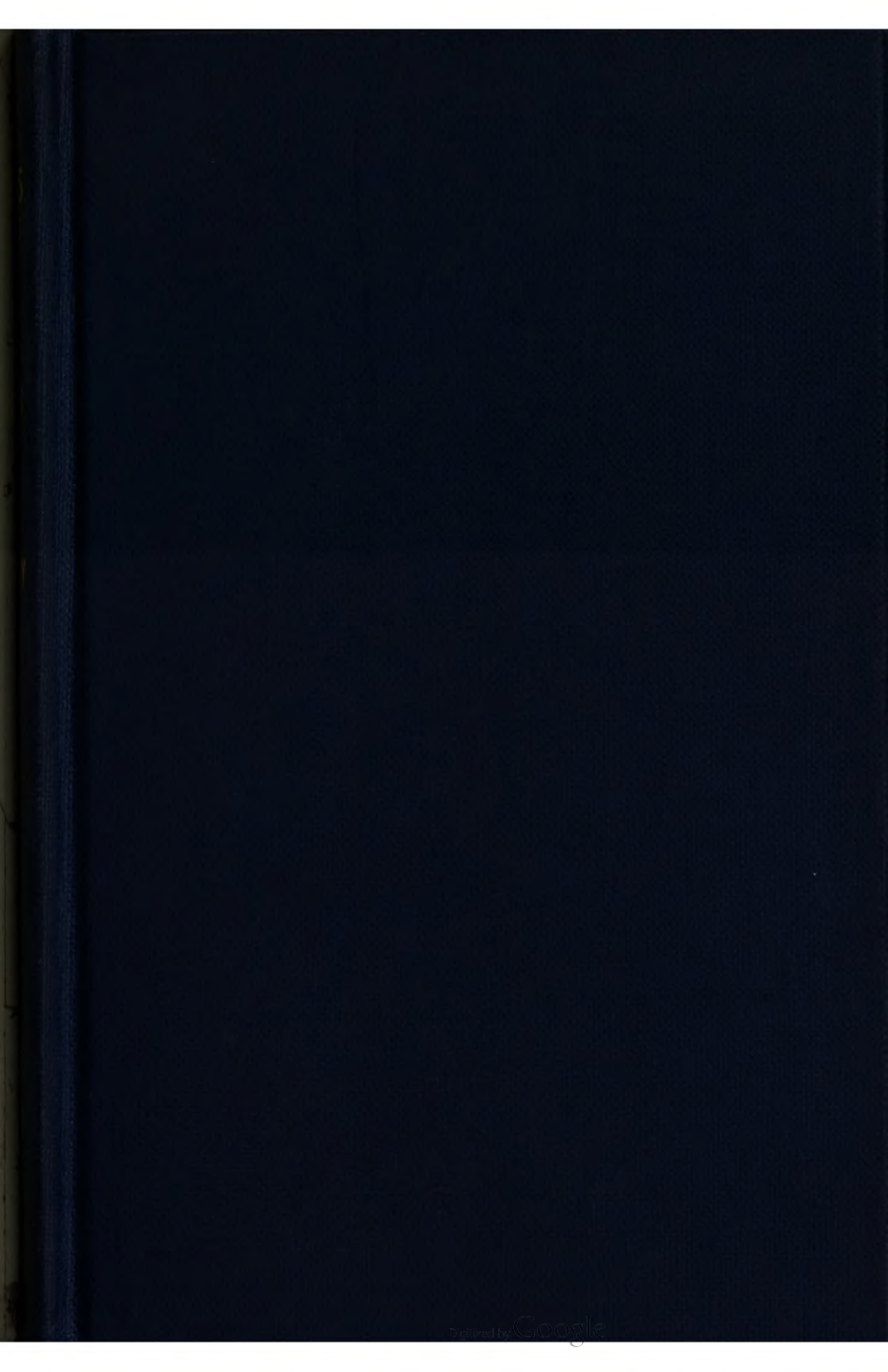

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“THE WAY
WHICH SOME CALL HERESY,”

OR

REASONS FOR SEPARATION FROM THE
ESTABLISHED CHURCH.

A LETTER TO THE CHRISTIANS OF HULL,

BY

ANDREW JUKES,

FORMERLY OF TRINITY COLLEGE, CAMBRIDGE; AND LATE
ASSISTANT CURATE OF ST. JOHN'S, HULL.

“But this I confess unto thee, that after THE WAY WHICH THEY CALL
HERESY, so worship I the God of my Fathers, believing all things which are
written in the law and the prophets: and herein do I exercise myself to have
always A CONSCIENCE VOID OF OFFENCE toward God and toward man.”—
Acts, xxiv. 14—16.

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A LETTER,

&c.

DEAR BRETHREN,

The following pages, containing a simple statement of one of the reasons which led to my separation from the Church of England, have for some time been lying by me: The only question in my mind has been whether I ought to publish them,—whether in a word I ought to address you respecting the grounds on which I am now separated from the Establishment, or whether I should keep them to myself.

During the period which has elapsed since my secession, it has been my endeavour by earnest prayer and self-examination to learn the mind of our God and Father, as to the conduct He would have me pursue in this particular. At first I was disposed to leave the whole matter in His hands alone who is the Searcher of hearts, and to suffer it, as far as I was concerned, to pass over in silence: I wished not to distress your consciences, and I felt a shrinking from that controversy and reproach, which I foresaw might be elicited by any statement from me.

Under these circumstances I allowed month after month to pass away without any public declaration from

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me as to the facts and grounds of my separation from St. John's; but I can do this no longer: In the first place, I feel strongly that I am not justified through any false love of quietness in withholding from my brethren what God has shewn me of his truth; and in the next place, whatever might be my wishes, the attempt at quietness has utterly failed. On the one hand I find that there are not a few among you who are so far interested in my case as to press me for an explanation of my conduct and my principles; and that explanation I feel is your right: while on the other hand there are many who, ignorantly and unwittingly perhaps yet not less certainly, are circulating misrepresentations of my motives and of my views, which seem to me to call for, if not a defence, at least a disclaimer on my part. Misconceptions may remain after all, and probably they will in some quarters, yet I feel that it is due, not only to you, but also to the truth which I advocate, to do what in me lies to remove from your minds any unnecessary misunderstanding.

To do this, it will not be necessary to go into any detail of the communications which passed between the Archbishop and myself; * it will be sufficient for me now simply to state one of the reasons for

* Of all this correspondence I will only say, that in what then took place I found an answer to my prayers, and was unexpectedly assisted by the hands of others into that very position of separation from the Establishment, which under God I had determined to take for myself.

my separation. Not that in doing this I have the smallest idea of justifying myself before my fellows ;— in this sense I trust I have in some degree been taught to “ cease from man ;”—but I am willing in obedience to the Word of my God to “ give a reason of the hope that is in me with meekness and fear.” I know indeed by sad experience how difficult it is to speak on a subject like this without injuring oneself: I know how in arguing about error there is constant need of watching our own treacherous hearts, lest we rejoice in iniquity because it proves us in the right ; for I feel that we are not fit to speak of evil to our brethren unless we can share the burden in humiliation before the Lord : but the Lord knows that in thus openly coming forward in a course which I foresee will expose me to certain reproach, I do it not for my own, but for the Church’s, sake. The things which I write, I write “ not that we should be approved, but that ye should do that which is honest, though we be as reprobates ; for we are glad when we are weak and ye are strong, and this also we wish even your perfection.”†

Without further preface then I proceed to state one of the reasons for my separation from the Establishment. It may be stated as follows :—

The Church of England requires from her ministers, among other tests and conditions of conformity, that each candidate for orders shall subscribe the three

† 2 COR. xiii., 7—9.

Articles of the Thirty-sixth Canon ; but these articles involve the consent of what now appears to me unscriptural : I therefore cannot subscribe them ; and consequently cannot remain a minister of the Church of England.

First, the Church requires of each of her ministers, before he can be ordained, subscription to the Three Articles of the Thirty-sixth Canon. That entire Canon runs as follows :—

“No person shall hereafter be received into the Ministry, nor either by institution or collation admitted to any Ecclesiastical Living, nor suffered to preach, to catechise, or to be a Lecturer or Reader of Divinity in either University, or in any Cathedral or Collegiate Church, City, or Market-town, Parish-church, Chapel, or in any other place within this realm ; except he be licensed either by the Archbishop, or by the Bishop of the Diocese, where he is to be placed, under their hands and seals, or by one of the two Universities, under their seal likewise ; and except he shall first subscribe to these Three Articles following, in such manner and sort as we have here appointed.

“I. That the King’s Majesty, under God, is the only Supreme Governor of this realm, and of all other his Highness’s dominions and countries, as well in all Spiritual or Ecclesiastical things or causes, as Temporal ; and that no foreign prince, person, prelate, state, or potentate, hath, or ought to have, any jurisdiction,

power, superiority, pre-eminence, or authority, Ecclesiastical or Spiritual, within his Majesty's said realms, dominions, and countries.

“II. That the Book of Common Prayer, and of ordering of Bishops, Priests, and Deacons, containeth in it nothing contrary to the Word of God, and that it may lawfully so be used : and that he himself will use the form in the said Book prescribed, in public prayer, and in administration of the Sacraments, and none other.

“III. That he alloweth the Book of Articles of Religion agreed upon by the Archbishops and Bishops of both provinces, and the whole Clergy in the Convocation holden at London in the year of our Lord God one thousand five hundred sixty and two ; and that he acknowledgeth all and every the Articles therein contained, being in number nine and thirty, besides the Ratification, to be agreeable to the Word of God.

“To these three Articles whosoever shall subscribe, he shall, for the avoiding of all ambiguities, subscribe in this order and form of words, setting down both his Christian and Surname, viz., *I, N. N. do willingly and ex animo subscribe to these three Articles above mentioned, and to all things that are contained in them.* . And if any Bishop shall ordain, admit, or license any, as is afore-said, except he first have subscribed in the manner and form as here we have appointed, he shall be suspended from giving of orders and licenses to preach, for the space of twelve months. But if either of

the Universities shall offend therein, we leave them to the danger of the law and his Majesty's censure."*

Such are the three Articles, which every one who presents himself before the Bishop for ordination is required to sign, and respecting which he is to say that he "*willingly and ex animo, i. e. from his heart, subscribes to all things contained in them.*" I now proceed in the next place to shew upon what ground it is that I object to subscribe them. In doing this I need not carry my reader into an examination of all the Articles required by the Canon, if it can be shewn that any one of them is unsound, this of itself will sufficiently justify my non-conformity, and clear me from the imputation of unnecessary separation. To one article alone therefore I shall here confine my remarks.

Observe then what it is to which each minister is required to subscribe in the Second Article of the Canon alluded to: nothing less than this,—and be it remembered that nothing less than this will satisfy the Church,—that he "*willingly and ex animo subscribes that the Book of Common Prayer containeth in it nothing contrary to the Word of God.*" Now the question is, can it be proved that what this article declares is agreeable to truth, or can the contrary be shewn? Let us see.

And here, as I wish to simplify the question as

* In addition to this, every incumbent has to make the following declaration:—"I, A. B., do here declare MY UNFEIGNED ASSENT AND CONSENT TO ALL AND EVERYTHING contained and prescribed in and by the book intituled, *The Book of Common Prayer.*"

much as possible, I shall be content to rest the decision upon a single point. To begin then, where it is most natural we should begin, with the initiatory rite of our holy faith—baptism; I ask, is it true of the Baptismal Service of the Church of England that there is NOTHING IN IT CONTRARY TO THE WORD OF GOD? I do not know that I can better shew the answer to this question, than by detailing the steps by which I have been taught that this service is not agreeable to the Word of Truth, and therefore that it is not one to which the words of the Canon can with truthfulness be applied.

When I entered the ministry the view I had of the Baptismal Service was simply this, that as the Prayer-book was necessarily made for Christians, the right mode of interpreting it was to take its declarations as *hypothetical*. Accordingly I considered that the Church in her Service for Baptism, having elsewhere* stated what are the pre-requisites for the rite, (*viz.*, faith and repentance,) takes for granted that all the requirements of the Service are fulfilled; and assuming this, as she needs must, since the Prayer-book is intended for Christians, she declares the effect, namely regeneration, which is connected with the proper reception of the rite.

Plausible however as all this might appear in *theory*, it became quite another thing when the question was regarded in connexion with the daily *practice* of the

* In the Catechism

church ; for then, whether one would or not, the certain fact was forced upon the mind, that though the Church might require a profession of faith before baptism, and only baptize upon that profession, yet unconscious infants could never truly perform that "reasonable service," or make that hearty profession. Besides, on further acquaintance with the Prayer-book, I found to my dismay that contrary to the express statement of the Catechism respecting the necessity of a profession, the Service for the Private Baptism of Infants required *no* profession. In that service, without any question asked, without any answer received, and without any profession of any sort, the minister is obliged to declare of the infant he baptizes that it is then and there "*re-generate with the Holy Spirit.*"

At this point then my conscience was pressed with what appeared, to say the least of it, the inconsistencies of the Service. If, as some Dissenters do, the Church would baptize children, simply because they are the children of believers, then well and good as far as consistency goes*. But if, as the Church declares, faith and repentance, and a profession of them, be necessary, then why does she baptize without them.

* In saying this I would by no means be understood as countenancing the idea, held I believe by Dissenters in general, that baptism may be administered without any profession on the part of the candidate for the ordinance: I cannot think so. On this point I fully agree with the judgment of the Church as stated in her Catechism, that "Faith and repentance" are pre-requisites for the rite.

In this dilemma I again, with much self-humiliation and scrow of heart, went through the services and articles of the Church. One by one I endeavoured to apply to them the various interpretations** which have been given of the contested clauses of the Baptismal Service by the best instructed ministers of the Church : but without success. The more I examined them, the more firmly I was convinced that they were either in-

** Perhaps it may be both interesting and profitable to detail what these are. The following skeleton of the opinions stated at a clerical meeting held last year, may do this as well or better than anything I can say. It will also be valuable in another light, as exhibiting THE NOT TRIFLING DIFFERENCE of opinion which exists upon the subject of Baptism among the better instructed clergy of the Church of England.

At the Annual Clerical Meeting, held at the Rev. D. Wilson's, Islington, January 5th, 1842, Archdeacon Hoare in the Chair, and nearly a hundred clergymen present, the subject for discussion being the Baptismal Service, and the doctrine of Regeneration as connected with that rite, the following speakers stated their opinions in effect as follows :—

MR. CUNNINGHAM (of Harrow,) said, his opinion was that in Baptism some positive, clear, distinct, intelligible blessing and benefit, called by the name of "Regeneration" was conveyed to the infant. This benefit is reconciliation to God: a change of *state*, but not necessarily a change of *nature*. Not an alteration of the moral condition of the child, but simply a change by which the child is brought into the *outward communion of the Church*: and this is the state which in the Service is called "regeneration." This view is very nearly that of Bishop Hopkins, of Derry.

MR. BURGESS spoke next. He said he could not agree to this view. His opinion was, that in Baptism the infant receives *the remission of original sin, and a principle of Divine life imparted by the Holy Ghost*; a seed given to fructify or die, but always given. He considered that a repenting, believing, converted adult was not pardoned, nor received regeneration until baptism.

MR. C. BRIDGES differed from each of the preceding speakers. His view of the question was, that in Baptism where the prayers are offered in faith, as contemplated by the framers of our Services,

consistent with the Bible, inconsistent with other parts of the Prayer-book, or inconsistent with common sense. The following are a few of the points to which I objected, and to which therefore I could not subscribe that "there was nothing in them contrary to the word of God."

I. In the first place there was, what now appears to me not a little startling and absurd, namely, that in the midst of a most solemn religious ordinance, and as a test of the candidates' fitness to receive the rite, *I should actually have to put questions respecting faith and obedience to a senseless and perhaps sleeping babe* :*

those prayers which we put up for the child's regeneration are heard and answered, *and the gift of regeneration is granted to prayer*. But in other cases, i.e., where there is no really faithful prayer, there is no work of the Holy Ghost, who works not without exerting an energetic power, producing visible effects.

MR. VENN could not agree with any of these interpretations. He said he believed that in the Baptismal Service, *Regeneration is said to be bestowed conditionally or hypothetically*, i.e., on the hypothesis that the infant really professes faith, and that when come to years of discretion it will believe and repent. For it is on this ground only,—that is on the sponsors answering for this faith in the infant,—that the ordinance is administered.

Such is a brief sketch of the views advocated at this meeting. I have copied it from notes taken at the time.

I will only further observe that the four clergymen who spoke had each been given some weeks notice of the meeting; their declarations therefore are well digested statements, which had been prepared for the occasion. Yet the result was that on the appointed day **THEY ALL DIFFERED**. No others spoke.

* That the child is the person addressed I need scarcely remark. The question, "**WILT THOU BE BAPTIZED** in this faith" is conclusive. Besides, the Service says, "**THIS INFANT** must also faithfully **FOR HIS PART PROMISE, &c.**" The following passage upon this subject, from a letter, written by Bishops Grindal and

Add to which the acknowledged fact that *the only answers which I could receive, were to be received, not from the person concerned in the baptism,*—(for the child may perhaps be sleeping, and is certainly unconscious,)—*but from others who promise what they can have no power to perform,* and you have the first point to which I could not willingly subscribe, that there “is nothing in it contrary to the word of God.” §

But surely there is some explanation which can be offered in defence of these requirements of the Baptismal Service,—surely there is something to be said on their behalf: otherwise they never would be used. Yes: something may be said on their behalf, but query, is it

Horn, may be interesting and instructive, as shewing the judgment of our Reformers, both as to the sense and correctness of the questions in the Service. They say,—“We receive, it is true, *or rather tolerate,* until the Lord shall give us better times, *the interrogations to infants,* and the sign of the cross, in baptism, and kneeling at the Lord’s supper. We publicly profess, and diligently teach, that *questions of this kind are not very suitable to be proposed to infants,* notwithstanding they seem to be borrowed from Augustine.”—*Zurich Letters, p. 179.*

§ It is only a few weeks since one of the Established Clergy of this town, a staunch supporter of all the Services of the Church, was speaking to me respecting the absurdity and impiety displayed by Father Mathew in administering the Teetotal pledge to children under three years of age. But is the Teetotal pledge a more important and solemn profession than the Baptismal one? Can an infant rightly promise “faith and repentance” at its Baptism when only a month old, and then be unable to promise temperance a couple of years after? Surely if the latter is an absurdity, the former must be something very like it. And yet men can see the latter: but as to the former, habit and system have so shut their eyes that nothing but the special grace of God can teach them.

something to the purpose. Something may be said for most absurdities, especially if they have been consecrated by Time ; something may be said for Transubstantiation,—much more I believe than can be said on this subject,—while yet nothing may be said to the purpose. And this is the case here. Something may be said, and something is said, but how far it is something to the purpose, how far it meets the real question in dispute may be seen as follows :—

For instance in support of the Service, it is sometimes said that the matter and manner of it may be defended on, what is called, “the analogy of circumcision:”—that as Circumcision was the sign of a spiritual blessing, and yet was administered to children, therefore baptism may be the sign of a spiritual blessing, and yet be administered to children. Suppose I grant this, yet what does it prove ? Simply this, that children may be baptized : but this is not the question. The question here is, not whether the circumcision of infants justifies the baptism of infants ; but whether the circumcision of infants justifies us *in putting questions respecting faith to infants, and in making one person promise faith for another*. Let us suppose it proved, which however it is not, that the circumcision of the male infants of Abraham’s family justifies the baptism of all the infants born of professedly Christian parents, how does it follow that **THEREFORE** we may ask those infants questions, require from them answers, and make one person promise for

another what can never be known; and all this in the midst of a solemn ordinance, which, according to the Church of England, † requires faith and repentance in the candidate as a pre-requisite for the rite. What then comes of the analogy of circumcision? In this question, nothing. The very statement of the argument is sufficient to expose it. If stated, it would run thus:—Birth in Abraham's family entitled the male children of that family to receive a carnal ordinance, in which *no* questions were put to the child, and *no* answers required; THEREFORE birth in a professedly Christian land is to entitle all children, both males and females, to receive a Spiritual ordinance, in which questions *are* put, and answers *are* required: an ordinance, moreover, be it remembered, the right to participate in which depends, according to the Prayer Book, on the possession and profession of faith and repentance.

But does not St. Paul say of circumcision that it was "a seal of the righteousness of faith," and does not this teach us that as faith was in some way imputed to children of old, so we too now may suppose faith in our children, and in this way defend the service.—Now in answer to this I simply ask, does Paul say this? What are his words? They may be found Rom. iv. 11, and they form part of the Apostle's argument to shew that

† "What is required of persons to be baptized? *Answ.* REPENTANCE whereby they forsake sin, and FAITH whereby they steadfastly believe the promises of God, made to them in this Sacrament."—*Church Catechism.*

Abraham was justified before circumcision : he says,—
 “and he (Abraham) received the sign of circumcision,
 a seal of the righteousness of the faith which he had yet
 being uncircumcised.” Observe how this comes in.
 The Apostle’s object is to shew that men may be justi-
 fied or righteous without circumcision, and to prove this
 he cites the case of Abraham, to whom circumcision was
 only a seal of the righteousness of the faith which he al-
 ready possessed :—“*he* received the sign of circumcision
 a seal of the righteousness of *the faith which he had* :” but
 I read not that circumcision was any such thing to his
 children, nor will this Scripture prove it. For take
 now a similar case to illustrate the passage : what should
 we think of the man who, having read that the author of
 Waverley received the rank of Baronet, as a mark or
 seal of the talents which *he* had before receiving the
 title, should thence conclude that therefore Sir Walter
 Scott’s children also, to whom the title descended, re-
 ceived it in like manner as a seal of *their* talents. Yet
 this is exactly analogous.

But say some, the passage of St. Paul, just quoted,
 if it proves nothing as to faith in the children, will prove
 something as to the correctness of the service, if stated
 in another form ; for may it not be said, that as the
 righteousness of Abraham was in some degree imputed
 to his children, so the righteousness of parents may in
 some way be imputed now ? But what follows ? Sup-
 pose this to be the case, (which I here neither affirm

nor deny,) this is different from the sponsors professing faith in the name of the child. According to the Church of England, the child is not baptized on the ground here assumed, namely because its parents are righteous, but because it professes faith through its sponsors. If again it be said that as Abraham's righteousness was imputed to the child, so the sponsor's righteousness may be now; I say, as before, that allowing this to be the case, (though there is not even a shadow of ground for the supposition,) yet the child is not baptized by the Church of England on the ground that its sponsors are righteous, but on its own profession;—a profession made indeed through others, but yet the child's own profession in the eye of the Church. This as I have said before is clear enough, for in answer to the question, "Why are infants baptized?" the Church tells us, it is, not because of the righteousness of the parents, nor because of the righteousness of the sponsors, but "because they (the infants) promise them both, (i. e. promise both faith and repentance,) by their sureties."§

This passage therefore of St. Paul's fails to support the system of vicarious promisings of faith, nor do I know of any other Scripture on which this fiction of the Service may more plausibly be supported. I grant in-

§ So too in the Service—"Wherefore, after this promise made by Christ, THIS INFANT must also faithfully, FOR HIS PART, PROMISE," &c.—See note, p. 14.

deed that God might, if he would, have appointed god-fathers to answer for their children; and so might he, had it pleased him, have appointed men to partake of the Eucharist for their babes; but we cannot find any proof that he ever enjoined either the one or the other: on the contrary we read that "Every man must bear his own burden,"* And why this? Because Christianity is essentially spiritual, "a reasonable service,"† a matter between each man's conscience and his God.

Now can it be said of this part of the Baptismal Service of the Church of England that it is a "reasonable service?" I think if reason§ might be heard she would speak somewhat as follows:—The child, to whom you put the question "Wilt thou be baptized?" either has the power of assenting and dissenting to the question, or it has not the power. On the one hand, if it has not the power, why put any question to it at all? On the other hand, if it has the power, how can you tell which

* GAL. vi. 5.

† "Reasonable Service," λογικην λατρειαν. "A service suited to rational creatures." *Scott*: "A service pertaining to the mind."—*Hodges*.

§ If it be said that there are things in our religion about which we cannot reason; I answer, this is true, but not to the purpose here, for the question in debate is not one of them. There are things in our faith *above* reason, but such things are *all revealed in Scripture*, and though above reason are never *contrary to it*: but where is it *revealed in scripture* that we should put questions respecting faith to infants, and make one person promise for another?

way it may use it, and whether it may assent or dissent ?* I leave the supporters of the Service to take either alternative which suits them: I can take neither, and therefore I cannot subscribe to the Service, and therefore I cannot be a minister of the Church of England.

II. But there is another particular in the Baptismal Service to which I can no longer subscribe "that there is nothing in it contrary to the Word of God." For instance, if I remain in the Church of England, I am required to affirm, and that in an address to God, what is utterly impossible for me to know, namely, *that every child I baptize is then and there "regenerate by the Holy Spirit."* As a minister of the Church I am obliged, while I continue within her pale, to apply these significant words to a senseless child; nor this only, but further to say, *that in all this, "there is nothing contrary to the Word of God."* I openly declare I cannot do it: and the reason I cannot do it is this,—I do not believe of all who are baptized that they are "regenerate," and as I do not believe it of them, so neither will I say it.

But does the Church really *say* this? On this point there can be no doubt:—she asserts of every child whom

* Observe what the godfather assents to—not that the child *shall* believe at some future time, but that it does believe. The question is not, *Wilt* thou believe? but "*Dost* thou:" and the answer, "All this I steadfastly believe."

she baptizes that it is “spiritually regenerate.”*—The only question is,—does the Church, in these words *mean* what she *says*? does she intend us to understand that every infant that is baptized is really “spiritually regenerate?” On this point there is a difference of opinion in the Church. Some there are, the high Church party, who, disdaining any escape from the plain letter of the Service, and objecting to the hypotheses resorted to by the Evangelical Clergy, openly and avowedly hold that the Church in the Baptismal office means literally all that she says, and that every baptized person is truly “regenerate by the Spirit.” On the other hand there are the better instructed members of the Church, who, shrinking from the unscriptural dogma just alluded to, have three several systems by which to evade the force of these expressions.

With regard to the first party, who say that the Church holds, and they believe, that every baptized infant is “regenerate by the Spirit,” I shall here say nothing more than that had Spiritual regeneration invariably accompanied baptism, Paul could hardly have “thanked God that he baptized none but Crispus and Gaius,” † nor would he have said that “God sent him

* Of every infant that is baptized the Church speaks as follows,—“Seeing now that this child *is regenerate.*” And again—“We yield thee hearty thanks, most merciful Father, that *it hath pleased thee to regenerate this infant WITH THY HOLY SPIRIT.*”

† 1 COR. i. 14.

not to baptize but to preach the Gospel." § The fact is that this view of Baptismal regeneration has been so satisfactorily disproved by sincerely attached members

§ 1 COR. i. 17. I will here subjoin the following passage from the pen of the Hon. and Rev. Baptist Noel upon this subject. He writes thus:—"Regeneration is a gift which no language can exaggerate. It is connected with the eternal love of God, and the boundless blessings of immortality. It is a boon, for which no less a cost was requisite than the blood of Christ; and which no other power can accomplish than the infinite grace of the Spirit. Now is *this* given to a *child* when brought to the baptismal font,—who is utterly unconscious of the proceeding,—has uttered no prayer,—has expressed no desire,—has given no consent,—is utterly unconscious of the proceeding, as a *clod of this inert earth* would be,—unconscious as a *brute creature*—when brought to this *ceremony* which is performed upon him? Ungodly *parents*, that have lived constantly in the violation of the laws of God, systematically disregarding His word; who never exercised one hour's faith in the Redeemer; who are trampling on His authority; who select from their friends, *sponsors* of the same levity with themselves; and, whether they issue from some miserable alley, where they have been more accustomed to the gin-shop than the church of God, or whether they emerge from the luxurious precincts of some lordly palace, in *either* case coming to make *prayers* which are *utterly unmeant*,—to engage for the fulfilment of *duties* never intended to be *discharged*,—they present their child, it may be, to a *minister as ungodly as themselves*; one devoted to the *sports of the field*,—engaged in the dissipating amusements of fashionable life,—who has never manifested, by any *spirituality of temper*, or zeal of *conduct*, that Christ sent *him* into the ministry. But *this man*, "RIGHTLY ORDAINED," receives the little child; and while perhaps no other persons, or scarcely any, are present; and those who *are the witnesses*, may have the same levity and irreligion,—because *that minister pours* on that little *unconscious infant* the baptismal *water*, he is pronounced to be INSTANTLY REGENERATED! God has said, in His Word, that those who are born again, are born "not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the *will of man*, but of God." Yet these *irreligious parents* can, *on any day*, and *at any hour*, secure the *regeneration* of their child, as certainly (according to *this doctrine*) as they could determine on some *scheme of pleasure*, or negotiate the *purchase of an estate!*"

of the Church of England,* as being not only contrary to Scripture, but opposed also to other statements of the Prayer-book,§ that anything further would be superfluous here. Besides, in this literal and absolute sense those I now address object, quite as strongly as I do, to the words of the Service. The only question therefore which I shall here consider is, whether the explanations generally current among the Evangelical party are such as both satisfactorily and honestly meet the circumstances of the case.

There are then three different methods of interpreting the Service, upon the ground of which the better instructed of the Church Clergy think themselves justi-

* See the tracts on this subject by Scott, Fawcett, Molyneux, and others.

§ It is in this way,—by proving that this erroneous view of Baptism is contrary to some of the statements of the Church,—that good men in her communion persuade themselves that the Prayer-book contains nothing but the correct view. Because, argue they, in the articles she opposes the wrong view, THEREFORE she holds nothing but the right view, and therefore we may say that there is nothing in the Prayer-book contrary to the Word of God. But the fact is, *the Church holds both*; in her Services she has passages both opposing and countenancing the idea of an opus operatum; and so, *if words mean anything*, on this question contradicts herself. This has not only been observed by me: the late Rev. Thomas Scott, in his Essay on Regeneration says, “our pious Reformers from an undue regard to the Fathers and to the circumstances of the times, have retained a few expressions in the Liturgy, which NOT ONLY ARE INCONSISTENT WITH THEIR OTHER DOCTRINE, but also tend to confuse mens' minds, and mislead their judgments on this important subject.” Here is an unequivocal and published avowal of “INCONSISTENCY” in a ritual to all and every part of which the writer of the above extract had declared his “unfeigned assent and consent.”

fled in saying of every child they baptize that it is then and there "regenerate with the Holy Spirit." True, to an unconcerned looker on, the mere fact of there being these three different interpretations, all varying from each other and from the plain letter of the Service, and yet all professing to be the only true and undoubted sense of the Prayer-book, might cause some doubt as to their sufficiency and correctness, and might lead to the conclusion that the Service itself was none of the clearest: with this, however, I have nothing to do here: my simple business being to examine these various interpretations and to see whether they are satisfactory or not.

1. The first method in use among the Evangelical Clergy, by which they endeavour to reconcile themselves to the statements of the Service,—and by which they justify their declaration that, in saying of every baptised child that it is regenerate, they say "nothing contrary to the word of God,"—is as follows. A supporter of this system of interpretation would answer thus:—"You ask in what way I explain this statement of our Church, and how I reconcile myself to say of every child 'I baptize that it is then and there 'regenerate with the Holy Ghost:' I do so on these grounds:—Our Saviour says, 'Ask and it shall be given to you, seek and ye shall find, knock and it shall be opened to you,...if ye being evil know how to give good gifts to your children, much more shall your heavenly Father give his

“Holy Spirit to them that ask him.’* In the belief of “this, I ask for the regeneration of the child, and I conclude that according to Christ’s words I have that which I ask for. The matter is simply a matter of prayer. I pray for regeneration by the Spirit, and I believe I obtain it, because God has said, ‘ask and ye shall have.’”

Now I ask is this a satisfactory explanation, and does this passage of Scripture on which it professes to rest, justify the conclusion which is drawn from it? Let us look at the verse more closely and I think that we shall see that the promise of the Spirit is very obviously *limited to the person who asks*:—“much more will your heavenly Father give His Holy Spirit TO THEM THAT ASK HIM:” but the children in the Service do *not* ask Him: how then does this Scripture apply?

“But,” says the advocate of this system, “another Scripture is still stronger in support of my views:—“this is the confidence that we have in Him, that if we ask anything according to His will, He heareth us; and if He hear us, whatsoever we ask we have the petitions which we desired of Him.’” †

Now here again I answer the promise is limited;—“if we ask ANYTHING ACCORDING TO HIS WILL he heareth us:” but where are we told that it is according to God’s will that every infant who is brought to the

* LUKE xi. 9, 13.

† 1 JOHN, v. 14, 15.

Baptismal font should be *then and there immediately regenerate*. Take a parallel case. Suppose that on the strength of this Scripture taken in connexion with others, such as, "God will have all men to be saved," and "the earth shall be filled with the knowledge of the Lord as the waters cover the sea;"—suppose, I say, that on the strength of these promises a body of Christians were to meet together to ask God to regenerate the world; and then, having asked, should within ten minutes, thank him for having done so, and speak of the world as already regenerate, and of the Millennium as being already come; should we call such conduct credulity or faith? * Yet as far as this promise to prayer is concerned, the one would be just as Scriptural as the other.

And in point of fact one simple question is all that is needed to expose this system as insufficient and untenable: for instance, I would ask the supporters of it to answer me one question:—Do you believe that every child you pray for is then and there regenerate?—Yes

* The following language is taken from an article in the *Christian Observer* for 1836. It there occurs in reference to the writers of the Oxford Tracts: how far it applies in the question we are considering let the reader judge:—"The absurdity, the irrational fanaticism, the intellectual drivelling under the abused name of FAITH, which dictates such sentiments . . . must disgust every intelligent man, and make him an infidel, if he is really led to believe that Christianity is a system so utterly opposed to common sense." I quote this also in the hope that Evangelical Churchmen, when they see how they themselves have written of others, will excuse any unbecoming warmth of expression into which I may have fallen against my will.

or no?—If you do *not* believe it, why do you say it, as in the Service: on the contrary, if you *do* believe it, why do you not regenerate every town at once:—souls are perishing; judgment is coming; your prayers, you say, can regenerate all you pray for; you are bound then to do it: why have you not caused the regeneration of all in your family and in your land?

But this system of explanation labours under still another difficulty, the difficulty namely of being in open opposition to the declarations of the Service. The Service says,—“*seeing now, dearly beloved brethren, that this child is BY BAPTISM regenerate,*” and, “*is now BY THE LAVEN OF REGENERATION IN BAPTISM received into the number of the children of God, and heirs of everlasting life, &c.*” Now I simply ask, does the Church when she says “*by baptism*” mean *by prayer*? Again, does she when she says “*by the laver of regeneration in baptism*” mean *by prayer*? Surely if in selecting these expressions the Church does not mean to teach us that children are, what she says they are, “*regenerate BY BAPTISM,*” there is an end of all certainty in the meaning and use of words; * for with equal ease and in like manner may it be proved that transubstantiation means nothing but the truth of Scripture, and that purgatory is in accordance with the Word of God. I cannot there-

* A writer upon this subject fairly confesses that “if we give this sentence its full force” it is beyond the power of “EXPLANATION.”—*The Baptism of Jesus Christ.* p. 38.

fore shelter myself under a system of interpretation which does such violence to plain language, and consequently cannot upon this ground consent to say of every child I baptize that it is "then and there regenerate," and further, that in saying this, "there is nothing contrary to the word of God."

2. The second method, now almost generally exploded as untenable, by which the Evangelical clergy have attempted to escape the plain letter of the Service, and have endeavoured to prove that "there is nothing in it contrary to the word of God," may be stated as follows. An advocate of this system would explain the Service thus:—"The office for Baptism declares of "every infant who is baptized in the Church of England, that he is then and there 'regenerate;' and I "allow that every infant who thus partakes of that "ordinance is at once regenerate; but then—what do "I mean by the word 'regenerate'? simply a change "of *state*, not a change of *nature*. In applying this "word therefore to infants, I do not mean that there is "any alteration in the moral condition of the child, but "simply that in *some* * way, which I confess I cannot "very definitely explain, the child is brought into the "outward communion of the Church." Now what does this explanation amount to? Is it not, when reduced

* I wish in this argument that instead of saying, "in *some* way,"—"to *some* extent,"—"in *some* degree," men would say distinctly in *what* way, to *what* extent, in *what* degree: such conduct would help not a little to clear up the matter.

to plain English, simply this,—that when we *say* “regenerate with the Holy Spirit,” we do not *mean* “regenerate with the Holy Spirit,” but something else which cannot exactly be defined, of which the only certain point is that it is *not* that which is commonly called “regeneration.”

But neither does this explanation meet the case: for observe, the Church does not simply say that the child is “regenerate;” she clearly shews that when she *says* “regenerate,” she *means* really “regenerate,” by expressly declaring that the infant is “regenerate WITH THE HOLY SPIRIT.” Besides, the child is required, and promises, to “renounce the world, the flesh, and the devil,” “to believe in God,” and “to walk in his ways,”—things which cannot be done without “a change of nature, † as well as a change of *state*.” If however a doubt remain with any as to the meaning which the Church attaches to the word “regenerate,” I refer them to the three following passages from the Prayer-book, which seem quite conclusive upon the subject.

First, in the Baptismal Service, we find the congregation saying,—“we yield thee hearty thanks, most merciful Father, that it hath pleased thee to REGENERATE *this infant* WITH THY HOLY SPIRIT, and to *receive him for thine own child by adoption* :” Again, in the Confirmation Service, we find the Bishop praying thus,—“Almighty

† For “he that *believeth* that Jesus is the Christ is *born of God*.”—1 JOHN v. 1.

God, who hast vouchsafed to REGENERATE *these thy servants* BY WATER and THE HOLY GHOST *and hast given them forgiveness of all their sins*, strengthen them, &c.:" and lastly, in the Catechism, we find the child instructed to say, "*my BAPTISM wherein I was made* A MEMBER OF CHRIST, THE CHILD OF GOD, AND AN INHERITOR OF THE KINGDOM OF HEAVEN."

But according to the method of interpretation which we are now examining, all these expressions are really nothing: according to this view of the Service a person may be "regenerate by the Holy Spirit," without discerning or possessing the Spirit, and "God's own child by adoption," while yet he is a servant of sin! According to this view of the service, there may be "members of Christ," without justification through Christ,—“children of God” without the knowledge of God,—and “inheritors of the kingdom of heaven,” without holiness, without love, without understanding; in a word without a single grace which characterizes and accompanies salvation!

Such is the principle of interpretation by which many of the clergy satisfy their consciences. Well: if they can be thus satisfied, let them remain: I hinder them not. I only say, I cannot be thus satisfied, and consequently I cannot say of the Service that “there is nothing in it contrary to the word of God.”

3. The third system by which to explain away what is called “the difficulty” of the Service, though not so simple as the preceding methods, is yet more plausible

to those who can comprehend it. This is commonly called "the *hypothetical* system," and when fairly stated is pretty nearly what I believed when I entered the ministry; and could the assumptions which it involves be proved agreeable to scripture, (*viz.*, could it be proved that children really possessed faith, and that it was right for their sponsors to promise it for them,) would perhaps be tolerably satisfactory. It may be stated as follows:—

"The Church declares that faith and repentance
 "are pre-requisites for baptism;* agreeably to this she
 "expects the profession of these from every candidate
 "for the ordinance.† Now the adult, or the child, who

* So the Catechism teaches. "Question.—What is required of persons to be baptized? Answer.—**REPENTANCE** whereby they forsake sin, and **FAITH** whereby they steadfastly believe the promises of God made to them in this Sacrament."

Now as this *Answer* seems to contain an objection to Infant Baptism, the Church in the next *Question* of the Catechism, in order to refute the objection authoritatively, puts it in all its force as follows;—

"Question.—Why then," (that is, why since Faith and Repentance are requisite) "are infants baptized, when by reason of their tender age they cannot perform them? Answer.—Because they promise them both," (that is "THEY," the infants, infants though they be, "THEY" promise both Faith and Repentance) "by their Sureties:" Here is the reason, and the only reason which the Catechism gives for their baptism. Thus we see that, according to the Church, Faith and Repentance must be promised in every case, and that infants are regarded as promising them both; "THEY promise them both by their Sureties."

† This we see by referring to the Services both of Adult and Infant Baptism. In either case the questions *Dost thou renounce the Devil? dost thou believe, and wilt thou be baptized in this Faith?*" are put to the candidate for the Ordinance, and must be answered

“is baptized does make this profession; the adult for himself, the child by the lips of others;* and it is upon this profession of faith that the Church pronounces him ‘regenerate,’ grounding her declaration on those scriptures which declare that, ‘whosoever believeth that Jesus is the Christ is *born of God*,’ † and, ‘no man can say that Jesus is the Christ, but *by the Holy Ghost*.’ § Now the child professes that Jesus is the Christ; and the Church, hearing this profession of faith, says of all who make it that they too are ‘born of God,’ ‘regenerate by the Spirit.’ To this exactly agrees the xxvii. Article, which runs thus— ‘Baptism is not only a sign of profession, ...but is also a sign of regeneration or new birth, whereby, as by an instrument, they that receive baptism rightly,’ (that is, they who receive it possessing the requisites of faith and repentance,) ‘are grafted into the Church; the promises of forgiveness of sin, and of our adoption to be sons of God by the Holy Ghost,

by him in the affirmative before the Service can proceed. The Service declares “*this infant must also faithfully for his part promise by you, &c.*”

† 1 JOHN v. 1.

§ 1 COR. xii. 3.

* Were any further proof needed to shew who it is that is supposed to speak the answers to the questions in the Baptismal Service for *infants*, the one query, “Wilt THOU be baptized, &c.,” would of itself settle the matter—the sponsors having all been baptized before.

“are visibly signed and sealed; faith is confirmed,*
 “and grace increased by virtue of prayer to God.’”—
 Such is the hypothetical system, a system from first to
 last proceeding upon the assumption that the vicarious
 profession made through the sponsors is to be taken for
 faith and repentance in the child. §

I have thus given a full and perfect statement of
 the hypothetical system. I will however just say in
 passing for the sake of the less instructed of my readers
 that this method of interpretation, being more complex
 than either of the preceding ones, may from its nature
 be stated in slightly different forms. For instance
 sometimes it is put very vaguely and generally, as
 thus ;—“The Church supposes that all is rightly per-
 “formed on the part of the candidate, and so asserts of
 “the baptized person what would be the case, were all,
 “as she supposes, rightly performed”:—or, to put it
 still in other words,—“The Church takes for granted
 “that all the requirements of the service are properly
 “fulfilled, and assuming this, as she needs must, she
 “declares the effect, (namely regeneration,) which
 “follows such a reception of the rite.” All this how-
 ever is only a vague and general way of stating what is
 more clearly stated above. In either case the hypothe-

* Observe, “Faith is *confirmed*,” not *given*: its prior existence
 is assumed; “and grace is *increased*,” not *bestowed*.

§ The clearest and strongest statement of this hypothetical
 system may be seen in Mr. Fawcett’s Tract, entitled “Baptism
 considered in connexion with Regeneration.”

sis is exactly the same. Only let these brief statements of the hypothetical system be analyzed, and they will be found precisely to accord with the longer one above; with one advantage however in favour of the shorter statements, this namely, that from their brevity the absurdities of the hypothesis escape being *stated*, and are only *implied*; and so to many minds never appear, and to all are more plausible and specious?

Yet as I said just now, the hypothesis is in either case precisely the same: for now to return for a moment to these brief statements of the system, what, I ask, do you mean in the first of them by—"The Church supposes that all is rightly performed on the part of the candidate,"—and what do you mean in the second by—"the Church takes for granted that all the requirements of the service are fulfilled?"—Do you not mean that faith and repentance, the due pre-requisites according to the Church for the rite of baptism, are possessed by the infant, and that by the possession of these "all is rightly performed on the part of the candidate," and "the requisites of the service are properly fulfilled;" and is not this exactly in substance what is stated above.

Such then is the hypothetical mode of interpreting the formularies. Now let it only be observed for a moment upon what foundations this system proceeds: on nothing less than these assumptions,—first, that an infant can possess such faith as entitles it to be called "regenerate;" and secondly, that a sponsor's profession

for a child is equivalent to the child's own profession. But are these points so clearly established that they may be thus readily assumed, or are they not rather a part of the very question in dispute? and yet the whole hypothesis rests on these assumptions, assumptions for which I believe not a shadow of proof can be produced either from reason or scripture.

But,—argue the supporters of this hypothetical scheme of interpretation,—have we not an apostle's example to justify the statements of the prayer-book? does not St. Paul himself countenance us in using this hypothetical style of expression? does he not say of the twelve tribes that they “instantly served God day and night,” while they were still unconverted and remaining in unbelief? Again, does he not say of the Church at Corinth that they were “sanctified in Christ Jesus, called to be saints,” while yet they permitted a peculiarly scandalous fornicator among them, and were erring both in doctrine and practice? And do not these examples justify our saying in like manner of all whom we baptize that they are, what they should be, then and there regenerate, even if in fact they are not so.

Let us now examine these two passages in detail, and see whether they will prove what they are brought to prove.

The first example is to be found Acts xxvi. 7, and the argument from it in defence of the hypothetical system may be stated thus:—“St. Paul says of the

Jewish people that they 'instantly served God day and night:' but the truth is they did nothing of the sort; on the contrary they crucified the Lord of glory and clung to their old superstitions: consequently, as the apostle spoke thus hypothetically of his nation, so we may speak hypothetically of ours, so we may say of baptized children that they are 'spiritually regenerate,' even when it is not strictly and literally true."

Now what does this argument amount to when put into plain English: simply this, that St. Paul said what was not the case, therefore we may say what is not the case: this is what it comes to. I own indeed that to an unprejudiced looker on, it certainly would seem rather hazardous to bring in an apostle to justify falsehood; but the case is desperate, and either it must be justified by the apostle, or else it can never be justified at all. The facts are simply these:—the defenders of the Baptismal Service are clearly guilty of saying what is not the case, and the only way they have to justify this is by proving that apostles have done the like. §

§ In passing I will just call the reader's attention to the similarity there is between the reasoning here used by the supporter of the hypothetical system, and the reasoning used by the Papist in support of Transubstantiation. The advocate of the hypothetical scheme defends the Baptismal service by involving an Apostle in the charge of uttering what is false. True in doing this he will make the Apostle say what is not the case; but this, so far from offending him, is the very gist of the argument: had the Apostle spoken truth, his words would have been useless. Just so the Papist argues for Transubstantiation, and defends his own error by

Now supposing it could be shewn that Paul had acted thus, would this justify us? Supposing it could be shewn that Paul had said what was not the case, is that any reason why we should say what is not the case? Surely not. But unfortunately for this hypothetical system the apostle says nothing of the sort: the whole argument arises from misunderstanding his words: far from saying what was not the case, the apostle's words properly translated are strictly and literally true, and it is our translation alone which gives any colour to the argument we are considering. In the original all that the apostle says of his nation is that it "instantly" or perseveringly "serves," ἐν ἐντενείᾳ λατρῆυον. The simple question then is, what is the meaning here to be attached to the word "serves." A reference to Schleusner's New Testament Lexicon, in which he cites the other places where the word occurs, will settle the question in a moment. He thus explains the word here used by the apostle:—"λατρεύω, to worship religiously, ...but the word is specially and par excellence used of the outward, legal, and Levitical worship of God, so that it must not unfrequently be translated, 'to sacrifice,' 'to perform the sacerdotal office, &c.'"* In fact our trans-

proving that the Lord must have declared a falsehood. True in doing this he must make our Lord say what is not the case, that the bread he breaks is His body; but what is this to him: if in any way he can shift the odium from himself, this is sufficient.

* λατρεύω· colo religiose, cultu prosequor divino, et speciatim ac κατ' ἐξοχὴν de cultu divino externo, eoque legali ac Levitico usurpatur, ut adeo haud raro per sacra facere, munere sacerdotali fungi reddendum sit." Schleusner in verb.

lators have in other places of the New Testament thus rightly translated this very word: for instance in Heb. ix. 9, they translate it by the expression, "*did the service*," § (i. e. the Levitical service.) In like manner the substantive *λατρεία* is used in the same application: the apostle says Heb. ix. 6. "When these things were thus ordered, the priests went always into the first tabernacle accomplishing *the service*," (i. e. the Levitical service.) †

What then is it that the Apostle says of the Twelve tribes, or rather of the twelve-tribed people, in the passage we are considering? Simply this, that they "persevered in the service," i. e. in the Levitical service, which was strictly true. His defence before Agrippa is in effect this,—“I now stand and am judged for the hope of the promise made to our fathers, (that is, for the hope of a Messiah;) but this hope is nothing for which I should be condemned, for my own nation, instantly serving, that is, *persevering as they do in the Levitical services*, still look for this very hope: in other words, my nation, much as they differ with me on other points, and obstinate Judaizers as they are, still hold this hope.”

§ The apostle says—“The tabernacle which was a figure for the time then present, .. that could not make *him that did the service*, &c.,” τὸν λατρεύοντα, the same word as in our text. For similar use of the word see Luke xi, 37; Heb. viii., 5; ix., 9; x., 2; xiii., 10.

† Cf. Rom. ix., 4.—Heb. ix., 1, for a similar use.

The Apostle therefore in saying of his nation that they "perseveringly served," (i. e. persevered in the Levitical observances,) so far from stating anything hypothetically as it is called, stated nothing but the simple and literal truth; and therefore this passage, the English version of which is the great strong-hold of the defenders of this system, will not justify the use which is made of it, nor bring in the Apostle guilty of saying what was not the case.

The second example brought to defend the hypothetical system is not more fortunate than its predecessor: When fully stated the argument will run thus:—"St. Paul says of the Church of God at Corinth that they 'were sanctified in Christ Jesus, called to be saints,' while yet they permitted a peculiarly scandalous fornicator among them, and were in many points erring both in doctrine and practice: consequently as the Apostle speaks thus hypothetically of the Church at Corinth calling them 'saints' when some of them were sinners; so we may speak hypothetically of our infants, calling them 'regenerate' when they are nothing of the sort."

Now observe that here, as in the preceding example, the argument for the hypothetical scheme is simply this;—St. Paul said what was not the case, therefore we may say what is not the case. But I answer, St. Paul did no such thing. The Apostle addresses those who were "in Christ" as "in Christ," those who were "saints" as "saints;" but that he addresses un-

godly and unregenerate persons as "in Christ" and as "saints" is a mere assumption from first to last; and the passage brought to prove it will no more prove it than the first chapter of Genesis proves it. The supporters of this argument, before they can say anything to the purpose, have to shew that those whom the Apostle addresses as "sanctified in Christ Jesus and called to be saints" were *not* sanctified in Christ Jesus, and *not* called to be saints: this is what their system requires, but this they can never do. I grant indeed that this epistle to the Corinthians teaches us that saints may be in much ignorance and error, while yet they are a Church: I grant moreover that there are passages in the New Testament which speak of "false apostles," and "deceitful workers," and every church will have some such enemies to fight with; but what does this prove? that St. Paul said what was not the case? far from it: a saint in error and ignorance is still a saint, and as different from the world as light from darkness, and the particular offender mentioned in the first epistle to the Corinthians as having so grievously scandalized the Church at large is seen in the second epistle* to have been a saint indeed notwithstanding his awful fall: and as to "deceitful workers" and "false apostles" being addressed by St. Paul as "sanctified in Christ Jesus," I say where is the proof of it? where does the apostle say

* 2 COR. ii. 6—8.

that such characters were "saints?" when the proof is forthcoming the argument may stand: at present it is all assumption.

And in point of fact the supporters of this hypothetical system of interpreting the Prayer-book, though they bring these passages forward in defence of themselves, seem scarcely to trust what they themselves have written. Thus one of the clearest writers in support of this scheme, having attempted to satisfy others by the passages just cited, is evidently not quite satisfied himself: he writes thus, §—"It appears then that the language of the Church, much as it has been objected to, is in perfect agreement with the language of St. Paul, and according to the just theory of a Christian Church. *Still it may be reasonably questioned whether in the present state of things among us the language is not to be regretted.* † The circumstances of the Church now are very different from what they were in the days of St. Paul. In his time among many true believers there were a few hypocrites and disorderly persons; with us there is a great outfield population, who though baptized and calling themselves Christians have nothing of Christianity but the name. *The language therefore which might be suitable when the godly were the*

§ Fawcett, "Baptism considered in connexion with Regeneration." p. 29.

† Why should the language be "regretted," if it is "in perfect accordance with the language of St. Paul, and according to the just theory of a Christian Church?"

“many, the ungodly the few, may be very unsuitable when “the ungodly are the rule, the godly the exception.” Very true, and therefore I cannot use the Service, nor assent that there is “nothing in it contrary to the Word of God.”

But “charity hopeth all things,” and may you not defend the Service under this shield. I say, no: This scripture will not shelter you here. If you “hope” the regeneration of the child, say you *hope* it: charity may defend you in this: but charity will never justify you in saying what is not the case.** In truth to a simple mind the matter is very simple: the only question is, Do we, when we *say* these words, *believe* that the child is then and there “regenerate,” or do we not? If not, why do we *say* it? I cannot but feel that to have the least feeling of insincerity on such an occasion,—to have the least approach to professing what we doubt in such connexion as this,—to tell God what we do not believe,—this is nothing less than to carry the works of darkness into the very presence of the God of light, and thrillingly brings to mind the solemn charge which was laid against Ananias,—“Thou hast not lied unto men, but unto God.”*

** On this subject hear the following declaration of a minister of the Establishment:—“The judgment of charity,” says Mr. Riland, “is a phrase invented by a bad world to screen itself from the attacks of an uneasy conscience, and to keep in countenance the companions and abettors of its crimes.”—*Church Reform*, p. 147.

* ACTS v. 4.

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And now, to exchange all this cloud of hypothesis and assumption for the simple daylight of fact and truth, let me put one single question to the advocates of this method of interpreting the Prayer-book: It is this:—do you, or do you not, *say* of every child you baptize that it is then and there “regenerate with the Holy Ghost?”—Yes or no?—Your answer must be, YES.—Do you then *believe* of every child you baptize that it is then and there “regenerate with the Holy Ghost?”—Yes or no?—Your answer must be, NO.—You cannot, and by your own confession you do not, believe that every baptized infant is so regenerate. Then can any explanation, hypothetical or otherwise, justify you in telling God what you do not believe? One would have thought not; and yet in a solemn religious ordinance you *say* more than once of every child you baptize that it is “regenerate,” and all the while you do not *believe* the fact which you assert so positively.

Such are the systems by which the statements of the Prayer-book respecting the “regeneration” of the child are watered down or defended by the Evangelical clergy, systems which I believe only require to be examined to be proved untenable. These systems I have stated as fairly as I have been able, and, as far as in me lay, have brought everything to support them which has appeared to the purpose. If however I have omitted or overlooked anything which may be truly urged in their

defence, I shall be thankful to have it shewn me. The Lord is my witness that if I err, I err seeking the truth; and if it can be shewn from the scripture that I am in error, the Lord being my helper, I will leave it and return: Job's decision shall be mine,—“I have spoken once, yet will I not therefore maintain argument; yea twice, howbeit for that cause further I will not proceed.” The Lord is my witness how for several months I earnestly sought to find some system which would satisfy my conscience, and which would suffer me to remain where I was; and man is my witness how earnestly I have read and thought and conversed with those from whom I hoped to get instruction. For awhile, by leaning more upon man's teaching than upon God's, I believed I had found a principle which would suffer me to remain in the communion where all my interests and affections and habits would have kept me: but I can do so no longer: my way therefore is clear; henceforth I must take up my cross, and blessed be the Lord that cross is to me more precious than everything the world can give.

I grant indeed that the current systems, by which to evade the difficulties of the Prayer-book, are such as may satisfy those already satisfied, and quiet those whose minds have never been disturbed; but how they can satisfy an honest mind once truly alive to the difficulty I own I cannot conceive. While however I say this and thus judge the *systems*, far be it from me to

judge *individuals* who see not with me, and whose consciences are truly at rest where they are : I know by my own experience what it is to have been blinded by education and habit, I know how difficult it is to escape the snare : yet this I may say, for it is confessedly * the case, that in order to find a sense for the expressions we have been examining, which will be in accordance with the truth of scripture, we must descend to such a mode of interpreting plain words,—we must make such admissions, have such reservations, and use such special pleading,—as would never for a moment be tolerated in the ordinary intercourse between man and man. Nor is this all : he who knows the truth must unsay in the pulpit what he says at the font. At the latter he must state that all whom he baptizes are “regenerate” : from the former he must declare that most who are baptized are unregenerate. Thus if he is faithful to the truth he must deny to man, what if he is faithful to the Church he must affirm to God ; and so while he states one thing officially, he must personally contend for the contrary. †

* Mr. Riland, a minister of the Established Church, writes thus ;—“ Never have the arts of evasion, sophistry, palliation, and management, been more notoriously developed than in attempts to explain away the strictness of subscription to the Liturgy, Articles, and Homilies.”—*Church Reform*. p. 226.

† The evil consequences of this half-and-half sort of statement have been particularly forced upon my notice by Dr. Pusey’s lately published sermon on the Eucharist. I there find among the first and strongest authorities in support of the sermon the name of

And allowing that the matter could be got over by the learned with the help of assumptions, reservations, and special pleadings, what I ask must be the effects of such dangerous sophistry upon the ignorant, what must be the impression of false security which the statements of the Church,—if not explained away, that is, if they are understood to mean what they say,—are calculated to produce. I now however speak only of the matter as it respects the better instructed who utter these

Ridley. The passage from his works which Dr. Pusey has quoted is as follows:—"You and I agree herein that *in the Sacrament is the very true and natural body and blood of Christ, even that which was born of the Virgin Mary, which ascended into heaven, which sitteth on the right hand of God the Father, which shall come from thence to judge the quick and the dead.*" Now who having read this could have expected that in the same examination Ridley could also have spoken again as follows;—"the true substance and nature of bread and wine remaineth, with the which the body is in like sort nourished, as the soul is by grace and spirit with the blood of Christ." But how is this? the passages are evidently inconsistent: how then comes it that Ridley in this his last examination should thus contradict himself? Because the man had all his life long been tied by this system, and even yet could not fully escape. And so is it now. We have as a church through the mercy of God escaped transubstantiation, but the other sacrament is yet to be contended for by those who understand and love the truth. Put them on open ground, and there are few better able to defend the truth respecting regeneration than some of the Evangelical Clergy of the Church of England: but set them to expound the matter as Churchmen, as connected with the Baptismal Service and the Catechism, and then, if they take *all* that the Prayer-book says, they must knock down with the right-hand what they build up with the left; and what is the consequence? this, that the error they sanction is remembered as in Ridley's case, while the truth they teach is neutralized and deformed. True, they may die as Ridley did for the truth on this very point, but their erroneous statements will outlive them, and be quoted to mislead others.

words, and I cannot but feel that even for them the explanations which are current are insufficient, and that therefore the ordinance of Baptism is by the Service of the Church made a snare unto God's people. §

On these grounds then, dear brethren, were there no others, I cannot say of the Prayer-book that there is "NOTHING in it contrary to the word of God," and thus I cannot fulfil the test which the Church of England requires of all her ministers. If I remain in her communion I must say that, *in putting questions respecting faith and repentance to a senseless and perhaps sleeping babe,—and this in the midst of a solemn religious ordinance, and as a test of the infant's fitness to receive the rite,—*there is "NOTHING contrary to the word of God": this I cannot say. Again, if I remain in her communion I must say that, *in making one person promise faith for another,—another too whose mind cannot be known,—*there is "NOTHING contrary to the word of God": this I cannot say. Again, if I remain in the Church of England I must say of *every infant I baptize that it is*

§ "That the Church of England does hold and does teach Baptismal Regeneration, would never, we must venture to think, have been disputed, had not men been anxious to remain in her communion, and yet to make her formularies square with their own private notions. *We really think that no fair, no straightforward dealing, can get rid of the conclusion that the Church holds what is called Baptismal Regeneration.* You may dislike the doctrine, you may wish it expunged from the Prayer-book: but so long as I subscribe to that Prayer-book, and so long as I officiate according to the forms of that Prayer-book, I do not see how I can be commonly honest, and yet deny that every baptized person is on that account regenerate."—*Melville's Sermons*, Vol. ii., Sermon 8.

then and there "regenerate with the Holy Ghost," and of all this that there is "NOTHING in it contrary to the word of God": this I cannot say, for I do not believe it. But unless I declare all this the Church will not have me for her minister: I cannot therefore any longer be a minister in the Church of England.

And here let me not be misunderstood. I leave the Church of England, not so much because, as here in the Baptismal Service, she has evil connected with her, but because she will not allow me to minister in her communion unless I profess of all this error and inconsistency "that there is nothing in it contrary to the Word of God." I repeat, I do not secede from the Church simply because she contains evil, but because she absolutely requires of me, as long as I am connected with her, to recognize this evil to be good, and will not permit me to be her minister but on these conditions.

Let this be clearly understood, for it is the turning point of the question. God knows I seek not separation from any Christian, or any body of Christians, simply because they err;—this shall not divide me from those who are united to Christ;—but if they oblige me either by words or conduct, directly or indirectly, to declare that their error is no error; or if my uniting with them, through some requirement on their part, necessarily involves my virtual assent to their error; then I have no choice left me but to separate from them.

“If,”—as Chillingworth clearly argues,—“there were any society of Christians that held there were no antipodes, notwithstanding this error I might communicate with them : but if I could not do so without professing myself of their belief in this matter, then I suppose I should be excused from schism if I should forsake their communion rather than profess myself to believe that which I do not believe.”* So here : if a Christian or a body of Christians say they can use the Baptismal Service of the Church of England with a good conscience, then let them ; I hinder them not, nor will I separate from them for using it : but if they further require of me assent to that Service as the absolute test of my communion with them, and will only receive me on these grounds, they virtually drive me from their communion and force me to secede. And who is answerable, and who is to blame for this scandal and schism ?

My reader, I desire not to justify myself before man, for God is my judge, and to me it is a very small thing to be judged of you, or of man’s judgment, yet, for the sake of those who have not considered this point, let me press home this question, WHO IS TO BLAME HERE ? who is to blame for this scandal and schism ? Consider it well. The Church of England will not let me serve in her communion unless I say that in putting questions

* Chillingworth. Religion of Protestants, chap. v., sec. 59.

respecting faith and repentance to senseless and perhaps sleeping infants,—and this in the midst of a solemn religious ordinance, and as a test of the infant's fitness to receive the rite,—there is “nothing contrary to the Word of God.” The Church of England will not let me serve in her communion unless I say that in making one person promise faith and repentance for another,—another too whose mind cannot be known,—there is “nothing contrary to the Word of God.” The Church of England will not let me serve in her communion unless I say of every child I baptize that it is then and there “regenerate with the Holy Spirit,” and unless in addition I say of all the Service, “that there is nothing in it contrary to the Word of God.” But who taught the Church of England to impose such a test as this! does God require this profession from His ministers? would Christ exclude from teaching every man who objected to make it?—Yet the Church of England does both: and in this way drives me from her pale, by proposing as a test for communion among her ministers a test which God never required.

With whom then is the blame here?—with me or with the Church?—Let those who wish to have the true answer to this question weigh well the decision of one usually quoted as a model of reasoning and of scriptural truth, I mean Chillingworth. He says,—“If a Church, “supposed to want nothing necessary, require me to “profess against my conscience that I believe some error,

“ *though never so small and innocent, which I do not believe, and will not allow me communion but upon this condition, in this case THE CHURCH FOR REQUIRING THIS CONDITION IS SCHISMATICAL, AND NOT I FOR SEPARATING FROM THE CHURCH.*” * Again, “ If you require the belief of *any* error among the conditions of your communion, our obligation to communicate with you ceaseth, and so the imputation of schism to us vanisheth into nothing, *but lies heavily upon you FOR MAKING OUR SEPARATION FROM YOU JUST AND NECESSARY, by requiring unnecessary and unlawful conditions of your communion.*” †

I allow indeed with the author from whom I have just quoted that—“ neither for sin, nor errors ought a church to be forsaken, *if she does not impose them or enjoin them : but if she do, then we must forsake men rather than God,* leave the church’s communion rather than commit sin, or profess known errors to be divine truths : for the prophet Ezekiel hath assured us that to say ‘ the Lord hath said so, when the Lord hath not said so,’ is a great sin, and a high presumption, be the matter never so small.” §

* Chillingworth’s Religion of Protestants. Preface, Sec. 44.

† Answer to Preface, Sec. 22.

§ Chillingworth, chap. v., sec. 68. The above passages occur in Chillingworth’s Answer to the Papists : the argument however is just the same whether it be directed against the error of the Church of England or the error of the Church of Rome. The

It is in this way that the Church of England forces me to secede from her ministry. Vain is it for me to say,—Propose any test you will out of the Scriptures, or demand from me what assent you will which can be proved by the Scriptures, and I will at once subscribe it with heart and hand :—No : this is not enough. The Church requires from me, beside this, subscription to a book, whose language, (by the confession of some of the best of her sons,) is “*to be regretted*,”* and is “*inconsistent*,”† and “*exceptionably expressed* ;”‡ and of this I must declare from first to last that “there is NOTHING in it contrary to the Word of God.” Fox-hunters, Puseyites, men of pleasure, and men of the world may

following passage from Bishop Jeremy Taylor speaks the same strain. He says:—“Few Churches that have framed bodies of confession and articles will endure any person that is not of the same confession; which is a plain demonstration that *such bodies of confession and articles do much hurt*, by becoming instruments of separating and dividing communions, and making unnecessary or uncertain propositions a certain means of schism and disunion. But then men would do well to consider whether or no such proceedings do not derive the guilt of schism upon them who least think it; and whether of the two is the schismatic, he that makes unnecessary and (supposing the state of things) inconvenient impositions, or he that disobeys them, because he cannot, without doing violence to his conscience, believe them: he that parts communion because without sin he could not entertain it, or they that have made it necessary for him to separate by requiring such conditions, which to no man are simply necessary, and to his particular are either sinful or impossible.”—*Lib. of Proph.*, sec. xxii. 1.

* Fawcett. “Baptism considered in connexion with Regeneration,” p. 29.

† Scott’s Essay on Regeneration.

‡ Scott’s Letters and Papers. 1826. Page 219.

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“willingly” ** do this, and doing it be esteemed true ministers of the Church : but gifts and graces, zeal and talents, knowledge and love, all these are useless, all are in vain, as far as ministry in the Established Church is concerned, without an accompanying subscription to the Prayer-book. It is perhaps a startling assertion, but no less true, that could Paul return to earth, nay more could it be that Paul’s Master might return again to minister among men, He could not teach or minister in the Church of England unless he would subscribe to the Baptismal Service, “that there is nothing in it contrary to the Word of God.”

Here then is one of the grounds upon which I separate from the Established Church. It is not simply because she contains error, but because she will not let me minister within her pale unless I assent to that error, and unless moreover I say of it, that “there is nothing in it contrary to the Word of God.” As a minister therefore I have no choice left me : either I must separate from the Church which requires these tests, or from God who requires truth : and “whether it be right in the sight of God to hearken unto men rather than unto God, judge ye.”

“But,”—it has been said to me,—“why, if this be so, should you therefore leave the Church altogether? Why, if on account of the subscription required, you cannot be a minister in her communion, should you not

** See the Canon, p. 10.

be a layman. As a layman the Church requires no subscription or assent to her Services and Ritual: Be a layman therefore, and then your ground of secession from us falls to the ground."—But is it so? Let us see.

Observe then first that this objection from beginning to end proceeds upon the assumption that my separation from the Church of England rests *solely* on the errors in the Prayer-book, and the accompanying subscription required from ministers: but this is not the case. The subscription required from me to what appears erroneous and contradictory is *one* reason for my separation as a minister, and I believe a sufficient one; it is one too which I have chosen to illustrate the principle on which I secede, as it is an argument which can be handled so as to be intelligible to all: Still, as I said before, it is far from being my *only* reason; and yet, till this can be shewn, the objection proves nothing.

Yet suppose I grant for a moment what, let it be remembered, is not the case:—suppose I grant that this requirement of assent to the Services of the Church were my *only* reason for withdrawing from her ministry, let us see whether it is true that under these circumstances I could consistently remain as a layman in her communion. It appears to me that the following reasons prove that on this one ground, were there no other, I cannot honestly stay in the Church of England, even as a layman.

For *first* I would ask, are not the Services of the

Church as much for the layman as for the minister?—confessedly they are so: the minister is only the mouth-piece of the congregation. What he says, he says not for himself, but in the name of the Church as a whole. Thus in the Service we have been examining he says, not “*I* thank Thee,” but “*WE*,” that is *WE* the Church; “*WE* thank Thee, most merciful Father, that it hath pleased Thee to regenerate this infant with thy Holy Spirit.” The words therefore, are the words, not only of the minister, but also of the Church as a whole, and so of every individual who composes it.

The words then being the words of the Church, and so of each member of it, the only question is,—Does each member of the Church in using these words assent to what he is saying. I am almost ashamed that it should be necessary for me to prove this, but I will do it to avoid mistakes: I do it thus:—In using the Baptismal Service each member of the Church either assents to its expressions, or he does not assent. If he does not assent to it, his using the words is hypocrisy before God. But we cannot imagine a Christian hypocritically addressing his Maker in words to which he does not assent; the conclusion therefore is that the man does assent to the words of the Church. The fact is, as Dr. Paley observes, that the Church of England is “a church which, by transfusing the substance of her articles into the form of her public worship, *has in effect made the* “*terms of communion*’ and *of admission into the minis-*

“*try the same.*”* Thus the layman in using this service virtually declares his assent to it by his actions, and the minister in subscribing to it does no more by his words.†

We see this clearly enough in the case of others. The Papist layman who uses the mass and the confessional we judge as evidently sanctioning them as much as the priest. The heathen who eats of the sacrifice is partaker of the altar : nor would we allow either to be free from the sin they countenance. So is it here. What should we think of the Romish priest who having seen the errors of his Church should satisfy himself that by his becoming a layman in that Church he had done all he ought to do. Should we not at once see through such half-hearted conduct and judge it as it deserved? Let us do so here, and so discover whether he who uses the Service does not as truly sanction it by his conduct, as the minister who subscribes to it does by his words.

I know indeed that there are not a few among the laity of the Church, who have excused themselves to me by saying,—“ We never use the words,—‘ We thank Thee for regenerating,’ &c.,—we always silently omit them

* Paley. Subscription to Articles, p. 155.

† In like manner Chillingworth, arguing against the Church of Rome, says in words equally applicable to the Church of England,—“ the true reason (for separation) is not so much because you *maintain* errors and corruptions, as because you *impose* them, ..and have so ordered your communion that either we must communicate with you in these things or nothing.”—Relig. of Prot., chap. v., sec. 40, p. 357.

in the Service, and so we are free from its error."—To such I need only put one simple question, and it is this,—Are you consistent? Is not such conduct virtual dissent? Surely it is so. The only difference then between you and me is that you are afraid to act out your convictions by protesting against and separating from what you see to be evil: I am not: and which of these lines of conduct is the honester, be ye the judges.

My *second* answer to the objection is this:—By staying in the Church even as a layman I should throw the whole weight of my knowledge, and influence, and character to uphold, or at least to countenance, men in using and doing what I believe to be wrong. Such conduct it appears to me would be cousin-german to that of the man who should consider smuggling unlawful, but yet would countenance the smuggler by purchasing his goods. In such a case would not the guilt of the buyer be equal to that of the seller; or rather I may ask, would not the man, who saw that smuggling was a sin and yet silently countenanced it, be more guilty than he who did not see this, and so sinned in ignorance? surely he would: for the one would do it ignorantly in unbelief, but the other against light and knowledge.

But, to carry on the figure for a moment, suppose the man who thus countenanced smuggling in another to have been an officer appointed to prevent the crime; would not this circumstance make his conduct the more disgraceful?—Yet what would my countenancing this

evil, after I am conscious of it, be but this very thing. I have been called and commissioned as a minister of Christ to oppose the evil and teach the good, and were I after this to hold my peace and countenance what is evil, should I not be faithless and disloyal to my God?

And this leads me to give a *third* reason why I cannot remain a layman in the Church of England: It is this:—At my ordination when I professed before the Church that I believed I was inwardly moved by the Holy Ghost to take upon me the ministration of the word,* I professed that to the truth of which my inmost soul bore heartfelt testimony. I did feel, and still feel the same, that I had a message committed to me for the Church and for the world, a message which was given me by God; and I see nothing in the circumstances which have separated me from the Establishment to cancel that call. On the contrary I feel that what the Lord has shewn me of His will, and what He has so graciously wrought on my behalf, only demands from me more diligence and devotedness in preaching and declaring His truth. But this I am necessarily shut

* See the Ordination Service.—“*Then shall the Bishop examine every one of them that are to be ordered, in the presence of the people after this manner following:—‘Do you trust that you are inwardly moved by the Holy Ghost to take upon you this office and ministration, to serve God for the promoting of His glory, and the edifying of his people?’ Answer.—‘I trust so.’ The Bishop.—‘Do you think that you are truly called according to the will of our Lord Jesus Christ . . . to the ministry of the Church.’ Answer.—‘I think so.’*”

out from as a layman in the Church of England ; I cannot therefore be a layman in the Church of England.

In concluding this part of my subject I will briefly sum up its argument : It has been as follows :—

As a *minister*, the Church of England requires me directly and specifically to affirm of all the Services of the Prayer-book that there is “NOTHING IN THEM CONTRARY TO THE WORD OF GOD.” But it appears to me that in the Service for Baptism there are things both contrary to scripture and inconsistent with other parts of the Prayer-book : therefore I cannot say I assent to them ; and therefore I cannot be a *minister* in the Church of England.

Again, as a *layman*, my communicating with the Church makes me virtually assent to her Services that they are right. But I do not believe them to be so : Therefore I cannot be a *layman* in the Church of England. And the ground of this is, not simply because there is evil connected with the Church, but because she has so ordered her communion that I CAN NEITHER BE MINISTER NOR LAYMAN IN HER WITHOUT COUNTENANCING AND ASSENTING TO THE EVIL SHE ENJOINS.

I have thus enlarged upon one particular, which perhaps as clearly as any other, illustrates the principle § on which I feel compelled to retire from communion

§ This principle as I have said above, p. 49, is that communion with the Church of England involves *assent* to her error. I cannot stay in the Established Church without sanctioning evil, and this as a Christian, *and having seen the evil*, I may not do. In her

with the Established Church. It is however but one of the many difficulties of conscience which are constantly presenting themselves before the clergy, and after all is only the blossom, not the real root of the evil in the Church. While therefore I bring this single particular forward as a reason, and a sufficient reason, for separation; it must not be supposed that it is the sole, or even the chief one. *I now clearly see that those particular objections, which at first affected my conscience as practical evil, are neither more nor less than the natural result of an error in principle, an error in the position and constitution of the Church; and it is in this error in principle that I find the strongest objection to remaining in the communion of the Established Church.*

If therefore I am asked—Why have you left the Church?—I answer, it is not simply because she requires my assent to the Prayer-book, though this I consider a sufficient reason, but because I believe her to be essentially unscriptural in her constitution, and judged so even out of her own mouth. For what is a Church? “The visible Church of Christ,” to use the words of the xix Article, “is a CONGREGATION of faithful men,” as such a separation from the unfaithful, and in open contrast to the world: but how is the

position, in her practice, and in her formularies, there are things which I now believe to be directly wrong, and as such I cannot uphold them: my remaining in the Established Church would necessarily involve my assent to the evil; I have no choice left me therefore but to secede.

Church of England “a CONGREGATION of *faithful*, (that is of *believing*,*) men? Look for instance at the Church of England in this town: is she not *as a body*, as a *congregation*, just as much characterized by the principles and fashions and follies of the world,—in a word, is she not just as much a section of the world itself,—as any other section of it within the limits of our town. I grant indeed that connected with her there are many most devoted saints, but there is no “*Congregation*” of them, neither are these saints “the Church of England;” they are simply a number of individuals within her pale, often the laughing-stock of their Church, and forced in their search after communion to seek it in “*private meetings*,” wholly unauthorized by their Church, and from which the body of their church are intentionally excluded.† But the Church of England,—what is it? It is the baptized world; and were every saint now

* “*Cætus fidelium.*”—*The Latin version of the Articles.*

† At St. John’s Church admission to the “*Private Meeting*” is by private ticket, only given, and rightly so restricted, to believers, or those who are with reason considered such. On this subject the following passage from a recent writer, is apposite enough. “The faithful ministers of the Church of England feeling the evil of the promiscuous, worldly association in the Church, frame little churches within the Church, which are the strongest acknowledgement of the corruption and defectiveness of the Church without: for if the establishment be indeed the true Church, which they assert it is, and if so consonant to God’s mind, that they can not only quietly abide in it, but see no reason for separation; if they will so praise and uphold it in word, why are they not content with it in fact, and why do they resort to their select meetings of believers—this separation within the Church, and altogether unauthorized by it—from which indeed the multi-

connected with her to be removed, the unbelieving remnant would still as much as ever be the Church of England, having just the same honour and position and name.

I would that God's children in the Church of England would lay this to heart ; for if the Articles are true, the Establishment is judged to be no church even out of its own mouth. Is it true, I ask, that "the visible church should be A CONGREGATION of *faithful men*?" then in what way does the Establishment correspond to this description? The true Christians in the Church of England mixed with the great body of the world do not make the congregation "a congregation of faithful men;" and though the saints *individually* may be saints, this does not make the system they are connected with "the Church." We see this distinction clearly enough in the things of the world. For instance, no one doubts that those members of Parliament who attend the meetings of the Anti-Corn Law League are truly and *bonâ fide* members of Parliament ; but this is quite another

tude of her members are excluded? for they will not allow within their little sacred inclosures, those whom nevertheless the Church, whom they so praise and profess to obey, receives. Here then seems to be the strongest acknowledgement of the necessity of separation ; it is the *practical* acknowledgment of those who, in the exercise of an enlightened judgment, feel the truth of the right principle, and recognize its necessity ; but who will not bear the cross of it ; and therefore, their expedient to reconcile things irreconcilable. I rejoice that believers are brought together anyhow ; but how strangely inconsistent, if indeed this be all."—*Reasons for Separation from the Established Church*, by Charles Hargrove, late Rector of Kilmina.

thing from saying that the meetings are meetings of Parliament. So in the case before us, no one doubts that those members of the Church of England who are united to Christ are "faithful men; but this is quite another thing from saying that the Establishment is "a congregation of faithful men."

What then is the Church of England? It is the people of England, the world in England, all the parishoners of all the parishes, good, bad, or indifferent, who in the unconsciousness of infancy have been brought by others to be sprinkled at the font: and this makes the nation the Church. § Faith is not needed, (otherwise than as it is absurdly promised for the infants by others who often know not what is meant by the word,)—love

§ This is the boast of her sons. *Bishop Beveridge* says, "The Church of England is by the blessing of God of the same extent with the kingdom in which we live." Sermon iv. *On the nature of the Christian Church.*

Hooker says, "There is not any man of the Church of England but the same man is also a member of the commonwealth, nor any member of the commonwealth which is not also of the Church of England. Are not these saints and citizens one and the same people? Are they not one and the same society?"

So too the *British Critic* :—"The system of our ecclesiastical judicature, as it exists at this moment, is founded upon the presumption not only that every man, woman, and child, is a member of the English Church, but that not a soul of them is at liberty to consider themselves otherwise :—that the Christian communion is identical with the national establishment. For certain purposes a man is with us no more permitted to renounce his churchmanship, than he is to abjure his allegiance." Cited in *Scales' Principles of Dissent*, p. 170.

What a description of the Church of Christ! Why, at this rate there is no *world* in England. All are saints, all are Christians, all are in the Church.

is not needed,—holiness is not needed,—grace is not needed; it is enough to have been born within the four seas, and to have been sprinkled while an unconscious babe: this makes the nation the Church; and thus the whole realm, having been “regenerated by the Holy Spirit” in baptism, is spiritual, and unconsciously made “members of Christ, children of God, and inheritors of the kingdom of heaven.” †

I believe it is to this fundamental error in her constitution that we may trace the great body of the evils in the Church. For instance, to take the single particular which I have brought forward in the preceding pages,—namely the doctrine of Baptismal Regeneration,—a very little thought will shew how closely and naturally it springs from the idea of nations as nations being admissable into the Church.

But to shew this connexion we must clear a step or two. And first I would ask,—What is requisite to

† Church Catechism. If in answer to this I am referred to the Apostolic Churches in which there was evil, I acknowledge the fact, but deny that it is to the purpose. A church may be a church still, though error *exists* in it, but *evil in the Church* is one thing, and *the evil world* another. Besides in the question discussed in the preceding pages, the *imposition*, and not the *existence* of evil, is the point in dispute; and this distinction clears up the fallacy of the appeal to the errors in the Apostolic Churches. At Corinth, for instance, in the Apostles' days evil *existed* for awhile, but there was church power, the evil was judged, and the church's candlestick yet remained. Thyatira was in a more awful state: her sin was “*suffering*” evil, and for this she is threatened. But the Church of England has gone further than this even: she not only *suffers* evil, but *imposes* it as a test for ministerial conformity.

make men members of the Church of Christ?—The New Testament answers,—“*by one Spirit* are we all baptized into one body;” † “we are all the children of God *by faith* in Christ Jesus;” ** but “all men have not faith.” † Accordingly we find that under the Christian dispensation natural birth in any family or nation has ceased to confer the right to church-membership, for now “there is neither Jew nor Greek.” § In the Old Testament day it was otherwise: God then, under a carnal dispensation, appointed a national church, the sons of Abraham according to the flesh, to be a type of the “peculiar people,” which, gathered out of all nations, should be “a holy nation” * unto the Lord.

† 1 Cor. xii. 13. ** Gal. iii. 26. † 2 Thess. iii. 2.

§ Gal. iii. 28. The only passage in the New Testament which seems to contradict this is 1 Cor. vii. 14, “The unbelieving husband is sanctified (i. e. *is made holy*) by the wife, and the unbelieving wife is sanctified (*is made holy*) by the husband: else were your children unclean, but now are they *holy*.” From which it is argued by some that since children, by connexion with one converted parent, are called “*holy*,” therefore without personal faith they may be members of the church. In answer to this it may be sufficient to say that whatever is here meant by the word “*holy*” as respects the children, it is in this scripture equally applied to the unbelieving parent. If therefore the *child* of a believer is admissible as such into the Church, so also is the *unbelieving husband* or *wife*. In a word, the passage either proves too much or nothing; and therefore those, who from this scripture argue for the admission of *infants* into the Church, ought in common honesty and consistency to argue for the admission also of *unbelieving adults*; for of *both* it is said that connexion with a believer makes them “*holy*.”

* 1 Pet. ii. 9.

But does it follow from this that a national church is *now* according to the mind and will of our God? Far from it: the true application of the type is this, that just as of old, birth in the family of Abraham made a person a member of the Old Testament Church, so now birth into Christ's family makes men members of the New Testament Church. §

But what is birth in Christ's family? Is it that which a nation as such can receive, or is it not the particular gift of God according to election? Plainly it is the gift of God according to election, a gift which comes "not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God." † How then can a nation as such receive it? It cannot; and therefore if man determines that nations as such are to be received into the Church, they must be received, not on the ground which the New Testament describes as the test of church-membership,—the ground of their spiritual birth according to election,—but on the ground of some visible ordinance, which being first misapplied, shall then be put in the place of, and finally denominated, spiritual birth.

And this is exactly what has been done. The

§ Throughout the whole of this question, the one single truth which it is necessary to see is that taught Heb. vii. 12, that "the priesthood being changed, there is made of necessity a change also in the law." A clear apprehension of this truth would cut short many sophistries.

† John i. 13.

assumption, the utterly unscriptural § assumption is first made that all the inhabitants of a certain territory, (whether they are children of harlots or drunkards or infidels, or as is the commoner case, the children of mere worldlings,) may by birth be members of the Church; because their parents and parents' parents for centuries past † have in like manner, by their birth within a certain geographical limit, been brought under an outward ordinance. And thus the world is made the Church, and called "spiritually regenerate," "members of Christ, children of God, and inheritors of the kingdom of heaven;" not by virtue of conversion to God, or of spiritual birth, or of vital union to Christ, but because they are born within certain limits, and undergo an outward form.

The doctrine therefore of Baptismal regeneration, unscriptural as it is, is yet neither more nor less than the natural result of a national church. A church, if it pretend to be a church at all, must be "a *congregation of faithful men*," a body united to Christ, and as such "born of the spirit." This is allowed on all hands. If therefore the nation is to be the Church, it must be *regenerate and faithful*: the question is, how can this

§ By "utterly unscriptural" I mean utterly opposed to New Testament Scripture, which is our rule: nor will this be found to be contrary to the Old Testament, if only the types are properly applied.

† That is since the days when the Papal Apostacy held dominion in the land.

be accomplished? Why, thus alone: vicarious faith, which is in fact no faith, must be promised for all the infants of the realm, before the dawn of their mental consciousness; upon this vicarious profession baptism must be administered, and thus *unconsciously* the nation, while infants, becomes "a congregation of faithful men." O! what confusion on confusion. The Bible says, "the promise is of faith that it might be by grace," § and this to shew God's election; the Church of England says, it is of infant baptism without faith, that it may take in the nation as a whole. And this is the Church of England, every member of which has been declared regenerate, "regenerate with the Holy Spirit, received for God's own child by adoption, and incorporated into His holy church;" † every member of which is made in his baptism, (in his unconscious baptism,) "a member of Christ, the child of God, and an inheritor of the kingdom of heaven;" every member of which has been brought into such a state that respecting it he may pray that "he may continue in the same unto his life's end."

It is not however my design to enter any further upon this most important subject here, † and I have only touched upon it with the intention of shewing that however good a reason I may have for separation in the

§ Rom. iv. 16.

† Baptismal Service.

† I purpose, if the Lord enable me, bringing this question forward in a separate tract.

evils required by conformity, those evils are only the consequence of the more important error in the principle of the Church. To my mind the mere *position* of the Establishment as one with the state, together with the consequences arising from it,—among others the recognition of the Supreme Governor of the state as *ex officio* “Supreme Governor in all spiritual causes” § also,—is a far more serious objection to the Church of England than the errors in her formularies: the one might possibly be removed by a revision of her liturgy, but the other is bound up in her very constitution; the one may be regarded as only an excrescence from the

§ Canon xxxvi, to which the Church of England requires the “*ex animo and willing*” subscription of all her ministers. On this subject *De Lolme*, on the constitution of England, says,—“The King is the supreme head of the Church. In this capacity he appoints the Bishops and the two Archbishops, and he alone can convene the assembly of the clergy. The assembly is formed on the model of the Parliament; the Bishops form the upper house; deputies from the dioceses, and from the several chapters, the lower house: the assent of the King is likewise necessary to the validity of their acts and canons, and the King can prorogue or dissolve the convocation.”—p. 70.

The following passage from *Dr. Barrow*, directed by him against the headship of the pope, if true at all, must in some degree be applicable to the temporal headship of the Church of England:—“This pretence doth thwart the Holy Scripture, by assigning to another the prerogatives and peculiar titles appropriated therein to our Lord. The scripture asserteth him to be our only Sovereign Lord and King,—speaketh of one Archpastor and Great Shepherd of the sheep, exclusively to any other, telleth us that we have one High-priest of our profession,—informeth us that there is but one Supreme Doctor, Guide, Father of Christians, &c.—It seemeth therefore a sacrilegious arrogance derogatory from our Lord’s honour, for *any* man to assume or admit those titles of ‘Sovereign

branches, § the other is an important and integral part of the tree itself.

In faithfulness then to what the Lord has shewn me, I have no course left me but to separate from the Establishment; and though as a *reason* for this step I have in the preceding pages dwelt more on the evils which are sanctioned by conformity, than on the question of the Church's true position; yet I consider the latter to be the stronger and more scriptural ground. To take this latter however, the Christian must see the Church's calling as "not of the world, EVEN AS Christ is not of the world." † This, alas, very few even of

of the Church,' 'Head of the 'Church,' &c., upon what pretence or under what *distinction soever*.....

"To decline these allegations of scripture, *they have forged distinctions of several kinds of Churches, and several sorts of heads; but no such distinctions have any place or ground in scripture, nor can well consist with it,* which simply doth represent the Church as one kingdom, 'a kingdom of heaven,' 'a kingdom not of this world;' all the subjects of which have their *πολιτευμα* (citizenship) in heaven, or are considered as members of a city there, so that it is vain to seek a sovereign thereof in this world;... especially considering that our Lord, according to his promise, is ever present with the Church here, governing it by the efficacy of His Spirit and grace, so that no corporeal or visible head of this spiritual body is needful."—"On the Pope's Supremacy," p. 118, 119, 121.

How is it that what is so evil in the Pope is right in the Supreme Governor of the realm of England?—See *Zurich Letters. Letters i. & xiv.*

§ An excrescence however which as I have said above naturally arises from the idea of a national Church.

† John xvii. 16.

God's believing people now understand ; and therefore I have with sorrow been—shall I say, satisfied,—no, not satisfied,—with sorrow I have been compelled to illustrate the principle on which I secede on the lower and weaker ground, simply because it is such as can be apprehended with less light ; instead of exhibiting it from the higher and stronger ground, whither, it might be, some of the Lord's children would hesitate to follow me.

But while I do this, and while I speak of the errors which are imposed by the Church of England on all in her communion, as a reason and a sufficient reason for separation ; I do beseech every brother in the Lord to seek from Him who is the teacher—teachers, that right understanding of our calling in Christ, which shall enable him to see the Church's risen position in Christ Jesus,—to see that “ as Christ is, so are we in this world.” † O ! that the Lord's people may be led to understand more of this, and so learn to feel for the Church as a church, as well as for themselves as isolated individuals. How soon would this set them free from the union-destroying and spirit-hindering systems of man. But how few do this. It seems sufficient for the majority of Christians to have communion with God *for themselves*, to seek *their own* separation from the world, and to desire *their own* holiness, while the separateness and communion of the Church as a church s

† 1 John iv. 17,

wholly forgotten. But is this the mind of Jesus, is this the spirit of our Lord ?

Suffer me then to press upon such of you, my readers, as know the Lord, and wish truly to follow him, the duty and privilege of seeking to understand the true position of the Redeemer's Church. I urge this the more earnestly because the Lord has taught me that it is utterly useless to see the errors of the Establishment, unless at the same time we see our "heavenly calling" in Christ Jesus. How many are there in the Church of England who see her errors and yet remain. Why is this ? Because for the most part they do not *fully* see the Church's calling, as one with Christ in his cross, in his resurrection, and in his glory,—as rejected by the world, but "sitting in heavenly places in Christ Jesus." † They see perhaps that Jesus died for their sins, but they do not see that they themselves must be dead and crucified with him :—they see perhaps that Christ rose for their justification, but they do not see that they themselves may be risen with him, much less do they "know the *power* of that resurrection : " §—they see perhaps that Christ's glory shall appear to their joy, but they see not that that glory is really their's. And yet until we see these truths we see not our inheritance, and so are fearful to take our proper position in the world.

Nor is it enough for the saints of God to see these

† Eph. ii. 6.

§ Phil. iii. 10.

things for themselves as individuals: I would press on them to consider these truths for the Church as a church. Is it God's will that there should be a visible church, or is it enough for each Christian to stand alone? Surely there must be a church. And since there should be a church, is not the position of her risen Head the proper position also of the body as a whole? Ought not the Church as a body, as much as each individual Christian for himself, to know the death and resurrection of her Saviour and her God? Surely she ought, and would do were she standing where she should. But the Church of England cannot do this, for she is one with the world; and therefore though individual saints may be found within her pale, who as individuals know something of the power of Christ's resurrection and the fellowship of his sufferings, yet the Church to which they are connected not only knows nothing of the sort, but from its constitution and principle occupies a position of worldly honour and repute, and union with the world, which is utterly at variance with the position of her Head, and sorely hindering to the souls of the saints.

But I will say no more on this subject here. May the Lord open the eyes of all his people, not only to know more *about* these things, but to know them in their soul-satisfying inwardness and reality: and then, dear brethren, the preceding arguments against the requirements of the Church of England, strong as they

are, will be weak in comparison to that blessed spirit of life within you, which will lead you to rejoice in taking the cross, that you may here also know the resurrection, and so be prepared for the glory of our Lord and our God.

I have thus given a brief, and I hope intelligible, statement of the principle on which I feel compelled to retire from my position in the Established Church. It now only remains for me to notice a few of the chief objections which have been urged in reply: This I proceed to do at once, only requesting the reader to observe that though these objections display in some cases much ingenuity and sophistry, there is not one of them which really touches the main question in dispute, the question namely whether the Church of England does or does not commit sin in proposing, as a test for ministerial communion, the declaration—"that there is nothing in her Baptismal Services contrary to the word of God."

(1.) The *first objection* then which has been urged against what I have advanced is as follows: It is said,—
"If the Baptismal service is really inconsistent, and
"unscriptural, how is it that good men have so often
"without hesitation yielded their assent to what it
"contains?—how is it, if these things are errors, that
"so many true Christians, who in nothing have been

“hindered from impartially examining the requirements
“of the Church, have never seen them?”

Now what is this objection?—Simply an appeal from *principles to men*: of all other arguments the most dangerous. Observe, the objection does not attempt to prove that the Baptismal Services are good in themselves, or that the subscription required from ministers is in principle correct; It only tries to maintain the Church’s credit by resting on the example of good but yet fallible men: in a word, instead of taking up the argument on the intrinsic merits of the question, it attempts to decide it by the authority of men.

But there are many other flaws in this argument which prove it to be wholly untenable. In the first place, are its premises true? Is IT TRUE, as this objection assumes, that so many good men have discovered no uneasiness or hesitation as to the formularies and requirements of the Established Church? Why then, to take but a single example, did one of her brightest ornaments say of the Baptismal Service that it was “*exceptionably expressed?*” §—why did he say of the ‘assent and consent’ to the Prayer-book,—“*I can only be reconciled to it by the consideration that it “by no means is supposed to imply putting the Prayer-book on the footing of the Bible: and by reflecting “that many things are wrong everywhere; but I wish*

§ Scott’s Letters and Papers. Ed. 1826, p. 219.

it. were done with."*—Why again, while referring to his apology for the Burial Service, does the same writer say,—“I am not prepared to say so much of the objections to some expressions in the Baptismal Service or “in the office for Confirmation ;”†—meaning that such expressions were less defensible. Do not these hints of dissatisfaction§ respecting the Burial, Baptismal, and

* On this declaration of Mr. Scott's, another clergyman of the Established Church, Mr. Riland, thus strikingly comments:—“It will not be considered, I trust, as an unfair attempt to sustain my own cause by the concessions of a man whose memory we all venerate, and whose writings and life it becomes us exceedingly to value, when I add that the circumstance of equalizing the claims of the Bible and Liturgy is very far from being the actual question at issue ; and that the wish that subscription to the Prayer-book were abolished, is an evident and formal expression of dissatisfaction, painful doubt, and earnest desire to be released from a cause of great disquietude..

“The question still returns, How would all this hesitation, reserve, variableness of assent and consent, equivocal phraseology, and half-told diversity of opinion, be borne in the common transactions between man and man ; if for example, to recur to a former illustration, the managers of a Friendly Society were to admit members as subscribers, what would be said if one of the subscribing members were to urge, ‘my written assent to the rules by no means implies that they are to be put on the footing of the provisions by which the Bank of England is governed ; and I wish my subscription were done with?’—Would the managers felicitate themselves on the subscriber's faithfulness and powers of analogy!” *Church Reform.* pp. 270. 271.

† Scott's Letters and Papers. Edit. 1826. p. 265. 268.

§ I will give but one other instance of the avowed dissatisfaction respecting the Prayer-book, in the published expression of a minister of the Establishment :—

“What,” asks Mr. Riland, “do we gain by the party spirit of the preface to the liturgy ; the ill selection of proper lessons, gospels, and epistles ; the retention of legendary names and allusions

Confirmation offices betray a state of conscience somewhat at variance with "unfeigned assent and consent to all and every thing contained in and prescribed by the Prayer-book?"

But the objection assumes another point, namely that the good men who have thus yielded their assent to the Prayer-book have "in nothing been hindered from "impartially examining the requirements of the Church." —Now I ask, IS THIS TRUE? Is it indeed no hindrance to impartiality of judgment to have every thing in the world to lose, and nothing but reproaches to gain? In cases like this what does a man's "impartial" examination amount to? It is the impartiality of a man who according as his examination turns out, must eat or starve, be respected or reviled, be loved or hated. I do

in the Calendar; the lection of the Apocrypha, and the omission of the Apocalypse; the mention of feasts and fasts never observed; the repetitions of the Pater-noster, Kyrie eleison, and Gloria Patri; the wearisome length of the services; the redundancy and assumptions in the state prayers; the unsatisfactoriness of the three Creeds; the disputable character of the Baptismal and Burial offices; the incompleteness and dubious construction of the Catechism, and the Order of Confirmation; the inapplicable nature, and absolution, of the Visitation of the Sick; the imperfection of the Communion Service; the discordance between the Prayer-book and Bible translations of the Psalms; the contumelious and offensive language of the state services; and added to all these sources of weakness, similar causes of inefficiency in the Articles and Homilies." *Church Reform.* p. 209.

I beg to observe that I do not quote this as assenting to its contents, but simply as shewing the dissatisfaction of one who holds his position in the Church in virtue of his declaration respecting the Prayer-book as a whole that "there is nothing in it contrary to the word of God."

not say that these considerations *ought* to influence the children of God ; I do not even say that they *do* so. I only say that if they do not, the impartiality is such as angels may envy.

And supposing the above objection, (namely that many good men have never seen these errors,) to be true, I would have those who urge it as an argument remember that it has been, and can be, just as strongly used in behalf of the contradictions and absurdities of Transubstantiation. May not Papists, and do not Papists, say,—using the argument just as this objection does,—If this doctrine of Transubstantiation is contradictory and absurd, how is it that devoted Christians like Fenelon, and Pascal, and Quesnel, and the Port-Royalists, have yet yielded their assent to the Mass and its accompaniments? Surely if this argument is good in the one case, it is good in the other ; if it will defend the English Evangelicals in holding Baptismal Regeneration, it will equally defend the Continental Romanists in holding the doctrine of the Mass. But who is there will say that such an argument justifies the latter? Why then should it be brought to justify us?

The fact is, if we wish for Truth, we may never argue that an error is not an error, or a contradiction not a contradiction, simply because this man or that, this body of men or that body of men, have not seen it so. In this way any error may be canonized. As Chillingworth forcibly remarks,—in words strikingly applicable to the

supporters of the various systems which are now current in defence of the Baptismal Service,—“ Though perhaps “ it may be very difficult for a man in his right wits to “ believe a contradiction expressed in terms, especially “ if he believe it to be a contradiction; yet for men “ being cowed and awed by superstition, (or by any “ other circumstances,) to persuade themselves upon “ slight and trivial grounds that these or these, though “ they seem contradictions, yet indeed are not so, and “ so to believe them; *or if the plain repugnance of them “ be veiled or disguised a little with some* **EMPTY, UNIN-** “ **TELLIGIBLE, NONSENSICAL DISTINCTION,** or if it be not “ expressed but implied, not direct but by consequence, “ so that the parties to whose faith the propositions are “ offered are either innocently, *or perhaps* **AFFECTEDLY** “ **IGNORANT of the contrariety of them;** for men in such “ cases easily to swallow and digest contradictions, he “ that denies it possible must be a mere stranger in the “ world.”* Most true. The fact is that the Church of England holds out so many advantages and allurements to the flesh that if “ the plain repugnance” of her contradictions and errors can be veiled or disguised a little with, what Chillingworth calls, “**SOME EMPTY, UN-INTELLIGIBLE, NONSENSICAL DISTINCTION,**” it is hard, O! how hard to escape the snare.

What then comes of the objection we have been con-

* Chillingworths' Religion of Protestants. Vol. 1. ch. iv. § 47.

sidering? Simply nothing. In the first place, we have seen that it does not touch the main question in dispute,—the question namely whether the Church is right in her requirements,—but argues from men's examples rather than from principles of truth: In the next place, the premises are all of them questionable, not to say untrue: and in the third place the argument, if it proves anything, proves too much, since it will just as well defend the mummeries of Romanism as the errors of the Established Church. In no way therefore does it assist the Baptismal service and its supporters; in no way does it prove that I am justified in saying of the Prayer-book, "that there is NOTHING in it contrary to the word of God."

The *second objection* which has been urged against my separation from the Church of England has been put to me as follows:—"You say that you feel conscientious scruples respecting the position and requirements of the Established Church: but do you not know that conscience is a fallible and often an erring guide? How many men have acted conscientiously, and yet have erred; so you in like manner, though you act conscientiously, cannot be certain you are right, but may possibly be mistaking the truth of God."

Now here I ask at once, What does this objection amount to? Simply to this,—that a man in seeking the truth may possibly err: I grant this; but what

then? Does it follow that because I *may possibly be* in error, therefore I *am* in error; or because it is possible that a man may err in seeking God's will, therefore he can never be certain that the truth is the truth. Yet this is the argument of the objection. At this rate we might say,—arguing just as this objection argues,—Because it is possible for a traveller to lose his way, therefore I can never be certain that I am in the right way between Beverley and Hull:—Because it is possible that a judge may give a wrong judgment, therefore I can never be sure I have judged aright:—Because it is possible for a sailor to mistake a bank of clouds for distant land, therefore I can never be certain that land is land. These are all arguments precisely parallel to the objection under consideration, and are so palpably absurd, that, were it not for the cross which infallibly attends faithfulness, and for the blindness which always accompanies systematic error, they would instantly be seen through by the feeblest in the Church.

How then does this objection respecting the fallibility of conscience disprove the preceding arguments against the requirements of the Church? It does not disprove them: All it proves is that a fallible man is a fallible man: but I repeat that the possibility of a man's being deceived in the use of his faculties will never prove that he is not to exercise those faculties which God has given him. To say therefore that a man is fallible in the use of any faculty, be it conscience, or

reason, or hearing, or sight,—to say that these faculties and powers may possibly sometimes be deceived,—will never prove that a man is justified in neglecting those faculties, or in acting in opposition to them; much less will it prove that because these faculties may err, therefore the man who uses them must necessarily be deceived.

Yet the whole objection now under consideration proceeds on the supposition that because on certain difficult points men may err, therefore they can never be certain that they do not err. But the question I have brought forward as a reason for my separation is not one of these very subtile and hardly-comprehended mysteries, beyond the grasp of our powers; it is simply this,—can I truly say that *in putting questions respecting faith and repentance to unconscious and perhaps sleeping infants,—and this in the midst of a solemn religious ordinance, and as a test of the infant's fitness to receive the rite—*there is “nothing contrary to the word of God.” Can I truly say that *in making one person promise faith for another,—for another too whose mind cannot be known,—*there is “nothing contrary to the word of God?” Can I truly say that *in calling every child I baptize, “regenerate with the Holy Spirit,”* there is “nothing contrary to the word of God?” These are no very difficult questions. Granting then that there are points, as I confess there are, upon which doubt will remain after all our enquiries, I deny that

these are such. Granting too, as I fully do, that conscience may be sometimes deceived, this should no more hinder me from obeying my conscience in a plain question like the above, than the fact of a sailor's sometimes mistaking clouds for land should hinder him from confidently and safely casting anchor on some well-known shore.

I have thus answered the objection, as it is generally stated. In doing so I have taken no notice of the very dangerous use which is sometimes made of it, namely, that since conscience may err, therefore we may neglect and resist it. But what saith the Scripture? "To him that esteemeth anything to be unclean, to him it is unclean."† To take the very lowest grounds therefore, suppose it could be proved that in my case my objections to the Church of England were invalid,—suppose it could be proved that in objecting to call every child I baptize "regenerate with the Holy Spirit," in objecting to make one person promise faith for another, and in objecting to say of all this that there is "nothing in it contrary to the word of God,"—my conscience was overscrupulous: Suppose that this were the case, even then my only path would be to act up to what conscience dictated; for "he that doubteth is damned if he eat," and "whatsoever is not of faith is sin." §

What then comes of this second objection? Simply

† Rom. xiv. 14.

§ Rom. xiv. 23.

nothing, for if it proves any thing, it proves too much : if it proves that because conscience may possibly err, therefore we may not follow its dictates in a simple question of right and wrong ; it will equally prove that because our senses sometimes err, they may not be trusted for our ordinary wants. † But this is absurd. In nothing therefore does this objection assist the Church of England in her requirements ; in no way does it prove that I am justified in saying of the Prayer-book, “ that there is NOTHING in it contrary to the word of God.”

A *third objection* against secession from the Established Church has been put to me somewhat as follows : It is said, that “ the sad examples of those (Sibthorp, Newman, and others,) who having left the Established Church upon pretence of her errors, have yet wandered into greater errors, ought to deter any sober Christian from opposing or differing from the Church at all.”

Now with regard to this objection, it may perhaps be interesting to those who urge it to know that it has been, and may be, just as firmly wielded against the Church of England by the Bishop of Rome, as by the Church

† The natural result of acting on this objection is to lead men, under the supposition that conscience *may* err, to act as if it always *did* err, and so to give up conscience into the hands of others. We might as well say, because your eyes and ears may sometimes be deceived, therefore give up your eyes and ears into the hands of others.

of England against seceders from herself; and it is just as applicable in the one case as in the other. Thus it has been said a hundred times.—Many seceding from the Church of Rome have become Neologians, therefore never leave Rome :—many in abjuring the errors of the Mass have fallen into infidelity, therefore never leave the Mass :—Blanco White exchanged Popery for Socinianism, therefore cleave to Popery : Are we therefore to cleave to Popery ? Clearly not. But if the argument will not defend the evils of the Church of Rome, so neither will it defend the errors of the Established Church.

But to take the argument upon its own merits, after all, what does it amount to ? “ It is,” as Chillingworth says, “ just as if you should say, divers men have fallen “ into Scylla by going too far from Charybdis, be sure “ therefore you keep close to Charybdis : Divers leaving “ prodigality have fallen into covetousness, therefore “ be you constant to prodigality : Many have fallen “ from worshipping God perversely and foolishly, not to “ worship Him at all; from worshipping many Gods to “ worshipping none; this therefore ought to deter men “ from leaving superstition and idolatry, for fear of fal- “ ling into atheism and impiety. This is your counsel and “ sophistry : but God says clean contrary, ‘ *Take heed you “ swerve not either to the right hand or to the left ; you “ must not do evil that good may come thereon ;*’ there- “ fore neither, that you may avoid a greater evil ; you

“must not be obstinate in a certain error, for fear of an
“uncertain.” †

Allowing then that some who have left the Church of England have fallen into great errors, the question is, did their errors arise simply from leaving the Church? Clearly not: else all who have left the Establishment should have fallen in like manner, which they certainly have not done. The fact is, the errors of some of those who have left the Church, arose, not from leaving the Church's evil, but from the weakness of our nature, which in fleeing from one evil is so prone to fall into another. But are we, because the way of truth is difficult, to abide in what is sin? Are we to be constant in one way of error, lest if we leave it, we may fall into another? Because the right path is a steep and rough one, are we therefore to abide in the wrong? No: the rule is clear, however hard it may be to follow it,—“Straight is the gate, and narrow is the way that leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it;” † therefore “take heed that ye turn not aside, to the right hand, nor to the left.” §

What then comes of this *third objection*? Simply nothing. It is an argument from the abuse against the use of truth, of all arguments the most absurd; and if it proves anything, proves too much; since it is just as

‡ Chillingworth. Relig. of Prot. ch. iii. § 63.

† Matt. vii. 14. § Deut. v. 32.

valid in defence of Popery as in defence of the Established Church. In nothing therefore does this objection assist the Church of England in her requirements; in no way does it prove that I am justified in saying of the Prayer book, "that there is NOTHING in it contrary to the word of God."

A *fourth objection* which has been urged against my separation is as follows:—"Since in every thing human "there will always be evil, you must not expect the "Prayer-book to be perfect. Allowing therefore that "the Prayer-book has some slight errors, you ought "rather to put up with the small evil within the Church "than commit the greater evil of separation from it. "Even if you leave the Church you will not find perfection: had you not better therefore stay where you "are."

Now in answer to this objection I may say at once that I most fully agree with its opening declaration. I fully believe that in every human work there will necessarily be evil, nor do I expect that the Book of Common Prayer will be exempt from this: But what then?—How does this prove me wrong in refusing to say of the Prayer-book, that "there is nothing in it contrary to the word of God?"—Why, instead of answering me, it only supports what I have urged. The proper conclusion from the premises is evidently this:—Since in every thing human there will always be evil, and since

the Prayer-book is something human, therefore in the Prayer-book there will be evil : and since in the Prayer-book there is evil, I never ought to say of it that "there is nothing in it contrary to the word of God."

So much for the premises of this objection ; Now for the conclusion : it runs thus,—“Allowing therefore “that the Prayer-book has some slight errors, you “ought rather to put up with the small evil in the “Church than commit the greater evil of separation “from it.”

Now without entering into the question, how far this conclusion follows from the premises,* it may be sufficient for me to say that, whether it be true or false, it does not apply to the case in dispute ; the question is not whether in remaining in the Church of England I will “*put up*” with a small evil in preference to a great one, but whether I will *assent* to a small evil that “there is nothing in it contrary to the word of God.” I deny therefore that the expression, “*putting up with evil*,” by any means describes the real state of the case. It might more truly be described as “*sanctioning evil*.” The Church is not satisfied with her ministers “*putting*

* To the thoughtful reader I need hardly say that this conclusion has simply nothing to do with the premises here connected with it. I do not however press this point, as it might be said by some that the whole objection in the above form was only a man of straw of my own making. That the objection as it stands is but a man of straw I fully allow, but whether it is of my own making, I leave those of my readers who have urged it against me, to decide.

up with” her mistakes, this would be bad enough ;* she requires them further to *sanction* and *assent* to them : It is not enough for me to “*put up with*” the evil in the Baptismal Service ; I am further required to say of the whole Service, that “there is nothing in it contrary to the Word of God.”

The fact is, as I have said before, § that it is the *assent* to error required by the Established Church, and not the mere *existence* of it, which necessitates my secession from her communion. Evil there will ever be both in the saint and in the Church until the Lord returns, but this will never prove that therefore I may say of that evil, whether it be in myself, or in my brother, or in the Church, that it is no evil. Yet this is the point which offends and excludes me from the Church of England. I repeat, I do not separate from the Church expecting to find entire freedom from error,— I do not separate from the Church objecting to have fellowship with a brother because he ignorantly errs ;— the ground of my secession is this, that as long as I remain in her communion she requires me to *assent* to her evil, † and, as long as I remain a minister, to say of her

* This was just the charge against Thyatira, she suffered evil, she *put up with* what should have been judged, and hence the threatening upon her, see Rev. ii. 18-20. On the contrary see the commendation of Ephesus,—“thou canst not bear them that are evil.” Rev. ii. 2.

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† This as I have shewn above, pp 54-60, is equally true of laymen in the Establishment.

Baptismal Service with all its errors, that "there is nothing in it contrary to the Word of God."

And in this simple distinction we may unravel the whole sophistry of the objection we are considering: It consists in calling things by wrong names, and speaks of "*putting up with* evil," when the truth is the ministers of the Church must further *assent* to all the evil in the Prayer-book, be it great or small, that "there is nothing in it contrary to the Word of God." I need hardly point out how different these two things are: it is one thing to "*put up with* evil, but it is quite another thing to *assent* to it; it is one thing for me to "*put up with*" my suspension, but who does not see that it would be quite another thing for me to say that I "*heartily subscribed*" to the whole proceeding that "there was nothing in it contrary to the Word of God."

But the objection under consideration proceeds still further, and though in effect the preceding remarks have answered the concluding part of the objection, yet lest I should seem to shirk the question I will examine what remains: It runs thus,—“Even if you leave the Church you will not find perfection; had you not better therefore stop where you are.”

Now here again I fully agree with the declaration that "even if I leave the Church of England I shall not find perfection;" but how does it follow from this, that "THEREFORE I had better stop where I am?" At the same rate I might say to the world,—even if you leave

your sins and seek after righteousness, you will never reach perfection, THEREFORE be satisfied to remain as you are. Now, absurd as this is, the objection now under consideration when urged against my reasons for separation has still greater absurdity, for it just amounts to this,—Because you will never find perfection, *therefore* be satisfied to remain in a position where you must openly countenance what is clearly wrong,—Because you will never find a church without some evil, *therefore* be satisfied to say of the Church of England that her evil is good. With precisely similar force, (or rather with precisely similar absurdity,) it might be argued that because a Christian while in the flesh will never be wholly sinless, therefore he should say that his present sins are no sins; or because he will be always failing, therefore he should say of his failings that “there is nothing in them contrary to the word of God.”

What then comes of this objection? Simply nothing. So far from proving me in error, all its premises only support what I have advanced: and as for the conclusion, if it deserves the name, I think I may leave it to its fate. I will only say this more respecting it, that I am quite willing to learn from any one how by any means it assists the Baptismal Service and its supporters, or how it proves that I am justified in saying of the Prayer-book, that “there is NOTHING in it contrary to the word of God.”

A fifth objection which has been urged against my

separation from the Church of England has been as follows: It is said,—“Allowing that there are trifling errors in the Church, yet the enlarged sphere of usefulness which is given you in her communion, and the greater good which may be done among the numbers which are gathered within her pale, ought to keep you from being offended at the trifles to which you object.”

Now in answer to this, I would first ask, How does the above objection invalidate the arguments which I have advanced? Does it prove that the Baptismal Service is correct:—does it prove that the Church’s requirements are correct:—does it prove that the Church’s constitution is correct:—does it enter into any one or all of these important questions? Clearly not. It leaves them all to their fate, only putting forward the old Popish argument of *expediency* to cover its retreat. The objection therefore, to say the least of it, is inapplicable, and as such might safely be left to itself: still as it is constantly brought forward in this question, as if there were really some weight in it, I will proceed to examine it upon its own merits.

Suppose then, (what however is not the case,) that the objection were applicable; the question still remains, is it a sound one? To answer this let us observe what it amounts to. If it were to speak out clearly it would be simply this, that there are indeed trifling evils in the requirements of the Church, but the greater opportunities of usefulness within her pale justify the sanctioning

and supporting what is wrong. Observe here the objection does not deny that there are evils in the Church's requirements; It only assumes that the evils are "*trifles*," and that therefore they may be "*sanctioned*." But are they trifles:—or are they on this ground to be sanctioned? I put it to the consciences of the saints of God:—Is it a trifle to say evil is good and good evil?—Is it a trifle for me to say that there is nothing in the Prayer-book contrary to the Word of God, while I believe the book has errors?—Is it a trifle to call the world the church, and to treat them as such, while they live without faith, without love, without Christ, without the Spirit?—Are these things trifles:—are these things the "*mint and anise and cummin*:"—are they not rather "*the weightier matters of the law*."

But let us suppose that these evils are small evils, and that the field of usefulness connected with them is the widest that can be found, are we upon these grounds to say that evils are no evils? Is any idea of expediency to justify sin? Why this objection if sifted from its impertinences comes simply to this, that God cannot do His work unless we compromise the truth to help him, and that Christ is in such need of our assistance that He cannot effect His purpose without our sanctioning sin. Shall we then do evil that good may come? God forbid: for "*to obey is better than sacrifice, and to hearken than the fat of rams*."

And as to "*the enlarged sphere of usefulness*" in

the Church of England, which this objection assumes, I say, shew me in what way she affords more scope for service than the ground I stand upon of obedience and faith. The apostles had no establishment to assist them ; was their field straightened for lack of this : and will the christian who looks to God for employment lack opportunities of usefulness because he is faithful ? Surely not. But let us suppose the contrary : let us suppose that faithfulness really hindered the work of God ; would this be any reason for our sanctioning sin ? I need not answer the question. I will only say, alas, alas, for the Church of England, when the children of God within her are driven to such arguments and conclusions as these !

What then comes of this objection ? Simply nothing. In the first place it does not even touch the real question in dispute, and secondly, even if it did apply, its premises and conclusions are untenable. In nothing therefore does it assist the Church of England and its requirements, in no way does it prove that I am justified in saying of the Prayer-book that " there is NOTHING in it contrary to the word of God."

I have thus given an answer to those objections which have been urged against what I have stated as a reason for my separation. I do not know that I have omitted anything which might be said on the other side. It may be however that there is some argument or objection which may be weighing in the mind of some

brother in the Lord, which I may have overlooked : should this be the case, I can only say that either in person or by letter, I shall be truly glad to enter into the question. God is my witness that I seek for truth, and if I am deceived, it is in seeking His mind. If therefore any brother or sister in the Lord thinks that I have omitted any objection which might be brought against the argument I have advanced, I shall be thankful to such to point out my omission. Nay, I will go further ; dear brethren in Christ, children of our common Father, elect with me to glory, and fellow heirs of the kingdom of the Lord, I ask, do you not regard me as a Christian ? If so, are you not bound in love to shew me where I err. Suppose if you please that I am in error in what I have advanced above respecting the requirements of the Church, then I call on you to shew me what the error is, not on the ground of men's traditions, but on the unerring ground of the word of God. Shew me that the Church of England is right in requiring as a test for ministerial conformity the declaration that "there is nothing in the Prayer-book contrary to the word of God : " or else cease to charge me with unnecessary separation. Come and let us reason together, ye who are seeking for the truth ; come and instruct us, ye who profess to know the truth ; and the Lord give us all grace to follow whither He may lead us to the glory of His holy name through Christ Jesus.

Such, dear brethren in the Lord, is a simple state-

ment of one of the reasons which have led me to separate from the Established Church. God is my witness that in publishing it, I do it with a heavy heart; and were it not that I felt bound for your sakes to do so, my lips and my pen would never have spoken. It is no pleasure to me to reveal iniquity, especially when it is the iniquity of brethren. Far, far rather would I speak to you simply of our heavenly calling in our risen Lord: but facts affect conscience, and as such I have felt pressed to refer to them: in the hope that through the Spirit they may be the means of freeing some from the wretched bondage in which they are held. I know indeed full well that the bare statement of facts, or the mere force of argument, will never of itself practically affect the conscience; to do this is the prerogative of our God: yet facts and arguments in dependence on God's Spirit will always have weight, and though insufficient so to influence a man as to lead him to act right, may be quite sufficient to prove him in the wrong.

I think the case now before us is one of this kind: the requirements of the Church in the particular which I have dwelt upon, to say nothing of some of her other more important evils in principle, are when fairly investigated of so unscriptural a character that I believe they cannot be steadily met by a single-hearted Christian with an unruffled conscience; and though supporters of the Church of England as she now exists may remain

supporters of the Church of England to the end, they will I believe at least find it difficult to disprove the importance of the facts which I have urged.

I think it possible therefore that if any reply is attempted to what I have advanced, it will be, as hitherto it always has been, not an answer to my arguments, but an attack upon myself:—"Why did you enter the ministry?—why did you ever take orders?—you enter the ministry one year, and the next you feel compelled to leave it, &c."—Now although what I have here written is intended to be a reason for my secession, rather than a reason for my ordination; yet, as I wish not to appear before my brethren in any other character than I appear before my God, I am willing in this matter also to give the reason for my conduct, foreign though it may be to the question under consideration. If then I am asked to account for my change of opinion as to the position and requirements of the Established Church, I have only to confess that I never ought to have been ordained a minister of her communion: for though when I took orders I was blinded through unfaithfulness from receiving what was right, I had on many points light sufficient to shew me what was wrong, Would to God, I had then acted faithfully according to the light that was given me from above. But I did not act so: but sheltering myself under the example of good men, and at heart perhaps unconsciously shrinking from the cross, I

satisfied my conscience with some of the sophistries I have alluded to, instead of walking simply by the Word of God. It must not however be thought from this confession that at the time I refer to I saw things as I see them now: on the contrary when I offered myself for ordination I knew little or nothing of the Church's place "in Christ;" and thus not fully seeing the "heavenly calling" of God's children, I was willing to put up with the evils of the Establishment rather than separate from a body which I believed to be "THE CHURCH." Thank God since then He has shewn me greater things, even that "*as Christ is, so are we in this world,*" †—"that we are not of the world, even as Christ is not of the world;" § and this one truth, carried out in its bearings on the position of the Church, has taught me that the position of the Establishment is not the position of the bride of Christ, and that the practical evils of the Church of England are but the natural consequence of her standing in the world.

And now having confessed all this, and with deep humiliation I confess it, What, I ask has all this to do with the question of the correctness of the requirements of the Church. Allowing, if you please, that I have been inconsistent, or rather that I was too long consistent to the views I had been brought up in;—allowing that I too long suffered my mind to be influenced by what was

† 1 John iv. 17.

§ John xvii. 16.

said by man rather than by the teaching of God's Spirit, and God's Word ; allowing that I entered the ministry of the Establishment trusting too much to the examples of good men connected with her, instead of investigating every requirement in her communion for myself ; allowing all this, and with sorrow I confess it all, the question still recurs,—*What is all this to the purpose?* Suppose, if you can think so, that instead of being a conscientious Christian, walking with a single eye to God's glory, and in pursuit of this voluntarily giving up, or at least hazarding, my friends and hopes and worldly all ;—Suppose, I say, that instead of this I am not only inconsistent but a deceiver, how does this disprove a single iota of the arguments I have advanced? Let me, if you like to think so, be “ the filth of the earth and the off-scouring of all things,” † the question, the real question still remains precisely the same ; not, whether I took orders one year and resigned them the next : but whether a Christian who rightly sees his heavenly calling can stay in the Establishment ; or, to take the lower ground, whether what the Church requires as a test for conformity is sinful or is right.

Let it be shewn, (and I here confine myself to the weaker argument,) that the Church is right in requiring from me my “ willing and ex animo assent ” to the proposition that there is “ nothing in the Prayer-book contrary to the word of God ; ”—Let it be shewn that in

† 1 Cor. iv. 13.

putting questions respecting faith and repentance to senseless and perhaps sleeping infants,—and this in the midst of a solemn religious ordinance, and as a test of the infants' fitness to receive the rite,—there is “nothing contrary to the word of God;”—Let it be shewn that in making one person promise faith for another, another too whose mind cannot be known, there is “nothing contrary to the word of God;”—Let it be shewn that in calling every child I baptize “regenerate with the Holy Spirit,” there is “nothing contrary to the word of God;”—Let it be shewn that in the principle which requires all these absurdities, the principle of a National Church, there is “nothing contrary to the word of God:”—Let these things I say be first shewn, and then there may be ground for charging me with inconsistency and needless change; but until this is proved, all that can be truly said, however much the facts may be distorted, amounts simply to this,—that I have left what God has shewn me to be evil;—that instead of tying myself to a certain standard of man's appointment, just because it was the standard by assenting to which I should hold my position in society, and ensure myself a livelihood in the world, I have sought truth at the expense of comfort and reputation and ease.

The fact is that personal accusation ever has been and ever will be the short and ready way of replying to troublesome truth: If the *argument* cannot be answered,

the easier method is to abuse the *man*; * and if there is nothing else to be brought against him, the fact of his leaving error when he saw it will be urged as a crime. Well, as far as I am concerned I have nothing to complain of, for reproach is my portion even as it was my Lord's. I only grieve that it should come to me through brethren who profess to be living by the same Spirit, and to be waiting for the same Redeemer.

Another mode of answering me, or rather, if I may speak plainly, of diverting attention from the truth for which I suffer, has been to charge me with heresy. The Lord knows that were it not for the sake of His people in the Establishment, instead of "becoming a fool in glorying," † I would pass over this accusation, as I desire to pass over all other reproaches against myself, in silence: but is there not a reason for speaking, when many of God's people are deceived. With regard then to the errors in doctrine which have so liberally been ascribed to me,—and respecting which I may take up my Master's words, "they lay to my charge things I know not,"—I will only say that I hold all the errors, if errors they be, which I have preached and taught

* I need hardly refer those of my readers who know the Scriptures to examples of this, but I will just specify one: it may be found, John x. 20. Christ convicts the Jews of hypocrisy: What is the answer? "He hath a devil and is mad." The *argument* cannot be answered: the answer therefore, with what truth I need not say, must be reproach against the *man*.

† 2 Cor. xii. 11.

among you during the year that is past. Further than this, I will only add one word; it is this;—*Let me be judged by what I say for myself; and not by what others say for me.* Dear brethren, I am almost ashamed to be obliged to make such a request of you as this; but is it not necessary? Have not some of you been rightly warned against erroneous views, and then either by implication or assertion those erroneous opinions been imputed to me? Have not false principles been truly and faithfully exposed, and then in some way laid at my door? and why all this? because, if the truth must be told, the step I have taken judges others. This is the real heresy. Others can say of the Baptismal service, with its questions to infants, its vicarious promisings, and its assertions of regeneration, that there is nothing in it contrary to God's word: I cannot: and here is my sin. But I will say no more upon this point except this parting word:—Dear brethren, If the principles I have put forth in these pages, if the doctrines which I have preached either before or since my secession, or if the life which I lead, are unchristian, point out the failing, —kindly point it out as my brethren in Christ,—and God helping me I will amend it; but before you judge my heresies, be certain that they are such, and that I hold them, “less haply ye be found even to fight against God.” †

And here I will say one word as to another mode of

† Acts v. 39.

answering me,—which, by pretending to Charity, has I believe been much more availing to blind the eyes of Christians to the true state of the case, than the reproach and misrepresentation I have alluded to,—I refer to the way in which some *who cannot answer my reasons*, are pleased in great pity and charity to speak of me and to write to me as their “poor deluded brother,” their “sadly erring brother,” their “infatuated brother.” Now to all this sympathy I have only this to say, that when these brethren who thus pity me will be kind enough to exchange their pathetic lamentations over my “*sad, sad delusion*,” for scriptural and rational conclusions against the foregoing arguments;—when, instead of pitying me generally for my errors they will point out wherein lies the actual error of refusing to say of the Prayer-book as a whole that “there is nothing in it contrary to the Word of God;”—when they will not only negatively shew the mistakes in my conclusions, but positively also prove the true catholicity of the Establishment in proposing as terms of ministerial conformity such declarations as are required by the xxxvith Canon;—when, I say, they will give up refuting what I have never advanced, and, instead of with good-natured pity prejudging the whole question, come to it openly and fairly on the ground of the Bible;—Then, I shall have greater reason to thank them for their sincerity, whatever I may think of the wisdom of the attempt.

But this will hardly be the case. Affected pity is much easier. To call me an "erring brother," to sigh over my "sad, sad delusion," costs but little, and has this great advantage that not coming as an argument it escapes the answer which readily might be made; while the apparent charity wins sympathy from all. In saying this I doubt not some may really think me in error: To such I say, point out by the standard of the Bible in what the error lies of refusing to subscribe to the Prayer-book, and God helping me by His Spirit, I will leave it: but, as you wish for truth, be not deceived either by false reproaches or false pity to suppose that truth is not truth simply because it is unfashionable; or to refuse to search deeply into the mind of the Lord on the plea that the truth sought for is non-essential to the Church. Alas! Truth is no longer the bond of union among the followers of the Lord, and therefore, as it has been strikingly said, "the man who presses forward *any* deep truth, whatever his particular view of it may be, is deemed an intruder: not in reference to *what* he says, for that is not carefully examined; but in reference to his saying *any* thing which every body does not say. It would not indeed sound well to bring the real accusation against him, to wit, that he is a searcher into more of the truth of God than is usually brought forward; and that he proclaims what he knows with the boldness of honest enthusiasm, uncaring consequences;—this were an honourable charge: it suits better with

the temper of the times to charge him with a breach of love, a want of brotherly kindness, a harsh, Ishmaelish spirit.”*

And now, dear brethren, I commend you to God, and to the Word of His grace which is able to build you up, and to give you an inheritance among them that are sanctified. May He give you to know more of Jesus in the power of His cross, of His resurrection, and of His coming;—to know your place in Him, that “as He is, so are you in this world.” † And if you find that your present communion with the Church of England divides you from Christ’s members while it unites you with the world, ask yourselves how it comes to pass that the disciple is so separated from what the Master has received. The true reason is the position of the Establishment, a position of union with the world, and of contempt for the consciences of brethren. Such a position I can hold no longer. God has shewn me that His people should be one: henceforth therefore I acknowledge no other meeting-point but the blood of Christ. This is ground where if evil is manifested it can be separated from, and where the Spirit can be waited on and obeyed; this is ground where all God’s children *may* meet me upon earth, and where all *must* meet me in heaven: not on the condition of their receiving certain articles as tests of com-

* Mc.Neile. *Lectures on the Jews*. p. 12.

† 1 John iv. 17.

munion, not on the condition of saying of the Baptismal Service that "there is nothing in it contrary to the word of God;" but on the ground of their union with Jesus in His death, His resurrection, and His glory. God helping me, henceforth I take no other standing. On this no saint need leave me; on this no worldling will join me: and if it must be that in separating from evil, I separate also from my brethren who are united to the world, be ye judges who is to blame.

And this answers a question which has sometimes been put to me, the question namely,—“What sect will you join?” I answer, none of them; for instead of uniting as Christians on the truths all believers are agreed in, with all of them their grounds of meeting as a sect are those points on which they confessedly differ. With one it is some doctrine of Wesley; with another some view of baptism; with a third some opinion respecting church-government; with all, not communion with Jesus, but *some point of difference* by which they are distinguished from their brethren. But are these to be the bonds of union with the children of a common Father;—are we to meet upon our differences, or on the common faith of the Gospel? What saith the Scripture? “Receive ye one another as Christ has received you.” * This is the rule of the Bible, and to this God helping me I will cleave. †

* Rom. xv. 7.

† The following passage from “*A Letter to the Dissenters*,” by W. H. Dorman, (formerly an Independent Minister,) seems to

Are we then to form a new Church, or can the primitive church be restored? I answer, to do the first without commandment would be heresy, and the latter would as evidently be impossible. God's way has never been to restore a dispensation when it has fallen, but to cut it off, and bring in a better: "goodness, if thou continue in his goodness; otherwise thou also shalt be cut off." § And this I believe will be the history of Christendom. But is a Christian therefore to sit still and do nothing? I answer, let him do that which faith always will do,—acknowledge his weakness and his error, and withdrawing himself from every thing that is

me to touch a most important point which Dissenters have in general lost sight of: he says,—“A dissenting Church is not really a union of believers in Christ on the common ground of redemption by the blood of Christ, but *it is* A VOLUNTARY ASSOCIATION of *professed Christians holding certain principles, by which they are DISTINGUISHED FROM OTHER CHRISTIANS having different judgments on these points.* It is not a gathering together on that ground in which all true believers must be agreed, (being washed in the blood of Christ,) *but upon those points on which they confessedly differ.* This is not the Lord's principle of gathering: 'He died that He might gather together IN ONE the children of God that were scattered abroad.'”

“An Independent Church is an organized body of professed Christians claiming the right to *choose* their own pastor, to appoint their own officers, to *vote* in the reception or exclusion of their own members, and to exercise all the functions of a self-constituted body, without control from the secular power, and without responsibility to any other of the members of the body of Christ. This *is* the principle of Dissent; there may be modifications of it, but this is its basis principle. And in most cases (i. e. wherever there is a chapel) all the permanency that can be given by legal documents, is imparted to this system by trust-deeds and endowments, &c.”

§ Rom. xi. 22.

evil, take the place of confession before God. This I believe is all that can be done when God's children are scattered as they now are : and this is all that I look for. But while I say this, and while I acknowledge our feebleness, and how far we are from the circumstances of the Apostles, I cannot acknowledge that on this account a Christian may be less obedient or less faithful. The circumstances of Jeremiah mourning may be different from those of Moses at the Red Sea, but faithfulness in each is still faithfulness, and as such will receive its reward : and better, far better is it like Jeremiah to be separate from and mourning over the evil, than like prophets of deceit to be "daubing it with lies and crying peace, peace ; when there is no "peace." †

I cannot close without one passing word on a subject I feel most deeply, I mean the pain which I have caused to some, for whom I entertain the sincerest feelings of regard. I can truly say that it has not been the lightest part of my cross to find that a clear sense of duty should ever have forced me into a course involving pain to others. I had however on scriptural principles no choice left me. Staggering as the thought was, how can those so far my superiors in spiritual attainments remain where I cannot, the simple answer came home to my heart with irresistible power,—“that servant that knew his Lord's will and did it not shall

† Jer. vi. 14, and Ezek. xiii. 10—16.

“be beaten with many stripes;” * and “he that loveth
 “father or mother more than me is not worthy of me.” †
 Like the blind man I could say, “one thing I know
 “that whereas I was blind, now I see;” § and the
 Spirit said, “Take heed that the light that is in thee
 “be not darkness.” ‡

And now, dear brethren, do not accuse me of writing harsh things against you; for the Apostle's words may be mine,—“If I make you sorry, who is
 “he that maketh me glad but the same which is made
 “sorry by me: for out of much affliction and sorrow
 “of heart I have written unto you, not that ye should be
 “grieved, but that ye might know the love which I
 “have more abundantly unto you.” ** I trust indeed that in the preceding pages I have said nothing to grieve any Christian unnecessarily; and yet I do not so flatter myself as to suppose I have said nothing which in some cases may cause sorrow. The deep seated wound cannot be touched even by the kindest hand without inflicting pain; and if in the preceding pages I have probed a wound which is injuring and harrassing the Saints of God, the Lord is witness both as to my motive and object, and whether it has been for my sake or for yours.

In conclusion, dear brethren in Jesus, suffer this word of exhortation. It may be that as you have pe-

* Luke xii. 47. † Mat. x. 37. § John ix 25.

‡ Luke xi. 35 ** 2 Cor. ii. 2—4

rused these pages you have been led to see the evils of the Baptismal Service, but you say you see nothing better to connect yourself with, and therefore you will stay where you are. I answer, do you really see the evil? then cease from that evil: this of itself will be better; and God will shew you more when you have been faithful. But it may be that you have gone still further: it may be that you have long felt the evil of the Baptismal Service, but you wish before you separate from this evil to have further light respecting Establishments. You say,—“If God would shew me the evil of a National Church I would leave it, but I have prayed about it, and I remain contented.” My reader is it thus with you? Then let me ask, have you left the evil which you do see? What think you, is it evil to call every baptized child “regenerate with the Holy Ghost;”—is it evil to put questions to infants, and to make one person promise for another?—Yes or no.—If you think this evil, I ask you, have you left it?—if you have not, it is vain to expect further knowledge. “Thus saith the Lord God, son of man, these men have set up their idols in their heart, and put the stumbling-block of their iniquity before their face: should I be enquired of at all by them?” §

But the case may be still otherwise: my reader may be a Minister of the Establishment, and you say that you once felt some scruple relative to the Baptismal

§ Ezek xiv. 3.

Service, but that its statements now trouble you no longer. † Is it thus with any of you, my brethren? Then I ask you, how is it that you have ceased to be troubled? Is it that the Prayer-book is amended, or that you have waited until conscience has been deadened? You will say perhaps that your former scruples were but the result of ignorance, and that after all the Baptismal Service is not an objectionable one. Then let us look again for a moment at the facts connected with it. In the first place, *you put questions respecting obedience to unconscious and perhaps sleeping infants*: this you do *in the midst of a solemn ordinance, and as a test of the infants' fitness to receive the rite*: yet of all this you say that "there is NOTHING in it contrary to the word of God:"—Is this, I ask, evil or is it good?—Again, *you say that "repentance and faith" are prerequisites for baptism, and that children are only to be baptized on that profession*; and yet *in the Service for Private Baptism without any questionings or answerings of any sort, you*

‡ For the truth and reality of this supposition I need only refer to many of my friends among the Clergy. How often have I been answered by them, when stating my difficulty, "we have all more or less felt what you complain of, but in various ways we have got over it." This has been said to me again and again; and I have been told, as if it were something worth knowing, that had I only remained a year or two more in the Establishment, my conscience would by degrees have become reconciled. That my conscience, had I resisted it, might have grown callous, I think not only probable but almost certain; for if we turn from the light God removes it: but that the Service would on this account have been more scriptural, I must still with submission be permitted to doubt.

baptize the unconscious infants that are brought to you : and of all this you say that "there is NOTHING in it contrary to the Word of God:"—Is this, I ask, evil or is it good?—Again, in the Public Service for infant baptism you make one person promise faith for another, —thus promising what he has no power to perform, and for one whose mind cannot be known ; —and of all this you say that "there is NOTHING in it contrary to the Word of God :"—Is this, I ask, evil or is it good?—Again, in an address to the Almighty, you SAY of EVERY infant you baptize that it is then and there "REGENERATE WITH THE HOLY GHOST," while you openly confess that you do NOT BELIEVE that EVERY child who is baptized is so "regenerate :" and yet you say of this that "there is NOTHING in it contrary to the Word of God :"—Is this, I ask, evil or is it good? If it is evil, how is it that your conscience has become reconciled to it?

But I will not press this question any further, for God has not set me to be your judge: far less do I feel called upon to reproach you, for I have been partaker with you in your sin. I will only say,—and I say it with the sincerest love,—the Lord give you grace ere it is too late to judge this question as He judges it: and the Lord give you grace to be faithful, lest the light that is in you be darkness: for it would have been better for you to have been ignorant of the will of God, than having known it to turn from his commandment.

That the Lord may deliver you from union with

evil, and from supporting what He is so soon about to judge : and that you may ever be counted worthy of His glory, and preserved unblameable until His appearing and kingdom, is the prayer of, dear brethren,

Your servant and brother in Christ Jesus,

ANDREW JUKES.

HULL, 15th *December*, 1843.

Joseph Leng, Printer, Saville-Street, Hull.

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