

sins. After which, if he humbly and heartily desire it, the Priest is directed to pronounce absolution in the form ; first, of an invocation to the Lord Jesus Christ to forgive, and next, in a positive absolution according to the authority committed to him, in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost.

The reason for the pronouncing of absolution in this personal manner is obvious, viz., that the sick person cannot attend Church and hear the general absolution there.

In the office for ordaining Priests, the Church has ordered that the Bishop, in the act of laying on hands shall say : "Receive the Holy Ghost for the office and work of a Priest in the Church. Whose sins thou dost forgive, they are forgiven and whose sins thou dost retain, they are retained. And be thou a faithful dispenser of the Word of God and of His Sacraments."

The manner in which this power of absolution is to be exercised is not left to the private judgment of such Priest. The Church has clearly indicated both the occasion, the place, and the time in which this great and solemn function can be exercised, viz. :—

- (1). In the service of morning and evening prayer.
- (2). In the administration of Holy Communion.
- (3). In the visitation of the sick, when specially desired, in case of extreme sickness, or when death seems to be at hand.

All exhortations to confession as a general obligation and all exercises of the power of absolution, except as directed in the foregoing, are beyond the scope of duty, both on the part of the Minister and people, and are contrary to the mind of the English Church.

It is evident that the opening of grief in certain cases to a learned Minister in preparation for Communion is only to be on some special occasion of mental trouble and doubtfulness, which may arise from various causes, by no means arising from consciousness of unusual sin, or fear of having committed the unpardonable sin, but may have grown out of difficulty in understanding God's Word, or doubt as to the truth of that Word, or fear as to the truth of Christianity itself, or as to the position of the Church, or as to duty in respect of one's calling in life, or to one's family or otherwise.