poor, impossible under the present Pew system. By Rev. J. Mohyment. } | 13 |
| Letter to his congregation. From the Bp. of Brechin. | 14 |
| { Mr. Cheyne & the Bishop of Brechin Letter from Rev. M. M. Coll } | 15 |



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1842

QUID ROMÆ FACIAM?

NO NEED

TO JOIN THE ROMISH COMMUNION

ON ACCOUNT OF

THE WANT OF DISCIPLINE

IN THE

CHURCH OF ENGLAND:

A

LETTER TO A FRIEND,

FELLOW OF ——— COLLEGE, OXFORD.

BY THE REV.

THOMAS BOWDLER, M.A.

SECOND EDITION.

LONDON:

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1842.

SOME time having elapsed since this Letter was written, and the Author having deemed it right (though to his own loss) to withdraw, in these days of "strife, railings, and evil surmisings," the name of the friend to whom it was addressed, he still publishes it, for convenience sake, in its original form; and desires to record his deliberate conviction, that those who hold what are called—perhaps nick-named—high-church principles, are and always will be among the last, as they have least need, to break communion with our Church, for the sake of joining that of Rome; and further, that they will be found to be the firmest and most consistent opponents of the errors of that Church. (See Note to p. 22.) This might be well and usefully illustrated by reference to the Non Jurors of the last century in this country, and to the Episcopalians in Scotland and America.

Sydenham, Dec. 20, 1841.

A

LETTER,

&c.

MY DEAR ———

You will pardon me if I trouble you with a supplement to my last note, which peradventure may be, as a postscript often is, the longer and more important of the two. Indeed, I am afraid I ought to plead guilty to the charge of a certain presumption in sitting in judgment (even so far as to “hint a fault, or hesitate dislike”) upon your hebdomadal board, and upon several of our prelates, and, I may add, upon one of your friends; but I must plead in my defence the anxiety and regret excited in my mind by all that has passed; and which even the son of a stranger, —say rather a sister’s son—may be allowed to feel towards objects of reverence and affection,—our beloved Church and your University. But to the point now pressing upon my attention.

In the course of our conversation at Oxford, something was said upon the want of discipline in our Church; a subject upon which it were easy to expend many words of unavailing regret. At least, the remedy must be in the hands of our rulers; and some remedy, be it observed, will be applied sooner or later. Nay, in one way or other, good is working out of evil every day. But my present purpose is to beg you to consider whether the defect is not even now in ourselves, rather than in the Church, or the system of ecclesiastical discipline by which we are governed; and especially,

whether we have cause to look with something of envy, as perhaps a few among us are disposed to do, to the stricter system established in the Church of Rome, and the greater power placed in the hands of her ministers. Over whom is this exercised by them? Over whom can it ever be exerted? Is it possible to enforce the rule or censures of the Church upon the gay, the worldly, the sensual, the ungodly, the open and notorious profligate; or the man who, by virtue of his power, his wealth, his rank in society, or his philosophy, derides any such discipline however salutary? in short, upon any of that great mass of the people, for whose correction it is ordained? And is it worth while to desire the exercise of such authority, where it is least needed, and may be much abused? I do not mean to question the use and excellence of discipline, where it can be exercised beneficially; but I request you to consider what is the real amount of the powers which can be so used, which the Roman priesthood possesses, and which we have not.—The power of receiving confession, for instance, over whom is it exercised? Over the willing mind, the meek and gentle and fearful spirit? Yes: and often most beneficially; for direction in every-day duties, resolving of doubts and perplexities, correction of faults and errors, soothing of fears and comforting of sorrow. And the confessor, delivering the sentence of the Church, and thereby speaking with authority, will speak with effect too, which is lost where this power is thought to be wanting.—Is it over weak minds and such as are given to superstitious fears? Yes: and here too sometimes, no doubt, beneficially: but coupled, as it must be, with the sacrament of penance, and the doctrine of purgatory, is there not continual danger of such mighty power being wielded for bad purposes? Does it not actually produce very evil effects, unduly exalting those who sit in the chair to give judgment, and “degrading the mind” of such as come trembling before them?—Lastly, what are its effects upon the

multitude, such as they are found in all countries, but especially where Popery has for many ages held them in subjection? A relative of mine, who was very acute in discernment, and of sound religious principle, excellently qualified likewise to give advice and comfort, came to a conclusion, after many years' residence in Italy, that Popery, as there exhibited, produced most mischievous effects, so as to be sometimes worse than no religion at all. And a similar character is given to it in the early part of those very interesting papers ¹ to which you have referred me. "She virtually substitutes an external ritual for moral obedience, penance for penitence, confession for sorrow, profession for faith, the lips for the heart. Such at least is her system as understood by the many. She suggests the existence of a purgatory, in which, though their lives have been disobedient, and their forms have been insufficient, and the mass has failed, yet by their own brief suffering, they may cleanse themselves for heaven. In all these ways the popish spirit is essentially immoral."

My object however is to show what power we really have, and may call forth, under our present confessedly defective system.

And here I have a right to bring forward our public daily Morning and Evening Services, and the administration of the Holy Communion on Sundays and Festivals, as instruments of moral and mental discipline; and the rather on account of the large portions of Scripture appointed to be read in them, and the continuous uninterrupted course of reading of the Psalms, and of the whole of the Old and New Testament, not omitting that which has less of authority for doctrine, but is so full of wise, pious, practical instruction—a portion of the Apocrypha. These daily services are witnesses to the faithful, and to the ungodly; stirring up the

¹ Home-thoughts Abroad.—Brit. Magazine.

one to exercise their piety as members of Christ's body, and warning the worldly and sensual of the danger of neglecting the means of grace; showing continually both to the one and the other that the Church would teach and train her children in the ways of godliness. I must notice too, that though the confession of sins in these services is made both by minister and people, and the absolution is either declaratory or precatory, yet it is manifestly the intention of the Church to give authority to the priest, and efficacy to his office. The people should be taught to believe this; and that each person truly confessing his sins receives benefit by the priest solemnly pronouncing the absolution. Let me add, what an admirable exercise of moral discipline is contained in the rules of our Church, as delivered in the Rubrics of the Prayer Book, for our posture during the public service! What more useful, or more directly tending to humble the proud spirit, and exalt the low, and kindle the lukewarm; to awaken devout sentiments, and a spirit of love and charity, by the union of many hearts and voices, and their joining in the same acts of devotion! And this is to be rather remarked, because in a great portion of the Romish services, the congregation are spectators only; and the listening to prayers offered in a foreign tongue, or following by means of a translation, can hardly fail to be injurious to piety, instead of being instrumental to it.

Consider also the course of instruction and of discipline afforded by the observance of the higher festivals, and of saints' days; and whether the selection of these which has been made by our Church does not give us great advantage in this respect over the Romish Calendar, crowded as it has been with names, which may tend surely rather to encumber, than help devotion. Consider not only the days, but holy seasons which are appointed amongst us—Advent, Christmas, Easter, Pentecost. What a progress might we and

our congregations make, if these were observed, as they should be, with pious remembrance of our blessed Lord, and spiritual exercises for the instruction of our ignorance, and the building us up in our most holy faith !

Yet it must in fairness be observed, (I use the words of a much valued friend, in whose praise I could easily say more than he would be pleased to read,) “that the Prayer Book gives but scanty means for keeping up the interest of these seasons ; and, consequently, people are driven to their own inventions, or more often to the neglect of them altogether. Whereas, in the Breviary, every part of the daily service, for at least an octave, takes its colour from the season. We can only do this by a selection of hymns, or by using ‘the Christian Year.’”—To this might be added the loss which we have to deplore in the absence of appropriate Hymns, which are so abundantly supplied in the Breviary. Some of these, from their antiquity, as well as their chaste simplicity, should seem to be peculiarly suited to the primitive character of our Church.—I am at present concerned in these points, only on account of their effect upon the tone of sentiment and the affections, and consequently, upon mental discipline. And it will not, I trust, be deemed a breach of filial duty to utter the desire which the excellent Bishop Andrews has more than once expressed, ‘*Pro ecclesiâ nostrâ, ut quæ in eâ desunt suppleantur*’².

Take a view of a different side: Days of fasting and humiliation, Vigils, the forty days of Lent, the Ember weeks four times in the year, Rogation days, every Friday in the year. What a course of discipline have we here ! It is objected to us, both by Greeks and Romans, that we have no discipline among us ; and this is instanced in the absence of fasting. And whose fault is it if the charge cannot be gain-

² Devotions for the second day.—See also those for the first day ; and the second part, p. 244. ed. 1675.

said? But the mistake in this, as in a multitude of cases, is that men look on the outward appearance, and upon all that shows itself to the world. They know not how many servants of a crucified Redeemer are humbling their souls and striving to bring their bodies into subjection, by private mortification and retirement from the world; and they know not, and our own people do not choose to know or to remember, the rules of our Church, which, indeed, having been appointed by authority in a former age, may be almost said to be set at naught by authority in the present. It is cast in our teeth, that if our Church makes rules we have no power to enforce them. Assuredly, we cannot force any one to abstain from his usual diet, or the amusements which he deems himself at liberty to frequent. Neither do I know that the Church of Rome can compel her members to adopt a particular kind of food. Still less can she oblige them to derive any spiritual benefit from the various substitutes, by which the appetite will sometimes be pampered, instead of being tamed. But have we not here, in our own dear Mother's bosom, the discipline which we need for ourselves, if we will but use it: and the means of leading others to greater degrees of holiness, by a mild and gentle course of instruction? And is not this what is best suited to beings such as we are, and a people like ourselves?

And the authorized word of instruction is given us expressly, and most usefully, in the Homilies. And the duty and practice of private and family prayer taught us: at least it was by our Reformers. And why the forms of prayer then printed with the Bible and Prayer Book were laid aside, I know not. Several of them are excellent, and venerable for their antiquity. If we are less careful than our forefathers in this most important matter, let us give them the praise which belongs to them, and take the shame to ourselves. The power to restore or amend resides, I presume, in the same quarter with that to make forms, and enjoin the use of them.

Let me now approach a still more solemn, and sacred part of the subject, and with the reverence which is due to it. I come to the Sacraments which are administered in our Church. And I ask you whether we do not retain not only what is essential, but what is highly instructive, and ought to be—must be, if rightly used—an admirable course of moral culture and discipline? As to the essential doctrines taught in our services, can anything be desired plainer and more distinct, than the teaching of “spiritual regeneration,” or the new birth, as the grace proper to Baptism; and the true spiritual receiving of the Body and Blood of Christ by the faithful, as that of the Lord’s Supper? Is there any defect, as to doctrine, which requires to be supplied? In respect of the form of administration, is more wanted in the one than the blessing of the element of water, the discretion left to the minister of either dipping or sprinkling, the use of the words which our Lord gave to the Apostles, and the sign of the cross? If it were desired to add the putting upon the newly baptized a white vestment as an emblem of the purity acquired by this Sacrament, it is surely that which may be retained or laid aside, as the Church deems fit. The lesson taught therein is fully set before us, if we will learn it, from the service itself. And let me add, that the prayers prescribed to be used are as conformable to ancient usage, as they are appropriate and instructive.—Again, the care to provide sponsors, and such as are duly qualified, is not this an admirable provision made by our Church; which, though not so carefully regarded in some places as it should be, and scarcely any where perhaps so exactly fulfilling to the letter her ghostly admonitions, might be made most highly conducive to the instruction of parents and friends, and the bringing up of children in the nurture and admonition of the Lord? The addresses made to them, and the carrying forward of the good work, and cherishing the holy seed sown at Baptism by catechetical instruc-

tion, such as is provided in our Prayer Book, how much is this instrumental towards holy living, towards nourishing the life of God in the soul of the young disciple!

You will not be surprised if I say that I approach the consideration of the form of administering the other blessed Sacrament with less of entire satisfaction. You may expect to find such an one as myself lamenting the absence of three or four points which were more prominently conspicuous of old. And assuredly, if I may utter the wish without presumption, I could desire to enjoy the use of a more distinct expression of a commemorative Sacrifice, and an Invocation of the Holy Ghost. Still, I may believe that these, and the commemoration of the saints departed, are sufficiently provided, and can readily yield the poor judgment of an individual to that of the wise and pious ones who formed and reformed our Liturgy. If more be wanted for personal comfort and the lifting up of the heart, it can be supplied by acts of private devotion.

But beyond what belongs to the due administration of the Eucharist, my present object leads me to ask if the form in our Church is not more conducive to true piety and sound moral discipline, than those used in our two sister Churches on the continent; the one so shorn and crippled, and at the same time so nearly approaching to idolatrous worship, as to make us fear lest the blessed Sacrament be injured in its essentials; and both of them deformed and disguised by gorgeous ceremonial, so opposite, or at least injurious to the simple unpretending piety of the truly devout spirit? Then observe, I pray you, how strong, impassioned, solemn, affectionate, the warnings, exhortation, invitation to the Holy Communion; so plainly setting forth the high and blessed privilege of devout attendance, and the danger of neglect and of an unworthy use of it: especially when you bear in mind that those who intend to partake are required to give notice of

their purpose. How does the service itself supply all wants, and, if duly applied and properly understood, correct all mistakes, resolve all doubts, soothe the fears and comfort the sorrows of the timid and afflicted! The minister of Christ will probably find no method more useful for instructing those who are desirous to learn, removing difficulties, encouraging the fearful, and checking the presumptuous, than by a plain exposition of the Eucharistic service, with the preliminary notices; just as the Offices of Baptism and Confirmation form the best introduction to a right understanding of those ordinances. Nor must we omit to mention the concluding paragraph of the first form for giving notice of the celebration of the Holy Communion, in which “any one who cannot quiet his own conscience, but requires further comfort or counsel,” is invited to come to “some discreet and learned minister of God’s word, and open his grief.” And this for the sake, not of instruction and advice only, but in order to receive the “benefit of absolution” also, “to the quieting of his conscience and avoiding of all scruple and doubtfulness.” So that here is a power given by the Church to the spiritual pastor to receive confession, (for this must necessarily be implied,) and the unburthening of the conscience of the penitent, and healing its wounds by applying the remedy of absolution. Can any thing more be desired to be put into the hands of the minister of God’s word and sacraments, in respect of this most important part of his office—the healing of those who are broken in heart, and binding up their wounds? And with regard to another branch of it, the power to rebuke and repel—this likewise is given in the case of notorious offenders, and those who are at variance, a reference being immediately had to the Bishop. And this is perhaps as much as is fit to be placed in the hands of any frail and fallible person, “of the same passions with his brethren.” If the law of the land should at any time interfere to prevent the exercise

of spiritual authority, or punish it, this is probably no more than will occur in every country. The state will every where protect its subjects from injury in their temporal concerns; and in any extreme case, if such arise, a clergyman must be prepared to obey God rather than man, and suffer (if need be) for his faithfulness to his vows.

If now we go from the Sacraments to “the Sacramentals,” as the excellent Hammond styles them—you will readily admit the phrase, and I use it the more willingly because it implies that in these ordinances of inferior note the sacerdotal office is exercised authoritatively and with power—the preparing of the candidates for Confirmation is, as it were, the completion of Baptism. The laying on of the hands of the Bishop is, I hope, to be regarded as the direct conveyance of spiritual grace and blessing; and the carrying forward of those who have renewed their vows to a faithful attendance at the Lord’s Table, is a crowning and perfecting of the whole in respect of instruction; and all make this holy ordinance not only highly important and of inestimable value, but one in which the moral effects of the careful, watchful, tender, discriminating, and therefore severe administration of the pastoral care of souls is easily discerned, and highly to be appreciated. It is right to add, that this Office is much more edifying than that which corresponds to it in the Romish Church.

The office of Matrimony, again, is one in which the Minister of Christ possesses the high privilege of pronouncing a solemn blessing upon one of the most sacred of institutions: nay where he stands in a peculiar manner as the representative of Christ Jesus. Those who act for Him and by his appointment appear in a peculiarly high office, as signifying and pointing out in each instance the mystical union of the divine Bridegroom with the Church.

And here I am reminded of the loss of a benefit and bless-

ing provided by the Church, as may be seen in the Rubrick at the end of the Marriage service; namely, “that the newly-married persons should receive the Holy Communion at the time of their marriage, or at the first opportunity after.” A similar provision is made in the case of a woman who returns thanks after child-birth; showing the high importance which our Church attaches to this most sacred office. This, which forms part of the Marriage service in the Romish Church, is practically abandoned among us, and one source of discipline thereby lost.—The loss is yet greater by the omission of this crowning office at the Consecration of Churches, which seems now to have grown into a rule. One noble exception, indeed, was lately seen at Leeds, where was exhibited the beauty of Holiness in full perfection, and the perfection of Order too.

The office of Visitation of the Sick is peculiarly illustrative of the point before us. For here is “a special confession of sin” to be made, and “humble and hearty desire” expressed on the part of the penitent; and then a form of Absolution to be pronounced by the Priest, couched in terms so indicative of power vested in him, as to have given much offence to those who take a view of our office and the efficacy of ordinances, opposed to that which was manifestly held by the compilers of the Prayer Book. Indeed, it has probably been almost uniformly laid aside for many years. But the strength of it, and the excessive claim to authority which it is supposed to exhibit, illustrate and confirm in a most remarkable manner the point for which I am arguing, namely, that there resides in the priesthood in our Church as full and just a power as can be rightly placed in the hands of frail and fallible men, for carrying out the work of Christ in the salvation of sinners; that we are true representatives of our divine Head in his Priestly Office. What is there in the Romish ritual for the Visitation of the Sick, which we have not in a purer state for the comfort of penitent sinners?

But these which I have mentioned may perhaps be regarded as one or two scattered instances of power in the hands of our clergy. Let us see, then, more distinctly, what is the authority with which they are actually invested. And this may be made to appear from a ready and undeniable instance—the commission given them at their ordination. “Receive the Holy Ghost for the office and work of a priest in the Church of God, now committed unto thee by the imposition of our hands. Whose sins thou dost forgive, they are forgiven; and whose sins thou dost retain, they are retained. And be thou a faithful dispenser of the word of God, and of his holy Sacraments, in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost.” “Take thou authority to preach the word of God, and to minister the holy Sacraments in the congregation where thou shalt be lawfully appointed thereunto.” These are not idle words, nor is your’s the school in which their full meaning and power will be explained away. Whatever may be laid to your charge, you will not be accused of lowering the tone, or taking from the full, and rich, and comprehensive sense of Christ’s word, or of the words of the Church, “the spouse and body of Christ.” “It is a misery and a sore loss, (so writes one of yourselves,) that men would fain bring down the things of God, which they do not know, to the things of man, which they do know, and are pleased to keep ‘the beggarly elements’ of human things, because them they think they understand, rather than the divine, which they understand not. Let us not measure his infinity by our finiteness, his might by our weakness, what is possible to HIM by what is impossible to us, the boundlessness of his mercy by the narrowness of our thoughts, or the poverty of our desires³.”

I will not pretend to define the true meaning of the

³ Plain Sermons, lxxix.

words pronounced over the head of every one who is thus admitted into the order of priesthood in our Church. They not only contain a mystery which passeth knowledge, but, like the benefit conveyed in the holy Eucharist, fill one with awe at the greatness of the gift bestowed. I would rather refer, for illustration, and for showing the high antiquity to which our Church would carry us, to the soul-piercing words of the hymns⁴ appointed to be sung just before, and

⁴ “ Come, Holy Ghost, our souls inspire,
And lighten with celestial fire.
Thou the anointing Spirit art,
Who dost thy seven-fold gifts impart.
Thy blessed unction from above
Is comfort, life, and fire of love.
Enable with perpetual light
The dulness of our blinded sight.”

“ Visit our minds, into our hearts
Thy heavenly grace inspire ;
That truth and godliness we may
Pursue with full desire.

“ Thou art the very Comforter
In grief and all distress ;
The heavenly gift of God most high,
No tongue can it express.

“ The fountain and the living spring
Of joy celestial ;
The fire so bright, the love so sweet,
The unction spiritual.

“ Thou in thy gifts art manifold,
By them Christ’s Church doth stand ;
In faithful hearts thou writ’st thy law,
The finger of God’s hand.

.

“ O Holy Ghost, into our minds
Send down thy heavenly light ;
Kindle our hearts with fervent zeal,
To serve God day and night.”

The tone of feeling expressed in these hymns seems to me more lofty and spiritual, and therefore more true and just, than that which appears in writers

introduced by solemn silence and prayer to God by the whole congregation.—What I would press upon you is plainly this: You, and those who think with you, will not doubt that a great power is here conveyed; that a mighty authority is given; as great power and authority as words can express; and that the Divine blessing will confirm the gift, if rightly conferred and faithfully used. I ask, then, Can we conceive anything to be wanting among us, so that we have to complain of a deficiency in the power which the clergy may usefully and lawfully exercise “for edification, not for destruction?” If we fail in the use of the gift, is not the failure in ourselves, not in the intention or ordinance of the Church? is it not that we are either not duly qualified, or that we do not faithfully and wisely exercise the power given us? That we do fail of producing the effect which we ought to have over our people, is but too manifest. And is it not equally true that it may be ascribed in a great degree to one and the other of the causes just mentioned? I remember hearing, no long time since, from some one who had visited the north of Italy, that he was asked, by a Romish priest, what was the course of education among us for one who was to take holy orders; and upon hearing it, he could scarce believe that it could be so scanty, and must probably have triumphed in the thought, how successful he and his fellows were likely to be, if brought into dispute with any so ill provided with the armour requisite for the contest. And he went on to describe the course pursued in his own Church for diligent training of such from their earliest years. It is thus, no doubt, that they acquire a talent for casuistry and searching into the heart and conscience, which fits them both for public disputation and for receiving confession in private;

of the present age, or that which is just gone by, though men of unquestionable piety. And if they may be taken for a Catholic and primitive interpretation of the sentiments of our Church, I must prefer it to that of the eighteenth century.

and which is sometimes of course (how should it be otherwise when practised amid much infirmity?) perverted to evil purposes. But if they are led to abuse the power placed in their hands, are not we timid and unapt in the use of the weapons which we have, and hence unable to gain that influence over the minds of our people, and intimate acquaintance with their hearts, which might enable us to perform more perfectly and beneficially the duties of our office, and exercise the “authority” which was given us at our ordination? And is it not in a great measure owing to this cause that the Romish Church has so greatly excelled our own in devotional exercises, and in works which are calculated to rule and direct the secret communings of the heart with God and with itself? that they penetrate into the secrets of the conscience, while we for the most part play upon the surface? that they speak freely and with power, while we seem afraid to claim authority, because we know that we cannot enforce obedience? And is it not from their knowledge of the wants and cravings of human nature, as well as from a desire to tread in “the old paths,” which we, who boast to be more primitive, and truly Catholic, have suffered to lie waste and neglected; that their Churches are open continually, and the sacrifice—would that I could say a “pure offering”—offered daily?

If, now, in the administration of any of these ordinances, but especially of the two Sacraments, we of inferior rank have not fulfilled the intentions, and even express injunctions of the Church,—and if our superiors have stood by, and suffered the neglect to grow up into a rule, and the paring down of our Church services by a sort of inverse or perverse ratio, almost to keep pace with our rapidly increasing population, and their more rapidly increasing need of religious help, (I speak for the most part of by-gone days, and of the rapid

declension of piety during the last century,) shall we, when we are just rousing ourselves, and are but half awake, and know nothing of our real power, but are staggering under the thought of the work we have to do, shall we lay the blame on the Church which enjoins it, and not upon ourselves? and desire to amend her formularies, rather than our own conduct? A spirit of lethargy has indeed crept over us, and benumbed our senses and faculties, so that we do not feel as we ought, nor know from what height we are fallen, nor the extent of our sin and misery, nor what it really becomes us to do. What right have we to diminish the number of our Church services without sufficient reason, from daily to weekly services, from weekly to a monthly communion, as has been the case (it must be written in shame and sorrow) even in some of our cathedral churches, to which we are apt to point, as preserving more exactly than elsewhere the primitive forms of worship, and the idea of it as contemplated by our fathers? What right have the chapters⁵ to deprive us, their fellow-members in Christ's body, of the benefit of the weekly offering of prayer and praise at the altar, and the intercession for the faithful upon earth, and the commemoration of the saints departed? What right have they, who should be types and examples of devotion to the busier shepherds, to set an example of a low practice, in violation of the very letter of the Rubric? and when they should have maintained the rule of the Church, and the spirit of piety in a degenerate age, bring down their own practices to suit the coldness of the multitude around them? Some among us have striven by writing, or petition, or prayer,

⁵ Some noble exceptions may be quoted, and amongst the rest that of Exeter, where the weekly communion is celebrated most solemnly and devoutly. May one who has felt the great comfort of it be permitted to express a wish that it could be celebrated on saints' days likewise.

to support their temporal emoluments, in which we had no selfish interest, and rescue these institutions from the rude hand of the spoiler: let them, at least, repay us by the restoration of those spiritual blessings for their own sake, and that of their brethren at large.

Who shall say what may be the effect of the restoration of our Church services through the land? the effect upon the hearts and minds of the people, in drawing them more closely, more reverently, and affectionately towards their pastors? The Bishops have, as became them, both from their office, and from great and pressing obligation, led the way in bestowing greater care upon the ordination of the clergy, and in administering the holy rite of Confirmation more frequently, and therefore in a manner more tending to edification. From this last must, of necessity, arise a greater opportunity of useful intercourse between the shepherd and the young ones of his flock, and indeed the elder likewise. Hence too a deeper and more solemn impression produced at the time, and respect for the office of the Bishop, and a lasting recollection of the vows then taken upon themselves. These are, of course, natural effects, though produced in the way of God's providence bringing out events as He has appointed. And who shall venture to limit the unseen blessings which may follow the seeking of his best gifts, and the bestowing of them by those who are invested with authority as his representatives? What, now, if our prelates should condescend to aid their clergy in other points? In respect of the observance of Ember weeks, for instance? What, if there could be something more of that vigilant inspection which is implied in the episcopal title, which might correct some among us almost without words, and encourage and give weight and importance in the eyes of the people to others who need and deserve it; which might enable those who desire advice to

seek it more readily in the proper quarter, and maintain discipline with a gentle hand, and with the consent of all; which might unite and bring to better order those who are proverbially a disjointed body, or, as it is said, a rope of sand? The Bishop of New Zealand, when about to go forth on his high mission, found it needful to make known, through the *Ecclesiastical Gazette*, that he was ready to receive applications from any clergymen who might be desirous or willing to venture their lives and fortunes in the holy cause. Was this seemly? Did this indicate the order that should be in the Church? Should not his wishes have been made known through the Bishops to their clergy, and such as were ready have presented themselves, each to his diocesan, for previous examination and approval of his intentions and qualifications? Several who were desirous to tender their services found difficulties in their path, and were sorely tried thereby, and sought counsel of their friends. What state of discipline is this, that they who fill some inferior, but most important office, in the holiest of all services, and which should exhibit the bond of union, and therefore of just subordination most perfectly, should be at their own disposal to stay or remove as they please?

The true remedy for our present disorders is, 1st, To increase the number of our spiritual rulers; perhaps, by means of suffragans; to multiply heads, as the members are rapidly increasing; to divide, not consolidate dioceses. Though, even now a better state of things than that we see around us might surely be produced, in some small degree, by a more perfect system of well appointed subordinate agents, by means of whom a more intimate communication might be maintained between the centre and each even extreme point. 2ndly, To increase the number of priests and deacons, and assign to each his proper place and fit portion in the Lord's

vineyard; 3rdly, To divide parishes into districts, or smaller parishes, as may be deemed best, which may depend on local circumstances; 4thly, To carry out the plan and method of the Church in every instance so far as may be practicable; and therefore to make, and present to our Divine Head in the offertory, a provision for the clergy, besides that which the state has made or sanctioned by law. Other points might be noticed; several perhaps enumerated, which do not fall within the scope of the brief sketch set forth in this paper.

I have mentioned the mission of the Bishop of New Zealand. We hear rumours too of the consecration of a Bishop of Jerusalem, or of Palestine, which has (and no marvel) filled some of our brethren with fear, lest it be a breach of order, and prove a source of discord, where union should be most sedulously cultivated, I mean with the Greek Church. But, at least, may one not lament that it should be done as it were “in a corner?” Surely “from the ends of the earth should be heard songs, even glory to the Righteous.” Should it not be sounded forth into all lands, that the Church of England, a nation, “whose way,” like that of her Maker (be it spoken without irreverence), “is in the sea, and her paths in the great waters,” is about to plant a refuge and resting place, where the remnant of the house of Israel may find shelter, when they turn to the Lord their God; where they may come to weep between the porch and the altar, and “look on Him whom they have pierced?” Or, as a friend suggested, let him, who is chosen for this high office, go forth with the united prayers of the members of our Church, for a blessing upon his labour of love. For surely, an event has never yet occurred, which more called for the supplications of the whole Church, to be presented to the Throne by its great Head.

But now, if we are sending forth light from our candlestick

to enlighten the nations that sit in darkness and the shadow of death, is not this a sign that we are ourselves instinct with life? Have we the hand of death upon us, numbing our limbs, closing our eyes, and stifling our breath? No; we have been asleep perhaps, and “it is high time to awake out of sleep.” And one of your friends, at least, has given us such a rousing shake, that some of us seem scarce to know where we are; and some, peradventure, yet but half awake, feel tempted to do some desperate act, and take a rash step or two towards Rome. But this may not be; and those of your part will be the most earnest to stop them, most steady in their resistance to Romish seduction and power. For *Rome has not kept “the good thing” committed to her, pure, “without spot, unrebukeable.”* And we know that “*corruptio optimi est res pessima.*” We cannot go to Rome for truth of doctrine, or purity of worship. Nor have we need to depart from the side of our own dear Mother, though here and there we fancy that we discover some scars and traces of the conflicts she has undergone, and some marks of departure from that primitive ritual to which she would desire to conform⁶.

But these are few, and do not impair her character for essential truth, holiness, and usefulness. Nor, as I trust, do they diminish aught of her power, or the power of her best

⁶ I add, in a note, that it is no marvel if any who have not learned true Catholic principles should be led in an evil hour to adopt those of a false Catholicism; or if, feeling the want of a stay and support to their weakness, they lean on that which presents itself with a boldness and freedom, which we want; or if persons of a warm imagination should be fascinated by the gaudiness of the Romish ritual; as, on the other hand, those of a colder temperament will sink down to the low level of Unitarianism. Let us be taught to regard our Church, not merely as the child of the Reformation, or a member of the Protestant body, or one of the various denominations of Christians, but as a true and living branch of “the Holy Catholic and Apostolic Church;” and, while we mourn deeply for the corruptions with which Romanism is disfigured, we shall feel constrained to protest against them with what power and skill we can bring to the trial.

members, to supply what is wanting, correct what is in any way amiss, and strengthen the things that remain. And let us believe that our Divine Head is raising up among us those who will do his work in all meekness and simplicity, in faith and love. Your (may I be permitted to say our) friend has given us to understand that our people are as “those that are weaned from the breast,” and must be “taught with stammering lips.” Let me borrow from the prophet another image (as I have already hinted), and say that the Lord had “poured upon us a spirit of deep sleep;” so that our “prophets, and rulers, and seers had their eyes covered” for a century and more, and the course of his Providence towards us was “as the words of a book that is sealed.” But “the night is far spent, the day is at hand.” And one sure sign is, that the young among us are “up and doing.” The same who generously opposed the spirit of Reform, which might have been thought seductive to youthful ardour and love of change, are now casting their eyes upward at the Church’s call; ay, and eastward, and southward, and westward, to mark the going forth of the light of Gospel truth from this “extremity of the earth, and its running about unto the end of it again.” It is a cheering thought, and one which excites much thankfulness. And they, whose sand is fast running out, while they have forgot almost all the rest of their school learning, will remember, by frequent saying to their hearts—

“Dii patrii, quorum semper sub Numine Troja est,
 Non tamen omnino Teucros delere paratis;
 Cum tales animos juvenum, et tam certa tulistis
 Pectora.”

There are many of these, of noble minds, reverent spirits, and tender feelings, who are now looking to your leaders for guidance and protection. Oh! let them be taught to love

with reverential affection, Her in whose lap they have been nursed, to cling more closely to her, and “hold fast that which they have in her;” for “her ways are ways of pleasantness, and all her paths are peace: She is a tree of life to them that lay hold on her, and happy is every one that retaineth her.”

I remain,

My dear ———,

Very faithfully yours,

T. BOWDLER.

Bratton Fleming, Nov. 1841.

THE END.

