

greater latitude than is actually left to them by the recent judgment, would that justify only one of her members in throwing himself into the arms of a Church which teaches, and now more openly than ever insists upon, his paying divine honour to a creature? Is Mariolatry a less sin, or less a departure from the truth, than a low view of baptismal regeneration? Is a belief that the grace of God is not tied to the outward and visible sign of a sacrament, a more pernicious error than the assertion that the Priest's intention is necessary to the efficacy of a sacrament? If the former notion be calculated to raise a doubt whether this or that infant be made by baptism a Christian, is not the other much more so? No man in the Church of Rome, who is bound to admit its doctrine respecting the Priest's intention, can be sure whether he is a Christian or not. This one dogma of their Church is more calculated to raise doubts and scruples in the minds of her members than any uncertainty which is supposed to exist in any of the Articles of our Reformed Church. This line of reasoning might be pursued at greater length with reference to the various corruptions of Gospel truths, the belief of which the Church of Rome binds upon the consciences of all her members as necessary to salvation. But I must content myself with the general observation that he who deserts the Church of his baptism on account of some one supposed flaw in her system of discipline, or even doctrine, and submits to an authority which demands an implicit belief in an indefinite number of dogmas, opposed alike to Scripture and to common sense, some impious and some absurd, may be compared to a man who, having observed some instance of doubt or hesitation in his guide, in order to avoid mistaking the path on one side, rushes blindfold over a precipice on the other.

ROMANIZING.

But there is another very important consideration suggested to us by the recent lamentable secessions from our Church. It may well occur to us to inquire far the way may have been paved for them, in some instances at least, by the growth of opinions and practices in our own Reformed Church, at variance, if not with the letter, yet with the spirit, of its teaching and ordinances. I am unwilling to condemn, without reserve, the motives of those amongst the Clergy who have thought themselves at liberty to imitate, as nearly as it is possible to imitate, without a positive infringement of the law, the forms and ceremonies of the Church of Rome, or to insinuate without openly asserting some of the most dangerous of those errors which our own Reformed Church has renounced and condemned. I am bound to do justice to their zeal and devotedness—their self-denial and charity. Inconsistent as I think their conduct has been with their duty to the Church of which they are Ministers, I cannot suspect them of intentional treachery. They may perhaps, have thought that they were adopting the most likely method of retaining in our own communion persons of warm imagination and weak judgment, who were in danger of being dazzled by the meretricious splendour of the Roman ritual, or deluded by the false pretences of the Roman system of doctrine to antiquity and unity. If such has been their object, they have been grievously disappointed. Concessions to error can never really serve the cause of truth. If some few have been thus retained within the pale of our Church, many others have been gradually trained for secession from it. A taste has been excited in them for forms and observances which has stimulated without satisfying their appetite, and they have naturally sought for fuller gratification in the Church of Rome. They have been led, step by step, to the very verge of the precipice, and then, to the surprise and disappointment of their guides, have fallen over. I know that this has happened in some instances. I have no doubt of its having happened in many.

Then, with respect to doctrine, what can be better calculated to lead the less learned, or the less thoughtful, members of our Protestant Church to look with complacency upon the errors which their Church has renounced, and at length to embrace them, than to have books of devotion put into their hands by their own Clergyman, in which all but Divine honour is paid to the Virgin Mary? A propitiatory virtue is attributed to the Eucharist—the mediation of the saints is spoken of as a probable doctrine—prayer for the dead urged as a positive duty—and a superstitious use of the sign of the cross is recommended as profitable; add to this the secret practice of auricular confession, the use of crucifixes and rosaries, the administration of what is termed the sacrament of penance, and it is manifest that they who are taught to believe that such things are compatible with the principles of the English Church, must also believe it to be separated from that of Rome by a faint and almost imperceptible line, and be prepared to pass that line without much fear of incurring the guilt of schism.

INNOVATIONS IN PUBLIC WORSHIP.

Then, with regard to the mode of celebrating Divine worship, it has been a subject of great uneasiness to me to see the changes which have been introduced by a few of the Clergy, at variance, as I think, with the spirit of the Church's directions, and, in some instances, with the letter. It has always been esteemed an evidence of the wisdom and moderation of those who framed our Common Prayer, that they retained such ceremonies as they thought best to the setting forth of God's honour and glory, and to the reducing of the people to a most perfect and godly living, without error or superstition, putting away other things which they perceived to be most absurd, "as in men's ordinances it often chanceth diversely in divers countries." But this principle has been lost sight of by the persons to whom I allude, and they have presumed, following their mere private judgments, and not the rules or intention of the Church, to introduce, one by one, those very forms and observances which the reformers of our Liturgy had purposely discontinued and laid aside, but which it is now sought to revive, some of them for the first time since the Reformation. These innovations have, in some instances, been carried to such a length as to render the Church service almost *historionic* (theatrical.) I really cannot characterize by a gentler term the continual changes of posture, the frequent genuflections, the crossings, the peculiarities of dress, and some of the decorations of Churches to which I allude. They are, after all, a poor imitation of the Roman ceremonial, and furnish, I have no doubt, to the observant members of that Church, a subject, on the one hand, of ridicule, as being a faint and meagre copy of their own gaudy ritual, and, on the other hand, of exultation, as preparing those who take delight in them to seek a fuller gratification of their taste in the Roman communion. I am by no means insensible to the value of the æsthetic principle in the externals of religion, but great caution is requisite not to lay such stress on that which is material and emblematic as to detract from the importance of that which is purely spiritual—to substitute, in fact, the mere machinery of

religion for the effects which it is intended to produce. I have always contended, and still contend, that we are bound to carry out all the Church's directions for the celebration of Divine service; but I contend, also, that we offend against her order, not less by the addition of what it forbids or does not enjoin, than by the omission of anything that it prescribes.

Suffer me to remind you of the language which I held to you on this subject eight years ago.

"Such practices," I observed, "which are neither prescribed, nor recommended, nor even noticed by our Church, nor sanctioned by general custom, throw discredit upon those decent ceremonies and expressive forms, which are intended to enliven the devotion of those who are engaged in the service of God, and to do honour to His holy name. . . . In resisting an exaggerated spiritualism, we must be careful not to incur the charge of materializing religion, and above all, we must beware of arbitrarily connecting the gifts of God with ordinances of merely human appointment, and of our teaching people to place the ceremonies which the Church has ordained, however significant and laudable, on the same footing as the Sacraments, which have been ordained by the Lord Jesus Himself."

In 1846 I again complained of the efforts which had for some time past been systematically made to revive amongst the members of our communion opinions and practices usually regarded as peculiar to the Church of Rome, and spoke of them as tending to perplex and unsettle sensitive and imperfectly-instructed consciences, and to prepare them for an acknowledgment of the paramount authority of that Church, which, as it concedes nothing, nor admits the possibility of its erring, even in the minutest feature of that complicated system, which was stamped with the character of unchangeableness by the Council of Trent, has manifestly a great advantage in dealing with unstable and doubtful minds, whenever one step has been taken in advance towards that system.

I had hoped that these distinct expressions of my opinion would have the effect of checking the innovations alluded to, and of awakening those of the Clergy of my Diocese who had departed the farthest from the simplicity of our Reformed Ritual, to a sense of the danger of all endeavours to assimilate it to the Roman ceremonial, and to the inconsistency of such endeavours with their own obligations, as Ministers of our Reformed Church, bound by solemn pledges to observe her rules, and to carry out her intentions. The expectation has been disappointed; neither my public exhortations nor my private admonitions have produced the desired effect. I have been told that I had no authority to forbid anything which was not in express terms forbidden by law; and that practices which, though purposely laid aside by the Church, and so by implication condemned, have not been actually prohibited, are therefore lawful, and that canonical obedience to a Bishop is only that which he can enforce in a court of law; and so the innovations which I objected to have been persisted in, with additional changes introduced from time to time, with the manifest purpose of assimilating the services of our Reformed Church as nearly as possible to those of the Roman. Once more I declare my entire disapproval of such practices, and my earnest wish that, while every direction of the Rubric and Canons is observed where it is possible, no form should be introduced into the celebration of public worship which is not expressly prescribed by them, or sanctioned by long-established usage.

ADVANCE OF POPERY.

It is a duty at all times incumbent upon the members of our Reformed Church, especially upon her Ministers, to abstain from everything which may seem in any way to countenance the errors of the Church of Rome, and lead any person to believe that the difference between us is less than it really is; to forbear from imitating its peculiarities, from recommending its books of devotion, from attending the services, even through curiosity, in this country at least; in short to shun all intercourse with it as a Church. But this duty presses upon us with peculiar force at the present time, when that Church is advancing its pretensions to spiritual dominion amongst us with a degree of arrogance hitherto unknown.

It has been thought sufficient by all former Popes, since the time of the Reformation, to provide for the spiritual care of their adherents in this country by the appointment of Vicars Apostolic, exercising, indeed, episcopal authority over them, not as Bishops of an English See, but deriving their titles from some imaginary Diocese, in *partibus infidelium*. The assertion now first made of the Pope's right to erect Episcopal Sees in this country, appears to me to be, not only an intentional insult to the Episcopate and Clergy of England, but a daring, though powerless invasion of the supremacy of the Crown. The Act of Parliament which restored that supremacy provides that—

"No foreign prince, person, Prelate, State, or potentate, spiritual or temporal, shall use, enjoy, or exercise, any manner of power, jurisdiction, superiority, authority, pre-eminence, or privilege, spiritual or ecclesiastical, within this realm."

And although, while the law in this respect remains unchanged, the pretended erection of a Bishop's See in England, by the Pope's authority, can have no legal effect, it is manifestly the assertion, on his part, of a right to do that which the laws of England have forbidden. I cannot, therefore, but regard it as a measure against which, not only the Church, but the Government, of this country is bound emphatically to protest. It is evident that the Bishop and Court of Rome entertain very sanguine hopes of the conversion of this country, and of its return to the bosom of their Church. The sad falling away of some, who seemed to be the most devotedly attached to the Church of England, has awakened expectations, not unnatural, indeed, but destined to certain disappointment.

I believe that the very boldness of the pretensions now put forth by the Bishop of Rome and his agents will prevent their success. They may dazzle and confound a few weak minds, or captivate some ardent imaginations, but they will be instinctively repelled by the common sense and right feeling of the people at large. Popery, as demanding an utter prostration of man's intellect, before an authority which attempts to substantiate its claims, not by proofs, but by gratuitous and inconsistent assertions, cannot long retain its hold upon the mind of a well-educated people imbued with a knowledge of Holy Scripture. Its fundamental principle is, that men are not to examine, but to believe; and, at the present moment, by the re-assertion of superstitions which the more learned writers of the Roman Church have long ago exploded, and by the revival of legends, suited only to an age of the grossest ignorance, it seems to be pushing that principle to its very utmost length, as though its maxim were that the more incredible a doctrine or history may seem, the more merit there is in believing it. And this fearless

contempt and defiance of common sense has its effect upon some uninformed and humble minds, overpowering them by the very audacity of its pretensions, while the authority which displays it, offers to relieve them from all the trouble and anxiety of a search after truth, assuring them that it is at once their duty and their happiness not to inquire, but to believe.

But the Church of Rome employs different agencies and instruments to different classes of men. For those whose education and habits of mind require something like argument and evidence, she has her subtle dialecticians and persuasive orators, who do not fetter themselves with a very strict adherence to the canon of doctrine laid down by the Council of Trent, but insinuate, if they do not expressly teach, various modifications of it, adapted to remove what they term the prejudices of their Protestant hearers, especially of those who are members of the Church of England. You will readily understand me to allude to the Oratorians, as they are called, and I name them principally for the sake of expressing my earnest hope that none of you will give the least countenance to their proceedings, nor run the risk of impairing the strength of your own convictions, and of weakening your attachment to the Church of which you are ministers, by attending any of their services or listening to their lectures.

GERMAN THEOLOGY.

But, while we are looking to the dangers which impend over us in one quarter, let us not close our eyes to those which threaten us from another. A natural principle of antagonism in the human mind makes it probable that some who fly off from Popery will traverse the entire diameter of the rational sphere, and be landed on the antipodes of infidelity. I would desire you to consider whether those persons who are disgusted with the departments, now too common, from the soberness and simplicity of our devotional offices, and with the exaggerated notions which are insisted on as to the authority of the priestly office, are not too likely to take refuge, not in Low Church doctrine, as the term is generally understood, but in the boundless expanse of Latitudinarianism—a sea without a shore, and no polestar to guide those who embark on it but the uncertain light of human reason. I cannot but think that we have more to apprehend from the theology of Germany than from that of Rome; from that which defies human reason, than from that which seeks to blind or stiffen it; from a school which labours to reconcile Christianity with its own philosophy, by stripping the Gospel of all its characteristic features, and reducing it to the level of human systems, than from a Church which rejects and condemns even the soundest conclusions of true philosophy when they are at variance with the determinations, of its own presumed infallibility. They theology, if it deserves the name, to which I allude, has been grafted upon, or grown out of, the idealism of the German philosophers. It has exhibited symptoms of decline in its native soil, but I fear it is beginning to lay hold on the more practical mind of this country, and from it, in my judgment, more danger is to be apprehended than from the attempt to revive worn-out superstitions, and to shackle the understandings and consciences of men with fetters which were broken and thrown off at the Reformation. Moral evidence, historical testimony, inspiration, miracle, all that is objective in Christianity, is swept away by the writers of this school, its glory defaced, its living waters deprived of all their healing virtues, by distillation in the alembic of Rationalism.

Now, I fear that there are many persons who think that they may safely go to a certain length with these bold adventurers in theology, without following them into all their extravagant speculations; for instance, that they may deny the inspiration of Holy Scripture as the Church understands it, without calling in question the evidences—that is, the historical evidences—of Christianity; that they may believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God, and yet cast off what they term a superstitious reverence for the test of the Bible. But I do not believe it to be possible for any one thus to undervalue and weaken the authority of the Apostles and Prophets, and so to undermine the foundations of his belief, without impairing the soundness of the superstructure, and diluting his faith in Jesus Christ as the chief corner-stone. To deny the inspiration of Scripture is one step towards the rejection of the Gospel as a revelation from God.

Against this fatal heresy I would earnestly caution my younger brethren, as being one from which, in the present state of the human mind, we have much more to fear than from the encroachments of Popery. Rationalism, as its name implies, referring everything to man's unaided reason as the ultimate test of truth, flatters the pride of his nature, which is revolted by the humbling but consolatory doctrines of the Gospel. Popery offends and disgusts the understanding by inventions opposed alike to common sense and to the plain letter of Holy Scripture. The latter aims at the complete subjugation of the intellect to the authority of the self-constituted Vicar of Christ; the former asserts the supremacy and infallibility of Reason. It is manifest that this is the most likely to find favour with a learned and scientific generation, while the former can rest its hope of general acceptance only on the ground of an uninquiring ignorance. The true safeguard and preservative from both extremes is to be found in the general diffusion of sound scriptural knowledge, by means of education—in a sedulous inculcation of the doctrines of our Reformed Church, as drawn from the inspired Word of God, and in a firm adherence to her Creeds, and Liturgy, and the Articles. If these be cast aside, or, if, while they are subscribed to in the letter, they are understood and interpreted in a *non-natural* sense, so as to explain away, on one side, the fundamental truths of Christianity, or, on the other, the distinctive doctrine of Protestantism, we shall soon be afloat in a sea of error, drifting helplessly amongst the shoals and quicksands of heresy, old and new. The Church will no longer be an ark of safety; its ministry will be a ministry not of peace but of confusion; and what the results will be we may learn from the example of the continental Churches, which are now reaping the bitter fruits of their defection from Catholic truth and order, and of their separation of religious from secular education.

STATE AND PROSPECTS OF THE CHURCH OF ENGLAND.

And what is the lesson which the actual condition of our own Church is calculated to teach us? Menaced by dangers of opposite kinds—on this side, superstition and spiritual tyranny; on that side, Rationalism, with infidelity and Pantheism in its train,—we are not bound to put away from us, as far as our duty to the truth will permit, all dissensions and controversies between ourselves; to rally round the vital truths of the Gospel, and to study with much self-inquiry and earnest prayers to realise our Saviour's precept—"Have salt in yourselves, and have peace one with another?" Whatever effects we may believe to exist in the con-

stitution of our Church, as viewed in connexion with the civil polity of this country, let us devote our energies more resolutely than we have yet done to the fulfilment of our own individual duties as ministers of that Church, each in his proper sphere of action, and we shall find in the more rapid growth of true religion in the extension of the Church's boundaries, the daily in-gathering of those who are to be saved, and in the moral and social improvement of the people at large, abundant evidence of our belonging to a true Church.

May we not even now sufficient evidence of this kind to assure and encourage us? Can we believe that God would bless the efforts of a false or falling Church with such success as by His goodness has already crowned the awakened energies of our own? And is not the very fact of that awakening, viewed in connexion with its results, in itself a condemnation of those who desert our Church because she is hindered, as they think from doing her proper work? Is it too much to say that the Divine Head of the Church (we speak with humility) seems to be acknowledging the legitimacy of that branch of it which is planted in this realm, by repeated marks of His favour; not by amplifying its worldly honours, nor by enlarging its endowments, nor by augmenting its temporal power, nor by giving it increased favour in the sight of legislators and rulers, but by calling forth its spiritual energies, by reviving its inner life, by rekindling in its members somewhat of the Church's ancient warmth of piety and charity, by giving it both the will and the power to lengthen its cords and strengthen its stakes, and to break forth on the right hand and on the left?

Have we not thankfully to acknowledge the goodness of God towards the Church of this country, in permitting it to send forth, within the last ten years, fifteen additional Bishops to preside over its distant and too long neglected branches, and in blessing the labours of those devoted and self-denying men with an almost unlooked-for measure of success? This, too, be it remembered, by the Church's inherent energy, without assistance, almost without encouragement, from the State. Again, are there no indications of the existence of a true Church, faithful to her appointed work, in the efforts which have been lately made to bring into her bosom and to provide with heavenly nourishment the multitudes of perishing sinners, called indeed by her name, and for the most part, it may be, made her children by baptism, but from that moment treated as strangers and foreigners, ignorant of her maternal care, and suffered to remain in an almost worse than heathen state? Are not churches and schools, which are now so many centres of light and holiness in regions where the power of darkness long held undisputed sway, so many trophies which the Church militant has been permitted to erect over the enemies of man's salvation? Is it not the Church which has of late lifted up her voice, and told the rich and powerful of the duties which they owe to the poor, and of the dangers which have arisen, and of the ruin which must ensue, from the continued neglect of those duties?

Let us, dear brethren, be duly thankful to God for all that He has guided and enabled our Church to effect, as the dispenser of His truth, and be more zealous and more united than ever in our endeavours to carry on that work in our respective spheres of duty. Let us rally, as dutiful sons, round our spiritual mother in the time of her distress and perplexity; repair the breaches of our Zion as effectually as God may permit us to repair them, and possess our souls in patience and prayer, till, in His own good time, He shall see fit to perfect the work.

SISTERHOODS OF MERCY.

There are still other topics which seem to require some notice from me, but I can only touch upon them very briefly.

The question of establishing Sisterhoods of Mercy in our Reformed Church, is one respecting which opinions are greatly divided. That such institutions may be productive, under due regulation, of much good, cannot, I think, be doubted. They have from time to time been recommended to our Church for adoption, by writers whose attachment to the principles of the Reformation cannot be doubted. They were, in fact, originally Protestant institutions. Eighty years before the formation of Sisterhoods of Mercy in the Church of Rome by Vincent de Paulo, the Protestant Sisterhood of Sedan, and the ladies of Rochelle, set the example of those associations for pious and charitable objects. That it is possible to conduct them in accordance with Protestant principles is proved by the institution of Deaconesses established in Paris in 1841, and carried on with continually increasing success under the truly paternal care and wise direction of M. Vermeil, Pastor of the Reformed Church of Paris. In a few years a spacious house, containing 127 rooms, with large yards and gardens, has been purchased and fitted up, and is filled with sufferers of every description. Instruction for the young, consolation and guidance for patience, medicine and attendance for the sick, a lending library, the distribution of Bibles and tracts,—all these objects are carried out or superintended by the deaconesses or probationers, and these useful labours have been thankfully acknowledged from time to time by pecuniary grants from the municipal authorities of Paris.

This institution has from the first been carefully guarded from the errors and abuses of the Church of Rome. It has associated together Christian women constrained by the love of Christ, and desirous of being permitted to do His work more effectually than could be done by their detached and isolated efforts. But it has held out to them no inducement nor facilities to desert the duties laid upon them by their domestic relations. No vow of celibacy nor engagements binding their consciences,—no violation of the liberty where-with Christ has made us free,—the character of the establishment is not that of a monastic community, but of a great Christian family. If any Sisterhoods can be formed in this country answering to this description, I should hail their institution as calculated to increase the efficiency of our Church, and to strengthen it against the machinations of Rome. But I strongly deprecate the establishment of any religious or charitable society of females which shall have almost every peculiarity of a nunnery but the name. I fear that this is the case with some which have been already formed. I have reason to believe that, in more than one instance, young women have been encouraged or permitted to enrol themselves as Sisters of Mercy or Charity, against the earnest wish of their nearest relations, and to neglect one clearly prescribed duty for the sake of undertaking another, which is certainly not of positive obligation. I should think it a sufficient condemnation of such an institution to be able to show that in any one instance its conductors had invited or permitted a daughter to become an inmate in spite of the earnest remonstrances of a father or a widowed mother. From these objections the Training Institution for nurses is free; and I do not deny that more extensive establishments of the nature of that which exists at Paris might be formed in strict accordance with the principles of