

intend to say that you are able to prove that the Church of England is not the Church of Christ?

Mr. Brown.—Oh no, certainly not. But I am now a Methodist, and so were my parents before me, so that according to the principles on which I believe we both agree, I ought not now to leave the Methodists, till I am fully convinced that they are wrong.

Mr. Secker.—Ho! there I think you mistake, because you have *higher authority* than that of your parents, which tells you that they were in error; I mean the authority of the Rulers in both Church and State. Again therefore I repeat, that it appears to me, upon your own principles, which are certainly those of Scripture and right reason, that you ought at once fully to return to the bosom of the Church; unless indeed you are prepared upon the still higher authority of the Bible that both the princes and the prelates, with the clergy and the nation, are in error in believing the Church of England to be the true and apostolic Church of Christ. I trust, my dear friend, that I am not talking for the sake of victory, but to convince you of important truths with which your own spiritual interests are closely connected, and those of your family and dependants perhaps still more vitally; permit me then seriously to ask, Do you not see that your conduct is inconsistent?

Mr. Brown.—I hope not. I feel that I should be criminal to remain a Methodist without thoroughly investigating the subject, but having so far returned to the Church, by regularly taking my family to its services, and attending its Sacraments, as not I trust any longer to break its unity, I think it is perhaps lawfully expedient for me, being already a Methodist, to remain till I see whether Methodism can be at all supported by the Bible, though I agree with you that if I did not already belong to it, I should with my present views feel it wrong to join it; as it is, I wish to have my mind more fully made up on some points, before I decide to leave the Methodists. I should therefore be glad now to hear how you prove that the *present* is the *ancient* Church of England, and that it did not, as is commonly supposed, dissent from Rome.

Mr. Secker.—Though I am not satisfied but that the declaration of the church ought to be sufficient even for you as a Methodist, still I am quite willing to strive to remove this objection also. I fear, however, I shall now only have time just to hint at it, and must refer you for a full answer to some excellent popular works on the subject. In brief, then, the facts of the case are these:—"A Church of Christ was founded in these Islands, when and by whom is uncertain, but certainly at a very early period after the Christian era, and long before the Bishops of Rome exercised any jurisdiction over the Western Churches," indeed there were, holy martyrs in England long before Rome ever sent

a Missionary there: it is true that the Saxon conquest swept Christianity from the larger and fairer portions of the Island, though it was by no means altogether destroyed, but flourished under its own Bishops in Wales, and probably in some other parts of England which the Pagan Saxons had possessed themselves of. This, however, though it would naturally cause the Saxon portion of the Church to look up to Rome with filial respect, just as the church in the colonies, and even that of the United States now do the Church of England,—yet could give the Bishop of Rome no more right to control the English Bishops, than the Prelates of England now have to control the Bishops of the United States. But a further proof that the Church of England owes no vassalage to Rome or its corruptions is this, that when Gregory I. Bishop of Rome, sent St. Augustine to England in A.D. 597, the corruptions of Rome were by no means so great as they afterwards became. That terrible incubus upon the Roman churches, and the root of almost all their other evils, the supremacy of the Pope, or Universal Bishop, was not then a doctrine of the christian church, but on the contrary that very Pope Gregory, who sent Augustine, declared that whoever should claim the title of Universal Bishop would be Antichrist! Purgatory, though Gregory is said to have been favorable to it, was not then considered a necessary doctrine of the church, indeed the first Romish council which sanctioned this doctrine was that of Florence, A.D. 1442;—neither at this time had the worship of either saints or images received the sanction even of Rome;—neither for ages after did the absurd dogmas of transubstantiation, or the cruel heresy of denying the cup in the Sacrament to the people, or the unholy corruption of the Scriptural doctrine of "Justification by Faith," form parts of the Romish doctrine; in fact these superstitious and dangerous novelties were not fully received until after the famous Council of Trent, in the 16th century. Thus you see that Augustine did not plant *Papery* in England, but Christianity, though I admit not altogether pure; the modern corruptions therefore of Rome were no part either of the ancient British Church, or even of the Anglo Saxon Church founded by St. Augustine, but were unhappily introduced during times when many even of the clergy themselves were unlettered, and the bible a hidden book, though even then they were not brought in without strong and repeated opposition; surely then it was no schism or dissent in the Church of England to throw aside those corrupt novelties with which the craft of Rome or its own supineness had surrounded it! But the shortest answer to the charge that the Church of England has itself dissented from Rome, is furnished by a decree of the third general council at Ephesus, which Council the Romanists profess to receive equally with ourselves; it is to this effect,