

**Testimony to the Archbishop of Canterbury
and the Anglican Clergy**

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DELIVERED JANUARY 1836.

COX and SONS, Printers, 73, Great Queen Street, Lincoln's Inn Fields.

TO
HIS GRACE
THE
ARCHBISHOP OF CANTERBURY,
PRIMATE OF ALL ENGLAND, AND METROPOLITAN;
AND
THE OTHER THE ARCHBISHOPS AND BISHOPS OF THE UNITED
CHURCH OF ENGLAND AND IRELAND.

THE Church of England, among all the divisions of the Catholic Church, is most to be commended for the measure of truth contained in her doctrinal standards, for the comparative purity and spirituality of her liturgies, unmixed with superstitious rites of Popery and relics of Paganism, and for her church administration, wherein she rejects not, with the greater part of the other reformed churches, the Apostolic forms and ordinances of the primitive church. To the care of the Bishops, as heads, under Christ, and pastors of that Church, are committed the souls of the baptised in their several dioceses; and in their respective places of chief rule, they are the present

depositories and trustees of the priestly office, the ministry whereof has been preserved by God through the ages which have elapsed since the day of Pentecost.

[p. 2→] Thus recognising your standing and authority, it might seem to require explanation, that we should not merely seek, but, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, Head of His church, and by His authority, *claim* your audience. Nevertheless, we pray you to bear with us, while, in discharge of a duty, not undertaken at our own suggestion, but imposed on us by God, we address you in His name, and as His Ministers; and whether our communication be received or rejected, its nature will sufficiently prove its own apology.

Is it any marvel that, in the state of all things around, you, the heads of the Church, should be *thus* addressed? Is it not time for God to work, when men make void His laws? As Bishops of Christ's Catholic Church, you are called upon to look at her condition in every land, – and to sorrow over the misled, torn, and scattered sheep, for whom He died. As Bishops of the National Church, you are not merely bound to look to the apprehended judgments and dangers that surround you; but to be grieved in contemplating the wickedness of His baptised people, who are the agents through whom the ruin is apprehended, to mourn, not that you are the smitten, but that your children are the smiters.

It cannot be that you shut your eyes to the state of things around you: We will not believe, that they who should abide nearest in the secret of the Lord are involved in the delusion that all is well, and religion flourishing; and that, while all abroad and at home is becoming more and more “like to a troubled sea which cannot rest,” and all bonds of religious society and relationships [p. 3→] of life are dissolving, and among none so rapidly as among, the great professors of religion, you, the Fathers and Guardians of the Church, should content yourselves with sounding words, that the influence of true religion increases, all her principles sapped, and daily sinking away.

It is notorious, that through Europe priesthood is scorned under the name of priestcraft by the great mass of those who think for themselves – by almost all but those in whom reverence is sunk in superstition and idolatry: that the holiest truths of God are denied as irrational; the miraculous character of Christianity is assailed; and its most venerable mysteries are considered mere symbols for conveying a system of ethics, – preferable, perhaps (but only because more comprehensive), to the lessons of classical philosophy: that the Continent is all but swallowed up by the mediocrity in all that can instruct; all that can strengthen, and all that can minister the life of religion, in the Greek church; – by the Pagan superstitions, the perversions of truth, and the

declining dotage of the Papal system, in the Church of Rome; – by the neology and heresies of one part of protestantism, and the latitudinarianism, coldness, and death, of all parts; or, where vitality or, at least, activity is most apparent, by the spiritual infidelity of Germany, and the fierce atheism of France.

There may be exceptions – holy and good men, Greek, Roman and Protestant – if such can be considered properly exceptions: until the very reign of Antichrist, when nothing else shall be allowed to peep or mutter, buy or sell, charges of universal apostasy will [p. 4→] ever be exaggerations. But the general truth of this description is notorious; and our object in giving it is not to convict of sin, but to present in its true colours the: condition of so large a portion of the baptized church, the descendants of saints and martyrs – a condition which should draw from us, as from the prophet mourning over the vision: of the desolations of Jerusalem, the exclamation of passionate grief, – “O that my head were waters, and mine eyes a fountain of tears, that I might weep day and night for the slain of the daughter of my people!”¹

And as with priests and people, so by eternal disposition of God with princes and people also. But into the civil condition of other nations than our own we enter not, save to observe, that, as the churches are ripe for judgment, and the priests

¹ Jeremiah, ix. 1.

and people for apostasy; so is it, for the most part, with the states. Their princes rule by force, and the people are either waiting for an opportunity to revolt, or are running a course of revolution and anarchy, to end again in iron tyranny.

But to come to our own country: The evil principles which affect the rest of Christendom are here to be found struggling with an energy and life unknown elsewhere and with a force resistless, except God be pleased to come to our help, as in days of old. The priesthood universally despised, and the very nature and standing of the Church unknown and denied; the dignity of the one, and the legal establishment of the other, assailed; all [p. 5→] forms of superstition and fanaticism practised, and all heresies and perversions of truth maintained. Nay, infidelity taught as a system by preachers and lecturers who make it their profession, and in public assemblies gathered for that avowed purpose.

Among the clergy, all shades of opinion, both on matters of doctrine and discipline: the Socinian in the one class, and in the other the man who does not *object* to receive Episcopal ordination in order to qualify himself to preach his own levelling and disorganising opinions in the Established Churches, and the Bishops without power, for all practical purposes, to enforce either the doctrine or the discipline of the church on their beneficed clergy, even in cases where morality demands their interference.

Proceeding to the laity, alas! the disorganisation, the divisions of the Body of Christ! the sheep driven hither and thither, scattered among a thousand sects instead of one holy body! The thought that they owe any relative duty to the pastors of their parish, except just so far as they receive a benefit from that pastor, – gratitude, not duty, – or that they are bound to give honour to their spiritual pastor, as to their natural parent – these considerations enter not into the mind of the most attached to the church. In almost every parish one or more other temples, professing to be dedicated to God, vie with the parish church for the offerings of the people; and millions literally, – nay, in the manufacturing cities, generation after generation, – never enter their parish church, nor see that pastor who must answer for their souls; or, if ever, only when presented for [p. 6→] baptism in order to be placed on the register. Again, we remark, we are not now dealing with the matter of the sin in all this – no doubt both pastor and people have their share in it, for which they must give account: we are addressing ourselves to the moral aspect of what you know, and we know, and the people of this land know to be the true state of things.

In the country parishes in England the clergy have more in their power. They are able to exercise a more perfect control over their parishioners. And yet here how many are the cottages whereinto they are forbidden to enter, or more civilly

repulsed by the information that the inhabitants go to chapel. Even when the clergy seek conscientiously to fulfil their duty, how large a portion of their flock are withdrawn from their care and now almost, and, in many cases altogether, with their own allowance and consent, are handed over to dissenting ministers; and all the while demoralisation strides through the land, and the people are ready to rise against their rich neighbours, and the lawless, instead of being the exceptions, form the great body. It is useless here to trace to political causes the acknowledged demoralisation of the agricultural population. Such *is* their condition; and most fearfully does it threaten the Established Institutions in Church and State. Nor does it mend the matter that, when the Bishops, in their places in Parliament, have protested, or their clergy have petitioned, against legislative enactments calculated to increase this evil state, the counsel of the one has been rejected, and the exertions of the others :imputed to interested motives.

[p. 7→] But in towns is the concentrated energy of evil. Here are the strongholds of Satan. Here all wicked passions and tendencies take root and grow. Here are contrived and practised crimes of every description, and licentiousness unrestrained: hatred of authority, envy of wealth, and of rank, and of goodness. Here are conceived the schemes of sedition, and rebellion, and infidelity,

of destruction and robbery and, from town to town, the people are banded together for the work of ruin.

And what power is there left in the hierarchy to arrest the evil? You cannot reach the wicked doers with the voice of holy rebuke; and; if you could, they have thrown off your authority, and would refuse to turn at your word. Your means are insufficient; and whether you apply to the State, or to the laity as individuals, you must be sensible, that additional endowments cannot be procured for ministers, nor additional places of worship; nay, this is the very point of time when they curtail your means, and you know not how soon you may be met with the maxim already proclaimed by royal authority in Scotland, but a maxim subversive of the very notion of a National Church, that “wherever religious instruction and pastoral superintendence are, to a certain extent, afforded by any sect or denomination whatsoever, there the services of an Established Church are not required, and may be dispensed with.” Better that the State should altogether withhold its protection, than impart it in a mode which saps the foundation of the Church.

And the consequences are inevitable, so far as human agency can operate. The altar and the throne are systematically assailed. [p. 8→] The cessation of those mutual offices of parental blessing on the part of the Church, and of filial protection on the part of the State, is already decreed by the

party really; if not by that ostensibly; in power. The infidels, and dissenters, and papists, in unholy Union, are effecting this as the prelude to the destruction of both Church and Monarchy, amidst the applause of some and the apathy of others. And none know so well as those whom we address, that the most influential supporters of the Church, in and out of the legislature, are, in point of fact, abandoning the citadel while they defend the outworks; and; in seeking to preserve, as they intend, the property of the Church; are yielding to their enemies the only standing and principle on which the Church can be entitled to that property to the exclusion of others.

Already has the property of the Church been torn by lawless violence from the lawful proprietors in Ireland; and, in Parliament, both the political parties have, in their turn, proposed measures for sanctioning that spoliation. Two archbishops, and ten bishops, in that part of the kingdom which is filled with superstition, and most needs the exertions of the clergy, have been decreed to be “nuisances, and abated accordingly.” It has been attempted to extinguish the very performance of Protestant worship in nearly one-third of the parishes there. And the zeal, combination, and energy, which: have effected so much, will, with equal success, so far as human foresight can conclude, again put into action the

instruments of assault which have already made such breaches. Oh! it is not the loss of power, of wealth, or of political influence involved, – but this, Fathers of the Church, is the overwhelming thought, that while you have been intrusted by God with His baptised people in this land, you are about to be deprived, by the hands of wicked men, of the standing, the means, and the opportunity through which you might draw back to yourselves the wandering sheep, whom the Great Shepherd, when He shall appear, will demand at your hands. Even now see you the wolves in sheep’s clothing dissolving the ties which bind you to your flocks. Schismatics – heretics of every shade – fanatics and infidels filled with spiritual wickedness. The people, whom you *now* vainly seek to reach with your ministry, exposed to every form of temptation, spiritual, moral, and political. In a word, behold the mass of wickedness involving the souls of thousands, who by the clergy of the Church, should have been taught and blessed in the ways of God in His house; and that mass rolling onward with accelerated rapidity into the gulf of revolution and atheism – your responsibility remaining, your means of fulfilling it fearfully diminished.

And is it possible that all this ruin at home and abroad – this laying waste of God’s Church, planted by Him in the nations of Europe – can have been brought to pass without sin? These

evils within and without – this feebleness, and dissolution, and decay – have they been *God's* work, His church meanwhile having fulfilled *her* duties? It is not so; these are not a passing cloud, a mere trial of faith in adverse circumstances. The Lord Himself is the adversary; He covers the daughter of Zion with a cloud in His anger; He casts down from heaven to earth the beauty of Israel, and remembers not His footstool in the day of His anger; He swallows up all the foundations of Jacob; He throws down in His wrath the [p. 10→] strongholds of the daughters of Judah; He pollutes the kingdom, and the princes thereof; He cuts off in His fierce anger all the horn of Israel; He bends His bow like an enemy; He stands with His right hand like an adversary; He despises in the indignation of His anger the king and the priest.¹ And why should vain man seek to justify himself? rather let us confess the offences whereby God hath been displeased; “The sins of our kings, our princes, and our fathers, and all the people of the land;”² The sins of Christendom. For it is *not* the sin of one generation nor of two; and though now it has leavened the whole lump as it was never leavened before, nevertheless the leaven hath been hid for generations past. But now, or it will be too late, must the sins be confessed and repented of; for though in all times they have more or less existed, it is not the less

¹ Lam. ii. 1-4, 6.

² Dan. ix. 8.

true that this generation fills up the measure of the iniquity of their fathers, and of this generation shall be required the accumulated guilt.

The time of judgment answers to the time of harvest, not of sowing. The causes which have produced the ripening for judgment must be traced to former generations.

Bear with us, then, while, in love to the Church of Christ and to you, and yet, as becomes the ambassadors of Christ our King, we lay open the burden which He has endured in the iniquities of His people, whom He hath redeemed and gathered into the fold of His Church – the sins of His baptised; in the generation past, [p. 11→] which He hath long borne with and restrained; but which now are working their evil fruits in the spiritual desolation which surrounds us on every side. To this end, it is needful that we should first call to mind the standing of the Church of God, as He constituted her at the beginning.

The Son of God¹ came from the Father, leaving the glory² which He had with the Father before the world was, that He might redeem man from sin and eternal misery and might raise His Church, perfect in one, to the fellowship of His glory; which end and consummation, to be attained at the resurrection of the just, is described in St. Paul's Epistle to the Ephesians, as “the presenting it to Himself a glorious church, not

¹ John, xvi. 28.

² Ibid. xvii. 5.

having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing;”¹ and in the Apocalypse, as “the marriage of the Lamb; whose wife shall have made herself ready.”² For the attaining of this end, laid in the secret councils of Jehovah, by means wisely ordained and exactly adapted, and which, therefore, it can neither be necessary nor possible to vary, the Son of God hath worked, and will work, until it be accomplished. In the days of His flesh, by His own personal labours and sufferings; and, since His ascension, by the Holy Ghost inworking in the Church all things according to the will of God.

In the days of his flesh He appeared the great Witness of God to man; “the brightness of the Father’s glory, and the express [p. 12→] image of His person.”³ “The Word was made flesh; and dwelt among us (and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the Only Begotten of the Father) full of grace and truth.”⁴ He that had seen Jesus had seen the Father.⁵ The words He spake, He spake not of Himself; but the Father who dwelt in Him, He did the works. This was His Ministry of Witness. To the world who received Him not, the words He spake would judge them at the last day.⁶ To those whom the Father gave Him out of the world, He manifested the Father’s name.⁷

¹ Ephes. v. 27.

² Rev. xix. 7.

³ Heb. i. 3.

⁴ John, i. 14.

⁵ Ibid. xiv. 9, 10.

⁶ Ibid. xii. 48.

⁷ Ibid. xvii. 6.

But He fulfilled another ministry. The world received Him not; “but as many as received Him to them gave He power to become the sons of God.”¹ These were the sheep who knew His voice and followed Him,² whom He blessed with His instructions, not speaking to them in parables, but unfolding before their eyes, which could see, the mysteries of the kingdom, and speaking into their ears, which could hear, the lessons of truth as they were able to bear them;³ and, at last, pronouncing them clean, through the word He had spoken to them,⁴ he gave them the promise of the Comforter,⁵ who should lead them into all truth: and, sending them into the world, as the Father sent Him into the world,⁶ He besought the Father that they might be kept and sanctified through the truth,⁷ and prayed not for them alone, but for those who should believe on Him through their word,⁸ that they all [p. 13→] might be one. And, so parting from them with these last words of promise and intercession, He yielded Himself unto the death, the just for the unjust,⁹ the propitiation for our sins, and for the sins of the whole world;¹⁰ and having fulfilled all righteousness in His life, reconciled us unto God by His death;¹¹ and obtained eternal redemption for us.¹² This

¹ John, i. 12.

² Ibid. x. 27.

³ Matth. xiii. 16.

⁴ John, xv. 3.

⁵ Ibid. xiv. xv. xvi.

⁶ Ibid. xvii. 18.

⁷ Ibid. xvii. 11, 17.

⁸ Ibid. xvii. 20, 21.

⁹ 1 Peter, iii. 18.

¹⁰ 1 John, ii. 2.

¹¹ Rom. v. 10.

¹² Heb. ix. 12.

was His ministry in laying the foundation of His future church, and may, in this sense, be called His Ministry of Life.

The promise of the Holy Ghost, the Comforter, He gave to them, – for He had still to carry on and fulfil in His church those ministries which, when He was with them in the world, He had commenced. In terminating His personal actings in the world, He attained unto the resurrection of the dead,¹ becoming the first-fruits of them that slept.² But He had not yet prevailed to raise His people bodily; He had not yet, on the one hand, gathered all who were to be gathered out of the world – and *so* the time was not yet that the world should be judged: and, on the other hand, He had not yet prevailed to present His gathered church, His bride – “every man perfect in Himself, holy, and unblameable, and unproveable in His Father’s sight.”³ And until He hath prevailed to do this; until “that which is perfect is come, that which is in part,”⁴ the means whereby the child is to become that perfect man, cannot “be done away,” and ought not to be suspended in their operation.

[p. 14→] Now, the way whereby the Lord Jesus Christ continued His ministries of Witness and of Life after His departure, was by perpetuating in the Church the offices contained in all their fulness in

¹ Philip, ii. 8, 9.

² 1 Cor. xv. 20.

³ Col. i. 22, 28.

⁴ 1 Cor. xiii. 10.

Himself – the offices of apostle, prophet, evangelist, and pastor and teacher. He was the “Sent of God;” the prophet like unto Moses;¹ the preacher of the Gospel to the poor;² the good shepherd, who gave His life for the sheep,³ and who “led them in and out, and found them pasture.”⁴ In these four offices of Christ, the Father is in truth revealed. They are the ordinances whereby the essential goodness and blessings which are in God are manifested to the world, and poured into the bosom of the Church. They were ordained of God, because exactly adapted to those very ends: or rather, they are the necessary, and so the eternally ordained, channels whereby that Divine goodness and those blessings find their spontaneous means of manifestation and conveyance to man. These four offices have their *distinct* and *respective* relations to man, they have each their several appeal *to the heart* of every man, and their several work to effect *in* every man; at the same time and in like manner; they have their several relations to the varying characters of men. One man is more open to apostolic authority and wisdom; the conscience of another is more readily convicted by prophetic utterance;⁵ a third is more easily persuaded by the hearing of the glad tidings; while others are fitter subjects for the care of the Pastor and readier disciples of the

¹ Deut. xviii. 18.

² Matth. xi. 5.

³ John, x. 11.

⁴ Ibid. x. 9.

⁵ 1 Cor. xiv. 25.

teacher, at whose feet they find themselves sitting in the [p. 15→] first moments of spiritual consciousness. And yet, by receiving the blessing of all these offices, must the child grow up into the perfect man. These offices Jesus bore on earth; and He could not be other than He was. By them He witnessed to the world, and gathered His children; by them He blessed and comforted those whom He had gathered; by them He purposed still to witness, and to comfort, and to bless, until the consummation of the age.¹

Jesus Christ was and is the sole declarer of God.² No other single man, nor any number of men, nor all men together, save as a body united in Him, their head, and He in them, do declare or manifest God. He centred in Himself all the rays of the Divine glory, “the fulness of the Godhead bodily.”³ This is His peculiar glory, which none other can attain unto; “for it pleased the Father that in Him should all fulness dwell.”⁴ But His Church “is His body, the fulness of Him who filleth all in all.”⁵ And, as all the offices, whereby God should be known and His grace communicated, centred in Him, so in His Church must all those offices, distributed among His members, be. Not all to be exercised by any one – for that would be to make such one the

¹ Ἡ συντέλεια τῶν αἰώνων. Matth. xiii. 39, 40, 49; xxiv. 3; xxviii. 20.

² John, i. 18; xvii. 26.

³ Col. ii. 9

⁴ Ibid. i. 19.

⁵ Ephes. i. 23.

container of the incommunicable fulness; and yet all must be exercised by the Church, or the incommunicable fulness would not be dispensed; God, could not be manifested, the world evangelised, nor His blessings given in Christ Jesus be imparted.

[p. 16→] Again, the work of Jesus in the salvation of man was His own apart from all. The atonement made for sin, the inestimable price paid for the ransom of the world, man reconciled to God, and not merely snatched from sin and death, but so saved as that he shall be raised to eternal glory in the kingdom of heaven at the manifestation of the Sons of God; this is His own peculiar work, and is the substance of the Gospel. But His work of ministry in declaring this Gospel to the world, and communicating the blessings thereof to the Church, He fulfilled in His own person when upon earth; and not the less did He fulfil it after He had left this earth in His body, the Church. And He can only fulfil it in His Church as he fulfilled it in His own person, by the ministration of Witness and of Life through the offices ordained for this end. He is, as we have said, and the Scriptures declare, the Apostle of our profession,¹ the Sent of God. While on earth, He shewed forth the wisdom of God in words of wisdom and holy doctrine; and not less in wisdom of conduct and of rule; choosing and

¹ Heb. iii. 1.

separating the twelve and the seventy; sending them forth, on their temporary¹ missions which He gave them while among them; and in all things wisely ordering and guarding them, so that He could say, “Those whom thou gavest me I have kept, and none of them is lost but the son of perdition, that the Scripture might be fulfilled.”² After His ascension, the like dispensation of wisdom and of rule He committed to His twelve Apostles, on whom He laid the burden of “the care of all the Churches,”³ and whom He bound together into one. A twelvefold apostleship under Christ [p. 17→] is the only Scriptural bond of union to the Church, whose head is at the right hand of God and unseen. But the Church must be *seen* to be one; for by being *seen* to be one, the world is to know that the Father loves the Church as He loves the head of the Church.⁴ Again, Jesus, in the days of His flesh, was the Prophet, mighty in word and deed – the revealer of the mind and mysteries of God – the interpreter of His word; – after His ascension He committed the like ministry to the holy prophets,⁵ who, with the Apostles, were the foundations of the spiritual temple. In the days of His flesh, Jesus was the Anointed healer of the sick, the wounded, and the maimed, – the preacher of the Gospel to the poor: after His ascension, He gave evangelists, working great

¹ Luke ix. 10; x. 17.

² John xvii. 12.

³ 2 Cor. xi. 28.

⁴ John, xvii. 23.

⁵ Ephes. iii. 5.

miracles and signs, and preaching Jesus Christ among the nations. Lastly, Jesus while in this world, was the good shepherd, the instructor of His disciples. And, after His ascension, He ceased not to feed and teach His people; he gave also pastors and teachers, whom, by the Holy Ghost, He made overseers over the flock He had purchased with His blood.

Thus was continued in the world the witness of Jesus unto God by the Holy Ghost indwelling in the body, the Church, which is His temple. By this body, which needed indeed to grow up into perfection, but was complete in all its members, – and, by the calling of the Gentiles, comprehended all its component parts, God did begin to accomplish His intent, “that now unto the principalities and powers in heavenly places might be known by [p. 18→] the Church, the manifold wisdom of God.”¹ By this body; in its collective capacity and functions, wherein no member could be suffered to lack, if God’s purpose was to be effected – for with him is no superfluity; and every part whereof had its adaptation to all the varieties of the characters of men in speaking to their hearts and calling them back to God, did He seek to plead with the world, and search out and gather His people; which, when He shall have accomplished, and that “which letteth shall have been taken out of the way,” the apostasy shall be sealed up unto destruction, and

¹ Ephes. iii. 10.

“that man of sin,” that wicked (ἀνομος, that lawless) “shall be revealed, whom the Lord shall consume with the Spirit of His mouth, and shall destroy with the brightness of: His coming.”¹

As by the outward and manifest actings of this body the ministry of Witness should be fulfilled, so also the ministry of Life by the mutual services and reciprocal ministrations of its various parts. Therefore, says the Apostle, “When He ascended up on high, He led captivity captive, and gave gifts unto men.”² “And He gave some *men* (not gifts, τούς μὲν, not τὰ); apostles; and some *men*, prophets; and some *men*, evangelists; and some *men*, pastors and teachers; for the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry (διακονία), for the edifying of the body of Christ: Till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ: That we henceforth be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the [p. 19→] sleight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive; but, speaking the truth in love, may grow up into Him in all things, which is the head, even Christ: From whom the whole body fitly joined together, and compacted by that which every joint supplieth, according to the effectual working in the measure of every part, maketh increase of the body unto the

¹ 2 Thess. ii. 7, 8.

² Ephes. iv. 8.

edifying of itself in love.”¹ These gifts, then, are not impersonal influences nor abstractions. They are living men, by whom the fulness which is in Jesus, the life of God, is dispensed unto the Church. They were given for the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ. They were given till the whole people of God should come in the unity of the faith and the knowledge of the Son of God unto the perfect man – unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ. They were given to deliver us from the childish condition, and to prevent us from being tossed to and fro, and carried about by every wind of doctrine. They were given to hold the saints together by joints and bands, nourished and edified, and speaking the truth in love, which is the bond of perfectness. For this continuous work were they given, and by them alone can these purposes be accomplished, the saints be perfected, the Church be filled with strength and wisdom, with unity, truth, and love, and be prepared, as a spotless virgin, for the marriage of the Lamb. Every ministry in the Church is a ministry of life; but the apostolic ministry is the ministration of the *Spirit* of life from the [p. 20→] Lord Jesus Christ, and the strength of every other ministry – the ordinance for bestowing the Holy Ghost to be exercised in all those other ministries. Jesus alone has the Holy Ghost to bestow; and by Apostles alone did

¹ Ephesians, iv. 11-16.

He bestow Him. Wherefore, when Philip had preached the Gospel with great: miracles and signs at Samaria, and multitudes believed and were baptized, it was necessary that Peter and John should go down from Jerusalem, that with imposition of hands and prayer the disciples might receive the Holy Ghost; and because *they* were containers of all other ministers, and *through them* the gift of the Holy Ghost, the Spirit of Unity was dispensed, and *from them* the one faith proceeded, and *by them* the unity of that faith and of discipline was preserved, – therefore, while the number of those standing in the other offices of the Church is, from the very nature of those offices, unlimited; there was an equal necessity in the nature of this office that the number of the apostles should be limited. Not that the number of those who should *successively* stand in the office was limited, for all Scripture, and the traditions of the Church, do plainly shew, that more than twelve men in the first ages laboured as Apostles. But the very name whereby they are named, The Twelve;¹ the future office of the Apostles to the circumcision² in judging the twelve tribes of Israel;³ the election of St. Matthias⁴ to make up the complete number; and many other considerations to be gathered from holy Scripture; the traditions of the Church;⁵ and the very necessity of the case,

¹ Matt. xxvi. 20; Acts, vi. 2.

² Gal. ii. 7, 8.

³ Matt. xix. 28.

⁴ Acts, i. 23-26.

⁵ Hooker, *Ecc. Pol.* liber vii. sec. 4.

do likewise concur in this, that the apostleship was [p. 21→] twelvefold; for, as we have before set forth, in a twelvefold apostleship under Christ consists the visible unity of the Church. And, accordingly, while in the full exercise of their office, they abode together in Jerusalem,¹ caring for, and watching over all, thence going forth on their messages of blessing to the Churches, and thither returning again.²

Nor were the other offices, though subordinated, less necessary, nor less integral members, each in their place, in the Body. The Holy Ghost, the Comforter, is the revealer of the mysteries of God; and by Prophets hath He ever spoken forth the hidden things which it was needful that the people of God should know. Again, the Word of salvation, the things which the Church hath most surely believed, it is yet needful to remind them of; and, by the word of evangelists did Jesus renew in the Church the memory of His Gospel, as by evangelists He was preached in the world. Nor was it less needful that those whom the Holy Ghost had made overseers to feed the Church of God, the shepherds³ whom the Chief Shepherd used for this work, should take heed to themselves, and to their flock, to feed and take the oversight of them.⁴

¹ Acts, v. 12; viii. 1; xii. 17; xv. 2, 33; Gal. i. 17.

² Acts, viii. 14-25; ix. 32, comp[are]. with xi. 2; xii. 17, comp. with xv. 7.

³ 1 Peter, v. 2.

⁴ Acts, xx. 28.

But while these were the chiefest members and ordinances of the body for the principal functions of spiritual life, yet if we look at the great company of the baptised only as the subjects of [p. 22→] their ministry, we shall take but a partial view of the Scriptural doctrine of the Church, which was the body of Christ,¹ and all the baptised, members in particular, made to drink into the one spirit, and quickened with the one life. Not apostles, prophets, teachers alone; but these more prominent and manifested members, with those less honourable and unseen. And, by the mutual action of every part, each having need of the other, the communion of joy and life should have been maintained, and the whole body have grown together making increase of itself. Thus it had begun to be even in the very birth and first days of the Church, as it is recorded, All that were baptised “continued stedfastly in *the Apostles’ doctrine and fellowship*, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers. And fear came upon every soul: and many wonders and signs were done by the Apostles. And all that believed were together, and had all things common; and sold their possessions and goods, and parted them to all men, as every man had need. And they, continuing daily with one accord in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house, did eat their meat with gladness and singleness of heart, praising God, and

¹ 1 Cor. xii. 13-27.

having favour with all the people. And the Lord added to the Church daily such as should be saved.”¹ And again, “And the multitude of them that believed were of one heart and of one soul: neither said any of them that aught of the things which he possessed was his own: but they had all things common. And with great power gave the Apostles witness of the resurrection of the Lord Jesus: and great grace was upon them all.”² And again, at a later period, writes [p. 23→] the Apostle Paul, – “Though I be absent in flesh, yet I am with you in the spirit; joying and beholding your order, and the stedfastness of your faith in Christ.”³ The unity, the love, the faith, the power, and the growth, were made manifest to all men – man was blessed and God was glorified.

Thus God had established a visible body complete in all its parts, whereof the chiefest the very head of all other, were Apostles and Prophets. This was the witness, – not a confused and heterogeneous mass, but one harmoniously organised body; each member filling a particular function which no other could supply; every one as essential as the other – where one was lacking, all were deficient. God’s purpose is invariable and unchangeable; and though the apostleship is in twelve men, yet it is the Church that is apostolic, not any twelve men: and the character of the Church can no more be changed than the cha- [character]

¹ Acts, ii. 32, 33.

² Ibid. iv. 32.

³ 1 Col. ii. 5.

racter of God who ordained it in all its parts. Its character is such as He Himself describes in His word; and no assembly, confederacy, association, or body of any kind whatsoever, or what name soever it may take, is the Church of God, as it is in His contemplation and purpose, unless it answers the description He has given of it: and a Church which has neither apostles nor prophets is not the Church of Christ as He has described it.

What words, then, can express the extent of the guilt which lies upon the Church, the true character and awful nature of the [p. 24→] sin in God's sight, that this goodly order framed by Him for an end not yet accomplished, should be maimed of its noblest parts, and disfigured in its fairest proportions; that, instead of going on unto perfection, the body of the baptised should have retrograded, casting aside and letting slip the means which God had vouchsafed. Had the Church used the means aright, she would have attained the ends; "her line should have gone through all the earth, and her words to the end of world;"¹ her witness should have been the means of gathering the good seed into the garner, and separating the chaff unto unquenchable fire.² But she soon failed to keep the promises by that faith which at first obtained them, when the Church abode together in Jerusalem, waiting for the promise of the Father;³ she lost the gift of apostle- [apostleship]

¹ Psalm xix. 4.

² Matth. iii. 12.

³ Acts, i. 14.

ship in men sent forth of God and of Jesus Christ,¹ and whatever partial ministry of apostleship she has had, has been by men sent forth by their fellow-men, successors of Apostles; demonstrated by the very term (which is not scriptural) to be inferior to apostles – as, indeed, the Church has full truly experienced in herself, and exemplified to the-world.

Instead of extenuating it enhances her guilt, that she should glory in her shame, and should measure the purposes of God by her own wickedness which lost, and her unbelief which perpetuates the loss; or that, instead of returning to the Lord with [p. 25→] weeping for having so despised the pleasant land, she should studiously renounce, as belonging to a past and almost fabulous dispensation, every token by which she might be known as the dwelling-place of the Living and True God.

And with respect to the Apostles themselves, they were the commissioned of God, not to found churches merely (they were themselves the foundation), but to establish also and bring them to perfection. Wherefore St. Paul says to the Romans, "I long to see you, that I may impart unto you some spiritual gift, *to the end* ye may be established."² To the Corinthians, speaking of himself

¹ See this distinctive character of a true Apostle set forth in the titles of all St. Paul's Epistles, and particularly Gal. i. 1, 11, 12, and 1 Tim. i. 1.

² Rom. i. 11.

as a true apostle, “I have espoused you to one husband, *that I* may present you as a chaste virgin to Christ.”¹ Again, to the Colossians, “Warning every man, and teaching every man in all wisdom; *that we* may present every man perfect in Christ Jesus: whereunto I also labour, striving according to His working, which worketh in me mightily.”² But the Church is not yet presented – alas! who can say that she hath been preserved – a chaste virgin; instead of going on unto perfection, it needs not argument to prove – the whole Church is our argument – that every man is not presented perfect in Christ Jesus. The apostles of old have departed, although the end of the apostolic ministry had not yet been attained; and though their memory has been loaded by posterity with honours all but divine, yet, in their lifetime they were many times despised and set at naught, both by churches and individuals,³ [p. 26→] manifesting how it came to pass that the office ceased, namely, through the unbelief, which failed to keep, and which hindered its restoration, and through the unholiness, which shrunk from the manifested presence of the God of holiness, and was well pleased with the removal of the holy discipline which Christ exercised through apostles.

And with respect to the continuation of their

¹ 2 Cor. xi. 2.

² Col. i, 28, 28.

³ 3 John, 9, 10; 2 Thess. iii. 2, 6, 14; Rom. xvi. 17; Philip i. 15, 16; iii. 17, 18.

ministry in others their successors; the Apostles in their lifetime appointed men to take charge of particular churches; but this was for the end of good government, in subordination to themselves, not for associating them with themselves, in the apostolic office. Nay, it is evident from the words of Scripture, in the very commission under which the bishops of Christendom have since claimed their authority, that that commission was intended to be temporary: “These things write I unto thee, hoping to come unto thee shortly: but if I tarry long, that thou mayest know how thou oughtest to behave thyself in the house of God.”¹ And the first duty of those men, and of *their* successors to this day, was, with the churches committed to them, to cry unto God day and night, in the first instance to preserve, subsequently to restore, the apostolic ministry to the Church. It is true that, when and as the apostleship ceased, these, by a necessary devolution and preference, succeeded to the chief places of authority in the Church; but it is equally true that, in that act, God’s way of unity in His Church was violated.

And the whole history of the Church since that period [p. 27→] down to our own times, when a new and more monstrous form of wickedness has come in, has been but a perpetual struggle, for an unity to be brought about by *unlawful means*, by appeals to the strong arm of power (the first instance

¹ 1 Tim. iii. 14, 15.

whereof was to a *pagan* emperor Aurelian, and so early as the middle of the third century); or by the usurpation of one bishop over his brethren. Such was the sin, and such has been the punishment, of the Church: the sin, that the Church was content, and her rulers interestedly content, in the cessation of the apostleship: the punishment, the cruel tearings and rendings of the Body of Christ; the schisms, and distinctions, and divergencies in faith and discipline; the tyranny of the power of the state, or the tyranny of an universal Bishop.

It is not wonderful, that from this sin innumerable evils should flow; and decline and degeneracy must inevitably proceed, until authority and office shall be extinct, and all shall be resolved into a mass of confusion, from whence Antichrist shall select *his* materials and build *his* church. When the Church and its rulers have universally consented to regard the continuance in the Church of Apostles, the very wells and fountains of doctrine, to be unessential, no wonder that heresies innumerable should have crept in. If Bishops take upon themselves to govern the Church without Apostles, presbyters will lightly esteem Bishops, to be themselves in turn regarded as unnecessary; and finally, the mass of the religious will hasten to fulfil the prophecies of the last times spoken by St. Paul, St. Peter, and St. Jude, “Heaping

to themselves teachers having itching ears;”¹ “despising dominion,” “presumptuous,” “speaking [p. 28→] evil of dignities;” “perishing in the gainsaying of Core;” “feeding (shepherding ποιμαίνοντες) themselves without fear;” “having men’s persons in admiration because of advantage;” “separating themselves, sensual, having not the Spirit.”² Verily, except Jesus, the Head of the Church, had contained in himself all the fulness ready to be put forth through men, whenever the faith of the body would again receive the blessing, – and had it not been that the time was ever in the heart of God, when it should again flow into the Church through the channels constituted in the beginning; – long since should she have been swallowed up in the consequences of her own wickedness, and the promise of the Lord that the gates of hell should not prevail against her,³ had come utterly to an end.

Without Apostles it is not difficult to understand that Prophets should also have ceased; for the laying on of Apostles’ hands is God’s ordinary way of bestowing the Holy Ghost, whether in gifts, in administrations, or in operations.⁴ Apostles are His gift, direct and immediate; but Prophets and other ministries *ordinarily* are His gifts, mediate and through Apostles: and though the voice

¹ 2 Tim. iv. 3.

² 2 Peter, ii. 10; Jude, 8, 11, 12, 16, 19.

³ Matth. xvi. 18.

⁴ 1 Cor. xii. 4-6.

of prophecy may have been heard in the Church, the Lord from time to time speaking extraordinarily by whom He will, yet it was to be expected that Prophets, as a standing ministry in the house of God, should cease when Apostles had ceased. And again, those who had now succeeded to the chief rule in the Church, held in the body, the Church universal, a subordinate ministry to the Prophet; for says the Scripture, “First Apostles, *secondarily* [p. 29→] Prophets, *thirdly* Teachers:”¹ after that helps, governments, &c. Again, the word-of God through a Prophet is a declaration of His mind to the universal Church; and yet by Apostles alone could it be conveyed as an authoritative tradition and injunction: as St. Peter says, “Be mindful of the *words* which were spoken before by the holy Prophets, and of the *commandment* of us the Apostles of the Lord and Saviour.”² And, lastly, the voice of prophecy, coming direct from the throne of God, would claim an authority which, when the Church was under the rule of Apostles, from whom alone, as we have said, the traditions of authority could proceed, found its true exercise, but which would now be found to clash with the unsupported authority of the Bishop. And without speculating where ecclesiastical history is silent, we yet know that God works by, and not in direct contravention of, the natural course of cause and effect; and nothing but a continued

¹ 1 Cor. xii. 28.

² 2 Peter, iii. 2.

miracle against the natural course of things could have perpetuated the office of Prophet as it is in the Christian Church, (for we speak not of the law,) after Apostles had ceased to exist.

It is necessary again to argue and insist that the Church is not an institution of man for man’s purposes but of God for His purposes. If it do not accomplish these, it must become like salt which has lost its savour. Nor can God’s purpose be: accomplished by any means but those which He has chosen – means plainly set down in the Scriptures not as indifferent, or to be superseded, or changed for others, or capable of substitution by any invention [p. 30→] of men, or to be disregarded with impunity, or to be lost without a grievous mutilation of the body of Christ, and a stopping and hindering of God’s blessing. They are necessary, they are sufficient, they are terminable by nothing short of the accomplishment of the purposes for which they are given. There is no Word in Scripture declaring an intention on God’s part to do away with any one of them; and it is a daring defiance of God, and contempt of His wisdom and ways, to suppose, and act on the presumption, that any one of them can be dispensed with: but to set aside the two principal of these offices, the very foundations of the spiritual building, is a sin the parallel whereof in any human polity would exceed all belief.

Is it, then, that the universal Church needed not

to be bound together by the band of Apostles – that it was sufficient to commit the Church to the Bishops to insure that unity? It was not God’s way of unity, and, therefore, no marvel that in our further progress we should find that unity could not thus be maintained. To assert that the unity of the Church consists in its being under any one *Bishop* other than the Lord Jesus Christ, is the error in church government of the Papists. To assert that it stands in an invisible head, Jesus in the Heavens, to the exclusion of any visible unity on earth, is the error of the Independents; and its effect is perpetual schism in the body of Christ. And to assert, as has been the more recent doctrine of the Protestants, the independence of each national Church, tends, indeed; to correct the last error to a certain extent in the parts, but leaves the evil unremedied in the whole and is but Independency on a larger [p. 31→] scale; and would necessarily be proved to be such, whenever again a universal monarchy shall be established – and none can say how soon that may be.

And is it true, that the first apostles perfected even the outward fabric of church government, and left nothing to their successors but to administer what they had ordained? The traditions of the Apostles are lost; and the Church, under their successors, is at this day found in a state of division and opposition; one mass, of contradictions on the most important matters in church

ordinances, – ordination, for instance, and administration of the sacraments; one provincial church rejecting the received rules of another, and refusing to recognise her ordinations.

The law of the universal Church can flow only from those who under Christ have a permanent jurisdiction and episcopate over the whole Church throughout the world; nor by any others, Bishops, or Presbyters, whose power of action is confined to their own diocess [*sic*, diocese], or parochial district, can control be exercised, or Catholic reformation be introduced. And herein consists the fundamental character of apostolic rule and prophetic utterance; and in no way can the perpetual character, and constant necessity for these offices, which are the foundation, be more clearly shewn than by reference to the state of Christendom, divided into churches wholly independent of each other, and recognising no ultimate standard of authority in Word, or in rule, in doctrine or in practice.

It is no sufficient answer to these considerations to express a [p. 32→] spiritual optimism, which, disregarding our sins and our forefathers’, contends that every thing is as God would have it, because it is as it is. And what should have hindered in old time the application of that principle to the fall of man? or now, to any other abomination, not expressly and in words forbidden in Scripture?

The Lord Jesus so constituted His Church as His house, that He might Himself freely go in and

out, act and speak therein; not merely by means of men's mind, but independently and preternaturally. The Church fell from that her spiritual standing, and was fain to resort to human expedients. Those expedients once substituted supplied the place of the better things, the spiritual, and satisfied the consciences of men, while of necessity their effect was to circumscribe God's liberty in His own house, and ultimately hinder Him altogether; making Him appear – if He appeared at all – in the character of an intruder.

While the Apostles lived, their sentence was the standard¹ of doctrine; and though even in their days heretics arose, yet were they speedily separated and their opinions condemned by the authority of the Church expressed through Apostles. The doctrine delivered by an Apostle was the doctrine of the Church. But when they had departed, no single Bishop could pronounce the judgment of the Church against any novel doctrines introduced by heretics, for the heretics might themselves be Bishops. And general councils have been the only means whereby the universal [p. 33→] Church, since the times of the Apostles, has been enabled to pronounce her judgment on disputed points; – an insufficient means, which, more strongly than any thing else, might have instructed the Church in some apprehension of her loss; for, from the nature thereof, it cannot

¹ 1 Cor. xi. 2; iv. 17; 2 Tim. ii. 2; iii. 10.

but fail to give the universal judgment of the Church. A Synod of the Bishops of churches in the same district, might be supposed to convey the doctrine of the Church to those within that district; but what when all the Bishops of a province were involved in heresy? In the reigns of Pagan emperors it was, in the nature of things, impossible to gather all or a majority of Christian Bishops in a general council. And when that course was afterwards resorted to, many times the fixing on the place of meeting decided, the question in dispute; and the real majority of the Church has been bound by the acts of the minority; and thus, on one occasion,¹ as St. Jerome expresses it, “the whole world groaned and wondered to find itself Arian.”

How little the rule of Bishops tended to unity was exemplified in the state of affairs when the Roman Emperor Constantine became a convert to Christianity; – Africa in the hands of the Donatists, a large number of Bishops and their churches in Egypt, and whole districts in Asia, professing the doctrines of Arius. These judgments from God, vindicating His wisdom in His own ordained way of unity – Apostles ruling His universal Church – failed; to compel the Bishops of the Church to penitence and supplication, and drove them into the further act of wickedness, – the [p. 34→] introduction of the civil authority into the rule of the Church.

¹ Council of Rimini, A. D. 360.

We call it a further act of wickedness; whatever might be the justification for those who invoked it for it was “*confusion*,” an incestuous union forbidden by the law of God’s Church. But, lest we should give cause for misunderstanding, we shall consider this matter more fully.

The kingdom of the Lord Jesus Christ is not of this world:¹ it is in the age to come that “He shall be a priest on His throne;”² – that period when, no longer prophetically and with a spiritual application, the song shall be sung by His redeemed to Him who hath “made us unto our God kings and priests, and we shall reign on the earth;”³ for they are “a royal priesthood,”⁴ and shall be seen to be such at the manifestation of the sons of God; – Jesus the priest and the king – His people, with Him and under Him, a nation of kings and priests: and therefore, that any man in this age should, as priest, sit upon the throne, or that the king should take spiritual jurisdiction, as king, in the Church of Christ, is a forestalling, if it be not also an usurpation, of the prerogative of the Lord Jesus, when His kingdom shall come. Nevertheless, the throne and the altar are, as has been well observed; symbols of eternal realities. The Lord Jesus is the Eternal Priest as well as King, who, “through the Eternal Spirit, offered himself without spot to God.”⁵ and He is the

¹ John, xviii. 36.

² Zech. vi. 13.

³ Rev. v. 10.

⁴ 1 Peter, ii. 9.

⁵ Heb ix. 14.

Eternal King as well as Priest; “Thy throne, O God, is for [p. 35→] ever and ever.”¹ And to separate the one of these from the other *in the body of Christ*, or to suppose that, in any community of baptised men, kingly rule and priestly authority have not correlative and reciprocal duties is to do nothing less than to divide the kingship from the priesthood of Christ. Domestic and civil relations are, in their origin, as much ordained of God, and as much channels of blessing, as ecclesiastical relations; – the king and the parent as necessary as the apostle and the pastor; and in a Christian land God has hallowed, and baptism has sealed them sacred. But the civil and ecclesiastical rulers have each their proper functions. The office of the priesthood is to teach both kings and people their several duties, and to be the channels for imparting to all and each the grace and blessing without which they are unfurnished for discharging the same. Those are no sound politics which are not Christian politics: and the priesthood are the ordained teachers of principles for the guidance of both rulers and ruled. But their duty is strictly a spiritual duty, – their words are addressed to the faith and conscience, – their authority is spiritual; and, as citizens, they must obey – they must be patterns of obedience to – the powers that be. The duty of kings and rulers is to govern their people by the statutes and

¹ Heb. i. 8.

ordinances of God, which, in faith of Him; not of man, they receive from the lips of the priests; as the first-born sons, to be the obedient sons of the Church, from whose womb all the baptised are born unto God, and from whose breasts they are all nourished; and to guard and shield her from every danger with filial care. [p. 36→] Over the persons of all in their dominion they are to rule in righteousness; but dominion or jurisdiction in faith – authority internal or external in the church – belongs not to them, and is an usurpation of the office of Christ, the true Melchizedec, King of Kings and Lord of Lords, Priest of the Most High God.

If the Church had borne in mind her duty, and known and held her place, the question of the connexion between Church and State would never have been treated as a question of expediency either to the one party or the other, but would be seen to be a question, whether God should instruct men in the motives, means, and objects, whereby they were to be guided in ruling for Him? But when the Christian Church contentedly suffered the Apostleship to die away, and had satisfied herself that her sin was God's will; when the power of delivering over to Satan for the destruction of the flesh was superseded by excommunication, and the authority of Apostolic decision was exchanged for Synods of Bishops, in whose numbers consisted their sole authority in this behalf; these

weapons, as we have seen, were unequal to the contest, where Bishop contended against Bishop, and Synod against Synod. If unity, or rather uniformity its outward expression, were to be preserved (and unity was yet considered an essential mark of the true Church), the only apparent means (God's ordinances having failed) were a resort to the civil power. The immediate consequence of this was to make the civil power supreme arbiter in matters of faith; and the Emperor, seated in a council of Bishops, became the spiritual as well as temporal head.

[p. 37→] And that this is the true state of the case, whatever pretext or colour may be given to it, is proved by the result. If the Emperor was Arian, the Bishops, who were allowed to retain their Sees, were Arian: if orthodox, the Church resumed its orthodoxy. When the Emperor became Pagan, it is well known that the Church was unaffected in its internal relations, whatever was the consequence as to its external dignity or power. At length, on the decay of the Imperial power, and the division of the empire into many states, the Papal apostasy reared itself up, and sought to effect an unity by again anticipating the prerogative of Christ, and setting a priest upon the throne.

Our purpose is answered in pointing out the sin – we shall not dwell on the history of the Church, through the intermediate ages of Popery.

Whatever were the motives of those who were the promoters of the Appeal to the civil power, or of the advancement of the Popedom, – whether it was spiritual intolerance, or zeal for God’s truth, or both, in the one case, and spiritual ambition, or any better motive, in the other, – at least, the principle that unity was a *sign* of the true Church, and therefore should be visible, was at the foundation of all their endeavours. Unity they never could attain – it never shall be attained, except through the indwelling of God; for which end Apostles, Prophets, Evangelists, and Pastors, (Apostles and Prophets being the root of the others), were given. But the striving for uniformity was at least an acknowledgment by the Church of what she should be, the homage which, fallen [p. 38→] from her spiritual standing, she yet paid to the truth which she should have realised and manifested: but while she admitted the principle, instead of repenting of the past, and seeking God’s returning grace, she means she resorted to were the very instruments of her corruption: first of all, the abandonment and voluntary abdication of her true standing as a Church, from the consequences whereof she was only preserved by the breaking up of the empire, the reed whereon she leaned; and next, the usurpation of the office of Christ’s vicegerent; – an usurpation resting for support on superstitions of every kind in practice, and corruptions in doctrine. In its origin, it introduced

the novel exercise of jurisdiction by one Bishop over another independent Bishop; an act of ambition for which there is no pretence in the Word of God; and which was no sooner heard of than protested against by the universal Church: and its growth and progress were maintained by the undue elevation of the priestly office, through means of the Romish doctrines of absolution, human merits, and the real presence; and by the establishing of new orders of monks, those caterpillars¹ in the Christian vineyard, whose rivalry, again, was made the means of securing the allegiance of the priests.

The Reformers who came out from the Papacy, attained not to unity among themselves; they builded not one Church out of the apostasy, but added many sects to the Babylon which they found; they began well, but they went not forward; they began to build, but they did not finish; they contented themselves with [p. 39→] founding systems, and sought to build the Church on doctrines and creeds, instead of looking to God to build up his temple on living men standing; in His ordinances. They soon made alliances with the kings of the earth, each apart from the other, and each in order to establish their own system in their respective and limited spheres. Theirs has been an history not of the One Church but of many sects; not of one faith, one hope, one baptism,

¹ Joel, i. 4.

but of many faiths, many hopes, many baptisms. They have not dwelt together as brethren, eating and drinking in one holy place; but they have separated from each other, shunning each other, biting and devouring one another: the Church was one in the beginning through the indwelling of the Comforter – the Papacy was cemented together by the subtlety of Satan; but since the Reformation there has been no manifested oneness at all, but a mass of opposing sects, each contradicting the others, their, only claim to union being in the Scriptures, as the standard of truth; while they prove the fallacy of their *claim* by each referring to the Scriptures in support of their peculiar and, many times, contradictory tenets.

They came out, however, in national communities; but the license which each division thus claimed to exercise, eats as a canker into its own constitution: and the history of the reformed churches has proved, that the authority of the state, establishing the standard of the religious faith of the nation, and securing it by temporal endowments on the one hand, and penalties on the other, could alone preserve the semblance of unity, even among themselves in their separate and divided communities.

But we leave the foreign churches, and now address ourselves [p. 40→] to the share which the Church of England has had in the sin of the universal Church.

We are a part of the universal Church, the children on whom God visits the iniquities of the fathers; we have avouched the sin of the early Church by our indifference to the true nature and offices thereof; we have despised Apostles and Prophets by our contentedness under their loss; and in protesting against the errors of Popery, we have adopted and exceeded the sin which the Church committed under the first Christian emperor.

The first act of the Church of England in coming out from Popery, was to sanction and allow the sacrilegious robbery of her property; the first part of the price which she paid to obtain the support of the king and nobles. Her clergy should never have ceased to protest against this robbery, and to have reclaimed her property from the spoilers. But she dared not offend the secular powers on whom, at the very outset, her dependence was placed, and not on God alone. Next, the Church of England not merely acknowledged the subjection of all men in the realm as members of the state, to the king, to the exclusion of all foreign powers from authority in the realm (which was the pretence alleged); but they seated him on the throne of Christ, in a manner which had never yet been done by any community of Christians in the world. The clergy, in convocation, and by acts of Parliament, to which, in the persons of their Prelates, they fully assented, and under which

to this day, without protest of any kind, they are content to hold their possessions, “submitted and consented that they would not presume to enact or execute any new canons or constitutions [p. 41→] without the king’s assent;” and that no person in the realm, religious or otherwise, should go out of the king’s dominions to any general council. And they further consented, that the free election of Bishops should be taken from ecclesiastical persons or bodies, and virtually vested in the king. The former of these was in effect as schismatical an act as is recorded of any heretic, or body of heretics, in the history of the Church; for by it the Church of England cast off their allegiance to Christ in the unity of the body, and disabled themselves from adopting, of their own independent will, any regulation, or from uniting in any protest against error, which, by the universal consent of the whole of the rest of the Church, might be deemed necessary. They voluntarily cut themselves off from the universal Church. All the Protestant churches established themselves as distinct ecclesiastical polities; and so far all countenanced, in some degree, the separateness of the Church of England: but they never went so far as to preclude themselves from the *possibility* of union in the future, except with the consent, of a *lay*, and it might be an *excommunicated*, person.

But the remaining act was a violation in terms of common veracity and decency in the manner,

and in the matter an avowed and most fearful stretching forth of the hand of the King to wield spiritual authority. In the process called the *congé d’élire*, the King, the Bishops, and the electing Clergy, all conspire to lie before God and before man, transacting a pretended election; while, in fact and in truth, the King, as a layman, or, what is worse, the mere head of the political party for the time being in power, in the King’s name, presumes to be the organ of the Holy [p. 42→] Ghost, and nominates men to the highest office in the Church of Christ.

If there be such a sin as spiritual infidelity to Christ, the Church’s Lord, the Church of England in the commencement of its career as a Protestant Church, was guilty of that act: and it is to this day avowed, and acted upon, and justified by the Clergy.

No wonder that the Church should become a mere engine of government in the hands of political parties, and should be supported or sacrificed as their interest or their opinions should prompt; – no wonder that she should have ceased boldly to declare to princes and people the mind of God, and feared to assume the sacred authority with which the Lord invested her; – no wonder that her ministrations should have lost their effect on the people, and that conscientious, though misguided, men should have shrunk from her communion. And in this transaction of selling God’s

gifts and endowments, the value she received for the abandonment of her high calling and true standing, was the power to oppress. Since the cessation of living men ministering as the oracles of God, definitions, confessions, articles, and creeds, have been the necessary substitutes; and the enforcing of these, by the power of the law, upon her misguided children, – this was her part of the purchase. No one in the present day dares to defend, but, alas! who feels the guilt involved in the cruel persecutions of Puritans and Nonconformists? The calling of the Church is to follow those who separate themselves; to entreat them to return; to restore them in the spirit of meekness. The past age sought to repress them [p. 43→] by barbarous mutilations, or vindictive penalties, or deprivations: and the present age are the children of their fathers, and fill up the measure of their iniquity: they reprobate, indeed, the bigotry, as they call it, and fierce spirit of persecution of their predecessors; but they carelessly allow the wanderers to go where they please, nor take one active step to snatch them from the dangers they incur.

The right by which the Clergy of the Church established by law became the incumbents of the tithes and other property of the Church, is founded upon their being the ordained teachers and pastors of the land. These were the provisions of piety for God's Church; and the acceptance of the

emoluments involves the charge of the duties and responsibilities. But the duties have not been fulfilled to the people. In all the towns which have grown up in the last century, and which comprise a full third of the population, the Church has taken no care to provide religious instruction proportioned to the increase; nay, in many instances, has altogether neglected them. She has not been diligent to watch the ebb and flow of population, either in town or country, or to supply the need. The consequence of this has been, that there are large towns consisting almost wholly of Dissenters. And there are many instances of persons, who do not profess to be Dissenters, yet are compelled to avail themselves, among Dissenters, of the only religious instruction open to them. This cannot be, without gross neglect on the part of the Church as a body. If it has been the duty of no one to attend to it, it enhances the guilt of the body: but it is well known that attempts on the part of private persons to supply some remedy, and [p. 44→] to build additional places of worship, have been discouraged by the Bishops – it may be, properly: but it only the more behoved them to see that the remedy was legitimately applied.

And those who have separated themselves from the Church have been most of all neglected. That a man should call himself a Dissenter, has been admitted a sufficient excuse for the Clergy

to cease to concern themselves any further about him. Instead of seeking after Christ's sheep straying from the fold, and dispersed abroad (and if the Established Church be not the fold, wherefore do her ministers claim the endowments thereof?), they allow them to wander from one depth to another; and, in the secret of the heart, will even thank the Dissenting Minister for the care he takes of those who should be cared for by none but themselves, and by themselves should be sufficiently cared for.

And after all, and setting aside the neglect of duty by the Church, and without seeking to lessen the fault of the Dissenter who separates, is there in the ministrations of the Clergy, where they are performed, no justification which the Dissenter can plead? Has there been no lack in these ministrations? Have all the spiritual wants of the children who wait on them been supplied? Alas! the Church is divided between those who adhere to the form of truth, while the life has escaped out of the Ordinances, and those who, struggling for the life of God, the essence of all religion, have despised the Ordinances and made void the Sacraments of the Church. And the latter, disgusted by the coldness and want of spirituality in the religion of the former, and alienated by the [p. 45→] enormities and corruptions which their discernment in spiritual things enables them to perceive, but which they make use of as their

excuse for following their own fleshly, proud, self-determined, and separative ways, have either openly joined, or are secretly symbolising with, the sects, religious and political, who are now engaged in assaulting the institutions in Church and State.

It is the consciousness of her deficiency which unnerves the Church, and paralyses her exertions. She is conscious that she is not capable of being the Instructress of the Nation – she dares not to assert that she alone, in this land, holds the truth of God; and, instead of repenting of her guilt, and seeking for the mercy of God that she may discharge her responsibilities, she is on the point, at this moment, of allowing herself to become only the chief of a multitude of sects. For this, all things have been long preparing. The Church deserted her true standing when she purchased, instead of claiming, protection from the rulers in the State; and, like those who had gone before, she had not the means of unity in herself – she sought them not from God; and by that act she placed herself in the position of a Dominant Party, instead of the Mother of all. But by a just retribution, flowing immediately from her own acts – her persecutions at the first, her indifference and neglect of duty latterly – her children, driven from her bosom, and gathered into hostile knots and bands, are now obtaining the ascendancy, and will speedily reduce her below their own level

too probably plundering her wealth and dividing her inheritance, to satiate themselves. They loathe the notion of unity, which is the very notion of the Church of God; and seek to establish the voluntary principle, which [p. 46→] is the very principle of schism and lawlessness: for the question of God's truth, or God's worship, is not a thing of human choice, nor to be decided by mere human majorities (and yet it is on this footing that not only the *modern* Dissenters, but the advocates of the Church, consent to argue it). It is a virtual denial of Revelation in the State to propose it; it will be a betrayal of trust in the Church to assent to it; it is a denial of their baptism in the people to seek it. If the people are not kept conscious of their obligation, if the Clergy do not assert for Christ their place, as His appointed channels of all God's blessings – His priests to bring the people up to God, they will but degrade themselves to a level with those Voluntary Bishops, the birth of modern times, who neither have, nor profess to have, any Divine constitution or authority for their office. Instead of knowing that she alone has the talent, and trading faithfully with the same, she will act as if either the pastoral work, and all ecclesiastical functions, required no gift or authority of God, no delegation from Christ; or else that her own standing was questionable as the inheritor of that gift, authority, and delegation.

We know that the present Archbishop of Can- [Canterbury]

terbury, and other Bishops, have asserted the true standing of a Church; but it is not the less true that the great body of the Clergy are, at this moment, in heart assenting, not to the course adopted by the Government and the Legislature for despoiling and degrading the Church, but to the principle whereon that course is founded – the only principle on which their Registration Acts, their Marriage Acts, their University Measures, their Church Reforms, their Tithe Measures have [p. 47→] been brought forward, not by one party only in the State, but by all. And if the rulers of the Church were to *insist* on the only principle whereon she has any claim to be an establishment at all, and openly to resist the sacrilegious measures proposed, their warmest supporters would flinch from their side, and would manifest by their conduct, what the unopposed acts of the parliament are about to manifest, how wholly the very idea of God's Church has departed from the minds of men.

It matters very little what is the result of the present contest of political parties. It will not help the Rulers of the Church (if they look not merely to the preservation of their revenues, but are careful for God's honour and the integrity of the Church's standing), that for the present the violent assailants of the Establishment should give way to professed friends. The principle of a Church Establishment, which is not a political

question, but is the question whether the State shall profess Christianity – the question whether the *Church* shall be the sole teacher of religion to rulers and subject – has been already decided in the negative, and friends as well as foes are equally prepared to carry out the details of the opposite principle; and all that the former can do, is to protract the period during which the dignities and emoluments of the Church may be enjoyed by her ministers.

It is not to the point to allege, in answer to these charges, the diligence and piety of individuals, and the increasing numbers of such. We disclaim to pronounce judgment on individuals. It is of the Church we speak – the Church comprising all the baptised, [p. 48→] and for whom the ordained Pastors in this land are responsible. In the communion of the Church of Rome are many pious, and many most diligent; but they labour in a corrupted body, and they shall be saved only so as by fire; and so far as the glory of Christ and the advancement of His Church is concerned, they serve but as jewels which adorn and set off a harlot. But, looking upon religious professors as a body, and an increasing body, we observe, indeed, that the profession of religion is diffused widely, but we look for the fruits *of that body*, and they are wanting. As a body, the past generation of religious men, the fathers and predecessors of the present race, would have frowned

upon the wordly and modified religion of the present day. They had their failings. Exclusiveness, and inability to discern a heart right with God elsewhere than among those of their own opinions, must be charged against them; but at least they were honest, and had not the form of godliness without the power. But as to their successors, *as a body*, in the diffusion of religious profession, its power has evaporated. Many of them are among the Neologians in doctrine, the Sadducees who believe neither angel nor spirit – many among the open enemies – many among the failing friends of our institutions; and of all classes of men, these are they who, amidst the signs in the heaven, and the perplexity and trouble which fill the rest with undefined apprehensions, loudly proclaim that there is no reason for apprehension, nor dangers to be avoided.

Again, the optimists of the present day, the anticipators of a millenium [*sic*, millennium], to be brought about, not by the coming of the Lord, but by the efforts of men using not God's means, but those devised [p. 49→] by themselves – point to their religious societies. We know that these were founded, and have been advanced, by the efforts of good men, and have been modes whereby, in times of ignorance, well-intentioned piety has sought for exercise. But what are these societies? At the best, attempts to do the work of the ministry by voluntary combinations of men, to the supplanting of the Church

in her office and functions; the strongest argument, indeed, of the evil condition of the Church, the convicting her of her deficiencies; but substituting human means in place of the last remnant of the Church's gifts, and contributing, probably, more extensively than any other cause to the lightly esteeming of the ministers of God and the authority of the Church; and some of them more directly, others more insidiously, tending to strengthen the cause of schism and resistance to rule.

Men will call this a mere question regarding the government of the Church. And what is the Church? It is the Body of Christ, the Temple of the Holy Ghost. And can they not perceive the desperate hatred with which professedly religious men – men whose orthodoxy, in the ordinary sense of the term, cannot be questioned – are now animated, thirsting to destroy the Established Church? But above all, will they not know that all the heresies, and superstitions, and fanaticism, the atheism and infidelity, which overspread the land, the fearful increase of crime, the ignorance, the rebellion, the downfall of all authority, are the complicated results of the sins of all generations? The decline in the first ages of the Church; the errors which have marked her further progress; the errors in coming out from the Papacy, and the special errors of the Church [p. 50→] of England; the persecutions on the one hand, the

resistance of spiritual rule on the other; the negligence, the spiritual death of the Clergy; the separating of the people from their legitimate pastors; – all these hang together; all contribute to the amount of wickedness, and hasten the coming judgments on the Church and on the land; all have been preparing, and are now completing, the way for the introduction of universal confusion; from whence, as from a troubled sea,¹ Antichrist shall arise.

And, on the other hand, let not the rulers of the Church schismatically divide, nor forget that the whole body of the baptised are, as baptised, the Church, and not merely the Clergy, or their own immediate followers; and that the rest, in all their gradations of wickedness – wickedness not unrivalled by the evils which abound in those who profess to be of the Establishment – are their children, though, it may be, their rebellious children, and aiming at their parent's life. Had the rulers stood in their faith, and fulfilled their duty to princes and people, these evils which we behold, and the still greater which we apprehend, would have had no place. The Church should have been fitted for her work of instructing the whole land; the rulers in the State, the legislators, should have been instructed in youth in such principles as would have led them to legislate for God: and the ascendancy acquired in

¹ Rev. xiii. 1.

youth should have been followed up, in counselling and guiding them in the faith and ways of God. The people should have been taught to fear God and honour the King; there should have been no room [p. 51→] for the Nonconformist; nor should voluntary plans of man's devising have been resorted to, in aid of God's ordinances; and Britain, raised up of old to protest against the forms of evil which from time to time have manifested themselves, should not have fallen from her place of protest, nor now have been in danger of ceasing altogether to be a Christian: commonwealth. Never would this ruin have happened, but for the sins of God's Church – priests and people, but especially the priests – sins which belong to many generations, but which all who vindicate, nay, all who fail to resist and oppose, as they have opportunity, do make their own.

The history of the Church contains a melancholy but instructive lesson. God's purpose can only be brought to pass through God's means. All the forms of sin which have been manifested are the precise consequences of the efforts of man to fulfil God's purpose without God's means: and the form of sin whereunto the universal Church in every land is now hastening, is the denial of God's purpose as well as of God's means, and the reducing of Religion to a Christianised Paganism – a mere succedaneum to relieve a man's conscience,

as though God had no interest therein, nor design to bring about and perfect thereby.

The time must at last arrive, and is now rapidly approaching, when the Son of Man shall come, and see if He can find faith on the earth. The nobleman, who had gone into a far country to receive for himself a kingdom, is now ready to return, and call his servants to account for the money he had given to them. He requires, at the hands of His Shepherds, His beautiful flock – of those who [p. 52→] stand in the place of rule in His Church, His Holy Bride, clothed in fine linen clean and white, the righteousness of saints, adorned and made meet for His glorious appearing.

And you, Reverend Fathers, the Bishops of the Church in this land; must speedily appear before Him, and give an account of your office and stewardship. O! be not tempted, after the example of the unjust steward,¹ to send for your Lord's debtors and to be yourselves the prompters of the fraud, that they should take their bills and write less than His full claim on them. Seek not, we beseech you, to evade His demands, nor to vindicate yourselves; rather be mindful, that He is merciful to those who confess their sins. Meet Him, as did the Patriarch of old, with the acknowledgment of your vileness: Gird up your loins; let Him demand of you, and declare ye unto Him.²

¹ Luke, xvi. 8.

² Job, xl. 4-7.

Are you prepared to stand before Him at the head of a people, coming behind in no gift, waiting for His revelation¹ – who look for and haste unto the coming of the day of God² – who build up themselves on their most holy faith, praying in the Holy Ghost, and keep themselves in the love of God, looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life³ – who deny ungodliness and worldly lusts, and live soberly, righteously, and godly, in the present world, looking for that blessed hope and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ;⁴ – a people who shall [p. 53→] not be ashamed before Him at His coming,⁵ but shall be found of Him in peace, without spot, and blameless⁶ – who shall be your crown and rejoicing in that day?

And for yourselves, ye Ministers of God, do ye bear the marks of His servants, which are set forth in the discourses of Jesus, and in the Epistles of His holy Apostles? Doth the Church under you agree with the description transmitted in the writings of Peter, and John, and Paul? Are you exercising the endowments of the Holy Ghost, bestowed upon the Church on the day of Pentecost, enumerated by St. Paul in the 12th chapter of his 1st Epistle to the Corinthians? Are your churches united in one body, according to what is written by the same Apostle in the 4th

¹ 1 Cor. i. 7.

² 2 Peter, iii. 12.

³ Jude, 20, 21.

⁴ Titus, ii. 12, 13.

⁵ 1 John, ii. 28.

⁶ 2 Peter, iii. 14.

chapter of his Epistle to the Ephesians – according to the prayer of the Lord himself, when he said, “That they *all* may be *one*, as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us; that the world may believe that thou hast sent me: and the glory which thou gavest me I have given them, that they may be one, even as we are one: I in them, and thou in me, that they may be made perfect in one, and that the world may know that thou hast sent me, and hast loved them as thou hast loved me?”¹

“Holy brethren, partakers of the heavenly calling, consider the Apostle and High Priest of our profession, Christ Jesus.” Are you indeed possessing and rejoicing in the fulness of the blessings which, as the Apostle of God, the Sent of the Father, He hath [p. 54→] brought down into His Church? Are you indeed entering into the prayers, and praises, and manifold offerings which, as the High Priest over the House of God, he presents continually unto His Father and our Father, unto His God and our God? Have you indeed believed that the Church is His body, the fulness of Him that filleth all in all?² and are you, with the Church around you, receiving of that fulness, and manifesting the same unto His glory? Are you *indeed* provoking His ancient people to jealousy, by shewing before them the glory of the God of Israel?³ Is the

¹ John, xvii. 21, 23.

² Ephes. i. 23.

³ Rom. xi. 11.

Church now, whereof you are the rulers under Christ, convincing the world that God sent His Son into the world, and that He hath one body, the Church, partaker of His life, inheritor of His kingdom to come, and even now, by the earnest thereof, the Holy Spirit of Promise,¹ the manifester of His glory? Are you faithful witnesses unto Jesus, as the Lamb² that was slain,³ the Lamb of God which taketh away the sin of the world, having peace⁴ through his blood in your own consciences, and leading⁵ into the holiest to worship God a people who are partakers of your peace, who know that they are forgiven for His name's sake, and praise God without hypocrisy for His pardoning mercy? Are you witnessing unto Jesus that He is indeed the Christ, the Son of God, who baptiseth with the Holy Ghost and with fire; possessing that blessing bestowed upon the Church in Jerusalem⁶ on the day [p. 55→] of Pentecost, and upon the Church in Samaria,⁷ when the Apostles Peter and John went down unto them from Jerusalem, and by imposition of hands communicated unto them the Holy Ghost; and upon Cornelius⁸ and his household, when Peter preached unto them the glad tidings which they believed; and upon the disciples⁹ in

¹ Ephes. i. 13, 14.

² 1 Peter, i. 12.

³ John, i. 29.

⁴ Rom. v. 1, 9; Ephes. ii. 13, 14; Colos. i. 20.

⁵ Heb. x. 19, 22.

⁶ Acts. ii.

⁷ Ibid. viii. 17.

⁸ Ibid. x. 46.

⁹ Ibid. xix. 1, 6.

Ephesus, whom Paul visited; and upon all the Churches in the beginning?

Are you witnessing unto Jesus; that He is the Lord, the King of the whole earth¹ – unto whom the heathen are given for His inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for His possession – who shall reign upon the earth with His saints, fulfilling that promise, “The kingdoms of this world shall be the kingdoms of the Lord and of His Christ?”² Are you witnessing for Jesus, that He is the Head of the Church, holding all His members unto Himself, as the tree containeth its branches, as the foundation and corner-stone do contain the building, as the head holdeth up and into itself all the body and the members thereof, subordinating all His members and ministers unto Himself – giving to each his own place, and endowing each with his own gift? Are you, and the Church with you, fulfilling all the offices of that holy ministry which Jesus Christ committed to His Church?

These, things the Church is not fulfilling and she hath not the means wherewith to fulfil them; but we, with our fathers, [p. 56→] have fulfilled our part in the history of man, which hath been ever a history of treason and apostasy. Full well have we followed the example of Adam in his creation standing. And this, and the other successive failures of Adam's posterity in God's subsequent dispen- [dispensations]

¹ Psalm ii. 6.

² Rev. xi. 15.

sations, have happened to us also as prophetic types, instead of having been to us examples of warning.¹ But though we have fallen because of our iniquity, and the hand of the Lord is upon His Church because we have forsaken the covenant of the Lord God of our fathers,² – and as *they* the blessing, so have *we* experienced the curse;³ yet let us return unto the Lord our God, and obey His voice: and we shall return, and obey His voice, and do all His commandments; and He will make us plenteous in every work of our hand:⁴ “for the commandment is not hidden from us, neither is it far off: the word is very nigh to us, in our mouth and in our heart.”⁵ “God’s Spirit yet remains among us, according to the word of his covenant, when we came out of Egypt.”⁶ “If we shall confess with our mouth, and believe in our heart, we shall be saved;”⁷ for God is in the midst of His people, the strength of their heart, and their portion for ever. Jesus is the Head of His Church, and He is ready to put forth His ordinances for this very end, that the duties He requires of His Ministers they may be enabled to fulfil. “Though our sins be as scarlet, they shall be white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool.”⁸ “I will restore [p. 57→] thy judges as at the first, and thy counsellors as

¹ 1 Cor. x. 6, 11.

² Deut. xxix. 25.

³ Ibid. xxx. 1, 2.

⁴ Ibid. xxx. 8, 9.

⁵ Ibid. xxx. 11.

⁶ Haggai, i. 5.

⁷ Rom. x. 6-9.

⁸ Isaiah, i. 18.

at the beginning; afterward thou shalt be called, The city of righteousness, the faithful city.¹ Man may fail, but the counsel of the Lord, that shall stand: it shall be fulfilled in His Church in the very way and by the very means He hath Himself ordained.

And if there be any longing to be conformed to the image of Jesus the Son of God,² if any desire to be holiness unto Him, if any joy that He should be glorified on the earth, let not His grace be resisted, let not the truth of His purpose which we have declared, be counted a thing incredible to you: neither suppose that the means which He hath appointed can be withdrawn for ever, “for the gifts and calling of God are without repentance.”³ In the midst of darkness, God causes light to arise; and the period of approaching judgment has ever been His time for raising His voice to warn, and for ordaining His refuge, wherein there may be shelter and defence.

And now, also, He has arisen to rebuild His sanctuary, His tabernacle of defence, “for a shadow in the day-time from the heat, and for a place of refuge;”⁴ “the tabernacle of David which had fallen down;”⁵ “His dwelling place in Zion;”⁶ and from thence His testimony proceeds, and now comes unto you. It comes not by the

¹ Isaiah, i. 26.

² Rom. viii. 29.

³ Ibid. xi. 29.

⁴ Isaiah, iv. 6.

⁵ Amos, ix. 11; Acts, xv. 14-17.

⁶ Psalm. lxxvi. 2.

hand of twelve private men, bearing no office in the Church of Christ; but of men called to be Apostles by the Holy Ghost, whose [p. 58→] office it shall be, through the faith and diligent prayer of God's people, to bear the rule, under Christ, over His Church in all the earth; and to convey to all the baptised, but especially to you, all the blessings which Jesus the Apostle would bestow upon His Church through Apostles. And our present duty is not merely to shew the people of God their iniquities, and the house of Jacob their sins,¹ but to make known, also, the grace and goodness of the Lord, in comforting his people and speaking comfortably to Jerusalem; that the way of the Lord may be prepared – that the good-tidings may be published on the top of the mountain – that the sheep of Jesus may be fed, and the lambs gathered with His arm, and carried in His bosom, and that those with young may be gently led.²

About fifteen or twenty years ago, many who had a zeal for God, both of the Church of England and among the Dissenters, seeing the lifeless condition of the Church of Christ, and having some perception of the only means of recovering it, agreed to unite for at least one object, namely, to pray for the special outpouring of the Holy Ghost. The cry was raised in England, and, upwards of five years and a-half ago, the answer was vouchsafed in Scotland; and the manifestation

¹ Isaiah, lviii. 1.

² Ibid. xl. 1-11.

of the Holy Ghost, in these days of spiritual drunkenness and disorder, was, as Isaiah prophesied¹ in anticipation of the judgments coming on the drunkards of Ephraim as well as on Jerusalem, “with stammering lips and another tongue;” unknown “tongues and prophesying” – the way [p. 59→] of God in the primitive Church; as St. Paul testifies in his days in the case of the Corinthian Church; though now the by-word, the occasion of scorn and mockery, to the scoffers of these last times.

These people were unconnected with the others first referred to; of the Fourteenth Chapter of the First Corinthians they knew no more than the rest of the Church. But in one truth they had been instructed, namely, that the Church should be, as in the days of old, filled with spiritual gifts, to the end she might be established: and they had been brought to the knowledge of God through the preaching of another truth, that God loves all men with a love expressed in the gift of His Son, who is the propitiation for the sins of the whole world.

The influential among the priesthood of that land rejected, without inquiry, the revived gifts of prophecy, some expressing total disbelief in the promises and word of God, – all shewing ignorance of His revealed purpose, – and not a few declaring, that if true, it was not by any means an event to be desired. But God had now begun

¹ Isaiah, xxviii, 11; see also 1 Cor. xiv.

to work, and He would be no longer frustrated. Some persons in London also received grace to believe, and the voice of the Holy Ghost began there to be heard; – first, in members of the Church of England, who went to their own spiritual pastors desiring their protection, which was refused; subsequently, in the congregation of a minister of the Church of Scotland, who, though he had not yet pronounced a judgment, where he had hitherto possessed no means of forming it, yet waited for the consolation of Israel in the restoration of the manifested gifts of the Comforter. [p. 60→] So soon as he had satisfied himself, he endeavoured to fulfil, as best he might, the duty of pastor under these new and untried circumstances, in protecting the vessels of the Holy Ghost, cherishing the spiritual gift, and not seeking to quench it. To him, among all the good deeds for-which his praise should be in all the Churches, belongs, above all, this peculiar honour, that he first recognised and permitted the voice of God to be heard in His own house of prayer.

It was a strange and fearful work which God then wrought, when He lifted up His voice in the, midst of His assembled people once more. There was joy in heaven; the angels sang and gave glory – the angels rejoiced in heaven, when the voice of Jesus was heard in the midst of his people. That voice shall not be silent any more, but shall go forth to the uttermost parts of the earth.

And what has been the fruit of that voice, which came into the midst of the Church, and which the Church rejected – which came into the midst of the watchmen, and they knew not the sound of the trumpet, and warned not the land – which came into the midst of the people, and they scorned and heeded it not? The voice, cried “All flesh is grass;”¹ and it has withered the flesh; its might and power, its glory and its beauty. The walk of the most circumspect has been proved to be contrary – the ways of the most upright have been shewn to be very wickedness – the wisdom of the wise, and the counsel of the prudent, have been [p. 61→] confounded – the thoughts and intents of man’s heart have been uncovered, and his imaginations, which are evil continually, have been laid bare. The light hath shined in a dark place, – the living commentary of the Spirit on the Scriptures has been given, – and the Law and the Testimony have been bound into one.

But had the work of the Lord proceeded no further, all we had gained would have been the knowledge of *our own* sin, and the sin of *our fathers*; and the result would have been only the mournful expectation of the fall of all that was dear to reverence, and sacred to piety, without a vestige of hope, or the possibility of remedy.

But God had not forsaken the work of His own hands. Few, comparatively, gave heed to the re- [report]

¹ Isaiah, xl. 6.

port, that the Holy Ghost was again speaking in the midst of the Church; and fewer still recognised the voice of their Father: but some there were. And those who would hear, and who would receive correction, have proved the power of the voice of the Almighty – of Him who killeth and maketh alive, who woundeth and healeth: He has hewed them by his prophets; He has washed them with water by the word; He has led them by His Spirit; He has called them back to the old ways; and has taught them to walk therein! The work of the Lord by his Spirit has been to prepare men by many trials, by many chastisements, by many revelations of their own iniquity and perverseness, and of His never-failing mercy, to receive power, the very power of God, and to use it for the building up of His Church – for the blessing of His [p. 62→] children – for the bringing into one all the baptised; to recall them to the Apostolic character and constitution of the Church of Christ; to prepare them for receiving the fourfold ministry of Jesus; and to instruct them to submit to the order of the Lord.

From the first moment that the voice of the Holy Ghost was heard in Scotland, the cry raised was “for a Body.” The meaning of this was little understood by any, and least of all by those prophets through whom it was uttered. But now it has been clearly seen, that the gift of prophecy can be usefully and safely exercised only within the

border of the Church, which is the body of Christ. But though ill understood, the word was received in faith; and in answer to the prayer of those who believed, and in despite of the sin and ignorance of His unworthy instruments, God has prevailed to raise up more than fifty persons speaking in prophecy by the Holy Ghost – to separate, though He hath not yet sent forth twelve men with the name of Apostle named upon them by, the word of Jesus spoken in the Holy Ghost – to bring out a pattern, a shadow of what His Church should be, in seven churches in London – and to set up churches in most of the great cities in England and Scotland, and in Dublin, – churches rebuilt on the foundation of Apostles and Prophets, each under the spiritual rule of an Angel or chief minister, elders not exceeding six in each Church, who, with the Angel, form the sevenfold eldership, God’s ordinance for spiritual light; other elders serving as helps in the eldership, equal in office, but subject in rule and place to the elders; deacons and underdeacons; and to the poor the Gospel has been preached by [p. 63→] evangelists, as the ordinance for that special work of gathering into the Church.

The eldership fulfilling the functions of pastors, and the evangelists, are severally called to their office by the word of prophecy, and ordained by Apostolic hands (for from time to time the Lord has been pleased to use, extraordinarily, for this end certain of the Apostles, though they be not sent

forth); but the deaconship are waiting for the time when the Apostles, being sent forth, may lay their hands on all the people, bestowing the gift of the Holy Ghost, – and the people may bring up their deacons filled with the Holy Ghost, and set them before the Apostles, as in the Church in the beginning. And He has spread His table with unleavened bread, in token of their separation from all the corruption of doctrine, confusion in discipline, and uncleanness of living – the heresy, the schism, and the unholiness – which is the burden of His heart, and the dishonour of His name, throughout all His baptised people:

This is not a new sect – it is God’s work for imparting His blessing to the whole of Christendom, the whole baptised world. God casts none away; He will receive and set in their places all who in heart turn unto Him. It is God’s witness – a Church, in the midst of a disobedient and gainsaying generation, walking in obedience to all who have the rule over them. Throughout Christendom lawlessness prevails: here submission to authority. Without are divisions and sects; here is a body one in faith, its teachers speaking the same things. Abroad, synagogues of Antichrist, presided over by heads chosen of the people: here, a body [p. 64→] ruled by ordinances, not constituted by the people, but given by God. Abroad, the daily services of the Church falling into desuetude, although enjoined upon the clergy of the Church of England in their

Rubric: here, the daily worship, morning and evening, enjoined upon the faithful by the command of God, spoken in the Holy Ghost in the midst of the Church. Without, an infidel world, rising up against and destroying Kings, Bishops, and Tithes, and all the institutions in Church and State – wives dishonouring their husbands, children their parents, and servants rising up against their masters: here, God’s Church reverencing the King and all in authority, parents, pastors, and masters; giving honour to all orders and degrees in Christ’s Church, whether those continued by succession from the first Apostles, or those now bestowed upon a spiritual people by that ordinance again reviving; paying all dues to the former, – but also, rich and poor, at the command of the Lord given unto them in these last days, bringing the tithes of the whole of their income to the Altar, which He hath again rebuilt.

These are *signs* of Apostleship thus again put forth by Jesus, and are the sure pledge that, when the Lord shall please to send forth His Apostles to lay hands upon His people, the seal also of their Apostleship shall these be in the Lord¹ – signs which have been wrought in all patience indeed, though not hitherto, as by St. Paul, in signs and wonders and mighty deeds, as men count wonders and might: yet with signs and wonders; for what so bears the impress of God as that, in the midst

¹ 1 Cor. ix. 2, compared with Ephes. i. 13, and 2 Cor. i. 22.

of a perverse and [p. 65→] gainsaying people, a witness should be raised up against all the forms of sin which are hurrying men into the ranks of Antichrist; and, in things evident to the senses also, in multiplied instances of healing the sick, and in deliverances, manifest to the eyes of men, of those oppressed by the devil in body and in spirit.

Miracles, in the ordinary sense of the term, are not of themselves the test of truth. The evidences of the Divine mission of the Lord Jesus Christ, adduced by Himself in the days of His flesh, were, first of all, His words and the fruits of them, then His miraculous works. By the former His disciples “knew certainly that He came from God,” that “He and the Father were one;” and when the multitude, who saw His miracles, and many even of His disciples, fell away from Him, “seeing, and yet not believing,” those who had tasted His words that they were precious to Him still, saying, “To whom shall we go? Thou hast the words of eternal life.”

In the revival of His Church now, the Lord is bringing forth this twofold evidence, but chiefly the first. By the words of truth and life He is separating the spiritual remnant from the mass of profession throughout Christendom; and although He has confirmed His Church by many signs and wonders in these days, yet the chief evidence of His work that He brings forth is *truth*, the discovery of the foundations of His Word. He is

dealing with nations professedly spiritual, therefore His appeal to them is according to their standing toward Him. He appeals to the spiritual in them by setting forth the truth – the things new and [p. 66→] old from the oracles of God. If they cannot discern Him pleading for truth and opening the Scriptures, they would not discern Him in casting out devils and raising the dead. It is because that, in the last times, they receive *not* the love of the truth, therefore God sends them strong delusions that they should believe a lie. They will not believe the truth, because they have pleasure in unrighteousness. On the other hand, the mark of Antichrist in the last times is the working of signs and wonders.¹ By his wonders he will deceive the world; but by his lie he shall be detected by the saints.

Again, the mark of the Lord’s work in the last times is not only, that truth in word is brought forth from the Scriptures; but that the fruits of that truth should appear in living men – that His Church is rebuilding, according to the pattern given in the beginning – that the Spirit: of Elias, who should come, restoreth all things, turning the heart of the fathers to the children, and the heart of the children to their fathers² – the disobedient unto the wisdom of the just. And the signs pre-eminently to be looked for in His Apos- [Apostles]

¹ Matt. xxiv. 24; 2 Thess. ii. 9, 10; Rev. xiii. 13-15.

² Mal. iii; Mark, ix. 12.

bles, as in the Church, are those set forth in the Epistle to the Church in Philadelphia – a little strength, the *keeping of His word*, the not denying of His name.

And now we have come as far as unto you also in the Gospel of Christ; and we pray you receive the message which He sends by Apostles, not yet sent forth, yet separated unto this holy office, [p. 67→] which is for your blessing, the blessing of your people, the blessing of the Catholic Church.

And being separated, He hath given them this special charge that to you first, His anointed priesthood in this land, they should bear their testimony.

So far as He hath hitherto brought His work, you have been found, if not fighting against Him (which has, alas! been the case with some), at least disesteeming and passing it by. God hath seen it, but He reproacheth you not; He never brings sin to light but that it may be repented of, and that He may put it away. Our message to you is a message of forgiveness and love, which should be conveyed in all the courtesy of love, with all the earnestness of entreating love, not unmingled with trembling fear and deep apprehension. We beseech you in the Name of Jesus, who died for you – for the sake of His glory, which hath been so long obscured – for the sake of His

children committed to your care – for the sake of your own souls, and of their souls for which you must give account – stand in His counsel, and come to the help of the Lord against the mighty. Judgment approaches to your own gates. The things which are shaken are removing away: and now He invites every one of you to minister in His sanctuary, to serve in His temple, which He rebuilds.

If this be the true work of God, and most surely it is His own holy and pure work, what must be the fearful consequences of rejecting or despising it! If God draw near to any of His pastors, [p. 68→] vouchsafing to them the only means of reformation and deliverance – if He pour out His Spirit and stretch forth His hands, and they reject what can hinder that their fear should come as desolation, and destruction as a whirlwind? The preparation of the Church, as the temple of God, to receive Him when He cometh suddenly thereto, is the fulness of the Holy Ghost. If she abide in the flesh, when He calls upon her and brings near the means that she should be filled with the Spirit of God, what can hinder that she should be filled with the spirit of strong delusion, and delivered up to the Man of Sin? If the Lord be again sending forth Apostles and Prophets to His Church (and they are the only possible means to reform and deliver His whole Church throughout the world), and she

reject and persecute them, she thereby proclaims herself apostate; and it cannot be but that her house will be left unto her desolate.

Be assured that this is His pleading with you. He desires that you should be fellow-workers in this holy work; that in answer to your prayers, ascending up with the prayers of His Angels whom He has set over His Churches, the blessing should be given, and His Apostles be sent forth, not of men, neither by man, but by Jesus Christ and God the Father.

We call not upon you to follow twelve men, but to have faith in the Living God, in His promises, and in His Word. We remind you as the priests of God, that ye have to render to Him His Bride. For this He opens the treasures of Heaven, and restores the gifts which He took not away, but which were lost in the quenching of His Spirit, and the quickening again of the flesh of man in the [p. 69→] spiritual Church of God. We tell you in His name, that He puts forth again the ancient ordinances of His house, that you and your people may be filled with His blessings; and, resting in His revealed truth, you shall never be deceived. We offer to faith an help and power of the Lord, which the upright in heart must desire, the godly and the well-instructed in the Word will believe, and the faithful will seek: of God. We have no interests to serve. St. Paul, the type, the exam- [example]

ple, and the forerunner in the Gentile apostleship, has well forewarned us, that “God hath set forth us the Apostles last, as it were appointed unto death;” “we are fools for Christ’s sake;” “we are made as the filth of the earth, and are the offscouring of all things unto this day.”¹ If you will hear and receive His grace, He will never cast you off; if you will not, He will. The work must be done, and done by a priesthood; and He will change the priesthood, as He did in the days of Eli, if the existing priesthood will not receive the change of raiment, without which they cannot fulfil their office. Already, because the priests have resisted God’s way and welcomed Him not joyfully into His house, nor served Him as the time demanded, He hath taken them that were no priests, nor prophets’ sons and set them as priests in His house, as Apostles over His Churches. But He has done so with a sorrowful heart, and with a sorrowful heart should they take that office to which He has called them.

We know the difficulties wherein you are now placed, and the full weight whereof you will undergo in receiving this-our testimony. The calling of the followers of Christ is not to *honour* in this world, [p. 70→] but to *reproach* for His name’s sake – to take up their cross and follow Him. Nevertheless, we call not upon you to take any step in

¹ 1 Cor. iv. 9-13.

your own strength, nor to seek to free yourselves from the obligations into which the sins of generations past have betrayed the Church, and which, finding the Church involved in them, you, as individuals, have voluntarily incurred. Your duty is to stand in your places where you are, acknowledging the hand of God in His present work; confessing the sins which, like a thick cloud, have hid the face of Heaven; watching day and night for the salvation of Israel, more than-they that watch for the morning; continuing instant in prayer, but joyful through hope because of the approaching deliverance of yourselves and your people, through the power of God in the Holy Ghost. Above all, praying for us, that, like as now we have been used of the Lord to bring the Word of these good tidings to you, so also we may shortly be sent forth to you in the fulness of the blessing of the Gospel of Christ.

Fathers of the Church, our souls long over you all in the bowels of Christ. Unfeignedly we implore all the blessings of goodness may be poured forth upon you, and into the bosom of your people. God forbid that we should cease to pray for you, that you may be lifted into the hope of your calling, and draw up a spiritual people with you into the communion of the one fold. We feel the awful solemnity of the call which we make upon you – our own responsibility and yours; and while we have sought to fulfil our part in faithfulness [*sic*, “faithfulness” *in quarto edition*]

and truth, we have also sought to bear ourselves as those who “plead with their mother.”¹

[p. 71→] May the God of all grace fill you with all wisdom and spiritual understanding in all things; preserve you from the pride which saith, “I am rich and increased with goods, and have need of nothing;” “I sit as a queen, and shall never know sorrow!” May He count you worthy of this calling, and fulfil all the good pleasure of His goodness, and the work of faith with power, that the name of our Lord Jesus Christ may be glorified in you, according to the grace of God and of our Lord Jesus Christ. Amen.

Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Ghost.

As it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be, world without end. Amen.

¹Hosea, ii. 2.