

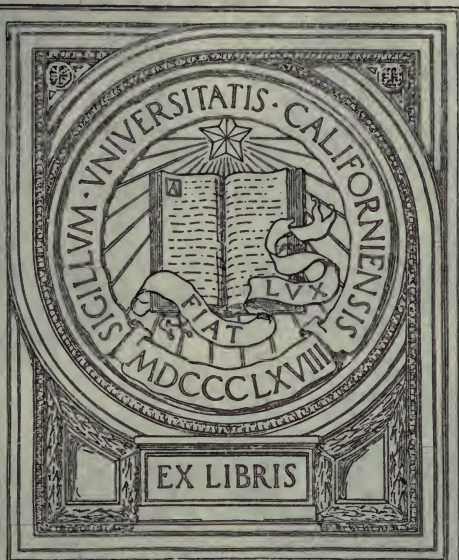
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ROMISH SACRAMENTS

AND

THE CONFESSIONAL,

AS NOW TAUGHT AND PRACTISED

IN THE ENGLISH CHURCH,

AND

THE DUTY OF THE CHURCH AT THE PRESENT CRISIS.

TWO SERMONS

BY

THE REVEREND HENRY HUGHES, M.A.

PERPETUAL CURATE OF ALL SAINTS, GORDON SQUARE,
ST. PANCRAS.

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P R E F A C E.

I have always been a devotedly attached member of the English Church. Believing her to be truly Protestant, I have never thought that the utmost developement of her principles, or the most complete obedience to her ritual, could ever lead me to Popery. Consequently I have aimed at both. Hence, perhaps, my words may have more weight. For it will shew that I have never belonged to any extreme party. And it will be the more readily believed that it is not with any feeling of exultation, but, on the contrary, of the deepest sorrow, that I have brought accusations against my brethren, and charged them with being false to the Communion to which they outwardly belong.

12, *Gordon Street,*

November 16th, 1850.

SERMON I.

ROMISH SACRAMENTS

IN THE

ENGLISH CHURCH.

JUDE 3, 4.

Beloved, when I gave all diligence to write unto you of the common salvation, it was needful for me to write unto you, and exhort you that ye should earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints. For there are certain men crept in unawares.

FOR even a humble presbyter to engage in the defence of divine truth, when it is endangered, demands no apology. Some perhaps may speak of him as presumptuous;—or even as unwise, in needlessly stirring up the elements of strife. But a party that has already given upwards of a hundred of the clergy, besides a large number of the laity, to the Church of Rome, are objects of just suspicion to Protestants; and when, owing to a series of remarkable incidents, the teaching and

practice which have issued in such disastrous results have been more clearly brought to light, it is plainly the duty of those who are pledged by their ordination vows "to banish and drive away all erroneous and strange doctrines contrary to God's word,"^a to expose the real facts; and to endeavour to the utmost, to stay the plague that has already begun among us.

Various are the points on which the party known as "Tractarian" have embraced and taught Romish doctrines, "erroneous and strange indeed, and contrary to God's word;"^b but in these present sermons it is my purpose to confine myself to this subject, *the adoption and use of Romish Sacraments, and the Confessional*; both because the revelations recently made concerning these, are more than usually novel and startling, and also because here, the attempt to Romanise the Church itself, has been carried on to an unthought of and unprecedented extent.

It is well known that on the delivery of the judgment of the Judicial Committee of Privy Council on what is commonly called "the Gorham Case," considerable agitation was the consequence; many being of opinion that that judgment was equivalent to a negation, on the part of

^a Service for "The Ordering of Priests."

^b As on Tradition, Justification, the Adoration of Images and Invocation of Saints, Purgatory, Prayer for the Dead, &c. &c.

the Church, of an Article of the Creed itself. This agitation Dr. Pusey endeavoured to allay among the members of his own party, by showing that that was not by any means the case. His attempt, however, gave great umbrage to his friends, and in May last, Mr. Dodsworth, Minister of Christ Church, Albany Street, addressed to him an expostulatory letter, in which occurs the following remarkable passage: "You have been one of the foremost to lead us on to a higher appreciation of that "Church System," of which sacramental grace is the very life and soul. Both by precept and example you have been amongst the most earnest to maintain Catholic principles. By your *constant and common practice of administering the sacrament of penance; by encouraging every where, if not enjoining, auricular confession, and giving special priestly absolution; by teaching the propitiatory sacrifice of the Holy Eucharist, as applicatory of the one sacrifice on the cross; and by adoration of Christ Really Present on the altar,*^a *under the form of bread and wine;* by your introduction of Roman Catholic books "adapted to the use of our Church;" by encouraging the use of rosaries and crucifixes, and special devotions to our Lord, as *e.g.* to his Five Wounds; by adopt-

^a The Capitals in this passage are Mr Dodsworth's, the Italics mine.—H. H.

ing language most powerfully expressive of our incorporation into Christ, as *e.g.* “our being inebriated by the blood of our Lord;” by advocating counsels of perfection, and seeking to restore, with more or less fulness, the conventual or monastic life;—I say by the teaching and practice, of which this enumeration is a sufficient type and indication, you have done much to revive among us the system which may be pre-eminently called ‘SACRAMENTAL.’”—It will be well to observe here that the truth of this extraordinary statement, addressed by one of the leaders of the party to him who has long been acknowledged as its head, may be thoroughly relied on. Mr. Dodsworth is not likely to have mis-stated to the master, from whom he has learned all this, the kind of teaching he has received. And besides, Dr. Pusey himself, in a published letter to his friend, Mr. Richards, in July last, adverts to it, and by simply objecting to the word “enjoin” as applied to his practice of auricular confession, tacitly admits the rest.^a On this statement then, as on a sufficient text, though by no means relying on it as my only proof, I ground this accusation against Dr. Pusey and his followers.

First, THAT THEY HAVE PERVERTED A SACRAMENT OF THE HOLY CATHOLIC CHURCH INTO A ROMISH FIGMENT.

^a Pusey's Letter to Rev. W. U. Richards, p. 6.

Secondly, THAT THEY ARE INTRODUCING AMONG US A FALSE SACRAMENT, UNKNOWN TO AND REPUDIATED BY THE CHURCH.

I. The first of these accusations will be readily established, at least to the satisfaction of those who are acquainted with the scriptural doctrine of the Church on the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper, by the mere enumeration of a few facts. Thus the priest is commonly said to be "intrusted with the awful and mysterious gift of *making* the bread and wine, Christ's body and blood."^a I was informed the other day by a recent convert to Rome, that before his conversion, he, as well as many others, were in the habit of adoring the elements in the Holy Eucharist, as being Christ's body and blood really and actually present. Mr. Maskell, the Bishop of Exeter's late chaplain, now a Romanist, asks Dr. Pusey, "how is it that certain strange statements in the Book of Common Prayer *about adoration*, or in the 28th Article, do not interfere at all with *your* teaching on the subject."^b Mr. Dodsworth, in the passage just quoted, reminds him that it is his custom to "adore Christ really present on the altar under the form of bread and wine," and "to teach the propitiatory sacrifice of the Holy Eucharist as applicatory of the one sacrifice on the cross." I shall not say

^a Oxford Tracts, No. 10, p. 4.

^b Maskell's Letter to Pusey, p. 47.

of such teaching and practice, as has been too leniently said, that it is on the extreme verge of what may be tolerated in a member of the Anglican Church; but I say plainly that it not only perverts Christ's blessed ordinance, and is contrary to Scripture, but is nothing else but bringing back among us the exploded sacrifice of the mass, with all its pernicious accompaniments; and that it is directly in the teeth of the most explicit and solemn declarations of the Church, of which the men who do these things are the ordained ministers. For the proof of which I need only refer you to the Declaration concerning kneeling at the Communion, at the end of "the Order of the Administration of the Lord's Supper," in the Prayer Book, and to the 28th and 31st Articles.^a

^a "It is hereby declared, That thereby (*i. e.* by kneeling) no adoration is intended, or ought to be done, either unto the Sacramental Bread and Wine there bodily received, or unto any Corporal Presence of Christ's natural flesh and blood. For the Sacramental Bread and Wine remain still in their very natural substances, and therefore may not be adored; (for that were Idolatry to be abhorred of all faithful Christians;) and the natural Body and Blood of our Saviour Christ are in heaven, and not here; it being against the truth of Christ's natural Body to be at one time in more places than one."—*Book of Common Prayer*.

"The body of Christ is given, taken, and eaten in the Supper only after an heavenly and spiritual manner."—*Art. 28*.

"The Sacrifices of Masses, in which it was commonly said that

II. Thus, then, one blessed Sacrament, which the Reformers in this realm of England rescued from perversion and pollution, and restored to its original purity, is being gradually deprived of its true character, and changed into a miserable superstition, which experience has already proved to be the keystone of a whole fabric of error, and sure to lead, wherever it obtains, to results utterly destructive of true religion. But not content with this, these teachers have revived, and are engaged in practising, a hateful system, known among themselves, and by the Romanists, as “the Sacrament of Penance.” Now, we are expressly told by the Church that Penance is “not to be counted for a Sacrament,” and that it “has grown of the corrupt following of the Apostles.”^a But Dr. Pusey and his followers do count it so notwithstanding; and use it habitually, in spite of its incurable corruption. Thus Mr. Dodsworth, as already quoted, “your constant and common practice of administering the Sacrament of Penance.” Thus Mr. Allies and Mr. Maskell in a joint letter to Dr. Pusey in May last, “Your long practice of administering in various dioceses the Sacrament of

the Priest did offer Christ for the Quick and the Dead, to have remission of pain or guilt, were blasphemous fables, and dangerous deceits.”—*Art.* 31.

^a Article 25.

Penance.”^a To some perhaps these words may appear almost innocent. They look upon Penance as the Romish term for Repentance, or at the most implying that some act of mortification, decorous and proper in a convicted sinner, is sub-joined. But what *is* the Sacrament of Penance? The decree of the Council of Trent, which we must take as our authority, declares as follows; “The *Form* of the Sacrament of Penance, in which its efficacy principally lies, consists in these words of the Priest, *I absolve thee*. The *Matter* of the Sacrament is found in the acts of the penitent himself, Contrition, Confession to the Priest, and Satisfaction by deeds. The *Effects* are, full and perfect remission of sins, reconciliation with God, and, not seldom, a consequent peace and serenity of conscience, and rapturous spiritual consolation.”^b Now consider for a moment all the false doctrine that this view of Penance necessarily involves. There is, not only the contrition of the heart, accompanied by such acts of mortification as deep anguish of soul, unillumined by divine grace, might possibly suggest, but that auricular confession of sins, with all its revolting particulars, which has already proved so great a curse. There

^a Allies' and Maskell's Letters, introduced into Maskell's Letter to Pusey, p. 15.

^b Concil Trident, De Pœnitentiâ, caput III. See also Rogers on the Articles. Edit. 1691, p. 156.

is the teaching that man by deeds of his can satisfy God for his sins, which a great divine characterises as “blasphemy and against the merits of Christ.”^a And lastly, there is the perilous belief that the words of absolution spoken by the Priest are valid, and alone valid,^b to cleanse the penitent from guilt, and to confer on him full and perfect remission of all sin. This is the Sacrament of Penance in the Church of Rome, nor is there any reason to believe that the Tractarian Clergy attach to it any other character, or regard it in a different light. In fact, the contrary is apparent.

Thus all the writers to whom allusion has been so frequently made, readily admit that they and others have been in the habit everywhere “of receiving confessions and giving absolution;” the expressions “sacramentally absolved,” “sacramental absolution,” repeatedly occur; absolution is spoken of as valid to “loose” men, from “the chain of their sins,” while of the gracious effects, and “rapturous consolation,” which insue from the use of this pretended Sacrament, Dr. Pusey himself speaks in the most glowing terms: “You too,” he exclaims to Mr. Richards, “can bear witness with me, that if there is one part of our ministry which God has blessed; if there be one part of our office, as to the fruits of which we look with hopefulness and joy to the day of

^a Thomas Rogers.

^b Concil Trident, De Pœnitent, cap. II.

judgment, it is to the visible cleansing of souls, the deepened penitence, "the repentance unto salvation not to be repented of," the hope in Christ, the freshness of grace, the joy of forgiven souls, the evident growth in holiness, the angel-joy "over each sinner that repenteth," which this ministry has disclosed to us. We have often in the subsequent growth in grace and "transformation" of the soul, by the "renewing of the mind," not been able to recall to ourselves the former self which we knew of, when first a person sought to hear, through our ministry, his Saviour's voice, "Thy sins be forgiven thee: go in peace."

" In these a Pastor dare delight,
A lamb-like, Christ-like throng ;"

for his likeness has anew, by Himself, been traced upon them."

" We have seen the work of Divine Grace in their souls. We have seen it too uniformly, too vividly, too variedly, too abounding in manifold fruits, as " God divideth to every man severally as he will," to have a shadow of doubt about it. To us all questioning seems like calling in question the work of God the Holy Ghost, which our own eyes have seen. * * * When we see spiritual cures, the spiritual sight restored, the taste in heavenly things given back, the senses deadened to the things of sense, the conscience once dulled, now tender; the proud heart, like a little child;

the hardened heart flow in tears of penitence; the soul more alive to its remaining infirmities than it once was to whole heaps of deep deadly sin; or that great triumph of the Divine Power, where one becomes eminent for the grace most opposed to his deepest besetting fault, we must adore the miracles of Divine Grace. Satan does not cast out Satan. It was His Name, through faith in His Name, which gave them their spiritual life and power, and victory in Him." Alas, brethren, if these eloquent words had but been spoken of souls brought to repentance, converted to God, and renewed in the Divine Life by the Ministry of the Word, and the power of the Holy Ghost, it would be indeed a reason for thankfulness. But spoken as of the fruits of the Popish Sacrament of Penance,—of Auricular Confession after "the rule of the Church of Rome,"^a of Deeds of Satisfaction, of Priestly Absolution as cleansing from all guilt, what are they but treason on the part of him who uttered them against the Church that brought him to Christ in Baptism, that would have nurtured him if he would with "the sincere milk of the Word" and Christ's true Sacraments, of which he is the Ordained Minister, and whose bread he eats.

On the subject of Auricular Confession as now practised among us, it is my intention to enter

^a Maskell's Letter to Pusey, p. 50.

at length in the next sermon. In the mean time, and reviewing what has been already said, is there not enough to make us thoughtful and anxious? especially when we bear in mind that though we have been engaged with the words and opinions only of a few, the principles themselves are spread among a large body of the clergy, and are every day gaining ground. So rapidly, indeed, that I fear we are gradually becoming familiarised with error, and that unless the sound portion of our community rises up at once in defence of the truth, as a Church we shall soon cherish it no more; it will perish from among us.

As to the position held by these teachers in the Church to which they nominally belong, it is neither my duty, nor inclination, to bring a railing accusation against them. No! brethren, we leave them to that sentence which, sooner or later, is sure to be passed upon false and untrue dealing, both by conscience and by God. But this I must say, that however sincere they may be in error, that position is, at least, one which can inspire us with no feeling of respect. Mr. Dodsworth himself admits that their morality may be questioned, and that they are to a startling degree "in danger of being accounted dishonest men."^a Mr. Maskell, who has vindicated his own

^a Dodsworth's Letter to Pusey, p. 18.

honesty by giving up every thing for conscience sake, exclaims, "People are beginning rapidly to understand that there are no reasons, and no principles of argument so shifting and so various, as those which are commonly advanced by the High-Church or Tractarian party in the English communion."^a And nowhere is this more conspicuous than in the shifts they are put to to reconcile their position in her with the great principles of morality, and to establish their right to be accounted her faithful sons.^b Yes! brethren, I say it here, before God, and before the Church, and in the place sacred to eternal truth, that these men, however conscientious their belief, have, as members of a Church protesting against Rome, no claim on our respect. I tell them that even while they eat her bread they are perverting her doctrines, and violating her laws; in short, lifting up their heel against her. And if they say, 'We remain in her that we may do her good, by bringing her back to the old paths which she has abandoned, and the fulness of the faith which she has renounced,' I tell them that to do this in the character of her sons, is against the vows

^a Maskell's Letter to Pusey, p. 48.

^b "I believe most entirely that on the doctrines of original sin and justification, the English Articles and the Council of Trent present different aspects of the same truth."—*Pusey's Speech at St. Martin's Hall, Oct. 16.*

they have taken, and the articles they have subscribed. I remind them that, when they were ordained her Priests, they pledged themselves to "give their faithful diligence, always so to minister the Doctrine and Sacraments, and the Discipline of Christ, as the Lord hath commanded, *and as this Church and realm hath received the same;*"^a and I tell them that if they would have us honour them as virtuous men, as we would gladly do, even though we hold them to be in grievous error, they must either come to a better mind, retrace their steps, and so cease their machinations against the truth, or else quit their posts of dignity and emolument. This is the only course prescribed by those immutable laws of the highest morality, on which we are every one of us agreed.

And while we have a word for these misguided men, have we no word for the sound and faithful portion of the Church? On our duty at the present crisis time does not now permit me to enlarge. But thus much I would say, that it is plainly a crisis fraught with the utmost danger to our Church, and if so to the dearest liberties, and even the spiritual independence, of the empire at large. Nay, I do not hesitate to say that we owe it to the sad defection from Scriptural Truth in the bosom of our own Communion, in other words, to the

^a Service for "The Ordering of Priests."

teaching and practices of these very men, that the Roman Pontiff has ventured upon the unprecedented act, of parcelling out this great kingdom of England as if it were an appanage of his tiara, and he himself the rightful sovereign of this realm. It is popery within that has supplied courage and audacity to popery without; and Pio Nono has acted thus, because he was taught to believe that the deed would be welcomed by many so-called Protestants; and hailed as the object of their desires, and the fulfilment of their hopes. Here then he must principally be met, or at least our efforts to purify the Church itself, and our resistance to external aggression, must be simultaneous. It will be but of little use repelling the Papal Bishops from our shores, if the integrity of our own Protestantism is undermined. But what are we to do? Yes! brethren, this is the question which will be asked by many. What are we to do? And many perhaps will be satisfied with the reply, 'We can do nothing.' But something *can* be done and *must* be done, rather than that the light of the Reformation should be quenched, and the night of Popish error again settle on the land. And the first thing is to get rid of that spirit of apathy and neglect in which we have so long indulged. For there has been neglect. Neglect I fear on the part of some of our spiritual Rulers, as they have now, I trust, though too late, discovered,

in not making a decided stand against the Romish teaching and practices of these men; and neglect on the part of the Church at large in not more generally protesting against, and resisting their encroachments. Then, brethren, I need not remind you how earnest and constant we should be in prayer to God to avert from us the grievous calamities with which our Church and country are threatened, and to enable us to preserve in its scriptural purity that primitive truth from which we have derived so many blessings. There is great power in the prayers of Christ's faithful people; and if only we are ourselves true, God will show himself to be on our side, and will not suffer our enemies to prevail against us. And, lastly, I would add, as a practical suggestion, on which I shall hereafter dwell more at large, that there ought to be at once formed "an Association," combining all its attached members, "for the defence of Protestant Principles in the Church of England." The advantage of such an association would be, that it would produce unity of action against a party who have chiefly derived their strength from union, while their opponents have acted without any general or concerted plan. The principal objects of such an association would probably be to watch carefully the introduction of Romish teaching or practices among us, and to take such measures as are fitting or possible for their suppression; to diffuse information by means

of a cheap and popularly written periodical, or by any other feasible means, and thus to arouse and keep alive the true protestant feeling of the people; to serve as a centre of union for all those who love the principles of the Reformers; and to bring the public mind and feeling of the Church to bear with their powerful, though perhaps unacknowledged, influence, upon those who have the disposal of her patronage, and the administration of her laws.

To this subject I shall again advert. In the mean time I leave it to your thoughtful consideration. Knowing the mind of the British people, and remembering that God has in former times brought us out of difficulties as great, perhaps, though I think not greater, than those by which we are now beset, I do not despair of the safety of our Church. But we must each of us think of the exhortation of the text, as if it were addressed to himself. We are all of us bound by our christian obligation, great and small, each one according to his several ability, and in his own degree, to contend earnestly for that faith which was once delivered to the saints. And believe me, brethren, that that faith, and the Church too, which as yet enshrines it in her holy keeping, are worth contending for. They have been the sources of untold, and inestimable blessings to this great country. They have inspired her senators with wisdom, and her laws with equity. They

have made her free and glorious. They have added to our national character its noblest and most generous traits. They give stability to the throne ; they sanctify our homes ; and above all, in their own pure teaching, they shed on our earthly path the light of a hope full of immortality. God forbid that they should ever be divorced ; or that we should be given over to the teaching of a Church saturated with Romish superstitions, and false to the high trust of blood-bought souls which Christ has committed to her charge.

November 3rd, 1850.

SERMON II.

THE CONFESSIONAL

IN THE

ENGLISH CHURCH.

Eph. v. 12.

It is a shame even to speak of those things which are done of them in secret.

IN the former sermon I preferred two charges against Dr. Pusey and his followers, First, "That they had changed and perverted a Sacrament of the Holy Catholic Church into a Romish figment;"—Secondly, "That they were introducing among us a false Sacrament, unknown to, and repudiated by, the Church." These charges were not lightly uttered, and I think I may venture to say were thoroughly substantiated. For I showed from their own words, first, *that they held a propitiatory sacrifice for sin in the Holy Eucharist, and adored Christ really present on the altar under the form of Bread and Wine*; thus rendering the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper nothing else but

the Romish Sacrifice of the Mass;—and then, *that they were teaching, and imposing on their disciples, the Romish Sacrament of Penance*, consisting of the Contrition, the Confession, and the Satisfaction of the penitent, and the Absolution of the Priest; and stated to have for its effects, the full and perfect remission of sins, reconciliation with God, and, not seldom, a consequent peace and serenity of conscience, and rapturous spiritual consolation.

The explanation which I gave of the Romish Sacrament of Penance, necessarily led me to say something of Auricular Confession. On this, however, I was compelled to be very brief, and it is to that part of our subject that our observations will be now particularly addressed. I doubt not I shall be able to show, that the practice of these teachers is as abhorrent to all the notions we entertain of the duty of christian ministers, as it is repugnant to the precepts of the Bible, and the doctrine and discipline of the English Church.

It appears that about the same time that Dr. Pusey was receiving expostulatory letters from his friends, owing to the view he took of the effect of the judgment in “the Gorham case,” the minds of three clergymen, Messrs. Allies, Dodsworth, and Maskell, were becoming much disquieted, on account of the extent to which they had carried the practice of receiving Confessions and giving Absolution. Not that they had the least misgiving as to the propriety of the thing itself, or as to the

validity of their Absolutions when given according to acknowledged rule,^a but they feared they had exceeded their jurisdiction in receiving Penitents who were not within the limits of their own cures, and towards whom they had no license or authority conceded to them by others. In this case it was possible, nay probable, that their absolutions were worthless, and that those whom they had confessed and absolved were still in their sins. A contingency, the idea of which not only filled their own minds with uneasiness, but caused the greatest consternation among those who fancied they might after all be destitute of the great benefit they were assured they had obtained. Accordingly the gentlemen referred to addressed no less than three letters^b to Dr. Pusey in May last, stating their apprehensions, and their reasons for them, and asking for some satisfactory explanation on the important question at issue. Dr. Pusey seems, from the tenor of the two last letters, to have been not only much disconcerted, but even angry, at being thus pointedly addressed, believing that the expression of the doubt was aimed especially at his own practice. However, after some correspondence which has not seen the light, there appeared in July, the letter to his friend Mr. Richards, alluded to in the former sermon.

^a Pusey's Letter to Maskell, p. 7.

^b Quoted by Maskell in Letter to Dr. Pusey, p. 8—16.

This letter is entitled, "The Church of England leaves her children free to whom to open their griefs," and in it, after quoting a long array of Roman Catholic writers on the jurisdiction of the Priest in Confession, he eventually leaves the validity of his absolutions to rest on the liberty given to her Priests by the Church of England; as shown, he says, in the language used in one of the Exhortations to Communion;^a the words being these, "therefore, if there be any of you who cannot quiet his own conscience herein, but requireth further comfort or counsel, let him come to me, or to some other discreet and learned Minister of God's Word, and open his grief; that by the ministry of God's Holy Word he may receive the benefit of Absolution, together with ghostly counsel and advice, to the quieting of his conscience, and avoiding of all scruple and doubtfulness."^b Now, I should be very sorry, brethren, to be so far misunderstood in any thing I may say with regard to Auricular Confession, as to have it supposed for a moment that I would discourage men from opening their spiritual griefs to their own pastor, or seeking, as often as they need it, his counsel and advice as to the things belonging to their peace. I wish it were done much oftener than it is done, and that there were far more

^a Pusey's Letter to Richards, p. 118—121.

^b Order of the Administration of the Lord's Supper.

readiness to explain those doubts, and confess those sins, the burden of which keeps men back from the highest privileges, and leaves their souls barren and unfed. It will be a happy day both for Ministers and people when such confidence grows up between them. "In all which circumstances," says Bishop Jeremy Taylor, "because we may be very much helped, if we take in the assistance of a spiritual guide; therefore the Church of God, in all ages hath commended, and in most ages enjoined, that we confess our sins, and discover the state and condition of our souls, to such a person whom we or our superiors judge fit to help us in such needs."^a Neither do I dissent from the teaching of the Exhortation, that it is especially to be desired that burdened souls and disquieted consciences should do this when they are bidden to the table of the Lord, or deny that the Church's Absolution, which is expressly said to be "by the ministry of God's Word," and therefore simply declaratory, may quiet the conscience, and set free the burdened soul, alike for the discharge of duty, and the reception of proffered grace. For then the Ambassador for Christ, having a true penitent before him, assures him, on the faith of God's own promise, that all his sins, being repented of, are, by virtue of the blood of Jesus, put away for ever, and that neither the Church, nor God who formed

^a "Holy Living."

the Church, and bade her guard the purity of Holy Rites, would have it so, that such sins, so repented of, should keep him from the heavenly feast, or close his ears and heart against the invitations of his loving Saviour. No Churchman can dissent from this. And if Dr. Pusey and his party had confined themselves to this they should have heard no note of jealous disapproval, even if some, excluded from Communion by groundless fears, had chosen to open their griefs to them, rather than to those under whose ministrations they were more immediately placed. No! brethren, we have not profited so little by the teaching of Christ, nor are we so destitute of sympathy for the weakness of forlorn and struggling souls. But who could believe that on the words, "Let him come to me or to some other," Dr. Pusey would "establish a right to receive Auricular Confessions and give Absolution, in any parish and in any diocese into which he might think proper to go,"^a much less that he would dare, even by implication, to ground on them a defence of Auricular Confession itself, in its worst and most objectionable forms. In point of fact these men derive their practices from Rome, and then they fall back on the loving and sympathizing words spoken by the Church to her desponding children, to bear them out in a latitude of administration,

^a Maskell's Letter to Pusey, p. 16.

which even Rome herself would be reluctant to concede.

But bear in mind, brethren, the words of the English service, and then view them in their modern *developement*. First of all, then, we are assured that Dr. Pusey “encourages everywhere, if he does not enjoin, Auricular Confession.”^a Dr. Pusey demurs to this, and says to Mr. Richards, “we do not wish to bring back any compulsory system.”^b But what says Mr. Maskell in reply, “Mr. Dodsworth knew, *as I know*,^c that to say merely that you have *encouraged* it, would fall as far short of what your actual practice is as the word *enjoin*, in the sense of *compelling*, would exceed it. He knew that you have done more than *encouraged* confession in very many cases; that you have warned people of the danger of deferring it, have insisted on it as the only remedy, have pointed out the inevitable dangers of the neglect of it, and have promised the highest blessings in the observance, until you have brought penitents in fear and trembling upon their knees before you.”^d Then again, these teachers, instead of waiting for the sorrowful and disquieted *to come to them* to open their griefs, think themselves at

^a Dodsworth's Letter to Pusey, p. 17.

^b Pusey's Letter to Richards, p. 6.

^c The Italics are Mr. Maskell's.

^d Maskell's Letter to Pusey, p. 18.

liberty to go every where, like vagrant monks, to confess their penitents. Mr. Maskell reminds Dr. Pusey that "he goes from home into other dioceses for the express purpose of receiving confessions."^a Dr. Pusey too speaks of receiving *continued confessions*, that is, not only the confession, once for all, of those who wished to come peacefully and untroubled to Communion, but ever afterwards, as "a healthful discipline for the soul, a safeguard often, by God's grace, against sin."^b And so entirely has the whole been systematised, and become surrounded with a certain ceremony, that he says he "has often the use of Parish Churches for the office."^c

But far worse remains behind, when we are told that this modern Confessional is regulated "according to the Rule of Rome;" a Rule which we know to be as satanic as it is skilful, and which, while it places an engine of tremendous power in the hands of the priesthood, has ever been abominable and disgusting to pure-minded men. We could scarcely credit this were it not that Mr. Maskell's evidence is decisive. "Whatsoever you hold," he exclaims, "upon this great Christian Sacrament is derived from that source, and from that source alone: and if this be so, as regards your *theory* of absolution, much more is it as regards your *practice*

^a Maskell's Letter to Pusey, p. 19.

^b Pusey's Letter to Richards, p. 136.

^c Id. p. 132.

in hearing Auricular Confessions. I shall not enter into this last point: it would give you, as well as myself, sorrow to be obliged to do so. All that need be said is, that the rules of the Church of Rome, and no other are your rules: rules, which the common cry of Protestants, and the voices of countless ministers and bishops of your communion have denounced in terms so blasphemous and fearful that they are not to be spoken of.”^a Again, in another place, he speaks of “the system of particular and detailed enquiry into every circumstance of sin, which, in correct imitation of the Roman Catholic rules, Dr. Pusey does not fail to press.”^b What that system of questioning is, by which, even at an early age, the conscience is anatomised, and the soul laid bare to the eye of the priestly inquisitor, I could not tell you in this place, nor could it be told anywhere, unless shrouded under the veil of a learned language.^c It is enough to say that it is suggestive of the utmost impurity, and of thoughts and feelings of pollution, from which the Christian youth of England have been hitherto shielded, and to which they are, happily, for the most part strangers. Well may the Bishop of Exeter have exclaimed of such a system, “God forbid that we do so.”

^a Maskell's Letter to Pusey, p. 50.

^b Id. p. 20.

^c See Dens' Theology.

According to the same Roman Rule, the Tractarian teachers draw that distinction between "mortal" and "venial" sins, which is so insulting to God, and so contrary to Scriptural truth. Dr. Pusey telling us of venial sins, almost in the words of Trent, that "the soul grows in grace through their confession,"^a though, indeed, as far as relates to their forgiveness, it is not needed?^b

But the crowning sin of all in this Tractarian fabric of error is its deceit. Is it to be believed for an instant that the Protestant parents of England would expose their sons and daughters to the contamination of its confessional? No! and therefore it must be carried on in secret. Yes! Dr. Pusey has fallen so low, under the baleful influence of his own creed and practice, that he has even lent himself to this. Such, at least, is the testimony of his friend. He tells us, "of persons secretly received against the known will of their parents, of confessions heard in the houses of common friends, of clandestine correspondence to arrange meetings under initials, or in envelopes addressed to other persons; and more than this of such confessions recommended and urged as a part of the spiritual life, and among religious duties; *not* in order to quiet the conscience before receiving the communion." "Think not," he proceeds,

^a Pusey's Letter to Richards, p. 71.

^b Concil Trident, De Pœnitentiâ, cap. V.

“that I write all this to give you unnecessary pain: think not that I write it without a feeling of deep pain and sorrow in my own heart. But there is something which tells me that, on behalf of thousands, this matter should now be brought before the world, plainly, honestly, and fully. I know how heavily the enforced mystery, and secret correspondence regarding confessions in your communion has weighed down the minds of many to whom you and others have “ministered:” I know how bitterly it has eaten, even as a canker, into their very souls: I know how utterly the specious arguments which you have urged, have failed to remove their burning sense of shame and deceitfulness. And, for their sakes, forgetting both myself and you, I speak so plainly as I have.”^a So writes Mr. Maskell, and a Tractarian writer cries corroboratively, “I appeal to the young—to those who should be the simplest of all,—and I ask if they do not feel in themselves that the light of Catholic belief has come to them with its glories tarnished by the dark shadow of something that came with it: something that has not left them as it found them: weighing them down with a sense of concealment and guilty secrecy: staining their souls, before so pure and genuine, with thoughts of contrivance and manoeuvring; setting a canker-worm at their hearts,

^a Maskell's Letter to Pusey, p. 21.

and lining young faces with the marks of an untimely age.”^a We quote the language, though not the sentiment, of the same author, when we exclaim, ‘It is time to “show the world what has been going on unthought of in the homes of Englishmen, setting the seal of falsehood on foreheads once open, and pure, and true.”’^b This is the English Confessional. And the men who practise it are neither Jesuits, nor avowed Romanists. No! They are Canons of Protestant Cathedrals, Professors of Protestant Universities, Dignitaries of Protestant Dioceses, Ministers of Protestant Churches, receiving Protestant pay for Romanising the Church and demoralising the land.

I am conscious, brethren, that the weakest part of this statement is its atrocity. It will scarcely be believed that men not wrought up and familiarised by early education to the unsanctified mysteries of Papal Rome could do these things. But the evidence is strong, and I fear decisive. At all events there is enough to prove that it is time the protestant mind of England were awaked from its lethargy. And once more I would urge in the strongest manner the immediate formation of that “Association for the Defence of Protestant Principles in the English Church,” to which I adverted in my former sermon; not, however, merely to stand on the defensive, but, by the

^a The Morality of Tractarianism, p. 11.

^b Id. p. 33.

means before enumerated, or by any others that may be devised, to endeavour to the utmost to arrest the progress of this evil, to put down these dishonest doings, and purify the Church. The very formation of such an association would have a salutary effect, in showing these men that they can no longer defy the Church's laws with impunity, that there is union among the true-hearted, and a determination to resist them. It will be said that the period for such decided measures has not yet arrived. That new combinations are new evils. That the offenders are divided, and that their "Unions" are quarrelling, and will soon fall to pieces of themselves. Brethren, I do not believe it for an instant. Nothing will check them in their course, until public opinion becomes too strong for them, and compels them to desist. What! not yet time for such measures? Look, I ask you, at the state to which our Church, so dear to us all, has been reduced. Romish doctrines taught everywhere. The Bible superseded by Tradition. Justification by works, Prayers for the Dead, Purgatory, the Real Presence, the Sacrifice of the Altar, the Mediation of Mary, insisted on as Catholic truths. Roman Catholic books of devotion, rosaries, and crucifixes, introduced into our Churches, and insidiously finding their way into our homes, under the sanction of Ministers of Religion. Clergymen in this great metropolis, like schoolboys playing at Popery, openly per-

forming their miserable imitations of the Romish ceremonial, amidst the derisive applause of the actual adherents of the Papal See. The Sacrament of Penance commonly administered by those who have vowed its renunciation. Confessionals set up in every Diocese, and Confessors, aptly instructed in all the dark mysteries of their art, ready to occupy them. The genuine honesty of our English youth trained to underhand dealing and concealment, under the specious guise of privilege to be enjoyed or duty to be fulfilled. Men daily driven into dissent or rationalism by what they see and what they hear. The Protestant character of our Church destroyed in the eyes of the nations. And hence, a foreign Potentate, with unequalled arrogance, parcelling out the realm of England, and delivering us over to the spiritual domination of his Bishops, as if our country and our Zion were ready to give themselves over, bound hand and foot, to his despotic rule. And yet not time ! Why, brethren, our Church with its offshoots has hitherto been the great bulwark against idolatry in the world ; and, even if others are as faithful, still, beyond a doubt, the most powerful witness for divine truth. While our country has been great for good, our Church has been yet greater. Anti-christ from the beginning has marshalled his forces against her, as knowing that if her light were darkened, his greatest enemy would be destroyed. But if these principles and practices prevail it will be so

no longer. Then shall we be on the side of falsehood, and not on the side of truth. Then all the bitter struggles of the Reformation have been useless. Then Luther preached, and our martyrs bled in vain.

And yet what we have to fear is not so much the principles and practices themselves, as that men, in spite of all warnings, will not see the dangers by which they are menaced. Indolence and indifference are often the most persuasive counsellors, and it is far easier to talk and express indignation than it is to act. The evil is not yet so great but that it may be dealt with; and if there really are no laws on which our Bishops and University Authorities can proceed to its suppression, and by which men false to their Ordination Vows can be restrained, they must be demanded by the voice of an indignant people, contending for that which is dearer than life, the inheritance of the truth, "the faith once delivered to the saints." It is clear that if these principles progress for the next fifteen years as they have done for the last fifteen, it will be an inheritance no longer. In the Church at least we shall have no Protestantism to hand down to our children, its light will be overshadowed, its tongue silent, its virtue gone. If we ourselves live long enough, it will be ours to mourn over it, and say, "How is the faithful city become an harlot," and to write upon it, "Ichabod," the glory is departed from us.

Oh! sirs, let us strengthen ourselves for duty and conflict by remembering, once and again, what our Church really is to us. How soon in days of infancy she welcomed us into her holy keeping, and laid us in the arms of Jesus; how tenderly she nourished us with “the sincere milk of the word;” how faithfully she imbued our minds with the great Catholic truths of Christ’s blessed Gospel; how simple her words, how loving her guidance, how gentle her reproofs; how vigilant her eye of watchfulness on the great deposit of the faith; how calm and resolute her protest against Antichrist and sin. Bear in mind how, “in this naughty world,” she throws the hallowed influence of religion through all the ramifications of the dealings and intercourse of men; how she befriends the poor and the oppressed; how she claims for all, and as the right of all, Christian education based upon the Word of God. Think of the happy and peaceful sabbaths she provides, of her ministry of the word in ten thousand temples dedicated to truth, of the sound words of holy prayer she puts into our lips, of the thoughts of everlasting rest she wakes up within our hearts. Think, too, how truthfully and undisguised, as yet at least, she comes into our homes; how she “turns the heart of the fathers to the children, and the heart of the children to their fathers;”^a what consolation she

^a Mal. iv. 6.

imparts in sorrow, what medicine for spiritual wounds; how she stands beside us in our dying hour, and illumines the grave itself with the sure and certain hope of the resurrection to eternal life. Such she has been to us hitherto, and such we pray and trust she may continue to be. Let it be ours to guard her purity, to be jealous of her honour, to be earnest in her cause, that we may give her, with her priceless blessings, to our children as the Reformers died to make her, and as our fathers have given her to us. And let it be our strength that the great God on high, who ruleth over all, hears the prayers, and beholds the conflicts of his Church. He "that maketh diviners mad; that turneth wise men backward, and maketh their knowledge foolish,"^a can frustrate the counsels of these men, save us from the hand of our enemies, and preserve to us our countless blessings unimpaired.

^a Isaiah xliv. 25.

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