

schism or any irregularity approaching to it in His Church. Indeed I should think that the voriest Dissenter that ever breathed must start at the idea of supposing it possible that our Incarnate God could so forget His own Majesty as to approve the conduct of any one who should have refused in any and every thing implicitly and fully to submit to Him; but if not, then his approval clears this believer of any charge of schism or self-seeking. The error, I think, lay in this, that the Apostles' idea of a temporal kingdom, in connection with that ambition by which they were so much influenced, before they received the Holy Ghost on the day of Pentecost, caused them to suppose that all who confessed Christ were to be subject to them as the future princes of His kingdom; and it is possible that the Saviour's answer was designed to check these their earthly aspirings. Or, what is perhaps equally probable, the Apostles might suppose that all who confessed Christ ought, as they had done, to abandon all their worldly pursuits and continually attend upon Him, and then the answer which St. John received would tend to show them that in these respects the calling of all was not alike, but that men in general might become his disciples and yet continue to follow their lawful worldly business, for that but few were called, like them, to the honours and the dangers of the Apostleship. Such are my views of this narrative; but yet I do not think it necessary to my argument to explain its meaning; it is quite sufficient that I am able to show that it does not give the least possible ground for supposing that Christ looks upon schism and insubordination as trifling evils; and that it does not do so, I trust I have fully proved.

Mr. Brown.—Indeed, Mr. Secker, I candidly acknowledge that you have entirely satisfied me that the case of this man forms not the slightest vindication of separation from the ancient Apostolic Church. But this reminds me of another question which I intended to ask you—it is this: What right has the Church of England to call itself the Apostolic and Primitive Church? I should think that the Roman Catholic Church is the only one that has a right to the title of "Primitive and Apostolic," for it is certainly the first Church. And if this be so, I do not see what right you have to complain of us for being Dissenters when you yourselves have dissented from the Church of Rome.

Mr. Secker.—This objection has been so often and so ably answered that I am a little surprised that you should have named it again. The truth is that the Church of England *has not* dissented from the Church of Rome. The Apostolic Church of England has ever been the same church; at some parts of its history much more pure than others, but still the *same* church. What I mean by its being the same church is this,—that it has had its succession of scriptur-

ally ordained clergy from the apostles unbroken; that it has never separated from any other church; that it has always retained those Holy Sacraments and the power of duly administering them, which Christ instituted as the only means whereby we could be admitted into his visible Church, and be retained as members therein; that it has always maintained the grand distinguishing truth of our holy religion, "God manifest in the flesh" crucified for the sins of men,—and, the vital doctrine, that faith in Him was the condition of salvation:—these, though at some times much overlaid by superstition, or forgotten through neglect, were yet ever the doctrines of the Church of Christ in England. In fact, the story of the English Church having dissented from the Romish Church, is nothing less than an impudent fabrication of the Papists, which never would have gained belief, but that ungodly people, who are too indifferent to inquire after the truth, are always ready to believe a lie when boldly told; and I do not know but that the ease with which careless Protestants receive the falsehoods of Popery is in part to be accounted for by that awful passage in the first chapter of St. Paul's Epistle to the Romans, "And even as they did not like to retain God in their knowledge, God gave them over to a reprobate mind." But indeed the Dissenters have also had much to do with deceiving the people in this matter.—they have purposely represented the Church of England as having dissented from Rome, in order that they might plead her example as an excuse for their own unholy divisions and schismatical separation from her.

Mr. Brown.—I admit that if you can prove all you have just stated, it is highly unjust to charge the Church with dissent; but then, excuse my saying, that I do not think that you can fully do this.

Mr. Secker.—Why, this has been so frequently done of late, that I scarcely thought you would question these things. Indeed it is impossible that I should go fully into the proofs of these assertions in an hour or two's conversation. And then I do not think that you have any right in fairness to demand it; I know that it is the custom of Dissenters to deny the very principles of our Catholic Church, and then call upon us to defend them, but this is surely contrary to every straightforward method of reasoning. Here is the Church of Christ, which for centuries has been established in the Empire; the authorities of the Empire and the rulers of the Church both declare that it is the ancient Church of Christ, with doctrines and government in accordance with His usage and apostolic institution. Now, Mr. Brown, if any one dissents from this church, and denies it to be the primitive and apostolic Church of Christ, surely *he* is bound to show *why* he dissents, and not to call upon the Church to defend itself, unless he can first prove that it is in error. For if men are not bound to