

Such are the means by which a new generation has been gradually familiarised with ritualistic novelties and popish superstitions, prepared for accepting a doctrine of the real presence undistinguishable to simple minds from a full-blown doctrine of transubstantiation, and finally for the restoration of the Romish confessional. "The real history of these cases," says the Bishop of Gloucester and Bristol in a recent address, "is commonly as follows. The general congregation, though at first a little startled, excuse the excess in consideration of the amount of work, and of the obvious earnestness that is shown, they get used to the excesses and novelties, and they end in either liking them, or so far tolerating them as to be prepared to defend their minister against what they deem interference or aggression." In this way the Church has been led on step by step, till we see the faithless perverters of its simple services and scriptural doctrines, such as Maconochie and Littledale, Bennet and Purchas, sustained and defended by the "English Church Union," while the rites and ceremonies which they practise, and the doctrines which they teach, are scarcely distinguishable from those of Rome. Nay, so wholly is the honest zeal of the fathers of the Reformation forgotten, that a petition has been presented to the convocation of Canterbury signed by four hundred and eighty three clergymen, in favour of what they designate "Sacramental Confession," and it has been thought a sufficient answer to show how small is this number compared to the whole body of the clergy. Yet faithful and indignant protests are not wanting. The Bishop of Manchester in answering a memorial on the subject, speaks of "auricular confession" as "most demoralising to the individual conscience, and (as all history proves,) fruitful of the most mischievous consequences to both priest and penitent, and to society at large." The Bishop of London in replying to a similar appeal from St. George's, Hanover Square, urges above all on the laity, "the teaching in their families, and exemplifying in their lives, that sober, cheerful piety, which springing from a heart reconciled to God through Christ, lives in filial relation to our Heavenly Father; and can go at once to Him through the one only Mediator, for pardon for every sin, and for grace to help in every time