

against his choosing the right one. To the dispassionate onlooker it would only be matter of amusement, were it not for the sorrow he felt that the simple, the divine teachings of Jesus of Nazareth could be drivelled and dwarfed down to this, and made still to pass current in His name!

But now respecting this "Church" theory—which seems to me to eliminate from Christianity all that is worth having—not to press the argument that the opposing claims of the High Episcopal churches destroy each other; let us state the pretensions of the Church of England's popular party, as certified by their priests.

That the Bishop is the representative, the plenipotentiary, of the apostle; who has derived, through holy office and by the imposition of holy hand, certain occult spiritual powers which he transmits downwards by ordination to the priests of the church, who thereafter operate upon the faithful. "The Church" is in fact the clergy; it is a sacred order, standing in a relation to God that no other body of Christians and no other individual can possibly occupy. All gifts and graces come through "the Church." "The Church" admits that Christ is "the way and the truth," but "the Church" keeps the wicket of entrance to the narrow path. "The Church" has the monopoly of Heaven's favour, and her ordinances are blessed and accepted; while the same services, offered with sincerity and devotion by those who are without, are rejected and unblest. The personal character of the priest has nothing to do with the efficacy of his services. He may be a saint; he may be a reprobate; the Spirit is with him all the same. When it is asked, "Whence shall our salvation come?" it is answered, "Through the Church." What shall it profit a man if he gain the whole world, and spend and be spent in doing good and communicating of good, if he has not belonged to the Church! (I do not exaggerate.)

In the life and conduct of its followers "the Church" has never been able, so far as I know, to point to any evidence that these claims and pretensions are real. It has never said that its ordinances make men better, holier, more Christ-like than those who have not had the advantage of them. It could hardly be seriously contended that a Roman Catholic or a Church of England man, of average type, is a higher style of man, of more blameless life, of stauncher integrity, of purer Christian motive and action than another average man whom he would call a *heretic* or a *dissenter*. Yet surely something like this