

"I am a priest of the most High God."

"Oh, indeed! Is your name Melchisedek? Called for the 'tithes,' I presume?"

"Not so, I am a Father Confessor."

"Oh, indeed! well, what are you going to confess? I don't remember that you've wronged *me* in any way."

"Child, you don't *understand*; I *receive* confessions; I want you to confess all your sins to *me*."

"But the Bible says, 'if we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins;' doesn't the word *He* mean the Lord Jesus?"

"Doubtless, but I am in the *place* of Jesus to you, and you know we are commanded to confess our sins."

"Yes, we are, I know, but I should'n't have thought by the look of you, that you are just and faithful; by the bye, I think I remember a text something like this—'Whatsoever ye would that men should do unto you, do ye also unto them.'"

"Well—ah—yes, perhaps there is; but doesn't St. James tell us to confess?"

"Yes, he does; he says, 'Confess your faults one to another, and pray one for another that ye may be healed.' Now then, in the first place, I'm not *sick*, and secondly, I I didn't *send* for you, remember; but if you'll confess your sins to me first, I'll pray for *you*, and then I'll confess to you and you shall pray for *me*."

"Absurd, 'Low,' un-Catholic idea! Don't you know I possess the keys of the kingdom of heaven, and that I have power to condemn you and power to release you?"

"Well, I think I have heard those words, or some very much like them, *before*. Didn't Pontius Pilate say them to Jesus in the judgment hall, and you remember the answer, don't you? 'Thou couldest have no power at all, except it were given thee from above.' Are you quite sure you have the power?"

"How dare you *doubt* it? the 'Catholic Church' teaches it, and that is sufficient, is it not?"

"Sufficient for *you*, perhaps, but not for *me*, and considering that I've done without you for so long a time, and further considering that I find no record of systematic and methodical confession (such as you would introduce) in the earliest history of the church, and believing as I do that your impertinent questions and abominable suggestions tend to pollute instead of purifying the heart, I think we can very well dispense with your services, *now*."