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## TRACTS FOR THE MILLION.

### PROTESTANTISM WEIGHED IN ITS OWN BALANCE AND FOUND WANTING.

#### THE CHURCH.

(Concluded.)

Every one who receives the Bible as the word of God must believe that our Lord appointed certain persons to teach His doctrine to the rest of mankind: "Go and teach all nations, . . . teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you." He must acknowledge, also, that to these teachers was committed the authority of ordaining others to assist and to succeed to themselves; for the election of Matthias to supply the place of Judas, and the ordination of Saul and Barnabas, are clear instances of the exercise of this authority. He must still further admit that the persons thus appointed to assist and to succeed to the Apostles, received a commission themselves also to appoint others to come after them; for St. Paul writes to "his dearly beloved son," Timothy, whom he had himself so appointed or ordained, (2 Tim. i. 6.) "the things which thou hast heard of me by many witnesses, the same commend to faithful men, who shall be fit to teach others also," (2 Tim. ii. 2;) and he bids him be cautious and prudent in his choice of persons to whom to commit this sacred trust: "Impose not hands lightly upon any man," (1 Tim. v. 22.) And yet once more, he cannot refuse to acknowledge that these persons were appointed, not only to *teach* others, but also, in a certain real sense, to *rule* and govern them. They are not only called prophets and doctors, that is, teachers, (Acts, xiii. 1; 1 Cor. xii. 28,) but also "prelates," or governors having rule over the faithful, (Heb. xiii. 7, 17; 1 Thess. v. 12,) and "bishops" or overseers, appointed by the Holy Ghost to rule the Church of God, (Acts, xx. 28;) and this was so essential a feature of their character, that if a man did not know how to rule his own house, this was a sufficient reason for not making him one of these bishops, because he would not be "able to take care of the Church of God," (1 Tim. iii. 5;) indeed their rule over the Church was such, that St. Peter thought it not unnecessary to caution them against "lording it" over those intrusted to their care, (1 Pet. v. 3;) and as a necessary consequence of this authority in the clergy, the people were required to "obey and be subject to them," (Heb. xiii. 17.)

Here, then, we have three or four links of a very important chain; a succession of persons divinely commissioned to teach the truths of religion to the rest of mankind, and to govern in all spiritual matters such persons as might be persuaded to embrace that religion. *When did this chain end?* This is the question which Protestants have to answer, and to answer out of Holy Scripture; or, if this is too much to expect upon what is in some sort an historical question, they ought at least to be able to show out of Holy Scripture that it *was* to come to an end some day or other; that it was a merely temporary ordinance, and not intended to last for ever. But this is just what they cannot do. They may be clever enough at raising difficulties and specious objections against this or that Catholic doctrine; but they are utterly unable to establish this doctrine so necessary for the support of their own system, that the succession of divinely-appointed teachers was to be broken, and the Church to come to an end. They may invent ingenious interpretations of this or that particular text which speaks of the Church, and, having thus explained away its obvious meaning, urge this as a proof that the obvious meaning is false; but they cannot support by any shadow of scriptural authority the remarkable difference, which is so plain to every body, between their own religious system of apostolic times, as exhibited to us in those very writings, which alone (they say) should guide us in such matters: in the religious system of apostolic times, the Church was the guide and teacher of mankind; in the religious system of Protestants, she is just nothing at all. They cannot deny but that the Church, as spoken of by our Lord and by His Apostles, meant a certain visible body then in existence, well defined, and easily recognised; that this body, like our own natural body, to which it is so frequently compared by St. Paul, consists of different members, each member exercising different functions; that it has therefore a head to govern, a mouth to speak, and hands and feet to execute; or, to speak more generally, that it is at least made up of two principal parts, one whose duty it is to rule and to teach, the other whose duty it is to obey and believe whatever is thus taught and commanded;—all this, I say, Protestants cannot pretend to deny about the Church, as it was at the time when the several books of the New Testament were written; nevertheless, professing strict obedience to the Bible, they are not afraid to apply all the promises and other declarations of that

Book concerning this visible Church to another, an invisible body, which can neither be defined nor recognised, the object of faith, not of sight; a body, whose members have not different spiritual relations one to another, so that one should command and the other obey, the one should teach and the other be taught; but, on the contrary, all stand in the same relation to Christ and to one another, all have one and the same duty to perform, viz., to read the Word of God, to believe and to practise it. So then, just as I showed on a former occasion, that Protestants apply to the Bible, or the written Word of God, declarations and promises which (as they must themselves acknowledge) were originally spoken concerning the Word of God, preached by the Apostles, that is, concerning the teaching of divinely-appointed ministers; so here, precisely in the same way, they apply to a secret invisible body, declarations and promises which (as they must themselves acknowledge) were originally spoken of a public and visible one; and in this way, whilst professing not to reject any portion of Holy Scripture, and even making a great boast of following nothing else excepting Holy Scripture, they really make it say just what they please, by affixing their own arbitrary interpretation upon its language.

The sum and substance, then, of what we have said may be briefly stated thus. Protestants bid us read the Bible, and learn from thence all that we are to believe about the religion taught by Jesus Christ. We take them at their word; we open our Bibles, and read there that Christ appointed certain men to teach others in His stead and by His authority; that those who were thus appointed by Christ gave the same commission to others, and desired them again to hand it on in like manner to others; that the very end and purpose of this appointment, the reason wherefore "Christ gave these apostles, and prophets, and pastors, and teachers," was this, that "henceforth we might be no more children, tossed to and fro with every wind of doctrine," but might all come into the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God; moreover, that these teachers exercised authority over their disciples, over those whom they converted, in such a way that the Christian believers formed a visible community, distinct from other persons, and were, in fact, a body corporate by themselves, with certain laws and privileges of their own, and their own rulers. We think it not unlikely, that this system of things, having been appointed by Christ Himself, should have been intended to continue; it certainly *did* continue up to the time when the latest portion of Holy Scripture was written; and, as far as we can learn from those sacred records, these were the means by which Christ intended that His religion should be propagated for ever, even to the end of the world; we expect, therefore, to find such a body of men still existing at the present day, teaching and ruling the flock of Christ, and we turn to our Protestant instructor, begging him to tell us where they may be found: but we ask in vain; he says that there is no longer any necessity for such a body; that the altered circumstances of the times, the extensive diffusion of the Scriptures, and other causes, have rendered it practically useless, and therefore it has been superseded: and that all this is quite certain, though the Bible, the only standard of truth, has not said a word about it.

Have we not a reason then for that assertion which we have already made, and which we now repeat, that *whilst Protestants pretend to follow the Bible, in truth they may make the Bible follow them?* Surely this is most evident in the present case; for whereas they cannot deny but that there was once upon earth a visible body of men called the Church, and that this body was once the appointed guide and means whereby men were to be taught the truths of the Christian religion, and whereas they constantly profess that men can only be required to believe that which the written Word of God expressly declares, nevertheless, they do not hesitate to demand our assent—and that upon their own bare word, without so much as a single text of Scripture to support them—to one or other of these propositions; either that this body has ceased to exist altogether, or that, if it still continue to exist, yet it has certainly been divested of all its prerogatives. But if the Bible is to be indeed our teacher, and not a mere puppet in our hands, made to speak according to the devices of our own hearts, and not according to the mind of the Holy Spirit, surely an obligation, concerning which it is clear from the language of Scripture that it once existed, and it cannot be shown from the same authority that it has ever been abolished, remains even at the present day in full and undiminished force. Now it is plain that there was once an obligation upon all mankind to hear the Church, and to obey its pastors and rulers; and it is no less plain that nothing can be alleged from the Word of God to take away that obligation: to those, therefore, who recognise

no other authority in controversies of faith but the Bible only, this obligation is as much in force now as it was in the days of the Apostles themselves, before a single word of the Bible had ever been written.

And this argument becomes still more cogent and unanswerable, if we take into consideration this plain matter of fact, so manifest to every one of us, that all this while there stands in the midst of us a body that does not hesitate to proclaim herself the very one spoken of by our Lord and His Apostles; a body which certainly did not spring into being to-day, nor yesterday, nor the day before, but which is known and acknowledged to be a continuation of one that existed in the age before us, and then again in the age before that, and so on backwards and backwards, till we come to the age of the Apostles themselves; a body which has all this time claimed to be the sole judge in controversies of faith, even as though she were the pillar and ground of the truth, and had received some special promise that the Spirit of truth should guide her into all truth; a body which claims the obedience of all baptized persons, as though they were her children, and always speaks and acts in the name and with the authority of Jesus Christ, as though He had promised to be always with her, and to ratify her deeds; in a word, a body which claims to be the sole teacher of Christ's truth, the sole dispenser of His gifts, and, in fact, His very representative upon earth, so that "he that heareth her heareth Christ, and he that despiseth her despiseth Christ." Such a body we seem to read of in Holy Scripture; and such a body still exists in the world, and exists too without a rival; there is no other body which makes a similar claim. Why, then, do persons refuse to receive her testimony in matters of Christian doctrine? Because they say that it is contrary to the teaching of the Holy Scripture. But how can they show from Holy Scripture that such a contradiction between the teaching of the Church and of the Bible could ever be possible? Is it not more likely that they are themselves mistaken as to what the teaching of the Bible, or of the Church, or still more probably both of one and of the other, really is?

### "DISMOUNTED SUPERINTENDENTS."

(From the Tablet.)

The Anglican establishment, or church, or whatever you call it, has just weathered a very difficult sea. It has been tossing about among breakers. Its dead lights—all its lights are emphatically *dead* lights—were stove in. The captain had fled from his post. The crew were drenched with salt water, and bruised with the violence of the tempest; but suddenly the storm has ceased, the wind has hushed, the breakers have disappeared, the ship lifts up her head above the billows, the sailors begin to comb their hair and dry their shirts in the rigging, and every living thing on board breathes more freely, being saved from what seemed imminent destruction. Such, at least, seems to be the language of D. C. L., the *Morning Chronicle*, and their fellow-laborers. They are positively in raptures. And why? "High Churchmen" (as they call themselves) when in "Church difficulties" are always apt to be thankful for what to everybody else but themselves seem to be very small mercies. Their difficulties are very great, but God tempers the wind to the shorn lamb. To-day they officially renounce a sacrament, and seem to have unchurched themselves. To-morrow an article in the *Tablet* sets all things right for them—and behold they are re-churched as much as ever. On the present occasion, that which fills the *Morning Chronicle* and D. C. L. with joy is the disavowal by two Superintendents—only two—of the admissions made in the Sumner-Gawthorn epistle; and the condemnation by public opinion of the admissions contained in that epistle; or, as the *Chronicle* joyfully expresses it, "the utter, complete, and ignominious end of an attempt on the part of the Primate himself" [Mr. Sumner,] "to contradict a first doctrine of the Church."

The *Chronicle*, indeed, argues at great length that the thing really disliked in the Sumner-Gawthorn epistle is not the doctrine but the indecorum of it. Public opinion has not pronounced against Presbyterian ordination, but against a titular Archbishop preaching such a doctrine. Or, to use the language of the *Chronicle*—"Archbishop Sumner's disclaimer of the necessity of the Apostolical Succession would not, perhaps, have been at all out of place if his Grace had happened to be President of the Wesleyan Conference; but as it is, public opinion condemns the Primate. A thing may be right, but it may be very wrong in some persons to say it."

Having gained this great triumph in public opinion, the next thing is to turn it to account; and certainly our heretical friends on the other side of the water are the most comical hands at turning a spiritual advantage to account that it ever was our fortune to

come across. It is a very proper thing to be extremely prominent and active in treading on Lord John Russell's toes—but who shall do it? It would be delightful if from this time forward that feline animal of a Prime Minister had a bell jingling at his neck, and sounding a jubilee to the mice, and a warning to all future cats in office. But, emphatically, who is to bell the little, stealthy, sly, sour, cunning intruder? Not the Superintendents. For, though nominally appointed to fight the battles of the establishment, they are too much incumbered with what Lord Bacon calls "*impedimenta virtutis*"—"the baggage of virtue"—riches and the love of the same—to be relied on for any such dangerous service. The parsons are looking for promotion, and, in spite of the great deliverance of which we have just given an account, they are naturally unwilling to commit themselves.

In this dilemma whom can we have recourse to for solving the problem? It is obvious that it must be worked out algebra-fashion, by signs, letters, and unknown quantities; and, accordingly, it is upon Y. Z. that this arduous duty must devolve. Yes, "Y. Z., care of Messrs. Rivington, 16, Waterloo-place; or the *Morning Chronicle* newspaper; or, if of a private description, to the former address." The occult virtue of Y. Z. will yet save the Establishment, in spite of the apathy of its Superintendents.

Y. Z., it appears, stands for "several members of the Church of England" who have "provisionally combined to collect and publish information upon the religious condition of the Continent; having in their eye" a variety of things to which we shall presently refer.

But these unknown individuals represented by Y. Z., have "provisionally combined!" Every other term descriptive of union amongst men for public purposes had been long since used, and were, besides, a good deal too definite for the present occasion. A church which on her own showing is not quite a church, and not quite not a church; which neither has nor has not two Sacraments; which leads her children either to Heaven or to Hell, leaving them to their own choice, not having quite made up her own mind about the road; which is not quite sure about the forgiveness of sins, is in great doubt about Orders, hopes rather than believes that her so-called bishops may be of some use; is not very clear about heresy, dare not pronounce upon schism, and hopes every body is right by one interpretation or another, except those vile wretches who demand a share or a restitution of the plundered goods which are to her the breath of life—such a church could not, of course, be helped or aided by anything half so plain or direct as an association, or society, or conference, or institute, or league; but as the best possible representation of her character and principles "several members" meet together in Mr. Rivington's back parlor, and when there they do not exactly pass resolutions, or by any formal process adopt any specific determination, but, with much meekness, they gradually slide into, and unconsciously invent, or practically discover, a new form of corporate association to which they give the happy nondescript nomenclature of "provisional combination."

"Provisional combination." If a man were to live to the age of Methusalem, we suppose that having once heard of a number of men who have not ventured upon "associating themselves," but have just mustered up courage to "provisionally combine," he could never forget it. Pope says that "true no-meaning puzzles more than sense;" and there is a happiness of "no-meaning" in everything that concerns Anglican theology, or that Anglican theology is concerned about, which constitutes the very best raw-materials for puzzles anywhere extant in the world.

Milton says of Death that, "What seemed his head the likeness of a kingly crown had on," and is supposed to have thereby achieved the very sublime of shadowy indistinctness. But truth is stranger than the fictions of poets, and Milton's Death was not half so wonderful a being as the Establishment, which actually has one very substantial and beautiful Head, that wears upon it not merely the likeness but the reality of a kingly crown, and upon the same pair of shoulders bears the semblance of another head—the shadowy bowing down, as it ought, before the substance—which shadow seems to have upon its brows the likeness—and a very bad likeness—of an Episcopal mitre.

But we dwell too long on these preliminaries. The shadowy, dim, hazy, misty, invisible, "provisional combination," proposes to itself several fields of labor; and these, as we have said, are all based on the true orthodox, notorious, Anglican opinions entertained by all honest "Churchmen" about the foreign Churches.

What are these? Mr. Bloomfield, the London Superintendent, dissents from, or seems to dissent