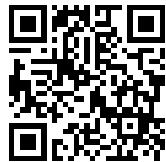

This is a reproduction of a library book that was digitized by Google as part of an ongoing effort to preserve the information in books and make it universally accessible.

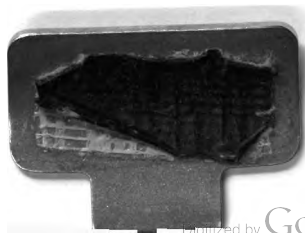
Google™ books

<https://books.google.com>



3939

c 33



2A. 1173.

3939

c 33

SECESSION CONSIDERED:

IN A

Letter

TO

THE REV. J. L. HARRIS, M.A.

LATE FELLOW OF EXETER COLLEGE, OXFORD,
AND
PERPETUAL CURATE OF PLYMSTOCK;

IN REPLY

TO AN

ADDRESS TO HIS PARISHIONERS,
ON SECEDING FROM THE
CHURCH OF ENGLAND.

BY THE

REV. ROBERT COX, A.M.

PERPETUAL CURATE OF STONEHOUSE,
AND
CHAPLAIN TO THE MOST NOBLE THE MARQUIS OF SLIGO.

SOLD BY

HATCHARD, LONDON; PARKER, OXFORD; DEIGHTON,
CAMBRIDGE; AND NETTLETON, PLYMOUTH.

[Price One Shilling.]



PRINTED BY
EDW. NETTLETON,
PLYMOUTH.

A LETTER, &c.

MY DEAR SIR,

I HAVE lately met with a pamphlet of yours, entitled, "An Address to the parishioners of Plymstock," in which you state your objections to the Established Church, and your reasons for seceding from its communion.

For some time I hesitated respecting the propriety of noticing your publication. I argued that it consisted rather of indirect insinuations and bold assertions, than arguments founded on established facts,—that the public was not likely to feel much interest in its perusal,—and that, like most other pamphlets, it would probably possess merely an ephemeral existence, unless its vitality was invigorated or prolonged by the stimulant of opposition. I may also truly add, that my respect for your many and well-known excellencies as an individual, made me instinctively shrink from the ungrateful task of exposing your religious fallacies.—

On farther consideration, however, I was led to apprehend, that if the same determined silence was manifested towards your publication, which has been the lot of other similar pamphlets recently circulated in this neighbourhood, the cause of religion might sustain a temporary and local injury. The writers themselves might conclude, that their statements were unnoticed, because they were considered unanswerable; some inconsiderate persons might heedlessly withdraw from our venerable establishment; and others, though they still remained in our communion, might have their minds harrassed by unnecessary scruples.

Such are my reasons for obtruding on the public attention a pamphlet, which, I am well aware, will prove as ephemeral as your own. I have not the arrogance to expect that any suggestions of mine will induce you to return to that Church which you have unhappily deserted, but I do cherish the pleasing hope, that the following plain but friendly observations may lessen some of your prejudices, and lead you to adopt greater caution in stating, and greater tenderness in impugning, the sentiments of a Church of which you were lately so active and efficient a minister.

After a few introductory observations you commence your Address by making an unqualified assertion, when nothing less than the clearest and most indisputable evidence was required to establish the validity of your statement. In reference to the baptism of infants (to the propriety of which I am happy to find, that your sentiments are unaltered) you fearlessly assert, that

“ the children of believers are the only proper subjects ” for this holy rite ; and from the connexion in which this memorable declaration is placed, you evidently imply, that such is the unanimous opinion both of the members of the Church of England, and of all other denominations, who do not exclude *all* infants from a participation in this sacrament. For my own part I am free to confess my ignorance both of the universality of this opinion, and of the arguments, by which it can be supported. Doubtless, if we use the term *unbelievers* in its most obnoxious sense, as synonymous with that of open persecutors and public scoffers of revelation, the unhappy children of such parents are not likely to be brought to the baptismal font. Who would expect the infant offspring of a Nero or an Aurelius, of a Payne or a Hobbes, to be solemnly dedicated to the service of a crucified Redeemer ? And yet it is highly probable that in every age, and completely certain that in most ages, the children of heathen, sceptical, and irreligious parents, have not unfrequently been the recipients of this sacred and initiatory ordinance. It is probable, that at the first spread of the Gospel, believing masters occasionally brought the offspring of their slaves and dependants together with their own children to the sacred font, just as Abraham circumcised with Isaac and Ishmael “ all that were born in his house and bought with money of the stranger ; ” and it is certain, that for many successive centuries, the influence of friends, the force of example, and the convictions of conscience, have induced tens of thousands of

irreligious parents to enforce the baptism of their children.

And what passages of Scripture, my dear Sir, constrain us to withhold "this charitable work of ours" from these forlorn, these more pitiable than orphan children? Surely not the exhilarating declaration, that "the Son of Man is come to seek and to save that which was lost?"—or the heart cheering assurance, that "it is not the will of God that one of these little ones should perish?"—or "the outward gesture and deed" of our blessed Lord, when he commanded the children to be brought unto him, blamed those that would have kept them from him, embraced them in his arms, laid his hands upon them, and blessed them?

The next quotation, which I shall make from your pamphlet, stands in juxta-position to the one I have already noticed, and contains an assertion no less extraordinary than the former. You affirm that the "laws of this country suppose all Englishmen to be real Christians." Transubstantiation itself is not more directly opposed to the evidence of our senses, than the startling affirmation which you thus unceremoniously introduce to our notice. Surely, my dear Sir, you reckon too much on the credulity of your hearers.—"Have they eyes, and see not?—Ears have they, and hear not?" "The laws of this country," you say, "*suppose* all men to be *real* Christians," and yet those very laws *suppose* the commission of every imaginable crime, and annex penalties for the diminution and punishment of these crimes. Common sense spontaneously

echoes the language of inspiration :—“ The law is not made for a *righteous* man, but for the lawless and disobedient, for the ungodly and for sinners, for the unholy and profane.” The indubitable inference therefore is, that the laws of this country, so far from *supposing* all Englishmen to be real Christians, rather regard them, (to adopt the appalling language of Isaiah) as “ a sinful nation, a people laden with iniquity, a seed of evil doers.” Hence, “ a *right* to baptism for their children,” or, as it might more modestly have been expressed, the high *privilege* conferred upon children of their being admitted to the sacred ordinance of baptism, is founded neither on the *supposed* nor real piety of their parents, but on the abundant mercy and overflowing beneficence of God. Pious parents of our communion with holy awe and lively gratitude accompany their children to the sacred font, and, happily for those children who are less favourably circumstanced, parents, who have only a questionable religion, or, perhaps, have no religion at all, are generally anxious that their children should not be deprived of this their heavenly birth-right.

I sincerely join you in lamenting the impiety and worldliness of too many parents, and the consequent improbability of their duly attending to the religious instruction of their children ; but I am at a loss to conceive, why this unhappy circumstance should exclude their unconscious infants from the sacred rite of baptism and the various privileges connected with it. I think you are not aware of the dangerous conclusions which

might be deduced from your own premises. A work of grace in the soul of man, commence when it will, must derive its origin from God. "The condition of man" I cite the forcible language of our Church, "after the fall of Adam is such, that he cannot turn and prepare himself by his own natural strength and good works to faith and calling upon God. Wherefore we have no power to do good works pleasant and acceptable to God, without the grace of God by Christ preventing us, that we may have a good will, and working with us when we have that good will." If, therefore, you maintain, that in consequence of the irreligion of the parent, God withholds from the child his "preventing grace" at one period of his life, you may justly argue, that God, "with whom is no variableness neither shadow of turning," will, as long as the original impediment remains, withhold it in every other. And thus you may deduce from your own premises, that the piety of each individual is contingent on that of his parent, and that should the latter die in a state of alienation from God, the eternal condemnation of his offspring is inevitable. "Let me fall into the hand of the Lord, for his mercies are great, and not into the hand of man!"

The next indictment preferred against the Established Church, has reference to our baptismal office: it consists of two counts, apparently comprising the most important grounds of your objections. First, "That the service so expressly *connects* Regeneration with Baptism, as to make them *appear* one and the same thing;" and

secondly, “That he who holds that Baptism and Regeneration *are the same thing*, is the only person who can conscientiously use the service.” As I am neither required nor able to harmonise these conflicting statements, and to shew that appearance is synonymous with reality, and connexion equivalent to sameness, I shall immediately proceed to notice what may be considered as the spirit of your objections.

Permit me then to remind you, that several Clergymen—some of them men of superior talent, and all of them persons of indubitable integrity—have demonstrated to their own satisfaction, and to that of a considerable number of their brethren, that the baptismal service does not imply a necessary connexion between Baptism and Regeneration, and that the thanksgiving has reference to the prospective piety of the infant. And here, perhaps, some of my readers might deem it prudent for me to stop. I consider it, however, more consonant with my character as an honest man and a minister of the sanctuary, candidly to acknowledge, that I am by no means satisfied with these and similar explanations of our baptismal service. The unhesitating assurance of divine aid, and the unlimited expression of gratitude for mercy received, which glow in our baptismal office, and are confirmed by the didactic statements in our catechism,—the concurring testimony of the primitive fathers,—and the well-known sentiments of Cranmer,*

* See his Sermon on Baptism. Richmond's Edition of the Fathers of the English Church.—Vol. III. p. 291.

who took so active a part in the compilation of our Liturgy, fully induce me to believe, that in the opinion of the established church the baptised child is actually regenerated, in other words, is admitted into the household of faith, and made a partaker of such a measure of divine grace as is *sufficient*, through the promised co-operation of the Holy Spirit, and the atoning sacrifice of Christ, to bring him safely to glory.

But a full elucidation of this subject would require a separate and elaborate volume, rather than a single paragraph in a short and hastily written pamphlet. I must, therefore, content myself with assuring you, that so far from being staggered by the expansive benevolence of our Church, I hail with peculiar delight every approximation to a full and unhesitating recognition of the universality of the love of God. The selfish and contracted heart of some men would limit the divine benevolence to a few individuals, whom they regard as the sole objects of the Almighty's favour, would restrain the workings of infinite goodness within the narrow precincts of their own conventicle, and arrest the flowing tide of heavenly mercy, saying "Hitherto shalt thou go, and no farther." The Apostles appear to me to have entertained very different views, and to have been actuated by very different feelings. I cannot read the arguments, to prove the fall of man in Adam, without being forcibly struck, that they are so involved in those which establish his recovery in Christ, as not to leave it doubtful for an instant, that the act of mercy is both contemporaneous and commensurate with the

act of justice. What a glowing hue, what a heavenly radiance does a full acknowledgment of the mercy of God impart to the following Scriptures :—“ Not as the offence, so also is the free gift.—Where sin abounded, grace did much more abound.—God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world ; but that the world through him might be saved.—If any man sin, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous : and he is the propitiation for our sins ; and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world.” And how tame, how spiritless, how contracted, how forced, are the interpretations which those are constrained to give of the same passages, who reject the universality of redemption in Christ, and the all pervading influence of the Holy Spirit.

Your frequent reference to the dictates of your conscience requires a cursory notice. It is indisputable, that no one ought to maintain any opinion contrary to his conscience, but it does not hence follow, that all the opinions, which he conscientiously maintains, are necessarily true. I give *you* full credit for *conscientiously* promulgating the various peculiarities contained in your pamphlet, and I trust you award to *me* the same degree of credit for opposing them. Yet one of us must be wrong : perhaps, in some instances both of us have adopted erroneous opinions. For what is conscience, but our own judgment of the merit or demerit of our own actions, sentiments, and affections ? Hence the verdict of our conscience can only so far be relied upon, as our judgments are sound, vigorous, and discrimi-

nating. "I verily thought with myself," says St. Paul, "that I ought to do many things contrary to the name of Jesus of Nazareth;" but he afterwards discovered, that it was the very acme of his guilt, that he had "persecuted the Church of God."

You also frequently refer to "the light and knowledge which the Lord has given you." But your expressions are too vague, and your allusions too cursory, to convey any distinct idea to my own mind respecting the nature and extent of your real or supposed illumination. If I mistake not, you have erred with some other good men from a misconception of the promises made to prayer, and an inattention to what passes within and around you. But here I gladly avail myself of the words of an abler writer: they will afford me "otium simul et auctoritatem."

"It is, indeed, as certain as God is true, that whatever He has *authorized* us to ask of Him, He will grant to our faithful prayers through Jesus Christ. But when we ask for *more* than He has promised, we ask for what we have no right to expect; we presume beyond His offered mercy; and so far from being bound by His promise to hear our prayer, it is well for us if He does not send chastisement or blindness instead of the prosperity or knowledge for which we are over-anxious. Thus, if a child asks bread of his father, a good parent will not give him a stone; but if he asks for a fine coat, for a costly toy, or an unnecessary (to him, perhaps an unwholesome) dainty, his father will refuse his request, and possibly punish him for making

it ; and if I should pray to be made a bishop or an expert mathematician, I should fall under the same censure. In like manner, in spiritual gifts, placed as we are in the lowest rank of spiritual beings, and sentenced for the present, to 'see through a glass darkly,' it is plain that 'the promises of the Holy Spirit to those who ask Him,' of being 'guided into all truth,' and having 'by the same Spirit a right judgment in *all* things,' must be limited to such aids and particulars as may ensure our salvation through Jesus Christ ; and that we may as well ask for the wings of an angel, as freedom from error in whatever doctrinal point may chance to attract our attention. Were it otherwise, there could be no such thing as difference of opinion among those who are really God's children, while it is plain that such difference exists among men who are likely to have prayed for the help of the Holy Ghost as earnestly, (though with somewhat different expectations of the manner in which their prayers were to be heard) as [Mr. Harris] himself. Nor can we decide under how many or how great circumstances of error God may allow His children to remain, or how small a measure of light is sufficient, in His hands, to bring them to Him.

"Many of the leading doctrines of Popery are, to all appearances, subversive of some of the plainest and most essential articles of the Christian faith ; yet I cannot read the lives of Bellarmine, Charles Boromeo, Vincent de St. Paul, Fenelon, and Pascal, without feeling that they were holy and humble men, incessant in prayer, and devoted to God and to their inquiries after

truth; or without a painful consciousness that, with all the clearer views of God's dispensations which I believe myself to possess, I should be happy beyond my hopes, and certainly beyond my deserts, to sit at the feet of the meanest among them in heaven. Nor dare we, as I conceive, deny that men like these, however grievously mistaken in some points, were under the guidance and teaching of that Spirit, from whose inspiration only such virtues as theirs could proceed." *

At the commencement of your attack on our burial service you allude to the distinction between "the baptismal rite" and "the funeral ceremony." "The one" you justly remark, "is an ordinance of the Lord Jesus Christ, most important in its real character; the other, a mere ceremony of the Church, intended for the consolation of the surviving relatives of a deceased believer." But you unhappily preface this unobjectionable statement by a groundless assertion, and shortly afterwards bring forward another still more indefensible. "Any one," you affirm, "who is conversant with the feelings of the people generally, must be aware, that the funeral ceremony is considered as of *equal* importance with the baptismal rite,—“The practical consequences,” you add, of such a profanation [—*i. e.* of a general use of the funeral service—] are most fearful. Men are thus accustomed to believe, that one end happeneth *to all alike*; and that there is *no difference* between him that serveth God, and him

* Bp. Heber.

that serveth him not." Reconsider, my dear Sir, these statements. You first represent the people as generally attaching *equal* importance to the burial and baptismal services; and afterwards, as regarding the rite of burial as infinitely more wonderful in its effects than that of baptism, or any ordinance whatever,—as blotting out every sin—as effacing every virtue: "they are accustomed to believe that there is *no difference*,"—provided the man has received the holy rites of sepulture,—“between him that served God and him that served him not!!” But these, my dear Sir, are not realities, they are the day-dreams of a fitful imagination, the ideal creations of a morbid state of mind.

At the commencement of our reformation a popish prior asserted, that such was the stupidity of the people as to render the circulation of the Scriptures pregnant with the most fearful consequences. “A dread of *leaven*,” he said, “would induce the baker to furnish us with insipid and unwholesome bread. An apprehension of involuntarily *looking back* would deter the plowman from continuing his former employment, as perilous to his soul’s welfare. And the act of *plucking out their own eyes, and cutting off their own hands*, would be so common, as to fill the nation with blind and mutilated beggars.” In reply to this solemn trifle Latimer remarked, that their holy guides strangely undervalued the understanding of the people, and their capacity for interpreting figurative language. “Shew them,” he continued, “a fox painted in a friar’s hood, and they will instantly perceive, that not the animal

itself, but the cunning, which is so frequently disguised under that garb, is intended." The painted fox and the popish cowl are the sole and undivided property of the sapient monk ; but the charge of libelling the common sense of the people is equally applicable to the late perpetual curate of Plymstock, and the reverend prior of the black friars.

I am a decided admirer of the general tenor and character of our burial service, but I am not a stickler for the servile retention of every specific expression which it may contain. "The funeral service," I have elsewhere remarked, "has been justly admired for its pathos, and for the topics of consolation it affords to the bereaved mourners. There are, however, two alterations which appear to be highly desirable ; the first is an expression of *resignation* to the divine will in the place of the thanksgiving for the removal of the deceased ; and the other, is the omission of those sentences which refer to the state of the individual."*

I must, however qualify the preceding remark by observing, that I should feel a holy jealousy respecting the hands into which the revision of this service should fall. It would be infinitely better, that it should retain all its glowing allusion to the future happiness of the real Christian, than that it should be lowered down to a cold and comfortless service, destitute of every expression of hope for the deceased, of every particle of encouragement for the surviving relations.

* The Liturgy Revised.

The alteration required, indeed, appears to me to be one rather of taste than of conscience. "Men should be what they seem." The members of a corporate body, for instance, whatever may be their private character, are justly invested with all the immunities of their society, until actually excluded from it. On the same principle, the members of a Church properly enjoy all its *external* religious privileges, until they are officially ejected from the pale of its communion.— And here observe the guarded, the discriminating language of our burial service. For the edification and encouragement of survivors, it expresses a *full and certain hope* of the triumphant resurrection of those who die in the Lord, but with respect to the actual state of each individual, it merely intimates a *charitable hope*, that such was the issue of his earthly pilgrimage.

I do not envy your feelings,—I trust they were only momentary,—when you expressed an objection to the religious "interment of bodies cast on the sea-shore, because a Jew or a Turk may thus be recognised as a Christian." What should we do with these unclaimed corpses? Should we bury them, like Jehoiakim, with the burial of an ass, drawn and cast forth beyond the gates? Or like the barbarians referred to by St. Paul, should we consider the men as murderers, whom, though their bodies had escaped the sea, vengeance suffered not to be interred? More charity and less scruple might, I conceive, be advantageously exercised on such occasions. "Charity thinketh no evil, believeth all things, hopeth all things."

There is a want of arrangement and precision in your observations on Church government. I should not have alluded to this circumstance, had I not feared that my subsequent silence might be mistaken for an acknowledgment of the validity of your statements, or my misconception of your meaning for a wilful perversion of it. You are well aware, that I am myself an advocate for the establishment of a temperate discipline in our Church, as well as for an authorised revision of our Liturgical services, and that I have endeavoured to direct the attention of the public to both these particulars. Some measures I trust will ere long be adopted for their accomplishment. In the mean time it should ever be borne in mind, that the restoration of obsolete canons, or the enactment of new laws, will affect, not the pious and consistent members of our Church, but the profane and lawless. Unworthy persons may then be excluded from our communion, but good men will not enjoy a single additional privilege. And surely, during the commemoration of the dying love of our Redeemer, we may be better employed than in canvassing the respective qualifications of our fellow-worshippers. If I may be permitted without egotism to refer to my own experience on the subject, I would say, that I have invariably found my thoughts abstracted from these and similar extraneous speculations, in exact proportion to the spiritual state of my own mind.

I am not aware of the extent to which you would like to carry the painful task of excommunication. I should

be fully satisfied by the exclusion of notorious profligates and open scoffers from a participation in the Lord's supper. A minister, I conceive, should exercise much caution and deliberation before he ventures unhesitatingly to speak of certain persons, "who have obtained the precious faith of the gospel," and of others "whom he *knows* to be yet strangers to Christ and the power of his gospel. "Some men's sins," says the Apostle, "are open beforehand, going before to judgment; and some men they follow after. Likewise also the good works of some are manifest beforehand; and they that are otherwise cannot be hid." I hope I shall never regard myself as a discerner of spirits, lest I should abuse the fancied prerogative. Prejudice and misconception might tempt me to confound some of the admired zealots of the day with the characters proscribed by the Apostles;—with those who "creep into houses, and lead captive silly women,—with the unruly and vain talkers,—with the presumptuous and self-willed, that are not afraid to speak evil of dignities,—with the boasters, proud, heady, and disobedient to parents." Prejudice and bigotry conjoined might further induce me to fulminate anathemas against these misconceived persons, and to denounce them, *ex cathedrâ*, as not "meet to be partakers of our holy mysteries."

Doubtless in our public addresses, as well as in private conversation, we may materially assist our people in the important work of self-examination, but after that, we must leave the issue to God and their own conscience. "Let a man," says St. Paul, "*examine himself*,"

and *so let him eat* of that bread, and drink of that cup." The closing sentence in our catechism affords at once a fine comment on the words of the apostle, and a no less admirable directory for personal examination:—

Question. What is required of them who come to the Lord's supper?

Answer. To examine themselves whether they repent them truly of their former sins, stedfastly purposing to lead a new life; have a lively faith in God's mercy through Christ, with a thankful remembrance of his death; and be in charity with all men."

And now, my dear Sir, having shewn that the generality of your assertions are groundless and even contradictory, and that your real objections to our Church are few and inconsiderable, permit me to inquire what effect your conduct is likely to produce on others?—Were you a selfish character, you might reply, "What is that to me? Am I my brother's keeper?" But happily, "you have not so learned Christ."

Your conduct, as far as your influence extends, has already excited the ridicule of the gay, and the lamentation of the grave. And what are likely to be its ulterior effects? It will probably confirm the hesitating formalist in his prejudices against vital godliness, and add fresh stimulants to the feverish imagination of the too susceptible sciolist. You have laid a flattering unction to their souls. Their past misgivings,

"gracious signs of sweet remorse
And pious awe, that feared to have offended,"

will probably return no more; and the one will exult

in the contrast between himself and the enthusiast, and the other look with pity and contempt on every exhibition of sober piety. Nor will the genuineness of your own religion neutralize the ill effects of your example. How appropriately may the words of the apostolical Clement be addressed to those well-meaning, but inconsiderate men, who preceded you in their recent secession from the established Church. "Your schism has perverted many, has discouraged many, has staggered many. It has caused grief to us all; and, alas! it continues still."* The world, I verily believe, has sustained little or no permanent injury from the profligacy, the impiety, and the morbid temperament of Byron. It has rather derived from that unhappy nobleman an awful, but salutary lesson, on the vanity of talents however eminent, of attainments however great, of manners however fascinating, when severed from the guidance of Scripture, and the sanctifying grace of God. But, alas! the heavenly origin and essential vitality of your own personal religion, though they may enable you to "drink any deadly thing" without sustaining mortal injury, only infuse an additional, because unsuspected, malignity into the poisonous draught which you heedlessly present to others. *You* "bear a charmed life," and remain unscathed; *they* drink the deleterious mixture, and the poison rankles in their veins. It is said that some of the courtiers of Alexander resembled the Macedonian hero in nothing but the wryness of his neck; so your partisans may easily contract,

* Epis. ad Cor.

what may be considered, your deformity, while they have neither the ability to discern, nor the desire to imitate, the real excellencies of your character.

• These are not times, my dear Sir, to foster a precocity of religious profession, or relax the salutary restraints of Christian prudence. Look around, and notice the appalling spectacle which the religious world presents to our view. “We have seen,” remarks an animated and observant writer, “the loveliest emotions checked; the loftiest energies wasted; the holiest principles perverted. We have seen men of the most attractive accomplishments, and of the choicest spirit, snatched from vortices of worldly dissipation, and inspiring the pleasing hope of future usefulness in the important spheres, in which they moved; and with deep-felt interest have we followed them, and waited for the realization of this flattering prospect: but, though these men have passed year after year, in professed attachment to the Saviour, in the enjoyment of religious privileges, and the cultivation of what are deemed pious associations, we are bold to ask, Where is their accurate knowledge of Divine truth? Where their solid attainments in experimental religion?—Where their hallowed influence in the Church of Christ? Are they not (with some honourable exceptions) weak and wavering as ‘a reed shaken with the wind?’ We do not ask, whether they are able to solve mysteries, which have cost their wise and learned forefathers much patient labour of investigation, and often yielded them no other result, than a more modest

estimate of their own powers? We do not ask whether they can take the Book out of the hand of the Lamb, and 'open the seals thereof?' neither do we inquire, whether they are as confident, that they are not deceiving themselves, as if they were already in heaven? These are points which, if it took them *six days*, yet certainly not *six weeks* to settle definitively.—Some, whose powerful genius and enlightened eloquence once took the loftiest and devoutest flights, have now learnt, in false lowliness, to strip themselves of their plumes, and scowl on every thing that flies, or soars, beyond the little spot, which, in their estimation, comprises all that is worthy of being known and enjoyed, within the compass of the universe. Others too, we could name, who once played skilfully on 'an instrument of ten strings,' while multitudes listened to the symphonic melody, till their passions were alternately roused and soothed, melted and entranced; but these sweet minstrels have broken their harps, or cast them away, as sacrilegious accompaniments, and now they strike nothing but a *monochord*, whose perpetual ding, ding, reverberates on the ear, like the knell of departed excellence." *

In concluding with sincere expressions of regard—regard arising from a knowledge of your estimable qualities—I conscientiously disclaim personality in my present strictures. The illustration of an argument in some cases may appear pointed; but as the force of an

* Modern Fanaticism Unveiled.

argument is best perceived by illustration, the importance of this kind of proof must outweigh every other consideration. Accordingly point and personality should be carefully distinguished : otherwise manifest injustice may be done to the most charitable and well-intended persons. To secede, then, from the Church of England is one thing, but to prove Secession to be right in a particular case is another. Now if the latter was your object, as it undoubtedly was, in your Address to the parishioners of Plymstock, a rejoinder necessarily implies some allusions to person. In these allusions I have given full credit to the purity of your motives, but have shewn that the reasons assigned for your secession either proved too much, or were insufficient to warrant your conclusions. In one instance perhaps the illustration adduced was applied to yourself, because it was necessary to shew, that what was practically absurd at one period of time, under similar circumstances, may be equally so at another. If, however, any observations of mine are calculated to wound your feelings, I deeply regret that the nature of the case was such as to render them unavoidable.

With every wish for your temporal and spiritual welfare, believe me, to be,

My dear Sir,

Yours very truly,

4 AP 65 ROBERT COX.

Stonehouse, October 13, 1832.

BY THE SAME AUTHOR.

THE LITURGY REVISED; or the Importance and beneficial Effects of an authorized Abridgment and careful Revision of the various Services of the Established Church. To which is prefixed an address to the Bishops on the subject of Ecclesiastical Discipline. Second edition. Price 2s. 6d.

N.B.—Copies of the annexed “ADDRESS TO THE BISHOPS” may be purchased separately at 3d. each.

“Reform in some shape must come. It cannot come too soon; and we earnestly hope that the spiritual Rulers of our Church will immediately concert some measures for the consummation of so desirable an end.”—*The Christian Remembrancer on Church Reform.*

SCRIPTURAL QUALIFICATIONS FOR THE CHRISTIAN MINISTRY; a Sermon preached at St. Andrew's, Plymouth, on the 3rd of June, 1831, at the Annual Visitation of the Venerable the Archdeacon of Totnes. Price 1s. 6d.

“We wish we could shew how earnestly we desire that every Christian of every denomination would attend to words spoken with the honest zeal of one who evidently wishes well to the cause of the Gospel, and who would secure his National Church from evils which may soon undermine and overwhelm it.”—*The Christian Remembrancer.*

HORÆ ROMANÆ; or, an Attempt to elucidate St. Paul's Epistle to the Romans, by an original Translation, Explanatory Notes, and New Divisions. Price 3s.

“The most useful help to the study of this epistle is Mr. Cox's *Horæ Romanæ.*”
—*Hartwell Horne's Introduction to the Study of the Holy Scriptures.*

The LIFE of the REV. JOHN W. FLETCHER, late Vicar of Madely, Shropshire. Second addition. Price 3s.

“No age or country has ever produced a man of more fervent piety or more perfect charity; no church has ever possessed a more apostolic minister.”—*Southey.*

