

THE NIAGARA CHURCH CASE.

It is well known that as far back as authentic history extends, men have always existed, so thoroughly debased in moral character, as not to shrink from "stealing the livery of heaven to serve the devil in." And when such oily serpents, adepts in dissimulation, succeed in palming themselves off as being really angels of light, why should it be thought a marvellous feat in them to maintain the deception for years; SO FAR, at least, as to prevent the POSITIVE detection of their impious fraud?—Why should any individual, community, or Church, view it as any special disgrace to be grossly imposed upon by the cunning craftiness of such artful, designing knaves? Should such an adroit impostor, while shining in all the graceful attire of an angel, actually succeed in planting himself firmly in the church, as a true minister of God, what sensible man would ever charge the sacrilegious villany to the church as a crime, or offence even? None—certainly none—provided the church flings the reprobate from its bosom, the moment his true character is discovered, and manifests true *gratitude* to all who aided in detecting the culprit. But, if instead of this, the church shows every possible lenity to the wicked impostor, and exercises its ingenuity in discovering faults in the method of his detection; and actually finds them where the common sense of mankind sees nothing amiss,—and thus finding them makes them the cause of placing the detectors of the impostor under its heavy displeasure,—to the extent of imposing upon them crushing and disgraceful disabilities, pains, and penalties; then, indeed, the church—thus proving its complicity with the most atrocious of vagabonds—is justly frowned upon and shunned by every upright, honest man. And it would tend greatly to the improvement of every such church, could it be made to feel the weight of public indignation. To this end attention is called to the treatment which the Rev., the God-fearing Mr. Reynolds has received at the hands of the Anglican Bishop of Toronto, his secretary, and the Niagara Commissioners. Most mercilessly has Mr. Reynolds been assailed,—they have imputed his motives—maligned his character—and suspended his ministry in Niagara, while measures are coolly taken to banish him from the town! But whence this severity? "Why, what evil has he done?" An outraged people, deprived of his valuable ministry, importune for an answer; and they learn that he has been found guilty—without a trial—of having committed the enormous crime of violating Episcopal etiquette! That he had not used ceremony enough, nor prudence enough, in tearing the mask of ministerial sanctity from a vile seducer! That he had somewhat rashly exposed his gross depravity! That he had rudely exhibited his revolting hypocrisy, making it manifest to all that he was not a minister of God, but a corrupt, polluted, drunken debauchee. Alas! that for doing these

things, in a style however *non-Episcopal*, the Rev. Mr. Reynolds should fall under the displeasure of the Magnates of his church! Who could have anticipated such a result? Who is so dull as not to perceive the analogy that exists between the conduct of the Rev. Mr. Reynolds in the Niagara retribution, and that of Phinehas in the matter of Baal-Peor? Making every allowance that can be demanded for altered times and circumstances, who can say that the zeal of Mr. Reynolds, in defence of moral purity, impelled him further than the son of Eleazar was carried, in arresting the adulterous Zimri in his career of pollution? If the conduct of the Rev. Mr. Reynolds, towards a brutal wolf found in the sheep-fold, was rude, rash, and unceremonious, and in violation of the nice distinctions of etiquette, what must be said of the course of Phinehas? Phinehas seems to have been profoundly ignorant that the wicked, lawless, adulterous Zimri,—Prince though he was,—had any claim on his respect, courtesy, politeness, or consideration in any form. Nor does he seem to have been aware that the Israelitish Church could be scandalized by the immediate proclamation of his gross criminality. He seems to have acted as though he had the assurance of heaven, that the vile impurity of the Prince, and not the thorough exposure of it, was culpable. In short, his conduct absolutely and most thoroughly ignores every principle on which the Rev. Mr. Reynolds is censured, condemned, silenced, and disgraced by the Lord Bishop of Toronto. How crushing is the rebuke administered to his Lordship by the single fact that Moses did not censure Phinehas for pointing out the lewdness of Zimri before he revealed the matter to him! And how overwhelming the condemnation of *Bishop, Commission, and Secretary*, embodied in the following proclamation of the King of Kings, the God of spotless purity and holiness, touching the case:—

"And the Lord spake unto Moses, saying,

"Phinehas the son of Eleazar, the son of Aaron the priest, hath turned my wrath away from the children of Israel, (while he was zealous for my sake among them,) that I consumed not the children of Israel in my jealousy.

"Wherefore say, Behold, I give unto him my covenant of peace:

"And he shall have it, and his seed after him, even the covenant of an everlasting priesthood; because he was zealous for his God, and made an atonement for the children of Israel."

Let the Rev. Mr. Reynolds lift up his head and rejoice. Well may he exclaim, let Bishop, Secretary and Commission, condemn me if they will. The Lord is on my side—I will not fear what man can do unto me. And if *prints*, lost to all sense of moral decency, join the iniquitous cry against the man, who, in Niagara tore the fangs from the serpent—because he did it too suddenly—because he did not first tell the monster that he was prepared to do it—because he did not give him a chance to swallow his fangs before