

Hence I say we are quite as able to judge of what is a sound faith, as those who wish to dictate to us what after all is but their own private judgment or that of frail, mortal men like themselves or ourselves.

His Lordship Bishop Lewis has been kind and charitable enough to call us "schismatics." It is certainly a new doctrine to tell us dissent is schism. If it be so, one half of the Church of England is certainly "schismatic." But we will see who the "schismatics" are by and by.

One would imagine by Bishop Lewis and other clergyman constantly parading the "Established Church" before us that it was a model of perfection, although it is certain that it has separated from—disowned—protested, against the religious standard to which it adhered for almost a thousand years. It is not merely the supremacy of the Pope it has cast off, it is a large and substantial part of the Roman doctrine and discipline. It avows now what formerly it did not tolerate and teaches now what once it burned men for believing; that is, on the ground that it is the same Church.

It has blessed the Pope and anathematized him; believed in Purgatory, and repudiated it; worshipped the Virgin Mary, and declared her worship to be idolatrous; inculcated the invocation of Saints and designated it a heresy; enjoined the confessional and denounced it, approved the Real "Presence" and denied it; persecuted the Wycliffites at one time, and the Catholics at another; the Protestants one day, and the non-conformists another; and employed the endowments of the same pious ancestors for the accomplishments of all these various purposes. What moral significance can attach to this ever changing Church? and still it is not satisfied. To be one thing after another was not enough; it now aspires to be all things almost at the same time. He who denies the doctrine of Baptismal regeneration is declared to be a not less worthy son of the Church than he who affirms it; and he who takes neither side is equally loyal, because, though one or the other opinion may be true, neither of them have been authoritatively regarded as essential.

The Clergyman who questions the inspiration of the Scriptures will find, happily, that inspiration is not included in the articles of a "Church which has given to all its sons free play in these questions" (so says Dean Stanley). Or, should he favor the doctrine of Transubstantiation, and assert a real and actual presence of our Lord under the form of bread and wine in the Holy Communion, he may comfort himself that the Church in her formularies affirms that "the body of Christ is given, taken and eaten in the supper only after a heavenly and spiritual manner;" but that while she does not require her ministers to teach that there is any other than the spiritual presence, she does not therefore exclude the idea—so writes a modern Essayist of note,—of the "Church" whose "rites and privileges" we poor "Schismatics" are to be deprived of—a deprivation both unspeakable and inconceivable!

We as Protestants believe, and were taught from our childhood to believe, that at the Reformation in the 16th century the following