



This is a digital copy of a book that was preserved for generations on library shelves before it was carefully scanned by Google as part of a project to make the world's books discoverable online.

It has survived long enough for the copyright to expire and the book to enter the public domain. A public domain book is one that was never subject to copyright or whose legal copyright term has expired. Whether a book is in the public domain may vary country to country. Public domain books are our gateways to the past, representing a wealth of history, culture and knowledge that's often difficult to discover.

Marks, notations and other marginalia present in the original volume will appear in this file - a reminder of this book's long journey from the publisher to a library and finally to you.

### **Usage guidelines**

Google is proud to partner with libraries to digitize public domain materials and make them widely accessible. Public domain books belong to the public and we are merely their custodians. Nevertheless, this work is expensive, so in order to keep providing this resource, we have taken steps to prevent abuse by commercial parties, including placing technical restrictions on automated querying.

We also ask that you:

- + *Make non-commercial use of the files* We designed Google Book Search for use by individuals, and we request that you use these files for personal, non-commercial purposes.
- + *Refrain from automated querying* Do not send automated queries of any sort to Google's system: If you are conducting research on machine translation, optical character recognition or other areas where access to a large amount of text is helpful, please contact us. We encourage the use of public domain materials for these purposes and may be able to help.
- + *Maintain attribution* The Google "watermark" you see on each file is essential for informing people about this project and helping them find additional materials through Google Book Search. Please do not remove it.
- + *Keep it legal* Whatever your use, remember that you are responsible for ensuring that what you are doing is legal. Do not assume that just because we believe a book is in the public domain for users in the United States, that the work is also in the public domain for users in other countries. Whether a book is still in copyright varies from country to country, and we can't offer guidance on whether any specific use of any specific book is allowed. Please do not assume that a book's appearance in Google Book Search means it can be used in any manner anywhere in the world. Copyright infringement liability can be quite severe.

### **About Google Book Search**

Google's mission is to organize the world's information and to make it universally accessible and useful. Google Book Search helps readers discover the world's books while helping authors and publishers reach new audiences. You can search through the full text of this book on the web at <http://books.google.com/>

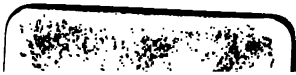
*THE*  
*OBLIGATIONS OF TRUTH*  
*IN*  
*RELIGIOUS CONTROVERSY*

---

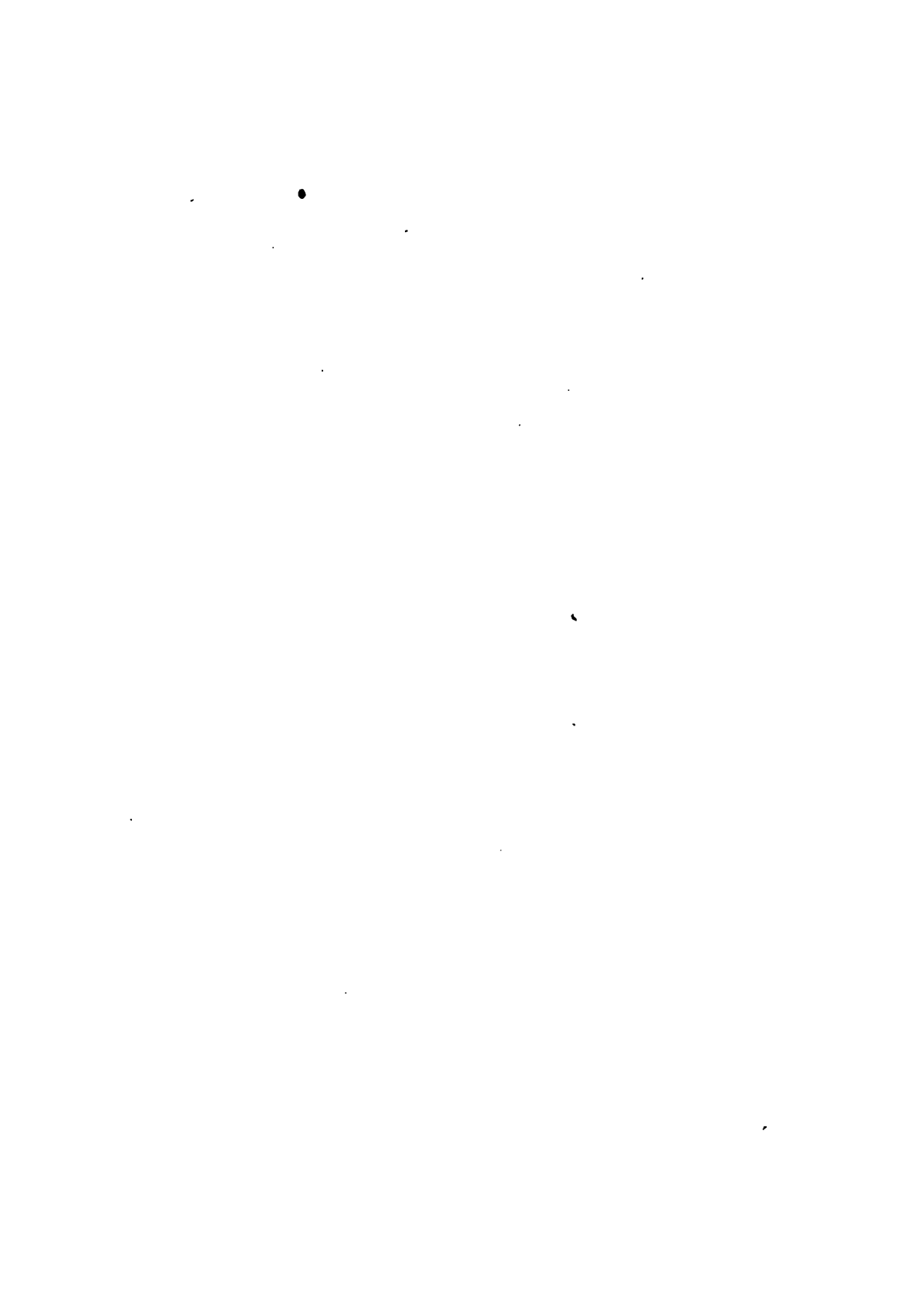
*E. GARBETT*



600099944+







THE  
OBLIGATIONS OF TRUTH

IN

RELIGIOUS CONTROVERSY:

A CRITICAL EXAMINATION OF A PAMPHLET, ENTITLED  
"CONFESSION AS TAUGHT BY THE CHURCH OF ENGLAND."

BY

EDWARD GARBETT, M.A.,

VICAR OF CHRIST CHURCH, SURBITON, AND CHAPLAIN TO THE  
RIGHT HONOURABLE THE EARL OF SHAFTESBURY.



LONDON:  
WILLIAM HUNT AND COMPANY,  
HOLLES STREET, CAVENDISH SQUARE;  
AND  
ALDINE CHAMBERS, PATERNOSTER ROW.  
1874.

130. e. 109.

---

LONDON:  
G. NORMAN AND SON, PRINTERS, MAIDEN LANE.  
COVENT GARDEN.



## INDEX TO QUOTATIONS.

	PAGE		PAGE
FIRST EXHORTATION TO HOLY		DOWNNAME . . . . .	91
COMMUNION . . . . .	22	MEDE . . . . .	95
OFFICE FOR VISITATION OF		MONTAGUE . . . . .	96
SICK . . . . .	26	VISITATION ARTICLES, OVER-	
113TH CANON . . . . .	27	ALL, &c. . . . .	98
LUTHER . . . . .	28	HAMMOND . . . . .	101
HOOKEE ON LUTHERANS . . . . .	31	HEYLIN . . . . .	103
MELANCTHON . . . . .	33	LAUD . . . . .	106
CALVIN . . . . .	36	BRAMHALL . . . . .	108
CRANMER . . . . .	37	10TH IRISH CANON . . . . .	110
THE CATECHISM . . . . .	39	USSHER . . . . .	112
FIRST PRAYER BOOK . . . . .	43	HERBERT . . . . .	114
RIDLEY . . . . .	44	N. FARRAR . . . . .	74, 116
LATIMER . . . . .	45	CHILLINGWORTH . . . . .	116
TURNER . . . . .	49	JAMES, EARL OF DERBY . . . . .	74
JEWEL . . . . .	51	HALL . . . . .	119
SECOND BOOK OF HOMILIES . . . . .	55	LADY CAPEL . . . . .	74
PARKER'S VISITATION ARTI-		LADY ANDERSON . . . . .	74
CLES . . . . .	58	MORTON . . . . .	124
THE ELEVEN ARTICLES . . . . .	60	JEREMY TAYLOR . . . . .	126
BECON . . . . .	61	SANDERSON . . . . .	74
HOOKEE . . . . .	65	PIERCE : . . . . .	135
KING JAMES I. . . . .	69	THORNDIKE . . . . .	137
WILLIAMS . . . . .	70	NICHOLSON . . . . .	139
REYNOLDS . . . . .	76	COSIN . . . . .	140
HAKERWILL . . . . .	76	MR. ADAMS'S SERMON . . . . .	142
AYLMER . . . . .	73	GRENVILLE . . . . .	145
CRANETHORP . . . . .	78	BARROW . . . . .	147
ANDREWES . . . . .	78	EVELYN'S DIARY . . . . .	75
DONNE . . . . .	84	SPARROW . . . . .	150
BAILY . . . . .	88	PULLER . . . . .	153



	PAGE		PAGE
COMBER . . . . .	155	MARSHALL . . . . .	182
PEARSON . . . . .	158	HOLE . . . . .	185
FOURTEEN BISHOPS ON CASE OF FRIEND AND PARKINS . . . . .	159	FIDDES . . . . .	187
PATRICK . . . . .	161	WAKE . . . . .	195
DODWELL . . . . .	75	WHEATLEY . . . . .	197
ISHAM . . . . .	164	SECKER . . . . .	200
BEVERIDGE . . . . .	166	BERKELEY . . . . .	201
KEN . . . . .	168	WILSON . . . . .	202
BULL . . . . .	173	HORNE . . . . .	207
SHARPE . . . . .	175	TOMLINE . . . . .	208
NICHOLLS . . . . .	177	MARSH . . . . .	211
HICKES . . . . .	178	SHORT . . . . .	214
		BAXTER (NOTE A.) . . . . .	216

## THE OBLIGATIONS OF TRUTH IN RELIGIOUS CONTROVERSY.

---

### PART I.

A PAMPHLET lies before me, while I write, entitled, "Confession, as Taught in the Church of England, by the Rev. C. N. Gray, Vicar of Helmsley, Yorkshire, late Curate of St. John's, Kidderminster." The title-page bears the words, "Fifth edition," showing that it has attained a very considerable circulation. The information subjoined: "Price ninepence. To Clergy, for distribution, 20 for 10s," implies the author's expectation of a large circle of readers, and the purpose, that it should be widely used for the spread of information on an important and pressing question. The Archdeacon of Taunton, in his sermon on Confession, preached in Wells Cathedral, in the summer of 1873, quoted from this pamphlet. Putting these things together, I conclude that this pamphlet is intended to be used as a kind of text-book on the controversy, and I have reason to believe that it is very largely accepted in this character, even in places where accurate information may so naturally be expected to exist, as in the Universities.

The proposed object of the pamphlet is to prove that the Church of England teaches "Confession to Man," and that this Confession should be "habitual." "Habitual Confession" is explained to mean, "that Confession may be repeated whenever it be required; and that it is not confined merely to those who have committed great crimes, but is allowed to all." It is evident that, in the controversy at present waged among us on the subject of Confession, the point in dispute will turn upon the phrase, "whenever it be required." If the words mean no more, than that a member of the Church of England, disquieted in mind by the sense of sin, unable to come to the holy Communion "with a full trust in God's mercy, and with

a quiet conscience," and therefore requiring "further comfort or counsel;" or finding at the approach of death his "conscience troubled with some weighty matter;" may consistently "make a special confession of his sins" in the one case, and in the other case, go to some "discreet and learned minister of God's Word, and open his grief"—if, I repeat, this is all that is intended by the "Habitual Confession" of this pamphlet, then I for one have no ground of dispute with the author, for all men, so far as I know, frankly avow that this is the teaching of the Church of England. In this case there is no controversy between Mr. Gray and other Churchmen, and the publication of his pamphlet, to prove what all admit, has been altogether unnecessary.

But the author must mean more than this, and it is a just ground of complaint, that he has not more distinctly stated what he means. It appears that by the phrase, "whenever it be required," he refers to, and intends to encourage, such a sensitiveness and scrupulosity of conscience, as renders the habitual assistance of a spiritual physician necessary. That I may avoid the faintest risk of misrepresenting him, I give his own statement in full:—

"I hold that Confession is ALLOWED TO ALL who are troubled in mind, when preparing for Holy Communion or for death; since all are advised, yea, even bidden and 'moved' 'to open their grief,' and 'make special confession.'

I say all; for we should *all* be communicants, we should *all* be prepared to die. It is therefore offered to all, suggested to all. But yet liberty is left to all. Liberty to use, liberty to omit. The formula which I have taught is in accordance with this, viz.:—'The Church of England says you *may* use Confession; the Church of Rome says you *must*.'

"Still further, I hold that the Church lays down no rule as to WHAT is a 'WEIGHTY MATTER,' and what is not; what sins should cause a conscience to be so troubled as to need Confession, or what should not. To the drunkard, it may be, his sin is no weighty matter, brings no unquiet conscience; while to the saint, the remembrance that his sins (small as they may seem in the eyes of other

men) are yet 'more in number than the hairs of his head,' may justly 'cause his heart to fail.'

"I hold, moreover, that 'CONFESSION MAY BE REPEATED WHENSOEVER IT IS REQUIRED;' since the Church says if you cannot (by means described) 'quiet your own conscience,' 'open your grief.' Your having confessed before matters not: if your conscience be again unquiet, the words of the exhortation again apply to you.

"But though I claim this liberty for English Churchmen, that according to the teaching of the Prayer Book they may come from time to time whenever 'their conscience is unquiet,' for the 'avoiding of all scruple and doubtfulness,' my own view is that *very* frequent confessions are probably unhealthy, and I should therefore be inclined to discourage them, though I should hold it impossible for any Clergyman positively to refuse to receive them; because I maintain that the use, equally with the non-use, should be left entirely to the discretion of each individual soul.

Moreover, this I believe, that a person who is in earnest will be careful in self-examination; and though sins be confessed once, human nature is not conquered, nor do we become holy all at once; there are relapses into former sins; sins, too, there are, which once indeed seemed small as compared with those greater ones since in God's mercy trodden under foot, but which now stand forth to clearer eyes in darker form; the soul itself begins to see sin somewhat more as God sees it:—how that one single sin (little you may call it if you will) is enough to make us unfit for heaven and for Christ, enough to damn us for ever; how that each little sin required the outpouring of that atoning Blood; that for one little sin did Adam die, and the whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together until now. When, then, the soul begins to see that *no* sin in God's sight is really small, but *all* are weighty; when (shrinking under the awful accumulation of them) it begins, though faintly, still in some measure, to realise the immensity of the Love of God poured forth upon us. His awful hatred of *every* sin, our own gross ingratitude,—it will feel more than ever that the 'remembrance of our sins is grievous unto us, the burden of them is intolerable,' and so again will resort once more to that same fountain of healing and of comfort."

I point attention to the last words. What is intended by "that same fountain of healing and comfort;" they must have some reference to Confession, or else they are wholly irrelevant

to the object of the pamphlet. One would naturally refer them to the atoning blood of Christ, spoken of above; but, if so, they evidently involve that Confession is the ordinary mode, whereby the benefits of the atoning blood are applied to the uneasy conscience. I scarcely think it possible that I can misapprehend the author's meaning, in stating it to be this. Another publication of his on the same subject also lies before me. It is a tract of little more than eight pages, entitled, "Why I Recommend Confession." The second reason assigned is, "Because I am a Churchman." The third section under this general heading is as follows:—

"c. IN THE 113TH CANON OF THE CHURCH.

'If any man confess his secret and hidden sins to the Minister for the unburdening of his conscience and to receive spiritual consolation and ease of mind from him,' the *Priest* is straitly charged 'that he do not at any time reveal and make known to any person whatsoever' any sin, under pain of deprivation of all his Priestly rights.

"It is plain then that the Church does something more than merely allow Confession to God in the presence of the Priest, she in some cases even very strongly urges it."

I refer to this extract chiefly on account of its misquotation. The term "Priest" does not occur once in the 113th Canon, and the importance of this will appear presently. The words are, "If any man confess his secret and hidden sins to the Minister . . . such do not any way bind the said Minister." But the important passage occurs in the 7th section, under "Because I want to be better." It is as follows:—

"(7.) BY GOING TO CONFESSION I GET THE ASSURANCE OF FORGIVENESS THROUGH THE ABSOLUTION.

I KNOW that (unless I have come impenitently and hypocritically), my sins ARE *through that Absolution* (the Italics are mine) BLOTTED OUT of God's Book, forgiven, washed away by the Precious Blood of Christ, and that they will not be brought against me at the last great day."

This is a plain declaration, that, in the author's belief the

words of absolution are the instrument, whereby God, in the ordinary order of His grace, applies the blood of Christ to the forgiveness of sins after baptism. This is the exact view of the Church of Rome. The Catechism of the Council of Trent declares, "Sins can be forgiven only through the Sacraments, if their form be duly administered; but the Church has received no power to remit sin otherwise. Hence it follows that Priests and the Sacraments serve as instruments unto the forgiveness of sin, by which Christ the Lord, the author himself and bestower of salvation, accomplish in us the remission of sins and justification." (Part I. Cap. xi. 24.)

It might seem an invidious thing thus to illustrate the meaning of a clergyman of the Church of England by the teaching of the Church of Rome, were it not that language substantially, and almost identically, the same is used in the Declaration on the subject of confession recently issued, bearing the signatures of Dr. Pusey and twenty-eight other signatories, published in the Times Newspaper of December 6, 1873. In proposition three of this Declaration it is said, "We believe that God, through absolution, confers an inward spiritual grace and the authoritative assurance of His forgiveness to all those who receive it with faith and repentance." Again in proposition five: "Upon this we remark, first, that in these words, (the form of absolution in the Visitation Service,) forgiveness of sins is ascribed to our Lord Jesus Christ, yet that the priest acting by a delegated authority, and as an instrument, does through these words convey the absolving grace." The phrase used in the Pamphlet "my sins are through that absolution blotted out," and the language of the Declaration are united by so close a theological identity, as to justify the supposition that the Declaration expresses more fully and precisely, that view of Confession which the pamphlet is intended to support. Certainly, if it be not so, the quotations adduced by Mr. Gray are irrelevant to his purpose; for, in the form in which they stand in the Pamphlet, they appear on the face of them to support that

sacramental view of Confession which is stated in the Declaration.

Assuming therefore an identity of theological view in the Pamphlet and in the Declaration, the statements made in the former are no little startling. Eighty-eight authorities are adduced to prove that the Church of England teaches "Confession to Man," in that sense of Confession, which is analogous to the teaching of the Church of Rome. The feeling of astonishment is heightened at the perusal of the list of authorities, for it includes the names of Luther, Hooker, Calvin, Cranmer, Ridley, Latimer, Jewel, and of some others who are among the most illustrious lights of the Reformation. To suppose that such men could ever have supported one of the worst errors of the Church which they denounced, would be enough to take away one's breath, and would involve such a complete reversal of life-long convictions, as to stagger the belief of the most credulous. Yet such is the assertion of the Pamphlet.

The issue, to which we are challenged, is consequently equally important and pressing. The question can not be passed by, in justice to the honesty of Evangelical Churchmanship. The cause of honesty, as well as the cause of truth, demands that it should be answered; for one of the two parties to this controversy must be under a delusion, about the strangest and most absolute ever palmed upon the human mind. This conviction led me to undertake an examination in detail of the authorities quoted by Mr. Gray. The enquiry has issued in a stronger conviction than ever that the Church of England does not, either by her formularies, or by the voices of her great divines, teach "Confession to man," in the sense of the Declaration. As the matter interests others as well as myself, and as, in this busy age, it is not in the power of every one to give the labour which this examination has caused me, I proceed to state publicly the grounds of this conviction.

The troublesomeness of the enquiry has not arisen from the mere number of the authorities quoted, but from the manner of

the quotations. In some cases the passages have been given without any references at all, as in the passage from Heylin in page 18, the passage from Mede at page 24, the passage from Hammond on page 28, etc. In some cases the references are wrong, as with the passage from Archbishop Parker quoted in page 19, and the quotation from Dr. Donne on page 25. In one case the heading of a chapter, in a work on Confession by a Roman Catholic priest, is given as if it were the title of a separate book: this is the case with the quotation from Luther taken from Protestant Evidences on page 11. In other cases, as in three important passages from Luther on the same page, the treatise is not mentioned from which the extracts are taken, and the reference is to an edition of Luther's works, which I have vainly endeavoured to trace, and which certainly is not to be found either in the libraries of London, Oxford, or Cambridge. In another instance, as with the reference to Archdeacon Aylmer on page 23, and to Bishop Bull on page 51, the reference fails to give the name of the publisher, or place or date of the publication, and I have consequently been unable to identify the work referred to. These inaccuracies, from whatever cause they may have proceeded, have rendered the work of examination exceeding troublesome. I feel the more bound to save others the labour I have been compelled to undergo myself.

But before I proceed further to explain the results of my enquiry, I feel it necessary to define, yet more precisely, the exact question that is at issue. It is in verbal ambiguities that error hides itself, and from them misconceptions take their rise. Let there be no mistake therefore, as to what it is we believe the Church of England to teach, and what we believe her to reject. Words derive their value from the things they signify, and it is their meaning, and not their sound, to which we need to look. I most fully admit that a large number of our eminent divines, including some of the most Protestant and Evangelical of them all, speak frequently and largely of "confession to man," that they highly commend it, and repeatedly assert that the Church of Eng-



land has not rejected it. But the question is, what is the nature of the confession they advocate? To ascertain this clearly, we must distinguish between different kinds of confession. Three kinds may at once be put on one side, as involving truth acknowledged by all parties to this controversy, and therefore not entering into the present dispute. These are, first, confession of sin before God; secondly, confession of sin between man and man, when in the consciousness of having committed a fault against our neighbour, we frankly acknowledge it, express regret for it, and make all the reparation for it in our power; thirdly, confession of sin in the familiarity of confidential intimacy, when one friend lays open the secrets of his heart to another friend, and seeks his sympathy and advice. Such alone appears to be the confession indicated by St. James, chap. v. 16. All these may be put entirely on one side. There will still remain three other kinds of confession, which need to be carefully discriminated, and which I distinguish as Ministerial, Ecclesiastical, and Sacramental.

1. Ministerial Confession consists of the confidential intercourse between a pastor and his people. It differs so broadly from the very idea of sacramental Confession that I deeply regret that the word "confession" has ever been applied to it. This has been done, however, by divines anxious to vindicate the Church of England from the accusation, brought against her by Romish controversialists, of voiding a part of the ministerial commission. The use of the word therefore remains, and a good deal of unfair advantage has been taken of the fact. Such ministerial confession derives ample authority from Holy Scripture, and is wise and right. There are three cases, in which such an intercourse would naturally take place. A distressed conscience might properly seek from the appointed minister of the Church consolation, instruction, advice. There may be special disquietude of conscience produced by some particular sin, which may appear to the alarmed soul to cut it off from pardon and peace. Under the awful fear, the man naturally

turns to the minister for consolation, if consolation from the Word of God can properly be had. Or a man may be in doubt as to the meaning and bearing of some part of the plan of salvation, and, unable to make clear to his own satisfaction, from the Bible itself, what is the mind of God, he may come to the authorised teacher for fuller instruction. Or, he may be perplexed as to the course of conduct most accordant with the will of Christ under certain particular circumstances, or under the result of certain sins, of such a character that he cannot explain them to the nearest and dearest of earthly friends; and he inquires of his spiritual guide, what is the path of duty he is called to pursue. The confidential character of the communications held in such cases is guarded by the provisions of the 113th Canon. No one calls the propriety of such an intercourse into question, and it would be well, if it were more constant and more frank. One caution only needs to be remembered in such a case. This appeal for ministerial help should not become too frequent, lest it enter too minutely into details, and foster an unhealthy scrupulosity of conscience. It should not be allowed to become habitual, lest it should weaken the exercise of faith, and interrupt the soul's personal intercourse with God. Ministerial Confession, therefore, we accept.

2. Ecclesiastical Confession consists of the exercise of Church discipline. I believe that, in some form or other, this is invariably maintained in all Nonconformist communities. Among ourselves of the Church of England, perhaps as an indirect result of Establishment, and under the penalties of the civil law, it has fallen into desuetude, and the Church herself in her Communion Service both admits and laments the fact. Yet it is clearly recognised in her system. The necessity for a confession of some kind, and a power of binding and loosing of some kind, follows from the provisions of the Rubrics attached to the Communion office. The Rubrics, bearing on this matter, is as follows:—

“¶ So many as intend to be partakers of the holy Communion shall

signify their names to the Curate, at least some time the day before.

“¶ And if any of them be an open and notorious evil liver, or have done any wrong to his neighbour by word or deed, so that the Congregation be thereby offended; the Curate, having knowledge thereof, shall call him and advertise him, that in any wise he presume not to come to the Lord's Table, until he hath openly declared himself to have truly repented and amended his former naughty life, that the Congregation may thereby be satisfied, which before were offended; and that he hath recompensed the parties, to whom he hath done wrong; or at least declare himself to be in full purpose so to do, as soon as he conveniently may.

“¶ The same order shall the Curate use with those betwixt whom he perceiveth malice and hatred to reign; not suffering them to be partakers of the Lord's Table, until he know them to be reconciled. And if one of the parties so at variance be content to forgive from the bottom of his heart all that the other hath trespassed against him, and to make amends for that he himself hath offended; and the other party will not be persuaded to a godly unity, but remain still in his frowardness and malice: the Minister in that case ought to admit the penitent person to the holy Communion, and not him that is obstinate. Provided that every Minister, so repelling any, as is specified in this, or the next precedent Paragraph of this Rubrick, shall be obliged to give an account of the same to the Ordinary within fourteen days after at the farthest. And the Ordinary shall proceed against the offending person according to the Canon.”

The regulation is a right one; and, in a healthier state of things, in which participation of the Lord's Supper was a recognised duty of all Christian men without distinction, such a law would become absolutely necessary. In the state of things which prevailed at and immediately after the Reformation, a discipline of the kind was not only possible, but indispensable. With us, our communicants are a narrow circle of our congregations; but, at that time, to be a communicant was a matter of compulsion, required by Canons, made the subject of enquiry in Visitation Articles, and entering into the duty of Churchwardens. The

21st Canon enacts: "In every parish church and chapel, when Sacraments are to be administered, within this Realm, the Holy Communion shall be ministered by the parson, vicar, or minister, so often, and at such times, as every parishioner may communicate at the least thrice in the year." The 28th Canon is as follows: "No minister shall in any wise admit to the receiving of the Holy Communion any of his cure or flock which he openly knows to live in sin notorious, without repentance; nor any who have maliciously or openly contended with their neighbours, until they shall be reconciled; nor any churchwardens or side-men, who having taken their oaths to present to their Ordinaries all such public offences as they are particularly engaged to enquire of in their several parishes, shall— notwithstanding their said oaths, and that their faithful discharge of them is the chief means whereby public sins and offences may be reformed and punished—wittingly and willingly, desperately and irreligiously, incur the horrible crime of perjury, either in neglecting or in refusing to present such of the said enormities and public offences as they know themselves to be committed in their said parishes, or are notoriously offensive to the congregation there, &c." So jealously were these Canons for some time maintained, that questions related to them occur habitually in the Visitation Articles of the period. Taking the first twenty in the list appended to the Second Report of the Ritual Commission (1868), questions relative to compulsory attendance at Communion occur in every one of them without exception. Persons failing to attend, or not seeking to be reconciled after excommunication, were regarded as recusants.

It is evident, that under such circumstances the necessity of acting on the Rubrics attached to the Communion office must have been constant, and have entered into the habitual Church system. The authority so exercised by the minister, to admit to or to exclude, from the Sacrament, was known as the power of binding and loosing. When he refused the Sacrament to a noto-

rious evil liver, he bound him. When, on his acknowledgment of sin and profession of repentance, he admitted him again to the Sacrament, he was said to loose him. The act was the act of absolution ; the exercise of a power of discipline committed by Christ to his Church. Confession was the necessary means, whereby the excommunicated person sought reconciliation with the Church. The power was the power of the keys. This system, and the state of things for which it was adapted, have passed away. Whether it would be desirable to restore it, if it were possible, may be a matter of opinion ; but all parties will admit that such confession has nothing about it unscriptural or superstitious ; nothing derogatory to the Word of God, or dangerous to souls.

3. Sacramental Confession, as it exists in the Church of Rome, is tersely described by Hooker thus : "They hold that Confession to be Sacramental, which he receiveth who must absolve."—(Ecl. Polity, B. vi. p. 34, London, 1821.) In the system of English Sacerdotalism, its order of development appears to be this. In the first place Repentance is regarded as Penance ; an inward condition of heart being changed into an outward sacramental ordinance, which conveys spiritual grace, in other words, has power to bring the penitent into a condition of favour with God. Then the priest is conceived to be the representative of Christ, and to exercise by delegation His powers and prerogatives. "The powers which our Lord manifested before the unbelieving Pharisees by working a miracle, He conferred on the Priesthood of the Church ; or rather, to speak more correctly, He now exercises through the Priesthood."—(Tracts for the Day, Tract iii. *The Seven Sacraments*, p. 58.) Thus the priest and the sacraments together, become the instrument through which God, in the ordinary working of his grace, forgives sin. "The Priest has a commission from Christ to pronounce his pardon, and that pardon, so pronounced, will convey not only peace to the soul, but also forgiveness of sins."—(Ibid. p. 60.) Thus the sacrament is made to be, ordinarily,

the indispensable threshold of eternal life. To give it, is to save the soul for ever; to deny it, is to condemn the soul for ever. And thus such language as the following becomes possible.

“Let Protestants beware, lest, in resisting the power, they resist the ordinance of God. ‘No man can forgive sins but God only,’ said the Pharisees; and they were silenced by Christ, ‘It is a dishonour to God that man should forgive sins,’ said the Novatians; and they were refuted by St. Ambrose, ‘Why should it be more a dishonour to God, or more inconvenient, that man should forgive sins by Penance than by Baptism, seeing it is the Holy Ghost who, in both cases, doth it by the ministry of the Priest.’ If Priestly absolution be the means ordained of God for remitting sin, then it is fearful to contemplate the ruin which may have been inflicted on souls by neglect of it. Souls have been launched into eternity by us, unabsolved, because we either did not believe in the power given us at our ordination, or we were too timid to exert it.

“We are verily guilty concerning our brother, in that we saw the anguish of his soul, as the gates of Hell opened upon him, and he beheld the doors of the shadow of death; and we cast him in, bound hand and foot, having first, with cruel kindness, stupified him with the dram-drinking of a false assurance, when we might have loosed him and let him go.”—Ibid. Tract i., *Priestly Absolution*, pp. 21, 22.)

Now, these three kinds of Confession are sharply distinguished from each other. Ministerial Confession has its basis in the fact that the sovereign Spirit of God is pleased to act through human instrumentality, and especially through His own appointed ordinance of an ordained ministry; but this ministry is simply instrumental, while the agency is all His own. Ecclesiastical Confession has its basis on the constitution of the visible Church as an organized society, with defined conditions of communion, and the power to exercise discipline by the expulsion of offenders against her laws, or their restoration

again on repentance. Sacramental Confession has its basis in the sacerdotal power of the ministry, not as presbyters, but as sacrificers, and on its power to forgive, not only offences against the Church, but sins against God; and the consequent necessity, in the ordinary course of grace, for some act to be done by man for the forgiveness of sins. Sacramental Confession has thus a distinct basis of its own, a separate and special principle, and neither Ministerial Confession nor Ecclesiastical Confession involve the slightest complicity with it.

Here then comes the question in dispute. Mr. Gray affirms that the Church of England teaches habitual "Confession to Man;" and he adduces eighty-eight authorities in support of his statement. On the other side I freely admit that a large number of our Church writers speak of confession in terms of commendation, and that, in a sense, of "Confession to Man;" but I aver that not one of them speaks of Confession to man in the sense of which Mr. Gray speaks of it. I say this on the supposition, that what he means to maintain is not Ministerial Confession, nor Ecclesiastical Confession, but some form or other of Sacramental Confession. I use this qualifying phrase, because I do not for a moment say that the views of the Rev. C. N. Gray are identical with the views of the Rev. Orby Shipley, or that he would use the language which Mr. Shipley has ventured to use. It may be so, or it may not be so; I have no means of judging. But I assume that, however widely the two clergymen named may disagree in the application of the same principle, they both agree in accepting the distinctive principle of Sacramental Confession. I cannot understand the language of his tract, "Why I Recommend Confession." "My sins are through that Absolution blotted out of God's Book," otherwise than that he agrees with Dr. Pusey, in holding that "the Priest, acting by a delegated authority, and as an instrument does, through" the form of Absolution, "convey the absolving grace;" and with Mr. Shipley, in holding that "the Priest has a commission from Christ to pronounce his

pardon (the pardon of the penitent), and that pardon, so pronounced, will convey, not only peace to the soul, but also forgiveness of sins."

Mr. Gray therefore affirms, that the Church of England teaches some form of Sacramental Confession. I affirm, on the contrary, with the fullest confidence, that she teaches Sacramental Confession in no form whatever, but repudiates it in any and every form in which it can be stated.

What becomes then of the eighty-eight authorities quoted in the pamphlet? Mr. Gray asserts that they teach Sacramental Confession. I assert that they teach Ministerial Confession, and Ecclesiastical Confession; but that not one of them teaches Sacramental Confession. We both accept the same books and writers; but the one states that they maintain Confession in one sense, the other that they maintain it only in another sense, distinctly and totally different. Here is a positive conflict of assertion; and how is the question to be decided, or the conflict of assertion explained?

In endeavouring to account for so entire a contradiction on a matter of fact, some allowance must, no doubt, be made for different habits of mind, varying predilections, and diverse stand-points. Men regard the same acknowledged facts very differently, when the divergence is only in themselves, and not in the facts. But in these cases the conflict turns less upon the actual fact itself, than upon the relation in which it is viewed, and the meaning put upon it. But here it is the fact itself, upon which we are at issue. Do the great writers of the Church of England teach Ministerial and Ecclesiastical Confession only? or do they teach Sacramental Confession? It is a plain question of fact, and must be capable of a direct solution. We may differ as to the value of the fact; but both parties are equally concerned in ascertaining the fact itself.

Nor can we entertain the notion, that the writers in question are ambiguous, and sometimes say one thing and sometimes



another, like men who did not clearly know their own minds. They were men singularly acute and learned, and for the most part express themselves with great precision of language. They were, moreover, bred in controversy, and, standing as they did front to front with the Romish system, must have perfectly well understood what they meant to retain and what to reject. This explanation therefore is not available.

We are driven therefore to consider another alternative, which the mind contemplates with pain, and from which it would fain turn away. That the pamphlet in question is calculated to convey to the mind of the reader the impression, that the great divines of the Church of England teach Sacramental Confession, is indisputable; and if no previous knowledge of the subject existed on the reader's part, there would be nothing whatever to put him on his guard against it. Yet, if these writers did not teach, as I believe, Sacramental Confession, the impression is a false one. Can it be possible that the quotations are unfairly made, and convey sentiments which quotations fuller, more accurate, and more careful, would show never to have been entertained by the writers?

The question is exceedingly grave, for the obligations of perfect truthfulness in religious controversy are of the most binding kind. Garbled or inaccurate quotations are simply fraudulent, for they gain credence on false pretences. Readers who accept certain opinions on the authority of quotations which are either inaccurately or unfairly made, are deceived; and that in matters of the greatest moment, which can be presented to human belief. To gain money by fraud must be esteemed to be, in the scales of human justice, a far less serious offence, and far less injurious to mankind, than to gain belief by fraud; for the one affects only the interests of the body and of time, while the other extends to the interests of the soul and of eternity. If a man accepts Sacramental Confession on the authority of writers who never taught it, and if

he consequently rests his hopes of forgiveness of sin on an instrumentality which God never appointed for that purpose, and to which is attached no promise of peace, an injury may be done to that man which eternity itself can neither measure nor repair. The responsibility of a public teacher is enormous; and, for myself, I am painfully conscious of it. To misrepresent truth is an offence, than which none can well be greater.

I wish it, therefore, to be understood that in impugning the fairness and accuracy of the pamphlet in question, I repudiate with sincere earnestness any wish to attack a person, or to bring any charge against his candour and honesty. I would have avoided the question altogether, did not the imperative interests of truth require that it should be faced. The examination of the matter has been forced upon us, and cannot be avoided. I have no right to judge any man, or to refuse to a brother clergyman the same full credit for honesty of conviction, that I claim for myself. I could not judge of motives, if I would; and I would not, if I could. By what moral and mental process the mind may have been brought to believe that to be true which is not true, I am wholly unable to ascertain. In fact, I have nothing to do with such questions, and desire to put personal considerations altogether on one side. I have only to do with the Pamphlet, with its statements, and with the effect they are calculated to exercise on men's minds, and, consequently, on the fortunes of the Church of England. If the charge I venture to bring against the pamphlet be substantiated; if its quotations, considered alike in their mutual relation and in themselves, misrepresent the true opinions of the writers from whom they are quoted, the injury is not diminished in the slightest degree by the honesty and conscious integrity of the author who has made them. The mischief is increased, not diminished, by the confidence that may be placed in the personal character of the author; for the higher it stands, the more likely are his statements to be accepted without examina-

tion, and the more implicit will be the confidence reposed in them.

It is necessary, before stating the evidence, briefly to consider the various modes in which quotations may be falsified, and the tests to which they should consequently be submitted.

(1.) In the first place, it may be done by the coarse method of substituting words not used by an author, for the words actually employed by him. Of this offence I entirely acquit the Pamphlet, and am rejoiced to do so, because of such a mode of misquotation no other explanation can possibly be given, than that of conscious and deliberate fraud. I have found no instance of any such misquotation in the Pamphlet, nor any inaccuracy beyond what may readily arise from a mistake of the copyist. Yet even to this statement I must make a qualification. In a very large number of instances, and, indeed, with few exceptions, throughout the pamphlet, the words "confess," "confession," and "absolution," are commenced with capital letters, where no capitals have been employed by the authors. It is a trivial change in itself; but, when persistently adopted, it has a tendency to delude the mind through the eye. For we do not use capitals at the beginning of words expressive of frames of mind and emotions of heart; but we do prefix them to words expressive of formal outward acts and ordinances. Thus the reader is naturally led to suppose, that the authors quoted intended precise and sacramental acts, when, in truth, they intended only a frame of mind before God, or a covenanted relation in his Church.

(2.) Misquotation may practically be effected by an insufficient or misleading statement of the point, which the quotations are intended to prove. Thus I have shown that the opening statements in the pamphlet are replete with ambiguities. It is only by a reference to another publication, that a true estimate of the author's meaning has been gained. Why should it not have been plainly and fully stated? The whole result of the Pamphlet is to produce an impression in favour of Sacramental Con-

fession; yet the proposition with which it opens, while it may, and doubtless does, mean Sacramental Confession, so far as the mere force of the word goes, need not necessarily mean more than Ministerial or Ecclesiastical Confession. Thus the mind is led to accept the proposition in one sense, while the author intended it in another; and the whole argumentative effect of the quotations is thus falsified.

(3.) Misquotation may be effected by affixing one arbitrary meaning to theological terms, which a careful examination shows not to have been the meaning of the author. Thus it is positively asserted in the pamphlet that the phrase "Ministry of God's Holy Word" in the first Exhortation in the Communion Office does not mean the application of the Word of God to the conscience, but the use of the form of absolution; that "learned men," in the usage of Bishop Latimer, is said to be synonymous with "Priest" or "Minister," although Latimer's express language positively proves the contrary; that the word "penance" is used by Archbishop Parker in its strict theological sense of a Sacramental act, although the language of the Church herself in her Communion Service, and the avowed usage of many eminent writers, prove it to have been used as an equivalent for "repentance."

(4.) Misquotation may consist either of the insufficiency of the extract given, or of actual omission. It may offend by insufficiency, on the old principle, *suppressio veri, suggestio falsi*. In the discussion of a given question, a part only of the author's statement may be given, and another part, perhaps of critical importance, omitted: or the whole of a passage may be given from one particular work, or part of a work, and a partial impression may be conveyed, because the passage was written from a special and precise point of view, and therefore was meant to deal with one aspect of the question, and not with the whole of it. In this case, no fair estimate of the author's opinion can be gained, unless reference be made to other parts of his works, and especially in cases where the author has dis-

cussed in a formal and methodical treatise the subject under discussion. Or it may offend by the omission of part of a passage; explanatory sentences may be left out in the middle of a quotation; and this is an offence of the worst kind, because it is difficult to acquit it of wilful misrepresentation: or the early part of the passage may be omitted; or the extract may stop short where it ought to have been continued; because important qualifications or explanations made by the author are thus omitted in the quotation.

(5.) The meaning of a writer may be practically misrepresented when the order of the passages quoted is changed. When what comes first in the original is placed last in the quotation, and what comes last is placed first; or when sentences really consecutive are so given as to have the appearance of being widely apart from each other; or sentences widely apart, as if they were closely consecutive.

Of all these modes of misquotation repeated instances occur in the Pamphlet.

(6.) These misstatements may have their origin in a habit, which deserves to be seriously considered, and which is dangerously common. I refer to the habit of second-hand quotation. It opens the door to indefinite inaccuracies, and multiplies an error once made a hundred times over. Some of the most distinguished writers of the day have apparently fallen into this habit, for on no other ground can the numerous mistakes of their quotations be explained. It appears to be thought, that when one writer gives the name of another writer as authority for the accuracy of certain quotations, he is himself discharged from all further responsibility. But neither in the code of human or of Divine morality can this principle be accepted. That human morality does not justify it, is shown by the law of libel; for the law holds a man responsible, not only for the origination, but for the propagation of what is false and slanderous. Religious controversy should not be conducted on a looser law of moral responsibility, than the transactions of ordi-

nary life. That the principle is not consistent with Divine morality is plain, for "every man must bear his own burden," so that "every one of us shall give account of himself to God." No man has a right to publish what he does not believe to be true, or in regard to which he has not taken pains to ascertain that it is true. If a man's name stands to a forfeited bond, he is not excused the penalty, because he did it carelessly, or falsely trusted to the honour or solvency of the man whose security he became. He may have such confidence in the writer whose quotations he adopts, and may have gained from experience such good reasons for trusting him, that he adopts his words without hesitation; but, nevertheless, he is responsible for adopting them, and must bear his own portion of the blame, if they are found to be inaccurate.

Such are the principal sources of misquotation; and by these tests every author must consent to be measured. No one can call into question their justice, for they are founded on the command, "Speak every man truth with his neighbour, for we are members one of another."

## PART II.

I now proceed to give the evidences, on which I venture publicly to impugn the fairness of the quotations contained in the Pamphlet. I shall in the first place contrast in parallel columns the passages as they are quoted, and the passages as they appear in the original, so that the reader may compare the sentiments of the authors as represented in the Pamphlet, and the sentiments of the authors as represented by themselves. I shall only add such rapid comments, as are required to make the contrast intelligible to the ordinary reader. I shall then sum up the evidence, and classify in a rapid way the offences against truth with which the Pamphlet is chargeable.

## THE PRAYER BOOK.

## FIRST EXHORTATION TO HOLY COMMUNION.

1. In this the Church, inviting us to the Holy Sacrament of the Body and Blood of CHRIST, bids us examine ourselves, bewail our sins, confess them to God, and purpose to amend; and then he proceeds to say, "if there be any" (and be it remembered, she speaks to *all* here, since *every* parishioner is required to communicate *at least* three times a year): "if there be any of you who by this means 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

1. A comparison of these words with the words adopted in previous editions will prove that the language has no reference to Sacramental Confession or Priestly Absolution, but to Ministerial Confession only. In the Communion Office of A.D. 1548 the Exhortation ran thus:—

"And if there be any of you whose conscience is troubled and grieved in anything, lacking comfort or counsel, let him come to me, or to some other discreet or learned Priest

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."

taught in the law of God, and confess and open his sin and grief secretly, that he may receive such ghostly counsel and comfort that his conscience may be relieved, and that of us, as a minister of God and of the Church, he may receive comfort and absolution, to the satisfaction of his mind, and avoiding of all scruple and doubtfulness: requiring such as shall be satisfied with a general Confession not to be offended with them that doth use, to their further satisfying, the auricular and secret confession to the Priest; nor those also which think needful or convenient for the quietness of their own consciences, particularly to open their sins to the Priest, to be offended with them which are satisfied with their humble confession to God, and the general confession to the Church: but in all these things to follow and keep the rule of charity; and every man to be satisfied with his own conscience, not judging other men's minds or acts, where as he hath no warrant of God's word for the same."

In the Prayer Book of 1549 A.D. the same words were used, with some trifling alterations. In the Prayer Book of 1552 it was altered thus:—

"And because it is requisite that no man should come to the Holy Communion but with a full trust in God's mercy, and with a quiet conscience: therefore if there be any of you which by the means aforesaid cannot quiet his own conscience, but requireth further comfort or counsel; then let him come to me, or some other learned and discreet minister of God's word, and open his grief, that he may receive such ghostly counsel, advice, and comfort, as his conscience may be relieved; and that by the ministry of God's Word he may receive comfort and the benefit of absolution, to the quieting of his conscience, and avoiding of all scruple and doubtfulness."

In the Prayer Book of 1559 A.D., the words are almost the



same. But in 1661 it was finally changed into the present form. The word "holy" having been added—"God's holy Word," as if to mark emphatically the reference to the "Holy Bible." Now, the form of 1548-9 professedly recognized the lawfulness of Auricular Confession! The Pamphlet intimates, that the words, as they now stand, recognize the lawfulness of Auricular Confession. But, if so, why was the form changed, and changed by the total omission of the words in which the recognition was formerly expressed.

2. It may be useful to observe that the term, Ministry of God's Holy Word, does not mean the reading of exhortations from Scripture, but the exercise of that Ministerial Office, which amongst other designations in Scripture is termed the "Ministry of the Word." (See Acts vi. 4.)

2. To understand by the "ministry of God's holy Word," (the "ministry" as it was originally printed;)—the sentence of absolution pronounced by a priest, is an exceedingly violent and improbable interpretation of the words. The question, how-

ever, can only be decided by the general usage of the Prayer Book, and this is decisive against it. In the form of 1548-9, the "warranty of God's Word" can only refer to the Scriptures, which are the Rule of faith. In the present form, the words "discreet and learned minister of God's Word," occur in the same sentence as "the ministry of God's Word," as it was formerly,—"the ministry of God's holy Word," as it is now. But if "God's Word" means the Scriptures in the one clause, it must also mean the Scriptures in the other clause. Omitting the present place, the phrase "God's Word" occurs in the Prayer Book twenty-three times, and on no one of these occasions can it possibly mean anything else than the Holy Scriptures. Four times it occurs in the Preface; and on the third time with the precise explanation, "the very pure Word of God, the Holy Scriptures." It occurs once in the Rubric appended to the Baptismal Service, "it is certain by God's Word." Twice it occurs in the Service for the Ordina-

tion of Priests, "dispensers of the Word of God and the Sacraments;" "to preach the Word of God, and to minister the Sacraments." Twice in the Office for the Consecration of Bishops, "doctrines contrary to God's Word;" "such authority as you have by God's Word." In the commission to the newly-consecrated Bishop occurs a remarkable passage, as clearly asserting Ministerial and Ecclesiastical Confession, as it excludes Sacramental Confession. "Be to the flock of Christ a shepherd, not a wolf; feed them, devour them not. Hold up the weak, heal the sick, bind up the broken, bring again the outcasts; seek the lost. Be so merciful that you be not too remiss; so minister discipline, that you forget not mercy," &c. Ten times the phrase is used in the Articles; twice in contrast with Sacraments, viz., in Articles XXVI., XXXVII.; once with the addition of the epithet "written;" "God's Word written," Article XX. Nor is this all. If we turn to the Homilies, we find it twice in the Preface, and thirteen times in the first Homily, to say nothing of the other Homilies, and always in the same indisputable sense. It occurs also with an equally precise usage eight times in the Canons; so that we find the phrase used forty-six times in the authorised formularies of the Church in one invariable sense. To fling aside all this authority of usage, and in one solitary place to interpret it of the act or form of Absolution, would be as monstrous a piece of criticism as it is well possible to conceive.

## II.—THE VISITATION SERVICE.

1. Again in the VISITATION FOR THE SICK. After asking the sick person the several questions mentioned in the Rubric, the Priest is directed thus: "Here shall the sick person *be moved* to make a special Confession of his sins, if he feel his conscience troubled with any weighty mat-

1. The two emphatic "ifs" must be noticed. "Then shall the sick person be moved to make a special confession of his sins, *if* he feel his conscience troubled with any weighty matter. After which confession the Priest shall

ter. After which Confession, the Priest shall *absolve* him (if he humbly and heartily desire it), after this sort:—

“ Our Lord Jesus Christ, Who hath *left power to His Church, to absolve* all sinners who truly repent and believe in Him, of His great mercy forgive thee thine offences: and by His authority committed to me, *I absolve thee* from all thy sins, In the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. Amen.”

So that every Priest of the Church of England is *bound to move or urge* the sick person to make Confession, if his conscience be troubled with any weighty matter. Again, then, is Confession distinctly placed before *all*, here especially as a preparation for Death.

2. This order, that the sick person shall here be “moved” to special Confession, was added in 1661, which is an important fact, as specially charging the priest to suggest it to the sick person, lest it should be forgotten.

absolve him (*if he humbly and heartily desire it*.)” But what if his conscience be not troubled and he does not desire the form of absolution—then he is not to be moved to make a special confession, nor is the Priest to absolve him. The confession is not suggested to all, but only to the sick with two qualifications: if his conscience be troubled, and if he earnestly desire absolution. If it was meant for all, why limit it with conditions?

2. It should have been added that in 1549 the Rubric ran thus: “Then shall the sick person make a special confession, if he feel his conscience troubled with any weighty matter. After which confession, the Priest shall absolve him after this form; and the same form of absolution shall be used in all private confessions.” In 1552 it was altered thus: “Then shall the sick person make a special confession, if he feel his conscience troubled with any weighty matter. After which confession the Priest shall absolve him after this sort.” This form was retained in 1559. It was at the last revision that the Rubric was brought into its present

shape. There has therefore been a progressive change. In 1549 private confession was recognised. In 1552 the recognition was taken away, and has never been replaced. In 1662 a second qualification was added—the form of absolution was no longer to be used as a matter of course, but only if the sick man humbly and earnestly desired it.

3. The Presbyterians (at Savoy Conf. 1661) requested that the form of absolution be declarative and conditional, as, "I pronounce thee absolved," instead of "I absolve thee," if thou dost truly repent and believe. The Bishops answered, "The form of absolution in the Liturgy is more agreeable to the Scriptures than that which they desire; it being said in John xx., "Whose sins you remit, they are remitted," not, 'whose sins you pronounce remitted;' and the condition needs not to be expressed, being always understood. (Cf. Cardwell, *Hist. of Conferences*, c. 7, p. 321 and p. 361.)

3. The third case (which is all that I shall adduce) is a passage at the end of the 113th CANON OF THE CHURCH (passed in Convocation in the year 1603, and published by the King's authority under the Great Seal of England), which runs thus:—

"Provided always, That if any man *confess his secret and hidden sins to the Minister*, for the unburdening of his conscience and to receive spiritual consolation

3. The declaration of the Bishops that the condition, "if thou dost truly repent and believe," is always necessarily understood, is fatal to the very idea of Sacramental Confession. For, if the absolution of the Minister and the absolution of God through Christ are not coincident, it cannot be true that Christ forgives through the Priest as his instrument. This is the argument of Bishop Jeremy Taylor: if God does not forgive in heaven, then the absolution of the human priest is useless; if he does, it is unnecessary.

3. The 113th Canon is equally applicable to Ministerial and Ecclesiastical Confession as to Sacramental, and therefore proves nothing as to the point under discussion. No one has ever denied that "Private Confession" is recognized and allowed in the Church of England. But there are three kinds of private Confession,

and ease of mind from him ; we do not any way bind the said Minister by this our Constitution" (that means, do not bind him to present to the Bishop the man who has so confessed his sins), "but do straitly charge and admonish him, that he do not at any time reveal and make known to any person whatsoever any crime or offence so committed to his trust and secrecy (except they be such crimes as by the laws of this realm his own life may be called into question for concealing the same), under pain of irregularity" (that is, deprivation of Priestly rights.)

Here, therefore, once more does the Church of England distinctly recognise the doctrine of Private Confession.

These quotations surely are conclusive! Every fair-minded person must admit that it is at least *allowed* in the Church of England.

and the question to be decided is, to which of the three does she give her sanction.

#### LUTHER.

LUTHER says of Private Confession, "*It is useful, yea, necessary, neither would I desire that it had no existence ; nay, rather I rejoyce that it exists in the Church of Christ.*" (De Capt. Babyl." opp. t. ii., fol. 292.)

1. The whole passage is as follows:—

"But Secret Confession which alone is maintained, although it cannot be proved by Scripture yet in a modified form is to be approved, and is useful, yea, necessary, neither would I desire that it had no existence ; nay rather I rejoyce that it exists in the Church of Christ, since it is the only cure of an afflicted conscience.

For when we have laid our conscience open to our brother, and have confidentially revealed the evil which lay hidden in it we find peace in the mercy of God speaking by the mouth of our brother. This only I hate, that such confession should be perverted into the tyranny and exactions of Pontiffs for they reserve the secrets to themselves and then command them to be made known to confessors appointed by themselves, and altogether despise the true duty of Pontiffs which is to preach the Gospel and to care for the poor." (De Capt. Baby. Eccl.; Vol. ii. page 287, fol. Jenæ, 1612.)

2. Again (vol. i., p. 312, Jena, quotations by Melia in "Protestant Evidences"): "What is the shame we feel in declaring our sins to a man, compared to the shame that will overwhelm us when death, and perhaps an immediate death, will force us to confess them in the presence of God, in the presence of the angels, and of the very devils themselves? All this we can avoid by humbling ourselves in the presence of a single man! Moreover, I do not conceive that that man can feel a lively faith who will not even condescend to so slight a humiliation, and thus bear a small share of the holy Cross." And even more strongly (vol. v., p. 233, Jena) Luther says, "Rely on the words of Jesus Christ, and be assured that God does not remit sin *otherwise than by the living voice of man*, as He Himself has ordained it."

3. Again (vol. i., p. 63, Jena): "The august and holy sacrament

2. These other quotations I give as they stand in the Pamphlet, because I have been unable to trace them. It will be observed that the second passage, printed in the same paragraph with the one already noticed, bears a different reference, and that in none of these latter references is any Treatise given. The truth appears to be that they are all copied verbatim from a "Treatise on Auricular Confession, Dogmatic, Historical, and Practical," by the Rev. Raphael Melia, D.D., Missionary Apostolic of the pious Society of the Missions founded by the servant of God, Viscount Paleotti. Dublin: James Duffy. On turning to this publication, I find the passages quoted, with a reference to an edition of Luther's works, published at

of Penance, that abundant source of grace, *is the only means* which the Divine mercy selected to pour grace and consolation into the heart of the sinner, when the keys were given to S. Peter, the representative of the whole Christian Church."

at Oxford, nor the University Library at Cambridge, nor the Library of Trinity College, Dublin. That the passages, in the exact form and relation in which they occur in the Pamphlet, should ever have been written by Luther is simply impossible; for among Luther's works is a formal Treatise on Confession, from which I extract the following:—

"There are three sorts of Confession. The first is that which we make before God . . . the second we make to our neighbour, and is a duty of charity as the other is of faith. Of this the Epistle of St. James speaks, Confess your faults one to another. . . . The third kind of confession, which the Pope has commanded, is that auricular confession, which is made to the priest. God has never commanded it, but the Pope hath forced men to it. . . .

"As to what they call Auricular Confession, we think that, although none ought to be forced to it, it is yet not altogether to be despised, for there are many reasons, for which we approve of it. The principal is that the word of God is never to be despised, but should be received with ardour of mind, wherever and whenever it can be heard. For indeed the Word of God has been spread over the whole world, so that there is not a corner of it in which it may not be found.

"But the word of God and the Gospel have this characteristic, that they promise the forgiveness of sins. This is indeed the sum of the Gospel, that sins are forgiven to them who believe in Christ. Nor is it possible to teach the Gospel, but that the priest must pronounce what they call absolution. . . .

Jena, 1546. I have searched in vain for this edition. It is neither to be found, nor to be traced, at the Library of the British Museum, nor the Library of Sion College, nor the Archbishop's Library at Lambeth, nor the Bodleian Library

“Nor is it of much importance, whether he (who receives the Confession) be a priest, or a public minister of the Church, or any other Christian man: for the word, which he speaks, is not his own, but God’s. And God does not esteem that word less, than if He had spoken it himself.

“Above all, as with the Sacrament, so with that word, which you hear from the priest, it is of no use unless it is applied personally. But in public discourses the promise flies out into the crowd, and, although it belongs to you as to others, you may not be so able to feel confident about it. But here in Confession it is spoken to you alone, so that you can have no doubt of the goodwill of God towards you. Now if there were any place on earth in which Christ himself wished to speak to you, or indeed an angel, not Christ, would you not be willing to go to the furthest bounds of the world that you might hear the heavenly voice.

“Although therefore I am unwilling that any one should be compelled to go to Confession, lest he should suppose that he sins in not doing so, I think confession to be a treasure, to which no earthly wealth is comparable, and not in the least degree to be despised. For no one is able, either to hear the Word of God with diligence enough or to engrave it in his mind, as it ought to be.” (Concio de Confessione et Sac. Euch. Jenæ, 1564.)

#### THE CHURCHES IN GERMANY.

Our own Hooker, too, tells us: “But concerning Confession in private, the Churches of Germany, as well the rest as Lutherans, agree all, that all men should at certain times confess their offences to God in the hearing of God’s ministers, thereby to show how their sins displease them; to receive instruction for the warièr carriage of themselves hereafter; to be soundly resolved,

The four last lines of the paragraph in the original are omitted, and it is not difficult to conjecture the reason. They refer absolution to “Christ’s own word and power,” in distinction to the word and power of an earthly priest. They are:—

“So that grounding upon this assured belief, they are to



if any scruple or snare of conscience do entangle their minds; and, which is most material, to the end that men may at God's hands *seek every one his own particular pardon, through the power of those keys*, which the minister of God using according to our blessed Saviour's institution in that case, it is their part to accept the benefit thereof as God's most merciful ordinance for their good, and without any distrust or doubt, to embrace joyfully His grace so given them according to the word of our Lord, which hath said, 'Whose sins ye remit, they are remitted.'" (Hooker, vi., ch. iv. 14.)

professed, the Church not denied to have authority either of abridging or enlarging the use of that power, upon the people no such necessity imposed of opening their transgression unto men, as if remission of sins otherwise were impossible; neither any such opinion had of the thing itself, as though it were either unlawful or unprofitable, save only for those inconveniences which the world hath by experience observed in it heretofore. And in regard thereof, the church of England hath hitherto thought it the safer way to refer men's hidden crimes unto God and themselves only; howbeit, not without special caution for the admonition of such as come to the holy sacrament, and for the comfort of such as are ready to depart the world." (Eccles. Pol., Bk. VI., p. 38, Vol. iii. London, 1821.)

Hooker's own views will be stated further on.

rest with minds encouraged and persuaded concerning the forgiveness of all their sins, as out of Christ's own word and power by the ministry of the keys."

Moreover, in the next sentence he proceeds to state, that the view of the Churches of Germany on this matter is not the view of the Church of England.

"It standeth with us in the Church of England, as touching public confession, thus . . . and for private confession and absolution it standeth thus.—

"The Minister's power to absolve is publicly taught and

## MELANCTHON.

So MELANCTHON: "*It would be wicked to take away private Absolution from the Church.* Nor if any despise private Absolution, do they understand either what remission of sins means, or the power of the keys" (cf. Carter, p. 86). So again (2 Book, "Oper. Inst.," fol. 450): "Absolution . . . is good and profitable before God, and being so, Confession is to be retained in which Absolution is asked."

This extract affords an apt illustration of the unhealthy system of second-hand quotation, habitual among some modern writers. The Pamphlet gives the passage on the authority of the Rev. T. T. Carter, in his work on "Doctrine of Confession in the Church of England." On turning to this publication I find that Mr. Carter in his turn gives it on the authority of the Rev. H. G. Newland, in his work, "Practice of Confession in the Church of England." On turning to this work, I find the passage unauthenticated by any reference whatever. For controversial purposes the passage is therefore worthless. I have been unable to find it, and equally unable to find the second quotation. Two editions of Melancthon's works, which I have consulted, contain no work entitled the "Institutes." On the subject, however, of confession, and its kindred subject of absolution, Melancthon has written freely, and his views are identical with those of Luther. In his treatise on the Articles of Faith he writes thus:—

"Confession is not abolished in our Churches. For it is not customary to administer the Lord's body except to persons examined and absolved. Our people are diligently taught about the faith of absolution upon which nothing has been said in times past. They are taught to regard absolution of the greatest importance because it is the voice of God, and is pronounced by the command of God. The power of the Keys is commended, and it is explained how much comfort it can give to frightened consciences, and that God requires faith from us that we may trust that absolution as we would a voice that sounds from heaven, and that such a faith in Christ must

obtain and receive absolution. Formerly satisfactions were immoderately extolled, but no mention was made of the merits of Christ and of the righteousness of faith, in which particular our Church leaves little cause for complaint. For even our adversaries are compelled to acknowledge that the doctrine of repentance is most diligently taught and explained by our ministers.

“But as to confession they teach that an enumeration of sins is not necessary, and that consciences ought not to be burdened with the task of enumerating all sins, for the thing is impossible. So the Psalmist testifies, ‘Who can understand his offences.’ So also Jeremiah, ‘The heart of man is corrupt and unsearchable.’ But if no sins are forgiven which are not first confessed, men’s consciences can never be at rest, because they can neither perceive nor remember all their transgressions. The ancient writers also testify that an enumeration of sins is not necessary. For the Decretals quote Chrysostom, who says I do not tell you to expose yourself in public, nor accuse yourself before other men, but I wish you to obey the prophet when he says, Acknowledge your way unto the Lord, therefore confess your sins to God the true Judge, and speak to Him. Tell your offences not with your tongue, but with the memory of your conscience. And the Gloss on Repentance confesses that confession is only of human appointment. Nevertheless, confession is retained among us principally for the benefit of absolution but also for other advantages to the conscience.” (Art. Fid. Præ. Melanctoni, P. Op. Om., Vol. i. pp. 34, 35. Wittebergæ, 1562.)

In a larger work he enters into the subject more fully. He first presses the importance of distinguishing the different meanings of the word “confession.” He then proceeds to enumerate the advantages of private confession, to which he had referred in the previous passage.

“For the sake of private absolution, which is a thing to be retained in the Church, the habit of seeking absolution is to be

retained likewise, and there are many other advantages secured by this private intercourse even where there is no enumeration of sins. The first is, that absolution is sought. The second, that the pastor can question his hearers concerning their faith. The third, that certain unlearned persons should not be admitted to the sacraments till they have been examined concerning their faith, and this intercourse has about it the character of catechetical instruction. Fourth, although the pastor must not compel any one to tell his secret deeds, yet he may put questions to them about their morals suitable to their age and condition and may usefully advise them. . . . Fifth, as it is said in Nehemiah and in Matthew they confessed their sins, that is, they made a general confession that they were guilty, they submitted themselves to God, they gave expression to their grief. Thus, in seeking absolution, although there may not be any mention of sins in particular yet there must be a general acknowledgment that we are guilty, we must submit ourselves to God, and truly grieve that we have offended God, have polluted the Church and given occasion for fresh judgments upon her. When this custom is prudently and gravely retained, it is a valuable help to discipline. Sixth, of all other reasons this chiefly influences prudent men. The habit of seeking absolution is a public witness that those who have fallen may on repentance, be received again of God, and ought to be received by the Church." (*Loci Theolog. Ibid. p. 251.*)

"The power of the ministry is illustrated when men are taught to distinguish between an act which is judicial, and an act which is ministerial. For a ministry touches the conscience and testifies to the forgiveness of God. But judgment is another thing and touches notorious offences. No man ought to be excommunicated or to be admitted again without enquiry, but that enquiry must relate, not to the conscience, but to outward morals, and that absolution before the Church takes effect even though the person absolved should only pretend to be repentant." (*Ibid. pp. 252-3.*)

## CALVIN.

1. So CALVIN bids "every faithful man remember that it is *his duty* (if inwardly he be vexed and afflicted with the sense of his sins) not to neglect that remedy which is offered him by the Lord, to wit, that (for the easing of his conscience) he make private confession of his sins unto his pastor."

1. The entire passage, from which the extract is made, is as follows:—

"For as the duty of mutual admonition and correction is committed to all Christians, but is especially enjoined on ministers, so while we all ought to console each other mutually, and confirm each

other in confidence on the Divine mercy, we see that ministers, to assure our consciences of the forgiveness of sins, are appointed to be witnesses and sponsors of it, so that they are themselves said to forgive sins and to loose souls (Matt. xvi. 19; xviii. 18). When you hear this attributed to them, reflect that it is for your use. Let every believer, therefore, remember, that if in private he is so agonised and afflicted by a sense of his sins that he cannot obtain relief without the aid of others, it is his duty not to neglect the remedy which God provides for him—viz., to have recourse for relief to a private confession to his own pastor, and for consolation privately implore the assistance of him, whose business it is, both in public and private, to solace the people of God with Gospel doctrines." (Calvin's Inst., Vol. I. B. III., c. iv., s. 12. Edin., 1863.)

The very next words go on to express a caution as to the frequency of this appeal for ministerial help:—

"But we must always use moderation, lest in a matter, as to which God prescribes no certain rule our consciences be burdened with a certain yoke. Hence it follows, first, that confession of this nature ought to be free so as not to be exacted of all, but only recommended to those who feel that they have need of it; and, secondly, even those who use it according to their necessity must neither be compelled by any precept, nor artfully induced to enumerate all their sins, but only in so far as they

shall deem it for their interest, that they may obtain the full benefit of consolation. Faithful pastors, as they would both eschew tyranny in their ministry, and superstition in the people, must not only leave this liberty to churches, but defend and strenuously vindicate it." (Ibid.)

2. So again (3d Bk. of Instits. c. 4), after speaking of the benefit of Public Absolution, and referring to John xx. 23, he adds : "Nor has Private Absolution less efficacy or fruit where it is sought for by those who have need of this special remedy to heal their infirmity."

2. The concluding words of the passage, which the Pamphlet omits, are very explicit. The whole is as follows :—

"Nor is private absolution of less benefit or efficacy when asked by those who stand in need of a special remedy for their infirmity. It not seldom

happens that he who hears general promises which are intended for the whole congregation of the faithful, nevertheless remains somewhat in doubt, and is still disquieted in mind, as if his own remission were not yet obtained. Should this individual lay open the secret wound of his soul to his pastor, and hear those words of the Gospel specially addressed unto him, Son, be of good cheer, thy sins be forgiven thee (Matt. v. 2), his mind will feel secure, and escape from the trepidation with which he was previously agitated. But when we treat of the keys, we must always beware of dreaming of any power apart from the Gospel." (Ibid. s. 14.)

#### CRANMER.

But to turn to our own great divines.

ARCHBISHOP CRANMER said that "Confession of sins which is called auricular, and is made privately to the ministers of the Church, is very useful and MOST ADVANTAGEOUS." We find this in Cranmer's handwriting as a correction to the words "highly

It should be borne in mind that, if the Thirteen Articles constituted the groundwork for the Articles now in use, the fact only makes it more significant, that in the Thirty-nine Articles there should not be a solitary reference to that subject of confession, which occu-

necessary, which occur in the eighth ("De Pœnitentia") of the XIII. Articles. These articles were written indeed in 1538, but yet are important, as they seem to have constituted the groundwork for the Articles now in use (cf. for Latin original, Strype's "Cranmer," vol. iv., p. 283; also "Hardwick on Articles," p. 256).

to have been in progress at the date of these Thirteen Articles. At all events, even his language appeared too strong to the King, for he suggested seven alterations, and every one of them consists either of a softer word for a stronger one, or the addition of explanatory words to the same effect. But that Cranmer's own views may be correctly understood, it is necessary that the context, before and after the passage quoted in the pamphlet, should be carefully considered. The whole passage is as follows:—

"But since most Christian men are ignorant of the things which produce repentance, nor know how true repentance is to be effected, nor where forgiveness of sins may be obtained: that they may be the better instructed, and taught on these matters, not only must preachers and pastors in their public discourses, diligently instruct the people out of the Holy Scriptures what true repentance is, but also that confession of sins which we call auricular and which is made in private to a minister, is very useful and highly necessary.

"This Confession is by all means to be retained and highly esteemed in the Church, not only on account of the instruction of the unlearned in the word of God, and other advantages not a few (of which we shall speak presently), but principally for the benefit of absolution, that is, the forgiveness of sins, which in this confession is offered and declared to the penitent by absolution and the power of the keys, according to

pied no less than four long paragraphs in the Thirteen Articles. The gradual change which took place in Cranmer's mind is well known; and while it was most remarkable in his views of the Lord's Supper, it necessarily extended to the other points in controversy with the Church of Rome. This change appears

that promise of Christ, John xx., 'Whosoever sins ye remit.' In this absolution we certainly ought to have confidence, for it is the voice of the Gospel, by which the minister through the word, not in his own name but in the name and by the authority of Christ announces and proffers forgiveness of sins to the penitent. When the penitent truly believes and trusts that voice of the Gospel sounding through the minister, his conscience is made clear about the forgiveness of his sins, and he knows for certain that God is favourable and merciful to him. This one thing should greatly influence Christian men by all means to love and to avail themselves of that confession in which by absolution the certainty of God's favour and of the forgiveness of sins is understood and established."—(Cranmer's Works, p. 476. Parker Society, Cambridge, 1846.)

#### JUSTUS JONAS.

And in the year 1548, in the Catechism written indeed by Justus Jonas, but put forth by Cranmer's authority, being dedicated by him to Edward VI., and spoken of him in one place at least as his own, we read, "Now God doth not speak to us with a Voice sounding out of heaven; but he hath *given* the Keys of the Kingdom of Heaven, and the *authority to forgive sin, to the ministers of the Church*. Wherefore *let him that is a sinner go to one of them*. Let him *knowledge and confess his sin*, and pray him that, according to God's commandments, he will give him absolution, and comfort him with the word of grace and forgiveness of his sins. And when the minister doth so, then I ought

The passage is taken from a discourse on the Authority of the Keys. The author first explains the general ministerial commission:—

"Now the sum of the commission which Christ gave to his disciples was this, that they should preach repentance and forgiveness of sin, in his name. And he added thereto, both a promise and a threatening, saying, He that will believe and be baptized, shall be saved. But he that will not believe shall be damned. Wherefore all things which the ministers of Christ do say or do to us ought to be directed to this



steadfastly to believe that my sins are truly forgiven to me in heaven." And a little later in the same, "Wherefore, good children, give good ear to this doctrine; and when *your sins do make you afraid and sad, then seek and desire absolution and forgiveness of your sins of the ministers which have received a commission and commandment from Christ Himself to forgive men their sins; and then your consciences shall have peace, tranquillity, and quietness.* But he that doth not obey this counsel, but being either blind or proud, *doth despise the same, he shall not find forgiveness of his sins,* neither in his own good works, nor yet in painful chastisements of his body, or any other things whereto God hath not promised remission of sins, wherefore *despise not absolution, for it is the commandment and ordinance of God.*"—"On Authority of the Keys," Tracts of Anglican Fathers, vol. i., pp. 22—26.)

and to deny them absolution, that be repentant and trust in the mercy of God, then they should not do well, nor their acts should be of any force, but they should deceive themselves and others also."—(Catechism, p. 198, Lond. 1710 A.D.)

He then explains how the necessity for this ministerial work arises:—

"For it is not so easy a thing, to rise again from sin, as the mad and blind world doth think, but when the Devil and our faith shall skirmish, then in those straits, and troubles of con-

end, that they may loose us, and declare unto us, the forgiveness of our sins, when we truly repent, and believe in Christ. But when we do not repent of our sin, and forsake the same, or do not believe the Gospel, then they ought to bind or reserve sin, and to declare unto us, that if we still continue in sin, we shall be damned for ever. And when the ministers do thus execute their commission, then they obey God, and whose sins soever they forgive on earth their sins be forgiven in heaven also. And contrary-wise, whosoever they bind on earth, their sins be bound also in heaven. But if the ministers would enterprise to do contrary to their commission, that is to say, to forgive sins to unrepentant persons or unbelievers, or to bind their sins

science, we have need of the help of some true minister of the Church, which (as it were in our swooning) may lift us up with the word of God, comfort, and refresh us."—(Ibid. p. 199.)

He then applies the principle to open and to secret sins, and proceeds:—

“ And this also is to be reprov'd, that some men, which continue in manifest and open sin, and go not about to amend their lives yet they will be counted Christian men and enterprize to receive the same sacraments, that other do, to come to the church, to worship God, and to pray with other. Such must be warn'd of their faults, and if they refuse to hear and amend, then they ought to be excommunicate and put out of the Christian congregation, until they repent and amend their lives. . . . For they which presumptuously do cast away all yokes of ecclesiastical discipline or punishments, and do let, that such kind of correction, as is agreeable to the Gospel, may not be restored again, shall have without doubt God for their Judge. But let us pray our Lord Jesus Christ, that as it hath pleas'd Him to restore unto us his most blessed word, and the true understanding of the same, so also he will vouchsafe to render and send again to us, these and such like good and wholesome ordinances agreeable to his Word.

“ Now when a man after baptism hath grievously sinned, and doubteth in his conscience, whether he be in the favour of God or no, as oftentimes it happeneth, then it is hard for him to trust to his own bare imagination, thinking in this fashion, I know that I have sinned, but yet I am in this opinion, that God is not so cruel an avenger, but that he hath forgiven me. For such an opinion without God's word, is not a true faith, nor is able to stand in the dangerous skirmishes of temptation. But true faith must ever be stay'd on the certain word and work of God. Now God doth not speak to us with a voice sounding out of heaven but he hath given the keys of the kingdom of heaven, and the authority to forgive sin, to the ministers of the Church. Wherefore let him that is a sinner go to one of them, knowledge

and confess his sin; and pray him, that according to God's commandment" (not commandments as in the pamphlet) "he will give him absolution and comfort him with the word of grace and forgiveness of his sins. And when the minister doth so, I ought stedfastly to believe, that my sins are truly forgiven me in heaven. And such a faith is able to stand strong in all skirmishes, and assaults of our mortal enemy, the Devil, forasmuch as it is builded on a sure rock, that is to say, upon the certain word and work of God. For he that is absolved, knoweth for a surety, that his sins be forgiven him by the minister. And he knoweth assuredly also, that the minister hath authority from God himself to do so. And thirdly he knoweth that God hath made this promise to his ministers, and said to them To whom ye forgive sins on earth, to him also shall they be forgiven in heaven. Wherefore good children, give good heed to this doctrine, and when your sins do make you afraid and sad, then seek and desire absolution and forgiveness of your sins from the ministers, which have received the commission and commandment from God himself to forgive men their sins, and then your consciences shall have peace tranquillity and quietness. But he that doth not obey the counsel, but being either blind or proud, doth despise the same, he shall not find forgiveness of his sins, neither in his own good works, nor yet in painful chastisements of his body, or any other thing, whereto God hath not promised remission of sins. Wherefore despise not absolution, for it is the commandment or ordinance of God, and the Holy Spirit of God is present, and causeth these then to take effect in us, and to work our salvation. And this is the meaning and plain understanding of these words of Christ, which you heard heretofore rehearsed, which are written to the intent that we should believe that whatsoever God's ministers do for us by God's commandment, are as much available as if God himself should do the same. For whether the ministers do excommunicate open malefactors and unrepentant persons, or do give absolution to those, which be truly repentant

for their sins and mend their lives, these acts of the ministers, have as great power and authority, and be confirmed and ratified in heaven, as though our Lord Jesus Christ himself had done the same. Wherefore, good children learn these things diligently. And when you be asked How understand you the words before rehearsed? ye shall answer, I do believe, that whatsoever the ministers do to us by God's commandment, either in excommunicating open and unrepentant sinners, or in absolving repentant persons, all these their acts, be of as great authority, and as surely confirmed in heaven, as if Christ should speak the words out of heaven.

“ So ye have, good children, the beginning and foundation of the ministers of God's word, and of the authority of the keys, as our Lord Jesus Christ himself did first ordain and institute the same. The which our Saviour Christ did institute and appoint for this purpose, that our consciences might thereby be comforted, and assured of the forgiveness of sins, and to have the inestimable treasury of the Gospel, as often as we have need thereof.” (Ibid. pp. 201, 204.)

#### THE FIRST PRAYER BOOK.

In the next year followed the FIRST PRAYER BOOK OF EDWARD VI., accepted by Convocation, Archbishop Cranmer presiding, in which the exhortation to the Holy Communion runs thus: “ And if there be any of you, whose conscience is troubled and grieved in any thing, lacking comfort or counsel, let him come to me, or to some other discreet and learned Priest taught in the law of God, and confess and open his sin and grief secretly, that he may receive such ghostly counsel, advice, and comfort, that

By first quoting from the present Prayer Book by itself, as on page 5 of the pamphlet, and then quoting from the First Prayer Book subsequently, and also by itself, the true meaning of the Church is lost. Whereas, when we compare the two, and find that a reference to auricular confession contained in the First Prayer Book was carefully and wholly removed in subsequent revisions, it becomes evident that a change had

his conscience may be relieved, and that of us (as of the ministers of God and of the Church) he may receive comfort and absolution, to the satisfaction of his mind, and avoiding of all scruple and doubtfulness; requiring such as shall be satisfied with a general confession, *not to be offended with them that do use, to their further satisfying, the auricular and secret confession to the Priest*; nor those also which think needful or convenient, for the quietness of their own consciences, particularly to open their sins to the Priest, to be offended with them that are satisfied with their humble confession to God, and the general Confession to the Church. But in all things to follow and *keep the rule of Charity*, and every man to be satisfied with his own conscience, not judging other men's minds or consciences; whereas he hath no warrant of God's word to the same."

taken place in the views of the compilers between the issue of the successive editions. The recognition accorded to auricular confession in 1548-9 was intentionally withheld in 1552, showing that auricular confession was no longer permitted in the Church.

#### BISHOP RIDLEY.

BISHOP RIDLEY writes: "*Confession unto the minister*, which is able to instruct, correct, and inform the weak, wounded, and ignorant conscience, *indeed I ever thought might do much good to Christ's congregation, and so I assure you I think to this day*" (Ridley's Works, Park. Soc., 338). This was Ridley's view,

The words of Bishop Ridley are correctly quoted; but they give no support whatever to the view of confession which Mr. Gray must be supposed to hold. The office of the minister is to "instruct, correct, reform;" but not to absolve. The controversies in which

written April, 1554, from Bocardo, the prison at Oxford, the very year before he was burnt, Oct. 16, 1555.

Ridley was engaged may be said to have turned exclusively upon the subject of the Lord's Supper. On auricular confession I have found nothing in his works. What opinion he is likely to have formed of it, in common with the other parts of the Romish system, may be gathered from the two following extracts:—

“It may be evident, and easy to perceive, that these two ways, these two religions, the one of Christ, the other of the Romish See, in these latter days, be as far distant the one from the other, as light and darkness, good and evil, righteousness and unrighteousness, Christ and Belial.” (Ridley's Works. A Piteous Lamentation, p. 57. Parker Society, 1841.)

“Thou must be a contributor to the changes of all the disguised apparel, that the popish sacrificing priest, like unto Aaron, must play his part in. Yea when the pardoner cometh about, or the flattering friar, to beg for the maintenance of superstition, except thou do as thy neighbours do, look not long for to live in rest.” (Ibid. p. 67.)

#### BISHOP LATIMER.

Again, BISHOP LATIMER, another Reformer, after denouncing “THEIR (i. e. our Papists') auricular” Confession, viz., that “we MUST go to the Priest,” that sin “may not be forgiven without confession,” the “binding” men's consciences to use it, says, under the head of “True and meet Confession is very necessary:” “*To speak of right and true Confession, I would to God it were kept in England; for it is a good thing, and those which find themselves grieved in con-*

1. The whole passage considerably modifies the impression, which the quotation on the other side is calculated to convey:—

“Here our Papists make much ado with their auricular confession, proving the same by this place (Matt. viii. 1, 2, 3). For they say Christ sent this man unto the priest to fetch there his absolution; and therefore we must go also unto

science might go to a learned man, and there fetch of him comfort of the Word of God, and so come to a quiet conscience, which is better, and more to be regarded, than all the riches of the world" (Lat. Sermons, 3rd after Epiphany, p. 179, 1552).

the priest, and, after confession, receive of him absolution of all our sins. But yet, we must take heed, they say, that we forget nothing; for all those sins that are forgotten, may not be forgiven. And so they bind the consciences of men, persuading them that when their sins were all numbered and confessed, it was well. And hereby they took clean away the passion of Christ. For they made this numbering of sins to be a merit; and so they came to all the secrets that were in men's hearts: so that emperor nor king could say or do, nor think anything in his heart, but they knew it; and so applied all the purposes and intents of princes to their own commodities. And this was the fruit of their auricular confession. But to speak of right and true confession, I would to God it were kept in England; for it is a good thing. And those which find themselves grieved in conscience might go to a learned man, and there fetch of him comfort of the word of God, and so to come to a quiet conscience: which is better and more to be regarded, than all the riches of the world." (Serm. for 3rd Sund. after Epiphany. Sermons and Remains of Hugh Latimer, pp. 179, 180. Parker Society, 1845.)

*Foot Note to p. 15.*

What "learned man" means is plainly shown—(α) by Latimer's own words in the two next quotations, where it is used synonymously with "Priest" and "Minister;" (β) by Turner's quotation below, "Let the Bishops appoint 'learned men,' . . . then the people shall come to the 'Priests' by heaps and swarms."

So far from its being "plainly shown" that the phrase "learned man" is equivalent to the word priest, the fact is the exact reverse. In his Sixth Sermon on the Lord's Prayer, Latimer says:—

"But to say the truth there is a great fault in the priests, for they for the most part be unlearned and wicked, and seek rather ways and means to

wickedness than to godliness." (Sermons of Bp. Latimer, Ser. XXII., p. 423. Parker Society, 1844.)

To the same effect wrote Archbishop Cranmer :—

"To this are to be added other advantages of private confession, of which one is, that unlearned and ignorant (imperiti) men can never be more conveniently or better instructed in Christian doctrine than in confession, provided they secure a learned and holy confessor." (Cranmer's Works, p. 476, Parker Society, 1846.)

The quotation from William Turner, which follows on page 16 of pamphlet, is sufficient of itself to disprove the conclusion of Mr. Gray. It clearly implies that the Bishops were apt to appoint priests to hear confessions who were not learned men, but blockheads. If some priests were "blockheads," "priests" and "learned men" could not have stood in his usage as equivalent expressions.

2. And in a sermon for 1st Sunday in Advent, p. 13 (under head of Auricular Confession), he says to those who are content with the assurance from the pulpit that CHRIST will forgive if they are truly sorry, well; "but they that are not satisfied with it, they may go to some godly learned minister, which is able to instruct and comfort them with the Word of God, to minister that same (absolution, of which he has been speaking) unto them for their contentation and quieting of their consciences;" and then proceeds very rightly to warn them against believing in any satisfaction or absolution for our sins save through CHRIST, that we must first believe in His Atonement; and absolution may

2. The extract in the other column will be seen to stop with the word "consciencess." The reason for this can readily be conjectured, when the entire passage is read as it is given below :—

"As touching confession, I tell you, that they that can be content with the general absolution, which every minister of God's Word giveth in his sermons, when he pronounceth that all that be sorry for their sins, and believe in Christ, seek help and remedy by him, and afterward intend to amend their lives, and avoid sins and wickedness, all those that be



not be had except we believe in the satisfaction made by Him for us, nor will His satisfaction avail except we make restitution and amends for our sin according to the utmost of our power.

godly learned minister which is able to instruct and comfort them with the word of God, to minister that same unto them to their sustentation and quieting of their consciences. As for satisfaction, or absolution from our sins, there is none but in Christ; we cannot make amends for our sins, but only by believing in him that suffered for us. For he hath made the amends for all our sins by his painful passion and bloodshedding. And herein standeth our absolution or remission of our sins, namely, when we believe in him, and look to be saved through his death; none other satisfaction we are able to make." (Sermon for 1st Sunday in Advent, pp. 13, 14. Sermons and Remains. Parker Society, 1864.)

3. And again, "Sir, I tell thee the Priest, he hath power given unto him from our Saviour to absolve in such wise as he is commanded by Him. But I think ministers be not greatly troubled therewith; for the people seek their carnal liberties, which indeed is not well, and a thing which misliketh God. For I would have them that are grieved in conscience, to go to some godly man which is able to minister God's Word, and there to fetch his Absolution, if he cannot be satisfied in the public sermon. It were truly a thing which would do much good."— ("Sermon on Lord's Prayer," p. 423, Park. Soc.)

so minded, shall have remission of their sins; now, I say, they that be content with this general absolution, it is well; but they that are not satisfied with it, they may go to some

3. But there be peradventure some of you, which will say, "the priest can absolve me, and forgive me my sins. Sir, I tell thee, the priest or minister, call him what you will, he hath power given unto him from our Saviour to absolve in such wise as he is commanded by him: but I think Ministers be not greatly troubled therewith, for the people seek their carnal liberties, which, indeed, is not well, and a thing which misliketh God. For I would have them that are grieved in conscience

to go to some godly man, which is able to minister God's Word, and there to fetch his absolution, if he cannot be satisfied in the public sermon; it were truly a thing that would do much good. But, to say the truth, there is a great fault in the priests; for they for the most part be unlearned and wicked, and seek rather means and ways to wickedness than to godliness. But a godly minister, which is instructed in the Word of God, can and may absolve in open preaching, not of his own authority, but in the name of God; for God saith, 'Ego sum qui tollo iniquitates;' 'I am he that cleanseth thy sins.' But I may absolve you, as an officer of Christ, in the open pulpit in this wise: 'As many as confess their sins unto God, acknowledging themselves to be sinners; and believe that our Saviour, through his passion, hath taken away their sins, and have an earnest purpose to leave sin; as many, I say, as be so affectioned, 'Ego absolvo vos;' I, as an officer of Christ, as his treasurer, absolve you in his name.' This is the absolution that I can make by God's Word."—("Sermons of Bishop Latimer. Sermons and Remains. Sixth Sermon on the Lord's Prayer," pp. 423-424. Parker Society, 1844.)

#### WILLIAM TURNER.

So WILLIAM TURNER, another of the Reformers: "*We do not utterly forsake auricular or ear confession; but the additions of man's traditions are parted and sundered from wholesome doctrine. . . . If we perceive not . . . if any doubt arise in our consciences. . . . Furthermore, when we be faint-hearted, or have no courage, and are vexed with temptations, we may not despise the remedy that God ordained. Thou hast God's Word, 'Whose sins ye remit,*

In the "Old and New Learning," William Turner contrasts the teaching of the Church of Rome as the "New Learning," with the teaching of Scripture as the "Old Learning." Thus, under the head of "Confession, the New Learning," he states the doctrine of Rome, and then, under "the Old Learning," the doctrine of the Word of God. After quoting Ps. xxxii., Luke

&c. (Matt. xviii. John xx.) . . . xviii., Luke vii , Matt. iii.,  
 Let the Bishops appoint learned Acts xix. 18, 1 John i., and  
 men to hear confessions, and not 1 Peter v., he proceeds,—  
 blockheads, and then the people  
 shall come to the Priests by heaps  
 and swarms.”—(“The Old and  
 New Learning,” Tracts of Angli-  
 can Fathers, vol. ii., p. 196.)

“In the first of John the  
 first chapter we have a con-  
 fession which is of God’s law,  
 by the which we confess our  
 faults lowly to God the

knower of men’s hearts: and he is faithful and righteous to  
 forgive us them, for he giveth grace to lowly persons, and  
 resisteth proud men. Where as true penance is, truly there is  
 also confession, as the true fruit of penance. We do not utterly  
 forsake auricular or ear confession, but the additions of men’s  
 traditions are parted and sundered from wholesome doctrine, as  
 chaff is from the corn. It is a wholesome doctrine and accord-  
 ing to God’s law, to require the law at the mouth of a priest,  
 and to learn of the bishop the way of the Lord (Malachi ii.,  
 Haggai ii., 1 Tim. iii., Titus i.) Therefore I would not that the  
 order of the Church should be broken, which is (1 Cor. xii.)  
 where the Apostle after he had made mention of the mystical  
 body, showeth that Christ set in the Church, or Congregation,  
 first Apostles, then Prophets or Preachers, thirdly teachers.  
 Why should teachers be in the Church: namely for this  
 intent, that they having the fashion and the form of wholesome  
 words should teach the Church those things which be necessary  
 for man’s salvation; and resist with the sword of the Spirit,  
 the enemies of the faith, and all ungodliness: and that they  
 might preach the word openly and privily, that they be fervent  
 in season and out of season, that they rebuke, reprove, and ex-  
 hort with all gentleness and learning, 2 Timothy iii. Let  
 them know the face and countenance of their flock, and, to be  
 short, let them be full of those virtues, the which God requireth,  
 Ezekiel xxxiii., of the watchmen or overseers of the house  
 of Israel. If we perceive not and be ignorant in anything  
 that pertaineth unto a Christian man’s living, and it is not plainly

taught in the open sermon, we must go to the curate, to hear of his mouth the judgments and testimonies of the Lord. If any doubt arises in our consciences, whom ought we rather to go to, and ask counsel than of the herdman of our souls; furthermore when we be faint-hearted or have no courage and are vexed with temptations; we may not despise the remedy that God ordereth. Thou hast God's word Matt. xvii. and John xx. whose sins ye shall remit, &c. Whom would not these fatherly promises provoke and allure to confession; where as the conscience is lifted up and established not by man's word, but by God's word, spoken by his mouth." (A Comparison between the Old Learning and the New, translated out of Latin in English by William Turner. Printed in Southwark by me James Nicholson. 1537.)

#### JEWEL.

1. Thus too BISHOP JEWEL, the Apologist: "*Touching the third (private Confession, made unto our brother), if it be discreetly used to the greater comfort and better satisfaction of the penitent, without superstition or other ill, it is not in any way by us reprov'd. The abuses and errors set apart, we do no more mislike a private confession than a private sermon.*" And adding, to guard against compulsory Confession, "Thus much only we say, that private Confession to be made unto the minister is neither COMMANDED by CHRIST, nor NECESSARY to salvation." ("Defence of Apology," p. 351, Park. Soc.)

1. It will be observed that the words quoted on the opposite side have reference to confession "to our brother." With confession "unto the minister" he deals in another paragraph. The two things were therefore regarded by him as distinct. In the same section he, says, after quoting "Chrysostom de Sacerd." Lib. iii. :—

"He speaketh of the sacrament of baptism, of preaching, and of prayer. By these means St. Chrysostom saith the priest remitteth sins, and reconcileth God unto the people. Who would think that Dr.

Harding would allege these places for private confession, where as is not so much as one word spoken of Confession. . . .”

“Mark the word and examples that St. Basil useth. ‘Thus,’ saith he, ‘the people expressed their sins to John the Baptist: Thus they confessed their sins to the Apostles.’ Thus saith St. Basil. But did either the Apostles or John Baptist hear private confession?” (“Defence of Apology,” part ii. p. 352. Parker Society, 1848.)

2. Again, after quoting “*The Church of England hath authority this day by God’s Word to bind and loose as much as ever Christ gave any of His Apostles*; and by the same authority the Church of England is able to bind, not only M. Harding and his fellows, as Peter bound Simon Magus, or as Paul bound Elymas the false prophet, but also the Pope himself, if he be an open offender; and, as St. Paul saith, is able to deliver him over to Satan; and, undoubtedly, being so bound in earth, he shall also stand bound in heaven,”—he says, “*As for private Confession, abuses and errors set apart, as it is said before, we condemn it not, but leave it at liberty; and therein we seem to follow the advice of Charles the Emperor, . . . ‘Confession and enumeration of sins, as it is not too much to be relaxed, so on the other hand it must not be too much made a matter of obligation.’*” (*Ibid.* pp. 362, 363.)

2. The quotation on the other side is given with verbal correctness. But the Pamphlet omits to state, that the section in which it occurs begins with these words:—

“We confound not these keys, M. Harding, but speak plainly and distinctly of either other. We say that the power, as well of loosing as also of binding, standeth in God’s word; and the exercise or execution of the same standeth either in preaching, or else in sentence of correction and ecclesiastical discipline.” (*Ibid.* p. 362.)

The section ends with the following:—

“Thus, M. Harding, it is plain by the judgment of your own doctors that, were your auricular confession quite abolished, yet might the people notwithstanding have full remission of their sins. But of you it may be verified that

Christ said unto the Pharisees, 'Ye have taken away the keys of the kingdom of heaven; and neither do ye enter yourselves, nor will you suffer others that would enter.' Of your keys, Veselus said long sithence: 'Claves Papæ et Prelatorum non aperiunt regnum Dei sed claudunt potius.' The Pope's and the Prelates keys do not open the kingdom of heaven, but rather shut it." (Ibid. 363.)

3. So again: "Abuses and errors removed, and especially the Priest being learned. . . . we mislike no manner of Confession, whether it be private or public. For as we think it not unlawful to make open Confession before many, so we think it not unlawful (abuses always excepted) to make the like Confession in private, either before a few or before one alone." (Heylin quotes from "Def. of Apology," pt. 2, c. 7, § 2.)

have said before, we mislike no manner confession, whether it be private or public. For, as we think it not unlawful to make open confession before many, so we think it not unlawful, abuses always excepted, to make the like confession in private, either before a few or before one alone. But, as the holy fathers upon good consideration, were forced to remove the use of open confession, even so we say, that upon the like good considerations private confession also may be removed.

"Only this we say, that Christ, when he sent his disciples into the world, and gave them authority to bind and to loose, made no manner mention of any such hearing of confession, but only bade them 'Go and preach the Gospel.'" (Ibid. part II. p. 375.)

4. Again: "To be short, we succeed the Bishops that have

3. This quotation is mutilated, as will be seen from the entire passage;—

"All this notwithstanding, albeit M. Harding was able to prove that the fathers had somewhere made mention of confession in secret, yet should not that greatly either further his purpose or hinder ours. For abuses and errors removed, and especially the priest being learned, as we

4. From the manner in which the passage on the other

been before our days. We are elected, consecrate, confirmed, and admitted as they were." "Moreover, we say that Christ hath given to His Ministers power to bind, to loose, to open, to shut."

side is quoted, it might naturally be supposed that the two sentences put together into one paragraph are more or less connected with each other. This is not the case. The last sentence is quoted from the

Apology, and stands in the Defence under the heading, "The Apology," chap. xi., division 1.

But the first sentence does not occur either in this division or in the division preceding it, or in the division succeeding. There is in the argument of Jewell no relation whatever between the one sentence and the other. The whole passage in the Apology in which the second sentence occurs is as follows:—

"Moreover, we say that Christ hath given to his ministers power to bind, to loose, to open, to shut; and that the office of loosing consisteth in this point, that the minister should either offer by the preaching of the Gospel the merits of Christ and full pardon to such as have lowly and contrite hearts, and do unfeignedly repent them, pronouncing unto the same a sure and undoubted forgiveness of their sins, and hope of everlasting salvation; or else that the minister, when any have offended their brother's mind with a great offence, and with a notable and open fault, whereby they have, as it were, banished and made themselves strangers from the common fellowship and from the body of Christ, then, after perfect amendment of such persons, doth reconcile them, and bring them home again, and restore them to the company and unity of the faithful. We say also, that the minister doth execute the authority of binding and shutting, as often as he shutteth up the gate of the kingdom of heaven against the unbelieving and stubborn persons, denouncing unto them God's vengeance and everlasting punishment; or else, when he doth quite shut them out from the bosom of the Church by open excommunication. Out of doubt, what sentence soever the minister of God shall give in this sort,

God himself doth so well allow of it, that whatsoever here in earth of their means is loosed and bound, God himself will loose and bind and confirm the same in heaven.

“And touching the keys, wherewith they may either shut or open the door of the kingdom of heaven, we with Crysostom say, they be “the knowledge of the Scriptures;” with Tertullian we say that they be “the interpretation of the law;” and with Eusebius we call them ‘The word of God.’” (Apology, part ii., pp. 60, 61.)

#### THE HOMILIES.

1. Bishop Jewel also is the reputed author of the 2ND BOOK OF HOMILIES, or Sermons, written in the reign of Elizabeth. In the HOMILY OF REPENTANCE, after denouncing the (Roman) adversaries and the arguments whereby they try to “maintain THEIR auricular Confession,” and saying, “It is most evident and plain that THIS (Roman) auricular Confession hath not the warrant of God’s word,”—the Homilist continues: “I DO NOT SAY, BUT THAT, IF ANY do find themselves troubled in conscience, they may repair to their learned curate or pastor, or to some other godly-learned man, and show the trouble and doubt of their conscience to them, that they may receive at their hand the comfortable salve of God’s word; but it is against the true Christian liberty that any man should be BOUND to the numbering of his sins, as IT HATH BEEN USED HERETOFORE in the time

1. The quotation is so given as to suggest that the words “I do not say” follow immediately after the words “warrant of God’s word.” This is not the case, and when the whole passage, with its context, is read together, it appears amazing how any one can possibly interpret the language of Sacramental Confession. Ministerial Confession no doubt it recognises, as cordially as it repudiates Sacramental Confession:—

“And, where they do allege this saying of our Saviour Christ unto the leper, to prove auricular confession to stand on God’s Word, ‘Go thy way, and show thyself to the Priest;’ do they not see that the leper was cleansed from his leprosy, before he was by Christ sent



of blindness and ignorance" (p. 592).

unto the Priest, for to show himself unto him? By the same reason we must be cleansed from our spiritual leprosy, I mean our sins must be forgiven us, before that we come to confession. What need we then to tell forth our sins into the ear of the Priest, sith that they be already taken away. Therefore, holy Ambrose, in his second sermon on the hundred and nineteenth Psalm, doth say full well: 'Go show thyself unto the Priest. Who is the true Priest but he which is the Priest for ever, after the order of Melchizedek?' Whereby this holy Father doth understand, that, both the priesthood and the law being changed, we ought to acknowledge none other Priest for deliverance from our sins, but our Saviour Jesus Christ; who being Sovereign Bishop, doth with the sacrifice of his body and blood, offered once for ever upon the altar of the Cross, most effectually cleanse the spiritual leprosy, and wash away the sins of all those that, with true confession of the same, do flee unto him.

"It is most evident and plain, that this auricular confession hath not the warrant of God's Word; else it had not been lawful for Nectarius, Bishop of Constantinople, upon a just occasion to have put it down. For, when anything ordained of God is by the lewdness of men abused, the abuse ought to be taken away, and the thing itself suffered to remain. Moreover these are St. Augustine's words, 'What have I to do with men, that they should hear my confession, as though they were able to heal my diseases? A curious sort of men to know another man's life, and slothful to correct and amend their own. Why do they seek to hear of me what I am, which will not hear of thee, what they are. And how can they tell, when they hear of me by myself, whether I tell the truth or not; sith that no mortal man knoweth what is in man, but the spirit of man which is in him?' Augustine would not have written thus, if auricular confession had been used in his time.

"Being therefore not led with the conscience thercof, let us

with fear and trembling, and with a true contrite heart, use that kind of confession, that God doth command in his word; and then doubtless, as he is faithful and righteous, he will forgive us our sins, and make us clean from all wickedness. I do not say, but that, if any do find themselves troubled in conscience, they may repair to their learned curate or pastor, or to some other godly-learned man, and show the trouble and doubt of their conscience to them, that they may receive at their hand the comfortable salve of God's word: but it is against the true Christian liberty, that any man should be bound to the numbering of his sins, as it hath been used heretofore in the times of blindness and ignorance." (Hom. on Repentance, pp. 371, 372. London, 1815.)

2. Again, in the HOMILY OF "COMMON PRAYER AND SACRAMENTS:" "And as for the number of them, if they should be considered according to the exact signification of a sacrament, namely, for the visible signs, expressly commanded in the New Testament, whereunto is annexed the promise of free forgiveness of sin and of our holiness, and joining in CHRIST, there be but two, namely, Baptism and the Supper of the Lord. For although Absolution hath the promise of forgiveness of sin, yet by the *express word* of the New Testament it hath not this promise annexed and tied to the visible sign, which is imposition of hands. For this visible sign (I mean laying on of hands) is not expressly commanded in the New Testament to be used in Absolution as the visible signs in

2. This passage simply proves what is not denied, namely, that the Church recognises absolution in her system; but what absolution? This is explained, in the rest of the passage which follows the quotation, to be precatory and special. The passage continues:—

"And though the ordering of ministers hath this visible sign and promise; yet it lacks the promise of remission of sin, as all other sacraments besides the two above named do. Therefore neither it, nor any other sacrament else, be such sacraments as Baptism and the Communion are. But in a general acceptance, the name of a sacrament may be attribu-

Baptism and the Lord's Supper are ; and therefore Absolution is no *such sacrament as Baptism and the Communion are*" (p. 385).

ted to anything, whereby an holy thing is signified. In which understanding of the word, the ancient writers have given this name, not only to the other five, commonly of late years taken and used for supplying the number of the seven sacraments ; but also to divers and sundry other ceremonies, as to oil, washing of feet, and such like ; not meaning thereby to repute them as sacraments, in the same signification that the two forenamed sacraments are. And therefore St. Augustine, weighing the true signification and the exact meaning of the word, writing to Januarius, and also in the third book of Christian Doctrine, affirmeth, that the Sacraments of the Christians, as they are most excellent in signification, so are they most few in number ; and in both places maketh mention expressly of two, the sacrament of Baptism, and the Supper of the Lord. And although there are retained by the order of the Church of England, besides these two, certain other rites and ceremonies about the Institution of Ministers in the Church, Matrimony, Confirmation of Children, by examining them of their knowledge in the articles of the faith, and joining thereto the prayers of the Church for them, and likewise for the Visitation of the Sick ; yet no man ought to take these for sacraments in such signification and meaning, as the sacraments of Baptism and the Lord's Supper are ; but either for godly states of life, necessary in Christ's Church, and therefore worthy to be set forth by public action and solemnity, by the ministry of the Church, or else judged to be such ordinances, as may make for the instruction, comfort and edification of Christ's Church." (Ibid. pp. 241, 242.)

#### ARCHBISHOP PARKER.

1. So ARCHBISHOP PARKER, 1. No such passage from  
in 1567, in VISITATION ARTICLES, Visitation Articles of Arch-  
inquires, "*If any* members of bishop Parker is to be found

your Church . . . . do either privilie or openlie preach or teach any unwholesome, erroneous, seditious doctrine . . . . or in any other point do persuade or move any not to conform themselves to the order of religion reformed, restored, and received by public authority in the Church of England, as for example that . . . . or that mortal or voluntary sins committed after baptisme, be not remissible by penance?" (Foxe, "Acts and Monuments," vol. iii., p. 253.)

in Foxe "Acts and Monuments," vol. iii., p. 253, or at any other page. I have carefully examined all the referenes to Archbishop Parker, to be found in the Index to the "Acts and Monuments," without success. The articles of 1567 are to be found, however, in Wilkins' Concilia, vol. iv., p. 253, London, 1737, and they contain the words quoted. Their relevancy to the present controversy depends entirely on the meaning

attached by the Archbishop to the word "penance." The Pamphlet, in a foot-note assumes "that Parker used the word Penance in its strict theological sense" that is, in the sense of an act of penance, but it was also largely used for "repentance," probably from the Vulgate translation of the verb *μετανῶειν* by "penitentiam agere." The Commination Service of the Church of England evidently uses the word in this sense of a state of mind, "confessing our sins, and seeking to bring forth worthy fruits of penance." Foxe's book, to which reference is made, affords ample proof of the common use of the word "penance" in this meaning. For instance, "Then without tarrying, Jesus began to preach, and to say unto the people, Do ye penance, for the realm of heaven is now at hand." (Examination of W. Thorp, Acts and Monuments, vol. iii., p. 253. If however it should appear that "penance" was used in a stricter and more limited meaning, as I admit to be probable, from the occurrence of the word "repentance" just afterwards, there can be no hesitation in that case in referring his words to the exercise of Church discipline. For in Parker's Visitation Articles of 1563, also found

in Wilkins' Concilia, Vol. IV. p. 257, there occurs the following question :—

“9. Item, whether any of your ministers doth, or hath admitted any notorious sinner or malicious person out of charity, without just penance done and remuneration made, to receive the Holy Communion.”

That the word could not possibly have been used in a distinctively Roman sense will sufficiently appear when a little more of the context is supplied, than has been given in the Pamphlet. “As for example, that it is not lawful for any particular Church, or province, to alter the rites and ceremonies publickly used, to better edification, or that any man may, or might of his private authority, do the same; or that any man is to be borne with, which do extoll any superstitious religion; as relics, pilgrimages, lightings of candles, kissing, kneeling, or ducking to images; or praying in a tongue not known, rather than English, or to put trust in a certain number of “Paternosters,” or use any beads for the same, or such other things, or to maintain purgatory, private masses, trentalls, or any other fond fantasy invented by man, without ground of God's word; or to say, teach, or maintain, that children being infants should not be baptised; or that every article in our creed commonly received and used in the Church, is not to be believed of necessity; or that mortal or voluntary sins committed after baptism, be not remissable by penance; or that a man, after that he have received the Holy Ghost, cannot sin; or that afterwards he cannot rise again by grace to repentance; or that any man liveth without sin. . . . or any other errors, or false doctrine, contrary to the faith of Christ and Holy Scriptures.” (Art. of Archbp. Parker, 1567, Wilkins' Concilia, Vol. IV. p. 253.)

#### THE ELEVEN ARTICLES.

2. He (Archbp. Parker) also maintained that “The Church of  
2. The bearing of this pas-  
sage is entirely dependent

Christ is" that in which "the Word of God is truly taught and the Sacraments orderly ministered according to Christ's institution, and the authority of the keys is duly used." ("The Eleven Articles," 1559, Hardwick.)

upon the interpretation of the phrase—"the power of the keys." It has been already shown that "the power of the keys" was fully recognised by Bishop Jewell, but that he meant by it nothing more than either the preaching of the Word of God or the exercise of Church discipline. In what sense it is likely that Archbishop Parker used the phrase in the XI. Articles may be conjectured from the fact, that the sixth of them denies that 'private masses' were used among the fathers of the Primitive Church. It then proceeds to censure the idea that the 'mass is' a propitiatory sacrifice for quick and dead, and a mean to deliver souls out of purgatory, urging that such a tenet is neither agreeable to Christ's ordinance nor founded upon 'doctrine apostolic.'

Archdeacon Hardwick says: "It is plain however, that in reference to this country, the eleven articles had been intended as no more than a provisional test of orthodoxy, which in practice would be commonly superseded when the great Elizabethan articles passed the Synod of 1563, and were enjoined on all the English Clergy by the Canons of 1571." (Hardwick's Hist. of the Articles of Religion, p. 123.) The Articles of 1563 were substantially the Articles at present authorised in the Church of England. Archbishop Parker took the principal part in their final settlement. (Exp. of the 39 Articles, by Dr. Harold Browne, Bishop of Winchester. p. 9.) These articles contain nothing, which even theological ingenuity can construe into a recognition of private confession.

#### BECON.

Again, Thomas Becon, D.D., who has the reputation of being a Puritan writer (1570)—"There-

The three passages on the other side all form part of one and the same passage. But

fore to make few words, disdain ye not to go to Confession . . . and when he (the minister) shall rehearse unto you the most sweet and comfortable words of Absolution, give earnest faith unto them, being *undoubtedly persuaded that your sins at that time be assuredly forgiven you*, as though God Himself had spoken them, according to this saying of Christ: 'He that heareth you heareth Me,' and again: 'Whose sins ye forgive are forgiven them.'" (Early Works, Parker Society, p. 101. "Potation for Lent.")

And a little before: "What need I to make many words? Confession (speaking of auricular) bringeth high tranquillity to the troubled conscience of a Christian man, while the most comfortable words of Absolution are rehearsed unto him by the Priest."

Again: "How say you, is anything to be condemned in auricular Confession thus used? No, verily, all things that you have rehearsed are rather worthy high praise and commendation." (Becon's Early Works.) These words were not altered, see pp. 89, 102, in Becon's collected edition of his works, edited A.D. 1560, the reign of Elizabeth.

the order has been exactly reversed. A perusal of the whole passage, as it stands in the original, will show how utterly Becon's sentiments are removed from the auricular Confession advocated by modern English Ritualism. The whole passage is too long for quotation. In the former part he commends auricular confession as a thing of "much weight and grave importance," for six reasons,—

1. because "it engrafteth in us a certain humility."
2. because "it beateth into our hearts a shamefacedness."
3. because "it bringeth us to a knowledge of ourselves."
4. because "we learn ways and means to eschew sin."
5. because "we may learn the assurance and certainty of anything of which we are in doubt."
6. because "the ignorant are brought to knowledge." He then proceeds:—

"Confession bringeth high tranquillity to the troubled conscience of a Christian man, while the most comfortable words of absolution are rehearsed to him by the priest.

Eus. I pray you, what is

that absolution?—Phil. Verily a preaching of the free deliverance from all our sins through Christ's blood. How say you, is there anything to be condemned in auricular confession thus used.—Chris. No verily, all things that you have rehearsed are rather worthy high praise and commendation. Phil. It is attributed and given to us even of nature to communicate with others the secrets of our hearts concerning temporal and worldly things, whether they be of joy or sadness; and till we have so done we are never at rest. Eus. Ye say truth. Phil. Why should we then not be ready to do so likewise in spiritual affairs, and things pertaining unto the salvation of our souls, except peradventure we be enemies of our own health? "What is sweeter and more pleasant," saith Cicero, "than to have such one with whom thou darest be bold to speak all things as with thyself?" A man having a learned, wise, discreet, silent, close, and faithful ghostly father, which loveth the penitent no less than a natural father doth his child, why should he fear to declare unto him the secrets of his heart, which is ready to comfort, to instruct, to counsel, to teach, and to do all things that should make unto his consolation and health? The prophet Malachy saith: "The lips of a priest keep knowledge: and men shall seek the law at his mouth: for he is a messenger of the Lord of Hosts." If this ought to be done at all times, when have we a more convenient and fit time to do it than at the time of confession, when we may freely talk to our spiritual fathers whatever pleaseth us?—Eus. It is truth that ye say. But what if such a ghostly father doth not chance as ye have described heretofore?—Phil. Verily, ye ought always to resort to the best learned men, and to seek for such ghostly fathers as both will and can instruct and teach you the law of God. But let it so be, that your curate be not of the greatest learned man; yet is he too much simple if he can bring "out of his treasure-house things neither new nor old," seeing that the holy Scriptures are so plentiously set forth in our English tongue,



that even the very idiot may now become learned in the kingdom of God. Therefore, to make few words concerning this matter, disdain ye not to go to confession at the times appointed, according to the act of our most excellent King, yea, and that with all humble reverence. Declare the diseases of your souls unfeignedly, that ye may be healed with the most sweet and comfortable salve of God's Word. Follow the godly and wholesome admonitions of your ghostly father. Go unto him with such an hatred and detestation of sin, that ye may return from him with hearts altogether enflamed with the perfect love of virtue, innocency and true godliness, being full fixed never to return to your old vomit and wallowing in the mire. And when he shall rehearse unto you the most sweet and comfortable words of absolution, give earnest faith unto them, being undoubtedly persuaded that your sins at that time be assuredly forgiven you, as though God Himself had spoken them according to this saying of Christ "He that heareth you heareth Me," again, "Whose sins ye forgive are forgiven them."

The Editor of the Parker Society's edition appends this note,

"The act of the six articles, passed July 1539, of which the sixth prescribed auricular confession, as expedient and necessary to be retained. Severe penalties were denounced against all who by word or pen opposed the doctrines maintained by this act. Hence the caution of the author in speaking as above. He was nevertheless brought into trouble on account of these very writings." (Becon's Works. Potation for Lent. Early Works, pp. 100, 101, Parker Society, 1843).

Becon was committed to the Tower, during the reign of Mary, as a seditious preacher in August, 1553, and continued in confinement till March 22, 1554. Important passages on confession will be found in his "Castle of Comfort," pp. 557-566.

## HOOKER.

Passing on, we find HOOKER himself (in 1600) using Confession, being absolved on his death-bed by Dr. Saravia, "*they being supposed to be confessors to each other.*" "To which end the doctor came, and after a short retirement and privacy, they two returned to the company." ("Life," by Isaak Walton, p. 67.)

The fact recorded by Walton that Hooker shortly before his death retired to a private conference with Dr. Saravia admits of a different, and much more rational and consistent explanation than Walton gives of it. In his Ecclesiastical Biography, the present Bishop of Lincoln records the fact

thus :—

"About one day before his death Dr. Saravia gave Hooker and some of his friends the blessed sacrament of the body and blood of Christ, which being performed, the Dr. thought he saw a reverent gaiety and joy on his face."

1. He writes (Book vi., ch. vi. 3): "It is true that our Saviour by those words 'Whose sins ye remit, they are remitted,' did ordain judges over sinful souls, give them authority to absolve from sin, and promise to ratify in heaven whatsoever they should do on earth in execution of this their office; to the end, that hereby, as well His ministers might take encouragement to do their duty with all faithfulness, as also His people admonition, gladly with all reverence to be ordered by them."

1. The passage quoted on the other side proceeds, in the original, after the words "ordered by them" thus;— "both parts knowing that the functions of the one towards the other have his perpetual assistance and approbation. Howbeit all this with two restraints, which every jurisdiction in the world hath; the one, that the practice thereof proceed in due order; the other, that it do not extend itself beyond due bounds; which bounds or limits have

so confined penitential jurisdiction, that although there be given unto it power of remitting sin, yet no such sovereignty of power that no sin should be pardonable in man without it."

After thirteen intervening lines he continues, "What is then the force of absolution? What is it which the act of absolution worketh in a sinful man? Doth it by any operation derived from itself alter the state of the soul? Doth it really take away sin, or but ascertain us of God's most gracious and merciful pardon? The latter of which two is our assertion, the former theirs."

A few pages further on he writes further :

"As for the ministerial sentence of private absolution, it can be no more than a declaration of what God hath done; it hath but the force of the prophet Nathan's absolution, "God hath taken away thy sin:" than which construction, especially of words judicial, there is not anything more vulgar. For example the publicans are said in the Gospel to have justified God; the Jews in Malachi to have blessed proud men, which sin and prosper; not that the one did make God righteous, or the other the wicked happy; but to bless, to justify, and to absolve, are as commonly used for words of judgment, or declaration, as of true and real efficacy; yea, even by the opinion of the Master of Sentences. It may be soundly affirmed and thought that God alone doth remit and retain sins, although he have given the power to the Church to do both; but he one way, and the Church another. He only by himself forgiveth sin, who cleanseth the soul from inward blemish, and looseth the debt of eternal death; so great a privilege he hath not given unto his priests, who notwithstanding are authorised to loose and bind, that is to say, declare who are bound and who are loosed." (Hooker's Works, Vol. III. pp. 65, 66. London, 1821.)

2. Again (Book vi., ch. iv. 7):  
 "Furthermore, because *the knowledge how to handle our own sores is no vulgar and common art*, but we either carry towards ourselves for the most part an over-soft

2. This passage must be given in full, because Mr. Gray's quotation not only stops short of some very explicit and explanatory language, but also omits a passage of the same

and gentle hand, fearful of touching too near the quick ; or else, endeavouring not to be partial, we fall into timorous scrupulosities, and sometimes into those extreme discomforts of mind from which we hardly do ever lift up our heads again ; men thought it the safest way (speaking of the Early Church) to disclose their secret faults, and to crave imposition of penance from them whom our Lord Jesus Christ hath left in His Church to be spiritual and ghostly physicians, the guides and pastors of redeemed souls, whose office doth not only consist in general persuasions unto amendment of life, but also in the private particular cure of diseased minds." . . . "But the greatest thing which made men forward and willing upon their knees to confess whatsoever they had committed against God, and in no wise to be withheld from the same with any fear of disgrace, contempt, or obloquy which might ensue, was their fervent desire to be helped and assisted with the prayers of God's saints."

character in the middle. The whole runs thus :—

" Furthermore, because the knowledge how to handle our own sores is no vulgar and common art, but we either carry toward ourselves, for the most part, an over-soft and gentle hand, fearful of touching too near the quick ; or else, endeavouring not to be partial, we fall into timorous scrupulosities, and sometime into those extreme discomforts of mind, from which we hardly do ever lift up our heads again ; men thought it the safest way to disclose their secret faults, and to crave imposition of penance from them whom our Lord Jesus Christ hath left in his Church to be spiritual and ghostly physicians, the guides and pastors of redeemed souls, whose office doth not only consist in general persuasions unto amendment of life, but also in private particular cure of diseased minds."

" Howsoever the Novationists presume to plead against the Church (saith Salvianus) that every man ought to be his own penitentiary, and that it is a part of our duty to exercise, but not of the Church's authority to impose or prescribe repentance ;" the truth is otherwise, the

best and strongest of us may need, in such cases, direction. "What doth the Church in giving penance, but show the remedies which sin requireth? or what do we, in receiving the same, but fulfil her precepts? What else but sue unto God with tears and fasts, that his merciful ears may be opened!" St. Augustine's exhortation is directly to the same purpose; "Let every man whilst he hath time judge himself, and change his life of his own accord; and when this is resolved, let him, from the disposers of the holy sacraments learn in what manner he is to pacify God's displeasure." But the greatest thing which made men forward and willing, upon their knees, to confess whatsoever they had committed against God, and in no wise to be withheld from the same with any fear of disgrace, contempt or obloquy, which might ensue, was their fervent desire to be helped and assisted with the prayers of God's saints. Wherein, as St. James doth exhort to mutual confession, alleging this only for a reason, that just men's devout prayers are of great avail with God, so it hath been heretofore the use of penitents for that intent to unburden their minds even to private persons, and to crave their prayers. Whereunto Cassianus alluding, counselleth, "that if men possessed of dulness of spirit be themselves unapt to do that which is required, they should in meek affection seek health at the least by good and virtuous men's prayers unto God for them." And to the same effect Gregory, Bishop of Nice: "Humble thyself, and take unto thee such of thy brethren as are of one mind, and do bear kind affection towards thee, that they may together mourn and labour for thy deliverance. Show me thy bitter and abundant tears, that I may blend my own with them."

But because of all men there is or should be none in that respect more fit for troubled and distrest minds to repair unto than God's ministers, he proceedeth further; "Make the priest, as thy father, partaker of thy affliction and grief; be bold to impart unto him the things that be most secret,

he will have care both of thy safety and thy credit." (Ibid. pp. 24, 25.)

#### KING JAMES I.

King James I. himself bears testimony (Cf. Cardwell's Conferences, chap iv., p. 174). "Next in order was the point of Absolution." The Archbishop quoted only the public Absolution, which the King "liked and approved." Then the Bishop of London, stepping forward, said: "There is also another *more particular and personal form of Absolution*, prescribed to be used in the Order for the Visitation of the Sick. This the king required to see, and whilst Master Dean of the Chapel was turning to it, the said Bishop alleged that not only the Confessions of Augusta, Boheme, Saxon, which he there cited, do retain and allow it, but that Master Calvin did also approve such a general kind of Confession and Absolution as the Church of England useth, and withal *did very well like of those which are private*, for so he terms them. The said particular Absolution in the Common Prayer Book being read, His Majesty exceedingly well approved it, adding that it was Apostolical, and a very good ordinance, in that it was given in the name of Christ, to one that

The quotation should have been commenced earlier, for, as it stands, it does not fairly represent what took place. The beginning of the passage is as follows:

"Next in order was the point of absolution, which the Lord Archbishop cleared from all abuse, or superstition, as it is used in our Church of England: reading unto his Majesty, both the confession in the beginning of the Communion Book and the absolution following it, wherein (saith he) the minister doth nothing else but pronounce an absolution in general. His Highness perused them both in the book itself, liking and approving them, finding them to be very true, what my Lord Archbishop said. But the Bishop of London stepping forward, added, it becometh us to deal plainly with your Majesty; there is also in the Communion Book, another more particular and personal form of absolution," &c.

desired it, and upon the clearing of his conscience."

And not only this, but on his death-bed he remembered and used it, seeking Absolution at the hand of Bishop Williams.

What this was, has been already shewn on pp. 36, 37. Thus we find that the strongest of all the forms was not framed, nor intended to be understood, in the sense of Sacramental or Sacerdotal absolution.

The fact, that King James on his death-bed received absolution in this form, has no bearing whatever on the question in dispute, for no one calls into question the authority of the Visitation Service.

#### BISHOP WILLIAMS.

And not only this, but on his deathbed he (King James I.) remembered and used it, seeking Absolution at the hand of Bishop Williams.

just quoted. King James I. received, on his deathbed, absolution at the hand of Bishop Williams; therefore Bishop Williams is adduced as an authority for "habitual confession to man." Because he gave absolution to a dying man, therefore he recommended habitual confession to men in ordinary health. Because he administered absolution to the sick under the special condition of the Visitation Service, therefore he approved of absolution, when the conditions are altogether absent. Because he did what the Church has directed him to do, therefore he must be supposed to have done, what the Church has not directed him to do. Such is the argument of the Pamphlet, and such

It should be observed that we have here a formal explanation of the form of absolution in the Visitation of the Sick, that it was only intended in that sense of absolution of which Calvin himself approved.

In the index of authorities prefixed to the Pamphlet appears the name of Bishop Williams. The only alleged ground for the use of his name is expressed in the few words

the mode by which the list of apparent authorities for "habitual confession to man" is swelled.

DR. REYNOLDS.

The testimony of DR. REYNOLDS is the more remarkable, since he was the leader of the Dissenting interest in the Church of England at the Hampton Court Conference in 1604: "Yet he was so well satisfied in the power and nature of Sacerdotal Absolution, that he did earnestly desire it at the time of his death (in 1607), humbly received it at the hands of Dr. Holland, the King's Professor in Divinity, in the University of Oxon for the time then being, and when he was not able to express his joy and thankfulness in the way of speech, did most affectionately kiss the hand that gave it." (Conf. Heylin on "Creed," Forgiveness of Sins, p. 460.)

The opinions of Dr. Reynolds on confession and absolution are more safely gathered from his own words, than from the statement of Dr. Heylin. The following passage is too explicit to admit of mistake:—

"So much hath Christ honoured his stewards in the faithful discharge of this their ministry, that though they be but weak men, yet such effects are ascribed unto them, as are proper unto God alone. They are said to forgive sins: (John xx. 23), to convert and to save souls; (James v. 20, Tim. iv. 16), to deliver them from going down into the pit; (Job xxiii. 24), to revenge all disobedience; (2 Cor. x. 6),

and to judge wicked men; (Ezek. xx. 4) none of which can be effected, but by God alone. The excellency of the power belongs unto him (2 Cor. iv. 7). *Nulla est remissio culpæ nisi per gratiam: sed gratiam dare est potentiæ infinitæ*, saith Alexander Hales. And therefore Peter Lombard, and after him Altissiodorensis, Bonventure, Occam, Biel and divers other schoolmen, do affirm. 'Per hanc potestatem non posse remitti culpas, sed solum declarari remissas;' and that the priest doth it 'per modum impetrantis,' but not 'per modum impertientis.' And yet because unto us is committed the min-



istry of reconciliation, (2 Cor. v. 19), and, together with that office, an authority to work together with God as his instruments, who maketh us able ministers of the New Testament (2 Cor. iii. 6) so that by the operation of God, our Gospel cometh not in word only, but in power. (1 Thess. i. 5, 2 Cor. x. 8, Titus ii. 15). Therefore we are said to do those things which are proper for God alone to do, because God is pleased to do them by that word of grace, the ministry whereof he hath committed unto us. "Humana opera, Dei munera," as Optatus speaks; the ministry is man's, the gift is God's. "The priest," saith St. Chrysostom, "lendeth his tongue and his hand; but neither angels nor archangels can do the thing, but God alone; "Humanum obsequium, munificentia supernæ potestatis" saith St. Ambrose (De Spiritu Sancto lib. iii. cap. 19.) The service is man's, but the munificence is God's. We loose by our pastoral authority, whom God raiseth by His quickening grace, saith Gregory. (Homil. xxvi. in Evang.)

#### LAST HOURS OF EMINENT CHRISTIANS.

##### BISHOP REYNOLDS.

The testimony of DR. REYNOLDS is the more remarkable, since he was the leader of the Dissenting interest in the Church of England at the Hampton Court Conference in 1604: "Yet he was so well satisfied in the power and nature of Sacerdotal Absolution, that he did earnestly desire it at the time of his death (in 1607), humbly received it at the hands of Dr. Holland, the King's Professor in Divinity, in the University of Oxon for the time then being, and when he was not able to express his joy

I have grouped all these cases together under one general heading, to save space, time, and patience. As far as argument is concerned, they are all repetitions of each other. It will be observed, that with the greater number of them, reference is made to a work entitled "Last Hours of Eminent Christians." As neither place, nor date, nor publisher's name are given, all my efforts to find the book have failed. I easily discovered a small work having the same

and thankfulness in the way of speech, did most affectionately kiss the hand that gave it." (Conf. Heylin on "Creed," Forgiveness of Sins, p. 460).

**BISHOP COSIN ON MRS. HOLMES.**

Next will come BISHOP COSIN (1672). Preaching the funeral sermon of a Mrs. Holmes, he says: "Her preparation to her end was by humble contrition and *heartly confession of her sins*; which, when she had done, she received the *benefit of Absolution* according to God's ordinance and the religious institutions of our Church—a thing which *the world looks not after now, AS IF Confession and Absolution were some strange superstitious things among us, which yet the Church has taken such care to preserve, and especially to be preparatives to death.*" (Cosin, vol. i., p. 28.)

**ARCHDEACON AYLMER.**

It was about this time (1625) that Dr. Theophilus Aylmer, son of the Bishop of London, and himself Archdeacon of London, died, of whom we read, "When he found that he approached nearer to death, he made, according to the order of the Church, his Confession to the preacher, his assistant, and received his

title, but it proved to be of a totally different character, and contained none of the passages quoted in the Pamphlet. I found, however, that all these instances were quoted together, in one connected paragraph, in Mr. Carter's Work on Confession. They were taken by him from a work entitled "Visitatio Infirmorum," the Visitation of the Sick, by the Rev. Sir W. H. Cope, and the Rev. Mr. Stretton. They occur in the introductory chapter to that work; and, as adduced to illustrate the practice of the Church of England, as ordered in her Office for the Visitation of the Sick, they are perfectly legitimate. On this subject, they would scarcely indeed be considered as authorities; but as evidences of an existing custom, they are fairly and properly quoted.

As they are adduced in the pamphlet, they have not the slightest relevancy. I have been compelled to repeat over and over again, usque ad nauseam, that as to the propriety of a special confession on the part of a sick person under certain conditions, and of the

**Absolution**" ("Last Hours of Eminent Christians," p. 53).

**MR. NICHOLAS FARRAR.**

In 1640 died Mr. NICHOLAS FARRAR, Jun. The Bishop of Peterborough, Dr. Torrens, "came to him two days before he died. . . . who gave him absolution, and with many tears departed." ("Last Hours of Eminent Christians," p. 85.)

**THE EARL OF DERBY.**

In 1651, JAMES, seventh EARL OF DERBY, was put to death by the rebels. We read he made his confession to Mr. Greenhaugh and then received absolution and the Sacrament.

delivery of the words of absolution provided for that purpose, there is no dispute between us whatever. We fully admit it, and this is all that these instances can, at the very utmost, prove. With "habitual confession to man" on the part of persons in health, they have nothing whatever to do. This being the case, I have not thought it necessary to trace the references given in "Visitatio Infirmorum."

**LADY CAPEL.**

About this time (Jan. 26, 1660) died LADY CAPEL, who "three days before her death asked and received the Church's last comfort and blessing, the benefit of absolution, which she received with great thankfulness, and showed a heavenly comfort and peace ensuing upon it." ("English Women of 17th Century," p. 76; quoted from Cooke on Absolution.)

**LADY ANDERSON.**

One LADY ANDERSON died the following year, of whom the Rev. Edward Boteler, Rector of Wintringham, writes: "The day before she died she desired me to pray with her and absolve her according to the use of the Church of England, which I accordingly did, to her no little comfort." ("English Women of 17th Century," p. 260.)

**BISHOP SANDERSON.**

BISHOP SANDERSON died 1663. We read that the day before his death he received absolution from Mr. Pullin, his chaplain, pulling off

his cap, "that Mr. Pullin might lay his hand upon his bare head" (Isaak Walton); and this was one of the Commissioners, who gave us our Common Prayer as it now stands.

#### EVELYN.

In EVELYN'S DIARY, dated March 16, 1685, the day on which he buried his daughter, we find recorded "the discovery of many papers: one to a divine (not named) to whom she writes that he would be her ghostly father, and would not despise her for her many errors and the many imperfections of her youth, but beg of God to give courage to acquaint him with all her faults, imploring his assistance and spiritual directions. I well remember she had often desired me to recommend her to such a person; but I did not think fit to do it AS YET, seeing her apt to be scrupulous, and knowing the great innocency and integrity of her life." (Quoted from Cooke on "Absolution.")

#### DODWELL.

At the beginning of this century died the pious HENRY DODWELL, "who desired and received the absolution directed by our Church from my hands." (Brokesby's "Life of Dodwell," quoted by Cooke on "Absolution.")

#### BISHOP BULL.

The great BISHOP BULL, too, received Absolution in his last illness; not once, but frequently. "A few days before his death (Feb. 17, 1710) he received Absolution, when, in the presence of several persons, he made a solemn confession and declaration of the conduct of his whole life, and so took his leave of the world in a manner the most edifying that could be." ("Last Hours of Eminent Christians," pp. 182. 186.)

#### BISHOP WILSON.

Bishop Wilson also thanked God that his wife had confessed and received absolution in her last illness, in these words: "For all the spiritual comforts the gracious God did vouchsafe her, the opportunities of receiving the Blessed Sacrament, the prayers of the faithful, the *ministry of Absolution*, and the assistance of her pious friends at the hour of her death" (1705).

## DR. REYNOLDS.

The testimony of Dr. REYNOLDS is the more remarkable, since he was the leader of the Dissenting interest in the Church of England at the Hampton Court Conference in 1604: "Yet he was so well satisfied in the power and nature of Sacerdotal Absolution, that he did earnestly desire it at the time of his death (in 1607), humbly received it at the hands of Dr. Holland, the King's Professor in Divinity, in the University of Oxon for the time then being, and when he was not able to express his joy and thankfulness in the way of speech, did most affectionately kiss the hand that gave it." (Conf. Heylin on "Creed," Forgiveness of Sins, p. 460.)

The quotation is made from Heylin's *Theologia Veterum*, and immediately precedes the quotation from that work on page 105.

## DR. GEORGE HAKEWILL.

Dr. George Hakewill, in answer to Carier (1616), writes: "Howbeit (the people) are indeed freed from the NECESSITY of that which we call *auricular*, though not from the POSSIBILITY, as you falsely pretend. For as we enforce none, if they come not, as knowing that force may work upon the body, but never upon the will; so we exclude none if they come with a true penitent heart, or out of the scruple of conscience, either to seek counsel,

"We willingly acknowledge (with St. Paul) that to *the ministers of the Gospel* (2 Cor. v. 18) is committed the *ministry of reconciliation, and the keys of the kingdom of heaven, to open and shut as they see cause; and therefore in their ordination hath our Church ordained the Bishop to use these words* (Receive ye the Holy Ghost, whose sins thou dost forgive they are forgiven, and

being ignorant of the quality or quantity of their sin, or comfort against despair for sin known and acknowledged. . . . And sure I see not but, *the minister standing in the place of God, as His Ambassador*, and pronouncing Absolution upon humble and hearty repentance, as from God, it should prove a marvellous great ease and settlement to a poor distracted and distressed conscience . . . which is an Absolution only declaratory, conditional, and ministerial" (p. 266).

whose sins thou dost retain they are retained), and consequently if the power of absolution be given in these words, then is it given and received in the Church of England: and as for the people they stand bound as often as they meet in their solemn assemblies, to a public and general confession, howbeit they are indeed freed from the necessity of that which we call auricular, though not from the possibility as you falsely pretend, for as we enforce none if they come not (as knowing that force may work upon the body but never upon the will) so we exclude none if they come with a true penitent heart, or out of the scruple of conscience, either to seek counsel, being ignorant of the quality and quantity of their sin; or comfort against despair for sin known and acknowledged. In this case the only imparting of a man's mind to a trusty friend, like the opening of a festered sore, cannot but bring content to a soul so anguished and perplexed, but much more if the ulcer be disclosed to a skilful and faithful pastor of the soul, who is no less able than willing, as well to understand the nature of the disease, as by warrant of divine ordinance to apply the remedy: and sure I see not but ~~the~~ minister standing in the place of God, as his ambassador and pronouncing absolution upon humble and hearty repentance as from God, it should prove a marvellous great ease and settlement to a poor distracted and distressed conscience; in which regard our Church hath well ordained in one of the Exhortations before the Communion (if any . . . doubtfulness) and in *the Visitation of the Sick* (if he feel . . . Ghost) which is an absolution only declarative,

conditional and ministerial (Dr. G. Hakewill's answer to Dr. Carier, pp. 266, 267. Lond. 1616).

DR. CRACKANTHORP.

Dr. Crackanthorp (1624), a vigorous writer against Rome, says: "*Private Confession and Absolution our Church both approves and teaches. We have not impiously abolished them, as you calumniously assert.*"

The quotation is given, as if it constituted one passage. The two sentences are however parted from each other in the original, and when the entire paragraph is perused, it will be seen that Mr. Gray's quotation conveys a totally incorrect

estimate of Crackanthorp's sentences.

"As to Auricular Confession also abolished among us you deal in a subtle and cunning way. Private confession by which a man may throw the burden of the distress of his mind on account of sins done by himself alone or in company with others into the breast, and if you like, into the ear of a presbyter, and also absolution on a serious and not a feigned repentance for his sin through the keys of the Church entrusted to all presbyters our Church both approves and inculcates. Nor do the other Reformed Churches differ from us in this." He then quotes two passages from Calvin, and proceeds: "We have abolished neither Private Confession nor Absolution; nor have we abolished them impiously, as you calumniously assert. It is that Antichristian confession of yours into the ear of a priest which is nothing else than a snare of consciences, an abyss of frauds and a deception of the unlearned, this and nothing else we have abolished and deservedly condemn it to the pit of hell" (Def. Eccl. Angli. cap. lxxx. s. 6, p. 565. Library of Anglo-Catholic Divinity, Oxford, 1847).

BISHOP ANDREWES.

1. Again, the great Bishop Andrewes (1626) was one of those

1. The passage is inaccurately quoted from the original. A

of whom we know that they not only taught but used and practised it. He thanks God Who "hast given me good hope for the remission of my sins by repentance, by the works of repentance and by the *power of the Holy Keys*" (Dr. Andrewes's "Devotions"). Moreover, when he held the place of "*Prebendary in Paul's*," i.e., of Confessor or Confessioner in St. Paul's Cathedral, he used, especially in Lent, to walk daily at certain hours in one of the aisles of the church, to receive those who chose to come to him.

distinction is made in the original between the relation of repentance and good works towards salvation, and the relation of the keys and sacraments towards it. The one is expressed by the preposition "by;" the other by "through." The passage in its connection stands thus, being an address to God:

"Leaving in me someshame, horror, trembling for my sins past.

O give me oftener and greater, greater and oftener more and more, O Lord.

Giving me good hope, of the remission of them, by repentance, and by the works thereof, through the power of the most holy keys, (neither italics nor capitals) and sacraments in thy church.

So that, day by day, for these thy benefits, which I remember; . . . .

I confess and give thanks to Thee, I bless and praise Thee, as is meet, every day." (Meditations and Devotions—Andrewes's *Minor Works*, p. 317. Library of Anglo. Cath. Divinity, Oxford, 1854).

To his *Minor Works* is prefixed a short life of Bishop Andrewes by Henry Isaacson (London, 1650), which simply records that Sir Francis Walsingham made him "then Prebend and Residentiary of St. Paul's, and afterwards Prebend of the Collegiate Church of Southwell." This life does not say a word of his daily walk in the aisles of St. Paul. The fact however, if true, will afford no support whatever to secret Auricular Confession. A friendly conference on spiritual sub-



jects, such as I have called " Ministerial Confession," would be consistent with a habit of the kind; but such a thing as " Sacramental Confession" would be wholly inconsistent with it.

2. Hear, too, his words in a sermon on the power of Absolution, which caused some sensation at court at the time. The text was, " Whose soever sins ye remit, they are remitted unto them;" part of the Gospel for the day, the First Sunday after Easter, " There God doth associate His ministers, and maketh them workers together with Him. There have they their parts in this work, and cannot be excluded. . . . And to *exclude them is, after a sort, to wring the keys out of their hands to whom Christ hath given them, is to cancel and make void this clause of ' ye remit,'* as if it were no part of the sentence; to account of all this solemn sending and inspiring as if it were an idle and fruitless ceremony. He continues: "*Neither are we, the ordnance of God thus standing, to rend off one part of the sentence.* There are here expressed three persons" (the sinner, God, and the Priest). *Three* are expressed, and where *three* are expressed, *three are required*; and where *three* are required, two

2. The sermon from which these extracts are taken is entitled " Of the Power of Absolution." In the early part of the sermon he compares sin to an imprisonment, and speaks of the folly of men not seeking remission of sins till their death-bed.

" Those whom we have gone by seven years together, and never said word to about it, them we are content to speak with, when the counsel and direction they give we are scarce able to receive, and much less to put in practice."

He explains that there are, according to his view, two acts in the remission of sins; one " exercised on earth, which is the Apostles, the other in heaven, which is God's." He then adjusts the two thus:—

" *Remittuntur*, which is God's power, is the primitive or original; *Remiseritis*, which is the Apostles' power, is merely derived. That in God sove-

are not enough. It is S. Augustine that thus speaketh of this ecclesiastical act in his time: *'Let nobody say within himself, I repent in private, I repent before God: God, who pardons me, knows I repent from my heart:* THEN to no purpose was it said, "Whatsoever you shall loose on earth, shall be loosed in heaven;" then to no purpose were the keys given to the Church of God; we make void the Gospel, we make void the words of Christ." Which, as was remarked at the time, is as much as saying, "that contrition, without Confession and Absolution, and deeds worthy of repentance, was not sufficient" (cf. White's Letter to Sydney, "Letters," vol. ii., p. 185).

mediately by Himself from heaven.

"But we should then have said of the remission of sins, saith St. Paul, "Who shall go up into heaven for it, and fetch it thence." For which cause, saith he, "the righteousness of God speaketh thus, Say not so in thy heart. The word shall be near thee, in thy mouth, and in thy heart, and this is the word of faith which we preach."

He then argues that this function in the remission of sins was not given to the Apostles, either as Christians or as those particular twelve persons, but as "Preachers, Priests, or Ministers;" and he thus states the conclusion.

"It being then neither personal nor peculiar to them as Apostles, nor again common to all as Christians, it must

reign; this in the Apostles dependent. In Him only absolute; in them delegate. In Him imperial, in them ministerial."

"The power of remitting sin is originally in God, and in God alone. And in Christ, our Saviour, by means of the union of the Godhead and manhood into one person; by virtue whereof "the Son of man hath power to forgive sins upon earth."

"This power being thus solely invested in God, he might without wrong to any have retained and kept to Himself, and without means of word or Sacrament, and without Ministers, either Apostles or others, have exercised im-

needs be committed to them as Ministers, Priests, or Preachers, and consequently to those that in that office and function do succeed them, to whom and by whom this commission is still continued. Neither are they that are ordained or instituted to that calling, ordained or instituted by any other words or sense than this ; yet not so that absolutely without them God cannot bestow it on whom or when Him pleaseth, or that He is bound to this means only, and cannot work without it. For, *Gratia Dei non alligatur mediis* ‘the grace of God is not bound but free,’ and can work without means either of word or Sacrament ; and as without means, so without Ministers, how and when to Him seemeth good. But speaking of that which is proper and ordinary in the course by Him established, this is an Ecclesiastical act committed, as the residue of the ministry of reconciliation, to Ecclesiastical persons, and if at any time He vouchsafe it to others that are not such, they be in that case *Ministri necessitatis non officii*, ‘in case of necessity Ministers, but by office not so.’

These statements must in all fairness govern the sense put on Andrewes’ subsequent words. They assert that the function of absolution, so far as man is concerned, is only ministerial ; (2) That it is part of the ministry of reconciliation. (3) That the means of it are the Word and the Sacraments. (4) That for this office the Priest is the Preacher or Minister. (5) That the absolution may be vouchsafed through the means of Laymen. (6) That the function discharged is Ecclesiastical, not spiritual. He then proceeds with the paragraph, from which Mr. Gray’s first extract is taken.

“Now as by committing this power God doth not deprive or bereave Himself of it, for there is a *Remittuntur* still, and that chief, sovereign, and absolute ; so on the other side where God proceedeth by the Church’s act as ordinarily He doth, it being His own ordinance, there whosoever will be partaker of the Church’s act must be partaker of it by the Apostles’ means ; there doth *Remiseritis* concur in his own

order and place, and there runneth still a correspondence between both. Then doth God associate His Ministers, and maketh them “workers together with Him.” There have they their parts in this work, and cannot be excluded; no more in this than in any other acts and parts of their function. And to exclude them is, after a sort, to wring the keys out of their hands to whom Christ hath given them, is to cancel and make void this clause of *Remiseritis*, as if it were no part of the sentence; to account of all this solemn sending and inspiring, as if it were an idle and fruitless ceremony; which if it may not be admitted, then sure it is they have their part and concurrence in this work, as in the rest of “the ministry of reconciliation.”

“Neither is this a new or strange thing; from the beginning it was so. Under the law of nature, saith Elihu in Job speaking of one for his sins in God’s prison, “If there be with him an ambassador, commissioner, or ‘interpreter—not any whosoever but—’ one among a thousand to show unto him his righteousness, then shall God have mercy upon him’ and say, Let him go, for I have received a propitiation.

“Under Moses it is certain the “covenant of life and peace” was made with Levi, and at the sacrifices for sin he was ever a party.

“Under the Prophets. It pleased God to use this concurrence towards David himself, Nathan the Prophet saying unto him, *Transtulit Dominus peccatum tuum.*

“Which course so established by God till Christ should come—for neither covenant nor Priesthood was to endure any longer—was by Christ re-established anew in the Church, in that calling to whom He hath committed the word of reconciliation.” Neither are we, the ordinance of God thus standing, to rend off one part of the sentence. There are here expressed three persons:—“1. The person of the sinner, in *quorem*; 2. Of God, in *remittuntur*; 3. Of the Priest, in *remiseritis*. Three are expressed, and where three are expressed, three are required;

and where three are required ; two are not enough. It is St. Augustine that thus speaketh of this Ecclesiastical act in his time : “ Let no one say to himself I repent in private, I repent before God. God who pardons me knows that I repent from the heart. Then to no purpose was it said, whatsoever you shall loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven? Then to no purpose, the keys were given to the Church of God? we make void the Gospel of God, we make void the words of Christ.” (Andrewes Sermon, vol. v. pp. 89-94. Library of Anglo. Cath. Divinity. Oxford, 1843.)

Two things must be briefly noted—

1. That the power asserted is not that of a priest ; (“ for neither covenant nor priesthood were to endure any longer,”) but of a minister through the word of reconciliation ; and that the act of reconciliation is Ecclesiastical, not spiritual ; pertains to discipline before the Church, not forgiveness before God.

2. The most enthusiastic Protestant would not maintain that contrition for sin is sufficient without confession, and absolution, and the fruits of repentance. The only question is what is meant by Confession and Absolution.

#### DR. DONNE.

1. DR. JOHN DONNE (died 1631), Dean of St. Paul's in the time of James I., writes : “ Men come not willingly to this manifestation of themselves, nor are they to be brought in chains, as they do in the Roman Church, by a necessity of an exact enumeration of all their sins, but to be led (to Confession) with that sweetness with which our Church proceeds, in appointing sick persons, if they feel their conscience troubled with any weighty matter

1. The quotation is correctly made, though imperfectly. It is preceded by the following :

“ And then, *Confitebor Domino*, says David, *I will confess my sins unto the Lord ;* sins are not confessed, if they be not confessed to him ; and if they be confessed to him, in case of necessity it will suffice, though they be confessed to no other. Indeed, a confession is directed to God,

*to make a special Confession, and to receive Absolution at the hands of the Priest*" (Sermon 56, vol. ii., p. 563); and then we are to remember that "*every coming to the Communion is as serious a thing as our own transmigration out of the world, and we should do as much here for the settling of our conscience as upon our death-bed.*"

though it be made to His minister; if God had appointed his angels, or his saints to absolve me, as he hath his ministers, I would confess to them. Joshua took not the jurisdiction out of God's hands, when he said to Achan, *Give glory unto the God of Israel, in making thy confession to him; and tell me now, what thou hast done, and hide*

*it not from me.* The law of the leper is "*that he shall be brought unto the priest*"; men come not willingly, etc.

Then follows the quotation, and the passage proceeds after the words "*upon our death-bed,*" thus;—

"And to be remembered also, that none of all the Reformed Churches have forbidden Confession, though some practice it less than others. If I submit a cause to the arbitrement of any man, to end it, *secundum voluntatem*, says the law, how he will, yet still *arbitrium est arbitrium boni viri*, His will must be regulated by the rules of common honesty, and general equity. So when we lead men to this holy ease of discharging their heavy spirits, by such private confessions, yet this is still limited by the law of God, so far as God hath instituted this power by his Gospel, and far from inducing among us, that torture of the conscience, that usurpation of God's power, that spying into the counsels of princes, and supplanting of their purposes, with which the Church of Rome has been deeply charged." (Donne's Works, vol. ii., pp. 563-4, London, 1839.)

In the foregoing passage, Donne refers to the limitations put on confession and absolution by the law of God. He expresses his view upon this very fully in the following:—

"Neither is this to erect a parochial papacy, to make every minister a pope in his own parish, or to re-enthral you to a

necessity of communicating all your sins, or all your doubtful actions to him ; God forbid. God of his goodness hath delivered us from that bondage, and butchery of the conscience which our fathers suffered from Rome, and *anathema*, and *anathema maranatha*, cursed be he till the Lord comes, and cursed when the Lord comes, that shall go about to bring us in a relapse, in an eddy, in a whirlpool, into that disconsolate state, or into any of the pestilent errors of that church. But since you think it no diminution to you, to consult with a physician for the state of your body, or with a lawyer for your lands, since you are not born, nor grown good physicians, and good lawyers, why should you think yourselves born, or grown so good divines, that you need no counsel, in doubtful cases, from other men. And therefore, as for the law that governs us, that is, the Scripture, we go the way that Christ did, to receive the testimony of man, both for the body, that Scriptures there are, and for the limbs of that body, that these books make up those Scriptures, and for the soul of this body, that this is the sense of the Holy Ghost in that place ; so, for our judge, which is the conscience, let that be directed beforehand, by their advice whom God hath set over us, and settled, and quieted in us, by their testimony, who are the witnesses of our conversation." (Ibid. Vol. V. pp. 107, 108.)

"We are fools for Christ, and pretend nothing to work by, but the foolishness of preaching. Lower than this we cannot be cast, and higher than this we offer not to climb ; *obsecramus*, we have no other commission but to pray, and to entreat, and that we do, in his words, in his tears, in his blood, and in his bowels who sent us *we pray you in Christ's stead.*" (Ib. pp. 143-4.)

"But when we seek to raise no other war in you, but to arm the spirit against the flesh, when we present to you no other holy water, but the tears of Christ Jesus, no other relics, but the commemoration of his passion in the Sacrament, no other indulgences, and acquittances, but the application of his merits

to your souls. When we offer all this without silver, and without gold, when we offer to you that seal which he hath committed to us, in absolution, without extortion or fees, wherein are we *rei nostræ legati*, ambassadors in our own behalfs, or advancers of our own ends." (Ibid. pp. 145, 146.)

2. And in another sermon (vol. v., p. 434): "For Confession, we REQUIRE PUBLIC Confession in the congregation; and in time of sickness upon the death-bed, we ENJOIN PRIVATE and particular Confession, IF the conscience be oppressed; AND IF ANY MAN DO THINK THAT THAT WHICH IS NECESSARY FOR HIM UPON HIS DEATH-BED IS NECESSARY EVERY TIME HE COMES TO COMMUNION, AND SO COME TO SUCH A CONFESSION, if anything lie upon him, AS OFTEN AS HE COMES TO THE COMMUNION *we BLAME NOT, we DISSUADE NOT, we DISCOUNSEL NOT that tenderness of conscience, and that SAFE PROCEEDING in the soul.*" "The more I find Confession or any religious practice repugnant to mine own nature, the further will I go in it."

require public confession in the congregation: and in time of sickness, upon the death-bed, we enjoin private and particular confession, if the conscience be oppressed: and if any man do think, that that which is necessary for him, upon his death-bed, is necessary, every time he comes to the communion, and so come to such a confession, if anything lie upon him, as often

2. This reference is wrong.

The passage, however, is complete as follows, the capitals being such as occur in the original.

"To recollect all, and to end all: Christ justifies feasting; he feasts you with himself: and feasting in an Apostle's house, in his own house; he feasts you often here: and he admits publicans to this feast, men whose full and open life, in court, must necessarily expose them, to many hazards of sin: and the Pharisees, our adversaries, calumniate us for this; they say we admit men too easily to the sacrament; without confession, without contrition, without satisfaction. God in heaven knows we do not; less, much less than they. For confession, we



as he comes to the communion, we blame not, we dissuade not, we discourse not, that tenderness of conscience, and that safe proceeding in that good soul. For contrition, we require such a contrition as amounts to a full detestation of the sin, and a full resolution not to lapse into that sin: and this they do not in the Roman church, where they have suppld and mollified their contrition into an attrition. For satisfaction, we require such a satisfaction as man can make to man, in goods or fame: and for the satisfaction due to God, we require that every man, with a sober and modest, but yet with a confident and infallible assurance believe, the satisfaction given to God, by Christ, for all mankind, to have been given and accepted for him in particular." (Ibid. Ser. cxxxix., pp. 505, 506.)

The concluding words form no part of this passage, nor are in any mode connected with it.

#### DR. LEWIS BAILY.

Dr. Lewis Baily, Bishop of Bangor (1632), in his "Practice of Piety," a book which passed through seventy-two editions at least, and was a standard devotional book during great part of the 17th and 18th centuries, writes thus: "In any wise, remember (if conveniently it may be) to send for some godly and religious pastor, *not only* to pray for thee at thy death . . . *but also* UPON THY CONFESSION AND UNFEIGNED REPENTANCE, to ABSOLVE THEE OF THY SINS. For *as* Christ hath given him a calling to baptize thee unto repentance, *so* hath He likewise given him a calling and power and authority

The passage quoted has reference exclusively to sick persons. The general heading of that portion of the work, where it occurs is "Consolation against the fear of Death." The particular heading is "The sick man now to send for some godly and religious Pastor."

At the close of the paragraph containing the quotation on the other side, the author proceeds:

"The Bishops and Pastors of the Church do not forgive sins, by any absolute power of their own (for so only Christ their Master forgiveth sins)

(upon repentance) to absolve thee from thy sins. . . . The Bishops and pastors of the Church *do not forgive sin by any absolute power of their own* (for so only Christ their Master forgiveth sins), *but ministerially*, as the servants of Christ, and stewards to whose fidelity their Lord and Master hath committed His keys. . . . For Christ from heaven doth by them (as by His ministers on earth) declare whom He remitteth and bindeth, and to whom He will open the gates of heaven, and against whom He will shut them: and therefore it is *not* said, 'Whose sins ye *signify* to be remitted,' but 'whose sins ye *remit*.' Again, "As therefore none can baptize but only . . . so, though others may comfort with good words, yet none can absolve from sin but only those to whom Christ hath committed the holy ministry and word of reconciliation." And after denouncing forced Confession "when they feel no distress," as in the Romish Church, he continues: "And verily there is not any means more excellent to *humble a proud heart*, nor to *raise up an humble spirit*, than this spiritual conference between the pastors and the people committed to their charge. If *any sin*,

but *ministerially*, as the *servants* of Christ, and *stewards*, to whose fidelity their Lord and Master hath committed his keys, and that is, when they do *declare and pronounce*, either *publickly* or *privately*, by the Word of God, what *bindeth*, what *looseth*, and the *mercies* of God to penitent sinners, or his judgments to impenitent and obstinate persons; and so do *apply* the *general promises* or threatenings to the *penitent* or *impenitent*. For Christ from *Heaven* doth by *them* (as by his *Ministers* on earth) declare whom he *remitteth and bindeth*, and to whom he will open the *gates of heaven*, and against whom he will shut them. . ."

"Christ gives his Ministers power to forgive sins to the penitent in the same words that he teacheth us in the Lord's Prayer to forgive us our sins: to assure all penitent sinners, that God by his Ministers absolution doth fully, through the merits of Christ's blood, forgive them all their sins. So that what Christ decreeth in Heaven, *in foro judicii*, the same he decreeth on earth by his reconciling Minis-

therefore, troubleth thy conscience, *confess it to God's minister*, ask his counsel, and if thou dost truly repent, *receive his Absolution*. And THEN DOUBT NOT, IN FORO CONSCIENTIÆ, BUT THY SINS BE AS VERILY FORGIVEN ON EARTH, AS IF THOU DIDST HEAR CHRIST HIMSELF, IN FORO JUDICII, PRONOUNCING THEM TO BE FORGIVEN IN HEAVEN. 'He that heareth you, heareth me.' *Try this, and tell me* whether thou shalt not find more ease in thy conscience than can be expressed in words. Did prophane men consider the dignity of this Divine calling, they would the more honour the calling, and reverence the persons" (pp. 432—439).

*Function*, so, though others may comfort with good words; yet none can *absolve* from sin, but only those to whom *Christ* hath committed the holy *ministry and word* of reconciliation: and of their *absolution*, *Christ* speaketh, *He that heareth you heareth me*. In a doubtful title, thou wilt ask the counsel of a *skilful Lawyer*: in peril of sickness thou wilt know the advice of the *learned Physician*; and is there no danger in *dread of damnation* for a *sinner* to be his *own judge*? . . . ."

"*Christ* never ordained in the New Testament any order of sacrificing priests: neither is the name of *ιερευς*, which properly signifieth *sacerdos* or sacrificing Priest, given to any Officer of *Christ*, in all the New Testament. Neither do we read in all the New Testament, of any, who confessed himself to a *Priest*, but *Judas*. Neither is there any *real Priest* in the New Testament, but *only Christ*. Neither is there any part of *his Priesthood* to be now accomplished on *Earth*,

*in foro penitentia*; so that as *God* hath *reconciled the world unto himself by Jesus Christ*, so hath he (saith the Apostle) given unto us the ministry of this reconciliation.

"He that sent them to *baptise*, saying, *Go and teach all nations baptising them &c.*, sent them also to *remit sins*, saying, *as my Father sent me so send I you; whosoever's sins ye remit, they are remitted unto them &c.* As therefore none can *baptise* (although he use the same *water and words*), but only the *lawful Ministers*, which *Christ* hath *called and authorised to this divine and ministerial*

but that which he fulfilleth in *Heaven*, by *making* intercession for us."

"Seeing therefore Christ never ordained any order of *sacri-ficing Priests*, and that Popish Priests scorn the name of *Ministers of the Gospel*, to whom only Christ committed his Keys, it necessarily followeth that no *Popish Priests* can truly either *ex-communicate*, or *absolve* any sinner, or have any *lawful* right to meddle with *Christ's Keys*. But the *Antichristian* abuse of this divine ordinance should not abolish the *lawful use* thereof betwixt Christians, and their Pastors, in *cases of distress of conscience*, for which it was chiefly ordained."

"And verily, there is not any means more excellent to *humble a proud heart*, nor to *raise up a humble spirit*, than this spiritual conference betwixt the Pastors and the people committed to their charge. If any *sin* therefore troubleth the *conscience*, confess it to *God's Minister*: ask his counsel, and if thou dost truly repent receive his absolution; and then doubt not in *foro conscientiae*, that thy sins be as verily forgiven on earth, as if thou didst hear Christ himself in *foro judicii* pronouncing them to be forgiven in Heaven. *Qui vos audit, me audit; he that heareth you, heareth me*. Try this, and tell me whether thou shalt not find more ease in thy conscience, than can be expressed in words. Did profane men consider the *dignity* of this divine calling, they would the more honour the *calling*, and reverence the persons." (Practice of Piety, pp. 508-515, London, 1685.)

#### BISHOP DOWNAME.

1. BISHOP DOWNAME (1634), author of "The Pope Antichrist," says (in "Sermon on Dignity and Duty of the Ministry," p. 57): "His ministers whom we are bound to hear, and to receive, not only as angels of God, but even (Gal. iv., 14) as Christ Jesus."

1. The relation, in which this quotation stands towards the general design of the pamphlet, suggests, and can scarcely be otherwise than intended to suggest, that Bishop Downame is here speaking

of confession of some kind or another. But in fact, there is not the slightest reference to confession. He is speaking of the preaching of the Word of God, and of this only. The entire paragraph is as follows:—

“First therefore, ministers were ordained to supply the office, and sustain the person of the Son of God, who is the Word and Wisdom of his Father. For from the beginning of the world unto the times of Moses, the Lord for the most part in His own person, performed the office of preaching to His people. In which respect He is often called in the books of Moses, “The Angel of God,” and elsewhere “The Angel of the Covenant.” But when the Lord in terrible manner had published His law from heaven, and the people not being able to endure His voice, had humbly entreated Him that He would be pleased to speak unto them by a prophet; upon this occasion the Lord ordained the public ministry, and promised a continual succession of prophets, (into whose mouths he would put His words), which was to continue unto Christ, in whom especially that prophecy was verified. And again, when Christ was to ascend into heaven, He ordained the ministers of the Gospel, as the ambassadors of God, in his stead; affirming that as His Father “had sent him,” so He did send them. ‘For we,’ saith the Apostle, ‘are’ the ‘ambassadors of God in Christ’s stead, even as though God did entreat you by us; we beseech you in Christ’s stead, be reconciled unto God.’ The ministers therefore were ordained to supply the room of Christ, which the Lord did, not that He would have the ministry of the word less esteemed, than if He should speak from heaven Himself; but that He might by this means teach us after a more familiar manner, and might make the better trial of our obedience. For as John saith, “he that knoweth God, heareth us; and who is not of God, heareth us not.” Our duty therefore is, when God doth speak unto us by His ministers, to act ourselves, with Cornelius and his company, in the presence of God; and to hear τὸν λόγον ἀκοῆς, “the word preached, not as the word of man,

but as it is indeed the word of God: and to receive the ministers of God, as the Galatians entertained Paul, as the ambassadors of Christ, as the angels of God, yea, as Christ Himself. For so hath He said to His ministers, "he that heareth you, heareth me; and he that despiseth you, despiseth Me." (Hickes' Christian Priesthood, vol. iii. pp. 57-58, Oxford, 1848.)

2. And "as touching their authoritie," he quotes S. Matt. xviii., 18, and S. John xx., 23, and Theophylact's annotation on those passages, adding: "As if in plainer terms he said, 'The authority of forgiving sins is Divine; which being communicated after a sort to ministers, in that they pronouncing the forgiveness of sin according to their commission, the sins indeed are forgiven, their authority also may be said to be Divine.'"

are set over the Church are called *οἰκονόμοι*, that is, stewards of God, set over his household. And whereas the authority of a steward is signified by the keys committed to him, our Saviour Christ therefore, to His stewards hath committed keys, "the keys of the kingdom of heaven;" that both by preaching the Gospel and by Ecclesiastical discipline, they might open to some the gates of heaven, and shut them to others: that to them which believe and repent, they might pronounce the sentence of absolution, and might denounce damnation against the unfaithful and impenitent; that they might loose the one, and bind the other." (Ibid. p. 66.)

He then proceeds to compare the dignity of the ministry, first with the dignity of the civil magistrate, and then with the dignity of the angels. He declares the ministry of the Gospel

2. Bishop Downname distinguishes the work of the ministry into two parts "The Liturgy or public service of God in the congregation, and the regiment of the Church." (Ibid. p. 60). Having explained the first, he proceeds to speak of the second in these terms,—

"And forasmuch as the Church in the Scriptures is also called the house of God, therefore the ministers who

committed to men to be "far more excellent" than the ministry of the law committed to angels.

"And as touching their authority: to the ministers," saith Chrysostom, "being conversant on earth, is committed the administration of things in heaven; and they have received such an authority as God never communicated to the angels:" "for to which of the angels hath God said at any time," which he hath said to his ministers, "Verily, I say unto you, whatsoever you shall bind on earth, it shall be bound in heaven; and whatsoever you shall loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven." And again, "Whose sins ye forgive, they shall be forgiven; and whose sins ye retain, they shall be retained." On which words Theophylact's annotation is something hyperbolic, but in a qualified sense, true; "Mark me," saith he, "the dignity of priests, that it is divine; for it belongeth to God to forgive sins; wherefore you must honour them as God." As if in plainer words he had said, "The authority of forgiving sins is divine; which being communicated after a sort to ministers, in that they pronouncing the forgiveness of sin, according to their commission, the sins indeed are forgiven; their authority also may be said to be divine. Wherefore, they bearing the image of God's authority before men, in forgiving or retaining sins, you are to honour and obey them as God, whose vicegerents they be." The like hath Ignatius: "Be subject," saith he, "unto your Bishop as unto the Lord." And again, "Reverence your bishop as Christ." Neither is this any more than is commended unto us in the example of the Galatians, who received the Apostle "as an angel of God, yea, as Jesus Christ." (Ibid. pp. 75, 76.)

It will be observed, that he concludes with the same comparison with which he concluded the previous quotation, and it must therefore be understood to refer in both places to one and the same thing, namely, the preaching of the Gospel.

## JOSEPH MEDE.

JOSEPH MEDE (1638), a famous writer against Rome, says that *Confession* is a duty "in some cases also convenient to be made unto His ministers not only for advice, but for consolation by that power and authority which God hath given them to exercise in His Name; according to that, whose sins ye remit, shall be remitted."

It will be observed that no reference whatever is given, by which this quotation may be traced; and as Mede's works are copious enough to occupy a large folio volume, it has been no light work to find the passage, especially as his works contain no special treatise in which a reference to this subject might naturally be expected. The following extract will suffice to show, in what light such a writer is likely to have regarded Sacramental confession and absolution.

"The reason we thus speak is to avoid the name Priest, which we conceive to signify sacerdos, that is, one that sacrificeth, such as were those in the Law. But our Curates, of holy things in the Gospel are not to offer sacrifice, and therefore ought not to be called Sacerdotes, and therefore not Priests." (Works, Dis. v. p. 27. Lond., 1672.)

I now subjoin the passage itself. If the context before and after the words quoted had been given, it would have been seen, that nothing was further from Mede's purpose than to recommend anything even approaching to Sacramental Confession. Such an imperfect quotation, as the pamphlet contains, is garbled to all intents and purposes. The entire paragraph is as follows:—

"*An Effect* of this *Contrition* is Confession; when out of a contrite and wounded heart, we acknowledge and lay open our sins before the face of Almighty God, (our heavenly Father), begging pardon and forgiveness for them. A Duty always necessary to be performed to God himself, whom we have principally and chiefly offended; and in some cases also convenient to be made unto his Ministers, not only for advice,



but for consolation, by that power and authority which God hath given them to exercise in His name, according to that, "*Whose sins ye remit shall be remitted. For if we confess our sins (saith S. John, 1 Epistle, i. 9), he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness; and Proverbs xxviii. 13, He that covereth his sins, shall not prosper; but whose confesseth and forsaketh them, shall have mercy.*" (Mede's Works, Dis. xxvi., p. 109. London, 1672.)

#### BISHOP MONTAGUE.

1. BISHOP MONTAGUE (1641):  
 "It is confessed that *all* Priests, and none *but* Priests, have power to forgive sins; it is confessed that private Confession unto a Priest is of very antient practice in the Church, of excellent use and practise, being discreetly handled. We REFUSE IT TO NONE, if men require it, if need be to have it. We URGE and persuade it in extremes, we require it in case of perplexity, for the quieting of men disturbed and their consciences" ("A Gag for the New Gospel," p. 83).

1. The words immediately introducing the passage quoted are important.

"The most that hath been said is, that *private confession is free*, not tied; and therefore *suus positivi*, not *divini*, therefore happily of convenience, not of absolute necessity. That in a private confession unto a Priest, a peculiar enumeration of all sins, both of commission and omission, with all circumstances and accidents, is never necessary necessarily; most an end not

expedient, nor yet, all things considered, required. It is confessed that all Priests, and none but Priests, have power to forgive sins: It is confessed that private confession unto a Priest, is of very ancient practice in the Church; of excellent use and practice, being discreetly handled. We refuse it to none, if men require it, if needs be to have it. We urge it and persuade it in extremes; we require it in case of perplexity, for the quieting of men disturbed, and their con-

sciences." (Montague : A Gag for the New Gospel, p. 83. Lond., 1624.)

2. "In some sense it is not true that none but God can forgive sins or retain them. For by delegation others also might do it ministerially. God doth forgive them by the ministry of men. The Priest, to do this, hath power conferred upon him by God in as ample a sort as he or any man can receive it." (Appello ad Cæsarem, p. 312.)

occurs under cap. xi., which is headed, "That none but God can forgive or retain sins." He is speaking of Matt. viii. 18.

"The text is so express to the purpose that Origen, Crysostom, Theophylact, and Anastatius, understand it of all Christians whomsoever; that sundry Roman Catholics, if Maldonate deceive us not, understand it of no more than civil policy. Go, take it, "Whatsoever ye bind on earth, shall be bound in heaven, and whatsoever ye loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven:" as yourselves will for the power and execution of the keys. We deny not in any sort, that power is given to mortal men to forgive sins on earth, nor to bind by excommunication, which is frequently practised, and peradventure too frequently among us." (Ibid. pp. 80, 81.) . . . .

"It is happily intended they confessed unto God. For it is not said they confessed unto John. And then, what is become of your *therefore sinners may be confessed unto man*. Secondly, your tenet is *of must be*, not *may be*. They did it *voluntarily once*: therefore often, and again we must necessarily do. Thirdly they did it once in all their life; and that on occasion, and time extraordinary; at their Baptism: not again for anything that we know. Your confession is penitential, flat

to do) that if any of them have their consciences troubled and disquieted with sin ; they should first resort unto him, or to some other learned and discreet minister of God's Word, and opening their grief, receive from him such ghostly counsel and comfort as thereby they may be relieved, and receive the benefit of absolution to the quieting of their conscience, and to the avoiding of all scruple and doubt on their coming to this blessed Sacrament ? And at the same or at other times, whether in sickness, or in health, when any man doth confess his secret or hidden sins to the minister, with intent and purpose to disburden his conscience, and to receive such spiritual consolation from him ; know you, or have you heard, that your minister hath again revealed to any man any such crime or offence, committed to his trust and secrecy, contrary to the 113 Canon ?

IX. Touching the Visitation of the Sick.

“ Whether doth your minister diligently visit the sick persons of his parish, when notice thereof is given unto him ? Doth he use the Prayers and Exhortations set forth for that purpose ? Doth he instruct, help, and comfort them ? Doth he cause them to profess the Articles of their faith ? Doth he, upon due confession and repentance of their sins, absolve them in that prescript form which is appointed by the Book ? Doth he deliver them the Holy Sacrament, when they desire it, for the benefit and strengthening of their souls.”—(Correspondence of John Cosin—Publications of the Surtees Society, Part I., pp. 116-119. London, 1809.)

*Montague*, 1638 : Under “ Visitation of the Sick ” he enquires :—

“ 20. But much rather, doth he comfort him as concerning his soul's health, his state to Godward ? Doth he, upon hearing of his confession, which he shall persuade him to make, absolve him from his sins, settle his faith, affiance and confidence in God ? and hath he at any time discovered any part of his confession ? ”

Minister he may receive the benefit of absolution, to the quiet of his conscience, and avoiding of the scruple; and if any man confess his secret and hidden sins being sick or whole to the Minister, for the unburdening of his conscience, and receiving such spiritual consolation, doth or hath the said Minister at any time revealed and made known to any person whatsoever, any crime or offence so committed to his trust and secrecy, contrary to the 113 Canon."

That the reference to absolution in these Articles is intended to apply to the remission of Ecclesiastical censures, and not to the remission of the guilt of sin, is evidently seen from the following extract from the Visitation Articles of Davenant, Bishop of Salisbury, 1628.

"22. Item. Whether doth your minister every six months denounce in his parish all such of his parish as do persevere in the sentence of excommunication, not seeking to be absolved: and whether he hath received any excommunicate person into the Church, without certificate from the Ordinary: who are encouragers and keepers of company with such as remain excommunicate; and whether any dying excommunicate be buried in Christian burial." (Ritual Com. 2 Report, pp. 480-502.)

*Cosin, Archdeacon, 1627.*—The Visitation Articles of Cosin as Archdeacon of the East Riding of York, 1627, have been published by the Surtees Society.

Cap. VIII. "Touching the administration of the Holy Communion."

"Doth he give public notice and warning in the Church, the Sunday before using Communion, inviting and exhorting his parishioners, in the name of God, duly to prepare themselves for the celebration occurring of those heavenly mysteries? When any of the people are negligent and slack in their coming, doth he invite and stir them up by reading the Exhortation prescribed for that purpose? Doth he further admonish and exhort his parishioners (as by the Book he is ordered

The next paragraph opens with quoting the words of the Exhortation to Communion, and then proceeds:—

“All which being an exhortation of the *Church* belonging to a particular case (*when a man by the use of all helps which are within his own reach cannot attain to quiet of conscience, or be satisfied that he is fit to receive the Holy Communion*), as they do imply that those foresaid *means* may happily serve the turn, without opening his case to the Minister, and consequently without receiving *absolution*, so are they a *fervent exhortation* to all, in case those means prove not successful, to seek out, and make use of those auxiliaries, which soever in that case shall repent, will be guilty of great unkindness to his own soul, and may well be thought to have betrayed it to great and needless danger. And it is worthy our noting from hence, that receiving of *comfort*, and the *benefit of absolution*, are by our Church here conjoined, to signify this absolution to be beneficial to him, that once *wanted comfort*, as a means of confirming that *comfort* which the Minister had now given him. To which end certainly, it is very proper and seasonable; for when a discreet, and learned Minister, having had the survey of my soul, (the cognisance of my *offence* first, and then of my *repentance*) shall from the Word of God give me assurance, that (if I am what to him I appear to be) my estate is good, and thereupon *pronounce* me absolved as a true penitent for all my sins; this will seal me a right of God’s promise of forgiveness in Heaven, as it were *solemnly* and in the *court*, and 2, extremely *quiet* me, and confirm to me that *comfort*, *i.e.* that *comfortable opinion* of my good estate, and hope of my future happiness, which he had given me, when I see him who hath no reason to be partial to me, and whom I cannot suspect of *ignorance*, or passion in this particular, (both which perhaps I may upon enquiry discern in myself) and beside who is set over me by Christ for this purpose, *pronounce* so clear a *sentence* of me, and that (as the precedent words are, by the *ministry of God’s Word*, *i.e.* by applying peculiar parts of that

infallible truth to the present condition of my soul ; and from thence *pronouncing my absolution*. And that this is the meaning of the *absolution* there, it is evident by that which is the second thing, which I thought worthy of our observing from hence, viz., what is added in conclusion, as the ultimate *end* of that *comfort* and *absolution*, the *quieting of conscience* and *avoiding of all scruple and doubtfulness* ; which whether they be distinct, so that the *quieting of conscience* may be the *completion* of the *comfort*, and the *avoiding of all scruple and doubtfulness*, the *end* intended in, and obtained by *absolution*, or whether both together *indiscretè* belong to both together, the product will be still the same ; that in case a man be not able to *satisfy* his own *scruples*, and *doubts* concerning himself, the Presbyterian will be able to stand him in good stead, by the Word of God applied to his case to *give comfort*, and by *pronouncing absolution* to him to seal that *comfort*, and persuade him to a greater *confirmation* of mind, that that *comfort* is not *groundless*, and to take away *doubts* and *scruples* concerning that matter, which before molested him, and made him unfit for the *communion*, which was the only occasion of the exhortation." (Hammond. Power of the Keys, chap. iv. pp. 447, 448. Lond. 1684.)

#### DR. HEYLIN.

Dr. Heylin, in Charles I.'s reign, teaches : " For Confession to be made to the Priest, it is agreeable both to the doctrine and intent of the Church of England, though *not so much to the practice as it ought to be*" (Heylin's " Summary of Theology," p. 455).

Heylin's Summary of Theology is the same work, referred to in another place of this pamphlet, as Heylin on the Creed. In chapter five he treats of " forgiveness of sins," devoting the latter part of it to the questions of " the confession of sin to men" and of " Sacerdotal Absolution." The

quotation constitutes the opening sentence of this part of the

work, and expresses what none deny, so far as I know, in this controversy. He proceeds to prove the statement from the Exhortation of the Communion Office, and the service of the Visitation of the Sick. He then discusses the differences between the Church of England and the Church of Rome in this matter, and states them to turn especially on the necessity and particularity of confession, as inculcated by the Church of Rome. He then says :

“ And yet for all their great brags of the *Jus Divinum* of Sacramental or Auricular Confession, call it which you will, though they have ransacked many texts of Scripture to find it out it hath been hitherto but to little purpose. Some build it on those words in *St. Matthew's* Gospel, where he speaks of those who were baptised by John in Jordan, *confessing their sins*, *Matt.* iii. 6. But what says Maldonate to this: *Quis unquam Catholicus tam indoctus fuit ut ex hoc loco Confessionis probaret Sacramentum* ; Was ever Catholic so unlearned as to go about to prove Sacramental Confession from that text. Some hope to find it in those words of our Saviour Christ, *Whose sins ye remit, they are remitted, &c.*, *John* xx. 23. But Vasquez saith that of all those who have undertook it, *Vix invenies qui efficaciter inde deducat*, you shall hardly meet with any that have effectually deduced a good proof from thence. Others presume as much on that place of the *Acts*, where it is said, *that many which believed, came and confessed, and showed their deeds.* *Acts* xix. 18. But this, saith Cajetan, was a *public confession*, and in generals only, *sed non Confessio Sacramentalis*, not such a private and particular one as is now required ; not such a *Sacramental* one as is now defended. But we might well have saved this particular search, it being ingenuously confessed by *Michael de Pelocios*, a *Spanish* writer, that notwithstanding all their pains, to found it on *some Text* of Scripture, they are so far from being agreed among themselves, that it is much to be admired, *Quanta sit de hac re concertatio*, what contention there is raised about it, and how badly they agree with one

another." (Theologia Veterum. Part ii. l. vi. pp. 486, 487. London, 1673.)

He then discusses the question of Absolution, quoting with approval the statements of Archbishop Usher and Bishop Morton, telling the anecdote about Bishop Reynolds found on page 22 of the pamphlet, and thus concludes the whole :

But what need more be said for manifesting this *judicial* power in the *remitting of sins*, than what is *exercised* and determined by the Church in the other branch of this *Authority*, in *retaining sins* ? By which impenitent sinners are *solemnly* and *judicially* cut off from the Sacred Body of the Church, and utterly excluded from the company and *communion* of the rest of the faithful. Of which, the Church has thus resolved in her 'public Articles,' viz., *that person which by open denunciation of the Church, is rightly cut off from the unity of the Church, and Excommunicated, ought to be taken of the whole multitude of the faithful, as an Heathen and a Publican, until he be openly reconciled by penance, and received into the Church by a Judge, that hath authority thereunto.* When clearly we have found a *Judicial* power, and *Judge* to exercise the same ; and that not only in the point of *retaining sins*, in case of *excommunication*, but also in *reconciling* of the *penitent*, in *remitting sins*, in the way of *ordinary* absolution. Which whether it be given in *foro pœnitentiæ*, or in *foro Conscientiæ*, whether in private on the *confession* of the party, or publicly for *satisfaction* of the Congregation, doth make no difference in this point, which only doth consist in the proof of this, *that the Priest or Ministers of the Gospel, lawfully ordained, have under Christ a power of forgiving sins*, which comfortable doctrine of *remission of sins*, by God's great mercy at all times, and the Church's ministry at some times (as occasion is) is the whole subject of this branch of the present *Article.*" (Ibid. pp. 490, 491.)



## ARCHBISHOP LAUD.

And ARCHBISHOP LAUD we find recording in his diary his own appointment "as Confessor to my Lord of Buckingham." He thus wrote also: "All men (for aught I know) allowing Confession and Absolution as *most useful* for the good of Christians, and *condemning only the BINDING* of all men to confess all sins, upon absolute danger of salvation."

The entries in this Diary are for the most part very brief. The precise entry to which reference is made is exactly as follows:—

"June 15. I became C. to my Lord of Buckingham, and June 16, being Trinity Sunday, he received the Sacrament at Greenwich." (Laud's Works, vol. iii., p. 139, Ox. 1853.)

No reference is given for the passage. It occurs, however, in the "History of the Troubles and Trials of Archbishop Laud," written by himself during his imprisonment in the Tower. Among the articles of accusation made against him was the following:—

"7. By comparing Canon ix. Cap. xviii., as it was sent in writing from our prelates, and as it is printed at Canterbury's command, may be also manifest, that he went about to establish auricular confession and Popish absolution."

He replies:—

"I have shown before that this book of Canons was not printed at my command. But I have a long time found sad experience, that whatsoever some men disliked was presently my doing. God forgive them. But to the present charge I shall answer nothing; but only transcribe that Canon, and leave it to the judgment of all orthodox and moderate Christians, whether I have therein gone about to establish 'auricular confession' and 'Popish absolution.' The Canon is as follows:—

"Albeit Sacramental Confession and Absolution have been in some places very much abused, yet if any of the people be grieved in mind for any delict or offence committed, and for the unburdening of his conscience, confess the same to the

bishop or presbyter ; they shall, as they are bound, minister to the person so confessing all spiritual consolations out of the word of God ; and shall not deny him the benefit of absolution after the manner which is prescribed in the Visitation of the Sick, if the party show himself truly penitent, and humbly desire to be absolved. And he shall not make known or reveal what hath been opened to him in confession, at any time, or to any person whatsoever, except the crime be such as by the laws of the realm his own life may be called in question for concealing the same."

"This is the Canon word for word ; where first give me leave to observe the care that I had of the laws of the kingdom. For I believe it will hardly be found that such a clause is inserted in any Canon, concerning the 'seal of confession,' as is expressed in this Canon, in relation to the laws of the realm, from the time that confession came into solemn use, till our English Canon was made, anno 1603, with which this agrees. And then for the matter of the Canon, if here be anything to establish 'Popish Confession or Absolution,' I humbly submit it to the learned of the Reformed Churches throughout Christendom ; all men (for aught I yet know), allowing 'confession' 'and absolution,' as most useful for the good of Christians, and condemning only the binding of all men to confess all sins, upon absolute danger of salvation. And this indeed some call *carnificinam conscientiae*, the rack or torturing of the conscience ; but impose no other necessity of confessing than the weight of their own sin shall lay upon them ; nor no other enforcement to receive absolution, than their Christian care to ease their own conscience shall lead them unto ; and in that way Calvin commends confession exceedingly ; and, if you mark it, you shall find that our Saviour Christ, who gives the 'priest full power of the keys' to bind and loose, that is, to receive confession, and to absolve or not absolve, as he sees cause in the delinquent ; yet you shall not find any command of his to enforce men to come

to the priest to receive this benefit. 'Tis enough that He hath left power to give penitent Christians this ease, safety, and comfort, if they will receive it when they need. If they need, and will not come; or if they need, and will not believe that they do so, let them bear their own burden." (Works, vol. iii., pp. 331-332, *Oxf.*, 1853.)

It will be seen that Archbishop Laud says nothing of an authoritative and Sacramental forgiveness of sins: that he refers not to a sentence of absolution, but to consolations out of God's word; that he repudiates confession and absolution of a Popish character; and states himself to maintain them, only in the same sense as Calvin maintained them.

#### ARCHBISHOP BRAMHALL.

And ARCHBISHOP BRAMHALL: No reference is given. The "Protestants have not pared away all manner of shrift, or Confession and Absolution." passage however occurs in "Protestants Ordination Vindicated." The entire paragraph runs thus:—

"Neither have the Protestants "pared away" all manner of shrift or confession, or absolution. I have shown before in this answer five several ways, whereby the Protestants hold, that their Presbyters put away sins. Nay, they condemn not private confession and absolution itself, as our Ecclesiastical policy, to make men more wary how they offend; so as it might be left free, without tyrannical imposition. No better physic for a full stomach than a vomit." (Bramhall's Works, vol. v., p. 222, A.D. 1844.)

The five modes of putting away sins, to which the Archbishop refers, are enumerated in the following passage,—

"We acknowledge, that he who is ordained, is enabled by his office many ways to put away sins. (1) By Baptism—"I believe one Baptism for the remission of sins;" so saith the Creed. (2) By the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper; "this is My blood, which is shed for you and for many, for remission

of sins ;” so said the Saviour. (3) By prayer ; “ Call for the Presbyters of the Church ; the prayer of faith shall save the sick ; and if he have committed sins, they shall be forgiven him.” (4) By preaching the word of reconciliation ; “ God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them ; and hath committed unto us the word of reconciliation.”—(5) By special absolution ;—“ Whose sins ye remit, they are remitted.” To forgive sins is no more proper to God, than to work wonders above the course of nature. The one is communicable as the other. The Priest absolves ; or to speak more properly, God absolves by the Priest. Therefore he says “ I absolve thee in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost.” God remits sovereignly, imperially, primitively, absolutely ; the Priests power is derivative, delegate, ministerial, conditional.” (Ibid. pp. 213-214.)

Two other short passages will suffice to show clearly Archbishop Bramhall’s meaning.

“ We do acknowledge, that on Penitence, pastors of the Church have a dependent ministerial power of loosing from sin ; but that (the primitive imperial, original power is God’s) God’s power is absolute,—“ *ad sententiandum simpliciter*,”—without ifs ; man’s power is only conditional,—*ad sententiandum si*,”—to loose a man, if he be truly contrite and aptly disposed.” (Ibid. p. 190.)

“ The words of our Ordinal are clear enough. First, “ Receive the Holy Ghost ;”—that is, the grace of the Holy Ghost, to exercise and discharge the office of Priesthood, to which thou hast been now presented, to which thou hast been now accepted, and for which we have prayed to God, that in it thou mayest discharge thy duty faithfully and acceptably, Secondly, in these words, “ Whose sins thou dost remit, they are remitted ;” that is, not only by Priestly absolution, but by preaching, by baptizing, by administering the Holy Eucharist, which is a means to apply the all-sufficient Sacri-

face of Christ for the remission of sins." (Works, vol. iii. p. 167.)

#### THE IRISH CANONS.

And in 1634 we find that the following passed as the 19<sup>TH</sup> CANON OF THE IRISH CHURCH in their Convocation—a Canon (be it remembered), drawn up by BISHOP BRAMHALL, and approved by ARCHBISHOP USSHER, who presided (these being two of the greatest opponents Rome ever had); which, after ordering that warning of the Holy Communion be given, continues thus: "And the minister of every parish, and in cathedral and collegiate churches some principal minister of the church shall, the afternoon before the said administration (of the Lord's Supper), give warning by the tolling of a bell or otherwise, to the intent that if any have any scruple of conscience or desire the special ministry of reconciliation, he may afford it to those that need it. And to this end the people are often to be exhorted to enter into a special examination of the state of their own souls, and FINDING THEMSELVES EITHER EXTREMELY DULL OR MUCH TROUBLED IN MIND, THEY DO RESORT UNTO GOD'S MINISTERS to receive from them as well ad-

The title of the Canon is "Warning to be given beforehand for the communion." Accordingly, the first part runs thus:

"Whereas every lay person is bound to receive the holy communion thrice every year, and many notwithstanding do not receive that Sacrament once in the year; we do require every minister to give warning to his parishioners publicly in the church at morning prayer, the Sunday before every time of his administration of the holy Sacrament, for the better preparation of themselves. Which said warning we enjoin the said parishioners to accept and obey, under the penalty and danger of the law."

Then follows the quotation given in the pamphlet. It thus appears that the regulation made to afford "to those who need it," "the special ministry of reconciliation," has reference to the Lord's Supper, and to scruples

vice and counsel for the quickening of their dead hearts, and the subduing of those corruptions whereunto they have been subject, as the *benefit of Absolution* likewise for the quieting of their consciences by *the power of the keys* which Christ hath committed to His ministers for that purpose."

of conscience or want of information, supposed to deter men from it. The regulation, therefore, exactly corresponds in spirit and intent to the language of the Exhortation in the Communion office of the Church of England. From these regulations necessarily arose the exercise of ecclesi-

astical discipline, in the manner already pointed out in the first part of this reply, pages 9, 10. The Canons of 1711 regulate the mode in which the readmission of penitents to communion,—“absolution;” and the exclusion of unrepentant persons from communion,—“excommunication,” shall be conducted. The XIII Canon of 1711 is as follows :

“No excommunications or absolutions shall be good or valid in law, except they be pronounced either by the Bishop in person, or by some other in holy orders, having Ecclesiastical Jurisdiction, or by some grave minister beneficed in the diocese, being a master of arts at least, and appointed by the bishop, and the priest’s name pronouncing such sentence of excommunication or absolution to be expressed in the instrument issuing under seal out of the court. And that no such minister shall pronounce any sentence of absolution but in open consistory, or at least in a Church or chapel, the penitent humbly craving and taking absolution upon his knees, and having first taken the oath, “*de parendo juri et stando mandatis Ecclesiæ.*” And that no parson, vicar or curate, “*sub pœna suspensionis,*” shall declare any of his or their parishioners to be excommunicate, or shall admit any of them so excommunicate into the church, and there to declare them to be absolved, except they first receive such excommunications and absolutions under the seal of the ecclesiastical Judge from whom it cometh.” *Wilkins’ Concilia*, vol. iv., pp. 551, 552.

## ARCHBISHOP USSHER.

Moreover, in ARCHBISHOP USSHER'S "Answer to a Jesuit's Challenge," we find (p. 75): "Be it known unto him, that no KIND OF CONFESSION, either public or private, is *disallowed by us*, that is in any way requisite for the due execution of that antient power of the keys which Christ bestowed upon His Church. *The thing which WE REJECT is that new picklock of Sacramental Confession, obtruded upon men's consciences AS A MATTER NECESSARY TO SALVATION*, by the Canons of the late Conventicle of Trent."

from man; but that inward contrition, and confession made to God alone, was sufficient in this case. Otherwise, neither they nor we do debar men from opening their grievances unto the physicians of their souls, either for their better information in the true state of their disease, or for the quieting of their troubled consciences, or for receiving further direction from them out of God's Word, both for the recovery of their present sickness, and for the prevention of the like danger in the time to come." (Answer to a Jesuit, p. 81, Camb., 1835.)

After quoting a passage from Gregory Nyssen, he goes on to say:—

"It was no part of his meaning to advise us that we should open ourselves in this manner unto every hedge-priest; as if there were a virtue generally annexed to the order, that upon confession made, and absolution received from any of that rank, all should be straight made up: but he would have us

Nothing can really be more explicit than Ussher's teaching, and there is little excuse for mistaking it, because he has devoted, in his "Answer to a Jesuit," special chapters to the subjects of confession and absolution. After quoting from the Fathers, he proceeds—

"By this it appeareth, that the ancient Fathers did not think that the remission of sins was so tied unto external confession, that a man might not look for salvation from God, if he concealed his faults

communicate our case both to such christian brethren, and to such a ghostly father, as had skill in physic of this kind, and out of a fellow-feeling of our grief would apply themselves to our recovery." . . . . "He (the spiritual physician) requireth care and diligence in the performance of the cure; being ignorant, good man, of that new compendious method of healing, invented by our Roman Paracelsians, whereby a man, "in confession of attrite is made contrite by virtue of the keys;" that the sinner need put his ghostly father to no further trouble than this, *Speak the word only, and I shall be healed.* And this is that sacramental confession devised of late by the priests of Rome; which they notwithstanding would fain father upon St. Peter, from whom the Church of Rome, as they would have us believe, received this instruction: "That if envy, or infidelity, or any other evil did secretly creep into any man's heart, he who had care of his own soul should not be ashamed to confess those things unto him who had the oversight over him; that by God's word and wholesome counsel he might be cured by him." And so indeed we read in the apocryphal Epistle of Clement, pretended to be written unto St. James, the brother of our Lord; where in the several editions of Crabb, Sichardus, Venradius, Surius, Nicholinus, and Binius, we find this note also laid down in the margin; *Nota de confessione sacramentali, "Mark this of sacramental confession."* But their own Maldonat would have taught them that this note was not worth the marking: for as much as the proper end of sacramental confession is the obtaining of the remission of sins by virtue of the keys of the Church; whereas the end of the confession here said to be commended by St. Peter, was the obtaining of counsel out of God's Word for the remedy of sins. Which kind of medicinal confession we well approve of, and acknowledge to have been ordinarily prescribed by the ancient Fathers for the cure of secret sin." (Ibid. pp. 83, 84.)

Speaking of the kindred subject of absolution, he says,



“To forgive sins, therefore, being thus proper to God only and to his Christ, his ministers, must not be held to have this power communicated unto them, but in an improper sense, namely, because God forgiveth by them, and hath appointed them both to apply those means by which he useth to forgive sins, and to give notice to repentant sinners of that forgiveness. “For *who can forgive sins but God alone?* yet doth he forgive by them also unto whom he hath given power to forgive,” saith St. Ambrose, and his followers. And “though it be the proper work of God to remit sins,” saith Ferus, “yet are the Apostles and their successors said to remit sins, not simply, but because they apply those means whereby God doth remit sins; which means are the word of God and the Sacraments.” Whereunto also we may add the relaxation of the censures of the Church, and prayer; for on these four the whole exercise of *this ministry of reconciliation*, as the Apostle calleth it, doth mainly consist.” (Ibid. pp. 108, 109.)

The following passage is also worthy of attention, as explaining the power of Ecclesiastical discipline, repeatedly referred to in these extracts.

“That this authority of loosing remaineth still in the Church, we constantly maintain against the heresy of the Montanists and Novatians, who (upon this pretence, among others, that God only had power to remit sins) took away the ministerial power of reconciling such penitents as had committed grievous sins, denying that the Church had any warrant to receive them to her communion again, and to the participation of the holy mysteries, notwithstanding their repentance were ever so sound; which is directly contrary to the doctrine delivered by St. Paul, &c.” (Ibid. p. 117.)

#### GEORGE HERBERT.

The great and holy George Herbert's words do not go Herbert (1632) declares even beyond the language of the the *necessity* of Confession at office of the Visitation of the

times. He describes "The Parson Comforting." "Besides this, in his visiting the sick or *otherwise afflicted*, he followeth the Church's counsel, namely, in PERSUADING *them to particular confession*, labouring to make them understand the great good use of this antient and pious ordinance, and how NECESSARY IT IS IN SOME CASES." (Chap. xv., "Priest to the Temple.")

Sick, about which there is no controversy. The context preceding the quotation proves, that Herbert expected consolation to be afforded to the penitent, not from the pronouncing of any form of absolution, or any power of the priest, but simply from the promises of the word of God applied to the particular circumstances of the penitent.

The context is as follows:—

"The country parson, when any of his cure is sick, or afflicted with loss of friend, or estate, or any ways distressed, fails not to afford his best comforts, and rather goes to them, than sends for the afflicted, though they can, and otherwise ought to come to him. To this end he hath thoroughly digested all the points of consolation, as having continual use of them, such as are from God's general providence extended even to lilies; from His particular, to His Church; from His promises, from the examples of all saints, that ever were; from Christ himself, perfecting our redemption no other way than by sorrow; from the benefit of affliction, which softens and works the stubborn heart of man; from the certainty both of deliverance, and reward, if we faint not; from the miserable comparison of the moment of griefs here with the weight of joys hereafter." Then follows the extract. He then proceeds without ever mentioning the form of absolution at all, "he also urgeth them to do some pious charitable works, as a necessary evidence and fruit of their faith, at that time especially; the participation of the Holy Sacrament, how comfortable and sovereign a medicine it is to all sin-sick souls; what strength, what joy, and peace it administers against all temptations, even to death itself; he plainly, and generally inti-

mateth all this to the disaffected, or sick person; that so the hunger and thirst after it, may come rather from themselves, than from his persuasion." (Priest to the Temple, cap. xv. Works, pp. 38, 39. London, 1861.)

#### N. FARRAR, JUN.

In 1640 died Mr. Nicholas Farrar, Jun. The Bishop of Peterborough, Dr. Torrens, "came to him two days before he died . . . who gave him absolution, and with many tears departed." ("Last Hours of Eminent Christians," p. 85.)

"In this manner, and upon the visits of friends, he would discourse; and the bishop came to him two days before he died, and found him most cheerful to die, and to be with God, as he would say to him; who gave him absolution, and with many tears departed,

saying to his father, "God give you consolation; and prepare yourself to part with your good son. He will in a few hours, I think, go to a better world: for he is in no way for this, that I see, by his body or by his soul. And in two days after, God took him away; who died, praying and calling upon God, "Lord Jesus, receive my soul! Lord, receive it; Amen." Dr. Pickard's Memoir of Mr. Nicholas Farrar. Wordsworth's Ecc. Bio. p. 239, vol. iv.

#### CHILLINGWORTH.

Most remarkable, however, is the testimony of Chillingworth (1644), author of the "Religion of Protestants," and of the saying (cf. Bishop Sanderson's observations on this and similar sayings in his preface to Sermons), "The Bible, and the Bible only, the Religion of Protestants," who so freely handled many of the Church's doctrines. Quoting Archbishop Ussher,

The whole bearing of these extracts depends upon the proposition, with which they start, that "no kind of confession either public or private is disallowed by our Church." But in the first place the paragraph, nay the particular sentence, is garbled by omission. The whole paragraph is as follows: 10. "Be it known" saith he

“Be it known to our adversaries of Rome” (“I add also,” says Chillingworth, “to our adversaries even of Great Britain, who sell their private fancies for the doctrine of our Church”), “that no kind of Confession, either public or private, is disallowed by our Church . . . And this truth being so evident in Scripture, and in the writings of the ancient best times of the Primitive Church, the safest interpreters of Scripture, I make no question but there *will not be found one person amongst you who, when he shall be in a calm, impartial disposition, will offer to deny it.*” He goes on to say that Rome had charged England with throwing away the Power of the Keys given by Christ, “taking advantage, indeed, from the *unwary expressions of some particular divines, who, out of too forward a zeal against the Church of Rome, have bended the staff too much the contrary way; and instead of taking away that intolerable burden of a sacramental NECESSARY and universal Confession, have seemed to void and frustrate all use and exercise of the keys.*” And he continues: “Since Christ hath given such authority to His ministers, upon your unfeigned repentance and contri-

(Archbishop Usher) “to our adversaries at Rome” (I add also to our adversaries even of Great Britain, who sell their private fancies for the doctrine of our Church) “that no kind of confession, either public or private, is disallowed by our Church, that is any way requisite for the due execution of that ancient power of the Keys which Christ bestowed upon his church. The thing which we reject is that new picklock of sacramental confession, obtruded upon men’s consciences, as a matter necessary to salvation, by the canons of the late conventicle of Trent, in the fourteenth session (p. 186).” But what is the kind of confession, requisite for the due execution of the power of the keys, had been stated by Chillingworth in a previous paragraph, and the whole of the subsequent passages must be read by the light of it. It is numbered paragraph 7, whereas the passage quoted above comes from paragraph 10, and is as follows:

7. But it may be you will say, suppose Zacchæus did freely and voluntarily confess

tion, to absolve and release you from your sins, . . . therefore, in obedience to His gracious will, and as I am warranted, and even enjoined, by my holy mother the Church of England expressly, in the Book of Common Prayer, in the rubric of visiting the sick (which doctrine this Church hath likewise embraced so far), *I beseech you that by your practice and use, you will not suffer that commission which Christ hath given to His ministers to be a vain form of words without any sense under them*; to be an antiquated, expired commission, of no use nor validity in these days; BUT WHENSOEVER YOU FIND yourselves charged and oppressed, especially with such crimes as they call ‘*Peccata vastantia conscientiam*,’ such as do lay waste and depopulate the conscience, that you have recourse to your spiritual physician, and freely disclose the nature and malignancy of your disease, that he may be able, as the cause shall require, to proportion a remedy either to search it with corrosives, or comfort and temper it with oil. And come not to him only with such a mind as you would go to a learned man experienced in the Scripture, as one that can speak comfortable,

his sins to Christ, who had authority to forgive him his sins, though he had never discovered them; what collection shall be made from hence? Zacchæus might be as bold as he would with himself; but as for us, his example shall be no rule to us: we thank God, this is popery in these days, and since we have freed ourselves from this burden, we will not be brought into bondage to any man; we will confess our sins, I warrant you, only to God, who is only able to forgive us them; as for the minister, it may be, we will sometimes be beholden to him to speak some comfortable words now and then to us, when we are troubled in conscience; and we have not been taught to go any further.” (Chillingworth’s Works, Sermon vii., Vol. iii., pp. 184, 185. Oxford, 1838.)

These words free Chillingworth’s views from any honest misapprehension. But more than this, the extracts in the pamphlet are unfairly put together. For instance the sentence “therefore (with a small t) in obedience to His gracious

quieting words to you, *but as to one that hath authority* delegated to him from God Himself *to absolve and acquit you of your sins.* If you shall do this, assure your souls, that the understanding of man is not able to conceive that transport and excess of joy and comfort which shall accrue to that man's heart that is persuaded that he hath been made partaker of this blessing, orderly and legally, according as our Saviour Christ hath prescribed." ("Sermons," vii., p. 83.)

will, &c." appears to be immediately connected with the absolve and release you of your sins" of the sentence before. But this is not the case: its immediate connection is with preaching the Word of God, proving that "the binding and loosing sins upon earth," of which he commends the benefits, is simply the application of the promises and threatenings of the Word of God to the individual conscience.

After the words "the use and exercise of the Keys" follows this paragraph:

13. "Now, that I may apply something of that which has not been spoken to your hearts and consciences, matters standing as you see they do; since Christ, for your benefit and comfort, hath given such authority to his ministers, upon your unfeigned repentance and contrition, to absolve and release you from your sins; why should I doubt, or be unwilling to exhort and persuade you to make your advantage of this gracious promise of our Saviour's? Why should I envy you the participation of so heavenly a blessing? Truly, if I should deal thus with you, I should prove myself malicious, un-Christianlike, malignant preacher; I should wickedly and unjustly, against my own conscience, seek to defraud you of those glorious blessings which our Saviour hath intended for you." (Ibid. pp. 187, 188.)

#### BISHOP HALL.

1. Next will come Bishop Hall (1656), author of "No Peace

1. The beginning of this quotation occurs in Bp. Hall's

with Rome," and other works, against Romanism.

"A mean would do well betwixt two extremes; the careless neglect of our spiritual fathers on the one side, and too confident reliance upon their power on the other. Some there are that do so overtrust their leaders' eyes, that they care not to see with their own; others dare so trust their own judgment that they think they may slight their spiritual guides; there can be no safety for the soul but in a midway between both these." "Who but the successors of a legal priesthood are proper to judge of the uncleanness of the soul? Whether an act be sinful, or in whatever degree it is such; what grounds are sufficient for the comfortable assurance of repentance, of forgiveness; what courses are fittest to avoid the danger of relapses; who is so likely to know, so meet to judge, as our teachers? *Would we in these cases consult oftener with our spiritual guides, and depend upon their faithful advice and well-grounded absolutions, it were safer, it were happier for us. Oh the dangerous extremity of our wisdom! Our hood-winked progenitors would have no eyes but in the heads of their*

Resolutions and Decisions in Cases of Piety and Religion."

It occurs in the opening paragraph of Case ix., which ends with the words "betwixt both these." The last quotation made in the pamphlet from Bishop Hall constitutes the closing paragraph of the same Case ix., but the passages which lie between I have been unable to find. Their position in the pamphlet would suggest that they are parts of one continuous argument, but this is certainly not the case. After the paragraph quoted, Bishop Hall proceeds—

"At whose girdle the keys of the kingdom of heaven do hang methinks we should not need dispute, when we hear our Saviour so expressly delivered them to Peter in the name of the rest of his fellows; and afterwards to all his Apostles and their lawful successors in the dispensation of the doctrine and discipline of his Church; in the dispensation of doctrine to all his faithful ministers under the Gospel, in the dispensation of discipline to those that are

ghostly fathers; we think ourselves so quick-sighted, that we pity the blindness of our able teachers; none but ourselves are fit to judge of our own leprosy."

entrusted with the managing of Church government." . . .

"Doubtless every true minister of Christ hath by virtue of his first and everlasting commission, two keys deli-

vered into his hand, the key of knowledge and the key of spiritual power. The one, whereby he is able to enter, and search into, not only the revealed mysteries of salvation, but also, in some sort, into the heart of the penitent; there discovering, upon an ingenuous revelation of the offender, both the nature, quality, and degree of the sin; and the truth, validity, and measure of his repentance. The other, whereby he may, in some sort, either lock up the soul under sin or free it from sin.

"These keys were never given him but with the intention that he should make use of them upon just occasion.

"The use that he may and must make of them is both general and special.

"General, in publishing the will and pleasure of God signified in his word concerning sinners; pronouncing forgiveness of sins to the humble penitent, and denouncing judgment to the unbelieving and obdured sinner. In which regard he is as the herald of the Almighty, proclaiming war and just indignation to the obstinate, and tendering terms of pardon and peace to the relenting and contrite soul; or rather, as the Apostle styles him, 2 Cor. v. 20, God's ambassador, offering and suing for the reconciliation of men to God, and if that be refused, menacing just vengeance to sinners.

"Special, in particular application of this knowledge and power to the soul of that sinner which makes his address to him. . . .

"Two cases there are wherein certainly there is a necessity of applying ourselves to the judgment of our spiritual guides.

"The first is, in our doubt of the nature and quality of the



fact, whether it be a sin or no sin ; . . . The second is in the irresoluble condition of our souls after a known sin committed ; wherein the burdened conscience, not being able to give ease unto itself seeks for aid from the sacred hand of God's penitentiary here on earth, and there may find it. . . . It cannot therefore but be granted that there is some kind of power left in the hands of Christ's ministers both to remit and retain sin.

"Neither is this power given only to the governors of the Church, in respect of the censures to be inflicted or relaxed by them, but to all God's faithful ministers, in relation to the sins of men ; a power, not sovereign and absolute, but limited and ministerial ; for either quieting the conscience of the penitent or further aggravating the conscience of sin and terror of judgment to the obstinate and rebellious." (Hall's Works, Resolutions and Decisions, Decade II., Case ix., pp. 354, 357, Vol. VII. Ox. 1863.)

The latter part of the quotation, from the words, "who but the successors of a legal priesthood," is not to be found here ; although the two next quotations are both taken from the same context. No such words occur in this place.

2. Again: "If after all these penitent endeavours you find *your soul still unquiet*, and not sufficiently apprehensive of a free and full forgiveness, betake yourself to God's faithful *agent for peace: run to your ghostly physician* ; lay your bosom open before him ; flatter not your own condition ; *let neither fear nor shame stay his hand from probing* and searching the wound to the bottom ; and that being done,

2. These words are part of the same Case, from which I have given extracts. It has already been shown therefore that the reference is to Ministerial confession alone, and not to Sacramental. To make it yet clearer, I subjoin the context preceding this quotation. "In case of some dangerous sickness of the body we trust not our own skill,

make careful use of such spiritual applications as shall be by him administered to you. This, this is the way to a perfect recovery and fulness of comfort."

nor some ignorant quack-salvers; but seek to a learned and experienced physician, for the prescription of some sure remedies: whereas if it be but for a sore finger or a toothache, we care only to make use of our own receipts. And so in civil quarrels, if it be only some slight brabble, we think to compose it alone; but if it be some main question importing our freehold, we are glad to wait on the stairs of some judicious lawyer, and to see him for advice. How much more is it thus in the perilous condition of our souls! which as it is a part far more precious than its earthly tabernacle, so the diseases whereto it is subject are infinitely more dangerous and deadly.

"Is your heart therefore embroiled within you with the guilt of some heinous sin? Labour what you may to make your peace with heaven; humble yourselves unto the dust before the Majesty whom you have offended; beat your guilty breast, water your cheeks with your tears, and cry mightily to the Father of mercies for a gracious remission: but if after all these penitent endeavours, &c." (Ibid. p. 356.)

3. And again, "Although therefore *you may* perhaps, through God's goodness, attain to such a measure of knowledge and resolution as to *be able to give yourself satisfaction* concerning the state of your soul; YET IT CANNOT BE AMISS, out of an abundant caution, to take *God's minister along with you, and making him of your spiritual counsel, to UNBOSOM YOURSELF*

3. This quotation must be read by the light of the previous context. It recommends ministerial confession alone; that is confession, not for the sake of forgiving grace through the word of absolution at the lips of the priest, but for the sake of advice and comfort, from the application of the Gospel promises to the special

TO HIM FREELY, for his fatherly case of the penitent by the advice and concurrence: the neglect *whereof*, through a kind of either strangeness or misconceit, *is certainly not a little disadvantageous to the souls of many good Christians.* The Romish laity make either oracles or idols of their ghostly fathers: if *we* make ciphers of ours, I know not whether we be more injurious to them or ourselves. We go not about to rack your consciences to a FORCED and exquisite confession under the pain of no remission; but we PERSUADE you, for your own good, to be more intimate with and less reserved from those whom God hath set over you, for your direction, comfort, and *salvation.*" (Hall's Works, vol. vii., pp. 451—455.)

#### BISHOP MORTON.

1. In 1659, BISHOP MORTON, who wrote against the "Superstitions of the Roman Mass," says: "It is not questioned between us WHETHER IT BE CONVENIENT for a man burdened with sin to lay open his conscience in private unto the minister of God, and to seek at his hands both the counsel of instruction, and the comfort of God's pardon: BUT *whether there be* (as from Christ's institution)

1. After the words "this private confession" (sic in the original), the following words occur in the passage, but are omitted in the quotation,—  
"both for all sorts of men, and for every particular known time, and ordinary transgression," which words prove that Bishop Morton and the Church of England in his opinion does not advocate or

such an ABSOLUTE NECESSITY of this private Confession, as that without it there can be no remission or pardon hoped for from God." ("Catholic Appeal," Book ii., chap. xiv., p. 253.)

allow "habitual confession," but only under special circumstances, and for a special purpose. The nature of the confession, which he states to be acknowledged by Protestants, is further explained thus:

"Protestants do greatly approve the use of private and voluntary confession, when a man either suspecteth the unlawfulness of any action, or else when he groaneth under the sensible guilt of a troubled soul, and shall desire the way of curing his disease, by the comfortable pronounciation of God's pardon from the mouth of him, who hath a commission thereof from God." (Morton's Catholic Appeal, Lib. 2, Cap. 14, S. 2, p. 254. London, 1610.)

2. Again: "The power of absolution, whether it be general or particular, whether in public or private, it is professed in our Church; where both in her public service is proclaimed pardon and absolution upon all penitents, and a private applying of absolution unto particular penitents by the office of the Minister; and greater power than this hath no man received from God." ("Catholic Appeal," p. 270.)

2. In the next paragraph he explains more fully what he means by the "private applying of absolution" in these words:

"Our adversaries do not profess an absolute absolution, but such an one as is bounded with an exception of *non ponendi obicem*, that is, except the party who is absolved, by want of faith or repentance do *put a bar*, which unto man

is invisible, notwithstanding it were well they would have had the moderation, with P. Lombard, to discern aright of man's jurisdiction in the office of absolution, as namely to understand by that saying of Christ unto the Pastors of the Church (*whose sins you remit on earth, they are remitted in heaven*) "that such

*only are worthily absolved of the Church, who are also absolved in heaven ; because by the error of man it may so happen, that he that seemeth to be cast out of God's family, be still within ; and he who may be thought to remain within, is notwithstanding cast out : and that therefore God absolveth differently from the Church : God by remitting the sin and purging the soul of the blemish thereof, and freeing it from eternal punishment ; whereas the Church's power of binding and loosing consisteth in declaring who are bound and absolved of God ; even as it came to pass, saith he, when Christ by his power cleansed the leprous parties, and after sent them to the Priest, to be by his judgment shown and manifested to be clean."* (Ibid., Cap. 17, S. 2, p. 270.)

#### BISHOP JEREMY TAYLOR.

1. And here is a name familiar to all, JEREMY TAYLOR, the saintly Bishop of Down and Connor (1667). In his "Guide for the Penitent" (which some have indeed assigned to Bishop Duppa), he says : " Besides this examination of your conscience, which may be done in secret between God and your own soul, there is *great use of holy confession* ; which THOUGH it be not generally, in all cases and peremptorily commanded, as if without it no salvation could possibly be had ; YET you are advised by the Church under whose discipline you live, that before you are to receive the Holy Sacrament, or when you are visited with any dangerous sickness, if you find any

1. Taylor's works do not comprise any "Guide for the Penitent ;" but they comprise a Treatise on the Doctrine and Practice of Repentance, which contains a section on "Confession" so full and comprehensive, as to make it difficult to explain by a few short quotations the author's views. I do not find in this section the first passage quoted. But I find the following—

(1.) Private Confession not necessary.

"If to confess to a priest were a Divine commandment, this caution (not to compromise others) would have in it difficulty and much vanity ;

*one particular sin or more that lies heavily upon you, to disburden yourself of it into the bosom of YOUR CONFESSOR, who not only stands between God and you, to pray for you, but hath the power of the keys committed to him, upon your true repentance to absolve you in Christ's name from those sins which you have confessed to him. Having made choice of such a confessor, who is every way qualified, that you may trust your soul with him, you are advised plainly and sincerely to open your heart to him; and that laying aside all consideration of any personal weakness in him, you are to look upon him only as he is a trustee from God, and commissioned by Him, as His ministerial deputy, to hear, and judge, and absolve you. That the manner of your confession be in an humble posture on your knees, as being made to God rather than man. For the frequency of doing this you are to consult with your own necessities." (P. 105, "Advice concerning Confession.")*

sins, that they who carelessly and causelessly neglect it, are neither lovers of the peace of consciences, nor are careful for the advantages of their souls." (Ibid. cap. x. Sec. iv. § 42.)

(2.) Reasons for Private Confession—

"There are many cases of conscience, which the penitent can

but since the practice is recommended to us wholly upon the stock of prudence and great charity; the doing it ought not, in any sense, to be uncharitable to others." (Doctrine and Practice of Repentance. Cap. x. Sec. viii. § 102. xvi.)

"But now, although this can not be a necessary duty for the reasons before reckoned, because the priest is not the injured person, and therefore can not have the power of giving pardon properly, and sufficiently, and effectively; and confession is no amends to him, and the duty of itself of confession is not an enumeration of particulars, but a condemnation of the sin, which is a humiliation before the offended party; yet confession to a priest, the minister of pardon and reconciliation, the curate of souls, and the guide of consciences, is of so great use and benefit, to all that are heavy laden with their

not determine, many necessities which he does not perceive, many duties which he omits, many abatements of duty which he ignorantly or presumptuously does make ; such partiality in the determination of his own interests ; and to build up a soul requires so much wisdom, so much severity, so many arts, such caution and observance, such variety of notices, great learning, great prudence, great piety ; that as all ministers are not worthy of that charge, and secret employment and conduct of others in the more mysterious and difficult parts of religion ; so it is certain, there are not many of the people that can worthily and sufficiently do it themselves ; and therefore, although we are not to tell a lie for a good end, and that it can not be said that God hath by an express law required it, or that it is necessary in the nature of things ; yet to some persons it hath put on so many degrees of charity and prudence, and it is so apt to minister to their superinduced needs ; that although to do it is not a necessary obedience, yet it is a necessary charity ; it is not necessary in respect of a positive express commandment, yet it is in order to certain ends which can not be so well provided for by any other instrument ; it hath not in it an absolute, but it may have a relative and superinduced necessity." (Ibid. § 43.)

(3.) The power of the Church to bind and loose.

"The Church hath a power of binding and retaining sins and sinners, that is a denying to the privileges of the faithful, till they, by public repentance and satisfaction, have given testimony of their return to God's favour and service. The Church may deny to pray publicly for some persons, and refuse to admit them into the society of those who do pray, and refuse till she is satisfied concerning them, by such signs and indications as she will appoint and choose." (Ibid. § 45.)

"And therefore when the Church did bind any sinner by the bands of discipline, she did remove him from the mysteries, and sometimes enjoined external or internal acts of repentance, to testify to and exercise the grace, and so to dispose them to

pardon; and when the penitents had given such testimonies—which the Church demanded, then they were absolved, that is, they were admitted to the mysteries.” (Ibid. § 50.)

“But the priests proper power of absolving, that is, of pardoning (which is, in no case, communicable to any man, which is not consecrated to the ministry) is a giving the penitent the means of eternal pardon, the admitting him to the Sacraments of the Church, and the peace and communion of the faithful; because that is the only way really to obtain pardon of God; there being, in ordinary, no way to heaven but by serving God in the way which he hath commanded us by his Son, that is, in the way of the Church, which is his body, whereof he is prince and head. The priest is the minister of holy things; he does that by his ministry, which God effects by real dispensation; and as he gives the spirit, not by authority and proper office, but by assisting and dispensing those rights, and promoting those graces, which are certain dispositions to the receiving of him; just so he gives pardon, not as a king does it, nor yet as a messenger, that is, not by way of authority and real donation; nor yet only by declaration: but as a physician gives health, that is, he gives the remedy which God appoints; and if he does so, and God blesses the medicines, the person recovers, and God gives the health.” (Ibid. § 51.)

(4.) The effect of absolution.

“For it is certain that the holy man who ministers in repentance, hath no other proper power of giving pardon than what is now described. Because he can not pardon them who are not truly penitent; and if the sinner be, God will pardon him, whether the priest does or no; and what can be the effect of these things, but this, that the priest does only minister to the pardon, as he ministers to repentance. He tells us upon what conditions God doth pardon, and judges best when the conditions are performed, and sets forward those conditions by his proper ministry; and ministers to us the instruments of grace; but first takes accounts of our souls, and helps us, who



are otherwise too partial, to judge severe and righteous judgment concerning our eternal interest, and does exhort or reprove, admonish or correct, comfort or humble, loose or bind. So the minister of God is the minister of reconciliation, that is, he is the minister of the Gospel; for that is the 'word of reconciliation,' which St. Paul affirms to be entrusted to him; in every office by which the holy man ministers to the Gospel in every of them he is the minister of pardon." (Ibid. § 52.)

2. Again (and be it remembered this is the author of the well-known work, "Dissuasive from Popery."): "In all which circumstances, *because we may very much be helped if we take in the assistance of a spiritual guide, THEREFORE the Church of God in all ages hath COMMANDED, 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." ("Holy Living," chap. iv., § 9, 5.)

2. This quotation is abridged by the omission of explanatory matter. The original is as follows:

"Confession of our sins to God can signify nothing of itself, in its direct nature; he sees us when we act them, and keeps a record of them; and we forget them unless he reminds us of them by his grace. So "that to confess them to God does not punish us, or make us ashamed; but confession to him, if it proceeds from shame and sorrow, and is

an act of humility and self-condemnation," and is a laying open our wounds for cure, then it is a duty God delights in. In all which circumstances, because we may very much be 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. For so, "if we confess our sins one to another," as St. James advises, we shall obtain the prayers of the holy man, whom

God and the Church hath appointed solemnly to pray for us: and when he knows our needs, he can best minister comfort or reproof, oil or caustics; he can more opportunely recommend your particular state to God; he can determine your cases of conscience, and judge better for you than you can do for yourself; and the shame of opening such ulcers may restrain your forwardness to contract them; and all these circumstances of advantage will do very much towards the forgiveness." (Holy Living, chap. iv., sect. ix. § 4.)

3. Again: "Whether there may be many or few that are sent to the sick person, let the curate of the parish, OR HIS OWN CONFESSOR, be amongst them. . . . He that is the *ordinary* judge cannot safely be passed by in his extraordinary necessity which in so great portions depends upon his whole life past."

particular necessities; but he that is the ordinary judge cannot safely be passed by in his extraordinary necessity, which, in so great portions, depends upon his whole life past, and it is a matter of suspicion, when we decline his judgment that knows us best, and with whom we formerly did converse, either by choice or by law, by private election or by public constitution." (Holy Dying, cap. v. sect. 2-4.)

"It is by *all* churches esteemed a duty *necessary to be done in cases of a troubled conscience*. THAT WHAT IS NECESSARY TO BE DONE IN ONE CASE, AND CONVENIENT IN ALL CASES, IS FIT TO BE DONE BY ALL PERSONS."

3. This extract is garbled both by omission and abridgment. It should be as follows:

"Whether they be many or few that are sent to the sick person, let the Curate of his parish, or his own confessor, be amongst them; that is, let him not be wholly advised by strangers, who know not his

These words are so quoted as to suggest (1) a connection between them and the words preceding. In point of fact they belong to different heads altogether. The first part of the paragraph as quoted, comes

("Holy Dying," chap. v., § 2, 4, § 3, 15, 16.) under the head "Rules for the manner of visitation of sick persons." The latter part

under the head of "Arguments and Exhortations to move the sick man to confession of sins." (2) That the last words extend to all persons without distinction; whereas in fact they only extend to all sick persons without distinction, and have no reference whatever to persons in health. Bishop Taylor is speaking of confession of sins in general, and not of private confession in particular. The entire subsection contains brief topics (*τόποι*) suggested for ministerial use, and by beginning the quotation a little earlier in the paragraph the meaning is cleared beyond the possibility of dispute, and is yet clearer still when the entire subsection is read together. It is enough, at present, only to quote so much as is necessary to show that Bishop Taylor's sentiments are quite misrepresented in the quotation, or rather quotations, as they stand in the pamphlet.

"11. That confession of sins is so necessary a duty, that, in all Scriptures, it is the immediate preface to pardon, and the certain consequent of godly sorrow, and an integral or constituent part of that grace, which, together with faith, makes up the whole duty of the Gospel. 12. That in all ages of the Gospel, it hath been taught and practised respectively, that all the penitents made confessions proportionable to their repentance, that is, public or private, general or particular. 13. That God by testimonies from heaven, that is, by his word, and by a consequent rare peace of conscience, hath given approbation to this holy duty. 14. That by this instrument those whose office it is to apply remedies to every spiritual sickness, can best perform their offices. 15. That it is by all Churches esteemed a duty necessary to be done in cases of a troubled conscience. 16. That what is necessary to be done in one case, and convenient in all cases, is fit to be done by all persons. 17. That, without confession, it cannot easily be judged concerning the sick person, whether his conscience ought to be

troubled or no, and therefore it cannot be certain that it is not necessary. . . . 20. That St. James gives an express precept, that we Christians should confess our sins to each other, that is, Christian to Christian, brother to brother, the people to their minister; and then he makes a specification of the duty which a sick man is to do, when he hath sent for the elders of the Church. . . . 23. That the ministers of God are the ministers of reconciliation, are commanded to restore such persons as are overtaken in a fault; and to that purpose they come to offer their ministry, if they may have cognizance of the fault and person. 24. That in the matter of prudence, it is not safe to trust a man's self in the final condition and last security of a man's soul, a man being no good judge in his own case. And when a duty is so useful in all cases, so necessary in some, and encouraged by promises Evangelical, by Scripture precedents, by the example of both Testaments, and prescribed by injunctions apostolical, and by the Canon of all churches, and the example of all ages, and taught us even by the proportion of duty, and the analogy to the power ministerial, and the very necessities of every man; he that for stubbornness or sinful shamefacedness, or prejudice, or any other criminal weakness, shall decline to do it in the days of his danger, when the vanities of the world are worn off, and all affections to sin are weaned, and the sin itself is pungent and grievous, and that we are certain we shall not escape shame for them hereafter, unless we are ashamed of them here, and use all proper instruments of their pardon; this man, I say, is very near death, but very far off from the kingdom of heaven." (Ibid. Sect. iv. § 1.)

4. Again: "CONFESS YOUR SINS OFTEN, hear the Word of God, make religion the business of your life, your study and chiefest care, and BE SURE THAT 4. There is nothing whatever to indicate, that confession in this place means anything more than confession before God. The "Agenda" are

IN ALL THINGS A SPIRITUAL GUIDE TAKE YOU BY THE HAND." Among these is the following ("Golden Grove," Agenda, 32.) account of the ministry. "Jesus Christ hath appointed ministers and ambassadors of his own to preach his word to us, to pray for us, to exhort and to reprove, to comfort and instruct, to restore and reconcile us, if we be overtaken in a fault; to visit the sick, to separate the vile from the precious, to administer the sacraments, and to watch for the good of our souls." (Taylor's Works, vol. xv. p. 18. Lond. 1839.)

After the "Credenda" follow the "Agenda," of which the sentence quoted specifies the last. There is not in the whole "Agenda" a solitary reference to priest, or minister, or Church. The whole refers to the private religious life of the individual, and bears the general heading "The Diary; or, a rule to spend each day religiously." The sentence quoted is followed by the following words, "Thou shalt always rejoice in the evening, if thou doest spend thy day virtuously." (Ibid. p. 40.)

5. Why in that very work, "Dissuasive from Popery," he says: "*Whether to confess to a priest be an advisable discipline . . . and a good instance, instrument, and ministry to repentance, and may serve good ends in the Church, and to the souls of needing persons, is no part of the question . . . . The Church of England is no way engaged against it, BUT ADVISES IT, PRACTISES IT.*" (Part 2, vii., § 11.) See also p. 241, vol. vi., ed. Eden: "Confession might be made of excellent use,

5. The quotation is both inaccurate and incomplete, as will be seen from a comparison of the entire passage. "Whether to confess to a priest be an advisable discipline, instrument, and ministry of repentance, and may serve many good ends to the Church, and to the souls of needing persons,—is no part of the question. We find that, in the Acts of the Apostles, divers converted persons came to St. Paul,

and is so among the pious children of the Church of England." either publicly, or privately, "and confessed their deeds," and burnt their books of exorcism, that is, did what became severe and hearty penitents, who needed counsel and comfort, and that their repentance should be conducted by wise guides. And when St. James exhorts all Christians "to confess their sins one to another," certainly it is more agreeable to all spiritual ends, that this be done rather to the curate of souls, than to the ordinary brethren. The Church of England is in no way engaged against it, but advises it, and practises it." (Dissuasive against Popery. Works, vol. xi., p. 10. Lond. 1839.)

"In short, binding and loosing, remitting and retaining, are acts of government relating to public discipline." (Ibid. p. 26.)

#### DR. PIERCE.

A Sermon, too, of Dr. Pierce (1661), President of Magdalen College, Oxford, afterwards DEAN OF SALISBURY, is pretty plain. Finding fault with the sectaries for imitating Naaman, he says: "I shall give but one instance, and that in the office of Confession, because it is amongst Christians a kind of Gospel Purification. The *duty of Confession from the penitent to the Priest* hath been commanded by the Church in the purest times of antiquity; and, however misused by the Church of Rome, *hath been reformed, and NOT ABOLISHED by this of England*. Now some malcontents there were who

As some parts of the passage is omitted, I think it well to give the whole, as it stands in the original.

"Let us now apply this to certain *Sectaries* here at home, who often endeavour in their discourses to show the *fitness*, the *lawfulness*, and many times the moral *Necessity* of their being *Schismatical* and *Disobedient*. I shall give but *one* instance, because I want Time to insist on many; and in the office of *Confession*, because it is amongst *Christians* a kind of *Gospel-Purification*. The duty of Confes-

thought our Church not clean enough, unless they might sweep away the pavement; and, amongst other things THEIR STOMACHS ROSE AGAINST CONFESSION. Will not God, say they, be pleased with the acknowledgment of the heart, but must that of the mouth be required also? Must we pour out our souls into the ear of the Priest? But I would say to such an English or Scottish Naaman, Wash and be clean; that is, *confess and be forgiven.*" That was preached before the King the very year in which our Prayer Book took its present form.

sion from the *Penitent* to the *Priest*, hath been commanded by the Church in the *purest* Times of *Antiquity*, and however misused by the *Church of Rome*, hath been reformed, and not abolished by this of England. Now some *Malcontents* there were, who thought our Church not clean enough, unless they might sweep away the *Pavement*. And amongst many other things, their stomachs rose against *Confession*, Will not God (say they) be pleased with the *acknowledgment* of the *Heart*, but must That of the *Mouth* be required also? Or can we not make it in our

*Closets*, but they must have it in the *Church* too? Must we pour out our souls into the *Ear* of the *Priest*? or can he *loose* us from *our* sins, who is *bound* and *manacled* in his *own*? But I would say to such an *English* or *Scottish Naaman*, no other thing than was said by the *Syrian* Servant, *My Brother*, or *my Sister*; suppose our *Mother the Church* of England, bid thee do some great thing, wouldst thou not cheerfully have done it *without dispute*? How much rather when she saith, *Wash and be clean*? that is, *confess, and be forgiven*? Vouchsafe to write after the copy which the *Virgin*, and her *Babe*, in this text have set thee. Who did not (as they might, upon better pretensions than thou canst bring) allege the *Privilege* of their *Purity*, or the natural *Indifference* of what was commanded by the Law, whereby to withhold their obedience from it. . . . Tis in the Power at this day of *God's Vicegerents*

upon earth, to limit the *Time*, and the *Place*, yea the manner also, and measure, I say not of *private*, but *public* Duties. And by how much a thing is more *indifferent* in its *use*, it should the rather *cease* to be so, when by *legal authority* it shall be turned into a *Law*." (The Purification of our Lady and Presentation of our Lord: a Sermon preached before the King at Whitehall upon Candlemas Day, 1661. Collection of Sermons by Thomas Pierce, D.D., Oxford, 1671, pp. 291, 294.)

#### THORNDIKE.

In 1661 we have Dr. Thorndike ("Blessed," as Bishop Bull, the great defender of the Faith, calls him) saying: "It will appear a *lamentable case* to consider how *simple, innocent Christians are led on till death in an opinion that they want nothing requisite for the pardon and absolution of their sins*, when it is *manifest they want the keys of the Church*; as it is manifest the keys are not used for that purpose." ("Just Weights," p. 118.)

1. The passage is accurately quoted; but, in order to see what Thorndike understood by the power of the keys, we must look to other parts of his works. The following passage will show that he uses the phrase for the exercise of Ecclesiastical discipline.

"The power of the keys, and the work of it in admitting or readmitting to the communion of the Church, by baptism or by penance, may be

considered either in respect to God, or in respect to the society of the Church, in order to invisible communion with God, or in order to communion with the visible Church; in the first respect, that holds true which is here affirmed, p. 125, that it is the act of a physician; seeing that, a physician can do no more than help nature to overcome the disease, by the use of things contrary to it, and friendly to nature, which he prescribes; so much and no more is this power able to do, by prescribing to those that seek for remission of sins and life everlasting, to undertake the profession of Christianity, and to go through with it. And if a physician be truly said to give



health and life, by doing that which I said, then is he that manageth the power of the keys as truly and as properly said to give remission of sins, and life everlasting, by doing no more than hath been specified. But if we regard the society of the Church, then it is the act of a judge to admit or exclude from the communion of the same; the jurisdiction being founded on the power of the keys, which sentenceth those that demand the communion of the Church, to be qualified for it; or excluding it accordingly." (Review of the Primitive Government of the Church, Cap. xi. § 1.)

2. Again ("Laws of Church," Book iii., chap. ix., p. 85; quoted by Hickee, vol. i., p. 39): "The most part of Christians are bound in conscience to have recourse to the power of the Church and the keys thereof, for the cure of those sins which are not of themselves notorious."

reconciled to the Church. And in first procuring him, and then judging him, to be so qualified, consists the right use of those keys which God hath given to the Church, towards them that transgress the profession of Christianity after they have made it." (Laws of the Church. B. iii. C. ix. § 23.)

He argues at length that "remission of sins committed after baptism may be obtained without the keys of the Church," but that in ordinary cases her corrective discipline should be used, and concludes with a double qualification omitted in the quotation of the pamphlet. "The most part of Christians are for the most part bound in conscience to have recourse to the power of the Church, and the keys thereof, for the cure of those sins which are not of themselves notorious; and that other Christians may be tied in conscience to bring them to the Church for it, by making known those sins, which otherwise are not notorious; to wit, when they cannot reasonably pre-

2. In the same chapter, whence this quotation is taken, Thorndike repeats this opinion. He says:—

"The Church is to see that a man be qualified for reconciliation with the Church, upon supposition of his reconciliation with God before he be

sume, that of themselves they will apply themselves to the means, which the cure requires. And if this be true, it will also follow, that it is in the power of the Church to make rules (of force to bind the consciences of those who are of the Church) limiting the terms upon which they shall stand bound to have recourse to the Church for that purpose. (Ibid. § 37.)

#### BISHOP NICHOLSON.

Bishop Nicholson (1671), writes: "Lastly, to the Priest's hand He hath delivered a key, and the use of it is for the detention and remission of sins: 'Whose sins ye remit, they are remitted.'"

1. No one, who is acquainted with the truly Evangelical doctrines of grace taught throughout Bishop Nicholson's exposition of the Catechism, could possibly suppose that he meant by the "key" in this quotation a priestly power of absolving sins. Other portions of his exposition render it certain, that he applies the word only to the exercise of Church discipline. The entire passage must first be read in full.

"Lastly, to the priest's hand he hath delivered a key, and the use of it is for the detention and remission of sin, 'Whose sins you remit, they are remitted.'

"Cast up all this, and you shall see to what it will amount. The total will set forth unto us the infinite Justice and mercy of God about sin. His justice that would not pardon a sinner without satisfaction first made. His mercy and readiness yet to grant a pardon, that He would give His Son to purchase a remission for us. And that to pass over the security to us, He hath left us His word to publish His will about it, instituted Sacraments to seal it, ordained us Priests, and left keys in their hand to administer. That so by the words dropped from their lips, the prayers offered by their devout and charitable hearts, by the Sacraments consecrated by their hands, by the keys left in their office, the full pardon and remission of sin might be

made known, obtained, sealed, and delivered over to sinners.” (Exposition of the Catechism, pp. 67, 68, Oxf. 1842.)

Now that in this passage the word “administer” denotes administer the discipline of the Church, is proved by the two following extracts:—

“The duties commanded are, 3. To observe religiously and purely all the substantial and external parts of God’s worship; praying, hearing of the Word, the Sacraments, and the discipline of the Church.” (Ibid. p. 89.)

“Offenders against this commandment, are 6, they who carry themselves rudely, carelessly, irreverently at prayer, at hearing of the Word of God, at the receiving of the Sacraments, or at the execution of Church discipline, to undervalue or cast aside these ordinances.” (Ibid. p. 90.)

These two last quotations specify four parts of Church work, 1. praying; 2. preaching; 3. Sacraments; 4. discipline. The passage imperfectly quoted in the pamphlet also contains four parts of Church work, 1. preaching, 2. praying, 3. Sacraments, 4. administration, or the keys of office. Whence it appears that administration or the keys of office are identical in the minds of the wicked with Church discipline.

#### BISHOP COSIN.

1. Next will come BISHOP COSIN (1672). Preaching the funeral sermon of a Mrs. Holmes, he says: “Her preparation to her end was by humble contrition and *heartly confession of her sins*; which, when she had done, she received the *benefit of Absolution* according to God’s ordinance and the religious institutions of our Church—a thing which *the world looks not after now*, AS IF *Confession and Absolution were some*

1. The quotation is correctly given. But it proves nothing whatever in favour of that habitual auricular confession which the pamphlet is published to support. It is frankly admitted by all parties of the Church, that in the case of a dying person who desires comfort, confession of sin and the declaration of absolution are part of the system of the

*strange superstitious things among us, which yet the Church has taken such care to preserve, and especially to be preparatives to death.*" (Cosin, vol. i. p. 28.)

2. But notice particularly what we find in his Devotions, and remember that he was one who had *much to do with the arrangement of the present Prayer Book*. He mentions, under the head of the "PRECEPTS OF THE CHURCH," to receive the Blessed Sacrament of the Body and Blood of Christ with frequent devotion, and three times a year at least (of which Easter shall be always one). And *for the better preparation thereto, AS OCCASION IS, to disburden and quiet our consciences* of those sins that may grieve us, or scruples that may trouble us, to a learned and discreet Priest, and from him to receive advice and *benefit of Absolution*. (Works, vol. ii., Ang. Cath. Library, p. 121.)

3. It is well, too, to remember, that Cosin was the disciple of Bishop Overall (1618), the author of the later part of our Catechism on the Sacraments. He, then, who spoke of "My Lord and Master Overall," writes thus on the Prayer Book (Bishops Cosin and Overall in "Nicholls on Common Prayer," fol. ed. p. 62): "The Church of England, howso-

Church of England, and are authorised in her service for the Visitation of the Sick.

2. The same remark applies to this passage. It is little else than a loose quotation of the language of the Exhortation contained in the Communion office. A single word is omitted in the quotation; the last words are quoted thus, "benefit of Absolution;" they should be "the benefit of Absolution," the exact phrase used by the Church.

3. The same remark applies here also. No one denies it to be consistent with the spirit of the Church's teaching that "if a man cannot quiet himself by confessing to God, then let him go to a Priest, and open his grief." We only deny, that he is to go to him for the purpose of that Confes-

*ever it holdeth not Confession and Absolution Sacramental, that is, made unto and received from a Priest, to be so absolutely necessary, as that without it there can be no remission of sins; yet by this place it is manifest what she teacheth. . . . Our 'if he feel his conscience troubled' is no more than his 'if he find out his sins' ('si inveniat peccata'); for if he be not troubled with sin, what needs either Confession or Absolution? Venial sins that separate not from the grace of God need not so much to trouble a man's conscience. IF HE HATH COMMITTED ANY MORTAL SIN, THEN WE REQUIRE CONFESSION OF IT TO A PRIEST, who may give him, upon his true contrition and repentance, the benefit of Absolution, which takes effect according to his disposition that is absolved. . . . The truth is, that in the Priest's Absolution there is the true power and virtue of forgiveness, which will most certainly take effect 'unless an obstacle is imposed,' as in Baptism." ("Notes on Common Prayer," 1st series, p. 163)*

sion and Absolution Sacramental, which Bishop Cosin in the second of the passages quoted distinctly states that the Church of England "holdeth not."

If any passages in favour of Sacramental Confession could have been adduced from Cosin, it would have been no matter of surprise; for he was suspected of Romish sympathies, and publicly impeached on account of them.

#### MR. ADAMS' SERMON.

Mr. Adams' Sermon was preached 2 June, 1836, before the University at Cambridge, and our knowledge of the circumstance is derived from a letter of Bishop Cosin to Dr. Steward, dated June 25 of the following year. Mr. Adams was immediately called to task for it. He was requested by the authorities of the University "to declare his mind fully and ingenuously about the differences between the Papists and us on this point." He did so in the following propositions—

"1. That he urged Confession the more because it was so much neglected and despised by others.

“2. That he urged only the use of Confession as it was practised in the primitive Church, before the times of Popery.

“3. That he held the scrupulous enumeration of all sins which a man committeth through his whole life to be impossible, and the urging of it (as Papists do) to be the rack and disturbance of a man’s conscience.

“4. That it is sufficient to confess those known sins whereof men are conscious to themselves that they live in them.

“5. That the numbering and exacting of all circumstances is not needful, and many times very unfitting.

“6. That the Papists made use of it to search the better into the secrets of State, and into such actions of private men as did not concern the sins of their souls. Which abuse he utterly condemned.

“7. That he made *no such absolute necessity* of Private Confession for all sorts of men, and for every particular and ordinary offence, as that *without it there cannot possibly be any pardon or remission hoped for from God’s hand*. This living one, though *not the only* means of salvation.

“8. Lastly, that he did most willingly and heartily subscribe to the doctrine and religion established in the Church of England, wherein he would constantly persist; and that he would also admit the words of the Homily where it saith “It is against Christian liberty that any man should be bound in Confession to the numbering of his sins as it hath been used heretofore in the time of blindness and ignorance.”

Notwithstanding the broad qualifications contained in these propositions, the explanation was deemed insufficient, and a form of recantation was drawn up, to the effect that his views “have no warrant from the Word of God, and to be crossing to the doctrine of the Church of England.” In the debate which followed between the Heads of Houses, Dr. Cosin, then Master of Peter-house said—

“That the Church of England in the 39 Articles—where it condemned all the opinions and points of Popery, that he

thought Mr. Adams and others are bound also to condemn—did not yet condemn the opinion that some men had of the necessity of special Confession, and that the Book of Common Prayer seemed rather to give a man liberty to be of that opinion than to condemn him for it, where it says, “If a man can not quiet himself by confessing to God, then let him go to a priest, &c.”—That is, I trow, if he shall think it necessary for him to do so; that this point had been a long time disputed in the Church, and was likely to be so still; that it was, as he conceived, the wisdom of the Church of England not to determine it; and therefore, that it might be dangerous for us to do otherwise, or at least to determine it under the name of the public authorized doctrine of the Church of England. Therefore that, though he wished many things in Mr. Adams and in his sermon amended, yet that he durst not condemn either him or it as being contrary to the doctrine of our Church, and therefore that to this his recantation, as it was framed, he might not give his assent.” It appearing that eight disapproved of the form of recantation, while five, including the Vice Chancellor, approved of it, nothing was done at that time. But at a subsequent meeting the same form of recantation was again proposed, and Mr. Adams was ordered to sign it on pain of undergoing the penalty of the statute, which was expulsion from the University. Dr. Cosin’s account of the transaction is as follows, and the whole transaction will be seen to afford scanty support indeed to the doctrine of “Sacramental Confession.”

“Then gave Mr. Vice-Chancellor his sentence—that he enjoined Mr. Adams to make that recantation ‘*conceptis verbis*’ as it was there drawn by him, or else upon his refusal that he censured him to undergo the penalty of the statute, which is expulsion from the University. And this he required the registrar to enact in his book. Some of us asked whether an act concerning a censure might be put down (and required to be so) in the public register of the University when there were not voices enough to make the censure. Answer was given

that every one might enact what they thought good for themselves, as it was 'ad liberandas animas suas.' ”

The Vice-Chancellor had already written his sentence in the schedule of recantation, whereunto he set his hands, and delivered it to the registrar. Dr. Ward, Dr. Bambridge, Dr. Pask, Dr. Love, and Dr. Holdsworth called also for it, and subscribed unto their hands after him. Dr. Pask in this peculiar form: “Unless Mr. Adams will confess his fault, he will confute himself, having already pleaded so much for confession.”

Afterwards Dr. Collins, Dr. Beale, Dr. Lany, Dr. Sterne, and Dr. Cosin thought good also for company to subscribe somewhat, and they did it every one to the same purpose, that they had declared in their votes before. (The letter will be found in the Record Office, Vol. 232, Chas. I, No. 113.)

· DEAN GRENVILLE.

And here in connection with Bishop Cosin may be mentioned some papers of Grenville, Dean of Durham, son-in-law to the Bishop. (Papers published by Surtees Society: cf. Annotated Prayer Book, p. 284.)

DEAN GRENVILLE writes:—  
“We having no directions given by the Church for private Confession and Absolution but what is in the Office for the Sick, as to the manner of performance, we ought to proceed in that method, for the matter of examination, as far as time, and place, and person will permit. The form of Absolution is there set down, and therefore ought to be retained; but as for the form of prayers

1. This passage is totally irrelevant to the question at issue. It deals with the case of sickness, and records the mode in which the Dean exercised the discretion which the Church, in the rubric to her Visitation Office, vests in her ministers. The question in dispute has reference, not to the occasional circumstances of the sick and dying, but to the religious habits of those who are in life and health.

After the words “so solemn a duty,” six lines from the bottom in the quotation, occurs the following direction:

“Then let the penitent re-



before or after, it is left to the discretion of the Minister; and, accordingly, several ministers have several ways and methods of performance of it, more or less to edification. The rule of the Apostle, 'Let all things be done to edification,' ought to guide Priests in this and all other performances." He then gives the form he himself uses "*according to the practice of the most godly and eminent divines under whom I have had my edification,*" viz., Lord's Prayer, Versicles, Gloria, 139th Psalm. "After this is said, the Priest takes his place in his chair," the penitent kneels down and makes the Confession. "It is expedient, and thought good for the ease and encouragement of the penitent, to have some form of examination and answers given to him some convenient time before, to consider of for the greater profit of his soul, and better preparation for so solemn a duty." Then follows Absolution, sentences of Scripture, thirty-second Psalm concluding Prayers, and blessing. A long paper of questions is appended, apparently the "form of examination to be given to the penitent some time before."

peat one of the forms of Confession after the Priest, with due deliberation and intention. After which the Priest rising up shall add, 'O Lord I beseech thee, &c.,' and then solemnly pronounce that excellent form of Absolution 'Our Lord Jesus Christ, &c.'" (Annotated Prayer Book, p. 284.)

## DR. BARROW.

1. In 1677, DR. ISAAC BARROW, one of our greatest divines, Master of Trinity College, Cambridge, author too, of a work against the "Supremacy of the Pope," says: "Likewise, if Christian men, having fallen into sin, or failed of duty towards God, do seriously confess their fault and heartily repent thereof, when the ministers of the Church in God's name and for Christ's sake, do declare (or pronounce) to them so doing or so qualified the pardon of their sin, and absolve them from it; we need not doubt but that their sins are really forgiven, and the pardon expressed in words is effectually dispensed unto them." (Works, vol. vi., p. 426.)

to all truly repentant sinners. The preceding paragraph is as follows:—

"God requires that this repentance

1. Be publickly declared and approved by the Church: that this remission be solemnly and formally imparted by the hands of God's ministers, declared by express words, or ratified by certain seals, and signified by mysterious representations appointed by God. Thus hath every man, (upon declaration of his real faith and repentance, to the satisfaction of the Church,) being admitted to baptism, the entire forgiveness of his sins, and reception into God's favour, consigned unto him therein, confirmed and represented by a visible sign, shewing, that as by water the body is washed and cleansed from adherent filth, so by

1. The passage is correctly quoted, so far as concerns the words of this particular paragraph; but it is incorrectly quoted, so far as concerns the meaning and intention of the author. For the paragraph immediately preceding proves that Dr. Barrow is not speaking of private confession at all, but of public confession before the Congregation, and that consequently by the words "declare (or pronounce) to them so doing or so qualified the pardon of their sin, and absolve them from it," he refers either to the exercise of Church discipline, or to the declaration of God's pardon

grace then imparted the souls of them, upon whom that mystical rite" (baptism) "is performed, are cleared from the guilts that stained it, *their sins are wiped out* (it is St. Peter's expression in the Acts), *their hearts are sprinkled from an evil conscience* (as it is in the Epistle to the Hebrews). *They are saved*, or put into a state of salvation, as St. Peter assures us." (Exposition of the Creed. Barrow's Works, Vol. ii., pp. 425, 426. Oxford, 1830.)

The passage quoted immediately follows. In the absence of any explanatory adjective, the confession spoken of must be the same as in the preceding paragraph, that is, public confession. The view of Dr. Barrow is however made clearer by the next passage quoted.

2. Again: "They remit sins dispensative by consigning pardon in administration of the Sacraments, especially in conferring Baptism, whereby, duly administered and undertaken, all sins are washed away; *and in absolving of penitents*, wherein grace is exhibited [old English for 'conferred'] and ratified by imposition of hands, the which S. Paul calls *χαρίζεσθαι*, to bestow grace or favour on the penitent." ("Power of Keys.")

2. It would appear from the mode of quotation that these words convey all Dr. Barrow's explanation on the subject of absolution. It is not so—the whole passage is as follows:

"1. They do remit sins *dispositivè*, by working in persons fit dispositions, upon which remission of sins, by God's promise, is consequent, the dispositions of faith and repentance.

"2. They remit (or retain sins) *declarativè*, as the ambassadors of God, in his name pronouncing the word of reconciliation to the penitent, and denouncing wrath to the obstinate in sin.

"3. They remit sins *impetrativè*, obtaining pardon for sinners by their prayers, according to that of St. James; *Is any man sick among you? let him call the elders of the Church; and let them pray over him: and the prayer of faith shall*

*save the sick, and the Lord shall raise him up; and if he have committed sins, they shall be forgiven him.*

“4. They remit sins *dispensativè*, by consigning pardon in administration of the Sacraments, especially in conferring baptism, whereby, duly administered and undertaken, all sins are washed away; and in the absolving of penitents, wherein grace is exhibited and ratified by imposition of hands, which St. Paul calls *χαρίζεσθαι*, to bestow grace or favour on the penitent.” (Power of the Keys. Vol. vi., p. 36. Oxford, 1830.)

The meaning of this last proposition is clearly explained to have reference to the exercise of Church discipline, in a passage which occurs only two pages before.

“The kingdom of heaven may be opened or shut by prudent discrimination of persons who are fit to be received into the Church (*εὐθετοὶ εἰς βασιλείαν*, well disposed for the kingdom, as St. Luke speaks,) or who deserve to be rejected from it.

“Thus the governors of the Church do open or shut the kingdom, when they determine who shall be admitted to baptism (which is *ecclesie janua*, and *porta gratiæ*, as St. Austin calls it) and who shall be refused; they admitted, who appear competently instructed in Christian doctrine, and well resolved to obey it; they refused, who seem in these points ignorant or ill resolved.

“4. The kingdom of heaven may be opened or shut by judicial acts, whereby unworthy persons (whose conversation may be infectious, or whose continuance in the church may be infamous thereto) are excluded from it, or kept without; or whereby persons, upon sufficient presumption of repentance and amendment, are restored to communion.” (Ibid. pp. 53, 54.)

It is palpable, that the power described in the foregoing extracts corresponds precisely to the remission of sins, *dispensativè*, quoted in the pamphlet.

## BISHOP SPARROW.

Let me now quote from BISHOP SPARROW (1685), one of the Commissioners who carried the present settlement of our Prayer Book. (Sermon on Confession and Absolution.) “*He that would be sure of pardon, let him seek out a Priest and make his humble confession to him,*” said S. Augustine; ‘for God, Who alone hath the prime and original right of forgiving sins, hath delegated the Priests, His judges here on earth, and given them the power of *Absolution*; so that they can, in His name, forgive the sins of those that humbly confess unto them.’ *But is not this blasphemy?* said the Scribes at once. *Is not this Popery?* say some with us now. Take the counsel that is given in Job: ‘Inquire, I pray thee, of the former age, and prepare thyself to the search of the fathers. . . . Shall not they teach thee and tell thee?’” and then, having quoted S. Chrysostom, S. Jerome, S. Gregory, S. Ambrose, and others, he continues: “These I have named are enough to give testimony of the former generation, men too *pious to be thought to speak blasphemy, and too ancient to be suspected of Popery.*” And later on: “*He, then, that assents*

The words, preceding the passage quoted in the pamphlet, greatly limit the apparent sense of the extract. The paragraph, whence it is extracted, begins:—

“Thus we have seen the nature of confession, and by that learn how to confess, Sed ubi confessarius? Where’s a confessor all this while? Where is any to take our confessions? here is none in the text to confess to, if we had a mind to it. None indeed expressly named, but here is one plainly enough described, here is one that can pardon our sins, that can purge us from all our iniquities; and to whom can we better confess, than to him that hath the power of absolution? Would you know who this He is? *I even I, said God, am he who blotteth out all your iniquities, and that forgiveth your sins:* to him, even to him then let us confess: be sure, this is necessary, and no pardon to be hoped for, unless we confess to him at least. But there is another Confessor that would not be neglected. *Qui confiteri vult, ut inveniat*

to the Church of England, or believes the Scriptures, or gives credit to the ancient Fathers, CAN NOT DENY THE PRIEST THE POWER OF REMITTING SINS, of absolving from sins all such as patiently confess unto them ; and since he can, in the name of God, forgive us our sins, GOOD REASON WE SHOULD MAKE OUR CONFESSION TO HIM. Surely God never gave the Priest this power in vain ; He gave it for our benefit, and expects that we should do the best we can to make use of it ; having ordained in the Priest the power of Absolution, HE REQUIRES that we should use the best means we can to obtain that blessing. Now the only means to obtain this Absolution is our Confession to Him. . . . Confess as the Church directs us, confess to God, confess also to the Priest ; if not in private in the ear, since that is out of use (*male aboletur*, saith a devout Bishop ; 'tis ALMOST quite lost, THE MORE THE FITY). . . ." And more to the same effect. This sermon was preached in 1637. The Rebellion, which ended in Puritan supremacy, began in 1642. Well might Sparrow complain of the neglect of Church ordinances in these days!

*gratiam, quærat sacerdotem, scientiam solvere et ligare*, saith St. Augustin. The passage then proceeds as quoted, to "given in Job." It proceeds not as given in the pamphlet, but thus, "*Inquire of the former generations, ask the Fathers, and they shall tell thee.*" The quotation proceeds, "These I have named." But the passage immediately preceding is as follows, and proves that it is the exercise of Church discipline that the writer speaks ; "Hear next what S. Gregory the Great says in his 20 Homil. upon the Gospels, *Apostoli principatum supremi iudicii sortiuntur, ut vice Dei quibusdam peccata retineant quibusdam relaxent* ; the Apostles and in them all Priests were made God's Vicegerents here on earth, in his name to retain and forgive sins, not declaratory only, but judicially ; *animarum iudices fiunt*, as he goes on, they are made the judges of the souls of men, casting the obstinate down to the gates of Hell, by the fearful power of excommunication, and lifting the penitent into Heaven by the blessed

power of absolution. And he is no better than a Novatian that denies it, saith *St. Ambrose*. I could name more Fathers, as *S. Augustin*, *S. Cyprian*, and others, but I spare. These I have named, &c.”

The passage proceeds correctly down to “is our confession to him,” but then proceeds in words of which the first portion are omitted in the pamphlet.

“The Priest may not, nor cannot absolve any but the penitent, nor can he know their penitence, but by their outward expression; it is God’s prerogative to know the thoughts of the heart, the Priest’s eye cannot pierce so far, he only reads the sorrows of our hearts by our outward confession, without the which we cannot receive, nor he give the benefit of absolution. *Pœnitentiam igitur agite, qualis agitur in Ecclesiâ*. Confess as the Church directs us, confess to God, confess also to the Priest, if not in private, in the ear, since that is out of use (*male aboletur*, saith a devout Bishop, ’tis almost quite lost, the more the pity), yet however, confess as the *Church* appoints, publickly before the congregation, that so we may at least by this reap the great benefit of absolution.” (A Sermon concerning Confession of Sins and the Power of Absolution, preached by Mr. Sp. of Queen’s Coll. Cambridge. London, 1637, pp. 14, 18.)

The last words of the quotation are again omitted in the pamphlet, which stops in the middle of a sentence. But the words show beyond dispute, that, whatever the writer’s private wishes might be, auricular confession was “out of use,” and that to confess sins before the congregation, in the form provided in the Morning and Evening Prayers, is to confess them “as the Church directs.”

2. Again (in “Rationale,” p. 266), after quoting “here shall the sick person make a special confession,” he adds: “It would be considered *whether every deadly sin* be not a weighty matter.”

2. The remark is made directly and exclusively in connection with the visitation of the sick. The whole paragraph is very short, viz. :—

“Then shall the sick person make a special confession, if he feel his conscience troubled with any weighty matter. It should be considered, whether every deadly sin be not a weighty matter.” (Rationale, p. 266. Oxf. 1839.)

DR. TIMOTHY PULLER.

TIMOTHY PULLER, D.D., author of “Moderation of the Church of England” (1693), writes: “Our Church doth declare the necessity of such a confession as is useful to the purposes of true repentance: that is, when confession to the ministers of God may be useful for spiritual advice, and for the quieting of any man’s conscience, in order to a good life or happy death, and particularly in order to the fruitful receiving of the Holy Communion. . . Such auricular Confession as is in practice in the Roman Church the Church of England hath utterly rejected, it being desired to pry into the secrets of governments, and such private circumstances of actions, which to unveil is neither the interest of private persons nor of priests. ‘It is more plain,’ saith our Homily, ‘that THIS auricular Confession hath not its warrant of God’s Word.’ Yet the said Homily earnestly commends to us the Confession of our sins before God, and one to another, for

The quotation is not entirely correct, but the inaccuracies are not sufficiently important to require that the whole passage should be given over again. Two other extracts may however be added, to show that Dr. Puller does not limit the grounds, on which the Church of England rejects “this auricular confession,” to the fact that it is compulsory in the Romish system; and also to show that the confession and absolution she admits, include no sacerdotal functions, but refer either to the exercise of Church discipline, “reconciliation of offences,” or to a moral and subjective influence exercised by “ghostly counsel” on the heart of the penitent. In regard to the first, under the head of “Moderation of the Church” in the judgment of doctrines, he describes the functions of the ministry thus:

“The Pastors of the Church who are placed over God’s



reconciliation of offences, and *to the minister of God for his ghostly counsel and absolution*, and publicly in case of public scandal. . . . And that the moderation of the Church may be more perceived, observe first, that our Church *ascribeth not the power of remission of sins to any but to God only*; secondly, it constantly holds that faith and true repentance are the necessary conditions of receiving the benefit of remission of sin; thirdly, it *asserts what is most true, that the ministers of the Church have a special power and commission, which other believers have not, authoritatively to declare this Absolution and remission of sins* for the benefit and consolation of true penitency, which, *if duly dispensed, cannot but have a real EFFECT from the very promise of CHRIST.*" ("Tracts of Anglican Fathers," vol. iii., p. 304, on Penance.)

people as watchmen and guides, have more than this, a judgment of *direction*, to expound and interpret the (holy) Scriptures to others, and out of them to instruct the ignorant, to reduce them who wander out of the right way; to confute errors; to foretell dangers; and to draw sinners to repentance. The chief pastors, to whose care the regiment of the Church is committed in a more special manner, have yet a higher degree of judgment, a judgment of *jurisdiction*, to prescribe, to enjoin, to constitute, to reform, to censure, to condemn, to bind, to loose judicially, authoritatively, in their respective charges." (Puller's Moderation of the Church. Cap. vi., §. 9.)

That no higher effect than a remedial one, is attributed by him to absolution even in its highest form, is shown by the following:

"The rare temper and proportion, which the Church of England useth in commensurating the Forms of Absolution to the degrees of preparation and necessity, is to be observed; that at the beginning of Morning and Evening Prayer, after a general Confession, the form of Absolution is in general declarative, and by way of proposition: in the Office of Communion, it is by way of Intercession: in the Visitation of the

Sick, when it is supposed and enjoined that the Penitent shall disburthen himself of the clamorous loads on his conscience, the Church prescribes a medicinal Form by way of delegate authority. 'Therefore,' saith the Bishop of Down, "It is the excellent temper of the Church, so to prescribe her forms of absolution, as to show them to be the results of the whole priestly office." All which forms, in sense and virtue, are the same." (Ibid., Cap. xi., § 4)

What were the views of Bishop Jeremy Taylor, has already been conclusively shown.

#### DEAN COMBER.

DEAN COMBER, author of three works against the Church of Rome (1699): "We *direct* all men to confess to God, but *some also to confess their faults and reveal their doubts to the Priest*, especially in these three cases, (1) when we are *disquieted* with the guilt of some sin already committed, or (2) when we *cannot conquer some lust or passion*, or (3) when we are afflicted with any intricate *scruples*, PARTICULARLY whether we may be *fit to receive the Blessed Sacrament or no*. If any of these be our case, then first we must choose prudently, preferring our own minister, if he be tolerably fitted, or else we may select another that is prudent and pious, learned and judicious, or who may manage these weighty concerns gravely

The mode, in which the passages in this paragraph are brought together, necessarily suggests, that they *all* occur together in the original work. This is an exposition of the Office of the Visitation of the Sick, and consequently has no real relevancy to the present controversy. The two latter passages from "And this was so received," I have readily found, but I have been unable to find the previous passage, and it certainly does not occur in any relation to the others. I give the whole, as it stands in the original, with those explanatory words which have been carefully omitted in the quotation of the pamphlet.

"5. Rubric. Here shall the sick person be moved to make

and privately, and dispatch it wisely and fully to our satisfaction. . . . And this was so received a doctrine in the primitive times, that the confession of sins to a Priest, in case of a troubled conscience, was esteemed an Apostolic institution. . . . *We wish, therefore, that the people, EVEN IN TIME OF HEALTH* (when their conscience is troubled for some great sin, or their souls are assaulted with a violent temptation) *would come and make their case known to their spiritual physician, to whom the fathers elegantly compare the Priest in this case. But if we have omitted this before, we have the more need to send speedily for God's minister in our sickness.*" (On Offices, p. 309. S. James v. 16.)

much." *James v. 16.* Whence it appears to be our duty to confess our sins, not only to God, but to men also, especially to the Elders of the Church mentioned in the former verse, and meant here by the title of "(A Righteous man,)" a name properly given to the ministers of God, *Matt. x. 41, Chap. xxiii. 29.* They were to confess to those who Prayed over them, which was the Elders, *Ver. 14,* who in those days were endued with the miraculous gift of inspired Prayer, called (*Δέησις ἐνεργουμένη,* 'effectual fervent prayer; and though the phrase ("one to another") may seem to allow us to confess to any, yet the use of those words elsewhere, assure us that they are to be limited according to the preceding matter;

a special Confession of his sins, if he feel his conscience troubled with any mighty matter." We shall now proceed to the Consolations, but only for fear that any secret sin should hinder the Sick from receiving the benefit of them, we first advise him to a special Confession, if his Conscience accuse him for any great transgression; and this is no more than God requires by his holy Apostle *St. James*; for after the Order for the Sick man to send for the Elders of the Church to pray over him, and the promise of Recovery and Remission, he adds: "Confess your faults one to another, that ye may be healed; the effectual fervent Prayer of a Righteous man availeth

so "be subject one to another," *Eph.* v. 21 is meant only of Inferiors to Superiors. And "use hospitality one to another," 1 *Pet.* iv. 9, is meant only of the Rich to the Poor, even as here, "confess one to another," is, the people to the Elders of the Church, for to them only Christ hath committed the power of binding and loosing, *Matt.* xviii. 18, *John* xx. 23, and when a man is "overtaken with a fault he that is spiritual must restore him." And this was so received a Doctrine in the Primitive times, that the Confession of sins to a Priest, in case of a troubled conscience, was esteemed an Apostolical institution; and was a general practice, as might be proved by innumerable testimonies of antiquity. But even the Scriptures inform us, that the Penitent Jew was to confess his sins to the Priest as well as to God, and the form then in use is still extant. The Converts which St. John baptized, confessed their sins unto him, *Matt.* iii. 6, and the *Ephesians* whom *St. Paul* converted, "came to him and confessed, and showed their Deeds." *Acts* xix. 18. Whence the Greek Fathers infer, that all faithful People ought thus to acknowledge their offences, that they may be reprov'd and amended. The Romanists indeed have wretchedly abused this Primitive and profitable practice, enjoining it at set times, and using it as an Artifice to gain money for absolution of course, and for commuting Penance, as also for a Picklock to open all men's breasts, and a means to set up their empire over the Consciences of their Proselytes; so that this excellent means of Repentance, is become the support and encouragement of Persevering Sinners: yet we Protestants ought not to reject this holy Rite, but to reduce it to its Primitive institution; we wish therefore that our people even in time of health (when their Conscience is troubled for some great sin, or their souls are assaulted by a violent Temptation) would come and make their case known to their spiritual Physician, to whom the Fathers elegantly compare the Priest in this case. For if we blush to show our wounds to them, we cannot expect that they should cure that which they are not suffered to see; and if this

were constantly practised in our health, we should not only be rarely assisted in order to the continual regulation of our lives; but when sickness and death comes, the holy man would be better able to assist us, as being no stranger to the state of our souls, and we ourselves should have less work to do, when our last conflict comes: but if we have omitted this before, we have more need to send speedily for God's Minister in our sickness, which is the special time in which *St. James* here enjoins us to confess to the Elders of the Church; and of the benefit of this last confession, the Thief upon the Cross was a great example, who confessing his offence, was accepted immediately, not only unto Christ's favour, but his kingdom. *Luke xxiii. 41,*" pp. 308, 310. (Comber on the Occasional Offices. *London, 1629.*)

#### BISHOP PEARSON.

The great Bishop Pearson (1686) *tells a Nonconformist* to whom he writes: "*This comfort must be taken from you*; for if . . . you desire to make a special Confession, and receive the benefit of Absolution, to which end the priest is ordered to use these words: 'By the authority of Christ committed to me, I absolve thee of all thy sins;' you will never acquiesce in the Absolution, where you acknowledge no commission, nor can you expect any efficacy which dependeth upon the authority." (Minor Works, vol. ii., p. 232.)

These words have exclusive reference to the case of sickness, and the use of the office of the Visitation of the Sick. This reference is concealed in the quotation, by the omission of seven words, "upon the apprehension of your latter end;" and it is difficult to conjecture any possible reason for omitting them, except it be to conceal the reference of the whole passage. I subjoin the entire paragraph complete.

"Lastly, the unfeigned exercise of religion is undoubtedly, as never more necessary, so never so comfortable as upon the bed of our sickness, especially upon the approach of death: wherefore the Church hath

taken great care that the minister shall attend, and how he shall behave himself in the visitation of the sick, for their comfort and advantage. This comfort I confess must be taken from you, who are of that persuasion concerning your pastor; for if upon the apprehension of your latter end you feel your conscience troubled, and being observant of the method prescribed, desire to make a special confession, and receive the benefit of absolution; to which end the priest is ordered to use these words, "By the authority of Christ committed unto me, I absolve thee of all thy sin:" you will never acquiesce in the absolution, when you acknowledge no commission, nor can you expect any efficacy, which dependeth upon the authority." (Pearson's Minor Works, vol. ii., p. 237. Oxford, 1844.)

#### FOURTEEN BISHOPS, A CASE OF FRIEND AND PARKINS.

There is a very important document bearing on this subject (cf. Wilkins' "Concilia," vol. iv., p. 267.) Sir John Friend and Sir W. Parkins were executed for conspiracy against King William III. Some clergymen absolved them, without Confession, publicly on the scaffold. Archbishop Tenison, of Canterbury, Archbishop Sharpe, of York, the Bishops of London, Durham, Winchester, Coventry and Lichfield, Rochester, Ely (Patrick), Hereford, Norwich, Peterborough, Gloucester, Chichester, Asaph, all, that is, that could be brought together, made and signed a Declaration, April 10, 1696. After quoting the rubric concerning sick persons,

It must be constantly borne in mind, that no one for a moment calls into question the fact that the Visitation Office authorises the sentence of absolution to dying persons, who, feeling their conscience troubled with any weighty matter, shall have first made a special confession of sin. This is admitted; and to reassert it a thousand times over will not advance the argument for sacramental confession one whit. All that the fourteen bishops did in the case cited is to affirm this general fact, but they did it in such a way as to strengthen the case against Sacramental confession, not for it. For their

they say: "But here they absolved, and that publicly, persons condemned by law for execrable crimes, *without so much as once moving them at that time to make a special confession of their sins*, at least of those sins for which they were condemned. . . . If these ministers knew not the state of these men's souls before they gave them Absolution, as it is manifest two of them did not . . . how could they, without manifest transgression of the Church's order, as well as the *profane abuse of the POWER CHRIST HAS LEFT WITH HIS MINISTERS, absolve them from their sins?*" The point to be observed here is, that the Bishops, in blaming this particular absolution, take for granted, as a matter of course, the reality of the absolving "power."

pronouncing a form of absolution; as their manner of doing this was extremely insolent and without precedent either in our Church, or any way that we know of, the thing itself was altogether irregular.

"The rubric in our Office of the Visitation of the Sick, from whence they took the words then used, and upon which if upon anything in our Liturgy, they must ground this their proceeding, gave them no authority, nor no pretence for the absolving these persons; nay, as they managed the affair, they acted in this absolution far otherwise than is there directed.

"That rubric is concerning sick persons, and it is required,

complaint was founded on the absence of the ministerial element, not of the sacerdotal. They protested, because these clergymen had pronounced absolution without first awakening the consciences of the absolved persons, and without receiving from them any evidence of true repentance. It is evident, that the protesting Prelates held a lower and more guarded view of Sacerdotal confession and absolution, than the clergymen against whose irregularity they protested. The body of the document is as follows:—

"For those clergymen that took upon them to absolve these criminals at the place of execution, by laying, all three together, their hands upon their heads, and publickly

first, that the 'sick person shall be moved to make a special confession of his sins, if he feel his conscience troubled with any weighty matter, and then after such confession the priest shall absolve him, if he humbly and heartily desire it.' But here they absolved, and that publickly, persons condemned by law for execrable crimes, without so much as once moving them, to make a special confession of their sins, at least of those sins for which they were condemned. And on the other side, here were persons absolved, that did not humbly desire absolution, as feeling any such weighty matter to trouble their conscience. If these ministers knew not the state of these men's minds, before they gave them absolution, as it is manifest two of them did not—how could they without manifest transgression of the Church's order, as well as the profane abuse of the power Christ has left with his ministers, absolve them from their sins.

"If they were acquainted with these men's sentiments declared in their papers, then they must look upon them either as hardened impenitents, or as martyrs.

"We are so charitable to believe that they would not absolve them under the former notion, for that had been in effect, sealing them to damnation."

April 10th, 1696. (Wilkins' Concilia, vol. iv. p. 629.)

#### BISHOP PATRICK.

1. BISHOP PATRICK, author of several sermons and treatises against Rome, 1707 (Book for Beginners), says: "If he still find he is not safe, he must after all advise with some discreet minister of God's Word, as with a spiritual physician. . . . And when he comes for this ghostly counsel and advice, let

1. "The book for beginners" is also entitled "An Help to Young Communicants." The quotation is taken from Chapter X. which is headed "Directions in case of frequent Relapses into sin." It has no reference therefore to the habitual life of a Christian, but to deep-seated spiritual sick-



*him not be ashamed plainly to confess his sins, and to open the whole state of his soul before him whom he consults relating how and by what means he comes to be thus entangled in the snare of the devil, that he cannot get out of it. Be sure you conquer the loathness you will find in yourselves to make this discovery for fear it should disgrace you in his opinion, and convince yourself that you ought the rather to confess your sins ingenuously, that you may take shame to yourself and lay yourself low in the presence of God and His minister."*

that he may get the Mastery of those unruly Lusts which are too hard for him.

"VI. And when he comes for this ghostly Counsel and Advice let him not be ashamed plainly to confess his sins, and to open the whole state of his soul before him whom he consults; relating how, and by what means he comes to be thus entangled in the snare of the Devil, that he cannot get out of it.

"VII. Be sure you conquer the loathness you will find in yourself to make this Discovery, for fear it disgrace you in his opinion. And convince yourself, that you ought the rather to confess your sins ingenuously, that you may take shame to yourself, and lay yourself low in the presence of God and of his minister.

*"Do it as part of your Humiliation.*

"VIII. Whereby he will be able to judge what Remedies are most proper for your Cure, when he knows the cause and Root of your disease. When you deal sincerely with him, he will be able to tell you of what Nature and Degree your sin is, and

ness. But further, the quotation is garbled where the break occurs, for the omitted words are not unimportant as might be supposed, but most significant. I give the entire passage, and the paragraph following, and it will then be seen that no ingenuity can possibly pervert it into a defence of Sacramental Confession.

"V. And if he still find he is not safe, he must after all advise with some discreet Minister of God's Word, as with a spiritual Physician; desiring to know what course to take,

whence it proceeds ; whether it be from idleness, or ill Company, or carelessness in your Devotion, or neglect of serious thoughts to quicken your belief, to call to remembrance your Obligations, and to put yourself in Mind of the great account you must give ; or from too much confidence in yourself, want of Fear and Caution ; not watching over your Eyes, or the Door of your Lips, and abundance of other such like things ; which he may observe and accordingly give you his Directions.” (Book for Beginners, pp. 86, 89. London, 1724.)

2. Again : “ To him it will be necessary to repair on all occasions, that he may instruct and teach you in that whereof you are ignorant, or *awaken you when you are sleepy, or refresh and cheer you when you are wrong, or cure you when you are sick or ill at case, or resolve you in your doubts, or quicken your dulness, or bridle your fervours.*” (“ Advice to Friend,” § 13.)

2. If the quotation had been continued a little further, it would have been clear that Bishop Patrick had no idea of absolving grace, but only of the application of the Word of God to the special circumstances of Christian experience. The passage continues :

“ Or bridle your fervours ; in short, that he may illuminate your mind to make a

difference between truth and falsehood, reality and appearance, good and evil ; and excite your will to embrace the one, and refuse the other, with a constant affection.

“ For suppose (to give an instance) any man should make a tendry to you of some Principles, which he labours to prove you ought to receive, as Articles of the Christian Faith ; How can you be secure that you shall not drink in some poisonous Conceits, under the sugared name of Truth ; unless you take advice of those, that have their senses more exercised to discern than yourself ? And so, in all other cases, know for certain, you will never be so well able to instruct and counsel yourself, as they ; never so well understand the Sacred Books, as by the

help of their Interpretations; nor be so well satisfied to do your duty, as by consulting with them, whose work it is to search, and make enquiries into the Laws of God." (Advice to a Friend. S. 13, p. 184. Lon. 1847.)

With the same reference to the Keys of the Word of God, he further describes the offices of the ministry from the conversion of the sinner to his entrance in glory.

"He hath committed authority to others in a perpetual succession that they should *watch for men's souls*, as the Apostle to the *Hebrews* speaks; declaring to them their own worth, and his love; engrafting that Word in them, which is able to save them; calling them to repentance; establishing them in the Faith; encouraging their Progress in virtue; ordering their goings; feeding them with his blessed Body and Blood; absolving them from their sins; assisting them in their last agony, that they may finish their course with joy." (Ibid. p. 186.)

#### DR. JOHN ISHAM.

So JOHN ISHAM, D.D. (1702: "Daily Office for Sick"): "It is fit also for you to observe that though our Church *presseth* particular Confession to the Priest *only when conscience is disquieted with sins* of deeper malignity; YET IT DOTH NOT DISCOUNTENANCE THE MORE FREQUENT USE OF IT; and this, too, is *so comprehensive* a case as to take in great numbers that neglect it, and it is the declared judgment of Bishop Taylor, himself a pious doctor of the sick, that 'Confession being useful in all cases,

It appears on the front of the quotation, that the words, "more frequent use of it" are confined solely to the case of the sick, "in the days of his danger and near death." When the whole context is read, the Ministerial character of the Confession, in distinction to the Sacramental, becomes exceeding clear. This part of Isham's work is headed "Directions for the Sick." The third paragraph runs thus:—

and necessary in some . . . he that for stubbornness or any other criminal weakness shall decline it in the days of his danger, is near death, but very far off from the Kingdom of Heaven.'”

“Let the sick person desire the charitable Assistance of the Minister of his Parish, before his Intellectuals are clouded, and his weakness prevails too far upon him; and then such Visits may be much more useful

to him, than they are in the common way: for certainly 'tis a very unwise course, to stay till the *Physician* retires, before a *Spiritual Guide* is requested to come. 'Tis then too late for him to begin his Enquiries, and Applications; or to have any conference with one whose Voice, and Strength, and Vitals are almost spent, and whose Senses have lost their Natural Offices: and he cannot then be admitted into the secrets of his soul; nor know his particular Wants, nor administer such help to him, as he might have done before this *Extremity*.”

The fourth section has reference to the sick man's temporal affairs. The fifth then proceeds:—

“If the sick person feel his *Conscience* troubled with any weighty matter, he is expected by the Church, to make special *Confession* of his sins to the Minister that visits him; and then having testified his hearty repentance, he is encouraged to desire Absolution; and to receive it in the *Form* of the Church, with all possible humility and thankfulness; looking upon the Priest that declares it, as speaking from God, who gave this *Authority* to his Church, and to the Pastors of it; “*whose soever sins ye remit, they are remitted unto them,*” John xx. 23; and “*whatsoever ye shall loose on earth, shall be loosed in Heaven,*” Matt. xviii. 18. However since the Ministerial Power cannot absolve any, whom God doth not absolve; the infirm Christian is to remember, that he can have no advantage by this *Absolution*, but upon the condition of his sound, and sincere Repentance (God so requiring it:) and by consequence he is earnestly to frame himself to such a *Contrition*. 'Tis fit also for him to observe; that though our Church presseth *particular Confession*

to a Priest, only when the Conscience is disquieted with Sins of deeper Malignity, yet it doth not discountenance the more frequent use of it ; and this too is so comprehensive a Case, as to take in great numbers that neglect it ; and 'tis the declared judgment of a Learned Champion against Popery, and a famous Director of the Sick ; that *Confession being useful in all cases, and necessary in some ; and encouraged by Evangelical Promises, by Scripture-Precedents, by the Example of both Testaments ; and prescribed by Apostolical Injunctions ; and the Canons of all Churches, and the Examples of all Ages ; and taught us by the Analogy to the Ministerial Power, and the very Necessities of every Man ; he that for stubbornness, or any other criminal weakness, shall decline it in the days of his danger, is near death but very far from the Kingdom of Heaven.*" (Daily Office for the Sick. London, 1702, pp. 164, 167.)

#### BISHOP BEVERIDGE.

Bishop Beveridge (1708) : The passage, even as it stands, renders no support whatever to any sacerdotal theory of confession and absolution ; since it states the power to be simply " ministerial." But even so, the quotation does not fairly represent the real sentiments of Bishop Beveridge. When the entire context is examined, it becomes clear to demonstration, that the Bishop meant by the power of Christ in the hand of his ministers, and especially, as the context shows, in the hands of the Bishops, nothing

“ ‘Receive ye the Holy Ghost ; whose soever,’ &c. As if He should have said, ‘I, the Son of Man, *having power upon earth also to forgive sins,* DO NOW COMMIT THE SAME TO YOU : so that whose sins soever are remitted or retained by you are so by Me also.’ . . . This power, ‘how great soever’ it be, ‘*it is but ministerial.*’ . . . Yea, whatsoever power they have of this nature, it is still *His power in their hands ;* they derive it continually from Him, who is always present with them. And therefore as they themselves need to

have a care how they exert this power, or neglect the exerting of it, so others had need to take care, too, that they neither resist nor despise it." (Sermons on Church, vol. i., p. 14.)

more or less than the power to exercise Church discipline.

"There is one thing still behind, which we must by no means omit, especially upon this occasion ; and that is, the

power of governing the Church, which our Lord left with His Apostles and their successors, to the end of the world ; but so that He, according to His promise, is always present with them at the execution of it. For this power is granted to them in the very charter to which this promise is annexed : for here our Lord gives them commission not only to baptize, but likewise to teach those who are His disciples, to observe whatsoever He had commanded. Whereby they are empowered both to declare what are those commands of Christ which men ought to observe, and also to use all means to prevail upon them to observe them : such as are arresting and punishing those who violate, rewarding and encouraging those who keep them. But our Saviour's kingdom being, as Himself saith, not of this world, but purely spiritual, He hath authorised His substitutes in the government of it, to use rewards and punishments of the same nature ; even to admonish delinquents in His name to forsake their sins, and if they continue obstinate, and neglect such admonitions, to excommunicate and cast them out of his Church ; and, upon their repentance, to absolve and receive them in again." After quoting Matt. xvi. 19, and John xx. 23, he proceeds, "As if He should have said, I, the Son of Man, having power upon earth also to forgive sins, do now commit the same to you ; so that whose sins soever are remitted or retained by you, are so by Me also. From whence it is plain, both that the Apostles received power to remit and retain sins, and that Christ himself concurs with them in the exercise of that power ; and how He doth it, even by His Holy Spirit now breathed into them.

"To explain the full extent and latitude of this power would

require more time than can be allowed this day, whereon 'tis to be exercised. And therefore, I shall observe only two things concerning it; whereof the first is, That how great soever the power be, which our Lord committed to His Apostles and their successors, for the government of His Church in all ages, it is but ministerial; they act only under Him as His ministers and stewards, and must one day give an account to Him of all their actions. Yea, whatsoever power they have of this nature, is still His power; they derive it continually from Him, who is always present with them. And therefore, as they themselves need to have a care how they exert this power, or neglect the exerting of it; so others had need to take care too, that they neither resist nor despise it.

“The other thing I would observe unto you, is, That for the better execution of this power, it hath been the constant custom of the Apostles and their successors in all ages, to visit the Churches committed to their charge, &c.” (Beveridge, *Theological Works*, Vol. i., pp. 13, 14, 15. Oxford, 1842.)

#### BISHOP KEN.

1. It was Bishop Ken, too, who pronounced over the dying Charles II. the Absolution of the Church; unheeded, indeed, by the King—then in heart a Roman, and no long time after received into that Communion (see Macaulay's "England," vol. i., p. 434)—yet enough to show what was the mind and practice of this great prelate.

equally irrelevant. For no one calls into question the fact, that the office for the Visitation of the Sick authorises the pronouncing of absolution over a dying man. The Bishop may indeed be thought to have exceeded his authority; for the

1. It is difficult to see, what argument is intended to be based on this paragraph. If it refers to the King's example, the statement that he was in heart a Romanist, and within a few hours afterwards was admitted into the Romish communion, deprives it of all relevance. If it refer to the authority of Bishop Ken, it is

rubric orders, that the Absolution should be pronounced after a special confession has been made, and this confession is to be made only when the conscience is troubled with some weighty matter. Neither of these conditions were present at the death bed of Charles II.

“Charles however was unmoved. He made no objection indeed when the service for the Visitation of the Sick was read. In reply to the pressing questions of the divines, he said that he was sorry for what he had done amiss; and he suffered the absolution to be pronounced over him according to the forms of the Church of England.” (Macaulay’s Hist. of Eng., Vol. ii., p. 8. Lon. 1858.)

2. And in a poem entitled “Absolution,” in speaking of the House of Prayer, Bishop Ken (author of “Awake my soul,” and “Glory to Thee, my God”) writes :—

“It is a pile magnificent and large,  
Of which collegiate pastors have the charge.  
Their prelate Salvian over them presides,  
To penitents they are sagacious guides;  
*Confessions private at their chairs are made,*  
*Which they to souls COMMAND NOT, but PERSUADE,*  
*In scandals chiefly, or distress of mind,*  
But all are to confess to God enjoined.”

(“Christian Year,” p. 437, 2nd Edition.) [*Pamphlet.*]

8. The poem from which the extract is made was composed in Ken’s declining years, and was entitled “The Penitent.” I do not deny that it expresses the author’s sentiments and wishes; but it does not profess in any degree to represent any actual or existing state of things, and cannot therefore constitute the slightest evidence as to the actual doctrine of the Church of England. It is ideal throughout. Thus the portion of the longer poem, arranged in Ken’s Christian Year under the head “Absolution,” begins thus :—

“There is a vale of tears which mountains bound,  
And from terrestrial prospects wall it round,



Where only Heaven is open to the sight,  
 Where happy souls to bliss commence their flight,  
 There in a land, to the loose world unknown  
 The awful house of mourning stands alone ;  
 Phylthreno, angel of repentance styled,  
 Of aspect gracious, and of language mild,  
 Stands at the gates, and with obliging air  
 Opens to all who to the place repair ;  
 Bless'd Jesus thither guides returning strays,  
 And thither his new convert, John conveys."

When the whole framework is allegorical, no part of the language can be pressed into a literal meaning, since each single part of the action partakes of the allegorical character of the whole.

3. Again in "Visitation of the Sick" (p. 441) :—

"To God I have my will resign'd,  
 To God I elevate my mind,  
 My ghostly guide has me Absolved, and I  
 Have nought to do but pray, and love, and die." [*Pamphlet.*]

The poem on the Visitation of the Sick contains, in the stanza immediately preceding the lines quoted in the pamphlet, the following reference to the Sacrament :

"I my viaticum received,  
 And that my ghostly strength retrieved ;  
 'Tis by repentance only I am eased,  
 And Jesus's love, who angry God appeased."

And two stanzas below the words quoted, Ken expresses the ground of his hope thus :

"My God, my love this soul sustains,  
 And sweetens all my dying pains.  
 Thou, Lord, didst bitter death endure for me,  
 And hast from all death's terrors set me free."

4. Again, in the poem on "Holy Order," after describing the warnings of the chief pastor to notorious sinners—

“ When wanton souls who brake Baptismal pact  
 Would league with sin, and with the world contract—”

he continues—

“ He Penance’s restorative enjoin’d  
 To mortify the sin, and purge the mind ;  
 True lovers with their tears her lapse bewail’d,  
 And for her pardon humbly Heaven assail’d ;  
 When all her satisfactions were complete,  
 She begg’d her Absolution at his feet.” [Pamphlet.]

The whole context shows that these words refer exclusively to the exercise of Church discipline ; the complete passage is as follows :—

“ Each bishop had bless’d Jesus’s keys to lock,  
 Or’ open the Church’s entrance to his flock ;  
 He faithful care of catechumens took,  
 Their growth in faith and love to overlook ;  
 And when he thought them for Communion fit,  
 Would to the font love’s candidates admit ;  
 He, that their faith and love might grow adult,  
 Nor lust, the world, and hell, should them insult,  
 Impow’red by Jesus, to their souls conveyed  
 By Confirmation, supplemental aid ;  
 The lovers to the altar would invite,  
 To raise their love to a triumphant height ;  
 Their love, by that Immortal Banquet fed,  
 To torture and to martyrdom was bred.  
 When wanton souls, who brake baptismal pact,  
 Would leagues with sin, the world, and hell contract ;  
 The Prelate the adulteress would call,  
 Then meekly mind her of her dangerous fall ;  
 And warned, the spouse of Jesus would adjure,  
 And mourn for her adulteries impure ;  
 The Penances restorative enjoined,  
 To mortify the sin, and purge the mind ;  
 True lovers with their tears her lapse bewailed,  
 And for her pardon humbly Heaven assailed ;

When all her satisfactions were complete,  
 She begg'd her Absolution at his feet ;  
 All lovers seeing her rekindled love,  
 Joyed for her here, as angels joy'd above.  
 But when bold sinners wholly love disclaimed,  
 Gave public scandals and the truth defamed.  
 Defied all sacred powers, and would endure  
 No one restorative to work their cure,  
 He, the apostates, zealous for his God,  
 Devoted to the sin avenging rod ;  
 Against their entrance shut the temple door,  
 And to infernal fury gave them o'er ;  
 Just doom of souls to Heavenly love unchaste,  
 Down to the diabolic state debased."—Pp. 447, 448.

5. "And, again, speaking of (p. 449.)  
 "Choice under-shepherds carefully ordain'd,"

he describes how

"The state of every soul they justly weigh'd,  
 And to their wants due applications made ;  
 Wont tenderly saints dying to frequent,  
 Their love, by their own fervours, to foment ;  
 Saints' tears were by their Absolution dried." [Pamphlet.]

This passage is connected immediately with the preceding.  
 The lines proceed from the close of the last quotation.

"Each Pastor, that in his large flock he might  
 Raise and augment celestial love and light,  
 Chose under-shepherds carefully ordained,  
 Their chief and they the burden co sustained ;  
 They sheep and lambs with sound doctrine fed,  
 They nourished them with Eucharistic bread ;  
 They in assemblies offered prayer and praise,  
 In studying holy Writ spent all their days ;  
 They bright examples of true lovers gave,  
 They strove all others to inflame and save ;

They, as they saw the tempers of their sheep,  
 Would comfort, warn, reprove, pray, joy or weep ;  
 The state of every soul they justly weighed,  
 And to their wants due application made ;  
 Wont tenderly saints dying to frequent,  
 Their love, by their own fervours, to foment,  
 Saints tears whereby their Absolution dried,  
 And lovers in their arms resignedly died ;  
 They, of each soul committed to their trust,  
 Gave their high-priest accounts minute and just."—P. 449.

6. In 1710, the holy BISHOP KEN: "In case, good Philotheus, you do find this examination too difficult for you, or you are afraid you shall not rightly perform it, or meet with any scruples or troubles of conscience in the practice of it, I then *advise you, as the Church does, to go to one of your superiors in this place to be your spiritual guide, and be not ashamed to unburden your soul freely to him*; that, besides his ghostly counsel, you may receive the *benefit of Absolution*; for, though confession of our sins to God is only matter of duty, and absolutely necessary, yet *confession to our spiritual guide also is BY MANY DEVOUT SOULS found to be very advantageous to true repentance.*"

6. This passage is wholly beside the mark. The advice of Bishop Ken has reference to the reception of the Lord's Supper, and is no more than the repetition of the language of the Church herself in the Exhortation to the Communion. The question is what is meant by "The benefit of absolution," and on this question the language here quoted from Bishop Ken does not throw the slightest ray of light.

#### BISHOP BULL.

The great BISHOP BULL, too, received Absolution in his last illness; not once, but frequently.

In a sermon on "the Priest's office difficult and dangerous," he speaks of his need of wis-

"A few days before his death (Feb. 17, 1710) he received Absolution, when, in the presence of several persons, he made a solemn confession and declaration of the conduct of his whole life, and so took his leave of the world in a manner the most edifying that could be." (*Last Hours of Eminent Christians*, pp. 182. 186.)

dom, first, for his preaching; secondly, in his carriage and action; thirdly, on the choice of his friends, and then proceeds.

"He must be wise to enquire into the state of his flock, and to discern their particular tempers and constitutions; and even to search into their hearts and secret inclinations.

He must be wise to administer private counsels and reproofs, duly observing the circumstances of time, of place, of person, of disposition." (*Bull's Sermons*. Vol. i. p. 158. Oxf. 1816.)

How natural would it have been, had the Bishop held any doctrine of sacramental confession, to speak of the wisdom necessary for the office of a Confessor. But there is not a syllable of it. The same significant absence of all reference to it is found in a sermon on "the principal branches of the Pastoral office." The man who held any form of sacramental confession could not, with the slightest candour or consistency, have omitted all reference to it in the discussion of such a question. He says

"The principal parts and branches of the Pastoral Office are these five, First, Reading divine service, or the prayers of the Church. Secondly, preaching. Thirdly, Catechising. Fourthly, Administering the holy sacraments of baptism and the Lord's Supper. Fifthly and lastly, Visiting of the Sick."

On the last head after expressing regret that sick persons do not more frequently "send for" their ministers, he simply adds

"How to perform this duty towards sick men aright, our Church fully directs him, in her excellent Office of the Visitation of the Sick, which is so full and perfect, that there needs nothing to be added to it." (*Ibid.* Vol. ii. pp. 147—155.)

## ARCHBISHOP SHARPE.

ARCHBISHOP SHARPE, whose opinion is the more important, in that he was the spiritual director of Queen Anne (1714), author of "Sermons against Popery," says: "ALL PROTESTANTS that I know of do not only . . . but even as to private sins, whereby no particular man nor no society is injured, but only God offended; I say, as to these, *they not only allow of, but APPROVE OF CONFESSION TO MEN even private Confession to men; and more especially such Confession as is made to those who are Ministers. No one Protestant, so far as we can judge by the public declarations of their faith, is against private Confessions of sin to any man, much less to a minister or pastor. Nay, they are SO FAR FROM BEING AGAINST IT, that they ADVISE it and RECOMMEND it in sundry cases as a most excellent instrument of repentance.* So that the Papists do very unjustly traduce and CALUMNIATE the Reformation *when they say that the Protestants are against private Confession.* All that they have done is to regulate it, to set it upon its true basis and foundation, which is done, NOT BY REQUIRING private Confession as a thing necessary, but BY EX-

These passages are so mutilated, as to convey an impression totally opposed to the real mind of the author. He divides sins into three kinds.

"All the sins that can be confessed will fall under some of these three heads: they are either such whereby God is offended, and he only; or they are such whereby some particular man is injured, as well as God offended; or lastly, they are such whereby scandal is given to the public society of Christians where we live, though no particular man be injured by them."

In regard to the second class he prescribes "a penitential confession and acknowledgment of them; and if that be not sufficient, such further reparation as the case requires." In regard to the third, he says "Not only our church but all other protestant churches, do not only allow, but approve of confession unto men; even a public confession, a confession as open as the sins committed were." And he remarks

**HORTING MEN TO IT AS A THING  
HIGHLY CONVENIENT IN MANY  
CASES.** In all those cases *where  
it can be useful*, or serve any  
good purpose, it is *both com-  
mended and seriously advised.*"

He gives certain cases, and adds,  
"In all these cases *no Protestant  
(that understands his religion)  
is against private Confession.*"  
(Works, vol. vii., p. 158.)

Again : "Confession to a min-  
ister is **ALWAYS LAWFUL**, and  
sometimes expedient; *and if  
people amongst us did more prac-  
tise it, there is no doubt they would  
find both great comfort and great  
benefit thereby.*"

sion of public sins in the face of the church ; but even as to  
private sins, whereby no particular man nor no society is  
injured, but only God offended (which is the third sort of sins  
that I mentioned in the first place;) I say, as to these, they  
not only allow of, but approve of confession to men ; and more  
especially such confession as is made to those who are ministers.  
No one protestant, so far as we can judge by the public decla-  
rations of their faith, is against private confession of sins to any  
good man, much less to a minister or pastor. Nay, they are  
so far from being against it, that they advise it, and recommend  
it in sundry cases as a most excellent instrument of repent-  
ance.

"So that the papists do very unjustly traduce and calumniate  
the reformation, when they say that the protestants are against  
private confession. There is no such thing. There is no pro-  
testant church but gives it that due esteem and regard that it  
ought to have. All that they have done is to regulate it, to

"This is that confession we  
so often read of in ecclesiasti-  
cal writers, and which they so  
much urge as of necessity to  
repentance, viz. a public con-  
fession of crimes, not that pri-  
vate whispering of sins into  
the ear of a confessor, which  
the Church of Rome hath now  
brought into the place of it."

He then reverts to the first  
class, and says,

"All Protestants that I know  
of, do not only require acknow-  
ledgment and confession of  
sins to the injured person, as  
necessary to repentance, and  
approve of particular confes-

set it upon its true basis and foundation ; which is done, not requiring private confession as a thing necessary, but by exhorting men to it as a thing highly convenient in many cases. In all those instances when it can be useful, or serve any good purpose, it is both commended and seriously advised ; that is to say, where a sinner either needs direction and assistance, for the overcoming some sin that he labours under ; or where he is so overwhelmed with the burden of his sins, that he needs the help of some skilful person to explain to him the terms of the gospel, to convince him from the holy scriptures, that his repentance (as far as a judgment can be made of it) is true and sincere, and will be accepted by God ; and lastly, upon the full examination of his state, and his judgment thereupon, to give him the absolution of the church. In all these cases, no protestant (that understands his religion) is against private confession. On the contrary all the best writers of the protestants (which give an account of their faith) are mightily for it, and do seriously recommend it. Mr. Calvin hath fully expressed their sense as to this point." (Archbishop Sharp's Works, vol. viii., pp. 117, 122. London, 1754.)

It thus appears that the benefits of this confession are purely ministerial, and may be secured by a confession to any "good man."

#### DR. NICHOLLS.

WILLIAM NICHOLLS, D.D., author of "Commentary on the Book of Common Prayer" (1712), says : "It is very plain from this passage that OUR CHURCH DOES NOT CONDEMN PRIVATE CONFESSION AND ABSOLUTION ; *though she does not universally require them* (as the Church of Rome does), as being

The words occur in Dr. Nicholls' comment on the language of the Exhortation in the Communion Office. His note is very short, but the latter half of it has been omitted in the pamphlet. The whole is as follows :

"It is very plain from this



necessary for the pardon of all sins." passage that the Church does not condemn Private Confession and Absolution, tho' she does not universally require them (as the Church of Rome does) as being necessary for the Pardon of all Sins. She only recommends them as things very convenient to be put in practice, when Persons cannot quiet their own consciences otherwise; but still leaves them at their liberty whether they will make use of this means or no."

In his notes on the Visitation of the Sick under "moved to make a special confession of their sins," he writes: "But as the Auricular Confession of the Papists, which they hold necessary for all Penitents, and have enjoined to be performed by a particular enumeration of all Sins which can be remembered, is a Doctrine which was never known in the Christian World, till very late ages of it; so the special Confession of some very affecting Sins, which disquiet the mind, to be made to the Minister as a spiritual Physician or Counsellor (as our Church enjoins) was practised by the purest Ages of Christianity."

#### DR. HICKES.

DR. HICKES, Dean of Worcester (died 1715), republished from Cranmer's Catechism the Sermon on the Power of the Keys, giving it high commendation (cf. Preface to "Divine Right of Episcopacy.") Speaking of the neglect of the power of the keys, he wonders "how Priests of the Church of England should be guilty of such an omission, when in the form of Ordination the power of loosing and binding, or of absolving and

I have been unable to find this passage; and it is no wonder from the inexact nature of the reference. No treatise on "The Divine Right of Episcopacy" is to be found in the published works of Dr. Hickes, nor do I find any such treatise in the list of his works published by bibliographers. There is a treatise on the "Dignity of the Episcopal Order;" but there is no pre-

retaining sins, is the very first thing which is mentioned as belonging to the office of a Priest, and in the Absolution after the General Confession in Morning and Evening Prayer, it is said that God hath given power and commandment to His Priests to declare and PRONOUNCE to His people, being penitent, the Absolution and Remission of their sins; and in the Office for the Visitation of the Sick it is expressly affirmed that God hath left power to the Church, that is, to the Priests of the Church, to absolve all sinners who truly repent and believe in Him; and therefore directs the Confessary to absolve the confessing penitent of all his sins in the name, &c."

Morning and Evening Prayer;" the other "in the office for the Visitation of the Sick;" neither of which are called into question. The following passage from the Prefatory discourse will suffice to show in what sense, and in what sense only, so high an Anglo-Catholic as Dr. Hickes maintained an "authoritative and ministerial" power of absolving from sin.

"It would require a great deal of time and paper, to show our author's fallacies and contradictions; and how, under the name of 'high Church,' he hath written from one end of his book to the other against the Church of England; contrary to her doctrine and discipline, in her articles, canons and homilies, in which she asserts the power of the keys, and the clergy to have that power; as the Bishop of Sarum writes in the preface to his Vindication of the Ordination of the Church of England;

face to it. The treatise on the Christian Priesthood is introduced by a Prefatory Discourse, occupying three-fourths of an octavo volume; but I have not met with the passage quoted in it. It is the less important, because asserting that "in the form of Ordination the power of loosing and binding, or of absolving or retaining sins is the very first thing which it mentioned as as belonging to the office of a Priest,"—which no one denies, the passage proceeds to adduce two modes in which the power so conferred is to be exercised; the one being in the form of "Absolution after the general Confession in

“But our Church still owns the power of the keys, which is not only doctrinal, when the mercies of God are declared, and His judgments denounced; but it is also authoritative and ministerial, by which all Christians are either admitted to, or rejected from the privileges of Church Communion, and their sins are bound or loosed. With this we assert the pastors of the Church are vested.” (Hickes, *Two Treatises Prefatory Discourse*, Vol. i., p. 158. Oxford, 1847.)

2. And again (vol. i., p. 37), writing in answer to Bishop Trimnell’s (of Norwich) misrepresentations, he says: “But then, if by the power of forgiving sins, properly speaking, he means, as he ought to mean, that conditional, ministerial, derivative power of forgiving sins, which God, properly speaking, hath committed to His Church and her Priests, then I acknowledge that not only we, upon whom his Lordship would be understood to reflect, but all the ancient and sober modern writers upon the power of Absolution have asserted such a power of forgiving sins to be lodged in the Church and the Priests of it by derivation and commission from God.”

2. The extract should not have been ended in the middle of the sentence, still less without the important passage which follows; for this passage proves that Dr. Hickes understood by the power of forgiving and retaining sins the exercise of Church discipline, and this especially in the administration of the sacrament. The context proceeds after the words, with which the extract closes, which are followed by a comma only, “as it is written ‘whose-soever sins ye remit, they are remitted unto them.’” In this sense of remitting sins, those very writers which he (Bishop Trimmell) cites do assert the power of forgiving sins, properly speaking, to be lodged

in the Church, and her priests. Mr. Thorndike asserts it in the passages which his lordship cites, and he will pardon me if I say, I think to no purpose; but more expressly in the passages, to which I here refer him, as well as the reader, for the justification of those upon whom he reflects ‘the power of the

keys is the foundation of the church,' and "is seen (much) more towards them that are already in the Church, than them" (the Catechumens) "that are not of it." . . . Therefore, though the power of the keys is seen in free admitting to the communion of the Church; yet it is more visible in excluding from the same, as well as in readmitting to it." "Inward repentance . . . is a disposition qualifying a man for (the) pardon of sin, by virtue of the covenant of grace, without any act of the Church passing upon it. But God hath charged His Church . . . and therefore given it power and right, to call all those that notoriously transgress that Christianity which once they have professed, to those demonstrations of inward repentance and amendment of mind, by visible actions, that may satisfy the Church, that God's wrath in regard to that sin is appeased through Christ, and upon these demonstrations, to readmit them to communion with the Church. And further, God having provided this means of procuring and assuring the pardon of sin by the Church, hath also obliged all Christians to make use of the same, by bringing their secret sins to the knowledge of the Church, so far, and inasmuch as they ought to stand convict, that the ministry of the Church is requisite to procure in them that disposition, which by the Gospel entitles them to forgiveness."—Hickes' Account of 3rd edition, Vol. i. p. 38.)

That this language of Thorndike's received the concurrence of Dr. Hickes, is seen from the following passage, which occurs five pages further on, in the same "account of additions to the third edition."

"The Bishop will not, I believe, deny that sacerdotal absolution is" (ordinarily) "necessary for the remission of sins, even of those who are truly penitent," nor that "God hath obliged Himself to ratify the absolution of the Church" for the remission of sins to those who are qualified for it by repentance. Neither, I suppose will he deny, that "the administration of the Holy Eucharist is the ordinary means of conveying the

sacerdotal absolution of sins after baptism," as baptism is the ordinary means of conveying the sacerdotal absolution of sins to the baptized, which they committed before baptism. Nor will he deny, I take it for granted, that "the priest is the judge competent," to whom the Sacraments shall be administered, and to whom not; whether the penitent sinner after baptism shall be loosed by giving him the Sacrament of the Holy Eucharist for the remission of his sins, or of a verbal absolution. Neither can his lordship, I think, deny that 'as priests were made or instituted for the administration of the Sacraments; so the Sacraments were instituted to be administered by the priests, and that to administer them is their proper right.' Nor will he, I presume, make any difficulty to grant, that 'as God hath given the power of the temporal sword to princes, for the preservation of their authority as well as for the benefit of their people, so He hath given the power of the keys and of administering of the Sacraments to His priests, for the preservation and maintenance of their authority, as well as for the benefit of the people.'" ("Account of the Third Edition," Anglo-Catholic Library. Hickes. Two Treatises, vol. i., pp. 43, 44. Oxf. 1847.)

#### DR. MARSHALL.

DR. NATHANIEL MARSHALL      Dr. Marshall's words are  
 (1714: Introduction to "Peni-      "that stale and putrid impu-  
 tential Discipline," p. 3; Anglo-      tation of Popery, is what he  
 Catholic Library) talked of "the      despises, from a consciousness  
 stale and putrid imputation of      that he does not deserve it,  
 Popery" in the matter of peni-      and from a full persuasion that  
 tential discipline.      no one will attempt to fix it  
 upon him, who is at all acquainted either with him, or with his  
 subject." (Penitential Disc. Intr. p. 3.) So general a state-  
 ment proves nothing whatever, unless we know, what Dr.  
 Marshall's views were on the subject now under dispute. He  
 states his general proposition thus:—

“Some outward and visible form of government was however necessary to the Church, for her external polity; and as there was an outward admission to the privileges of Churchmanship, so it was expedient to the honour of the Spouse of Christ, and from the design of her founder requisite, that she should retain no scandalous followers in communion with her; and therefore, as they were admitted into fellowship with her by one solemn ceremony (*viz.* that of Baptism), it was very proper that they should be cut off from her by another (*viz.* that of judicial censure). Again, that upon their humble desire of reconciliation, they should be restored by a third (*viz.* that of Absolution). And finally, that the intercourse and commerce between her faithful members, should be maintained by her great sacrifice of praise in the Holy Eucharist.” (*Ibid.* p. 8.)

After tracing the habit of excommunication among the Jews and pointing out how readily their acquaintance with it would enable the Apostles to understand our Lord’s language relative to “binding and loosing,” he proceeds:—

“Since, therefore, it appears, that upon the grant of this power to bind and loose, to retain and remit sins, there did commence a practice of excommunicating and absolving, answerable to, though not in every circumstance exactly resembling, the Jewish custom, which did then obtain; since the very terms of binding and loosing are expressed, by one of our most learned adversaries, to be capable of such a meaning, and sometimes to have been, in fact, applied to express and signify it; what room can be left for doubting whether the Apostles did not understand our Saviour’s design in those terms, to have been adopting a Jewish custom into a Christian institution.” (*Ibid.* p. 17.)

In chapter ii., under the head of Confession, Dr. Marshall further discusses the precise question now in dispute. On the one side, he adduces the conclusive evidence afforded by Origen, Tertullian, Nectarius, and Chrysostom, that confession of sin

was in primitive times public, and that private confession had no recognition and, in the Eastern Church, no existence. On the other side, he states the arguments of those who think private confession desirable, thus :

“ Since then it is evident, that private confession was in certain cases so early used and commended ; since the original of the practice cannot be fixed upon ; since it seems to have some foundation in both Testaments, and in the practice of the Jews upon the one, and of the first Christians upon the other ; many do think, that they hence have reason to conclude it an institution designed for the general service of the Church in all ages. . . . .

“ These, however do not, I presume, design extending the necessity of private confession to the Roman lengths, of every mortal sin, in all its minutest circumstances ; they do not style it, as the Romanists do, Sacramental ; nor, as such, assert it to be a general condition of God’s favour.

“ But wherever the conscience is oppressed with heavy guilt, and knows not how otherwise to disburden ; wherever there is a want of comfort or counsel, of solemn intercession for pardon, or of restoration to the peace of the Church (which may be *ipso facto* forfeited, even where there hath been no such thing as a judicial cognisance), then they apprehend the Ministry of the Priest to be of great importance, and, as such, recommend an application to it in the way of private confession.” (Ibid. p. 40.)

It will be observed, that this confession is solely ministerial, and strictly occasional. It is far removed from “habitual confession to man.” But even this form of confession, Dr. Marshall does not for himself maintain. He states his own opinion in these words :—

“ It is not here my design to interpose with my own opinion, otherwise than to recommend to each a mutual forbearance, where it is so hard to fix on any peremptory conclusion. Since it is, on one hand, most certain, that the practice is very ancient,

and makes near approaches to the fountain; as it looks very probable on the other, that the practice which anciently obtained, had references and aspects towards an usage which is now in a manner extinguished, viz., public penance." (Ibid. pp. 41, 42.)

DR. HOLE.

MATTHEW HOLE, D.D. (1730), in his "Practical Discourses on the Liturgy," pp. 129—131, speaking of persons to whom power of Absolution was given by the words, "Whosoever sin ye remit," says: "First and chiefly to the Apostles of Christ; . . . but yet not so as to be confined to them only; for the promise to 'be with them to the end of the world' could not be to them in their own persons, who died a little after, *but to them that succeed in their office to the world's end*; to which time there will be as much need of this office, and the Divine assistance in it, as when it was first given. Neither could the *συντέλεια τοῦ αἰῶνος* (end of the world) relate only to the end of that age, but to the end and consummation of all things, when time shall be no more. Our Church tells us that God 'hath given power and commandment to His ministers to declare and pronounce this absolution and remission of sins.' He that hath a just authority of

The whole passage, whence the extracts contained in the pamphlet are taken, is very long. Instead therefore of following the quotations one by one, I give some further extracts from the same passage, which will make the author's meaning plain.

"The power of *remitting or retaining of sins*, is originally in God only, and in *Christ* as God and Man; for which reason the *Son of man* is said to have power to forgive sins.

"This power Christ exercised himself in Person, during his stay upon Earth; but being to ascend up to Heaven, he delegated it to the Apostles and their successors, in these words, "*Whosoever sins ye remit they are remitted &c.*"

"And as this Power is given to them so have they Commandment to declare and pronounce it; to be God's Heralds to proclaim Pardon to Penitents,



doing anything may either do it himself in person, or depute others to do it in his stead. . . . This power Christ exercised Himself in person during His stay upon earth; but being about to ascend up to heaven, He delegated it to His Apostles and their successors in these words, 'Whosoever sins,' &c. . . . Our Church hath three forms of Absolution in her public Liturgy, all of which are confined only to penitent and returning sinners. The first is declaratory, in this daily Absolution; . . . the second is petitionary, in the Communion Service; . . . the *third is judiciary or authoritative, in the Office for the Sick, where the Priest, upon the hearty confession, and desire of the sick person, is empowered to say, 'Our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath left,' &c.*

"This power was given for the ease of dying and despairing persons, and must therefore be used with great tenderness and discretion, and the rather, because the sentence duly pronounced on earth will be ratified in heaven, and determine their future and final state." (Quoted from Cooke, p. 55.)

to dispense his Mercy, and to loose the Bonds of Iniquity, by Absolution and Remission of Sins.

"Now this Power of pardoning is annexed to some Acts of Religion, instituted by God for this purpose, and executed only by Christ's Ministers. As 1. Baptism. . . 2. The Holy Sacrament of the Eucharist. . . 3. The Preaching of the Word. . . 4. The Prayer of the Elders over the Sick hath joined to it the *Forgiveness of Sins*, James v. 14.

"Now these Ministerial Acts for the *Remission of Sins*, are peculiar only to the *Priests Office*; neither is the Virtue or Effect of them to be imparted to any other: for to them it is said, and to no other "*whose sins ye remit, they are remitted to them;*" and therefore a Pardon pronounced by them must be of greater efficacy, than by any ordinary Person.

"But are the Ministers of Christ hereby empowered to pardon the sins of all men? And shall the offences of every one, whom they think fit to remit, be remitted unto them? No, 'tis to people *being peni-*

tent, which is after explained, and confined only to such as *truly repent and unfeignedly believe his Holy Gospel*. . . This is everywhere the Sense and Language of Holy Scripture; suitable whereunto our Church hath three Forms of Absolution in her public Liturgy, all which are confined only to penitent and returning Sinners.

“The first is Declaratory, in this daily Absolution, that is ordered to follow the Confession, wherein the Priest is empowered to *declare and pronounce to his People being penitent, the Absolution and Remission of their Sins*: which is more than a Proclamation of Pardon by other Persons, who have no such Authority to publish it.

“The second is Petitionary, in the Communion Service, where the Priest prays to God, who hath *promised Forgiveness of sins to all them, that with hearty Repentance and true Faith turn unto him, to have mercy upon them, and to pardon and deliver them from all their Sins*: Which Prayer of the Priest is of greater force, and will prevail more than any others without this Commission; as we may learn from *Acts viii. 24, and James v. 15*.

“The third is Judiciary or Authoritative in the Office for the Sick, when the Priest, upon the hearty Confession and Desire of the Sick Person, is empowered to say “Our Lord Jesus Christ, &c.”

“This Power was given for the Ease of dying and despairing Persons, and must therefore be used with great Tenderness and Discretion; and the rather, because the Sentence duly pronounced on Earth will be ratified in Heaven, and determine their future and final state.” (Hole’s Practical Discourses on the Liturgy. Vol. i., pp. 168—171. London, 1714.)

#### DR. FIDDES.

DR. FIDDES (1725): “It may be proper to confess our sins for the quiet and relief of our own minds, or for the removal of any

Fiddes states his views of the power of the keys thus,—

“The Church being a regular and visible society, the

doubt or scruple, to a person capable of directing us, and *especially to our spiritual guide*, to whom the direction of our consciences is more immediately committed. But the Scriptures have nowhere made this a duty incumbent on us. . . . However, *as Confession is under certain circumstances a duty*; as the Priest is our spiritual guide; . . . as he is invested with a power, upon our repentance, of remitting sins; and, lastly, as a particular confession of sin is one good evidence of a true repentance,—**IT SEEMS, UPON THE WHOLE MATTER, the safest and most comfortable method we can take** when we appear in the form of penitents, *to make a particular confession of our sins* to him, in order to our receiving the stronger assurances of their being in truth remitted to us. . . . **IT SEEMS HIGHLY REQUISITE, if NOT ABSOLUTELY NECESSARY, to all true penitents, where the sacerdotal Absolution may be had, that, as it is a means God has appointed to declare the forgiveness of sins, IT OUGHT TO BE HAD.** And that he, therefore, who dies without thinking himself obliged to have any regard to the sacerdotal office in this respect, or in contempt of it, dies,

nature of it, as such, supposes there ought to be an inherent power lodged in it of receiving or retaining persons who are willing to conform to the rules of it, and of excluding other vicious and corrupt members, who openly transgress these rules. . . .

“But beside the natural reason of the thing, to show that the Church, as a society, ought to be invested with such a power we have an authentic evidence, from the words of our blessed Saviour himself, that, in fact, the Church is invested with it. (He goes on to quote Matt. xviii. 15, 16,) and that the Church has a power of excluding such a person, is as evident as words can make any thing, from the declaration of our Lord immediately following, and introduced with a form of speech denoting a more solemn asseveration of what he intends. *Verily I say unto you, whatsoever ye shall bind on earth, shall be bound in heaven, and whatsoever ye shall loose on earth, shall be loosed in heaven.*” . . .

“When we say, that the Church can remit or retain sins, we mean no more,

to speak in the softest terms, in a very dangerous state; both as he refuses God's pardon in His own way of applying it, and he cannot be supposed, while he does so, to be in other respects a true penitent." He adds, this is only spoken of a sinner dying "who wilfully slights it as a vain or insignificant remedy." ("Body of Divinity," vol. i., p. 597.)

than that God, who may employ what instruments he pleases in executing his will, makes use of the sentence pronounced by the Church to that end, as a means of his retaining or remitting them. . . . Tho' the Church cannot infallibly judge concerning the spiritual state of her members, we say, nevertheless, her censures or absolutions

are authoritative, because God, when they be truly applied, ratifies and confirms them; when they are misapplied, they have no manner of operation in respect of the persons they are applied to, but leave them in the same state and condition, as to the favour of God; wherein they were before. . . .

"Where then can be the ingenuity of men, in objecting to the church the claim of a power, which she is known expressly to disclaim. The Church of *England*, particularly, in all her absolutions, supposes a condition implied of true repentance in the party absolved. And that if she err in pronouncing any judicial sentence, her error can be of no effect either in favour, or to the prejudice of the person upon whom it is pronounced. So far is she from *making* the salvation of men to depend upon her arbitrary will or decisions, that all her sentences, relating to the favour or displeasure of God, are conditional. . . .

"What is here advanced would probably meet with much less opposition, were it not for a consequence, which is pretended to follow too naturally from it; that if *Christ* have given *Peter*, and in him the whole of the priesthood, a power of loosing sinners, particularly upon the confession which they make of their sins, then every sinner is obliged, to the end he may be absolved, to confess his sins to the priest.

"Here we must distinguish between such duties, as are of

absolute and standing obligation, and such as are only to be considered, under certain circumstances, as matter of expedience. It may be proper to confess our sins for the quiet and relief of our own minds, or for the removal of any doubt or scruple, to a person capable of directing us, and especially to our spiritual guide, to whom the direction of our consciences is more immediately committed. But the Scriptures have nowhere made this a duty necessarily incumbent on us. Repentance indeed is absolutely required in order to the remission of sins, which we are to testify the sincerity of, by all the signs of a true and hearty contrition, before the priest can, or ought to absolve us. But a particular confession of our sins, with the several circumstances of them, is nowhere expressly required. It may be, in some cases, and to some persons, an act of piety, or prudence, to make such a confession. And dying penitents, under any great conflicts of mind, are particularly exhorted, and supposed by our Church to do it. But still *Christ* not having made it a necessary condition, that penitents should make confession of their secret sins, except to God only, (the case as to those sins, whereby they have injured others without making restitution, is different), there can be no absolute necessity, why they should make such confession.

“ It is further said, when we are required to make confession of our sins, we are to understand such sins, as principally respect public scandals given to the world, or private injuries done to one another. In other cases, this duty imports the acknowledgment we make of our offences, private or public, to God, but nowhere directly to the priest.

“ However, as confession, is under certain circumstances, a duty, as the priest is our proper spiritual guide; as all his ministrations are supposed, for that reason, to be attended with a special benediction from God; as he is invested with a power, upon our repentance, of remitting sins; and lastly, as a particular confession of sins is one good evidence of a true repentance, it seems, upon the whole matter, the safest and

most comfortable method we can take when we appear in the form of penitents, to make a particular confession of our sins to him in order to our receiving the stronger assurances of their being in truth remitted to us.

“ But whether this be incumbent on us, in point of strict duty, or not ; whether a particular confession of their sins be, in any case, necessary, in order to qualify sinners for the sacerdotal absolution ; or whether other general testimonies of their repentance be sufficient to this end ; it seems highly requisite, if not absolutely necessary, to all true penitents, when the sacerdotal absolution is to be had, that, as it is a means God has appointed to declare the forgiveness of sins, it ought to be had. And that he therefore who dies without thinking himself obliged to have any regard to the sacerdotal office in this respect, or in contempt of it, dies, to speak in the softest terms, in a very dangerous state ; both as he refuses God’s pardon and His own way of applying it, and he cannot be supposed, while he does so, to be in other respects a true penitent.

“ I desire it may be observed, that this is only spoken on supposition, that a dying sinner, who may have the benefit of the sacerdotal absolution, wilfully slights it as a vain, or insignificant ceremony. We do not say that a sinner, who dies without such absolution dies, for that reason, unrepentant, any more, than that he, who dies without receiving the Holy Sacrament of the Lord’s Supper, provided he do not contemptuously decline the reception of it, which, though generally requisite, yet is not absolutely necessary to salvation.” (Body of Divinity, Vol. I., Bk. iv., pp. 592-597. London, 1718.)

2. Again: “ The objections, whether from weakness or from wickedness of those to whom this power is asserted, are altogether trifling. . . . It is a groundless insinuation, and not

2. The words omitted after “ trifling” are of great importance, for they intimate that, in exact accordance with the principle laid down by him at first relative to the inherent

the less so for being designed as a popular one, that this doctrine concerning sacerdotal Absolution subjects the laity to the clergy: *it only subjects them to the institution of God.*" He refers to the command given to Naaman, and then considers the objection, that, if particular Confession of sin be maintained as highly requisite at least, if not in some cases necessary, to the pardon of sinners: "It is a very ill consequence with respect to the peace and happiness of society." He replies: "Were this objection really attended with all the inconveniences that are thought to follow from it, yet I can conceive it ought not to be admitted against the reasons of a Divine positive institution. The rule will still hold true that we should hearken unto God rather than unto men. But the inconveniences objected are merely accidental, and the danger of them less from the infamy which accompanies, and ought to accompany, the discovery of any secret revealed in Confession."

not therefore less valid; and it is authentic, because the malefactor can not be pardoned or reprieved without it; for he who has the power, in either respect, may execute it in his own way, either indirectly, or by commission to others." The two next paragraphs are directed against the Romish doctrine

right of a society to punish offences against its laws, the confession of which he speaks is a confession of sins which made a man *ipso facto* excommunicate, and the absolution he commends that official act which restores the excommunicate to the communion of the Church. He extends the same common idea of the society to the case of the individual penitent and individual priest. He is still speaking of Ecclesiastical Confession, not of Sacramental. The entire paragraph is as follows:

"The objections, whether from the weakness or wickedness of those to whom this power is asserted, are altogether trifling. If a prince pardon or reprieve a malefactor, it is not necessary that he should in person declare him pardoned or reprieved; though this may be done by some subordinate, or, as it may possibly happen, by some very corrupt minister, it is

of intention, viz. "that the intention of him who administers the sacraments is essential to the grace and efficacy of them." It is from this point of view that the subsequent language must be interpreted.

"But, to pursue the argument, what connexion is there between a supernatural or divine power, and any natural or human means? Or what have the personal qualifications of men to do with conferring any act of divine grace? Since the institutions of God only operate the effect proper to them, because they are his institutions; he can indifferently make wicked or good, fallible or infallible men, the occasional means of producing it . . .

"It is a groundless insinuation, and not the less so for being designed as a popular one, that this doctrine concerning sacerdotal absolution subjects the laity to the clergy; it only subjects them to the institution of God. If God have given authority to any of the clergy of absolving sinners, to deny them that authority, from any consequences which may be thought inconvenient from their claiming it, is at once to withdraw our subjection from God, and to reflect on his wisdom, as being the author of an inconvenient institution, and, for that reason unworthy of him. And it might, with equal reason, be pretended, the command of Elisha to Naaman, to go and wash seven times in the river Jordan, rendered that Assyrian, by necessary consequence, the prophet's vassal.

"I shall take notice but of one objection more, which appears to lie against what has been said. It may be pretended, that the doctrine, which makes particular confession of sin so highly requisite at least, if not in certain cases necessary, to the pardon of the sinner, is of any ill consequence, with respect to the peace and happiness of society: as this doctrine gives the clergy an opportunity, not only of discovering the secrets, wherein private persons, and private families, but sometimes wherein the whole community, and even whole nations, are concerned; particularly, where wicked men are employed by the direction



of those, (as it has sometimes happened) who are at the head of public affairs, in designs, which can by no means bear to be examined by the strict rules of honour and justice, or which, if they should be known, might bring an indelible infamy on the author of them.

“Were this objection really attended with all the inconveniences, that are thought to follow from it, yet, I conceive, it ought not to be admitted against the reasons of a divine positive institution. The rule will still hold true, that we should hearken unto God, rather than unto men. But the inconveniences objected to are merely accidental, and the danger of them less, from the infamy, to say nothing of any other punishment, which accompanies, and ought to accompany the discovery of any secret revealed in confession.” (Ibid. 599, 601.)

It must further be remembered that the whole of the latter passages have exclusive reference to the case of the dying. There is nothing said of confession on the part of a person in health, still less of “habitual confession” as a recognised habit of a Christian man’s life.

The passage in which he passes from the general disciplinary power of the Church to the case of the individual is as follows :

“I have hitherto principally considered the power of the keys, as proper to the church, under the notion of a society, and as she is actually invested with that power by a positive grant from Christ. But there are some who contend further, that the power of absolving sinners (for with respect to that point the main controversy lies, and which I shall therefore confine myself to) was not only given to the church in general, but to every particular priest of it, upon such evidence as sinners, in common and ordinary cases, might give of their true repentance ; especially on occasion of their confessing the sins they had been guilty of in a more distinct and particular manner. Yet they do not argue, from the nature of confession itself, that it is requisite the confessor should have a power formally of absolving a penitent ; for then, as Christians are in

general exhorted to confess their sins one to another, every Christian would have the same power; yet a special commission being given by our Lord to Peter of binding and loosing sinners, not by the acknowledgment of those against whom this argument is brought, as head of the church, but as a private pastor, and in common to the rest of the apostles; and confession of sin being a proper mark of that repentance, which is necessary towards the absolution of a sinner, it is asked, if, upon his confession, the priest has not a power of absolving such a sinner, to what end was the grant of it made to him in the person of *Peter*; or upon what other occasion can he so conveniently be supposed to exercise it?"

#### ARCHBISHOP WAKE.

Once more, ARCHBISHOP WAKE, who wrote many books against Rome (1737), says: "THE CHURCH OF ENGLAND REFUSES NO SORT OF CONFES-  
SION, either public or PRIVATE, which may be any way necessary to the quieting of men's consciences or to the exercising of that power of binding and loosing which our Saviour Christ hath left to His Church. *We exhort men, if they have any the least doubt or scruple, NAY, SOMETIMES THOUGH THEY HAVE NONE, but ESPECIALLY before they receive the Holy Sacrament, to confess their sins.* We propose to them the benefit, not only of ghostly advice how to manage their repentance, *but the great comfort of Absolution too* when

As a portion of Archbishop Wake's language is omitted, in the middle of the passage quoted in the pamphlet, it is necessary that I should give the whole.

"This short view of the practice of antiquity on this point, may be sufficient to show, that unless it were the public power of the Church to censure open and scandalous offenders, which was the key of discipline our blessed Saviour left to it; for the rest, several churches and ages had their several practices. They advised private confession upon many grounds, which Monsieur de Meaux remarks, and which we willingly

they have completed it. . . .  
 When we visit our sick we  
**NEVER FAIL TO EXHORT THEM**  
**to make a SPECIAL CONFESSION**  
**of their sins to him that ministers**  
 to them, and when they have  
 done it, the Absolution is so full  
 that the Church of Rome itself  
 could not desire to add anything  
 to it." ("Exposition of Doctrine  
 of Church of England," pp. 42,  
 43: 1688.)

allow very useful to the peni-  
 tent; but it was not for above  
 a thousand years ever looked  
 upon as absolutely necessary,  
 nor, by consequence, as sacra-  
 mental.

"The Church of England re-  
 fuses no sort of confession,  
 either public or private, which  
 may be any way necessary to  
 the quieting of men's con-  
 sciences; or to the exercising

of that power of binding and loosing, which our Saviour Christ  
 has left to his Church.

"We have our penitential canons for public offenders; we  
 exhort men, if they have any, the least doubt or scruple, nay,  
 sometimes though they have none, but especially before they  
 receive the holy sacrament, to confess their sins. We propose  
 to them the benefit not only of ghostly advice how to manage  
 their repentance, but the great comfort of absolution too, as  
 soon as they shall have completed it.

"Our form of absolution, after the manner of the Eastern  
 Church at this day, and of the Universal Church for twelve  
 hundred years, is declarative, rather than absolute. Whilst we  
 are unable to search the hearts of men, and thereby infallibly  
 to discern the sincerely contrite from those which are not, we  
 think it rashness to pronounce a definitive sentence in God's  
 name, which we cannot be sure that God will always confirm.

"When we visit our sick, we never fail to exhort them to  
 make a special confession of their sins to him that ministers to  
 them; and when they have done it, the absolution is so full,  
 that the Church of Rome itself could not desire to add any-  
 thing to it.

"For the rest, we think it an unnecessary rack to men's con-  
 sciences, to oblige them, when there is no scruple, to reveal to

their confessor every the most secret fault, even of wish or desire, which the Church of Rome exacts. Nor dare we pronounce this discipline sacramental, and necessary to salvation ; so that a contrite sinner, who has made his confession to God Almighty, shall not receive a pardon, unless he repeat it to the priest also.

“This we must beg leave with assurance to say, is directly contrary to the tradition of the Church, and to many plain and undoubted places of Holy Scripture.” (Wake’s Exposition of the Doctrine of the Ch. of Eng. Art. XIII. Vol. XII. pp. 107, 108. Gibson’s Preservative. London, 1848.)

It will be observed, that the confession of which Archbishop Wake speaks, is of two kinds, Ecclesiastical, necessary for the exercise of Church discipline, and Ministerial, for the quieting of the conscience under special difficulty. It should also be observed, that he speaks of two forms of absolution and only two. The one the declarative form of Morning and Evening Prayer, the other the special form provided for the sick. Of any form available for “habitual confession” there is not a hint.

#### WHEATLEY.

So CHARLES WHEATLEY, in his Book on Common Prayer (1742), chap xi. sec. 4: “*So that we may still, I presume, wish, very consistently with the determination of our Church that our people would apply themselves oftener than they do to their spiritual physicians, EVEN IN THE TIME OF THEIR HEALTH: since it is much to be feared, they are wounded oftener than they complain, and yet through aversion of disclosing their sore, suffer it to*

Wheatley’s words have reference to times of bodily health, and of spiritual sickness. Thus he says, “If we have neglected to communicate our doubts and scruples in our health.” No one doubts for a moment, that persons under distress of mind should come to their minister that “he may receive through the ministry of God’s Holy Word the benefit of absolu-

*gangrene*, for want of their help who should work the cure. But present ease is not the only benefit the penitent may expect from his Confessor's aid: he will be *better assisted in the regulation of his life*; and when his last conflict shall make its approach, the holy man, being *no stranger to the state of his soul*, will be better prepared to guide and conduct it through all difficulties that may oppose. However, if we have neglected to communicate our doubts and scruples in our health, we have more need of following the Apostle's advice when we are sick, viz. 'to call for the elders of the Church,' and 'to confess our faults,' in order to engage their 'fervent prayers.' For this reason, though our Church leaves it in a manner to every one's discretion, IN TIME OF HEALTH, whether they will be satisfied with a general confession to God and the Church; yet when THEY ARE SICK, she thinks it proper that they be MOVED to make a special confession of their sins to the Priest, if they feel their conscience troubled with any weighty matter." Wheatley's view, that the absolution of the sick properly refers to Church censures, imposed or deserved, cannot be thought to nullify the

tion, together with ghostly counsel and advice." This is all that Wheatley recommends. But this is very different to "Habitual Confession." It is in connection with this language of the Exhortation, that the passage adduced in the pamphlet occurs. After quoting it, he proceeds, "Here we see there is nothing arbitrarily prescribed, but every one is left to his own discretion: all that was absolutely enjoined, was only a mutual forbearance and peace; for the security of which a clause was added in the first book of King Edward, (here follows the passage quoted on pages 22, 23 of this reply.) What could have been added more judiciously than this, to temper, on the one hand, the rigours of those who were too apt at that time to insist upon confession as always absolutely necessary to salvation; and to prevent, on the other hand, a carelessness in those who being prejudiced against the abuse, were apt indiscriminately to reject the thing, as at no time needful or useful to a penitent. So that we may still, &c."

force of this passage. So conf. Where the quotation ends,  
chap. iii. sec. 4.

Wheatley proceeds to explain,  
that the real bearing of the  
question turns on the nature of the absolution, which the Church  
is authorised to give to the penitent.

“For how will he be able to satisfy their doubts, if he be not let into the particulars of their case? or with what assurance can he absolve them, or admit them to the peace and communion of the Church, before he is apprised how far they have deserved its censure and bonds. If then they are desirous of the following consolations which the Church has provided for their quiet and ease, it is fit they should first declare and make known what burden it is from which they want to be freed. How far the Church can assist or relieve them, or what consolations they are which she administers, *the Absolution* here prescribed will lead us to consider.” (Wheatley on Common Prayer. Cap. xi., Sec. iv., pp. 429, 430. Ox., 1839.)

Nothing can be more positive than the mode, in which he interprets this absolution solely of Ecclesiastical censures.

“St. John indeed tells us, that our Saviour, after his resurrection, and when he seemed to be giving his final commission, endued his apostles with a power expressed by the terms of *remitting* and *retaining sins*. But now it is the opinion of Dr. Hammond, and from him of a late author of not inferior judgment (Dr. Marshall) that this passage has much the same signification with the former, and that the terms in St. John, of *retaining* and *remitting*, are equivalent to those in St. Matthew, of *binding* and *loosing*. They only observe, that *retaining* is more emphatical than *binding*, and that it signifies properly to *keep bound*, and that the word *remit* refers to sin as a *debt*, whereas the word *loose* refers to it as a *bond* or *chain*. And if this be the sense of the words in St. John, then it is plain that this commission, as well as the former in St. Matthew, confers only a power of excommunicating and absolving; and consequently that no authority can be urged from hence, for

the applying of God's pardon to the conscience of a sinner, or for absolving him any otherwise than from the censures of the Church." (Ibid., Sec. v., pp. 431, 432.)

"It does not appear from the text in St. John, nor from any of the others that have been spoken to above, that any absolution pronounced by the Church can cleanse or do away our inward guilt, or remit the eternal penalties of sin, which are declared to be due to it by the sentence of God, any farther than by the prayers which are appointed to accompany it, and by the use of those ordinances to which it restores us, it may be, a means, in the end, of obtaining our pardon from God himself, and the forgiveness of our sin as it relates to him." (Ibid., § v. p. 434.)

#### ARCHBISHOP SECKER.

ARCHBISHOP SECKER, too, we find saying that, though the form of Absolution was seldom asked for or used, yet "whenever people think it necessary, we are ready both to hear them with the utmost secrecy." And he speaks, too, of the pronouncing them forgiven, if we think they are. (Sermon xiv., vol. vi., p. 357.)

Secker's opinions are beyond all possible mistake. They are expressed in the following extracts :

"Possibly one part of the office (the Visitation of the Sick) may seem to have ascribed too high a power to the minister, of absolving the sick from their sins; as may

lead them into great mistakes. And it is indeed more liable to be so misunderstood than the earlier forms, which were expressed in the manner of a prayer. But still all writers on the subject have agreed, that this absolution either was intended (which indeed is most probable) only to set persons free from any ecclesiastical censures, which they might have incurred: (an indulgence, granted in every age of the Church to such as were dangerously ill, in their humble request; but which is no more pretended to make a change in their eternal state, than a pardon from the king is) or, if it means also to

declare them restored to the favour of God, means it only on supposition of a sincere and thorough repentance; which being professed by them, it may be charitably presumed, though not certainly known, that it is real; and without which, I beg you all to observe, no absolution here, granted by whomsoever, or in what words soever, will do you the least good hereafter. Accordingly this form is not appointed ever to be used, but when the sick have made, by their own choice, a *special confession of some weighty matter, troubling their consciences, humbly and heartily desiring*, that it may be used for their consolation. And as this is but seldom requested, and consequently the absolution seldom pronounced over any one; so wherever it is, it may and ought to be accompanied with such explanations, as will prevent any wrong construction." (Secker's Works, vol. ii., Sermon xiv. on Isaiah xxxviii. 2, p. 222. London, 1825.)

"Another sacrament of the Church of Rome is penance; which they make to consist of particular confession to the priest of every deadly sin, particular absolution from him, and such acts of devotion, mortification, or charity, as he shall see fit or enjoin. But no one part of this being required in Scripture, much less any outward sign of it appointed, or any inward grace annexed to it; there is nothing in the whole that hath any appearance of a sacrament; but too much suspicion of a contrivance to gain an undue influence and power." (Secker's Works. Lectures on Cat. Lec. xxxiv., p. 348. London, 1825.)

#### BISHOP BERKELEY.

Again, BISHOP BERKELEY, of whom the poet Pope said, "To him was given every virtue under heaven" (Letter to Sir John James, 1753): "I had forgot to say a word of *Confession*, which you mention as an advantage in

The letter, from which the quotation is made, was written to Sir John James on hearing of his intention to join the Church of Rome. It is almost the only expression we possess of this great thinker's opinion,



the Church of Rome, which is not to be had in ours. *But it MAY BE HAD in our Communion BY ANY WHO PLEASE TO HAVE IT; and, I admit, it may be very usefully practised.*"

have supplied scanty encouragement to the advocates of sacramental confession. It is as follows :

"I had forgot to say a word of Confession, which you mention as an advantage in the Church of Rome which is not to be had in ours. But it may be had in our communion, by any who please to have it; and I admit, it may be very usefully practised. But, as it is managed in the Church of Rome, I apprehend it doth infinitely more mischief than good. Their casuistry seemeth a disgrace, not only to Christianity, but even to the light of nature." (Berkeley's Works, Vol. iv. p. 278. Ox., 1871.)

#### BISHOP WILSON.

BISHOP WILSON (1755), "whose name is a household word wherever the English language is spoken or the services of the English Church solemnized," quoting Hammond: "If we have committed sins against God, these are to be confessed to the elders of the Church, and ἀφεθήσεται αὐτῷ, he shall be absolved or absolution shall be given him, i.e., upon his confession." Again: "I know it is with difficulty that people will believe that their eternal salvation can depend upon the ministration of a man like themselves. But so most cer-

on the points in controversy between the Churches of England and Rome. The reference to confession is contained in one short paragraph, and if the whole had been given, would

It might naturally be supposed, that the passages put together in this paragraph are in some way connected with each other, and constitute a part of one common argument. This however is not the case. The first extract is taken from I know not where, for I have been unable to find it; but it certainly does not occur in the sermons, from which the other extracts have been culled. The second, third and fourth extracts occur in Sermon lxxxviii. vol. iii. of Bishop Wilson's

tainly it is; . . . and though there is no question to be made of it but God can dispense with His own ordinances when He thinks fit, and save a sincere soul without them, yet it is as sure He will not save such as despise His ordinances, or wilfully neglect to make use of them. . . . Do not therefore mistake, and think that when the minister of God prays for you, or blesses you, or administers to you the ordinances of God, that he does it as an *ordinary private person*. No, he does it as God's minister, as one authorised to bless you *with sure effect*, if it be not your own fault; who does it, as St. Paul speaks, in the person or place of Christ. . . . We have power to receive the penitent, *to absolve* and to comfort them. And the same Lord who gives us this power, gives all penitents who submit to it an assurance that *they may depend upon* what we do in His name: 'Whatsoever ye shall loose on earth, shall be loosed in heaven; whosoever sins ye remit, they are remitted unto them.'" (Works, vol. iii., pp. 475, 476.)

depends upon the *sacrament of reconciliation*, after relapse into sin, and this administered by a man like ourselves; even as much as the lives of the children of Israel, when bitten by

works. The fifth occurs in Sermon xciii. The passages are thus torn from their context, and will be found to convey a wholly different sense when restored to it, and read in connection with it. This is the case with the second passage, which stands in the pamphlet thus:

"I know it is with difficulty that people will believe that their eternal salvation can depend upon the ministration of a man like themselves. But so most certainly it is."

By stopping here it appears as if Bishop Wilson meant to say, that a man's eternal salvation depended on receiving absolution from the elders of the church upon the confession of sin, spoken of in the extract immediately preceding. But Bishop Wilson meant no such thing. For he proceeds thus, after "But so most certainly it is." "It depends, *by the appointment of Jesus Christ*, upon *baptism*, administered by a man like ourselves, but having authority from God; it

serpents, depended upon looking upon the *brazen serpent* set up by Moses,—or as much as the stopping of the plague depended upon Aaron, the priest of God, his burning of incense.

“And though there is no question to be made of it, but God can dispense with His own ordinances, when he thinks fit, and save a sincere soul without them; yet it is *as sure*, He will not save such as despise his ordinances, or wilfully neglect to make use of them.” (Wilson’s Works, vol. iii., ser. lxxxviii. pp. 418, 419. Oxf., 1847.)

Four pages then intervene, and the author is now speaking, not of the forgiveness of sin in special, still less of confession and absolution, but of the benefit of a standing ministry.

“And now, Christians, having endeavoured to make you sensible of the very great blessing of a standing ministry, I shall conclude the whole with a few useful observations. The first shall be in the words of an eminent Jew (Maimonides): “Do not say what availeth the blessing of this simple priest; for the blessing depends not on him, but upon the Most Holy God.” Do not, therefore, mistake, and think, that when the minister of God prays for you, or blesses you, or administers to you the ordinance of God, that he does it as an ORDINARY PRIVATE PERSON. No; he does it as *God’s minister*,—as one *authorised to bless you* with sure effect, if it be not your own fault. Who does it, as St. Paul speaks, IN THE PERSON, or place, OF CHRIST.

We then pass over four intervening sermons, and in Sermon XCIII. on the express subject of “Church Discipline,” we find as follows:

“We pretend not to any power to *lord it over God’s heritage*; but this is the power we have from Christ: to *rebuke*, and that with authority, as very well knowing that God will warrant us in what we do in His name, and for His honour.

“We have power to deny the sacraments to all such as render themselves unworthy of them.

“We have power to shut men that are obstinately wicked out

of the Church, that they may no longer scandalise the Christian profession; and to charge all other Christians not to accompany with them. And those that will not obey do not reject our authority, but the authority of Christ.

“Lastly: We have power to receive the penitent, to absolve, and to comfort them.

“And the same Lord, who gives us this power, gives all penitents, who submit to it, an assurance that they may depend upon what we do in His name. “Whatsoever ye loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven.” “Whosoever sins ye remit, they are remitted unto them.” (Ibid. Ser. xciii., pp. 475, 476.)

Thus it is seen that Bishop Wilson is simply speaking of the exercise of Church discipline, and not of “habitual confession.” Thus in Sermon lxxxviii. he states the ministerial authority in this respect to be this,

“Lastly: He appointed *His* ministers, not the ministers of earthly princes, nor the princes themselves, to receive into His Church and kingdom such as they should deem worthy, and to turn out the unworthy; with this assurance, “that what they should bind on earth, should be bound in heaven; and what they should loose on earth, should be loosed in heaven.” (Ibid. Ser. lxxxviii., p. 420.)

2. Again: “Absolution benefiteth by virtue of the power which Jesus Christ has given His ministers. In short, our Lord having purchased the forgiveness of sins for all mankind, He hath committed the ministry of reconciliation to us, that *having brought men to repentance, we may in Christ's name, and in the person of Christ, pronounce their pardon.* And this

2. When the whole context is examined, it will be seen that the doctrine of the Parochialia is in full harmony with that of the sermons.

“It is not water that can wash away sins, nor bread and wine; but these rightly administered, by persons truly authorised, and to persons duly qualified by faith and

will be the true way to magnify the power of the keys, which is so little understood, or so much despised, namely, to bring as many as we possibly can to repentance, that we may have more frequent occasions of *sealing a penitent's pardon by our ministry*. And now if the sick person has been so dealt with as to be truly sensible of his condition, he should then be instructed *in the nature and benefit of Confession* (at least of such sins as do trouble his conscience) and of *Absolution*." ("Parochialia," i. p. 426.)

understood or so much despised; namely, to bring as many as possibly we can to repentance, that we may have more frequent occasions of sealing penitents' pardon by our ministry.

"And now if the sick person has been so dealt with as to be truly sensible of his sinful condition, he should then be instructed in the *nature and benefit of confession* (at least of such sins as do trouble his conscience) and of absolution. . . .

"At the same therefore that we are bound to encourage penitents earnestly to desire absolution, and to exhort them to receive the Lord's Supper, as a pledge to assure them of pardon; we must seriously admonish them not to hope for any benefit either from the one or the other, but upon condition of their sincere repentance." (Ibid. Works, Vol. vii., p. 69.)

3. "And she (our Church) asserts, what is most true, that Christ's ministers have a special

repentance. And thus absolution benefiteth, by virtue of the power which Jesus Christ has given His ministers.

"In short, our Lord having purchased the forgiveness of sins for all mankind, He hath committed the ministry of reconciliation to *us*; that having brought men to repentance we may in Christ's name, and in the person of Christ, pronounce their pardon.

"And this will be the true way to magnify the power of the keys, which is so little

3. The entire paragraph is as follows:

"*Absolution*. Our Church

commission, which other believers have not, authoritatively to declare this absolution for the comfort of true penitents, and which absolution, if duly dispensed, will have a real effect from the promise of Christ." (Thursday Meditation.)

ascibeth not the power of remission of sin to any but to God only. She holds, that faith and repentance are the necessary conditions of receiving this blessing. And she asserts, what is most true, that Christ's ministers have a special commission, which other believers have not, authoritatively to declare this absolution, for the comfort of true penitents; and which absolution, if duly dispensed, will have a real effect from the promise of Christ," John xx. 23. The whole paragraph is a quotation from Bullen, and refers to the Form of public absolution provided for Morning and Evening Service. In the original it was introduced with this sentence:

"The Absolution of the Priest hath its due honour and use in our Church, although it be made no part of any sacrament of Penance. And that the Moderation of our Church may be more perceived, observe, that our Church," &c. (Puller, Moderation of the Church of England, c. xi., § 4. p. 202. London, 1870.)

#### HORNE.

Bishop Horne (1792): "And when sick or wounded by sin, it (the soul) must be *recovered and restored* by godly counsel and wholesome discipline, by *Penance and Absolution*, by the medicines of the Word and Sacraments, as duly and properly administered in the Church, by the lawfully appointed *delegates and representatives* of the Physician of souls." (Discourse xviii., on Ephes. iv. 7.)

The whole passage shows two things; (1) that the "penance and absolution" spoken of in the passage are either ministerial or ecclesiastical, but not sacramental; (2) that the means, whereby they act, are "the medicines of the word and sacraments";

"As an infant, though born complete in all its parts, yet comes to its full stature and

strength by slow and imperceptible degrees ; by being supplied with proper kinds of food for its nourishment when in health, and proper medicines for its recovery when otherwise : so it is with the regenerate spirit of a Christian ; while it is (as St. Peter calls it) a babe in Christ, it must be fed with the milk of the word ; when it is more grown in grace, with the strong meat of its salutary doctrines ; when it is infirm, it must be strengthened with the comfort of its promises ; and when sick, or wounded by sin, it must be recovered and restored by godly counsel and wholesome discipline, by penance and absolution, by the medicines of the word and sacraments as duly and properly administered in the church, by the lawfully and regularly appointed delegates and representatives of the Physician of souls." (Horne's Works, Ser. xviii., Vol. ii., p. 231. London, 1818.)

#### BISHOP TOMLINE.

BISHOP TOMLINE (1827) says that though there is "not any authority for *requiring* auricular Confession to Priests, Confession of sin to God is an indispensable duty, and *Confession to Priests may sometimes be useful, by leading to effectual repentance* ; and therefore our Church ENCOURAGES ITS members to use confidential Confession to their (*i.e.* their parish) Priest, or to any other minister of God's Holy Word. But this is very different from its being an essential part of a Sacrament instituted by Christ or His Apostles. A contrite sinner may feel relief in unburdening his mind to his spiritual

The whole passage and its context are as conclusive against sacramental confession, as it is well possible that they should be.

"It is scarcely necessary to observe that the Penance of the Church of Rome is totally different from the Gospel doctrine of repentance, which consists in an inward sorrow for past sins, and a firm resolution of future amendment. This pretended sacrament has no foundation whatever in Scripture ; we are not commanded to confess our sins to priests, nor are they empowered

pastor, and may receive advice and consolation which may soften the pangs of a wounded conscience; his scruples may be removed; his good resolutions may be confirmed." (On 25th Article.)

to dispense absolution upon their own judgment. St. James indeed says, "Confess your faults one to another;" but no mention is made here of priests; and the word "faults" seems to confine the precept to a mutual confession among Christians, of those offences by which they may have injured each other; but, certainly the necessity of auricular confession, and the power of priestly absolution, cannot be inferred from this passage. And though many of the early ecclesiastical writers earnestly recommend confession to the clergy, yet they never represent it as essential to the pardon of sin, or as having any connection with a sacrament; they only urge it as entitling a person to the prayers of the congregation; as useful for supporting the authority of wholesome discipline, and for maintaining the purity of the Christian Church. But Chrysostom condemns all secret confession to men (Hom. 312, Heb.) as being obviously liable to great abuses; and Basil (in Psalm xxxvii. v. 8), Hilary (in Psalm li), and Augustine (Confess. lib. X. c. 3) all advise confession of sins to God only. And Mr. Daillé has proved, in his elaborate work upon this subject, that private auricular sacramental confession of sin was unknown in the primitive church.

"But though there is not the slightest ground for considering Penance as a Sacrament, nor any authority for requiring auricular confession to priests; yet confession of sins to God is an indispensable duty, and confession to priests may sometimes be useful, by leading to effectual repentance, and therefore our Church encourages its members to use confidential confession to their priests, or to any other minister of God's Holy Word; but this is very different from its being an essential part of a Sacrament instituted by Christ or His apostles. A contrite sinner may feel relief in unburdening his



mind to his spiritual pastor, and may receive advice and consolation, which may soften the pangs of a wounded conscience; his scruples may be removed; his good resolutions may be confirmed; and instead of falling a victim to religious melancholy, he may be enabled to work out his salvation by a life of active virtue, and by an humble faith in the merits of the blessed Jesus, who, as he himself assures us, came into the world "to call sinners to repentance."

"The only Absolution which our Church authorises its clergy to pronounce is ministerial, or declaratory of God's pardon upon the performance of the conditions which he has been pleased to require in the Gospel; it always supposes faith and sincere repentance, of which God alone is judge. Nor was any absolution, except declaratory and precatory, known among the early Christians, as fully appears from the ancient liturgies and rituals, and from the authors who have written on these subjects; particularly from the treatise of Morinus de Pœnitentiâ, in which he has proved that the indicative form of absolution, as it is called, *ego te absolvo*, was introduced into the Church as late as the twelfth century. Previous to that period only some such prayer as this was used, *Absolutionem et remissionem tribuat tibi omnipotens Deus*. The right of requiring confession, and of absolving sins, as exercised in the Church of Rome, must necessarily be the source of an undue and dangerous influence to the clergy, and must at the same time operate as a great encouragement to vice and immorality among the people. Our Church, in imitation of the primitive Church, for certain offences imposes public penance as a part of its discipline; but it by no means considers or represents divine forgiveness as a certain consequence of that outward and involuntary act." (Tomline's Elements of Christ. Theology; on Art. xxv. Vol. ii. pp. 423, 426. London, 1807.)

## BISHOP MARSH.

BISHOP HERBERT MARSH (died 1839) writes thus in his "Comparative view of the Churches of England and of Rome." "The case is widely different where men VOLUNTARILY go to consult their minister, in order to seek relief from a troubled conscience, and relate to him at their OWN DISCRETION the offences which cause their uneasiness. Now the Confessions required by the Church of England are general Confessions to Almighty God, in which the Priest joins with the congregation; and though on certain occasions especial Confession is recommended, it always depends on the will of the person himself."

The language of Bishop Marsh, when the whole of his statement on the subject of confession is read throughout, instead of being mutilated as in the quotation, is so dead against Habitual Confession, and at the same time so precise and explicit, that it is impossible to understand how his authority could be adduced on the other side; except on the supposition that the author of the pamphlet had not read the work himself, but had borrowed the quotation from some other quarter. It would be impossible to state the view, entertained by Protestant writers, in clearer language

than it has been stated by Bishop Marsh. The passage is somewhat long, but it is necessary to give the whole:—

"When children are educated in the belief, that as soon as they come to years of discretion, they must periodically confess their sins to a priest, and confess them without reserve, they are subjected to a spiritual tyranny, which would never be borne, if the impression of its necessity were not made at an age, when habits of servitude are most easily acquired. To confess our sins to Almighty God is a duty incumbent on us all. But to be placed under the obligation of going annually to a priest, for the purpose of Confession, and to be told, that if we conceal from him even a mortal sin, we lie to the Holy Ghost, is such an insult to a rational being, that even the pre-

judices of education are hardly sufficient to account for the patience, with which the servitude is endured. The case is widely different, when men voluntarily go to consult their ministers, in order to seek relief from troubled conscience, and relate to them at *their own discretion* the offences, which cause their uneasiness. Now the Confessions *required* by the Church of England are general Confessions to Almighty God, in which the Priest joins with the congregation: and though on certain occasions special confession is recommended, it always depends on the will of the person himself. Thus in the Exhortation to attend the Sacrament, the minister, after admonishing those, who have been guilty of any "grievous crime," *to repent* of their sins before they come to that holy table, subjoins, "if there be any of you, who by this means 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." This exhortation is so far from containing a *command* to make private confession of sins, that in the first place it applies only to cases, where men are unable to quiet their *own* consciences, and in the second place offers only the *means* of relief to those, who choose to *accept* them. But the advocates of the Church of Rome avail themselves of an expression in the office for the "Visitation of the Sick," which is considered, as implying something more, than mere recommendation. In one of the Rubrics to this Office it is said, "here the sick person shall be moved to make a special confession of his sins, if he feels his conscience troubled with any weighty matter." Now the force of the word "moved," on which great stress is laid, may be best appreciated by considering the use of it, in the Rubric immediately preceding, which is, "the Minister should not omit earnestly to have such sick persons, as are of ability, to be liberal to the poor." Here the verb in question is coupled with the adverb "earnestly;" yet no one will contend that a Rubric, relating to the sick man's *property*, can imply a *com-*

*mand* on the part of a minister. No such command then is implied in the Rubric, which relates to his Confession. Nor must we forget, that this Confession is not recommended in *all* cases; it is recommended only "if he feels his conscience troubled with any weighty matter." And how is the minister to *know* this, unless the sick man of his own accord declares it. But if he *does* declare that "his conscience is troubled with some weighty matter," the Minister who prays with him, may surely advise him to specify the cause of his uneasiness, as the surest mode of quieting his conscience. Here is no spiritual tyranny, for all depends on the will of the patient. On the other hand, if a Minister of the established Church were desired to pray with a sick person, and that sick person gave no intimation of a troubled conscience, or a *want* of spiritual relief, the Minister would not be authorised by the Rubric even to *recommend* a special confession. It would be a most impertinent and unjustifiable prying into secrets, with which he is in no otherwise concerned, than as the patient himself *requires* his assistance. There is no similarity therefore whatsoever between Confession of the Church of *England*, and Confession in the Church of *Rome*. Confession of sins to a priest, being an act of *obligation* in the latter, becomes a powerful engine of spiritual tyranny. But as private Confession is a *voluntary* act in the former, provision is made for the spiritual comfort of the sinner, without diminution of his spiritual freedom." (Marsh's Comparative View, Cap. ix., pp. 195, 198. Camb., 1814.)

In a note to page 197 the Bishop adds: "Even the Absolution is not given unless 'he humbly and heartily desire it.' Of this Absolution, though it is often quoted for the purpose of showing the similarity of *our* Church to the Church of Rome, it cannot be necessary to make many observations. The case, in which alone it is to be used, is a case, which *hardly ever* occurs. It is to be used only, according to the Rubric, when the sick person has thought proper to make a '*special* con-

fession of his sins, and then heartily *desires* the absolution.' The consequence is, that very few clergymen have ever had occasion to use it, &c."

#### BISHOP SHORT.

BISHOP SHORT, Bishop of St. Asaph, in his "History on the Church of England," pp. 141, 142, says: "The evils and abuses arising from this custom has so alienated the minds of most men from it, that it was readily dispensed with; but *it has proved a misfortune to our Church that the tide of opinion has carried us too far towards* THE OPPOSITE EXTREME. The Scriptures never speak of Confession as *obligatory* in such a sense as the injunctions of the Church of Rome had ordained. Confession to a Priest is nowhere mentioned as *absolutely necessary*; but reason, as well as the Word of God, strongly points out, that to *acknowledge our faults, especially to one vested with spiritual authority over us, must be a most effectual means of restraining* us from the commission of sin. . . . In the *Church of England the Confession of particular sins is recommended* in the Exhortation to the Sacrament, and the Visitation of the Sick; but so little are we accustomed to this most SCRIPTURAL

Bishop Short is speaking of the Communion Service of 1548 A.D., and writes thus:

"In the Exhortation, read the day before the celebration of the Communion, the people are allowed to use or to abstain from auricular confession, and warned against entertaining uncharitable opinions with regard to those who differed from themselves in this particular. The evils and abuses arising from this custom had so alienated the minds of most men from it, that it was readily dispensed with; but it has proved a misfortune to our Church, that the tide of opinion has carried us too far towards the opposite extreme. The Scriptures never speak of confession as obligatory in such a sense, as the injunctions of the Church of Rome had ordained. Confession to a priest is nowhere mentioned as *absolutely necessary*; but reason, as well as the Word of God,

**DUTY**, that these recommendations are frequently unknown and generally neglected.”

strongly points out, that to acknowledge our faults, especially to one invested with spiritual authority over us, must be a most effectual means of restraining us from the commission of sin ; and whenever the congregation has been scandalised by our transgressions, surely a public avowal of our errors must prove an obvious method of making all the retribution which we can, not to God, but to offended society ; nor can we doubt that the Almighty will accept such an outward act of humiliation. This was in all probability the whole extent of the penance of the early Church ; but the power with which private confession invested the priest, together with the profit to the ecclesiastical body with which absolution was gradually accompanied, transformed that which was instituted for the glory of God, and the salvation of mankind, into an engine of papal authority. The indulgences offered in the “Hours after the Use of Sarun,” the book of devotion then generally adopted in England, would move at once our derision and pity for an age which can admit such absurdities, did not the proffered pardon now hanging in foreign Roman catholic churches convince us, that the spiritual safety of the people can never be ensured by any state of civilisation, whenever the holy scriptures are practically not the standard by which men measure their duties, and the ground-work on which they found their reliance.

“In the Church of England the confession of particular sins is recommended in the Exhortation to the Sacrament, and the Visitation of the Sick ; but so little are we accustomed to this most scriptural duty, that these recommendations are frequently unknown and generally neglected, while scarcely a vestige remains of ecclesiastical law for the restraint of vice ; and though the punishment of many offences has been wisely transferred to the courts of common law, yet the laxity which prevails with regard to numerous breaches of the law of God

may be well esteemed a deficiency in our national duty." (Short's Hist. of the Ch. of Eng. pp. 254, 256, Vol. v. Oxf. 1832.)

The last words show, that the Confession Bishop Short desired to see restored, was a matter of ecclesiastical discipline.

#### RICHARD BAXTER.

Something has been said about RICHARD BAXTER. In vol. i. (fol. ed. 1707, p. 874), under "Directions for obtaining Pardon from God," we find "Direction 8. Despise not the Sacramental delivery of pardon by the Ministers of CHRIST, for this belongeth to the investiture and possession of the benefit; nor yet the Spiritual consolation of a skilful, faithful Pastor; nor publick absolution upon publick repentance; if you should full under the need of such a remedy." Again (in vol. ii. p. 919, &c.), under "Directions for getting and keeping Scriptural Peace and Comfort:" Direction 31, § 5: "Next consider in what manner you must open your grief, if you would have cure. 1. Do it as truly as you can. Make the matter neither better nor worse than it is. Specially take heed of dealing like Ananias, pretending to open all (as he did to give all) when you do but open some common infirmities, and hide all the most disgraceful distempers of your

What did Baxter mean by the phrase, "Sacramental delivery of pardon?" The question is answered without much trouble, for he states his meaning in the same chapter to which reference is made, and nothing can be conceived more unlike Sacramental Confession and Absolution. He states his views by way of question and answer.

● "Quest. 5. Can any man pardon sins against God? and how far?"

Ans. Pardon is the *remitting of a punishment*. So far as *Man* is to *punish* sinners against God, so far they may *pardon*, that is, remit the punishment. (Whether they do well in so doing? is another question.) Magistrates are to execute corporal penalties upon subjects for many sins against God: and they may pardon accordingly. The Pastors of the Church who are its

heart and sins of your life. The vomit of Confession must work to the bottom, and fetch up that hidden sin, which is it that continueth your calamity. Read Mr. T. Hooker in his 'Soul's Preparation' concerning this Confession, who shows you the danger of not going to the bottom." He has already given reason why we should go to the Pastors rather than private men: "It is their Office to be Guides of CHRIST'S disciples under Him, and to be spiritual Physicians for the curing of souls." And a little later adds: "But I know some will say, 'That it is near to Popish Auricular Confession, which I here persuade Christians to, and it is to bring Christians under the tyranny of the Priests again, and make them acquainted with all men's secrets, and Masters of their Consciences. Answer 1. To the last, I say, to the railing Devil of this Age, no more but, 'The Lord rebuke thee.' If any Minister hath wicked ends, let the God of Heaven convert him, or root him out of His Church, and cast him among the weeds and briars. But is it not the known voice of sensuality and hell to cast reproaches upon the Way and Ordinances of God? Who knoweth

Guides as to public Church communion, may remove offenders from the said Communion, and they may absolve them when they are penitent, and they may (rightfully or wrongfully) remit the penalty which they may inflict. 2. The Pastors of the Church may as God's Officers, declare the conditional general pardon, which is contained in the Covenant of Grace; and that with particular application to the sinner, for the comforting of his mind; q. d. (Having examined your repentance, I declare unto you as the Minister of Christ, that if it be as you express it, without dissembling or mistake, your repentance is sincere, and your sin is pardoned.) 3. In the same terms a Pastor may as the Minister or Messenger of Christ, deliver this same conditional pardon contained in the Covenant of Grace, as sealed by the Sacraments of Baptism and the Lord's Supper; which is an act of investiture; q. d. (I do as the Minister of Christ, hereby seal and deliver to you in his name, the pardon of all your sins



not that it is the very Office of the Ministry to be Teachers and Guides to men in matters of salvation, and Overseers of them? Should not the Shepherd know his sheep, and their strayings and diseases? How else shall he cure them? Should not the Physician hear the patient open all his disease—yea, study to discover to the utmost everything he knows, and all little enough to the cure? A disease unknown is unlike to be cured; and a disease well known is half cured. Mr. Thos. Hooker saith truly, 'It is with many people as with some over-modest patients, who having a disease in some secret place they will not for shame reveal it to the Physician till it be past cure, and then they must lose their lives by their modesty.' So do many by their secret and more disgraceful sins. Not that every man is *bound* to open all his sins to his Pastor. . . I am confident many a thousand souls do long strive against Anger, Lust, Flesh-pleasing, Worldliness, and trouble of Conscience to little purpose, who if they would but have taken God's way, and sought out for help, and opened all their case to their Minister, they might have been delivered in a good measure

through his blood; supposing your professed faith and repentance be sincere; otherwise it is void and of no such effect.) But this is, 1. But a conditional pardon, though with particular application. 2. And it is but a Ministerial act of Delivery or Investiture, and not the act of the Donor by himself; nor the gift of the first Title: so that it is no whit proper to say, that the *Minister pardoneth sin*; but that the *Minister bringeth and delivereth to you the pardon*, and sealeth it in his Master's name; or that Christ doth pardon you, and send it for you by his Minister. As it is utterly improper to say, that the King's Messenger pardoneth a traitor, because he bringeth him a pardon from the King. And though (if we agree of this sense) the controversy remaining will be but *de nomine*, yet it is not of small moment; when abused words do tend to abuse the People's understandings; he that saith, *I forgive your sins*; doth teach the people to take him for a God, whatever he meaneth in himself; and blasphemous

long ago. And as for Popish Confession I detest it: we would not persuade men that there is a NECESSITY of confessing every sin to a Minister before it can be pardoned. Nor do it in a perplexed FORMALITY only at one time of the year. . . . Lastly, Remember this, that it is not enough that you once open your case to your Pastor, but do it as often as necessity urgeth you to call for his advice, though not on every light occasion. Live in such a dependence on the advice and guidance of your Pastor (under CHRIST) for your soul, as you do on the advice of the Physician for your body."

Lastly, conf. vol. iv. p. 383, where he quotes Dr. H. Hammond on the Power of the Keys, declaring that to take narrow-mouth bottles singly in the hand and to pour water into each, is the surer way of filling them, than the setting them altogether (as is done in Preaching) and throwing never so many bottles of water on them.

The Minister is but the Physician to direct you what course to take for the cure." (Ibid. Vol. ii. p. 919.)

After "open all his sins to his pastor" follow the words, omitted in the quotation, "but those that cannot well be otherwise cured, he must; either if the sense of the guilt cannot be removed, and true assurance of pardon obtained: or else, if

words will not be sufficiently excused, by saying that you have not a blasphemous sense. So that a Pastor may, 1. *Declare Christ's pardon.* 2. And seal and deliver it conditionally in Christ's name. But he cannot pardon the internal punishments in this life, nor the eternal punishments of the next. But the punishments of Excommunication he may pardon, who must execute them." (Baxter's Pract. Works, Vol. i. c. xxxiii. pp. 873, 874. London, 1707.)

2. After the words, "not going to the bottom" follows this caution:

"You must not go to a Minister to be cured merely by good words, as Wizards do by charms; and so think that all is well when he hath spoken comfortably to you: But you must go for directions for your own practice, that so the cure may be done by leisure when you come home. . . .

Power against the sin be not otherwise obtained, but that it still prevaieth. In both these cases we must go to those that God hath made our Directors and Guides, I am confident." (Ibid.)

After the words "only at one time of the year," come the following :

"Nor in order to Popish Pardons or Satisfactions ; but we would have Men go for Physic for their souls, as they do for their bodies, when they feel that they have need. And let me advise all Christian Congregations to practice this excellent Duty more. See that you knock oftener at your Pastor's Door, and ask his advice in all your pressing necessities ; do not let him sit quiet in his study for you ; make him know by experience, that the tenth part of a Minister's labour is not in the pulpit." (Ibid.)

The last words of the quotation form the conclusion of the chapter.

## PART III.

I have now followed the quotations of the Pamphlet from the beginning to the end, with the sole exception of the four last upon the list, Hamilton, Keble, Moberly, and Wordsworth. All of these belong to our own times, and have actively shared in the great controversy, of which the question of Confession forms a part. While I recognise them as disputants, I decline to receive them as witnesses, and therefore make no attempt to analyse their opinions. With all the other authorities adduced in the pamphlet I have dealt, one by one, and have omitted nothing worthy of attention. In every case that was at all relevant to the question at issue, I have placed the author, as represented in the pamphlet, in contrast with the author as represented by himself. I have furnished in each case, such ample references, as will enable any critic who is disposed to submit my quotations to the same test, to which I have submitted the quotations of the pamphlet, to accomplish his task without the labour, which imperfect and inaccurate references have thrown upon myself. I do not venture to say, that I have fallen into no errors, or that no inaccuracy may have crept into the copy; since amid the continuous labour of transcription there is always a risk of inadvertence; but I believe the errors, if any, will be found to be few and slight, and I have honestly endeavoured to guard against their occurrence.

What then is the conclusion, which I claimed to have established. It is twofold. 1. As regards the particular quotations made in this pamphlet. 2. As regards the doctrine of the Church of England on the subject of Confession.

I. As to the pamphlet. Its quotations must not be considered in the aggregate, but singly; for if each quotation be singly untrustworthy, no accumulation of numbers can correct

the defect. Each one must be examined by itself, and be placed in contrast with the proposition it is adduced to support. The proposition by which I test them is this "the Church of England teaches habitual Confession to man in order that through Absolution sins may be blotted out of God's Book." I assert that there is not one solitary passage, adduced in the entire pamphlet, which, when corrected and supplemented, so as to express the real meaning of the author, gives any authority to such a proposition. In other words, there is not a single quotation in the Pamphlet which is trustworthy.

It is impossible to argue this in detail, and I must satisfy myself with having furnished the materials by which the assertion may be tested, and with rapidly summarising and classifying the results. Some one of the defects described in the first part of this publication, lies against every one of the quotations, and in some cases several defects are to be found in the quotations from a single author.

In seventeen instances quotations are palpably irrelevant, viz., Hooker, Reynolds, Aylmer, Farrar, Earl of Derby, Lady Capel, Lady Anderson, Sanderson, Cosin in the case of Mrs. Holmes, Grenville, Evelyn, Comber, fourteen Bishops, Dods-well, Ken, Bull, Wilson. All these cases refer, by affirmation or example, to the Visitation of the Sick, or to special anxiety of mind, and bear this reference on their very face. On this subject there is no dispute whatever among us. We may differ widely from our controversial opponents, as to the meaning and effect of the Form of Absolution authorised in the Office; but none of us wish to deny, that under the conditions specified in the Rubrics, the Church of England directs this Absolution to be given. To multiply therefore case after case, where this absolution has been sought and had, and where directions have been given in regard to it, is not only useless, but to a large class of readers is likely to prove exceedingly misleading. For the greater part of these instances are accumulated in the middle of the pamphlet. The first case, that

of Archdeacon Aylmer, is twenty-sixth on the list. All the previous quotations are relevant, and had they been accurate would have gone far to support the proposition of the Pamphlet. Without some critical examination they might be readily received by the reader. Now the number of persons who would be likely to go through the whole list of authorities seriatim, and examine them separately, is exceedingly small. In the great majority of cases a reader having examined a few, and found them apparently conclusive, would take the rest for granted. They would therefore tend to increase the bulk and apparent importance of the pamphlet. Whether the author was conscious of it, or not, of which I have not the slightest means of forming an opinion, this would be their indisputable effect—they would increase the apparent bulk of the evidence, and swell the list of authorities; though in reality they do not add a feather's weight to their real force and validity.

There are twenty-one instances where the quotations are insufficient. I mean that, although each particular passage is fairly given, yet, being given by itself, it has the appearance of supporting a view of Confession which the author quoted did not really entertain, and which a larger reference to his writings would have disproved. For instance the quotations from Bishop Andrewes appear on the face of them to support Sacramental Confession; but a fuller reference proves them to support only Ecclesiastical Confession;—the exercise that is, of Church discipline. The extracts from Dr. Fiddes appear to support Habitual Confession, whereas it is found in reality that he is speaking only of the sick. Thus the extracts from Tomline, Secker, and Baxter have the appearance of advocating a view of Confession, which a fuller examination of the very works whence the extracts are made, proves that they specifically and indignantly rejected. This charge of insufficiency lies against quotations from Melancthon, Justus Jonas, Latimer, Turner, Jewell, the second book of Homilies, Hooker, Reynolds, Hakewell, Andrewes, Donne, Baily, the Visitation Articles,

Hammond, Heylin, Laud, Bramhall, Irish Canons, Ussher, Herbert, Taylor, Pierce, Thorndike, Nicholson, Cosin, the same on Adams Sermon, Barrow, Sparrow, Puller, Beveridge, Ken, Sharpe, Nicholls, Hickes, Marshall, Hole, Fiddes, Wheatley, Secker, Horne, and Short.

There are twenty-two cases of direct omission ; I mean omission of words or sentences immediately before the extract quoted, or immediately after it, or in the middle of it, where the omission affects the whole meaning of the passage. For instance Crackenthorpe is quoted thus, " Private Confession and Absolution our Church both approves and teaches. We have not impiously abolished them, as you calumniously assert." Whereas his words really are " Private Confession, by which a man may throw the burden of the distress of his mind on account of sins done by himself alone, or in company with others ; into the breast, and if you like, into the ear of a Presbyter, and also Absolution on a serious and not a feigned repentance for his sin through the keys of the Church entrusted to all presbyters, our Church both approves and inculcates. We have abolished neither private Confession nor Absolution, nor have we abolished them impiously as you calumniously assert. It is that antichristian Confession of sins into the ear of a Priest, which is nothing else than a snare of consciences, an abyss of frauds and a deception of the unlearned ; this and nothing else we have abolished, and deservedly condemn it to the pit of Hell." Again Becon is quoted as asking " How say you, Is anything to be condemned in Auricular Confession thus used ?" Whereas the sentence runs thus, " Verily, a preaching of the free deliverance from all our sins through Christ's blood. How say you, is here anything to be condemned in Auricular Confession thus used ?" Omissions of this kind occur in quotations from Luther, Hooker, Calvin, Latimer, Farrer, Becon, King James 1st., Crackenthorpe, Mede, Chillingworth, Morton, Taylor, Pierce, Barrow, Pearson, Patrick, Sharpe, Nicholls, Wake, Berkeley, Marsh, and Baxter.

There are eleven instances where passages are falsely put together,—separated from each other, where they should have been united ; or united, where they should have been separated ; or where the order and mutual connection have been reversed. The statements of instances of this kind would occupy more space than I can give : but they occur in quotations from Jewell, the Homilies, Becon, Crackanthorpe, Donne, Downname, Montague, Chillingworth, Taylor, Comber, and Wilson.

Lastly, there are ten instances where an arbitrary sense has been put upon terms, which gives a meaning to the passages quoted, which I believe they were not intended to bear ; or where conclusions have been drawn, which the premises do not justify. For instance, “ the Ministry of God’s holy Word ” in the Exhortation to the Communion is assumed to mean the sentence of absolution : the word penance in Parker’s Articles is assumed to mean an outward act : the phrase “ learned man ” in the quotation from Latimer is asserted to be equivalent to the words “ Priest ” and “ Minister.” Lastly, as an instance of false argument, the fact that certain members of the Church of England received absolution on their death beds in accordance with the Office for the Visitation of the Sick is adduced in proof, that the Church teaches “ habitual confession to man ” on the part of those who are in health.

If these charges are supported by the evidence I have adduced, the author of the Pamphlet must be held to have utterly failed to prove the proposition he maintains. For these writers, whose works have been examined are his own chosen authorities, the most partial and favourable witnesses, whom an industrious ingenuity can discover in the long and illustrious list of our English Divines. If these do not prove habitual confession, as a means for the forgiveness of sin through absolution, it may be confidently concluded, our opponents themselves being the witnesses, that no great writers of the Church of England can be adduced to prove it. I have shown that they do not prove it, and the controversy, therefore, may thus far be taken to be



closed. *Cedit quæstio.* The assertion, that the Church of England teaches habitual confession, is but a theory in the clouds, with no solid foothold in the real facts of her controversial history. I not only claim this conclusion ; but I claim more. The witnesses adduced not only do not prove habitual confession to man to be the teaching of the Church of England, but they directly disprove it. They show that the Church of England recognises in her system no confession, save that which is either ministerial or ecclesiastical, and utterly rejects all forms of Sacramental Confession as unscriptural, and dangerous to souls.

Ministerial confession is that which is made for counsel, instruction, and the personal application of the several promises of the Word of God to the individual conscience of the penitent. This confession is recognised universally, and its efficacy highly commended by the most Protestant and Evangelical of our Divines. The favourite, and most frequent of all their illustrations, is drawn from the analogy between bodily and spiritual sickness. The minister fulfils the same office towards the one, that the physician fulfils towards the other. Let the office of the physician be considered. He has no power in himself, or by any direct action of his own to act upon sickness, or either to alleviate or to cure it. The belief in charms, and spoken incantations, and symbolical acts, as remedies for bodily disease, belongs to the exploded superstitions of the past, and only survives among the most barbarous of peoples. The intelligent use of means, adapted to meet the peculiarities of each disease, has taken its place. The physician's first duty, and that which tests most highly his professional knowledge and skill, is the diagnosis of the disease with which he has to deal. His trained intellect unravels the complicated symptoms which perplex the patient himself, and lays its finger on the central cause of the mischief. When he has ascertained this, his course is clear and his office almost discharged. He prescribes for the use of his patient the ap-

appropriate remedies with which a kindly Providence has stored the world, and which tend to neutralise the special poison of the disease. But with the inherent virtue of the medicines he has nothing whatever to do ; he can not endow a single drug with any quality which the great Creator has not given it ; nor can he be sure that, in any particular case, his medicines will be effectual. Their remedial virtue is above him and beyond him, and is wholly of God ; and their action in particular cases is dependent on causes which lie within the control of God alone, and are subject to no other will than His. The physician can do much, but his work is from end to end secondary and instrumental. So it is also with the Physician of Souls. He must first ascertain the soul's malady ; what is the special mistake ; in what misconception does it take its rise ; what is the special temptation, and by what special motives and means can the penitent be enabled to resist it ; what is the special sin, and in what relation has it placed the soul towards the promises of the grace of God. When the exact nature of the disease is recognised, then he has to furnish out of the medicinal treasury of the Word of God the appropriate lesson, the special warning or exhortation, the particular promise or threatening which meets the case. And not only does his experience in dealing with souls qualify him for such a work, but his office enables him to discharge it with effect. On its human side it is a matter of common experience, that persons will often pour into the ear of their pastors secrets which they would not divulge to their dearest earthly friends ; and on its side towards God, why should we hesitate to believe that God honours the instrumentality He has been pleased to institute, and blesses both the preaching and the prayers of the "men of God." in whom, as in earthen vessels, it has pleased Him to place the excellency of the gift.

But while Ministerial Confession is held by all our writers, Ecclesiastical Confession is recognized among them likewise, and is especially prominent among the divines known as Anglo-

Catholic. They press it with great earnestness, and argue elaborately that it is a thing of divine authority. It is possible that to some persons their language may seem exaggerated, and their earnestness unnecessary, if what they claim be no more than the exercise of Church discipline. I should be among the last to accept, without reserve and considerable qualification, all that they have written upon this subject. And yet I conceive, that the appearance of exaggeration is largely due to a want of acquaintance with the circumstances under which they wrote, and the tendencies against which they had to plead. It was inevitable, that in the reaction from Popish tyranny minds should be in danger of running into licence, and of forgetting those great principles on which God has constituted all human society, whether it be civil or religious, secular or spiritual, the State or the Church. The whole of Hooker's great work on Ecclesiastical Polity is one continuous evidence of the dangerous elements that were at work, in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, towards the dissolution of all order. The Anabaptist madness was strong. In Germany Munzer, under the belief that Christ was about to assume the government of the world, declared against all laws, governments, and magistrates. The more moderate of his followers held, that the Church of Christ was exempt from all sin; that all things ought to be in common among the faithful; that all tithes and tribute ought to be abolished; that the Church of God stood in no need of ministers or pastors; and that in the kingdom of Christ civil magistrates were absolutely useless. The strength and prevalence of these opinions in our own country is indicated by the fact, that the Church of England has directed one of her Articles (the XXXVIIIth) specially against them. They occupied much of the attention of the Anglo-Catholic divines, and gave a distinct colour to their writings. They had to maintain, indeed, a double front, one against the Church of Rome, and one against Protestant sectaries. In the face of these tendencies, it was no unnecessary

thing to defend the constitution of the Church as a society, and her right, by the express authority of her Master, to exercise discipline in the excommunication of offenders, and the absolution of penitents. One or two of these writers, such as Andrewes and Fiddes, appear disposed to push, in a vague sort of way, their personal views of Church authority yet higher; but they correct their own speculative tendencies by the clear assertion of the limits, within which the Church of England confines her teaching on this subject. Thus Fiddes, in the extract given on page 190 of this publication, distinctly says:—“dying penitents, under any great conflicts of mind, are particularly exhorted, and supposed by our Church” to make particular confession of sins.

The importance of the view for which they argued, may be further seen in the enormous difference which would be made in the existing condition of the Church of England, if ecclesiastical discipline, with its two keys of excommunication and absolution, were in active exercise among us. It was therefore for no small thing that they pleaded: no vague unreality which they claimed. It was the exercise of a substantial authority, which could only exist in the Church by the express institution of her Master. The divines, quoted in this volume, believed this power to be conferred upon the Church by the words of Christ in Matt. xviii. 18, and John xx. 23. They were accustomed to support their interpretation of these passages by the instances recorded in the New Testament, of the exercise of Church discipline, such as 1 Cor. v. 4: and the fact, that the Apostles exercised the power of the keys in this mode, is as certain, as it is certain that there is not a single passage to be found in the whole New Testament, indicative of their ever having exercised it in any other mode. Whether the restoration of such a discipline in the Church of England is conceivably possible; or whether, if possible, it is desirable, are questions which it is not necessary for me to discuss. It is enough for me, that the great writers of the past have almost

unanimously maintained Ministerial Confession and Ecclesiastical Confession, but no other Confession. Not a single passage can be found in their writings which maintains habitual confession to man in order that sins, through absolution, may be blotted out of God's book. Such a confession "would be Sacramental Confession;" and Sacramental Confession they have unanimously rejected and condemned.

One further question must be briefly considered. Great stress is laid in the pamphlet, by the use of capitals and italics, on the distinction between Compulsory and Voluntary Confession. It is represented, that the difference between the Church of England and the Church of Rome on the subject of confession turns wholly on this one point, that in the Church of England confession is voluntary, in the Church of Rome compulsory. Enough has been already said to show, that much more than this was, and is, involved in the controversy; for it includes the whole question, as to the absolving power of the Church. But I fully admit that this particular difference is of great importance, and was constantly debated between the apologists of the two Churches. The Church of England rejects a compulsory confession, but admits a voluntary one. The Church of England therefore admits, say the advocates of the Confessional among ourselves, the Confession for which we plead; for we do not compel our people to confess; we only advise. Our confession is not therefore compulsory, but voluntary, and is consequently allowed by our Church. I believe that a great fallacy lurks in this statement, and that a little consideration will suffice to dispel it.

For what was meant by a compulsory confession, and what by a voluntary one? There are two modes of compulsion, the one external, exercised by force of power upon the outward actions; the other internal, exercised by force of motive on the conscience and the reason: the one belongs to the coercive discipline of the Church; the other to its doctrine. It is true, that in all justice and right the two should ever be combined. An

external compulsion is unjustifiable, when there exists no spiritual necessity for the thing, to which men are compelled. It would be utterly monstrous for a Church to use its coercive power to compel its members to confession, if confession were not in the teaching of the Church in some way necessary to salvation. The two should stand or fall together. The positive regulation is only justified by the spiritual necessity, and the spiritual necessity, if a Church be faithful to her own belief, must find expression in the positive regulation. The two are connected as antecedent and consequent, premise and conclusion: and of the two the spiritual necessity, which gives rise to the positive regulation, must be incomparably the most important.

Now, in which of these two senses did the writers of the past use the words "compulsory" and "voluntary." I reply that they used them in both. To suppose that they objected only to the outward coercion, and not to the principle which justified it, would be to resolve the English Reformation into a matter of Church order, and not of vital doctrine. Such an explanation is wholly opposed to the facts of the case. The extracts, contained in these pages, are enough to show, that it was not against the external regulation that they protested: but against the doctrine which produced it—against the torture of the conscience involved in the system of the Confessional; the substitution of an earthly confessor in the place of the soul's own access to God: and the subjection of the spiritual freedom of the soul to the tyranny of a Confessor. In short, their objections were not disciplinary, but doctrinal; not against the outward regulation, but against the supposed spiritual necessity out of which it sprung.

Now if we turn to our modern English sacerdotalists, I readily admit, that they do not make Confession compulsory on their people by any positive Church regulation. I do not see how they could do so, if they wished it. In the absence of any public authorisation from their Church, the exercise of such a

power on the part of single Clergymen, or an association of Clergymen, would be ridiculous; and, could it be made, would be swept away by a storm of national indignation. As a matter of positive regulation, habitual confession to man is not compulsory in the system of sacerdotalism; but as a matter of doctrine and spiritual necessity, it is compulsory, and it is a gross fallacy to deny it.

For Confession, according to its teaching, is a preliminary condition to priestly absolution; and priestly absolution is the means, whereby sins are blotted out of God's book. Consistently with the language of the Declaration of Dec. 6, 1573, the precious blood of Christ is the procuring cause of forgiveness of sin after baptism, but "the inward spiritual grace" is conferred "through absolution;" "the priest" through the words of absolution "conveys the absolving grace." This Confession becomes, in the ordinary course of Divine grace, a condition prevenient to the forgiveness of sins. Confession and absolution are placed in exactly the same relation to the soul, as the Church places the sacraments of Baptism and of the Lord's Supper. They are "generally necessary to salvation." No doubt, in exceptional cases, of which God alone can judge, it will be admitted that persons may be saved without auricular confession and priestly absolution, just as under like circumstances, they may be saved without Baptism and the Lord's Supper. But in ordinary circumstances these means are necessary, when they can be had. The general circumstances of an English congregation are ordinary, not extraordinary. The teaching they receive from English sacerdotalists practically therefore amounts to this, that they must confess, and be absolved by the priest before they can be saved. Let us conceive such a teaching pressed upon the consciences of susceptible women, and of womanly men, with all the authority of a ministry, clothed with those awful prerogatives of the Son of God, with which modern Sacerdotalism, I believe blasphemously, invests itself, and Confession becomes com-

pulsory—as compulsory as the terrors of an alarmed conscience, and the fears of the wrath of God, can make it. To assert that Confession is not compulsory, with those prostrate and quivering consciences to witness against the assertion, is nothing less than a delusion, and a mockery.

It was exactly against such a system, that the protest of the Church of England was made at the time of the Reformation, and with that singular moderation, which under the gracious Providence of God, moved the illustrious men by whom the Reformation was conducted, she did not in the holy passion of her indignation fling away, in indiscriminate haste, the false and the true together. The false Confession she flung absolutely away; but the true, which consists of the proper use of the ministerial office, and of the discipline of the Church, she carefully and jealously retained. In asserting this, I am not relying on my own personal convictions alone; for this is the assertion of the Convocation of Canterbury in the Report presented to its two Houses, and adopted by them.

It would require a great weight of evidence to overthrow so authoritative a statement of the mind of the Church; but, unless I am mistaken, I have shown that no evidence whatever, not a shadow of evidence, can be brought to impugn it.

In assuming this position, the Reformed Church of England has identified herself with all true Catholic antiquity. In the absence of any more recent work of anything like the same character and completeness I refer for the evidences of this fact to Daille's learned work, "*De sacramentali sive auriculari Latinorum confessione disputatio.*" Gen. 1661. He adduces thirty cogent arguments, to prove that auricular confession was unknown till the thirteenth century, a conclusion which the Romish author, Morinus, supports, for he has proved that the judicial form of absolution was unknown in the Church for twelve hundred years after Christ. Bingham in his learned work on *Christian Antiquities* broadly asserts that "the doctrine



of the necessity of auricular confession was wholly unknown to the ancient Church." (Vol. vi. p. 467. Lond., 1840). But he adds that Private Confession was allowed and encouraged in some cases, as 1. For lesser sins, men were advised to confess mutually to one another, to have their prayers and assistance. 2. In case of injuries done to private persons, men were obliged to confess, and ask "pardon of the injured party." 3. When they were under any troubles of conscience, they were advised to make private Confession to a minister, to have his counsel and direction. 4. To take his advice also, whether it was proper to do public Penance for private offences. 5. When there was any danger of death arising from the Laws of the State against certain offences. 6. Private Confession required a case of private admonition for offences. Lord King in his "Enquiry into the Constitution, &c. of the Primitive Church" gives the same account of the practice of the Early Church. In answer to the question "What the primitive censures were?" he says, "As the Church, so her arms were spiritual; her thunderbolts consisted in suspensions and excommunications, in ejecting and throwing out of the Church her scandalous and rotten members, not permitting a re-induction of them till by visible signs of repentance they had satisfied for their crimes and villainies." "For the greater demonstration of their sorrow and humility they were to make a public confession of their sin, styled by them *exomologesis*." . . . "As soon as confession was over then followed the formal absolution, which was this: the person to be absolved kneeled down before the bishop and the clergy, who put their hands upon his head and blessed him; by which external ceremonial the penitent was declaratively and formally admitted to the Church's peace." (Cap. vii. p. 93, London, 1839.) Thus the Church of England is in exact accord with Catholic antiquity. Habitual Confession to man with a view to the blotting out of sins through priestly absolution is no more than a modern conception, bred of "the stinking puddles of tradition" and nursed into life amid the su-

perstitutions of a period, when nothing was free save the anathema of the priest, and the sword of the Inquisitor."

And when we trace the matter one step further backward to the truest of all antiquity, and the purest of all Catholicity, the antiquity and Catholicity of the Word of God we have yet higher cause to be thankful for the pure faith of our own Church. Attempts have been made, by the diligent use of capitals, to find support for Auricular Confession from the divinely given institutions of the Mosaic law. But nothing can be more dissimilar than Confession as provided in the law of Moses, and Confession as inculcated in the system of modern Sacerdotalism. The New Testament is absolutely silent on Confession to man, save in the one memorable passage in the fifth chapter of St. James. Neither in the Acts of the Apostles, nor in the inspired Epistles is a solitary trace to be discovered of such an ordinance; nor is the silence of Scripture all, significant though it is; for the whole scheme of its doctrinal teaching is conclusive against the modern innovation. In the divine scheme of doctrine as revealed in the Word, and as gathered from the Word and formally embodied in the articles of the Church of England, it is impossible to find a place either for Habitual Confession to man, or for priestly absolution. The sufficiency of the atoning work of the Son of God; the sovereign operations of God the Holy Ghost as "the bond of our conjunction with Christ;" the electing purposes of the Eternal Father, and all the doctrines gathered round these great centres,—justification by faith alone, sanctification by the Spirit, the eternal high Priesthood and Headship of the Lord Jesus, and the soul's personal contact with God—all exclude it. The doctrines of Auricular Confession and Priestly Absolution do not stand alone; they are a disturbing element which dislocates, disintegrates, and perverts the whole Divine scheme of God's saving love for man.

THE END.



7





.

.

.

.

.

.



