

power to remit sin." The argument is that this power was given to the apostles, and transmitted through them to their successors. But (1) as we have already shown by incontrovertible evidence, in the first part of the lecture, devoted entirely to it, the apostles had not, and could not, in the nature of things have any successors. The missing links, too, are so many as to spoil the chain. (2) In point of fact, other powers vested in the apostles were not transmitted. Who of their so-called successors can raise the dead or cure deadly diseases as the original apostles did? No proof is furnished that the pardoning power was transmitted or ever exercised. (3) We know that when Peter was besought to remit he positively refused, saying, "Pray to God if perhaps this thought of thy heart may be forgiven thee." (Acts viii. 22.) Nor do we ever read of Paul, or John, or James, or Jude, any more than Peter, confessing or absolving a single soul. (4) This power here described was not limited to the apostles, but was given to the "disciples" as well, and the mixed company gathered in the upper room, corresponding, perhaps, with the 120 disciples of Acts i. 15. Jesus stands in the midst, not of the "eleven" only, but "of those that were with them" (Luke xxiv. 33), "all the rest" of verse nine. Breathing on them He said, "receive ye, etc. On clergy and laity alike, thus the same power was conferred. This conclusively shows that the power thus given was not judicial, but simply declaratory, not magisterial, but ministerial, like the priests in cases of leprosy, who six times over in Levit. xiii. are said simply to pronounce unclean or clean. In like manner these New Testament passages intimate the terms and method of pardon, as we find "Peter and the apostles" doing in Acts v. 31, where they say, "Him (Jesus) hath God exalted to give repentance and remission of sins," and Paul in Acts xiii. 38: "Be it known, therefore, to you that through Him forgiveness of sins is preached to you"; and in Acts xxvi. 18: "That they may receive forgiveness of sins and a lot among the saints through faith that is in me." Along with his declaring there was vested in the Church and its representatives the disciplinary power, the prerogative, in cases of wrong doing, of putting away from among them wicked persons, when they sinned, and receiving them back again to their former standing in the Church when they showed signs of sincere repentance. This, as we shall hereafter see, was a prominent part of the Key Power, or the "remitting" and "retaining," the "binding and loosing." All this is in perfect harmony with those passages of the Word that send us to the Divine Confessional, as where in "C's" own New Testament it is written: "The Blood of Jesus Christ His Son, cleanseth us from all sin." "If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all iniquity." (1 St. John, i. 7-9)

2. The second passage quoted by "C" is Acts xix. 18, telling us "how the fanbul acted at Ephesus when Paul was there"; "Many of those who believed came confessing and declaring their deeds." "It is simply (says "C.") a groundless supposition to refer this passage to a general public declaration of sin." "The words themselves preclude such an interpretation." The conclusion is, that this was a private and particular confession to Paul as to a priest. To us the words themselves plainly teach the very opposite of what "C" indicates. The many came "publicly," confessed their sins publicly, declared their views publicly. In the verse following (the 19th) it is mentioned "they brought together their books and burnt them before all." The whole scene is laid, not privately, but before all.

3. "C" next quotes 2 Cor. v. 18, that "Christ has given to us the ministry of reconciliation," and verse 19th, "He has placed in us the word of reconciliation."

"What word of reconciliation (asks he) except the absolving from sin?" Yet, strange to say, the judicial "absolving from sin" on the part of any man or body of men is not even hinted at in the passage. What is the "ministry of reconciliation" spoken of in the second part of verse 18? Simply the instrumentality divinely appointed for spreading abroad the precious message contained in the first part, to wit: "that all things are of God who hath reconciled us to Himself by Christ, and hath given unto His Church this ministry." And what is the "Word of reconciliation" at the close of the 19th verse, but just the substance of the blessed message as given at the beginning, which is but the following up of what goes before "for God indeed was in Christ reconciling the world to Himself, not imputing to men their sins."

What post, then, do the members of this "ministry" or service fill? Not certainly that of "priests," for they are ministers or servants; not sovereigns or judges, but simply the "messengers of the churches" and delegates of Christ. "Ministers of His to do His pleasure." Hence, verse 20th goes on to say: *For Christ, therefore, we are ambassadors.* Now, the ambassador of a sovereign does not make peace, but announces it; does not grant pardon, but as a herald makes it known. He, if the carrier of the amnesty, the communicator of the terms of reconciliation. How utterly opposed, therefore, is this Pauline statement to that of "C"—the power of the priesthood does not consist in merely declaring sins to be remitted, but in remitting them. Since they were to remit or to retain, it must have been intended that they should act, in a judicial capacity. This is the very point to be proved which our critic takes for granted and which the very passage quoted by him effectually disproves.

4. I have hitherto quoted exclusively from the Roman Catholic translation of the Holy Scriptures, published under the highest authority, as doubtless more acceptable to "C" than our own, but in his last Scriptural quotation (Titus i. 5), I must take issue with him, and decline receiving the Rheims rendering priests instead of presbyters. "For this cause I left thee in Crete, thou shouldst set in order the things that are wanting, and shouldst ordain priests in every city, as I also appointed thee." I know what is said about priest being a corruption of presbyter, or elder, and, if so understood, it is innocent enough. But the general idea of priest involves the presentation of a sacrifice, which "all Scripture" forbids. Without sacrifice (and where is there another since our great High Priest said on the Cross, "It is finished") the priest's "occupation is gone." Our authorized version, which reflects the scholarship of the past, the revised version, on which has been expended the most advanced scholarship of the present age, agree in inserting "Presbyters"—not "Hiercs", elders or presbyters, not priests, as the word used here. We are not aware of one solitary manuscript out of the multitude collated and compared, which sanctions the Rheims rendering. Even of Christ Himself the Rheims revision says, in Hebrews viii. 4: "If He were on earth He would not be a Priest," much less than His ministers, who cannot be priests in the ordinarily received sense as distinguished from the spiritual priesthood of believers, without impugning the perfection of "the High Priest of our Confession, Jesus" (Heb. iii. 1), and impairing the completeness of His finished sacrifice. The doctrine enunciated by "C" is certainly, as he declares, "the same as that preached in St. Mary's, but strangely unlike that of Fort Massey Church." True, perfectly true, my good friend, and may it ever continue so!

"C" further writes: "Dr. Burns says private confession began with Leo the Great. This Pope lived late in the fifth century. we have conclusively shown that it existed from the beginning." Very far from it. We say it with the utmost respect and deference. Your mistake arises from confounding private with public confession. We have always said that the latter was practised in the primitive Church. Christ brings this out when describing (Mat. xviii. 15-18) the mode of dealing with an offending brother. First, the offended one to deal with him, then two or three, and lastly, the whole church. "If he will not hear them tell the church." 1 Cor. v. illustrates the mode of dealing with a loose-living member, and any confessing or disciplining is not private, but, "before all." Paul had no dealings with the party in question, far less privately confessing and absolving him. He was absent, but the Spirit of God was present to guide, (1 Cor. v. 4). In the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, you being gathered together and my spirit too. If the case of discipline issued in forgiving the party accused, the apostle, though away, endorsed the pardon—thus, 2 Cor. ii. 10. "To whom ye have pardoned; I also." When it ended in rebuke or expulsion, it was, like the confession, done publicly. Thus, Cor. 2. 6. "To him that is such an one this rebuke is sufficient *that is given by many*," not by one as if it were a private confessing. Nay, in 1 Tim. v. 20, far from favouring such secret confessing, the apostle says: "Them that sin reprove before all, that the rest also may have fear." All these latter passages also have been copied from the Roman Catholic edition of the Scriptures, to prevent anyone asserting that I had put a Protestant construction upon them. Private con-

fession was monastic in its origin—Jerome, de Regul Monachar, in Op. VI. 499, and Basil, Regul Bror in Op. II. 492. Wealthy and influential sinners, not relishing a public exposure got an indulgence, and might confess privately. For a good while the clergy outside monastic walls keenly opposed private confessing. A demand was made by the Bishops of Campania and Apulia to the effect that public notice be given to the congregation of sins confessed in private. This led Leo the Great officially to sanction private confession, and so to legalize what for a time had been connived at. See Opera Leonis, M. Ed.; Hallerini, Ed. 168. In Canon 31 of the Lateran Council of A.D. 1215 the custom is confirmed. It was not till the 13th century that the formula of absolution was altered from "Dominus te absolvat"—"May the Lord absolve thee" to Ego te absolvo—"I absolve thee."

"C" closes with this remark: "The early heretics, such as Arians, Copts, Monophysites and others, who, fell away from the Church before St. Leo's time, all teach and practice in the present day auricular confession." We are not aware that they do; but if so, we are rather glad to be clear of their company, and to be associated as we have seen ourselves to be, with the "goodly company of the prophets, the holy fellowship of the apostles, and the noble army of martyrs," "with God, the Judge of all, and Jesus, the Mediator of the new covenant." It was not originally intended, and shows things have got considerably mixed, that when I opened fire on a fortress near us that had hung out delusive colours, the shells showered from Fort Massey should have fallen within another entrenchment a little way farther off, and that the watchful sentinel mounting guard there, with whom we have been having this friendly tilt, should have now championed the flag so strangely taken from his own and transferred to the other citadel.

And now, with the best of feeling I bid good bye to "C," adding that although I have made an exception in his case in noticing an anonymous communication couched in, on the whole, a kindly tone and coming from an apparently authoritative source, I shall not promise to continue the discussion on this unequal footing (for the reason assigned at the outset) much less to notice those of inferior calibre who have neither "C's" talent nor taste.

I have purposely avoided seeking to excite prejudice and passion by any reference to the corruptions of the Confessional, its social and domestic influences, or glancing at any side issues, or collateral topics of discussion, out of which "points" might have been made that would have probably irritated rather than convinced.

#### TRUTH TELLS.

MR. EDITOR,—Allow me to express my approval of the editorials and letters in defence of Calvinism and Presbyterianism in opposition to the "Christian Guardian." They were both timely and appropriate. We shall probably hear less from that quarter about alleged "revolts" from the Calvinistic theology. I have read the "Guardian" for some years and have often been grieved and offended by its persistent and grossly unfair attempts to discredit our doctrines by its misrepresentations. These are taken up by many of the circuit preachers, and repeated with offensive iteration, as I have had occasion to hear again and again. It was time they should be set right in this matter. Our doctrines are eminently scriptural. They need assertion, not apology. VINCE.

It is sometimes hinted that the occupants of choir seats are not always the gravest and most decorous portion of a congregation. We have heard it asserted that mild flirtations are carried on by means of little notes—not necessarily musical winks and giggles. It all looks very silly and incongruous. We hope the habit is all but unknown in Presbyterian choirs; if it isn't, it should be. Matters are blacker still among our American friends as the following from an exchange will show.—Wood Granger was fined \$30 for disturbing public worship in a little church near Middleton, Ky., notwithstanding Robert Andrew Higgins' testimony in his behalf, as follows:—"Wood Granger, in my opinion, was no worse in his behavior den some of do res'. I tole you dar's no behavior in dat church whatsomever. Dey all cuts up dar. I've done seen 'em rollin' dese yer little round dice in de pews while de preacher war a prayin' fur the salvation of der souls. What I means by behaviour is, dar wuz no real good, genteel behaviour."