

I have endeavoured to show you how it was prepared, both doctrinally and politically. Doctrinally it owes its first impulse to those disciples of the new learning who educated the people of England, and translated for them into their own tongue, the sacred Scriptures. Politically it was nothing more than the rejection of a usurped authority, and a return to the ancient liberties of "the holy Church of England." That it involved a severance from the Roman Communion cannot be attributed as a fault to the Church of England, unless it can be shown that the Papal supremacy was not a usurpation, and that the more recent doctrinal developments of the Roman Church were not unscriptural superstitions. Were the English people to tolerate usurpations against which their forefathers had protested, both in Synod and Parliament, from time immemorial? Were they to profess to believe in the truth of unscriptural innovations in doctrine when they distinctly saw them to be baseless and pernicious? So long, indeed, as these corruptions and usurpations were supposed to have more or less right on their side, so long as men's minds rested passively on an authority as yet unchallenged, submission to Rome might be consistent with rectitude of character. But when men's eyes had been opened, when they saw that the Church of Rome had fallen into error, and had invaded the liberty of Christendom, acquiescence could not have been continued without loss of honesty and self-respect. But let it not be forgotten, that after all it was not the Church of England, but the Church of Rome, which was the true cause of the English schism. The Council of Trent not only upheld the Pope's claim to supremacy, affirmed the essentially Christian character of mediæval superstitions, and formulated for the first time an un-Pauline doctrine of justification, but also pronounced all those anathema and excommunicate who refused to bow to its decrees. This changed the whole position. Errors and usurpations might have gone undetected in the age of ignorance. Excuses might even be made for those who, having received such a legacy from the darker past, still held to it in a kind of passive acquiescence. But when its contents had been set in the light of the new learning, when that light had been made to search them through and through, and to reveal their base origin and unchristian character, to readopt them, to reaffirm them, to anathematize all who rejected them, was to require from those who had detected their falsehood conscious acquiescence in a lie. No honest man could or would do this. It was too heavy a price to pay for even the great blessing of unity; for unity in conscious falsehood would be unity in spiritual death. Slowly and gradually then, but necessarily and inevitably, the English Church repudiated, first the claims of the Papacy, and then the doctrines of the Council of Trent.

The first stage of this Reformation belongs to the reign of Henry VIII. In the drastic legislation of that reign, both Church and State repudiated those claims of the Papacy which had been so strenuously resisted in Anglo-Saxon times and the days of the Edwards. It has been pretended that this legislation was wholly secular, carried in an obsequious Parliament out of deference to a dissolute and arbitrary King. Nothing could be further from the fact. Before this legislation was undertaken, Convocation prayed the King to cause the exactions of Rome to "cease and be foredone forever by this His Grace's High Court of Parliament." And finally, Convocation prayed His Majesty, in case the Pope should take measures for continuing these exactions, that then, "as all good Christian men be more bound to obey God than any man, and forasmuch as St. Paul willeth us to withdraw ourselves from all such as walk inordinately, it may please the King's most noble grace to ordain in this present Parliament that then the obedience of him and the people be withdrawn from the See of Rome.

Again, when action was taken in accordance with this petition, what is known as the "Submission of the Clergy" was agreed to in Convocation a year and a half before it was enacted by Parliament. Mr. Joyce has truly declared that "the chief corner stone of a true reformation in the doctrine, ritual and discipline of the Church of England was really laid by the Convocations of York and Canterbury in the year 1534." On March 31st of that year the Canterbury Convocation, with only four dissentients in the Lower House, and on May 5th, the Convocation of York unanimously decreed that "the Pope of Rome has no greater jurisdiction conferred on him by God in Holy Scripture, in this kingdom of England, than any other foreign Bishop." Nor was it only in the initial stages of the Reformation that the spiritually led the way. Canon Joyce has shown at length that in spiritual matters throughout the whole course of the Reformation "Acts of Parliament, royal proclamations, and civil ratifications did not precede but followed the decisions of the spirituality, and were merely ancillary to the Acts of the Convocations." Thus not only were all the decisive steps of the English Reformation acts of the Church as well as of the State, but they were acts of the Church before they became acts of the State. This was not less true of the much disputed title which Henry assumed of "supreme head on earth of the Church of England" than of other matters. The Convocation refused to sanction the assumption of such a title, and substituted for the King's words those of their own—"so far as the law of Christ permits, even supreme head." The King was satisfied, and in this form, and in this alone, was the acknowledgment made by the Church. So expressed it meant no more than this: That while spiritual things were left to the spirituality, in all questions which came before the courts and involved the exercise of coercive jurisdiction, the King was supreme. That the King never meant to claim any other or larger authority than this is evident from his own words in his reply to the Convocation of York. "As to spiritual things, forasmuch as they be no earthly or temporal things, they have no worldly or temporal head, but only Christ, who did institute them, by whose ordinance they be ministered here by mortal men, elect, chosen and ordained as God hath wished for the purpose, who be the clergy. Lord Selborne has shown that this and no other was the Royal intention, both from the preambles of Acts of Parliament, from the institutions of a Christian man, from the injunctions of Elizabeth, and from the words of the 38th of the Articles of Religion. And if it be Erastian to hold the theory of the Royal supremacy, as thus explained, then not only are we of the National Church Erastian, but all those Nonconformists also who bring, as they often do, questions of doctrine and discipline involving pecuniary interests into the courts of the Crown to be decided by the royal judges.

Now, if I have given you, as I have honestly striven to do, a substantially correct account of the origin, nature, and course of the English Reformation, can anyone doubt that the Church of England to-day is the same National Church which has subsisted in this island from ancient times? "Not one ecclesiastical corporation," says Lord Selborne, "except the monasteries, no archbishopric or bishopric, no parochial rectory or vicarage was dissolved; none except certain conventual chapters of cathedrals and a few collegiate churches were so much as remodelled. All their charters, when chartered, all their customary rights and incidents, by the common law remained in force without interruption. Their endowments were held as before by the old tenures and tithes. There was no moment (I use Professor Freeman's words) when the State, as many people fancy, took the Church property from one religious body and gave it to another. * * * What

was not pulled down was not and could not be reconstructed. Not a stone of the then ecclesiastical organization in England (the monasteries being only excrescences upon it) was displaced or disturbed. . . . Even the partisans of the Papacy continued to conform to the Church of England till the eleventh year of Elizabeth, when Pius V. excommunicated that Queen and her loyal subjects, and took upon himself to give her crown to the King of Spain. When the separation actually took place, the seceders who obeyed the order of the Pope were (as they have ever since been in England) few and insignificant in comparison with the mass of the clergy and lay people who still remain in the English Church." Thus, if there is to-day spiritual separation between the Church of England and the Church of Rome, the creation of that separation is the act, not of the Church of England, but of the Pope. The Church of England did what her conscientious convictions made necessary; she reformed herself in discipline and doctrine, and for doing so she was anathematized and excommunicated by the Pope. But how does that destroy her identity or the continuity of her historical life? Equally before and after the Reformation she resisted Papal claims and disputed Papal doctrine. If variation from Roman doctrine and discipline determines the life of a church, then the English Church had no true life in her from her very foundation. Or if, again, the Pope's anathema is to quench her very being, we must concede to him an insight and an authority equal at least to that which was claimed for him recently at the Vatican Council. We must not only believe that he is Christ's viceregent upon earth, but a sharer (in matters of faith and doctrine) of the divine infallibility. The wonder is that such monstrous claims as these could ever have been set before intelligent men. How can we believe that the Pope is infallible by virtue of his office, that he receives it on mounting the chair of St. Peter, if we glance at all the records of the past? If the office confers infallibility, then Pope Honorius was infallible, of whom we know that he was condemned as a heretic at the sixth General Council; that he was solemnly pronounced a heretic for centuries by each Pope on his accession, and that he was named among noted heretics in the Roman breviaries till the 16th century, when germinal notions of Papal infallibility cancelled his name from the list of the proscribed.

Again, if the Papal anathema can even quench a Church's life, what must have been the lot of a large part of the Roman Catholic world in that long schism which began in 1378 and lasted nearly forty years? Then rival Popes anathematized each other and each other's adherents in the most awful language, each declaring that adherence to his rival would involve the danger of eternal damnation. Now of all the anti-Popes who professed to reign during this disastrous time some must have been the real Popes, whose anathemas had actual force in them. According to the Papal theory, then, whole provinces of the Christian world must have lain for years under the blight of heaven's own malediction. And yet the Jesuit Maimbourg can say:—"The thunderbolts and the anathemas which the two Popes hurled against each other, and against all those who followed the opposite party did no harm to anybody." Nobody could discover who was the true Pope. No discernable effect determined whose anathemas were efficacious. Even the Council of Constance, which closed the schism, only did it by deposing both the remaining competitors and causing a new Pope to be elected. With such facts before us we may perhaps be excused if we refuse to recognize in the Pope's excommunication any power either to extinguish or suspend the life of our National Church. . . . The English Church in the reign of Elizabeth took the best means she could (perfectly satisfactory means, as I