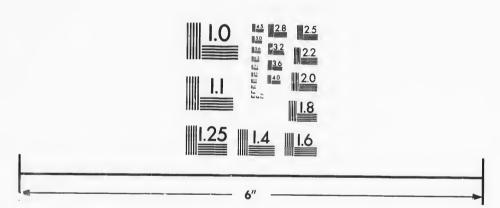
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WHAT IS POPERY!

A LECTURE

DELIVERED IN THE

Churches of St. Margaret's Bay, N. S.

IN THE YEARS 1842, 1847, AND 1851.

Br J. STANNAGE,

RECTOR,

And Missionary of the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts.

"Prove all things: hold fast that which is good."

1 THESS., v. 21.

HALIFAX, N. S.

PRINTED LY WM. GOSSIP, AT THE CHURCH TIMES OFFICE 1856.

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WHAT IS POPERY? MY DEARLY BELOVED BRETHREN. According to promise, I proceed to give you the differences, or rather the chief differences between the English Catholic and the Roman Catholic Churches. But before entering upon the subject, I would again call upon you, as I have always done when alluding to other denominations, to endeavour to think and to speak of all these things in a spirit of peace, and with a greater desire after the truth as it is in the Bible, than after the conquest of other people's opinions; with a greater wish to know the will of God better and better every day than to increase our numbers, or overcome by force of arguments or of mere high-sounding words, those who oppose themselves to us, or to what we consider to be the truth as it is in Jesus. Let us pray, then, Beloved, for the spirit of meckness as well as for that degree of firmness and unshaken stability in the faith which is always so necessary for the support of all Christian doctrines. We may not always have appeared to possess as much of that gentleness and meekness as the Gospel demands. In all discussions there always naturally mixes too much harshness and severity; and we are in danger of falling into this snare quite as much as those with whom we are often obliged to contend, and therefore it is very necessary that we ever bear in mind, and in these days of discord more than ever, this valuable Scripture passage in the 25th verse of the 2d Chapter of the 2d Epistle to Timothy, where the Apostle calls upon Timothy to " be gentle unto all men, apt to teach, patient;" "in meckness instructing those that oppose themselves." And again in 1st. Peter, III. 15, "Be ready always to give in answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you with meekness and fear." It is, Beloved, in order to enable you to do this. " to give a reason of the hope that is in you with meckness and fear," that I am so anxious to instruct you upon all points. of the Christian doctrine. The state of division into which the Christian world is fallen makes the office of God's Ministers most trying and painful. Many of those who are opposed to us are so on account of such small differences that it becomes doubly painful for us to disagree with them. This is the chief cause, no doubt, that so many Church people, in other parts, are so much afraid to hear their Ministers touch in any way upon the differences between them and other bodies. Many of our own people are inclined to accommodate themselves with the opinions of others much more than others are to accommodate themselves with theirs; and this laxity of zeal in support of our own Reformed Catholic Church, while it leads to greater and greater errors day by day, proceeds from several causes such as the following, -the fear of orfending kind friends or neighbours—the desire not to appear bigotted, as it is commonly called—and it is to be feared, often from no other cause than pure worldlings of mind, or carelessness, or real want of information on the subject.

Now these principles may do very well for those who have only this world in view, and who care not much whether they support truth or error, so long as they obtain a name, or pass through the world as very good, quiet, and liberal men. But the Bible Christian, in whatever denomination he may find himself situated, will think it the most important duty of his life to be as firm as a rock in support of the least particle of truth, and will not even be afraid of the name of bigot, so long as his principles are grounded on the Holy Bible, the only unerring rule of faith and practice. He will however pray that he may be thus firm in all meekness and gentleness of spirit, patiently allowing for the infirmities of others, while he begs of them to make allowance for his own. It is pleasing to me, however, Brethren, to find that as far as my own people in this Bay are generally concerned in the above remarks, I have not much reason to complain. The great majority of our members have nobly supported me while explaining the Holy Scriptures on which they

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and others were at issue; and I have found an increase everywhere in the zeal, the attendance, and knowledge of our people. Two or three may have doubted the necessity of thus openly speaking the truth, yet they all the time allowed it to be the truth, and thus only shewed their own want of zeal or firmness, rather than my want of faithfulness. For these I pray that they may have a greater zeal for God, and for all, let us pray that our zeal may be according to knowledge, and not after the traditions of men, or the deceitfulness of our own puffed up or misled reason.

We now come to the subject before us. I am auxious to inform the minds of my people upon the difference between the Church of their Fathers, which happens happily to be a branch of the true Church of Christ in the world, and that known as the Roman Church. It has long appeared to me as if Protestants were, to an alarming degree, forgetting the great reasons which induced our pious Biskops and fathers of the Reformation to fight so manfully, even " to the death," for the doctrines and principles of our Church. Our own Clergy have not perhaps preached so often on the subject as they ought, and I fear that I myself have shared largely in the general neglect in this matter, especially when I remember that by the Canons of the Church, which I have sworn to obey, we are bound to preach four times a year against what is commonly called Popery. From this cause perhaps it is in a great measure that there is a belief gaining ground among the young and uninformed, who seldom hear the Clergy speaking against these things, and who have no other means of learning the truth except at the "Priest's lips," that both Churches are much alike, and that it is little matter to which we belong. Advantage is thus taken for inter-marriages, and for making concessions which would never be made if a proper acquaintance on the subject existed among the people generally.

The duty of Protestants is to obtain all the information they can on the principles of the Reformation and the nature and spirit of the Roman Church, teaching the same to their children with all possible care, while they should take care to have so much of the spirit of the Gospel in themselves, as not to use carnal weapons, or worldly reasoning, but rather "the sword of the Spirit" which is "the word of God," and the gentleness of Christ which gives "not evil for evil, but contrariwise, blessing."

1. The chief objection which a Reformed Catholic should ever strenuously maintain against the Roman Church is-their not taking the Bible, in its plainest sense, as the only infallible and unchangeable rule of faith, and as of greater authority than all the clergy or the churches in the world put together, whether as having lived, living, or that may live hereafter. The English Catholics say they respect the office of their Bishops and clergy very highly for their work's sake, but they respect the Bible above all,* the Roman Catholics say they will leave the Bible in the hands of their clergy, who alone are to be believed as to the right interpretation of it. The English Catholic Clergy say we are fallible men as well as our lay brethren. We hold, it is true, the place of rulers in the Church of God, but we are not to trust to our own reason or learning, except as far as they agree with God's Word, and on that account we must give the Bible to every man that he may see that what we teach is the Word of God, and not our own inventions or the traditions of men.

But the Roman clergy say no; the people need not the Bible—we are the only ministers of Christ who have power to open and to shut the gates of Heaven, you are to believe us, and not trouble yourselves about what the Bible says.

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^{*} The anthority of the Church and the authority claimed by the Pope of Rome, are two very different things. The voice of the whole Church and that of one man cannot be synonymous. Christ did indeed give authority to His Church to be the guardian and interprete. of Scripture, and he did make the Apostles and Prophets, Himself being the chief Corner-stone, the foundation of His Church. But He nowhere in Scripture gave authority to Peter over his brother Apostles. Again, many will obey neither the Church of God nor the Pope of Rome; but they will obey Pope self alone. They despise all authority, forgetting that their own private judgment is quite as fallible as ruy other, and that "no Scripture is of private interpretation." The Bible sends us to the Church as a guide to our conscience, and the Church gives us the Bible that we may see her doctrines are contained therein, and not that we may "wrest the Scriptures to our own destruction, as the unlearned and unstable do." See Peter ch. iii. 16. See also Bishop Hopkins on the British Reformation.

The English Catholic clergy say this is a new doctrine. It was not so in the first ages of the Gospel. The clergy in those days were guided by the Word of God alone, and by the rules and ceremonies established by inspired apostles, and so we should be at all times and in all places. We should always put the Bible above the Church, and the Church next to the Bible; neither should we trust those clergy too much who seem to be so unwilling to let us see for ourselves what that holy book says on all these important matters.

But Romanists will say—Protestants have abused the Bible, most of them seldom read it, and when they do so it is very carelessly and very partially, and it leads them into sects and parties. You cannot expect the working classes to study as much as they ought to know the true

meaning of the Bible.

To this the English Catholics reply, that if the Bible is abused by many, and if it seems to lead them into sects, it is not the fault of the Bible, nor of the clergy, but the fault of the corrupt human heart, which is always inclined to make a bad use of the best gifts of God, and that the clergy themselves, without the Bible, are just as liable to make a bad use of their authority, and have actually done so in a most dangerous and pernicious manner, at the time when the people had no Bibles, and when the clergy themselves were full of ignorance, and thus became blindly superstitious.

Besides, the English and Reformed Catholics believe that those passages of Scripture which call upon us to study the Sacred Writings, apply to all, if the clergy and laity. The Saviour says in the Gospel of St. John, v. 39, "Search the Scriptures, for in them ye think ye have eternal life, and they are they which testify of me." St. Paul says to Timothy, "But continue thou in the things which thou hast learned and hast been assured of, knowing of whom thou hast learned them, and that from a child thou hast known the Holy Scriptures, which are able to make thee wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus." "All Scripture is given us by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for re-

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proof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished un-

to all good works."

Again, we are told "that the people of Berea searched the Scriptures daily to see whether what the Apostles told them were so or not." All these passages do not lead us to suppose that the people had not the Scriptures to study and to search, or that they were to leave them entirely into the Priest's hands. As everybody is at liberty to buy the laws of the country in which he lives, and to study them, yet without having, on that account, the right to break those laws or to rule that country, so every Christian is at liberty, and it is his duty to have the Word and will of God in his possession, and to study it carefully and with a humble and obedient mind, yet he is not, for all that, allowed to break the rules of that blessed book, or to take upon him any authority which belongs alone to God's ministers. We give the Bible because we are not afraid to have it as a witness against us.

But there are many errors among Protestants, Roman Catholics will say. It is true, we reply; but the Roman church berself is also fallen into so many new and strange doctrines that nobody will trust his soul into it who properly understands the Holy Scriptures. We do not mean to say that every one of her members is lost. God forbid. God, for Christ's sake, will fergive those who do His will as far as they know. But we mean to say that she holds so many erroneous doctrines, which she says must be believed as necessary to salvation, that her members are in the greatest danger possible of making total shipwreck concerning the faith; nay, but we believe that she, as a body, has actually greatly erred—that she has very little indeed of what can be truly called Catholic and Apostelic truth in her creeds and ceremonies, of which I proceed to

give some powerful proofs.

The first great and fundamental error which is to be found in the Roman Creed is on the doctrine of Justification. They do not believe that faith in Christ alone justifies the sinner. This error proceeds from the want of a proper knewledge of the Scriptures; for if the Bible were

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well read among them, thousands would most undoubtedly gladly embrace its gracious and free salvation, instead of depending upon "those commandments of men which render the Word of God of none effect."-Matt. xv. 2, 8. A decree of the Council of Trent says, that " if any one shall say that justifying faith is nothing else than confidence in the Divine mercy pardoning sins for Christ's sake, or that it is that confidence alone by which we are justified, let him be accursed." This is the root of all the other errors of Romanism. They do not believe that Christ alone is able or sufficient to save us-they do not trust his merits, sufferings, death, and intercussion alone, as we are so often exited to do in the Holy Bible, but all kinds of good works, they say, our own, together with as many as we can buy, or borrow, from saints, and the prayers of the Clergy, of the Virgin Mary, of departed saints, and of angels, who are prayed to so retimes more than God himself, all these besides suffering ico in a great imaginary fire called Purgatory, to inish in us what our good works, or the blood of Christ could not finish, are necessary to our salvation!

Now the Catholic clergy of England say that all this is new in the Christian Church, nay, but that such doctrines were never formally embraced by any part of Christendom before the Council of Trent, which Council only completed the mischief of the dark ages. We believe it to be the destruction of all Gospel doctrine, and to detract from God's glory and from Christ's merits and death, to have recourse to any other merits than his own, nay, but we believe ourselves so full of sin, and all our prayers, as well as those of all other saints, even including the blessed virgin, so imperfect, as not to be worth offering up to God except through the all-atoning sacrifice once offered for the sins of the whole world. We believe also that good works are necessary, but not meritorious; they are necessary to shew our gratitude to God for the unspeakable gift of his own dear Son; and "when we have done all that which is commanded us," we are tought by our blessed Lord to say " we are still unprofitable servants."-Luke xvII. 10. How then can any of our works be meritorious in the sight of God? or how can we depend upon those of others, since "all men have sinued and come short of the glory" of God, and thus all men have need of the same saving grace which is alone to be found by faith in Christ Jesus? Oh! would that the members of the Roman Church understood these sacred passages as they ought. St. Paul says in Rom. xi. 6, "If by grace, then is it no more of works; otherwise grace is no more grace; otherwise work is no more work;" and Gal. v. 4, "Christ is become of no effect unto you, whosoever of you are justified by the law; ye are fallen from grace." Again, Eph. ii. S. For by grace are ye saved, through faith; and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God: not of works lest any man should boast."

The next great and new error—new at least to the true Catholic Church, is the dectrine of the Mass. In the Mass they believe that they every time renew the sacrifice of the Cross. "I profess," says Pope Pius IV. "that in the Mass there is offered to God a true, proper and propitiatory sacrifice for the living and the dead; and that in the Sacrament there is truly, really, and substantially, the body and blood, together with the soul and Divinity of our Lord Jesus Christ; and that there is made a conversion of the whole substance of the bread into the body, and of the whole substance of the wine into the blood, which the Catholic Church calls transubstantiation."

To this the English Catholic replies, that no such doctrine ever entered the head or the heart of the first Christians. It is all a corruption of the original beautiful and simple institution of the Lord's Supper. Our Saviour merely took bread and wine, and blessed them, and gave them to his disciples, saying, "This is my body, do this in remembrance of me." He wished his followers never to forget Him, and ever to bear in mind what he had suffered for them, that they might feed their souls by faith, and in a spiritual manner, upon his meritorious sacrifice. But He never meant that the bread and the wine should become, naterially, his real flesh and blood; they were to be used only as means of union with Him by faith, and with his body the Cl. 10th militant here on earth, as well

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as with that which is triumphant above. St. Paul says, "Christ was offered once for all." How then can any man offer him again? He offered himself for us, and we can only present our prayers, and offer the sacrifice of ourselves, our bodies and souls, our alms and oblations, to Him, as our most reasonable service. This was the Apostles' doctrine, and it is also that of the true Catholic Church. Indeed no Church has a right to be called Catholic which in any way destroys the real meaning and sense of the word of God.* I ought also to have mentioned that this Roman view of the Sacrament leads the people to worship the bread and the wine, and to call it God, and thus produces idolatry! It also leads to an extraordinary reverence for the clergy, who are believed capable of converting by a few words bread and wine into real God! But indeed, beloved, the idea is so shocking that I cannot dwell upon it any longer. It would require many sermons to point out all the unscriptural dogmas into which this poor degenerate Church has fallen. One or two more I must allude to, though I fear the time will not permit me to be very explicit.

Let us consider for a few moments the honour which is paid by Romanists to the virgin, to angels, and saints. They pray to these invisible beings, and kneel before their images, as heathers do before their wooden gods, and call upon their assistance and intercession, as if they had the power of omnipresence, which belongs to God alone! God alone can see and hear all things at the same time, and has promised to hear our prayers for his Son's sake, but in no other way. Jesus says: "I am the way,

lday!

^{*} The Anthor's views on the Sacraments may be further explained as follows:—A Sacrament consists of two parts—"the outward and visible sign, and the inward and spiritual grace." (See Church Catechism.) So long as we live in the Church militant, the two parts must be inseparable to make a Sacrament. He is no trac communicant who does not partake of both the outward sign and the spiritual grace. As there is no faith without works, so there is no "inward grace" without "the outward sign." The outward sign would be no salutary Sacrament, if deprived of the inward grace. Thus, to say that the bread and wine in the Lord's Supper become, materially, the very bod, and blood of Christ, is the Romish, not the Catholic, doctrine; and to deas that the bread and wine are not spiritual tool to the believer, to "the greengthening and refreshing of our son by the body and blood of Christ, as our Lodies are by the bread and wine," is equally uncatholic and heretical. The spiritual presence of Christ in the Sacrament was never dismitted by the Church of England, but only the material change of the elements called "Trats distant ities."

the truth, and the life, no one cometh to the Father but by me."—John xiv. 6. But the Roman Church tries to approach God by many other ways. "There is one Mediator between God and man," says the Bible, but the Pope has invented a great many. He says that the virgin Mary is the Mother of God! and so can hear our prayers; but the true Catholic cannot believe God to have had, at any time, a beginning, therefore He cannot have had a mother! That part of Christ which was God was God from all eternity, and could not proceed of the virgin Mary. Mary was merely the Mother of Jesus Christ's humanity, but not of his Divinity. Mary, besides, acknowledges herself a sinner saved by Christ as well as others, so that she could have been no other than an honoured vessel chosen by God to bring his Son into the To worship her, to pray to her or any saint, is giving to the creature the honour due alone to the Crea-

tor, and is therefore pure idolatry!

The next monstrous error is that of the pretended infallibility of the Church. Romanists believe their Church cannot err-cannot be wrong, and that it was always the same and is unchangeable. But the English Catholic says, with the Scriptures, that all Churches may err, and have erred; and that even in the Apostles' times many Churches under lawful Bishops, had already fallen into error, as will be seen by reading attentively the first Chapters of the Revelation of St. John, and other parts of Scripture. There is no man upon earth, however high or holy his office may be, that is not liable to be deceived or mistaken. The same may be said of any institution. Since the Christian Church was first planted in Rome it has changed in a most extraordinary manner. It has adopted too much of worldly wisdom and human policy, and lost its character as a Scriptural body. Its Priests were rightly ordained, it is true; but as a father is always a father, though he may fall into very serious mistakes, so the clergy that are truly ordained are always clergymen, though they may greatly err upon some points. The Saviour himself gives us his opinion on this subject. " The says dang mane Trad they

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"The Scribes and Pharisees are scated in Moses' seat," says he, yet he says that they were fallen into sad and dangerous errors, even so much as to "make the commandment of God of none effect by their own traditions." Traditions are good only when they establish, not when they destroy, the truth.

But, it might be said, If the Romish clergy are truly

But, it might be said, if the Romish clergy are truly ordained, as you admit, why then not unite with them in order to correct their mistakes, and try to mend the evils

into which we believe they have fallen?

To this we reply, that we, as English Catholics, have our own lawful Bishops and Clergy, who never would fully acknowledge the Bishop or Pope of Rome to have any authority over this Church or nation. We were for a time under the Pope, but it was when we were forced to it, and then not from the beginning. Indeed, the Pope never had the power which he claims, before hundreds of years after the Christian era, when the Emperor Phocas made him Bishop over all the Bishops of the world, and even king of kings, and lord of lords. This authority, however, never was given him by Christ or his Apostles. and was rejected in England by the Clergy and Nation so soon as Providence gave them an opportunity. When the Apostles went about establishing churches, they appointed bishops and clergy over them; but each province or each nation had its own independent bishops, and the bishops from other provinces were never allowed to interfere with their brethren in their respective Dioceses. Neither did any of the Bishops assume authority over other bishops, other than the laws of the whole Church One was generally chosen to preside had defined. in their assemblies, as the Archbishop of Canterbury does in England, but no further. The English Church had her own Bishops from the Apostles' times, and the Bishop of Rome, even if he were now right on all points of the Christian doctrine, could not have any power over us, except through usurpation. We wish to have none but kind feelings towards him, personally, but we wish him to remain satisfied with his own province, as our own bishops do, and that he may do all he can to correct the great and

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dangerous errors into which he has fallen. Yes, brethren, it is our duty to pray earnestly unto God that the veil may soon be taken from our Roman Catholic friends' eyes, and that they may see that we are indeed their true and best friends.

It is not in Protestant countries you can see the evil genius of Popery. There is too much of the enlightening rays of Holy Scripture to allow them to come out under their true colours. You must go into those countries where no kind of reformation is allowed, where the Bible is not read, and where the Inquisition, or at least the spirit of it reigns in all its terror, and there you will see whether the people are led, as they ought to be, to that blood which cleanseth us from all our sins, and to that only Mediator between God and man, Jesus Christ the righteous: or rather, whether the praise and glory which alone belong to this good and great Saviour, is not given to Popes and Priests, to Angels and Saints, to the filthy rags of pretended good works, to relies, crosses,* images, indulgences, and an infinite number of ceremonies, forming such a heap of "wood, hav, and stubble," as to cover from view "the only name given under Heaven whereby man can be saved."

There is but one more error to which the time will permit me briefly to allude. I mean the Roman principle—that Christians may use force of arms and all kinds of carnal weapons to conquer the opinions and principles of others. Their belief is, that those who differ from them may even be put to death, if, by that means, the Roman Church can be increased and benefitted. This is so shocking a doctrine that it is a most difficult thing to believe that it can be for one moment entertained by any person of sound sense and reason; and indeed, I can-

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^{*} The Cross is called by our Church "the banner of Christ crucified." It was used in that sense alone by the primitive Church. To make it the special sign, or banner, of Popery, then, is giving an advantage to Rome to which she has no right. There is a wide difference between the right and wrong use of a thing. If we must be ashamed of "the banner of Christ" because some make a superstitions use of it, we must, by the same reasoning, be ashamed of every other decent thing which we have, if it have ever been abused. And what is there upon earth which is not abused, by both Protestants, and Romanists? The Bible, and the most holy Sacraments are dreadfally abused; are we, then, on that account, to reject them altogether?

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not but hope that few entertain it in this country, though many facts have lately come to my knowledge which have greatly astonished me. But surely one should think that there would be too much of the spirit of the Gospel abroad in these Provinces to permit such principles to grow very rife.

It is, however, my opinion, that thousands belong to the Roman Church who are quite ignorant of its unscriptural character, and who would soon shake off its trammels and its chains, if they only would listen to the Word of God, and receive it in its true, and plain, and unsophisticated sense. It is bad enough when a spirit of obstinacy and blindness takes hold of us in support of any sect or party. It is sad enough when Christians cannot follow the primitive model of *unity* and *love*, by making those great Gospel principles work together for the reformation of all the errors which may from time to time happen to exist in national churches, or their individual members, (for this is, beloved, the true Catholic spirit, a spirit of toleration, without partaking of other men's sins,) but when a spirit of intolerance takes place and is sanctioned by one that calls herself a Christian church, nay, but the only Christian church in the world, then it is that her own members ought to begin to see that there is something wrong at

Christ "came not to destroy men's lives, but to save." When his disciples, under an erroneous spirit, wanted to call down fire from above to consume his enemies, he promptly reproved them by these significant words—"ye know not what manner of spirit ye are of."—Luke ix. 55. The spirit of the Gospel is a spirit of truth and grace, and truth and grace, or peace, must "kiss each other," or they lose their effect and their object. I want to declare myself a Protestant, individuals have often told me; but you must not reveal it, for I am afraid of my Roman Catholic friends, who, I am sure, would kill me, if they knew it. Romanists will say, perhaps, that they have been long kept under disabilities by Protestants; but they may be sure that would not have been the case had they been as good subjects of the British Throne as they are of the

Pope of Rome. It is because we know them to be more attached to a Foreign Prince, or Bishop, than to their law ful one, that we are afraid of them. We know not the moment the Pope, through his agents, the Priests, wil call upon them to revolt and murder all the Protestant in their neighborhood, promising them eternal life for so doing,—and this is the cause why we are unwillingly obliged to look upon them with more suspicion than upor

any other body of Her Majesty's subjects.

I would now, Beloved, conclude, by addressing a few words of application to Protestants more particularly. I is now three hundred years since our forefathers fought and died for the great blessings of the Bible in its purity for the Church as it was in primitive times, for faith in Christ alone, for English instead of Latin prayers, and for the worship of the one True God without dividing it among a number of saints, angels, &c., whom the Bible plainly forbids us to worship. We have all these blessings We have the Catholic Church upon the primitive model We have the Divine office [our Prayer-book] so framed that our prayers alone will ever preach Christ and the way to Heaven, so long as they remain as they are, ever though our clergy should unhappily preach false doctrine Is it not, then, the duty of Protestants never to forget the necessity of explaining these things plainly and distinctly to their children, shewing them the necessity of ever pro testing against such dangerous abuses, and of firmly maintaining the faith as it was once delivered to the saints? Oh! my beloved, would that we all had the spi rit of the Gospel, which was, and must be, in all true Christians; and then we would feel on these matters a we ought to feel. Let us only feel alive to our own sal vation-let us only be anxious to obtain the forgivenes of our many sins-let us only seek that forgiveness in the Sacrifice of the Cross till we find it, and then we wil know the value of Christ alone as our only Saviour, and will do all in our power to impart the same biassings t others, to our children, our neighbours, and to the worl at large.

St. Paul's, Jan'y, 1851.

