

THE CHURCH OF ENGLAND.

SEVEN DELUSIONS.

(By the Lord Bishop of Southwell.)

1. It is a delusion that the Church of England was ever Roman, or ever acknowledged, as a Church, any subjection to the Pope or any other relation but that of an independent English Church (or Churches) established by the preaching of missionaries from Rome, accepted by Kings and people of what we call England.

2. It is a delusion that the Church of England seceded or separated from Rome, as indeed she could not if she was always independent of her. She was, in fact so insular that she had no occasion even to protest, as the German Protestants at Spire. She renounced certain mediæval errors promulgated from Rome, and at a certain stage in her reform the Pope desired all English who would follow him to withdraw from attending English Church Services, and so the Pope made a (not very large) Roman Schism in England, which remains till this day in our English Roman Catholic bodies.

3. It is a delusion that the Church of England was a different Church after the Reformation from before, any more than England is a different country because she abrogated the slave trade, or had a Reform Bill, or than a drunkard's personal identity is lost if he reforms.

4. It is a delusion that King, Queen, and Parliament either reformed the Church or ordered that the Pope should no longer be her head. The Church declared what she has repeatedly testified on occasions of encroachment, that the Pope never had any more authority over her than any other foreign Bishop. Civil enactments maintained that declaration, at home or abroad, in secular action upon it.

5. It is a delusion that the recognition of the Royal supremacy meant or means any spiritual headship, or anything else than what had always been asserted—that the clergy of England, as well as the laity, are subject to English law, without appeal against it to a foreigner like the Pope; that the last appeal of all alike is to the Sovereign. It is strange, in the face of the very strong words of Henry and Elizabeth, that any delusion on this exists.

6. It is a delusion that Parliament settled the Church of England, or even that the Church is subject to Parliament now, except in matters affecting personal or property rights. The Church reformed her errors herself; her Prayer-book and her Articles are her own work. The Act of Submission, which is the limitation of her action, is in theory no more for her than for Parliament itself. It