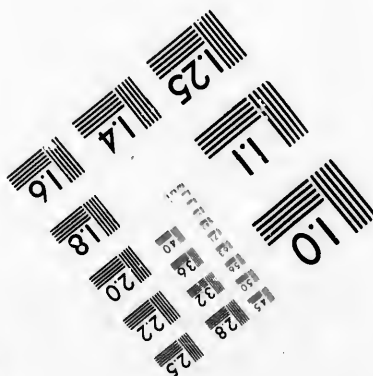
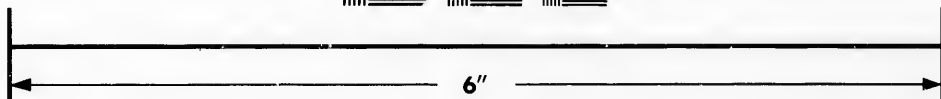
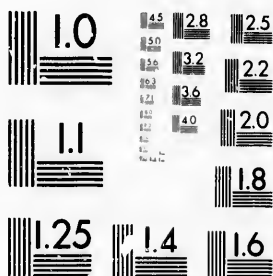


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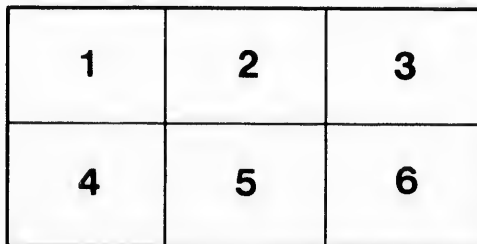
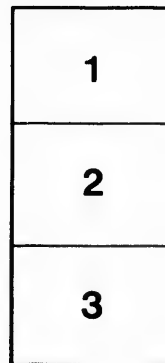
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J. P. S.

Priestly Confession & Absolution.

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A SERMON

*Preached in Fort Massey Presbyterian Church, Halifax, N. S., on
Sabbath Evening, 25th Nov., 1883,*

BY THE

REV. ROBERT FERRIER BURNS, D. D.

TOGETHER WITH

THE "C" CORRESPONDENCE.

(Published by request.)

HALIFAX, N. S.:

PRINTED BY WILLIAM MACNAB, 12 PRINCE STREET.

1884.



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PREFACE.

On the 10th November last, a "Mission" was inaugurated in several of the Episcopalian Churches of Halifax, which lasted for ten days, and to which, by bills, circulars, tracts and advertisements, all were urgently invited. On Wednesday evening, the 14th November, at the Cathedral Church of St. Luke's, the chief of the Missioners came out with views on the subject of Confession and Absolution, which it was the immediate object of the accompanying discourse to combat.

Referring to the subject, the *Chronicle* of Monday, the 26th November, says:—

"In a number of the city churches, yesterday, considerable attention was paid by the occupants of the pulpits to the preachings of those conducting the Church of England Mission, which closed here this week. In several, the discourses were chiefly devoted to the subject, and those who had announced such as their intention, were listened to by large congregations. In St. Paul's Church in the morning, the rector, Rev. Dr. Hill, spoke at considerable length, expressing the same opinions in opposition to the character of the Mission he has previously been understood to entertain, and arguing more fully in support of the stand he has taken. In the evening, Rev. Mr. Sampson, of Trinity, went as fully into the subject, his views agreeing in the main with those pronounced by the Rector of St. Paul's. His Lordship the Bishop, in his sermon in Bishop's Chapel, referred to the Mission and the good he expected would be the outcome, but no allusion was made to the present controversy. At Fort Massey Presbyterian, Brunswick St. Methodist, Poplar Grove Presbyterian and the Universalist churches, their respective pastors all spoke of the Mission, Rev. Dr. Burns paying particular attention to it. At Chalmers' church, Rev. Prof. Forrest preached a sermon containing expressions of opinion somewhat similar to those pronounced by Rev. Dr. Burns and Rev. Mr. Simpson. It may serve to indicate the interest taken in the theological questions which are being discussed in the community, that at the delivery of Dr. Burns' discourse, Fort Massey Presbyterian church was packed to the doors. The body of the church, the gallery, the aisles, the vestibule, the stairs being crammed with a dense mass of people till at length the doors had to be closed and many had to go away without gaining admission."

The sermon was written in the ordinary course of pulpit preparation, and not with any view to publication. It is now published by special request.

The "C" correspondence grew out of the report given of this sermon.

The preacher would not have noticed an anonymous correspondent, but for the fact that his letters appeared simultaneously in the two morning and evening journals of the city, and were generally considered to have emanated from the highest Roman Catholic ecclesiastical authority in the Maritime Provinces. The first Reply was in the form of an appendix to a lecture on Apostolic Succession, delivered in Fort Massey church on Monday evening, December 3. The second Reply was given as a distinct Lecture on Friday evening, 21st December. These, together with the letter, No. 3, of December 29, which closed the correspondence, appeared contemporaneously also in the same papers.

Several other letters appeared anonymously,—six from a single pen,—but they made no points of any consequence which are not fully met in the Sermon and in the Replies to "C."

SERMON.

MATTHEW IX. 3.—“This man blasphemeth.”

THIS was spoken by the Scribes with reference to the action of Jesus, in the case of the palsied man who was let down through the roof on a mattress and laid at his feet. The cures of the Great Physician were not skin deep. He probed his patients with keen lancet. He went to the root of the matter. Knowing the close connexion between sickness and sin, aware perhaps, too, that this sufferer's trouble was the result of sinful indulgence in some form,—Christ does for him exceedingly abundantly, above what he had asked or thought—He bestows the moral before the physical cure. “He said to the sick of the palsy, son, be of good cheer, thy sins be forgiven thee.” The Scribes, the recognized writers and expounders of the Levitical Law, who ranked among the sharpest critics of Christ, now appear for the first time, finding fault with him for presuming to grant absolution to this poor man. With all their errors, they were orthodox enough to know that the pardoning power was Divine, and that it was blasphemy for any mere man to assume it. Jesus stood no higher in their esteem. From their standpoint, therefore, the judgment pronounced by them, in my text, was natural and necessary. “They said within themselves”—whispering it to one another in an undertone—“*This man blasphemeth.*” The Evangelist, Mark, in his version of the scene, goes more into detail, giving us the substance of their whisperings. “There were certain of the Scribes, sitting there and reasoning in their hearts—‘Why doth this man thus speak blasphemies? Who can forgive sins but God only?’” Jesus endorses the correctness of their inference. He thoroughly coincides with the view that none can forgive sins but God only,—and proceeds to perform the cure on the body, to show that he had a right to heal the malady of the soul.

The miracle so readily wrought in his own name, and without any reference to a higher power, was designed to prove that though found in fashion as a man, he thought it “no robbery,” no usurpation of what did not rightfully belong to him, to be equal with God.

It was the habit of Christ to appeal to His miracles in support of the Divinity of His Person and Mission. Thus in that remarkable scene in John x., when His enemies took up stones to stone Him

for asserting His true and proper Deity in these terms,—“I and my Father are one,”—terms so plain and positive as not to admit of any other construction,—they came out with this vindication of their course, “For a good work we stone thee not, but for blasphemy and because, that thou, being a man, makest thyself God.”

To prove that He was right, “though a man, in making himself God,” Jesus replies by appealing to His miracles as mirroring the glory, and needing, in order to their performance, the great power of God, “If I do not the works of my Father, believe me not, but if I do, though ye believe not me, believe the *Works*,” &c.

Hence His action in the present case. Christ deemed the spiritual cure which is wrought in the forgiveness of this man’s sins far greater than the healing of his body. But, in great condescension to their weakness and perversity, he would establish his right to do the former by doing the latter. He puts it to them, “whether is easier to say, thy sins be forgiven thee; or to say, arise and walk—but that ye may know that the Son of man hath power on earth to forgive sins—(then saith He to the sick of the palsy,) Arise, take up thy bed and go unto thine house.”

By the immediate working of so great a wonder, through the out-putting of His own inherent agency, does He prove His supreme Divinity, and, consequently, that He and He only had the right on earth to exercise the prerogative of Jehovah, who hath said: “I, *even I am He that bloteth out thy transgressions for mine own sake*.” And again, “*Beside me, there is none else*,”—“I, even I, am Jehovah, and beside me there is no Saviour” (Is. 43, 25; v. 11). As if anticipating that frail and fallible mortals would, in their ignorance and presumption, put in such a claim, the great God reserves this power exclusively to himself, with an “I, even I,” twice repeated. Feeling the weight of our sins, and that vain is the help of man to rid us of the crushing and corrupting load, for “who can understand his errors?” and as for our heart, “who can know it?” let us go direct to that Throne of Grace where alone we can get mercy to pardon, as well as grace to help, exclaiming with deep contrition and adoring gratitude, “There is *forgiveness with Thee* that thou mayest be feared.”—“Who is a God like unto Thee, *that pardoneth iniquity*,” “Who can forgive sins but *God only*?” Realizing the impotence and impiety of any mere creature, however exalted, presuming to absolve, backed, as we are, by the practical endorsement of Christ, in the passage before us, it cannot be uncharitable to say of anyone besides himself putting forth such a claim, “*This man blasphemeth*.”

It becomes my duty now to show that this claim has been advanced in the midst of us, during the past few days, and the grounds on which it has been made to rest, and then to expose the blasphemy of the claim and the baselessness of the pretensions advanced in its favour. That this claim has been advanced in the midst of us, can be proved by the oral testimony of many witnesses, as well as by the various

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printed reports. The strict accuracy of these, in the main, is attested by the fact that exception is taken, by the Party principally concerned, only to one statement, with reference to the impropriety of going "straight to Christ." The fact that no objection has been brought against the correctness of any other portions of the reports, warrants us in concluding that they actually represent what was spoken. Were there the least flaw in the rest, it would have been detected and exposed, when the speaker was correcting the other point at any rate. We are at liberty, therefore, to conclude that these and such like words were used as reported :

"Christians are divided into two great branches—(1) the Holy Catholic Church, comprizing the Churches of England and Rome; (2) the Protestant sects, from Quakers to Presbyterians—the latter holding the doctrine that man must worship God as a Spirit; the former holding that all approaches to God must be by means of the 'keys,' *i. e.*, those appointed in Christ to hold the keys of the Kingdom of Heaven. Christ became man, and so raised material things to a higher level, and made them the means of bringing grace to the soul. Thus, by the Bread and Wine of the Sacrament, we receive the Body and Blood of the Lord. By the water of baptism we are cleansed from original sin, and by the lips of the properly ordained priest we obtain pardon and absolution."

"If the Church, his mother, tells him in his ordination that he has power to forgive sins, and gives him authority to do so, she cannot refuse to ratify this absolution when it is given, without acting dishonestly. For his part, he would not remain within its pale one hour, and would spurn it from him, but he knew it was the teaching of the Church by its canons, and he came to declare the whole counsel of God."

"Christ gave the Keys of the Kingdom of heaven to his Disciples. Through those 'keys' alone was there access to God."

"Men must use the things provided. You can be forgiven by the power of the keys on earth. I believe that God has given me the right to absolve. I would say to every sinner that I have power to forgive sins, and if he earnestly seeks it, I will absolve him. It makes me burn with indignation when I think that some of the ministers of the Church of England ignore the confession. God has commanded me to absolve the sins of seekers. I have authority to forgive sins by the commission of my church, and by the authority of Him whose I am."

I think I hear some of you by this time exclaiming, and with a reason the scribes had not, "this man blasphemeth." None of the ecclesiastical dignitaries present said aught against it, though a good many earnest people came away with sorrowful hearts, feeling "we have heard strange things to-day."

We felt sorry, too, for, as belonging to a sister Protestant church, we have "part and lot in this matter," but we were not surprised. It is only what we expected, and what we foreshadowed last Sabbath week, though the revelation came sooner than we anticipated. These views are not new. They form part of the leaven of the Pharisees, and the "mystery of iniquity which did already work," even in primitive times, which have all along seduced not a few from the simplicity that is in Christ—which received a check and quietus at the glorious Reformation, but which in these last days have been reproduced in the well-known "Tracts for the Times," which gave its name to the Tractarian movement. Dr. Pusey, its best known exponent, from

whom Cardinals Manning and Newman received their Romeward impulse, uses language not unlike that with which, of late, our ears have become familiar. In his sermon on the entire Absolution of the Penitent, we find such sayings as these: "Consciences are burdened, —There is a provision on the part of God, in his church, to relieve them;" "Our Lord hath left others with his authority to convey to sinners, in His name, the forgiveness of their sins;" "The possession of the Key opens at once to us what, without it, would have been hidden from us." "Grievous sins after baptism, are remitted by Absolution. By Absolution pardon is given, life is renewed." "Confession is of excellent use—the channel of God's grace to the soul; it quenches the fires of Hell."—Pref. III, p. p. 18, 16, 25-6, 39.

In the Dix Catechism, too, which is said to be used in certain Episcopal Sabbath-schools of our city, we find the following:—

"By whom is God pleased to forgive sins in the Church?" Ans. "By the Priests of the Church."

"When did God give the Christian Priesthood authority to forgive sins in His Name?" Ans. "When Jesus breathed on His Disciples and said: 'Receive ye the Holy Ghost. Whosoever sins ye remit they are remitted unto them, and whosoever sins ye retain, they are retained.'"

"Which is the greater presumption, to claim to absolve sinners in God's name, or to refuse to do so?" Ans. "To refuse: for that would be to declare some of Christ's own words unnecessary and unmeaning."

"What is absolution?" Ans. A means whereby the sins we commit after baptism are put away."—(P. p. 33 and 35.)

Then at page 54:

"By whom must absolution be administered?" Ans. By a Bishop or Priest."

All this sounds not unlike what we read in the leading standards of the Church of Rome. Thus, for example, in the catechism of the Council of Trent, (Page 271) we read of "God in His admirable wisdom, giving to the Church the Keys of the Kingdom of Heaven, and of our sins being forgiven (if you come to the tribunal of penance) by the Minister of religion, through the power of the keys." The Decree of the Council of Trent, (Session XIV) which, together with the creed of Pius IV., forms Rome's principal confession of Faith, runs thus:—"Whosoever shall deny that Sacramental Confession was instituted by Divine command, or that it is necessary to salvation, or shall affirm that the practice of secretly confessing to the Priest alone, as it has been ever observed from the beginning by the Catholic Church, and is still observed, is foreign to the institution and command of Christ, and is a human invention, *let him be accursed.*"

Leaving out the Anathema at the close, (the common ending of all the Tridentine Decrees) and you find very little difference between the Roman and the Anglo-Catholic utterances. These two agree in

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one. Be it remembered too, that the form of Romish Absolution is not "May God absolve thee!" or "May Christ absolve thee!" but "*I absolve thee.*" The penitent, kneeling, makes confession in detail, being subjected to diverse questionings, terminating with this—"For these and all other my sins, which I cannot at the present call to my remembrance, I am heartily sorry, purpose amendment for the future, and most humbly ask pardon of God, and penance and absolution of you, my ghostly Father." Then the Priest replies: "*I absolve thee* in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost." Wherein is this so-called Priest of a professedly Protestant Episcopal Church different, when he says, in words whose correctness he has virtually acknowledged: "I believe that God has given me the right to absolve. I would say to every sinner that I have power to forgive sins, and if he earnestly seeks it, I will absolve him. You can be forgiven by the power of the keys on earth." Have we any right to "beat him openly," "who is a Roman," and taunt him with blasphemy, and not also say of this Anglo-Catholic, who has been preaching among us another Gospel than that ye have received, "This man blasphemeth."

Let us now notice the passages from Scripture which are commonly adduced in support of this assumption.

1. As so much has been made by our Oxford disciple and his Trent masters of the power of the Keys, we may take, first, the passage where the 'Keys' are spoken of. You will find it in Mat. XVI, 19: "I will give unto thee the keys of the Kingdom of Heaven." To whom were these words addressed by our Saviour? To Peter. There is no reference to any other—not a hint that the power thus vested in him was to reach any further. Peter had just given a striking testimony in his Master's favour; that Master tells him that on the rock of that testimony, which is equivalent to Himself—"the tried stone, the precious cornerstone, the sure foundation,"—He would build His Church the "House of God, which is the Church of the living God against which the gates of hell would never prevail." In recognition of his faithful witness-bearing, there was conferred on him the peculiar honour of throwing open this House to the world in its two great divisions. As Columbus was privileged to throw open a new world, and appeared on the stage of civil history, metaphorically, with the keys of a continent hanging from his belt, so, in sacred history, is Peter presented with the keys of a grander kingdom in his hands. He used one key on Pentecost in opening the door of the spiritual house for the admission of his own Jewish fellow-countrymen, and another key afterwards in the house of Cornelius to open "the door of faith unto the Gentiles," removing the locks debarring their entrance which Jewish rites and ceremonies had fastened. What "a power of the keys" when in a moment three thousand hearts were simultaneously opened, and thereafter 5,000, besides women and children, pressed into the kingdom; and afterwards, too, when among

his own people, at the first Jerusalem Synod, Peter rose up and said unto them (Acts 15/7): "Men and brethren, ye know how that a good while ago, God made choice among us, that the Gentiles, by my mouth should hear the word of the Gospel and believe." What an utter wresting of this Scripture, hearing on the Keys is the recent teaching which oracularly declares, "Through those Keys alone (as held by a so-called 'Priest') was there access to God. Suppose the rector of St. Luke's would hand the keys of the church to several young men and tell them they alone should admit persons into the church, and then some person, ignoring those who held the keys, would go to the rector and ask to be admitted, he would not allow such person to enter, but would refer him to the holders of the keys, *by whom alone* entry should be obtained." This would seem (if language has any meaning) to shut us all out who go not to these so-called Priests. It sounds very different from the words of the great High Priest of our profession, Jesus Christ, when he says: "I am the Door, by me if any man enter in he shall be saved."—"I am the way; no man cometh unto the Father but by me." It sounds very like the words in the great authoritative Catechism of Trent (pt. 2, c. 5—¶157): "No one is admitted into Heaven, unless the doors be opened by the Priests, to whose care God hath committed the keys."

There is not the shadow of a proof that this power of the Keys which belonged to Peter, and which was manifestly not transferable or transmissible, had anything whatever to do with the forgiveness of sins. As a matter of fact we never read of his (Peter's) ever having claimed or exercised such a power. On the contrary, when on a memorable occasion he was urged to do so, he positively declined. When Simon Magus, the sorcerer, committed the great sin which has imprinted an indelible stigma on his name, a sin committed after his being baptized on profession of his faith, he, dreading the consequence of his sin, earnestly besought Peter to pray for him. "Pray ye to the Lord for me," is his earnest cry. Peter will not act as father confessor or absolver—not even as intercessor. He throws the responsibility on himself. Every man must bear his own burden; even he who is counted by his admirers chief of the apostles, first and foremost of priests, will assume no such responsibility. Realizing to the full "who can forgive sins but God only"—He repudiates the very idea—he cannot confess or absolve him—the very thought was blasphemy. Yet not shutting the door of Hope, even in the face of such an one, Peter says "Pray God, if perhaps the thought of thy heart may be forgiven thee." If Peter could and would not act the part of confessor, in a case where his interposition might have been of service to the infant cause, who else can have the right? The very thought of such foolishness is sin, and may fittingly lead us to say of anyone, however prominent in the church, harbouring such a thought and giving practical expression to it "this man blasphemeth."

2. In Mat. 16, 19, Jesus goes on to say "Whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth, shall be bound in Heaven, and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth, shall be loosed in Heaven." This is repeated in the 18th verse of the 18th chapter:—"Verily I say unto you, whatsoever ye shall bind on earth, shall be bound in Heaven, and whatsoever ye shall loose on earth, shall be loosed in Heaven."

On these two passages we would remark:—

First, that the duty or privilege of binding or loosing [terms we shall afterwards explain], is not spoken of as belonging to ministers, misnamed priests, in particular. The first passage confines it exclusively to Peter, who is there specially addressed. That, at any rate can have no force now; and if it did refer to the forgiving of sins. (which we are prepared to show it did not) it is somewhat strange that we never read of Peter using this power, though he did other wonderful things, but, on the contrary, refusing when asked.

The second passage extends the privilege further. It says, "*whatsoever YE*,"—doubtless the "Disciples" spoken of in the 1st verse which does not necessarily limit it to the twelve Apostles. We read in one place of seventy "disciples" being sent forth. In another of Christ being seen after his resurrection, of five hundred "disciples" appearing. Verse 17, the one immediately preceding that we are considering, speaks of "*the Church*" as the ultimate point of appeal in the settlement of a case of discipline. "Tell it unto *the Church*." And what is the Church? The Disciples of verse 1, the "little ones that believe in me" of verse 6, "The whole body of the faithful." *Ecclesia*, "The collective company of those called out from the world and separated unto the Gospel of God." These constitute the "Ye" addressed in the 18th verse,—The learners, the "little ones" in age and attainment, "Babes in Christ" as well as the Apostles. Notice secondly, that in both passages it is not "whosoever" that is used, as if it referred to persons, but "*whatsoever*," showing that it refers to *things*. *Whatsoever* ye shall bind, *whatsoever* ye shall loose. What things? Rites, Ceremonies, Institutions to be observed as authoritative in the Church. The truth taught them is, that such of the Jewish usages as they saw fit to retain, were to be fostered, while those rejected by them were to be forbidden. At the first Christian Synod whose minutes you will find recorded in the 15th chapter of Acts, this power was exercised by the Apostles and others, and embodied in a deliverance prohibiting circumcision and the eating of things offered unto idols, and things strangled, and blood. In other portions of the Acts, and also the Epistles, we find allusions to this power.

3. But supposing, by a stretch of charity and criticism, we allow persons also to be included under the "whatsoever," it gives not the slightest encouragement, but the reverse, to the practice we are combatting. This brings us to the real meaning of "binding" and "loosing," according to the Hebrew Ritual, and as commonly understood by the Jews in the time of our Saviour. These terms had an

allusion to the Levitical usage with respect to leprosy. It is given in detail in Leviticus XIII. Authority was vested in the Priests to examine those suspected of having this dreaded distemper. Signs are mentioned, on the discovery of which, in any one, the examining Priest was to *pronounce him unclean*. He did not make him unclean, but manifest that he was so. The victim was then "shut up" "bound," or "retained" in confinement within certain prescribed limits, that he might not come in contact with the congregation of Israel. If, after an interval elapsing, there seemed ground for thinking that the signs of the disease had passed away, he had again to go and show himself to the Priest, who, if he found the generally understood marks of restored health, *pronounced him clean*.

Half a dozen times in the first few verses of the chapter named (Lev. XIII) we find these expressions used. In the one case the Priest did not create the uncleanness; it was in his system before the leper came to be examined. He simply announced what was previously there. Nor, in the other case, was he the author of the restored health, but simply its announcer. But, in the Septuagint or Greek version of the Old Testament, which was commonly in use during Christ's life on earth, and frequently quoted by him, what in the original Hebrew is "*pronounce unclean*," is rendered by the Greek verb (meanci) literally, the Priest shall *defile* or *unclean* him, as if he really did it instead of declared what was in him before he came. So, when he comes back recovered, and he who was "bound" is ready to be "loosed," the LXX version translates what in the original is "pronounce clean" by *Katharisei*, he, that is, the Priest, shall *clean him*. In both instances the Priest is said to do what he merely *declared*. He could neither impart the leprosy nor remove it. In applying all this to the spiritual leprosy—its curse and cure—Christ used the language commonly employed, knowing, as he did full well, the meaning that was ordinarily attached to it. Were this all that was meant by the Confession and Absolution advocated of late amongst us, no one could object to it. It is what every minister or private christian seeking to be faithful to precious, never-dying souls would do. But an absolving power that is merely Declaratory, in the sense indicated, both Roman and Anglo-Catholic would indignantly reject. It is a *judicial absolution* that is contended for, else, distinctively, it is nothing at all. The Council of Trent says: "Our sins are forgiven us by the absolution of the Priest. The voice of the Priest, who is legitimately constituted a minister for the remission of sins is to be heard as that of Christ himself, who said to the lame man, 'Son, be of good cheer, thy sins are forgiven thee.'" Unlike the authority given to the Priest, to declare the leper cleansed from his leprosy, the power with which the Priests of the New Law are invested is not *simply to declare* that sins are forgiven, but as the ministers of God, really to absolve from sin. (Conc. Trid. Less. XIV; Canon 9). I can put no other construction than this on the words

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repeatedly used by the chief of the missioners that have recently visited us. A frail, fallible man assumes the functions of the All Wise and All Holy! Though he may be foolish and ignorant, and chargeable with sin—the confessor more than the confessed—yet is this, the greatest conceivable power, vested in him. The Council of Trent, with whose general tone in this matter our visitors so closely coincide, goes the length of saying, "Whoever shall affirm that Priests living in mortal sin have not the power of binding and loosing, let him be accursed." (Conc. Trid., Sess. xiv; Can. 9). They may not accept the entire Romish platform, but they repudiate the name of Protestant. Where, if not on the former, are we to place one who declares, unchallenged, "Those who belong to the Protestant communion, say, I will confess to God and receive forgiveness, forgetting that Christ gave his Apostles and their successors, the keys of the Kingdom of Heaven—through this means must Heaven be reached." Must we not say here, as well as in the other instance, "This man blasphemeth."

3. The next passage quoted in support of this claim is in John xx; 22-3: "Receive ye the Holy Ghost. Whosoever sins ye remit, they are remitted unto them, and whosoever sins ye retain, they are retained." This is so like the passage already considered with reference to the "Keys," and "binding," and "loosing," that we may not dwell on it at length. Supposing this was addressed to the twelve Apostles, it would never prove that this power of remitting or pardoning sins and the reverse, belonged exclusively to them, or, if so, was transmitted by them to posterity.

Where is it different save in the anathema appended from Canon IX., of the great R. C. Council:—"If any one saith that the Sacramental Absolution of the Priest is not a judicial act, but a bare ministry of pronouncing and declaring sins to be forgiven to him who confesses, let him be accursed."

They had other extraordinary powers, such as speaking with tongues, healing diseases, raising the dead and the like, which were not handed down. What reason have we to believe that this power in particular was singled out for transmission, especially when nothing is said about it, and there is not a tittle of evidence that it ever was exercised in Apostolic times.

Moreover, these words touching "remitting" and "retaining" are imbedded in a passage whose surroundings go convincingly to show that they were not addressed any more than the text on "binding" and "loosing" to the Apostles exclusively. The Laity are associated with the Clergy in the privilege here conferred, who were present on the solemn occasion, in question. On whom did the Divine afflatus fall? To whom was this power to "remit" and "retain" given? It requires no very close examination of the passage to find out that this breathing and blessing of her Divine Lord, was for the *whole church*, and not for the Apostles only.

Glance at the chapter (John xx), and at verse 9 you will find the faithful women, "last at the cross and first at the sepulchre," bringing the glad tidings of the Resurrection unto the eleven, and to "*all the rest.*" On the afternoon of the same first christian Sabbath, two Disciples wend their way to Emmaus, of whom one, at all events, Cleopas, mentioned in verse 18, was not an *apostle*. When their loving Lord put a live coal in their hearts, we are told in verse 33 that "they rose up the same hour, their hearts burning within them, and returned to Jerusalem and found the *eleven gathered together* and *THEM that were with them*, saying, the Lord is risen indeed." Into this mixed assembly of his followers Jesus comes. He stands in the midst, not of the eleven only; but of them that were with them—"all the rest of the 9th verse, corresponding, perchance with the 120 of Acts 1, 15. and, breathing on them, said:—"Receive ye the Holy Ghost. Whosoever sins ye remit, they are," &c. "The conclusion from this," says the Rev. Hobart Seymour, (himself an eminent clergyman in the Church of England), "is incontestable, namely, that those words were addressed, not exclusively to the twelve Apostles, as representing the Priesthood of the Church, or, as giving to them any peculiar or exclusive power over their fellow sinners of the Laity, but to all other Disciples or Believers then present, thus conferring upon all, Apostles and Disciples alike, or Clergy and Laity alike, the very same power or privilege, whatever it may be, granting it to all alike." And what is this power? Not, as we have already seen in considering the former passage, a *judicial* but purely a *declaratory* power, the power of declaring or pronouncing God's free forgiveness to every penitent and believing sinner. Of this privilege no class has a monopoly; it is part of "the common salvation." It is the goodly heritage of the brotherhood of the faithful. "That repentance and the remission of sins may be proclaimed among all nations, through His name," it is His will that every one that heareth say "come." "This honor have all His saints." But when any mere man or class of men, put forth the claim not to announce the terms of forgiveness, but actually themselves to forgive—I can only say sadly of each such claimant, "this man blasphemeth."

4. James v. 16: "Confess your faults one to another," is a passage much insisted on, Why? we have been always unable to understand, as it has no bearing whatever on the subject. What is here enjoined? The duty, simply, of one christian brother who may have intentionally or unintentionally wronged another christian brother, frankly acknowledging the same, and making reparation if need be. It is put in the same category with the "praying with and for one another" of the clause following. It involves mutual exhortation with respect to our common sins and shortcomings, trials and infirmities, and helping one another on in the Divine life,—exhorting one another *daily*. If it referred to confession at all in the sense we are considering, it would prove too much, for it would show it to be as much the

duty of the Priest to confess to the people, as of the people to confess to the Priest.

If on such an utterly unsubstantial foundation any one would try to rear the framework of "The Confessional," it is no breach of charity, but speaking the words of truth and soberness, to say kindly but firmly, "This man blasphemeth."

It is no business of mine at present either to defend or to assail the formularies of the Church of England, but it is only fitting I should notice the unfair effort of those now attempting to undermine her, to hide behind her bulwarks. I cannot but admit that the second part of the formula for the "Visitation of the Sick" is unfortunately worded, where the Priest (an improper name for a Minister) is required to say "By His (Christ's) authority committed to me, *I absolve thee* from all thy sins, in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost." It would have been well if the purging process of the Reformers had been applied to this as to other remnants of Romanism in the Prayer Book. It would be very desirable yet to have it expunged, or at least a short explanatory note appended, like what we have attached to the section of our Confession, which is thought by some to countenance persecuting principles. But the first part of the service for the sick can be explained satisfactorily on the principle enunciated when expounding the passage concerning "binding" and "loosing." The LXX as quoted by Christ, making "cleansed" and the opposite what literally means simply *pronouncing* clean or unclean. Indeed the very idea of a declaratory as distinguished from a judicial absolution, is directly expressed; "Power to *declare* (the article runs) and *pronounce* to his people, being penitent, the absolution and remission of their sins." That is a power, not to forgive absolutely, but only to "declare and pronounce" that "God pardons and absolves all them that truly repent and unfeignedly believe in his holy Gospel."

This is very different from the language used by our Missioner when he says: "you can be forgiven by the power of the keys on earth. I would say to every sinner that I have power to forgive sins. The only divinely instituted means by which a man may be saved and receive absolution, is by the Priesthood; they have the key of heaven."

Would that all in the Church of England, sympathising with the missioners, gave the more earnest heed to the plain spoken and truly Evangelical sentiments of their own "Homily on Repentance," and especially that pertinent clause, which, speaking of James v. 16, "Confess your faults one to another," says: "Whereas thy ADVERSARIES go about to wrest this place, for to maintain *their auricular CONFESSION*, they are greatly *deceiving themselves* and do *shamefully* deceive others, for if this text ought to be understood of auricular confession, then the *Priests are as much bound to confess themselves unto the Lay People, as the Lay People are bound to confess themselves*

unto them. And if to *pray is to absolve*, then the Laity, by this place, hath as great *authority to absolve the Priests*, as *the Priests have to absolve the Laity*." Let them hear also their own good Bishop Hall, who says: "This bird was hatched in the Council of Lateran, 1215, and fully plumed in the Council of Trent," also the learned Bishop Blomfield, who, in his charge of 1842, speaks of auricular confession, "A practice *utterly unknown* to the Primitive Church, one of the most fearful abuses of that of Rome, and the source of unspeakable abominations."

The positive arguments against the Confession and Absolution that have been preached and practised in our neighbourhood would require a lecture in themselves. We have touched on some of them in what we have already gone over. Suffer us to tax your patience a little longer by submitting a few additional considerations in a condensed form:

i. That Confession should be made to God only, accords with the dictates of *Reason*.

When chargeable with a fault against a Neighbour, common sense and right feeling suggest the frank acknowledgment of it to *him* and not to somebody else, who has nothing to do with it. So when I sin against God, I should confess unto *God*. What is Sin? Sin is a transgression of the Law. Whose Law? God's. Of what advantage then to confess to a man what he has had nothing to do with, and can do nothing to remedy or remove. Sin in its every form is a infinite evil committed against a sin-hating and punishing God. Why then confess it to one of like passions with myself and in the same condemnation? It augurs deplorable ignorance of self and sin and the High and Holy one with whom we have to do, to suppose that He would vest His loftiest prerogative in a poor, erring mortal. What advantage it me for such an one to say over me "I absolve thee," if I have not been absolved before hand by the Holy, Holy, Holy One, who has set mine iniquities before Him—my secret sins in the light of His Countenance. Before coming, either God has granted me Absolution or He has not. If He has, then what is the need of my coming to a man to get what I have already gotten from God. If He has not, then of what use can human Absolution be to me?

ii. Recall the "*I, even I's*," of Jehovah, how He claims the blotting out of sin, the forgiving iniquity, transgression and sin, as his own peculiar right, with which He will allow none to tamper. This is introduced in passages too numerous for citation.

iii. Think of the *Prayers of all Saints*, as recorded in the Word. Can you mention a single confession proper addressed to a man?

"Joshua said unto Achan: my son, give, I pray thee, glory to the Lord God of Israel, and *make confession unto Him*."—(Joshua vii, 19). "And Hezekiah spake comfortably unto all the Levites that taught the good knowledge of the Lord: and they did eat throughout

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the feast seven days, offering peace offerings and *making confessions to the Lord God* of their fathers."—2nd Chron., xxx-22. "And Ezra, the priest, stood up and said unto them, ye have transgressed. Now, therefore, *make confession unto the Lord God of your fathers*, and do his pleasure."—Ezra x-10, 11. Remember David when he says, "I acknowledged my sin unto thee, and mine iniquity have I not hid. I said I will *confess my transgressions unto the Lord*; and *thou forgavest* the iniquity of my sin."—Psalm xxxii 5. Daniel, too: "I prayed unto the Lord, my God, and *made my confession*, and said, O Lord, the great and dreadful God, keeping the covenant and mercy to them that keep His commandments."—Dan. ix.-4. In Dan. ix you have one of the finest illustrations of true confession.

iv. Turn to the *New Testament*. Did a syllable ever drop from the lips of Christ in support of priestly absolution? Remember the scene in connexion with which our text was spoken. Is it not directly in the face of such a claim? Was not His whole life and ministry a protest against it? He is the Way, the Door, the Ladder: the one foundation laid in Zion—the single fountain opened up for sin and uncleanness. Nor will He and His Father, who are one, agree to give their glory to another. His invitations are, "return unto the Lord, for He will have mercy upon you, and to our God, for *He will abundantly pardon*." He says, not "come unto a Priest to confess and absolve you, and he will rid you of your load," but "Come unto me all ye that labor and are heavily laden, and I will give you rest." Did the *holy Apostles* ever countenance such a practice? We have already seen how Peter (counted by those who contend for a auricular confession, the foremost of them all) acted towards Simon Magus. Sorely put to, tho' this poor sinner was, Peter could not, and would not, absolve him, but tells him to make prompt and penitent *confession to God*.

His "beloved brother Paul" says nothing of such Confession. He goes "straight to Christ," and pities the poor souls who will not—"for many walk (he says) of whom I have told you often, and now tell you even weeping, that they are the enemies of the Cross of Christ." If there was any disposition in his day to cling to a mere creature, one saying I am of Paul and another I of Apollos, and another I of Cephas, he strongly rebuked it. Who were Paul, Apollos, Cephas? not Priests, in whom they were to trust? He could not away with any such title which clashed with the perfection of Christ's propitiation and priesthood, but, "*Ministers* by whom ye believed, even as the Lord gave to every man." To him there was but "One mediator between God and man—the man Christ Jesus. We enter not into God's favour through any Priestly intervention.

"Through our Lord Jesus Christ alone have we entrance into this grace wherein His people stand," &c. "Through him only have we access by one Spirit unto the Father." "We have redemption through His blood, even *the forgiveness of our sins*."

The Beloved Disciple who found a pillow on his Master's bosom, and knew probably more of His mind than any other, presents to us but one Cleanser, but one Divine Confessional. He joins with his Apostolical brethren in utterly repudiating the possession of the power to forgive sins, assuring us that "the blood of Jesus Christ and that alone, cleanseth from all sin," and that if we confess our sins, "He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness." Although he was the Apostle of love, the remembrance of him who rated so sharply as liars and deceivers those who claimed to have no sin, and who rushed out of the bath when a well known Heretic came in sight, and who counselled his spiritual children not to receive into their houses, or bid God speed to those preaching any other doctrine amongst them, make us fully satisfied, that had he heard some of the recent utterances in our city, with which our ears have got familiarized, he would at least have gone the length of saying: "This man blasphemeth."

v. The early and most reliable of the *Fathers* were against confession and absolution. Even in the 4th century, when the truth was beginning to be alloyed by foreign admixtures, we hear Chrysostom the Golden mouthed—and the holy St. Augustine—coming out against it; the latter indignantly asking: "What have I to do with men, that they should hear my confession, as though they could heal my disease!" while the former, employing a kindred figure, says: "Review and lay open your conscience before God." "Show your wounds to the Lord, the best of Physicians, and seek medicine from him. Show to Him who upbraideth not, but cures most kindly."

vi. The leading *Reformers* protested strenuously against this Priestly assumption: It is a gross slander on Luther, like the other assaults on his fair name, that have been exploded and exposed so often that it now seems a work of supererogation to notice them, to assert that he had the slightest sympathy with the kind of confession we have been combating, and against whose enormities his whole reformed life was a protest. If there be a day of general confession once a year in Lutheran Churches, it is like days of fasting and humiliation amongst ourselves, and not the least like the Popish or Puseyistic Confession, at all.

vii. We have not time to-night to speak of the dangerous and delusive influence of Confession and Absolution, how it is calculated to deceive and debase, throwing a shadow on the hearth, and causing many a heart to know its own bitterness.

We can trace the entire system to its spring. Trace any error to its source and you refute it. It is thus with the leading errors of the Romish Church. Papal supremacy dates from 606; The seven sacraments from the 12th century; Transubstantiation, and the withholding of the cup from the Laity from the 13th century; the Immaculate conception and Papal infallibility originated within the memory of most of us. In like manner, we know the very time when Confes-

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sion began to be practised. In apostolic days, and during the years of the church's purity, confession of sin was publicly made before the congregation, and admonition administered. Hence the Pauline precept : "them that sin, rebuke before all." But, as the church lost the ardor of her first love, the wealthier and more influential members could not brook such exposure. Accordingly, in the 5th century, Leo the Great sanctioned secret confession to a priest. Not for centuries later was private confession made compulsory. Leo's law was simply permissive. In priestly hands, it became a new and powerful engine of tyranny and corruption. Two centuries thereafter, *a Penitential* was prepared by Theodore, Archbishop of Canterbury, to direct priests in confessing penitents. Therein do we find the seed-plot of that perverse and polluting casuistry that grows in rank luxuriance in the prurient pages of Escobar and Dens. We cannot stay to-night to tell you how it has emasculated the intellect, polluted the imagination and debauched the conscience,—how it forged shackles for mind and body, dealt a death-blow to every noble and generous impulse, and became the slaughter-house of souls. Along with the system of Indulgences, it had probably most to do with bringing about the great Reformation. The ministers and members of a Reformed church should, therefore, have no fellowship with such unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove them. Of course, its Anglo-Catholic face and form present no such repulsive features, nor at present, when Romanists are in the midst of Protestants, is there the bearing of such ruinous fruit. The progress of error and declension is gradual, but downward. The voice may now be Jacob's. We may yet find the hands Esau's. The gentleman who, at this singularly inopportune time (the 400th anniversary of the great reformer, Luther,) has headed this assault on some of the most cherished principles of the Reformation, may be to those of a sentimental caste as one having a pleasant voice and playing well on an instrument ; but, we feel persuaded, to the main portion of this Protestant community, the whole performance has been sadly out of tune, and discord and disquiet seem the only visible results. In these times of mental unrest, when error is rife and errorists abound, it is more than ever needful that ye contend earnestly for the faith, and be able to give to everyone that asketh a reason for the hope that is in you, holding fast the faithful word as ye have been taught, that ye may be able, by sound doctrine, both to exhort and convince the gainsayers. The old altars are gone, yet "we have an altar." The old sacrifices have long ceased to bleed and blaze, yet trusting, "only trusting," in the one Sacrifice of Calvary,—yours must be now the living sacrifice. Earthly priests have not been suffered to continue by reason of death. But, if ye be His, ye are a royal priesthood ; and seeing we have a great High Priest, supplanting and superior to all human priests, who hath passed into the Heavens,—Jesus, the Son of God,—let us *hold fast our profession*.

CORRESPONDENCE WITH "C."

LETTER OF "C."—No. 1.

Sir,—Fearing lest some, who may not have time, or ability, to study up the history of Confession and Absolution, might be led astray by the arguments so abundantly reported in the papers, I ask your permission to lay a few facts before the public. It is a matter of surprise that men laying pretensions to scholarship should adduce St. Augustine and St. Chrysostom as witnesses against Confession. Honesty is one of the first requisites in a teacher; knowledge one of his first equipments.

Confession is of Divine institution. It has ever been practised in the Church. The words of Christ cannot be meaningless sounds; they express a truth, and they confer what they signify. Hence His words (St. John xx, 21, et seq.), "As the Father hath sent me, I also send you." When He had said this He breathed on them, and He said to them: "Receive ye the Holy Ghost; whose sins you shall forgive, they are forgiven them; and whose sins you shall retain, they are retained"—gave power to remit sin.

Since they were to remit or to retain, it must have been intended that they should act in a judicial capacity. It would be folly to suppose that so great a power was to be exercised in any other way. How should they remit, or how should they retain unless they knew the person's internal state? And how could they know that state unless through confession? Were proof required of this we have the explicit words of holy writ, telling us how the faithful acted in Ephesus when St. Paul was there. We read: "And many of those who believed came confessing their deeds." (Acts xix, 18). It is simply a groundless supposition to refer this passage to a general public declaration of sin. The words themselves, as well as the constant practice of the early church, preclude such an interpretation. Confession and absolution, therefore, began with the Church, and St. Paul could well write (ii Cor., v. 18) that Christ "hath given to us a ministry of reconciliation;" and verse 19th, "He hath placed in us the word of reconciliation." What word of reconciliation, except the absolving of sin?

Now, since the mission of the Apostles was to the whole world, and since their message was to be always the same, and since they could not, and did not, personally preach the Gospel to every creature, it follows that their mission, and, as a consequence, their ministerial power must have passed to their successors. Can any sane man believe that the successors of the Apostles had the continuation of the Apostolic mission without its corresponding ministerial power? Surely not. And if the mission of the Apostles was one of reconciliation, that of their successors must have been identical; and they must have had "the word of reconciliation," or the power of absolving. That the Apostles appointed bishops in the same ministry with themselves, and gave them the same power, is clear from the Epistles of St. Paul and Timothy. He says: "Stir up the grace of God, which is in thee by the imposition of my hands. For God hath not given us the spirit of fear; but of power." He tells Timothy to teach what he has learned from him; he warns him not to lightly "impose hands" on any one; and he tells him what sort of persons to choose as bishops and deacons. And writing to Titus (i, 5), he says: "For this cause I left thee in Crete, that thou shouldst set in order the things that are wanting, and shouldst ordain priests in every city, as I also appointed thee."

The Apostle supposes both Timothy and Titus to have the same power of the ministry as he himself had; this is proof enough that the "word of reconciliation" passed from the Apostles to their successors. Indeed, had it not been so, the message of Timothy to mankind would have to be different from Paul's. Paul

could preach he had the power of binding and loosing; Timothy must have been able to preach the same, otherwise the eternal message of Christ to man would be changed. No Christian can think this.

Now, what was the belief of the early Church? Surely the testimony of its eminent divines is of more value than that of a person living centuries later.

Irenæus, who lived shortly after the Apostles, and who probably saw St. John, in his work "*de Hæresi*" (Lib. 1, cap. 9,) speaking of persons who had been misled by a magician, tells us that they often "were converted and confessed their sins." And he speaks of another who, through the means of her brother, was converted, and who "spent much time in confessing her sins, lamenting and bewailing her faults," etc. (Lib. 3, cap. 4). He relates of a certain Cerdon, that he used to "come frequently to the church making his confession."

Tertullian, who wrote towards the end of the second century, in his book on Penance, says: "Some more mindful of shame than their salvation presumed to avoid or to put off from day to day the confessing of their faults; like those who, having some secret disease, hide it from the knowledge of the physician." It is very evident that he here speaks of confessing secret sins, for he adds, ironically: "A great benefit is this shame, for if we conceal a thing from man, will it also be concealed from God?" Therefore, in the second century the confession of secret sins was held to be necessary.

Origen, who lived early in the third century, in Homily 2 in Leviticus, says: "There is a remission of sins, though hard and laborious, through penance, when the sinner washes his bed with tears * * * and when he does not blush to make known his sins to the *Priest of the Lord*, and to seek a cure * * * in which also is fulfilled what the Apostle says: 'Is any one sick among you, let him call in the priest.'" This is very plain, and shows the belief and custom of his time. In the third Homily he teaches that if "we have secretly done anything wrong, by word alone or even by *secret thoughts*, it is necessary to make them all known." And in Homily 2 in Ps. 37, he says that we must confess all to a learned doctor and follow his advice. If he judges that some things should be publicly made known, we ought to declare them publicly. He thus clearly shows that auricular confession existed for all sins, even those of thought; and some sins, if the confessor judged well, should be made public.

St. Cyprian, who lived in the same century, in (Serm. 5 de Lapsis), relates that some who had fallen, although they had not offered sacrifice to the false Gods, but "because they had thought of it, sorrowfully and with simplicity of heart confessing to the priests of God, laid open their consciences * * * and sought a cure for their wounds." Addressing his people (Epistle xvi. lib. 3), he says: "When even in small sins * * * penance has to be done for a time, and confession to be made, and the life of him who does penance is to be inspected * * * how much more in grave crimes should everything be cautiously done according to the discipline of the Lord." Therefore a confession by which one's conscience can be known is a "discipline of the Lord."

Wishing to be brief, we must omit much. St. Basil in the fourth century in his short rules: "In the confession of our sins we should act precisely in the same manner as in making known the wounds of our body. As therefore the wounds of the body are not foolishly made known to every one, but only to those who are thought capable of curing them, in the same way the confession of our sins should be only made to those who can cure them." And he explains who those are saying: "Of a necessity sin must be made known to those to whom has been given the dispensation of the mysteries of God"—that is, the priests.

In the same century Gregory Nisenus in his sermon on the sinful woman, said: "Show without fear to the priests the secrets of your soul which are hidden, as you would uncover hidden wounds to the physicians: he will have a care for your honor and for your cure."

Did space permit we could quote similar passages from every Father of the Church in the four first ages—the age of purity about which Dissenters speak so much. They teach what the Catholic Church of to-day teaches, and thus prove

that our doctrine is also "pure." Dr. Burns says private confession began with Leo the Great. This Pope lived late in the fifth century. We have conclusively shown that it existed from the beginning. Not long ago Protestants maintained that auricular confession began in the middle ages, under Innocent III. They now admit that it can be traced back to Leo I. Possibly, as light becomes more diffused, they will find that it goes back to Christ.

Dr. Burns is most unfortunate in asserting that St. Augustine and St. John Chrysostom were with him. Surely he never read them. St. Augustine, in his magnificent sermon on Penitents (Hom. 41), where he is treating of Penance dogmatically, and consequently, uses precise language, in order to induce persons to repent whilst in health, says: "For if they delay to the end of their life, they know not whether they can receive penance and confess their sins to God and the priest." As this passage speaks so clearly of confession to the priest it is not necessary to quote any more from this great doctor. He certainly differs from Dr. Burns.

Perhaps in the whole range of church literature there cannot be found such exaltation of the priestly character and the priestly power, as in St. Chrysostom's magnificent oration on the priesthood. In book third he says: For to those who live on the earth there has been given to dispense the things which are in heaven; to them has been given a power that God did not give to the angels, or archangels for he did not say to them whatsoever ye shall bind on earth shall be bound in heaven, and whatsoever ye shall loose on earth shall be loosed also in heaven. Earthly princes have indeed the power of binding, but only bodies; the power of the priest touches the soul itself and reaches to the heavens, so that whatsoever the priests shall do below God will ratify above, and the Lord will confirm the sentence of his ministers, for He has said: Whosoever sins you shall retain, they are retained. What power, I ask, can be greater than this? The Father gave all power to His son. I see that same power given by the son to them. * * * It was given to the Jewish priests to cleanse the leprosy of the body, or to speak more correctly, to testify that they had been made clean, * * * but to our priests it has been given not merely to cleanse the leprosy of the body, nor merely to testify to the blotting out of the stains of the soul, but *to blot them out.*

The power, then, of the priesthood does not consist in merely declaring sins to be remitted, but in remitting them. From Chrysostom it is a judicial power, higher than that of Kings, and of a necessity requires a knowledge of the conscience. We hope we shall never have Chrysostom quoted against us again. His doctrine is the same as that preached in St. Mary's, but strangely unlike that of Fort Massey church. Candid reader, who has antiquity on his side?

We may add that the early heretics, such as Arians, Copts, Monophysites and others, who fell away from the Church before St. Leo's time, all teach and practice in the present day auricular confession. Where did they learn it? Not from the Roman Church after their fall, certainly; therefore it was in the Church when they fell away. Of those who bear the Christian name, whether in the East or West, the Protestants alone deny auricular confession and absolution. Are they right and all others wrong? Who would believe it?

Yours truly,

C.

REV. DR. BURNS' REPLY TO "C.'s" LETTER. No 1.

During my ministerial life I have declined noticing letters that have not the name of the writer. When your contention is on the public arena with "open face," you are placed at a manifest disadvantage when your opponent skulks into an ambush or fights behind a mask. It is beneath dignity to notice every anonymous scribbler, and, amid the pressure of other duties, a city minister has not the time, even if he had the taste, for bush and guerrilla warfare. But there are exceptions to every rule. The long letter which has appeared simultaneously, during the past week, in two of our local journals, over the signature "C." bears such marks of respon-

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sibility and respectability as to deserve and demand notice. We like its calm and courteous tone, while differing entirely from its conclusions. We desiderate more of that style of writing on both sides in the present controversy, and if we can only avoid that "wrath of man which worketh not the righteousness of God," it will accomplish much good. Why should we not all endeavour to cultivate the charity that "suffereth long and is kind"—that is not "easily provoked, and thinketh no evil," and so earn the character indicated by the illustrious Dr. Chalmers in a letter upon a cognate theme, to a near and dear relation of my own? "I rest assured that your whole performance is characterized by that spirit of the Gospel which, if infused (and why should it not?) into our every difference, would disarm controversy of its sting, and reduce it to a calm and profitable contest of the understanding."

It is noticeable at the outset in the communication of "C." that it leaves the open field of the Word, and plunges into the braky thicket of the Fathers. I respectfully decline being drawn into such a wilderness. I infinitely prefer the *Grandfathers* and the *Great Grandfathers*. I entrench myself within the stronghold of the Bible from which dislodgment on this question is impossible. Even the Douay version (A. D., 1609), which "C." must accept, gives me this counsel: "Should not the people seek of their God, for the living of the dead? *To the law rather and to the testimony. And if they speak not according to THIS WORD, they shall not have the morning light.*" (Isaiah viii, 19-20). Better far, according to this, to have the "morning light" of the "true word"—"the light shining in a dark place"—than the "gloamin" or "the dim religious light" of the Fathers. Hence, in my discourse of an hour, filling forty-three pages of foolscap, I devoted scarcely two minutes of time and barely a page of space to the Fathers, and for a very plain reason. They, though some of them noble men, are liable to err, and did err, on many points, speaking "the words which man's wisdom teacheth," while the Scripture writers spake "what the Holy Ghost teacheth," "spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost." Unlike the writings of the Fathers, even a child can understand these, as the Roman Catholic version of the New Testament (A. D., 1592) says of Timothy (2 Tim., 3, 15-16): "Because from thy infancy thou hast known the Holy Scriptures which can instruct thee to salvation by the faith which is in Christ Jesus. All Scripture inspired of God," &c. It is singular that when you pass from this "All Scripture," even to those fathers that bordered on the Apostolic age, and were brought up at the feet of the Apostles, you at once perceive the difference in spirit and style between the inspired and uninspired. In the writings of the APOSTOLIC Fathers there is much useful Reading. They had the best opportunities of knowing the mind of Christ and the Apostles, three of them having been (it is said) pupils of Paul, viz., Barnabas, Clement Romanus and Hermas, and three of them disciples of John, viz., Ignatius, Polycarp and Papias. Ominously enough "C." makes not a SOLITARY QUOTATION FROM ONE OF THEM. For a manifest reason. They do not favor his view of confession. They are against it. Take Clement Romanus, for example, whom Ireneus (quoted by "C.") puts third from Peter at Rome (Haer iii, 3, 3), who acted as Chief Presbyter of the Roman congregation, and whom Jerome (de Vir III) identifies with the "Clement also," mentioned by Paul in Phil. iv., 3. Clement's First Epistle to the Corinthians is pronounced by competent judges one of the most important documents of Christian antiquity extant. It was preserved with singular care in the Alexandrian Manuscript of the New Testament, known as Codex A., and donated in A. D., 1628 to Charles I. by Cyril, Patriarch of Constantinople, and is now deposited in the British Museum. This Disciple of Paul says, "Blessed are we, beloved, if we keep the Commandments of God in the harmony of love, that so, thro' love, *our sins may be forgiven us*, for it is written, "Blessed are they whose transgressions are forgiven and whose sins are covered. Blessed is the man *WHOSE SIN the Lord will not impute to him.*" "This blessedness cometh upon those who have been chosen by God through Jesus Christ our Lord, to whom be glory for ever and ever, amen. Let us therefore *implore forgiveness* for all these transgressions, which, thro' any suggestion of the adversary, we have comm'ted. For

it is better that a man should acknowledge his transgressions than that he should harden his heart. THE LORD DESIRES NOTHING OF ANYONE EXCEPT THAT CONFESSION BE MADE TO HIM, for, says the elect David: "*I will confess unto the LORD,*" and "*THOU forgavest THE INIQUITY of my sin,*"—quoting two passages of Scripture in proof. Clement, whose writings were, in many places, read for edification at Divine Service in the Ancient Church, says not a word of any confession, save unto God, the only Sin-pardoner.

Ex uno, discite omnes (from one learn all). How full these Apostolic Fathers are of Scripture, in the appealing to which as the sole and supreme standard, the later ones sadly lacked! It is to these last "C." is so partial, and so prolific in quotations. The passages quoted from Irenæus, Augustine, and partly from Chrysostom, refer to a kind of confessing of which we cordially approve. The more of this public confessing of sin—of the closet confessing to the "Father in secret," and of burdened souls repairing to their pastors for advice and consolation, the better. Much of the confessing referred to by "C." and others in their quotations from the fathers, is of this wholesome kind, as different as can be from what is known as auricular confession. When it is otherwise, as in portions of the writings of the others quoted, Origen, Tertullian, Gregory of Nyssa, Cyprian and Basil, we have the germs, as we have always said, of that very system which "C." defends. *Augustine is with us*, of whom one of the greatest of modern English theologians (Mozley) says: "One such writer is himself a whole age, and more than an age of authorship, a complete school, and more than a school of divinity." What does Augustine say? (b. A. D., 353. d. 430). He indignantly asks, "*What have I to do WITH MEN THAT THEY SHOULD HEAR MY CONFESSION, AS THOUGH THEY COULD HEAL MY DISEASES?*" The paucity of passages in Augustine against confession and kindred dogmas may be explained by the fact noted in the Preface to the Venice Edition: "We have taken care that all those things which could affect the minds of the faithful with heretical pravity, or would cause them to DEVIATE FROM THE CATHOLIC ORTHODOX FAITH, BE TAKEN AWAY." (*Curavimus removeri illa omnia quae fidelium mentes hæretica pravitate possent inficere, aut a Catholica orthodoxa fide deviare.* Passages from Chrysostom (b. 347. d. 407 A. D.) have also been taken out, because bearing against their favorite principles and practices. In the edition of his works printed at Basle, the Inquisitors of the Expurgatory Index have made quite a number of erasures. For example, from his 1st Homily on John, they have blotted out these words: "The church is not built on the man, but the faith." From his sermon on Pentecost they have deleted "There is no merit but what is given us by Christ." Many erasures are made from different Fathers. Jehoiakim's pen-knife has been often used in after times, too.

I am fully aware that Chrysostom extols the hierarchy, and that the passage quoted by "C." seems to lean to absolution, but it does not countenance confession as it is now contended for, nor is it inconsistent with language used by him elsewhere, as when he says: "REVIEW AND LAY OPEN YOUR CONSCIENCE BEFORE GOD. SHOW *your wounds* TO THE LORD, *the best of Physicians, and SEEK MEDICINE FROM HIM. Show to Him who upbraideth not, but cures most kindly.*"

I cannot, therefore, admit the statement of "C." which is in questionable taste: "Dr. Burns was most unfortunate in asserting that St. Augustine and St. John Chrysostom were with him. Surely he never read them." And again at the beginning of the letter: "It is a matter of surprise that men laying pretensions to Scholarship should adduce St. Augustine and St. Chrysostom as witnesses against confession: Honesty is one of the first requisites in a teacher; knowledge one of his first equipments." Our position was based upon and buttressed by Scripture. Hence ninety-nine out of the hundred parts of our discourse were scriptural, and the remaining fraction, patristic. The Bible is solid rock. The Fathers are shifting sand. We would be like the wise man, "*He that heareth these words and doeth them,*" etc. (Rhemish vers. of Mat., 7, 24). Why should "C." seek the living among the dead, and not take the advice of his own Bible already quoted: "For the living to the dead. TO THE LAW RATHER AND TO THE TESTIMONY."

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Considering the many infallible proofs given by me from Joshua, Hezekiah, Ezra, David and Daniel in the Old Testament, and from Peter, Paul, John, and, best of all, from Jesus, in the New Testament, in favor of the Protestant position, which "C." has never touched or come within sight of; not to speak of the unambiguous testimony of the most reliable of those Fathers who lived in the very days of the Apostles, I may repeat his exultant question, "Candid reader, who has *antiquity* on his side?"

As so small a portion of "C.'s" communication is devoted to the Scripture argument, it becomes us attentively to consider the passages that are quoted.

1. The first is St. John, 20.21, et seq. "As the Father hath sent me, I also send you. When He had said this, He breathed on them and He said to them, receive ye the Holy Ghost. Whose sins you shall forgive, they are forgiven them, and whose sins you shall retain, they are retained." This, "C." says "gave power to remit sin." The argument is that this power was given to the Apostles, and transmitted through them to their successors. But (1.) as we have already shown by incontrovertible evidence, in the first part of this evening's lecture, devoted entirely to it, the Apostles had not, and could not, in the nature of things, have any successors. The missing links, too, are so many as to spoil the chain. (2.) In point of fact, other powers vested in the Apostles were not transmitted. Who of their so-called successors can raise the dead, or cure deadly diseases, as the original Apostles did? No proof is furnished that the pardoning power was transmitted or ever exercised. (3.) We know that when Peter was besought to remit, he positively refused, saying: "Pray to God if perhaps this thought of thy heart may be forgiven thee (Acts VIII. 22). Nor do we ever read of Paul, or John, or James, or Jude, or any other, any more than Peter, ever confessing or absolving a single soul. (4.) This power here described was not limited to the Apostles, but was given to the "Disciples" as well, and the mixed company gathered in the upper room, corresponding, perhaps, with the 120 Disciples of Acts 1. 15. Jesus stands in the midst, not of the "eleven" only, but "of those that were with them," (Luke XXIV. 33.) "all the rest" of verse 9. Breathing on them, He said: "Receive ye," &c. On clergy and laity alike, thus the same power was conferred. This conclusively shows that the power thus given was not *judicial*, but simply declaratory, not magisterial, but ministerial, like the priests in cases of leprosy, who six times over in Levit. xiii. are said simply to PRONOUNCE unclean or clean. In like manner these N. T. passages intimate the terms and method of pardon, as we find "Peter and the Apostles" doing in Acts v. 31, where they say, "Him (Jesus) hath God exalted to give repentance and remission of sins." And Paul, in Acts XIII. 38: "Be it known, therefore, to you, that *through Him forgiveness of sins is preached to you.*" And in Acts XXVI. 18: "That they may receive forgiveness of sins and a lot among the saints, through faith that is in me." Along with this declaring there was vested in the Church and its representatives, the disciplinary power, the prerogative, in cases of wrong doing, of putting away from among them, wicked persons, when they sinned, and receiving them back again to their former standing in the Church when they showed signs of sincere repentance. This, as we shall hereafter see, was a prominent part of the Key Power, or the "remitting" and "retaining" the "binding and loosing." All this is in perfect harmony with those passages of the Word that send us to the Divine Confessional, as where in "C.'s" own New Testament it is written: "THE BLOOD OF JESUS CHRIST HIS SON, cleanseth us from ALL SIN." "IF WE CONFESS OUR SINS, HE is faithful and just to FORGIVE US OUR SINS, AND TO CLEANSE US FROM ALL INIQUITY." I. of St. John, c. i., 7-9.

2. The second passage quoted by "C." is Acts xix. 18, telling us "how the faithful acted at Ephesus when Paul was there. Many of those who believed came, confessing and declaring their deeds." "It is simply (says "C.") a groundless supposition to refer this passage to a general public declaration of sin." "The words themselves preclude such an interpretation." The conclusion is, that this was a private and particular confession to Paul as to a priest. To us the words themselves plainly teach the very opposite of what "C." indicates. The many

came "publicly," confessed their sins publicly, declared their views publicly. Ideal the verse following (the 9th) it is mentioned "they brought together their book two and burnt them *before all*." The whole scene is laid, not privately, but *before all*, church

3. "C." next quotes 2 Cor., v. 18, that "Christ has given us the ministry of reconciliation," and verse 19th, "He has placed in us the word of reconciliation." "What word of reconciliation (asks he) except the absolving from sin?" Yet, He strange to say, the judicial "absolving from sin" on the part of any man or body of men, is not even hinted at in the passage. What is the "ministry of reconciliation" spoken of in the 2nd part of verse 18? Simply the instrumentality divinely appointed for spreading abroad the precious message contained in the first part, to wit: "that all things are of God who hath reconciled us to Himself by Christ, and hath given unto His Church this ministry." And what is the "Word of reconciliation" at the close of the 19th verse, but just the substance of the blessed message as given at the beginning, which is but the following up of what goes before, "for that God indeed was in Christ, reconciling the world to Himself, not imputing to men their sins." What post, then, do the members of this 'ministry' or service fill? Not certainly that of "priests," for they are ministers or servants; not sovereigns or judges, but simply the "messengers of the churches," and delegates of Christ. "Ministers of His to do His pleasure." Hence, verse 20th goes on to say: *For indeed Christ, therefore, we are ambassadors.* Now, the ambassador of a sovereign does not make peace, but announces it; does not grant pardon, but as a herald makes it known. He is the carrier of the amnesty, the communicator of the terms of the reconciliation. How utterly opposed, therefore, is this Pauline statement to that of "C."—"the power of the Priesthood does not consist in merely declaring sins to be remitted, but in remitting them. Since they were to remit or retain, it must have been intended that they should act in a judicial capacity." This is the very point to be proved, which our critic takes for granted, and which the very passage quoted by him effectually disproves.

4. I have hitherto quoted exclusively from the Roman Catholic translation of the Holy Scriptures, published under the highest authority, as doubtless more acceptable to "C." than our own, but in his last Scriptural quotation (Titus 1. 5) each I must take issue with him, and decline receiving the Rheims rendering—*Priests* instead of *Presbyters*. "For this cause I left thee in Crete, that thou shouldst set in order the things that were wanting, and shouldst ordain PRIESTS in every city, as I also appointed thee." I know what is said about *Priests* being a corruption of *Presbyter*, or Elder, and, if so understood, it is innocent enough. But the general idea of *Priest* involves the presentation of a sacrifice, which "all Scripture" forbids. Without sacrifice (and where is there another since our great High Priest said on the cross, "It is finished?") the Priest's "occupation is gone." Our authorized version, which reflects the scholarship of the past, the revised version, on which has been expended the most advanced scholarship of the present age, agree in inserting "PRESBYTEROS"—not "Hiericus;" *Elders* or *Presbyters*, not *Priests*, as the word used here. We are not aware of one solitary MANUSCRIPT out of the multitude collated and compared, which sanctions the Rheimish rendering. Even of Christ himself the Rheimish version says, in Hebrews VIII., 4: "If He were on earth *He would not be a Priest*," much less than his ministers, who cannot be priests in the ordinarily received sense, as distinguished from the spiritual priesthood of Believers, without impugning the perfection of "the High Priest of our Confession, Jesus" (Heb. III, 11) and impairing the completeness of his finished sacrifice. The doctrine enunciated by "C." is certainly, as he declares, "the same as that preached in St. Mary's, but strangely unlike that of Fort Massey Church." True, perfectly true, my good friend, and may it ever continue so!

"C." further writes: "Dr. Burns says private confession began with Leo the Great. This Pope lived late in the 5th century; we have conclusively shown that it existed from the beginning." Very far from it. We say it with the utmost respect and deference. Your mistake arises from confounding private with public confession. We have always said that *the latter* was practiced in the Primitive Church. Christ brings this out when describing (Mat. XVIII; 15-18), the mode of

views publicly. Dealing with an offending brother. First, the offended one to deal with him, then together their book two or three, and lastly, the whole church." "If he will not hear them, tell the privately, but *before all church.*" 1 Cor., v., illustrates the mode of dealing with a loose living member, even us the ministry and any confessing or disciplining is not private, but "before all." Paul had no word of reconciliation. Dealings with the party in question, far less privately confessing and absolving him from sin?" Yet, He was absent, but the Spirit of God was present to guide. 1 Cor. v. 4. In the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, you being gathered together and my Spirit too. Ministry of reconciliation. If the case of discipline issued in forgiving the party accused, the Apostle, though instrumentality divinely way, endorsed the pardon—thus, 2nd Cor., II: 10, "To whom ye have pardoned; need in the first part, to also." Where it ended in rebuke or expulsion, it was, like the confession, done Himself by Christ, and publicly. Thus, 2 Cor. II: 7, "To him that is such an one, this rebuke is sufficient." "Word of reconciliation that is given by many," not by one, as if it were a private confessing. Nay, of the blessed message 1 Tim., v. 20, far from favoring such secret confessing, the Apostle says: "Them what goes before, for that sin reprove BEFORE ALL, that the rest also may have fear." All these latter of, not imputing to men passages also have been copied from the Roman Catholic edition of the Scriptures, ministry' or service fill to prevent anyone asserting that I had put a Protestant construction upon them. servants; not sovereigns PRIVATE confession was monastic in its origin—Jerome de Regul Monachar, in and delegates of Christ. Op. XI, 499, and Basil Regul Brev., in Op. II, 492. Wealthy and influential h goes on to say: For sinners, not relishing a public exposure, got an indulgence and might confess or of a sovereign does privately. For a good while the clergy outside monastic walls keenly opposed ut as a herald makes private confessing. A demand was made by the Bishops of Campania and Apulia icator of the terms of the effect that public notice be given to the congregation of sins confessed in line statement to that private. This led Leo the Great to officially sanction private confession, and so to merely declaring sins equalize what for a time had been connived at.—See Opera Leonis, M. Ed.; Balremitt or retain, it must erini, Ep. 168. In Canon 21 of the Lateran Council of A. D. 1215, the custom ty." This is the very confirmed. It was not until the 13th century that the formula of absolution which the very passage was altered from "Dominus te absolvat"—"May the Lord absolve thee," to *Ego te absolvo*—"I absolve thee."

Catholic translation of "C." closes with this remark: "The early heretics, such as Arians, Copts, Montanists, as doubtless more phisites and others, who fell away from the Church before St. Leo's time, all quotation (Titus 1, 5) each and practice in the present day auricular confession." We are not aware ms rendering—*Priests* hat they do; but if so, we are rather glad to be clear of their company, and to be that thou shouldst set sociated, as we have seen ourselves to be, with the "goodly company of the PRIESTS in every city, prophets, the holy fellowship of the Apostles, and the noble army of martyrs," *Priests* being a corruption with God, the judge of all, and Jesus, the mediator of the new covenant." It ent enough. But the was not originally intended, and shows things have got considerably mixed, that which "all Scripture" then I opened fire on a fortress near us that had hung out delusive colors, the our great High Priest hell: showered from Fort Massey should have fallen within another entrenchment ation is gone." Our little way farther off, and that the watchful sentinel mounting guard there, with it, the revised version, whom we have been having this friendly tilt, should have now championed the up of the present age, ag so strangely taken from his own and transferred to the other citadel. ps or Presbyters, not And now, with the best of feeling I bid good bye to "C." adding that although solitary MANUSCRIPT have made an exception in his case in noticing an anonymous communication ouches in, on the whole, a kindly tone and coming from an apparently authoritative source, I shall not promise to continue the discussion on this unequal footing the Rhemish render- (then his ministers, who shed from the spiritual ho have neither "C.'s" talent nor taste.

the High Priest of eteness of his finished I have purposely avoided seeking to excite prejudice and passion by any reference declares, "the same to the corruptions of the Confessional, its social and domestic influences, or e Fort Massey Church." lancing at any side issues, or collateral topics of discussion, out of which "points" ight have been made, that would have probably irritated rather than convinced, te so!

began with Leo the e conclusively shown ay it with the utmost g private with public iced in the Primitive 15-18), the mode of

LETTER OF "C."—No. 2.

SIR,—

A short time ago I had occasion to write you a letter on Confession and Absolution. As I had merely to deal with doctrine, and as I made no accusation against anyone, I did not see the necessity of signing my name. In a matter of this kind it is not so much who speaks, as what is said, that ought to concern us.

Dr. Burns has dealt in a very courteous manner with the subject of my letter; whilst I feel grateful for his complimentary remarks, I must dissent from some of his conclusions.

There seems to be some misconception of the nature of the doctrine of sacramental confession in the minds of many. I shall endeavor to briefly state the teaching of the R. C. Church on that point, and then give the reasons for that teaching.

The R. C. Church teaches that there is no other name under heaven through which one can be saved than that of Jesus Christ. He atoned for our sins and redeemed us by His passion and death. He is our Redeemer, our High Priest and our Victim. He is also our perpetual intercessor in heaven. From Him is the power of the ministry, the grace of the sacraments, the sacerdotal office and prerogatives. He redeemed us, but the fruits of His redemption have to be applied to our souls; He purchased grace for us, but that grace has to come to us through certain channels, or by certain means. All Christians admit the act of Redemption in the same way; all, I think, admit that an application of the merits of Christ to our souls is necessary. The treasure is there, but it may be left unapplied. Man's free will remains, and that free will must co-operate with God's grace for the salvation of his soul. In other words, we must "work out our salvation with fear and trembling." Regarding the modes of application of Christ's merits the difference begins. All take it, admit that through prayer and good deeds grace may be obtained, or in other words, Christ's merits applied to the soul. The R. C. Church, whilst teaching this, teaches likewise, that the sacraments are the most powerful means of grace; that they are so many channels instituted by our Saviour which, under outward and visible signs, confer the invisible grace of God. Thus, baptism, in which all Christians believe, is a sacrament. The pouring of water and the pronouncing of the words of the form of baptism are outward and visible actions, but, through the will of Christ, whose ordinance they are, grace is applied. The stain of original sin (for we are all born "children of wrath") is blotted out; the soul is regenerated and becomes a child of God, and an heir to His kingdom. No one pretends that water and the words of the form of baptism could, of themselves, produce such an effect but they produce it because Christ willed that these visible actions should be the means of conveying the grace of regeneration to souls. Why He did this it is not our purpose to enquire; that He did it all Christians agree.

The Catholic Church teaches that besides baptism there are six other sacraments, each of which confers grace for some special purpose. We shall only speak of one, viz., penance. After baptism free will remains, and, consequently, man can fall into sin. By sin man, of his own free will, becomes an enemy of God; he deliberately turns away from God and cleaves to forbidden things. If pardon be desired, the sinner must come back to God through the way our Saviour has established. He must repent of his sin and submit to the ordinance instituted by our Lord. Now, the Catholic Church distinguishes between light sins or venial faults and gross sins, which amount to a total turning away from God. These latter she calls mortal sins, because they make the soul die to the grace of God, and entail, unless truly repented of, eternal damnation. Venial faults can be remitted by prayer and good deeds, etc., and this, I imagine, corresponds with what Protestants mean by

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a general absolution. But for grievous sins confession, or the sacrament of penance, is necessary, and it is necessary for precisely the same reason as baptism is necessary, viz., because Christ has so willed it. For light sins confession is not necessary; still, recourse may be had to it even for those. But for grievous sins confession is not a matter of choice; it is an absolute necessity whenever possible, just as much of a necessity as is baptism. The latter regenerates us; the former restores us; the latter remits original sin; the former actual sins; the latter makes us an heir of heaven; the former reconciles the erring child to the outraged Father. Baptism is the one only means of regeneration; penance the only means of restoration after a grievous fall. But just as Baptism can be supplied by ardent desire when it cannot otherwise be obtained, so grievous sins may be pardoned through perfect contrition, when it is impossible to confess them. Will God regenerate us without baptism, by water and the Holy Ghost, when it can be had? Will it be sufficient for the soul which despises the sacrament of baptism, to apply directly to God for regeneration? The whole Christian world answers no. But could not God do it? Not without breaking his own ordinance, which we know he will not do. In the same way God will not pardon grievous sins without confession, when it can be made. The sinner may go directly to Him, but he will say: "Go, show thyself to the priest." He made the law of confession, just as much as the law of baptism, and he will not break either of them. It is sad to hear men blaspheming what they do not know. It is pitiful to hear them boasting of a liberty they do not possess. Man is not at liberty, morally speaking, to choose his own religion. Christ made his law, and through its observance alone, can we obtain the fruits of the redemption. We are physically free to reject that law, and even to kick those who preach it; but the law remains all the same. Our puny rebellion, our stubborn pride, our passions, our prejudices, our indignation will not change by one jot or tittle God's eternal ordinance.

The power which remits sins in confession is the same power that regenerates in baptism, viz., the power of God. In baptism water and words are the instruments of that power; in confession the instrument is the priest. Surely it is as easy for the priest to be the instrument of God's power as it is for water and the form of words. And this power is not merely declaratory; it is efficacious. It is as the power of the judge—real and effective, although delegated. But this power of absolution cannot be exercised with benefit to the penitent unless he has the proper dispositions in the tribunal of confession. He must tell his sins; he must be sorry for them from some supernatural motive, and he must have a firm purpose of amendment. Then, and then only, can the words of absolution pronounced by the priest have their effect. All this is laid down in our little Catechisms, and carefully taught to our little children. They are taught that it is "through the power of God which Christ left to the pastors of His Church" that sins are forgiven.

This is our belief; now for its reasons. The Old Testament is out of the question in this controversy. The sacraments were instituted by Christ; they did not exist in the old law. They were foreshadowed, indeed, but of course are not taught in the Books of the Old Testament.

The fountain source of many errors, indeed, of all religious error, is the blind persistence with which man, in spite of incontrovertible facts, will hug the delusion that the Bible alone is the sole rule of faith, and that each man is competent to interpret it. Now, our Saviour never commanded His Apostles to write; He never wrote Himself, He taught, and He commanded the Apostles to teach. St. Paul tells us that "Faith is through hearing," not through reading. If the Bible were the sole rule of faith, then there could not possibly have been any true Christians before it was written. But, as a matter of fact, we know that thousands existed before a word of it was written; and tens of thousands had lived and died before St. John wrote his Gospel. And he only wrote because urged by his disciples to confute the

heresy of those who denied the Divinity of Christ. If it should be said that, the Apostles were sufficient witnesses in the beginning, we will come dot time to a later date. In the beginning of this century how many could read through England or America? Not one in five hundred. How could the unfortunates four hundred and ninety-nine get their religion? Not from the Bible or will tainly. And, regarding those who could read, how did they know that (with the Bible was the word of God? How do we know it now, with all our schools. It is ship and revised editions? How, I ask? Only through the Catholic Church. We must all say with the great St. Augustine: "I would scanda believe the Scriptures unless the Catholic Church proposed them to me. Therefore, of a necessity, there must be outside of the Scripture, and anterior to it, an authority which gives testimony to the Scriptures, and which in this dic be an infallible guide of truth. Unless this be admitted the Scriptures father a to the ground, and no one can say that there has ever yet been a Christian. gated ; Since, then, a teaching body, called the Church, and not a writing body, w the mu and did teach them before New Testament was written, and since that bod the discipline was to give testimony to the Scriptures, it follows that the fullness of Christ and oth message is to be found in its teachings. That body is the living exponent of the dead letter of Scripture. The Scriptures are, indeed, God's inspired word, "Can but, as we have shown, they cannot possibly be the sole rule of faith. The ing bo contain the substance of every Catholic dogma, but not its details and for Church of expression. The living voice was ever to be lifted up to teach all nation Hence alone the millions who could not read were to be taught all they could eve reason- That such a voice could not be fallible is surely self-evident. Through i tions, know of religion. If men would only look calmly at this they would of tell see how lovingly God had provided for the good of all, and how vain an others controversies whose supporters pit their personal prejudices, or interprete efficacy against Sacerdotalism; vague words usually please the unthinking; it may ous. B tickle one's vanity to imagine one's self superior to "all the ages;" but the things holy a fact remains that without an infallible living voice Christianity is impossi- ble. St. Ch

In express words the Gospels testify to the power of remitting sins conferred on the Apostles. When Christ says: "whose sins you shall forgive they are forgiven them," I simply believe him, and most decidedly refuse to believe the man who says he did not mean it. That the power of absolving was thus bestowed on the Apostles is outside of profitable controversy. If we do not believe Christ's word we are scarcely fit subjects for serious argument.

That confession of sins, such as I have described as necessary, is not taught in such express words, is quite true; but what then? We must remember that the sermons of the Apostles which are related are few, and were addressed to unbelievers; naturally there is nothing about confession in them. It was in their instructions to the new converts after baptism that they would speak of confession, but we have none of these. How many other things are there which all Christians hold, for example, the observance of the first day of the week, which are not taught in express words? In these the living, teaching voice interprets the unspeaking letter. But, as I observed in a former letter, the very power of remitting, or retaining, which supposes a judicial act, necessarily demands a knowledge of the conscience, which knowledge can only come through confession. And we have the Ephesians coming to St. Paul and confessing their sins. We may here observe that auricular confession is, in our church, a public act, in as much as in the public church, in the presence of fifty, or a hundred, the penitent goes and kneels before the priest and tells his sins. It is, therefore, quite public, and we could use in their full sense the words: "and many of those who believed came confessing and declaring their deeds" (Acts xix, 18). These words are verified every Saturday We

it should be said tight, and at other times, in all our churches, and the words which follow are g. we will come dot times, verified: "and many of those who had followed curious things w many could readrought their books together and burnt them." If it be borne in mind that could the unfortunate, auricular confession is not a hole and corner affair, but takes place publicly, ot from the Bible et will be seen how completely the practice of the church of to-day tallies d they know that (with that of the infant church at Ephesus.

, with all our school. It is quite true that side by side with auricular confession in the early through the Catholic church, there was a public confession of enormous sins which had given great line: "I would scandal, such as apostasy, heresy, bigamy, etc. As a matter of church disposed them to discipline, a public reparation for grave scandal was required, and the penitent ripture, and after was often, for years, cut off from communication with the Faithful. But res, and which m this did not affect auricular confession. One was a disciplinary observance, the d the Scriptures father a sacramental one. By degrees the rigor of early discipline was mit- t been a Christian, gated; partly because of the rapid increase of the church, partly because of a writing body, w the many inconveniences attending the carrying out of this lengthened dis- truths of eternal life. In a mitigated form it still exists in our church, and to every chap- and since that bot ter there is attached a public penitentiary. Origen, as quoted in my last, e fullness of Christ, and other early writers, distinguish between that public discipline and pri- e living exponent, vate confession. We do the same now. I think we can triumphantly say, d's inspired word, "Candid reader, who has antiquity on his side?"

ule of faith. The In the Scriptures, then, we have the substance of the doctrine: the teach- ing body explained it more fully, and apostolic practice came down in the to teach all nation Church, side by side with the books of which it was the unerring exponent. ident. Through Hence the early writers always appealed to the apostolic tradition, and all all they could eve reasonable men must admit its force. Not to tire your readers with quota- tions, we will only cite a few. St. Basil (4th century): "Among the points of this they would of belief and practice in the church, some were delivered in writing, while and how vain ar others were received in apostolic tradition * * * but both have an equal ices, or interpreta efficacy in the promotion of piety."—(De Spirit, Sanc. c. xxvii.) St. Epiphani- grandly to declaim ous, Basil's contemporary, writes: "We must look also to tradition, for all thinking; it mar things cannot be learned from the Scriptures. For which reason the he ages;" but the holy apostles left some things in writing, and others not." (Heres 41.) tianity is impossi St. Chrysostom: "Hence it is plain that all things were not delivered in writing, but many without writing, yet the latter are to be believed in like manner as the former." (Hom. in 2 Thess.) and St. Augustine wrote: "What- ever the whole Church observes, which was not decreed by councils, but always retained, is equally believed to be of apostolic origin." (L. 4, C. 24, Contra Donat.) and long before any of these St. Ignatius, a disciple of the apostles, when being led to martyrdom, exhorted the Christians "to adhere with the utmost firmness to the *tradition of the apostles*." (Euseb. Hist. L. 3, C. 30). A few years later, St. Irenaeus shows in a striking manner the neces- sity of this traditional teaching: "It is this ordinance of tradition which many nations of barbarians believing in Christ follow *without the use of let- ters or ink*." (Adv. Haeres, L. 4). And St. Paul lets us clearly know that he does not put down in writing all his instructions. After having given some directions, he adds: "And the rest I will set in order when I come." (1 Cor. xi, 34). We suppose that after these explicit testimonies no one will decay the traditional sense of apostolic practice as handed down in the church.

Dr. Burns imagined he scored a point when he cited the case of St. Peter, who told Simon Magus to do penance and to pray to God, etc. He thinks St. Peter would have absolved him if he could. We have said that absolution cannot be given unless the penitent has the proper dispositions. St. Peter tells Simon to pray for the grace of true repentance. He acted just as our priests would act to-day; they do not absolve until they have reason to think that the penitent is sincere. They, at times, put him off, telling him to pray well to God, and to prove, by a change of life, his sincerity. This is what St. Peter did with Simon.

We have shown that the Apostles received the power of absolving. We

have shown that apostolic tradition and usage must be admitted; we have proved that a teaching body was instituted. Our Saviour gave the Apostles in their corporate capacity, the mandate of teaching all nations, of reconciling them to Him. For this end he instituted the mode of application of his merits to individual souls. In their corporate capacity, too, he gave them power of absolving, and promised to remain with them forever, "even to the consummation of the world." Now, it is self-evident that a corporation, established for such a purpose, must have been endowed with a life co-equal to that of the world. Hence it could not die with its first members; new members were to be aggregated, otherwise it could not survive. But the mission of that corporation is always the same—"to preach the Gospel to every creature." Hence, its powers and prerogatives must be always the same. Not only was Christ to remain with the corporation during the life of the Apostles, he was to remain with it forever. At all times, and in every place, it was to be *His* corporation, *His* witness to the truth, *His* medium of salvation. When Christ explicitly promises to remain forever with that corporation, and when he explicitly commands all men under eternal condemnation to hear and to obey its teachings, surely He gives us proof enough that it is to live on unchanged; that the power of the Apostles is to descend to their successors. We do not think He could speak more plainly. We do not think any man who calmly considers the question would require further proof. Of course we may close our eyes to the light and say it is dark; we may refuse to believe, even as many who listened to our dear Lord rejected His word; but the sincere soul will rejoice to find in Christ's promise an invincible guarantee of the transmission of apostolic power with the apostolic mission.

Now, as this Church had to be the sole guide for millions of souls that could not read, as it had to guard and to transmit the deposit of faith, its teachings must have been true. Deny the infallibility of the Church and you deny the possibility of Christianity. This is what atheists want, and this explains why they so fiercely blaspheme ecclesiastical authority. It is far from pleasant to find many Protestants of good parts aiding them in this.

The Church ever believed that the power of absolving from sins was transmitted to her lawful pastors; she has ever acted on it, and taught the sacramental nature of auricular confession. Therefore, apart from the plain promise of Christ, we have an invincible evidence of this truth. If the Church was to do Christ's work, she must have known her own powers. That the Church ever believed in and taught the absolving power, and the necessity of confession, is easily shown. When we quote the early writers, or Fathers of the Church (by the way, we are sorry Dr. Burns should speak so slipshodly of them), we do not claim infallibility for them; but we do claim that they are reliable witnesses to the belief and practice of the Church in their time. That they are, this cannot be denied. Taking them as witnesses, we can show that in every age, and in all parts of the Christian world, the Church taught and practiced sacramental confession. If it be an error, then the whole Church was in error. Christ's promise failed, and she who, according to St. Paul, was the "pillar and ground of truth," became a broken reed, a rock of scandal, a snare for the death of immortal souls. There is no escape from this; no evasion is possible. And the worst is that for fifteen centuries she must have remained so; for fifteen centuries Christ's message was falsely preached to "every creature." All the glorious intellects of those ages, all the great Councils of the Church, were the slaves of error, and the active agents of Satan in seducing souls. Then several so-called Reformers appeared, but only a few of them denied the absolving power; only an infinitesimal portion of Christians are even now freed from the error. Now, in sober truth, can any one who feels a responsibility for his utterances, assert the above? and yet he must assert it, or admit the infallibility of the Church.

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In our last we quoted Tertullian from Africa towards the end of the second century; Irenæus from Lyons, who flourished shortly after the Apostles; and now, further back still, we will quote Dionysius, the Areopagite, who was converted by St. Paul's sermon in the Areopagus. In an epistle to Demophilus, (No. VIII., Edit., Migne, 1857), he rebukes Demophilus for his want of mercy: "You, as your letter shows, I know not why, drove away as an impious sinner one who came before a priest; he, indeed, was praying and confessing that he came for the *medicine of his vices*; but you, fearing nothing, insolently upbraided the good priest, because he had pity on the penitent, and *had justified the impious.*" We have here that the poor sinner came and confessed to the priest, was absolved by him; Demophilus rebuked the priest for being too easy, but Dionysius sternly reproaches Demophilus for his want of mercy. The doctrine of Dionysius is wonderfully like ours, and it is very old indeed. Then we cited Origen from Alexandria, in the third century; Basil from Cappadocia, in the fourth century; Chrysostom, from Constantinople, fifth century; Augustine, from Hippo, same century. We may add St. Ambrose, from Milan, latter part of fourth century. He says: "If you wish to be justified, confess your sins; a sincere confession loosens the bond of iniquity." (L. d. de Penitentia, Cap. 6). And chapter 9, he says: "Many who privately confessed did not wish to perform the public penance sometimes imposed; many conscious of their sins, and fearing future punishment, seek absolution, and when they have received it, through shame are kept from a public supplication. . . . Will one blush to ask of God what he has asked of man? Are you ashamed to supplicate God who knows you, when you are not ashamed to *confess your sins to a man who does not know you?*" This is very clear, indeed; private confession was common, but some feared to perform a public penance.

We could quote many more; but enough has been said to show that in all times, and in all places, the Church believed in and practiced Sacramental Confession. Therefore, it is God's Ordinance; and he who resisteth the ordinance, we are told, purchases to himself damnation.

Dr. Burns admits that in the writers quoted we "have the germs of that very system which 'C.' defends." He might have said more truthfully, the very system itself. However, his admission is much. We cherish strong hopes of yet seeing him with us, for he has the courage to face a difficulty, and the honesty to admit evidence. He showed his scholarship over the average Protestant by freely admitting auricular confession to go back to Leo I., fifth century, and did not stop at Innocent III., thirteenth century; now he sees the germs away back to Tertullian, second century. When he reads this he will, I know, see more than the "germs" in the writings of Dionysius, Paul's convert.

But he says Augustine is with him. As the reference is not given for the passage cited, I fear he has taken it at second hand. If we had the context we could easily show that Augustine did not mean to deny sacramental confession. We gave his testimony in express words regarding the necessity of "confessing to God and the Priest." And (in h. 50 Hom. 12) he says: "Our merciful God wills us to confess in this world, that we may not be confounded in the other." And (in Hom. 49) he lets us know what sort of confession he means: "Let no one say I do penance to God in private. Is it then in vain that Christ has said, 'Whatsoever you loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven?' Is it in vain that the keys have been given to the Church?" According to Dr. Burns they have been given in vain, but St. Augustine believes with the Catholic Church that they have not.

Leo I. did not introduce auricular confession. He could not do so; no man could do so. Would the whole Church, East and West, have accepted it from him? Would Constantinople, always jealous of Rome, have received it? Certainly not. Only God could induce men to submit to it. Leo, in his epistle mentioned by Dr. Burns, decrees the mitigation of public pen-

ances, and asserts that although public confession was practiced by many in the days of early fervor, still by *apostolic usage* private confession is known to be quite sufficient, and more will be brought to repentance by having auricular confession alone. A true vicar of Christ, he looked to the salvation of souls, and mitigated a disciplinary custom, whilst firmly retaining a divine ordinance received from apostolic times. Of this same Leo the General Council of Chalcedon proclaimed that *Peter spoke by the mouth of Leo*. Far from Leo's epistle being any help to Dr. Burns, it and the action of the universal Church triumphantly show that private confession had come down from apostolic times.

We can assure Dr. Burns that the early heretics, Arians, Copts and Monophysites, and we may add, the Nestorians, all of whom fell away from the Church before Leo's time, some of them two hundred years before, teach and practice auricular confession. He may be glad that he is not one of them; so are we; but this does not destroy the historical fact that there they are, scattered through Asia and Africa, living witnesses of what the Church believed on this point in its earliest ages. The argument is simply impregnable. Like the ruined columns of some magnificent temple that tell, even in their blighted grandeur, of past glory, these scattered sects, even in their slow decay, proclaim that early Christendom taught what the Catholic Church of to-day teaches regarding the absolving power.

Those who do not know what confession is deride it. Yes; the usurer, the adulterer, the cheat, the oppressor of the poor, may howl against confession; we would expect that. It sounds well from his lips. He, forsooth, will go to God for pardon. Yes, he may turn up his eyes in church; subscribe to a society for enlightening the heathen, and next day will support a den for ensnaring school girls. We can understand that class of men railing against confession. But we cannot understand how one who believes himself to be a minister of Christ, can think it a source of danger for God's priest to instruct, admonish and advise the penitent in confession.

Every tree is known by its fruit. If confession is a tree accursed, then those who most frequent it will be the greatest criminals. Now, look at results. We except the case of a professed hypocrite, who may spring up anywhere. But take, my reader, your Catholic neighbors. The men whose commercial honesty stands highest; whose private lives are most blameless; those, in a word, who are the best men and citizens, are men who frequent confession. You will find it out if you look around you. But take those Catholics who disgrace the name; who are up before the police court—who frequent low taverns and brothels; these either never, or very rarely, indeed, go to confession. And of our Catholic women, the pure, the high-minded, the charitable, these are the ones who go every month, or fortnight, or week, to confession; whilst those who shame the name of woman never, or very rarely confess. This is a well-known fact. The good fruit proves the tree to be good. Dr. Burns, who lives in a community which can proudly boast of many noble Catholic women, and many men of highest integrity and irreproachable life, all of whom frequent confession, ought to lay aside the old-time prejudice about the corruption of the confessional.

Yours truly,

C.

DR. BURNS' REPLY TO "C.'s" LETTER No. 2.

I have consented again to reply to "C.," because his last, appearing, like his previous communication, simultaneously in two of our local journals, wears an authoritative aspect, and is generally understood to have received the highest sanction. It presents fairly and clearly the R. C. doctrine respecting confession and absolution, and a great variety of vitally important subjects besides. If I do

not refer to any point it embraces I must not be held as consenting to his views on those not overtaken at present, or leaving them by default. I regret that the subject has not been kept by "C." within its original limits, but that he has travelled so discursively into the "regions beyond." It would have been better, in order to the distinct elucidation of the theme that originated this friendly interchange, had he concentrated on it, and maintained the common ground on which we stood, in the possession of the same Scriptures. I, at any rate will endeavour to keep the Scriptural ground, appealing invariably as before to the Roman Catholic version of 1582 and 1609) while doing a little skirmishing in the wilderness of the fathers, and glancing in the other directions, toward which the "ignis fatuus" of my friend would lure me. To his oft repeated fallacy of "begging the question"—renewed again and again in this long letter—"C." has added another fallacy, to which those on our side have now got used—the fallacy, known to logicians as that of "Reasoning in a Circle." "C.," like many of his predecessors when hard pushed, has revived the old and oft exploded device of trying to *prove the Church by the Bible*, and then, *the Bible, by the Church*. It does not satisfactorily meet our respectful request for Scripture proof in favor of auricular confession, such as is practiced in the Roman Catholic Church, to say "in express words the Gospels testify to the power of remitting sins conferred on the Apostles." "That the power of absolving was conferred on the Apostles is outside of profitable controversy." We wish to know what these "express" words are. Give us chapter and verse. Meet fairly and squarely the many passages quoted from your own translation of the Scriptures. You insist on it that the kind of confession you advocate is absolutely necessary to salvation. "For grievous sins (you say, making a distinction between sins for which there is no Bible warrant) confession is not a matter of choice, it is an absolute necessity;" and again, "God will not pardon grievous sins without confession, when it can be made." He has made the law of confession just as much as the law of baptism." We again ask, in your sense, where? I know it is written "He that hideth his sins shall not prosper, but he that shall confess and shall forsake them shall obtain mercy." (Prov. XXVIII, 13.) And "If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins." (1 Jo. I., 9.) But that is our kind of confession, not yours. You insist on it that for a sinner to go *direct to God* is not the right way, and that confessing first in the ear of a priest is essential in order to be finally saved—that this was taught by Christ and practised in Apostolic times. When did our Saviour give instructions to this effect? We are not told. On what occasion did the Apostles practise this form of confession? Not a solitary instance has been named nor can be. Can a sentence be found in those writings that come closest to the Apostolic age that could be even wrested into a favoring of this view? If there were, doubtless such a shrewd and far-sighted observer as "C." would have found it out, and exhibited it in large type.

If it be, as "C." avers, "not a matter of choice, but an absolute necessity," why this ominous silence on the part of those who might be presumed to know most about it? Why were nearly five centuries allowed to elapse before it was made *even permissible*, and over twelve centuries (4 Lateran Council, 1215) ere it became compulsory? What became of the many who, during these great gaps of time, passed into eternity without knowing or practising this indispensable means of salvation?

"C." says again: "In all times and in all places the church believed in and practiced sacramental confession. Therefore it is God's ordinance, and he who resisteth the ordinance, we are told, purchases to himself damnation." Rather hard on us, my good friend, who resist it so strenuously—"After the way which you call heresy, so worship I the God of my fathers" (as Paul puts it, Acts xxiv, 14), and because I honestly resist what you gratuitously call "God's ordinance," do I and all like minded purchase thereby "damnation?" Are we "explicitly commanded" (as you afterwards state) to "hear and obey its (the Church's) teaching, UNDER PAIN OF ETERNAL CONDEMNATION?" *We* are much more charitable. Far be it from us to cherish such thoughts of *you*.

"C." admits that a sinner may go straight to God, but God will not receive him

or remit his sins till he has first appeared before a priest. "The sinner may go directly to Him, but He will say: 'Go show thyself to the priest.'" "C" knows very well the circumstances in connection with which these words, as quoted by him, were used by our Saviour. They are entirely in harmony with our view of confession, and opposed to his. It is the case of the cleansed leper. Now, according to the law of leprosy, as presented in detail Levit. XIII, what was the priest to do? Not to give the disease or to take it away. The victim was to come with it and back again when it was removed, that the priest might discover and declare the signs of its presence in the one case, and its disappearance in the other. His office was purely ministerial, not magisterial; his duty declaratory, not judicial. Six times over in as many verses are we told that he was to pronounce the patient unclean or clean, as the case may be, "binding" him in the former instance, "loosing" him in the latter. Yet the Septuagint rendering of "pronounce unclean" is *meanet*, literally, shall unclean him; and of "pronounce clean," is *katharinet*, literally, "shall cleanse him"—as if it was his doing in both instances, though the passage in the original Hebrew is simply a declaration, not a judicial sentence; Christ and his Apostles, quoted from the Greek version made nigh three centuries previously, and then generally in use. The purpose of Christ's order "Go show thyself to the priest," is to be interpreted in the light of that ancient article of the Hebrew law. The application to the leprosy of sin is manifest, and the minister's duty as well. When, therefore, Christ authorized His disciples to remit or retain sin, and so bind or loose the sinner, he used the well understood language of the Levitical statute, to the effect that, just as the former priests were wont to *pronounce* lepers clean or unclean, so they were to *pronounce* the forgiveness or non-forgiveness of God in the matter of sin, not to *pass* the sentence as though it were by their own "power or authority," they did it. "Who can forgive sin, but GOD ONLY." Man may *declare* it, but cannot do it. This we have seen over and over again to be the unmistakable teaching of Christ and His Apostles. Yet "C." repeats and repeats his former statement, "This power is not merely declaratory, it is efficacious, it is as the power of the Judge, real and effective, though delegated." In view of the "line upon line" which we gave in our lecture on this subject in our last reply to "C.," and now, in this, have we not reason for returning to him his own retort: "Now, in sober truth, can any one who feels a responsibility for his utterances assert the above?"

When asserting the efficacious nature of priestly absolution, "C." endeavors to push a parallel between it and the ordinance of baptism. He elaborates this at considerable length, but the gist of his argument is in the sentence, "Confession is just as much of a necessity as Baptism—the latter regenerates us, the former restores us." "Baptism is the one only means of regeneration. Penitence, the one only means of restoration after a grievous fall." In a matter so momentous we need something more than mere dogmatic assertion. "*Nay, rather to the Law and to the Testimony*" (Isaiah VIII, 20) as our old quotation has it. If, through baptism "the stain of original sin is blotted out, the soul is regenerated, if, indeed, baptism is the 'ONE ONLY MEANS of regeneration,' how comes it:

1. That Christ never presents *water baptism* as the great regenerating force.
2. That not one instance can be given of Christ having ever baptized.
3. That St. Paul says: (1 Cor. I. 14-17) "I give God thanks that I baptized *none of you* but Crispus and Gaius, &c., for Christ sent me NOT TO BAPTIZE but to preach the Gospel." If baptism be the "*one* only means of regeneration," would one so bent on saving souls as Paul have spoken thus or acted thus?
4. That it is said of Simon Magus (Acts VIII. 13) "Then Simon himself believed also, and BEING BAPTIZED, he stuck close to Philip." There are many thoughts suggested by this scene, but these two lie on the surface:

(a) That Simon was baptized on the PROFESSION, *not* on the POSSESSION of faith in the Lord Jesus.

(b) That *baptism did not regenerate him*, for after receiving it from Philip, Peter says to him: "Thou hast no part nor lot in this matter, for thy heart is not right in the sight of God," (v. 21).

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If baptism and confession depend for their efficacy on the mental state of the recipient or penitent, then who can judge of that but He who says: "*I am the Lord who search the heart and prove the reins.*" (Jeremias xvii. 10). Herein even Peter fails, who endorses the baptism of one "whose heart was not right with God," a baptism too, which works no change on that heart.

5. On the other hand, the DYING THIEF was never baptised at all, but who will deny that *he* was regenerated to whom his expiring Lord said: "Amen I say to thee, this day shalt thou be with me in Paradise." (Luke XXIII). While arguing thus, I believe in baptism, both adult and infant, though not attaching to it (inasmuch as the Word of God does not) the saving power which Roman Catholics and Anglo-Catholics claim for it. I am somewhat surprised that the only other passage (in addition to "Show thyself to the Priest," and whosoever sins ye forgive," &c., already fully explained by us) to which "C." refers is that formerly quoted by him Acts xix. 18, "And many of those who believed, came confessing and declaring their deeds." He adds "These words are verified every Saturday night and at other times, in all our Churches." He admits also the book-burning, &c., as "at times verified" which, I suppose, in regard to *certain* books, is the case. Let the passage be carefully and candidly examined—and can anything else than an open, public confession—be taken out of it? The scene is laid not in a Church at all, but "in the school of one Tyrannus," or more probably, from the allusion to the "burning" and "all those that dwell in Asia, Jews and Gentiles,"—flocking to "hear the Word of God," it was in the open air. It is not a coming to confess singly, but "many" came, and not in any private way, which auricular confession necessitates, but "*before all.*" There is nothing like this, when each penitent goes separately into the confessionals usually to be found in R. C. Churches, and makes confessions in the ear of the one listener.

"C.," speaking of Christ's life in His Church, says: "Not only was Christ to remain with the corporation, during the life of the Apostles; He was to remain with it for ever." "When Christ explicitly promises to remain for ever with the corporation, He gives us proof enough that it is to live on unchanged." Our friend, with admirable coolness and complaisance takes for granted that this "Corporation" must be the one to which he belongs. But what would his favorite St. Augustine say to this? When he acted as secretary to the Council of Melvic and Bishop of Hippo, he along with two hundred and seventeen other bishops threatened with excommunication any who might appeal to Rome. One of the canons of that council runs thus: "Whoever wills to appeal to those beyond the sea, shall not be received by any one in Africa, to the Communion." At the sixth Council of Carthage, held in 412, presided over by Aurelius, the Bishop of that city, a formal despatch was forwarded to Celestinus, Bishop of Rome, from the collective episcopate of Africa, warning him not to receive any African appeals or to send any Legates or Commissaries. It is plain therefore that for long, the African Church belonged not to the "Corporation." Then, what of the Eastern Church with its eighty-four millions with which the strife of the Western was so bitter. Did it not claim to be the "Corporation," too? Nay, did not John IV., Patriarch of Constantinople, its visible head, love to call himself "œcumenical Patriarch," which so roused the ire of Gregory I., surnamed the Great, his Western brother and rival, that he wrote (A. D. 595) to the Emperor Mauritius bitterly complaining of the presumptuous assumption. One sentence from this memorable missive is worth quoting, "I confidently say that whosoever calls himself THE UNIVERSAL PRIEST, or desires to be so called in his arrogance, is a forerunner of Anti-Christ," ("Ego fidenter dico, quod quisquis, se universalem sacerdotem vocat, vel vocari desiderat in elatione sua Anti-Christum præcurrit," Greg. Max. Ep. Lib. VI., Ep. 30).

"C." knows the sad tragedy that followed, and how Gregory subsequently received from Phocas this very title; also how, over four centuries after, Gregory VII. (the Hildebrand of 1063) declared, in strange contrast to his progenitor's epistle, thus serving himself heir to the hard epithet hurled at his Oriental brother, "that the Roman Pontiff alone can be properly called universal" ("Quod solus Romanus Pontifex jure dicatur universalis"—Idem Lib. II., Ep. 55).

The "Corporation," therefore of which "C." so repeatedly speaks, cannot be the Roman only, especially when we find two of its visible heads giving forth such opposite testimonies on this vital point, which mirrors a corresponding contrariety, as we shall afterwards find, on a host of others.

The fact is, it never has been shown, nor can be, that the peculiar powers of the Apostles were transmitted or exercised, and as for the continued presence of Jesus, the promise, "*Behold, I am with you all days, even to the consummation of the world*" (Mat. xxviii. 20), belongs not to any one in particular. It takes in the "disciples," the whole household of faith. If any special honor be shown to the "Twelve Apostles of the Lamb," no priority is given to one over the rest, for their Master had just said to them in the previous chapter (xix. 28), "You also shall sit upon twelve seats." But, in point of fact, the same promise of His constant presence is given to the humblest members of His mystical Body, as He says in Mat. xviii, 20, "FOR WHERE THERE ARE TWO OR THREE GATHERED TOGETHER IN MY NAME, *there am I in the midst of them.*" In v. 19, two members of the Church, agreeing together in prayer, are promised an answer, and the verse before that (the 18th), couched in the same general terms, is the oft-quoted, "Amen, I say to you, whatsoever you shall bind upon earth shall be bound also," etc. Might I not here, as in several other places, with a sense of its appropriateness, introduce "C's" own statement: "If we do not believe Christ's word, we are scarcely fit subjects for serious argument." Still, "C's" confidence that he has a Scriptural foundation in this matter to stand on is far from thorough. In one place he says: "THE EXPRESS WORDS the Gospels testify to the power of remitting sins conferred on the Apostles," while, four short sentences afterwards, he says: "That confession of sin such as I have described as necessary, is not taught in such EXPRESS WORDS IS QUITE TRUE." The reason assigned by him for the lack of this "express" Scriptural evidence is somewhat novel in its character. "We must remember (he says) that the sermons of the Apostles which are related are few, and were addressed to unbelievers." Not so. Before Pentecost 120 gathered in the upper room. We then read 3,000 and 5,000. At the period of Stephen's martyrdom (A. D. 37) we read "The Word of the Lord increased, and the number of the disciples was multiplied in Jerusalem exceedingly; a great multitude also of the priests obeyed the faith." Acts -.

There must, therefore, have been multitudes of *believers* in the audiences of the Apostles, who had been regularly enrolled by Baptism as members of the Church, and yet, with reference to those Apostolic addresses, "C." has the candor to acknowledge "*there is nothing about confession in them.*" We go further than "C," when we say that the "unbelievers," before being baptised, were ordered by Peter to confess in the sense in which we understand confession—*i. e.*, open and public—"before all"—as distinguished from the priest's ear. Thus, on the day of Pentecost (Acts ii, 38,) and in Solomon's porch the day after, to the crowd that collected in connection with the healing of the lame man: "Be penitent, therefore, and be converted, THAT YOUR SINS MAY BE BLOTTED OUT," (Acts ii, 19.) Then, in Acts iv, 4, we are informed, "Many of them who had heard the word believed, and the number of the men was made five thousand." On their confession and profession then and there, they received the true absolution, not from Peter but from Him of whom Peter afterwards says, at the first Jerusalem Council, (denying all monopoly of the Spirit's influence that filled the humblest disciple equal with himself): "GOD, *who knoweth the hearts, gave testimony,* GIVING UNTO THEM THE HOLY GHOST AS WELL AS TO US, AND PUT NO DIFFERENCE BETWEEN *us and them.*" (Acts xv, 8-9.) Why then should any now make such "difference," when Peter himself repudiates it, going the length afterwards of saying: "The Ancients that are among you I beseech who am also an Ancient (more properly 'Elder' or Presbyter, for the Greek word is *Presbuteros*). (I Pet. v. 1.)

"C." goes on to say: "It was in their instructions to the new converts after baptism that they would speak of confession, but we have none of these." So you so? Then what are the Apostolic Epistles—Paul's 13 (leaving out Hebrew

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John's 3 (leaving out his Gospel and Apocalypse), Peter's 2, and the one each of James and Jude? What are these, forming the larger portion of the N. T., made up of but just what "C." aptly calls "their instructions to the new converts"—yet where in all these twenty epistles is there ONE SINGLE "instruction" on the subject of auricular confession? With their known anxiety for the good of their "new converts," and that they might be kept from what one of them calls "damnable heresies," that were even then beginning to crop out as tares in the field, and with the belief that "C." expresses that neglect of confession exposes to such fearful consequences, how can he account for such singular silence?

Dislodged thus from the open field of the Word (though claiming that "if we do not believe Christ's Word, we are not fit subjects for serious argument"), still feeling not sure of his ground, for, as he frankly owns "that confession of sins such as I have described as necessary, is not taught in such express words, is quite true," it is just what we might expect that this faithful champion of his faith would retreat into the thicket of the Fathers. While keeping at as convenient a distance as before from Christ and His Apostles, as well as from the fathers that lived closest to them, "C." rings the changes anew on Irenæus of the second century, Tertullian and Origen of the third, Basil of the fourth, Chrysostom and Augustine of the fifth. We are not careful to answer him in this matter, for even supposing that their testimonies referred, not, as we contend, to public as distinguished from private confession, still these were but uninspired men, whose statements cannot for a moment be placed on the same lofty level with those of the Divine founder of our faith and his immediate followers, or those earliest of the Fathers who accompanied with them. Two additional fathers are introduced by "C." to whose testimony he evidently attaches much weight, viz., Dionysius, the Areopagite, and Ambrose.

With reference to the former, he informs us that he was converted by the sermon of Paul in the Areopagus. The quotation from Dionysius' so called epistle to Demophylus, is unfortunate in this respect, that it strikingly represents one of the evils of the confessional in granting absolution too easily to notorious offenders—instance recently, it is reported, Carey, Brady, O'Donnell, etc. It is not denied that some of the worst criminals that have gone into eternity from the scaffold have been absolved beforehand. The effect of this as a sedative to the conscience, the knowledge that, on such easy terms, it can be got, cannot be helpful to morality and good order. Demophylus, according to the showing of "C.," had found fault with a priest for absolving "an impious sinner" who came to him "for the medicine of his vices." In this we conceive Demophylus was, as his name indicates, "a true friend of the people." Yet Dionysius rates him severely in the extract given because he said anything to "the good priest" who had "justified the impious." We would have "pity on the penitent" as much as any, but infected characters, "impious sinners," as Dionysius calls this one, should remain at quarantine a good while ere a clean bill of health be given them. "C." adds, "the doctrine of Dionysius is wonderfully like ours." I am sorry for it. The principle and practice of making absolution easy with "impious sinners," or to use the expression of this Father "justifying the impious," is injurious in its influence on society, and the Church. Speaking of the writing of Dionysius, he calls it "very old indeed," and twice over styles him "Paul's Convert." But this is all pure conjecture with no historical foundation to rest on.

1. The internal evidence is against it. (a) The highflown style is so different from the beautiful simplicity of the Apostolic age. (b) Peculiar theological terms, too, are employed which were not known till the fourth century. (c) The allusions to persons and events of later date. (d) The mystical and philosophical views brought out in certain of his works bear the stamp of the later outcome of Neo-Platonism that was associated with Proclus, who died A. D., 485.

2. This harmonizes with the time when the works of Dionysius were first spoken of. The stubborn fact cannot be got over that the works of this so-called Apostolic Father were never heard of till the conference of Constantinople, A. D., 533.

3. Though a bold attempt was made by Abbot Hilduin and others during the dark ages to identify Dionysius with St. Dennis of the third century, the patron saint of France, it also had to yield to the light of more accurate research. Although certain Jesuit writers such as Halloix, Delrio, Natalis-Alexander, &c., clung to the first or third century theory, the more reliable and authoritative R. C. theologians, such as Sirmond Launoi, Morinus, Dallacns, Le-Nouary, &c., have candidly yielded the earlier and accepted the later Chronology. The authorities are too numerous to mention, but can be given in detail if necessary.

St. Ambrose is the only other new Father named and quoted from by "C." (born at Treves, 340, died at Milan 397.)

We are surprised at Ambrose being quoted, who in other portions of his works goes against C.'s favorite dogmas—e. g.: On *Transubstantiation*, Ambrose says: "Make this ascribed oblation reasonable and acceptable, WHICH IS THE FIGURE of the Body and Blood of our Lord Jesus Christ" ("Figura est corporis et sanguinis Domini nostri Jesu Christi"—Ambros Opera, tom II. De Sacrament, Lib. iv., Cap. 5, Folio, Ed. Bened. 1690.)

On *Purgatory*, St. Ambrose says: "Death is a haven of rest, and makes not our condition worse, but, according as it finds every man, so it reserves him to the judgment to come"—De Bono Mortis, tom I., Lib. I., Cap. iv., et Cap. ii., Paris, 1686.

I have in reserve six other fuller quotations of like import, as: "They are not involved in any trials or troubles. They begin to foresee their future glory, and soothing themselves with that consolation, to rest tranquilly in their mansions, attended by guardian angels" (Idem Lib. I., Cap. XI., Col. 408, 409.) While recommending celibacy, he is silent on the Papal supremacy, and comes out against indulgences, the Apostolic succession, the immaculate conception and the primacy of Peter. We must therefore interpret his views on Confession in "C.'s" extract in the light of his recognized opinions on other questions. The second par. of the passage quoted makes it harmless as an argument for auricular confession—"Are you ashamed to supplicate God, who knows you, when you are not ashamed to CONFESS YOUR SINS TO A MAN WHO DOES NOT KNOW YOU?" The italics are "C.'s, not mine. Right glad are we that he has emphasized that clause. It goes to the "root of the matter." Again and again, in his previous, as in his present, communication, has "C." made the validity of the absolution depend on the "moral dispositions" of the penitent. In No. 1 he said: "How should they remit, and how should they retain, unless they knew the person's internal state?" Does not C.'s very quotation from Ambrose show the impossibility of any mere man knowing another's internal state? This were to exercise the prerogative of the great Heart Searcher, or of Him who knew all men, and needed not that any should give testimony of man, for HE KNEW WHAT WAS IN MAN (John ii. 24, 25). It would be a legitimate inference, from the language of St. Ambrose, to say that we might well be ashamed "to confess our sins to a man who does not know us." It is just at this very point that we can "make a score again (to use "C.'s" expression) in the matter of Simon Magus, where he thought he caught us napping.

"He (Dr B.) thinks (says "C.") St. Peter would have absolved him if he could." Well, certainly, from all that we are told of the holy St. Peter, we could not think him less merciful than Dionysius, the Areopagite, and yet we find that unique character sharply chiding one who favored this very course of keeping absolution from an "impious sinner," who came for the "medicine of his vices." The eminent course of Dionysius "in justifying the impious" is "wonderfully like ours" (says "C."). The stern course of Peter in refusing to remit the sin of Simon, "that impious sinner" (a course the opposite of the Areopagites)—this is also "wonderfully like ours." "He acted (say "C.") just as our priests would act to-day." Are both right? This suggests another point. What is the reason assigned by "C." for Peter's delay in granting absolution? We have said that absolution cannot be given unless the penitent has the *proper disposition*. But how can Peter know this man's internal state? To know whether he has the proper disposition is to know the heart. We have already seen that in giving Simon baptism on profession of his

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faith, Peter and Philip, though under the guidance of the Holy Spirit in a fuller measure than most now, judged of this deceiver more favorably than he deserved. The after discovery of "his heart not being right with God" was not the result of his seeing into his heart—that is hid from mortal eyes. "The heart is perverse above all things and UNSEARCHABLE, WHO CAN KNOW IT?" Jeremiah 17, 9. But "out of the abundance of his heart" the sorcerer's mouth hath spoken perverse things. What he said and did showed what he was. As Peter mistook in judging of his PROFESSION, he might, too, in the matter of his CONFESSION. To say, then, that "a person's internal state," or whether he has "the proper disposition" must be known (as "C." has repeatedly brought out), ere absolution can be given, is equivalent to an indefinite postponement of it and an acknowledgment of its impossibility. As the Psalmist puts it (Psalms CXXXVIII, 6), "Such knowledge is become wonderful to me: IT IS HIGH AND I CANNOT REACH TO IT,"

"C." devotes another considerable paragraph to *Augustine*, of whom he is so fond, that we must pause again in front of that venerable name. "He says Augustine is with him. As the reference is not given for the passage cited, I fear it has been taken at second hand," writes "C." On my part, "peradventure, it was an oversight." I pretty generally give the references, but they occupy space. He might have spared the "secondhand" hit, especially when in an earlier portion of his letter he is in the same condemnation with one of his most important quotations on a branch of the subject to be afterwards noticed, when he writes: "We must all say with the great Augustine, 'I would not believe the Scriptures unless the Catholic Church proposed them to me.' I endorse all the passages on confession given by him from Augustine. They are quite in accordance with our views. I wonder if he accords as thoroughly with Augustine's views on *purgatory* as when he writes: "We read of heaven and hell, but the third place we are utterly ignorant of; yea, we find it not in scripture." (*Tertium penitus ignoramus*, etc. Sec. 14, de verb Domet Hypeo, I., 5, contra Pelag:) We wonder if he agrees with Augustine's testimony against the multitude of ceremonies in August Opera tom II., Ad Inquisitiones Jarnarii seu Epist. 14, Paris, 1679, or that noble burst of his on the marks of the true Church, when, combating the Donatists, he says: "Let them show me their church, *not in the Councils of their Bishops*, not in the writings of disputers, not in the MIRACLES and PRODIGES of which they boast, but, let them show it to me in the ordinances of the law, in the predictions of the prophets, in the songs of the Psalms, in the preaching of the Evangelists and in the Canonical authorities of the Sacred books." THIS IS OUR FOUNDATION to which we inviolably attach ourselves, REPOSING ONLY upon this Scripture which is come from the Prophets and Apostles." Was I not right in saying that in the main, at least, "Augustine is with us"—in holding by the true confession as well as "succession," in testifying against error and for the truth, and in believing that Christ's true Catholic Church is built, not on any mere man, however eminent, but "is built upon the foundation of the APOSTLES AND PROPHETS, JESUS CHRIST HIMSELF being the chief corner stone."—(Eph. II, 20).

"C." repeats his former boast in these terms: "I think we can triumphantly say: Candid reader, who has ANTIQUITY on his side?" But "in this same confident boasting," which it is unnecessary to repeat refuting, "C." would do well to listen to his favorite, "the great St. Augustine," who meets the plea of "antiquity" thus: "This is a part of the devil's craft and subtlety, who, as he invented these false worships, and sprinkled some juggling tricks to draw men into them, so he took such a course that, in process of time, the fallacy was commended, and the filthy invention was excused, by being derived from antiquity. Whereas the reason of truth is not from custom (which is from antiquity) but from God, who is proved to be God, not by long continuance (or antiquity), but by eternity.—Quest et Vet et Novo Testamentis, Quest CXIV.

"C." chides me for speaking "so flippantly" of the Fathers. Show me where

and I shall at once make "the amende." Is it "flippancy" to say, as I did, "They, though some of them NOBLE MEN, are liable to err, and did err?" Is not this substantially "C's" own opinion, as he writes: "When we quote the early writers, or fathers of the Church, WE DO NOT CLAIM INFALLIBILITY FOR THEM?" Quite so. That is just what we think. The fathers are not infallible. In other words, they are "liable to err," and their writings, like all mere human productions, are, as I afterwards indicate, "shifting sand" as compared with the solid rock of the Infallible Word, anyone disbelieving which is deemed by our friend himself as not a "fit subject for serious argument." "C." finds "aid and comfort in the" thought that I acknowledge the "germs" of the Romish system, as being in the Fathers, and cheerily and charitably gives expression to the hope, on this account, of winning me over. Not so fast, my good friend. I not merely firmly believe that certain of the Fathers have in their writings "the germs" whose "full corn in the ear" is that "system which "C." holds," but I believe, with the holy apostles, that these "germs" were beginning to show themselves in their day, for, says St. Paul, "The mystery of iniquity ALREADY WORKETH, only that he who now holdeth do hold until he be taken out of the way, and then that wicked one shall be revealed, whom the Lord Jesus shall kill with the spirit of His mouth and shall destroy with the brightness of His coming," &c. (2 Thess. ii., 7-12)

At this point "C's" faith in the Word as the sufficient and sole standard seems to fail, and he begins to write of it somewhat after the fashion he incorrectly charges me with in my treatment of the Fathers. He, by a stroke of his pen, rules the larger portion out altogether (the O. T.), and as for the New Testament, it must come only on a level with the Fathers and the Church as its mind is expressed in the Decrees of Councils and the Bulls, and especially the "living voice" of the Pope. This, of course, removes at once the common platform on which we were beginning pleasantly to meet and move, and makes one feel like turning on "C." the sharp edge of his own weapon—that "if we do not believe Christ's WORD WE ARE NOT FIT SUBJECTS FOR SERIOUS ARGUMENT." Yet, let us not part so abruptly, but reason together a little longer.

"*The Old Testament is out of the question in this controversy,*" writes "C." How so? Is not the Old Testament the favorite armory from which you get the weapons you adroitly use in defence of the priesthood and many of your rites and ceremonies? Why, because it suits your purpose, discard it!—so (I was almost going to say "flippantly") here? The precious experiences I gave of Old Testament worthies *going to God direct* and pouring the full tide of their pent-up emotions, not into the ear of a man of like passions with themselves, but into the wide, warm heart of Him who alone has power on earth to forgive sin, are entirely in point. These confessions are very far from being "out of the question," such as that of the sacred Psalmist, "I have acknowledged my sin to THEE, and my injustice I have not concealed. I said I will CONFESS against myself, my injustice to THE LORD, and THOU hast forgiven the wickedness of my sin." (Ps. xxxii, 5) or that claim of the All Wise God to receive confessions, as His exclusive prerogative. "I AM, I AM HE THAT BLOTS OUT THY INIQUITIES for my own sake, and I will not remember thy sins." (Isaias, xlili, 25).

When ruling the Old Testament out of the controversy, and talking lightly of a WRITTEN, as contrasted with a *spoken*, revelation, has "C." forgotten how uniformly Christ appealed to it, preaching His first sermon from Is. 61, 1, making the roaring lion limp away with three thrusts of the sword of the spirit, saying thrice over: "*It is written,*" how all through His wondrous life he loved to quote it, how he spake it again and again on the cross, and breathed out his holy soul into the bosom of his Father, with a verse of it on His quivering lips. As fond of the Old Testament were the holy apostles. The quotations in the New Testament from the books of Moses are 90, and references to it over 100; from the Psalms 71, references 30; from Isaias 56,

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references 48; from the minor prophets about 30, making 639 in all. We cannot therefore submit to such a peremptory dismissal of the Old Testament.

"C." disparages also the sufficiency of the New Testament as a guide and standard of appeal. It is a mere "dead letter" "*without an infallible living voice*" it is of no account. Indeed, he says: "Christianity is impossible." This is repeated in a variety of forms, some of them violent in their imperiousness and dogmatism, in illustration of his position. "The fountain source of many errors, indeed of *all religious error*, is the blind persistence with which man, in spite of incontrovertible facts, will hug the delusion that *the Bible alone is the sole rule of faith*," &c. A good deal of the writing in this part of the letter plays only two effectually into the hands of the very infidels whose allies he thinks many of us are.

Grant "C's" premises, and how could we "put to flight the army of the aliens?"

To bring their artillery to bear on fortifications resting, not on the rock of Scripture, but on the morass of tradition, of bulls, of Decretals, "THIS is what Atheists want," "and it is far from pleasant to find many *Roman Catholics* of good parts, aiding them in this."

How does "C." like that turning of it? There are several other portions of his well written letter that tempt one to give a kindred boomerang force to his own words. "It may sound grandly to declaim. Vague words usually please the unthinking; it may tickle one's vanity to imagine one's self superior," &c. But this proves nothing save the want of proof.

"Our Saviour never commanded His Apostles to write. He never wrote Himself. He taught and He commanded His Disciples to teach." "John only wrote because urged by his Disciples," &c. Who speaks thus? Surely "an enemy hath done it." Can it be the faithful monitor who afterwards so earnestly warus us against giving "aid and comfort to the enemy." It is of that style of writing, when used by respectable and responsible men, and the insinuations it contains and conveys, our modern Free Thinkers lay hold, and the sad condition of France to-day, and for years, as a fevered patient tossing on her volcanic bed, seeking rest but finding none, is but a recoil from the thralldom of that "ecclesiastical authority" on which my opponent sets such high store. The leaves from this Tree of Life are now beginning to reach her plague spot and staunch her wounds. Would that she could only sit under its shadow and shake it to satiety! Was then the New Testament a mere afterthought--an accidental production? Would it have been better to have the words of Christ and His Apostles float down to us on the tide of tradition? "C's" eulogy on tradition would almost lead one to that conclusion. We know how a message sent from one to another alters in the passage. I found it so the other day in a very simple matter about which it seemed as if a mistake would be impossible. Yet, with but one between myself, the serder, and the party to whom it was sent, it got completely changed on the way. How much more with the great mystery of Godliness, and those momentous truths that concern the soul, salvation and eternity? How regardful, then, of our truest interests, and alive to the risks and uncertainties of tradition, was Jesus, when He said to John: "What thou seest WRITE IN A BOOK and send it *to the churches*," etc. (Rev. I, 11.) We need not go beyond the testimony of this very John to discover that in writing his Gospel, Epistles and Revelation as well, he had an inspiration far different from what "C." indicates. "These are written, (he says in his Gospel xx, 34) that you may believe, etc., and have life through His name." We believe in the "living voice," too, especially if it comes *direct* from a holy Apostle, without any intermediate parties to intercept its passage, or to give color to it in its course, as when the beloved disciple spoke face to face with the well-beloved Gaius and the Lady elect. (2 John, v. 12; 3 John, v. 13, 14); but human traditions cannot give Apostolic sayings to us, as to those "face to face" and "mouth to mouth," and therefore we are glad when John had

"many things to write unto us"—that he did "by ink and pen write unto us." It is evident that He who is "the Truth" did not deem it error, far less "the fountain source of many errors, indeed, of all religious error," to "lug" what "C." calls the "*delusion*"—that the Bible alone is the sole rule of faith, and that each man is "competent to interpret it." In that very Gospel of John, whose origin is so misrepresented, Christ says: indicating His special interest in the O. T., "If you did believe Moses, you would perhaps believe me also, for HE WROTE OF ME; but if you do not believe HIS WRITINGS, how will you believe MY WORDS?" Then He gives us His own search-warrant, without the least hint of aught else being needed. "Search the *Scriptures* (or *writings*) etc., the same are they that testify of me." (John v., 39, 46, 47.) Dives evidently thought that "the living voice" of Lazarus, coming straight from Abraham's bosom, would have more weight with his five brethren than what "C." calls the "dead Letter of the Word." Father Abraham, from his answer, was evidently of a different opinion, and thought the Scriptures sufficient, though there was then only half of the Blessed Book to instruct them. "Abraham said to him, they have Moses and the Prophets, let them *hear them*," and again, "If they hear not Moses and the Prophets, neither will they believe if one rise again from the dead." (Luke xvi, 29, 31).

I would be satisfied to rest the argument for the sufficiency of Scripture as the sole rule of Faith at this point—and yet "the half of it has not been told you."

Does it seem the least likely that our Saviour would favor that *tradition* of which "C." speaks in such glowing terms, when his chief complaint against the priests of old was that they taught for doctrines, the commandments of men, and hid the candle of the Lord beneath the "bushel" of tradition. "Leaving the commandment of God, (He says,) ye *hold the tradition of men*," "and He said to them, Well do you make void the commandment of God, that you may keep your own tradition, making void the word of God by your own traditions which you have given forth." (Mark vii. 7, 9, 14). Most evidently St. Peter also felt that tradition would make us the dupes of "cunningly devised fables," and therefore he is bent on making provision through the committing of the truths he taught to writing, against our being led astray. "I will do my endeavor also, that after my decease also, you may often have whereby you may keep a memory of these things." How is their memory to be refreshed? Through the Word of God, of which he goes on to speak. "We have the MORE FIRM prophetic word whereunto ye do well to attend," more reliable than the bright transfiguration light of which he speaks, or the voice from the cloud. The light of tradition is a delusive will-o'-the-wisp;" the light of reason is a glimmering taper; the lights of conscience and of passion are but "sparks of our own kindling." "The light of philosophy is as the Aurora Borealis, but this word *which came not at any time by the will of man, for the holy men of God spake, inspired by the Holy Ghost.*" (2 Pet. i, 15-21. 2 Tim., iii, 16). This is the light shining in a dark place till the day dawns.

I have already quoted Augustine in favor of inspired Scripture as the sole rule of faith, and could multiply proofs without number from all the most reliable Fathers, confirmatory of the views of Christ, and John, and Peter, and Paul already presented, but your time will not allow. Take one or two. Thus Irenæus, to whom "C." is so partial. "We following only one true Lord, and having His discourses as THE RULE OF TRUTH." Iren. adv. Haer. iv. 39.—and Tertullian, frequently quoted by our friend, says: "As for Hermogenes, let his shop produce THE WRITTEN WORD. If he be unable to produce *the Written Word* in substantiation of his tenets, let him fear the woe appointed for those who add to it or DEDUCT from it." Tertul. adv. Hermog. sec. 12, and Athanasius—the author of the well-known creed—"the holy and divinely inspired Scriptures are sufficient of themselves for the declaration of the truth. (Athanas. oratio contra Gent). Cyprian, too, who is in great favor

with "C." very properly asks, with reference to the tradition extolled by him: "*Whence is that pretended tradition?* God testifies that these things are to be done which are *written*." Cyp. Epis. 4, xxiv., and Cyril (also quoted by "C.") "Nor even a tittle ought to be delivered *without the authority of the Holy Scriptures*." (Cyr. Heiron Catech iv., page 30). But a truce to these quotations, which might be multiplied indefinitely. "C." dwells on the Church as "the infallible guide to truth—unless this be admitted, the Scriptures fall to the ground. That body is the living exponent of the dead letter of Scripture. He even goes the length of saying: "*Deny the infallibility of the Church, and you deny the possibility of CHRISTIANITY*." The repeating of this last extreme proposition is its own best refutation.

"C." dwells much on the infallibility of the Church. But wherein does this infallibility reside? Here we are quite at sea, for we find the Italian section of the R. C. Church vesting it in Popes; the Gallican or French, in Councils, while England and America were wont to go for a blending of the two. Our unknown friend brings the living voice of the infallible Church into contrast with the "Dead Letter of Scripture" to show the superiority of the former. But is there as much life in the declarations of the fathers, the decrees of councils, and the bulls of Popes, as in the "Word of God that *LIVETH* and remaineth forever," that "Word of the Lord which endureth forever, and which by the Gospel has been preached unto you," as your own Peter puts it (1 Pet. i., 23-25). If to be in a written book makes it a "dead letter," it is but a question which is the deadest letter, which *we* at least feel at no loss to decide, whether that which is to be found in these sacred writings which have God for their author, salvation for their end, and truth without any mixture of error for their subject matter, or those other writings of human production scattered through an endless quantity of ponderous and inaccessible tomes. The Council of Trent and the Creed of Pius IV., its echo, say with "C." that the word is to be interpreted according to "the *unanimous consent of the fathers*," but on what dogmas are they unanimous? And how are we to ascertain their unanimity? I have only seen throughout our entire Dominion but *two* (2) complete editions of the Greek and Latin Fathers, one in the Presbyterian College, Montreal, the other in "Laval University" (R. C.), Quebec. The former in 400 handsomely bound volumes, was presented by Mr. Peter Redpath, at a cost of \$1,500. Who can procure all these and read them, so as to find out whether or not they are unanimous in their views on this or that position of Scripture. Had we time I could easily show how radically they differ on a host of points. But the infallible Church's mind must be discovered also from Council decrees and Papal decretals. After getting through them with the great patristic volumes, if we get not befogged and bewildered amid labyrinthine mazes (excuse my slippancy) when you think you have reached a "rest and be thankful," you must, after taking breath, resume your journey, though plodding wearily (if you can get at them), through eight folio volumes of bulls, ten of decretals, thirty-one of the Acts of Councils, fifty-one of Acts Sanctorum, and so on. Now, do you seriously think that to search all these is any improvement on Christ's "easy, artless, unencumbered plan." "Search the Scriptures." It might make us "Dr. Dryasdusts;" but the reverse of the noble Bereans who "*searched the Scriptures* to see whether they were so." I could show, did time permit, how councils contradicted one another, even more than the fathers, and how time and again Pope was pitted against Pope. All these form but a "dead, lifeless, non-speaking series" of volumes, having much less of the "living" and "speaking" about them than that blessed word, whose wondrous writers "though dead, yet speak," for "there are no speeches nor languages where their voices are not heard." Be it remembered, too, that the first eight general councils were held in the Eastern Church, and that the Western was hardly represented at them, so that their decisions did not mirror the mind of universal Christendom. In some of the Western

councils, too, such as Constance (1414) they voted by nations, not by bishops so that a nation with ten bishops counted one, as much as a nation with a hundred. Then these councils went often by a majority vote. Thus in one of 564 bishops, the Catholics carried it over the Donatists by only eight votes (286 to 278). Sometimes it went the wrong way, as in the Council of Selencia where 145 went for Arianism and but 15 for the orthodox side. These are but a few of the many difficulties connected with making church decisions the standard of appeal. Then, came the great disruption when for eight seventy years there were *two Popes at Rome*, and *Avignon*, that great Western schism when the rival Pontiffs elected by the Italian and French factions, emptied on one another's heads their brimful wrath vials. Which are we to believe, the men of Avignon or the men of Rome? All through the "living voice," whose virtues are lauded, gives an "uncertain sound."

On the subject of Papal infallibility let me quote *St. Augustine*. In his second treatise on the 1st Ep. of St. John, speaking on that passage in Mat. 16 on which Romanists base the pretension of Peter's primacy and infallibility, Augustine says: "What do the words mean, I will build my Church on this rock? Answer, on this faith, on that which he said, thou art the Christ the Son of the living God." So far from believing that the Church was built on Peter, or that any plea of infallibility could be urged in behalf of him, and his successors, this illustrious prelate, to whose opinion "C." attaches so much weight, says in his 124th treatise on St. John, "On this rock which thou hast confessed I will build my Church, since *Christ was the rock*." Then, again, in his 13th sermon, "Thou art Peter, and on this rock (petra) which thou hast confessed, on this rock which thou hast known, saying, 'Thou art the Christ the Son of the living God,' I will build my Church ABOVE MYSELF, who am the Son of the living God. I WILL BUILD IT ON ME, and NOT ME ON THEE." This was the view of all Christendom, as well in Augustine's day. It is a striking fact that none of the apostles (Judas always excepted) proved so thoroughly fallible as Peter, and what do the admirers of celibacy think of this? We have no record of any of them being married save himself. How often he crossed his Master, and fifteen years after the Ascension (A. D. 58) we find St. Paul saying of him, though "full of the Holy Ghost," showing how little he believed in his infallibility. "When Cephas was come to Antioch I withstood him to the face, because he was to be blamed, and to his DISSIMULATION THE REST OF THE JEWS consented, so that BARNABAS ALSO WAS LED by them INTO THAT DISSIMULATION." Gal. ii., 11, 13. (Romanist version, from which all my quotations are given.) This ought effectually to dispose of the plea of infallibility for Peter or any of his "so-called" successors.

"C." holds by the dogma of the Pope's Infallibility, that the Vatican Council of 1870, the first since Trent, in 1563, formulated and fulminated. The decree then given forth, after keen and protracted opposition, amid lightning and thunderings, and a political earthquake, engulfing the Empire of France, the eldest son of the church, strangely following it, ran as follows: "Therefore faithfully adhering to the tradition received from the beginning of the Christian faith, for the glory of God our Saviour, the exaltation of the Catholic religion and the salvation of Christian people, the sacred Council approving, we teach and define that it is a dogma divinely revealed that the Roman Pontiff, when he speaks *ex cathedra*, that is, when in discharge of the office of pastor and doctor of all Christians, by virtue of his supreme apostolic authority, he defines a doctrine regarding faith and morals, to be held by the universal Church, by the divine assistance promised to him in blessed Peter (Lk. xxii., 32) is possessed of that infallibility with which the Divine Redeemer willed that his church should be endowed for defining doctrine regarding faith or morals, and that therefore such definitions of the Roman Pontiff are IRREFORMABLE OF THEMSELVES and not from the consent of the Church." Then, in the true Tridentine style, it winds up: "But if any one (which may

God avert) presume to contradict this our definition, let him be Anathema." We and all true Protestants presume to contradict it, and therefore come under the curse. How can we help contradicting it, when it goes in the face of Scripture and history, of all science and sense. The whole Vatican decree which "C." contends for is based on the continuity of the succession from Peter downwards, and of each link in the chain being intact and un sullied. As regards the integrity of the chain, it is enough to say that no one is sure as to Peter himself or the first after Peter, and as to the third and fourth there was among the early fathers the utmost diversity. The chain has, in fact, nothing to hang on. Then as to the quality of the links. We have already found council contradicting council. The seventh general Council, known as the second Nicene, convened by the infamous Empress Irene in 787, established image worship. This was endorsed by another general Council at Constantinople, but as soon as it was known in the West, in spite of the efforts of the Roman See, which went in the same direction, we find an important Council of three hundred bishops meeting under Charlemagne, and condemning the worship of images. At Constance and at Basle two different Councils, found "C's" living voice, or infallible authority, not in Popes but in councils, while two opposition councils held at Ferrara, and the Lateran, find it not in councils, but in Popes.

Now which are we to believe? It is curious to find "C." contending for the 'living voice' and then when proof is wanted on any point he leaves the "living present" and falls back on the *dead past*. When it comes to a question between this one book which God has written as the Romanists himself acknowledges, and the many books unobtainable most, if not all of them, to which he would invite us, we can be at no loss which to choose—as the more excellent way. To follow "C's" advice is to enter on a track in which the wisest will be sure to wander, and which the wealthiest alone can attempt. To follow along the highway the great God has "cast up and laid down for us," is to go on a track in regard to which—we may say with the Prophet Isaiah: (xxxv, 8) "THIS SHALL BE UNTO YOU A STRAIGHT WAY, SO THAT FOOLS SHALL NOT ERR THEREIN." The oldest and most long-headed will be puzzled in trying to interpret the hundreds of volumes that claim the authorship of Fathers, councils and Popes, but as for this Word whose sufficiency "C." questions; we are informed by Paul, the only Scripture writer who is thought to have in his writings "things hard to be understood," that from our very 'INFANCY we may know the *Holy Scriptures* which *can instruct* THEE to salvation by the faith which is in Christ Jesus." (2 Tim. iii, 15, 16.) We find the same contrariety among Popes, as among the Fathers and councils. Remember the principle of infallibility in the "living voice," being applied to one Pope must belong to all. This was urged by the opponents of the dogma at the Vatican Council (notably by the Archbishop of St. Louis, and the Bishop of Rottenburg). They brought up the case of Pope Honorius I, who had become one of those "early heretics," whom "C" says held by confession and with whom he is glad I have no affinity. Honorius was Pope thirteen years (625-638). He adopted Monothelite views, and was condemned and excommunicated by the sixth Œcumenical Council, held at Constantinople, 680. To use the not over charitable language of the act of excommunication, he was deposed as "a heretic who, with the help of the old serpent, had scattered deadly error." Two succeeding councils, that already named, which established image-worship in 787, the next in 869, endorse the action of the sixth council, and for four centuries thereafter down to the eleventh century each occupant of the Papal chair on his accession to office, took a solemn oath of abjuration, putting under an "eternal anathema," the authors of the Monothelite heresy, and especially Pope Honorius, "because he had given aid and comfort to the perverse doctrines of the Heretics." In breviaries, prior to the sixteenth century, we find allusion made to the sad Apostasy of Honorius. Leo II, in 682, denounced Honorius, his predecessor, as

one who "enleaved by profane treason," "profana proditiōne," to overthrow the "Immaculate Faith of the Roman Church." In like manner Zephyrinus and Celestus in the third century were Patripassian. Tiberius in the fourth century opposed Athanasius, who was known as "Father of Orthodoxy," siding with Arius, that early impugner of the Supreme Deity of Christ. Felix II. was a pronounced Arian. Innocent I. condemned Pelagianism. Zosimus, his successor, (417) was a decided Pelagian. Certain opinions of Nicholas III. and Clement V. were denounced by John XXII, in 1334. Several Popes spoke and wrote of human depravity in a way to involve the Virgin Mary, and at utter variance with the recent dogma of the immaculate conception. We thus find the Popes, like the councils, all at sixes and sevens, and the question suggests itself, which I leave "C." to answer, which Pope are we to believe, to which "living voice" are we to listen? On vital points one says one thing, another the very opposite. Both, on my friend's principles, are invested with infallible authority, but which should we follow? Sometimes a Pope will contradict himself. Thus Pius IX., who presided at the Council which proclaimed Papal Infallibility, and had many excellent qualities, commenced his official career as Sovereign Pontiff, a great political reformer and advocate of Italian unity. Yet, latterly, how keenly he opposed the cause of his early advocacy! Did the "living voice" of that weak but worthy man speak infallibly in 1848 or 1870. Which? At the Vatican Council the case of Honorius was dwelt on by the powerful minority. The majority could not resist the wisdom and the spirit that spoke, Acts vi, 13. The principle was brought out with transparent clearness by several of the minority who composed the best talent of the Council, "Si falsus in uno, falsus in omnibus." (If false in one, false in all). But they carried it their own way. As has been well said, "A dogma triumphed over history. If facts are against opinion (It was said by the Infallibilists) *all the worse for the facts.*" I am sorry to find such an intelligent authority as "C." classing himself with the majority.

The Vatican Council of 1870 made the Pope the Infallible Head. If it be true why was it not proclaimed sooner? If it be true in one case it must be in all. It shows their deep sense of the difficulties encompassing the question—that, when the vote was taken in secret session (July 13, 1870), of 601 members present, 450 bishops voted in the affirmative (placet), 88 in the negative (non-placet), 62 voted with a qualification, and over 80, though in Rome at the time, did not vote at all. That evening, the minority, comprising some of the most able and accomplished prelates, sent a deputation to the Pope, beseeching him on their knees to modify the decree. On the 17th July, 56 bishops opposed to the dogma, sent a written protest to the Pope. On the evening of that day these, with 60 besides, left Rome, and this gave an easy victory to the majority. I have heard it repeatedly stated that the late much respected and lamented Archbishop Connolly was opposed to Papal Infallibility at the Council, though ultimately falling in. On July 18 it passed. In the course of the debates Bishop Strossmeyer, of Bosnia, delivered a memorable address, almost every sentence of which I can cordially endorse. He co-operated with Archbishop Kendrick, of St. Louis, Hefele, of Rottenburg, and others of the opposition. All this goes to show how uncertain is this "living voice" on which "C." lays so much stress. I am sorry that "C." has touched on the *fruits* of the confessional. I cannot enter on that field without bringing out facts and statistics from which I would rather abstain. With all that he has said of the character of the Roman Catholic population of Halifax I perfectly agree. His eulogy on the excellent ladies also is doubtless richly deserved, but that is no fair test. But I must have done. I cannot notice any other anonymous writers. Anything of consequence in their productions has been fully met in these replies to "C." Nor can I engage to continue the controversy on the present indefinite footing. I am not expected to know with whom I am contending, and the disadvantage is mani-

lest the more when two or three masked combatants are at me simultaneously. Is their position so untenable and imperilled as to need so many to defend it? I repel as utterly unjust and untrue the charge of one that I "provoked this controversy." Quite the reverse. How did it begin? The Missioners by their utterances and fly-sheets, etc., challenged opposition. In common with several of my brethren, I met them in a frank, open way, having no desire or design of bringing Roman Catholics into the contest. "C." of his own free will, championed their side. Nor do I or any one else, I suppose, whose opinion is worth having, regret it. I could not (in the circumstances), but respond, recalling the Syrian's order (2 Chron. xviii, 30): "Fight ye not with small or great, but with THE KING ONLY." But why should he go into the battle disguised? (v. 29). This has been my drawback all through. I have tried to present our views plainly and honestly, as doubtless "C." also has done.

I do not think the columns of a secular journal form the best arena for such a discussion, though they certainly secure a wide publicity for it. Their readers must be getting tired of such lengthy communications, which, on a subject of this kind, it is hard to shorten.

I have endeavored since coming to this city, to study the things that make for peace, sometimes, as in March, 1876, under keen provocation, with the memory then of Antigonish, and occasionally since, when certain strangers and others, unlike in spirit to "C.," my present honorable antagonist, have travestied our most cherished opinions and traduced our most honored names. I shall continue as much as lieth in me to live peaceably with all men, and especially with my good friend "C.," to whom I would cordially and sincerely offer the Christian compliments of the season, suggestive to so many the world over, of "Peace on earth and good will to men."

LETTER OF "C," No. 3.

Sir,

Were length the only requisite quality in a "reply," then that of Dr. Burns would be admirable. But the real point of discussion is ignored, half a dozen new questions are started, and the reader is at a loss to know whether Papal Infallibility, Purgatory, the Immaculate Conception, the Real Presence, or the Vatican Council is the subject of the lecture. He would never think it was an answer to my last.

Now, I am quite prepared, at a suitable time, to defend each and every doctrine of my church, and to show that the Fathers are as much with us on all points as I have shown them to be on auricular confession. But that is not now the question. I cannot allow Dr. Burns to raise a cloud of dust in order to cover his retreat. He cannot draw me off on another scent. I shall, in as few words as possible, bring back the question to its starting point, and leave your readers to form their judgment.

Only God has power to absolve from sin; but he can delegate that power to man. The words of Christ (John xx., 22, 23) expressly delegates that power to his Apostles. Christ's promise (Matthew xxviii.) to remain with his Apostles "all days even to the consummation of the world," clearly proves that he was to be with the successors of the Apostles, and that, together with the mandate of preaching to every creature, they would have the power of the Apostolic ministry. If Christ's words mean anything they must mean that.

Now, the power of absolving from sin, or of retaining it, which Christ gave, was to be exercised with judgment; the very discretion of binding or

loosing demands this. But judgment cannot be exercised without knowledge of the cause; and knowledge of the cause, in this case, could only come from the confession of him who sought pardon. Therefore, confession of sins is included as necessary to the exercise of the power conferred. We may be very sure that Christ did not give a power which was to remain idle.

The words (Acts xix., 18) show how the first Christians acted on the obligation imposed of confessing their sins, as co-relative to the power of forgiving them. There is no warrant at all for torturing the words referred to into a public confession of sins. Neither is there any warrant for interpreting the various passages in Scripture which speak of confession in the sense which Dr. Burns wishes. It is simply his misinterpretation, and nothing more. That private confession is meant, the practise of the early church confirms. Those who saw the Apostles and listened to their words taught others, and we have undoubted proof that those latter held the doctrine of Sacramental confession. What they were taught by Apostles, that they practised. Certainly they could interpret Scripture as well as Dr. Burns. We do not need to go outside of Scripture for our proof.

But we have an argument equally as strong with which Dr. Burns did not attempt to grapple. We said that the corporation, or Church instituted by Christ, could not teach error; it could not cease to teach the truth, and become a snare for souls. Dr. Burns dare not deny this and still call himself a Christian. He evades the argument, and dashes off into Papal Infallibility. I am not going to follow him on that track. Papal infallibility has nothing to do with the matter in hand. What is called the negative infallibility of the Church, or, in other words, the impossibility of the whole Church accepting a false doctrine, is all I invoke; and no Christian can deny that property of Christ's Church. Well, I showed that for ages the whole Christian Church believed in and practised auricular confession. I ask your readers to keep the point clearly before them, and not allow themselves to be distracted by other questions. They will then see who has proved his contention.

Dr. Burns objects that even when one confesses a mortal man cannot be sure of his good dispositions. I grant he cannot be *absolutely* sure of them, but he can easily have that *moral* certainty which we find sufficient for most purposes of life. Suppose a heathen seeks admission into the Wesley Church, Dr. Burns would instruct him, and receive him after a trial membership. Is he *sure* the man has the necessary dispositions? He can have nothing more than a moral conviction of the man's fitness, but this, he feels, justifies him in baptizing. Why will it not be as easy for a priest to judge of the dispositions of a man who confesses? When Dr. Burns reflects he will see this.

My object in writing was to state the doctrine of the Catholic Church on Sacramental Confession—a doctrine denied by Dr. Burns in his denunciation of the teaching of Mr. Maturin. Had the learned doctor only fired his "shells" at the Church of England, I would never have interfered; but he denied the absolving power in general, spoke of the iniquities of the confessional, and cited St. John Chrysostom and Augustine as being in his favor. Then I thought the Fort, exulting in its massive outworks, was thinking of pitting itself against the Rock. It was my duty to return the fire. He has given up the Fathers; the quotation from St. Augustine is left without its place being assigned.

I am really sorry that Dr. Burns should fall into the vulgar error of saying that confession was not made compulsory until 13th century. Why, the Lateran Council simply commanded that *at least* at Easter time all who wished to belong to the communion of the Church should receive the blessed Eucharist, and that they should confess at least once a year. A specified time for fulfilling a duty was commanded; nothing more. Surely it is time to be freed from this confusion of ideas.

I now leave the reader to judge whether or not I have proved the soundness of my position. Whilst wishing the genial doctor many happy years

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some of which, I hope, he will spend in learning what our Church really teaches, and in reading a true account of the Vatican Council, I must thank you, Mr. Editor, for your courtesy.

Yours truly,

C.

DR. BURNS' REPLY TO "C's" LETTER No. 3.

It is not necessary to answer "C's" third, of this morning, for there is really nothing in it to answer, which has not been answered already to satiety. It makes one sorry to see an able and accomplished gentleman so completely cornered, and explains sufficiently why he finds it prudent to continue as "the Man with the Iron Mask." He must count a little too much on the obtuseness of your readers, and their shortness of memory, if any number of them, even on his own side, will deem his last a suitable reply, or, any thing else than (to use his own apt phrase) "raising a cloud of dust in order to cover his retreat." It is so transparently a re-asserting of dogmatic ex-cathedra assumptions, without any attempt at proof, and an utter evading of the real questions at issue. Our reply was certainly much longer than "C's" No. 2 required, but, being in the form of a *lecture*, it naturally dwelt on points at greater length than a letter would have done. We had respect, too, to more opponents than "C." who had rushed into the fray, not to speak of the hearers before us and the much larger audience outside. "Purgatory, the Real Presence, and the Immaculate Conception," were barely touched on in a few lines, and only in quotations from Augustine and Ambrose, to show *in what light* their testimonies (quoted by "C.") respecting CONFESSION, should be understood. The whole Lecture was devoted to the VERY THREE SUBJECTS which "C's" previous communication embraced, namely: Auricular Confession, the Rule of Faith, and Papal Infallibility, in about the same proportion of space as he himself devoted to each severally. Any one turning up his letter of the 15th can see, at a glance, that it was HE WHO LEFT THE ORIGINAL GROUND of confession, and retreated to *the new positions*, which now, under the strong counter, dislodging fire, he is constrained to abandon. A proper reply necessitated the taking up of those TWO OTHER SUBJECTS, to which *the better half of his communication was devoted*. Had it not given due prominence to these, it would have stood chargeable with a grave omission, on which "C" would have been only too glad to fasten.

The reference to the Vatican Council of 1870 was also in order, because *there* the Infallibility of the Pope, on which "C." had insisted so strongly as the supreme source of authority and ultimate standard of appeal, was first formulated and falmated. NOT A SINGLE IRRELEVANT QUESTION was discussed in the lecture, while the "real point of discussion," far from being "ignored," was kept steadily and persistently in view. The "ignoring" has been all "on the other side," for, strange to say, not one of the "many infallible proofs" derived from history, reason, revelation, or even the "Fathers," has been fairly met and grappled with.

The summary of the R. C. doctrine given by "C." in the long introduction to his former letter tempted one to follow him into a yet wider field of discussion, but for the risk he happily indicated and illustrated all through, of "being drawn off on another scent."

The only thing unmistakably new in his last is an illustration from Fort Massey, which has no point nor propriety, as its pastor presumes not to exercise any such unauthorized functions as "C."

It is satisfactory to find that this conscientious defender of his faith has no more to say, and that what he does say, in the old "begging the question" and "reasoning in a circle" fashion, is a virtual acknowledgment of defeat. It would have been better had he held out a little longer on the new lines and with the new base he had chosen in No. 2, or even retired (Balak like) to yet another hill." He has grounded his arms rather prematurely.

But it is, perhaps, just as well that the combatants, masked or otherwise, should bury their weapons in the grave of the Old year and shake hands around the cradle of the New, so carrying out (to the comfort, doubtless, of your printers and readers, whose courtesy and forbearance have been by this time taxed to the utmost) General Grant's laconic advice, "Let us have peace."

B.

HALIFAX, Saturday, Dec. 29th.

ADDENDUM ON THE "RULE OF FAITH."

Another evidently authoritative correspondent, since the "C." correspondence closed, has attempted a defence of "C.'s" deserted position on the Rule of Faith.

1. He dwells on the quotation from 2 Peter, i. 15-20, in which the "*more firm* word," is contrasted for reliability with the transfiguration vision and voice,—“more reliable,” adds Dr. B. Who speaks thus? “Surely an enemy hath done it.” “The Old Testament more reliable than the voice of God, saying, this is,” &c. ! What blasphemy! exclaims this new critic. We adhere to our statement, for—1. It is just repeating what Peter himself says in v. 19. He expressly declares the written Word to be surer. 2. The O.T. is the “voice of God.” 3. That voice pealing from the skies was liable to be mistaken, and in point of fact, was misunderstood. John xii., 28, 30, when it spake from heaven, and some of the people said “it thundered.” and others that “an angel spake to him,” and still further, on occasion of Paul's conversion (Acts ix).

2. He also says: “The British Constitution and a large part of British Law are purely traditional, inasmuch as they originate in no written document.” The reference is unfortunate for his purpose, for, aside from the want of point and propriety in the parallel, does he not know when common Law clashes with Statute or written Law, which generally prevails?

3. He further says: “Dr. B.'s argument is crumbled into dust by the words of St. Paul, ‘I praise ye brethren that ye *keep the traditions* as I delivered them to you.’ ‘Hold the traditions which ye have been taught, whether by word or by our Epistle.’” In reply notice:

(a) The primitive meaning of tradition. The original word "*paradosis*" means simply what is delivered by word of mouth. The "traditions which they had been taught" were neither more nor less than the *instructions he had given to them personally*—as Paul says to Timothy: “Hold the form of sound words, which thou *hast heard of me*.” It is a mere verbal quibble, like the double meanings attached to confession and confirmation, to say that a tradition of this kind—truth, coming *fresh from the lips of the holy Apostles*,

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and not passing through any second hand, is the same with the traditions which Anglo and Roman Catholics contend for, floating along on the tide of accident, through a long line of successive generations.

(b) The early Fathers counted the traditions of the Apostles and their writings the same. Thus, Athanasius: "The traditions of the Apostles teach us," St. Peter saying: "Christ, therefore, having suffered for us in the flesh," and Paul writing: "Looking for that blessed hope." (Apostolon paradosis didaskai, &c.) Ep. ad Adolph, cited by Goode, vol. I, p. 67. Almost uniformly, these Fathers speak of the "Evangelical Tradition," (Evangellike Paradosis) as equivalent to holy Scripture, which Athanasius describes as "ordinarily superseding enquiry." Cyprian (a great favorite with Romanists) asks: "Where is that tradition? For God testifies that those things are to be done which are *written*." (Epist. 74, ad Pomp). Jerome, the author of the Vulgate, translating a passage from Polycrates, calls *the Gospel* the Evangelica Traditio, "the Evangelical Tradition." (Routh Religi Sacr, vol. i, 371.)

4. He actually quotes, "Ye are our epistle written in our hearts," to show that something more than the *written* epistle is needed!

5. His whole argument (if he can be said to argue who simply asserts) proceeds, like "C.'s" in No. 2, on the idea that the Rule of Faith is subordinate to the Church, which has the exclusive right to define and interpret it.

It has been said: "That we owe the Scriptures to the Church." What Church? the Church Universal or the Roman? If the former, then what exclusive part or lot in the matter can belong to the latter? We have already seen the early Apostolic Church to be at direct antipodes to the later Roman: the African church (Augustine's) protesting against any appeals to the Roman: the Eastern church waging an implacable war against the Roman: we may say the same, yet more strongly, of the Waldensian church and of the Primitive Apostolic churches in the British Isles,—none of them were indebted for the "lively oracles" to Rome. The canon of Scripture was fixed long before the setting up of the Papacy. All these divisions and antagonisms show that the Church of Rome was not the Church Catholic (or universal), and the very expression—Roman Catholic—which involves a "particular general" is a contradiction in terms. The determining the canonical books was the work of the early churches, prior to the Roman assumption, therefore, Rome, no more than Jerusalem or Ephesus, Antioch or Alexandria, Constantinople or Carthage, has the right to put forth the exclusive claim of having collated, conserved or communicated the sacred books. But, even supposing she could show that she alone was the custodian and transmitter of these (which she cannot), still that would not establish her right to be their special interpreter, unless it can be shown that the mere keeper of books and documents is necessarily the best expounder of them, or that we have no right to read our letters *till the letter-carrier explains them!*

This substitute for "C." closes with what he terms, "a specimen of the reasoning of common sense." It is this: "Protestantism is founded on the doctrine that Scripture is the sole rule of faith; but this doctrine is not found

in Scripture. Therefore, Protestantism is unscriptural and self-contradictory." Could any disciple of Aristotle tell us what sort of syllogism that is?

6. In our letter to "C." No. 2, we have fully shown that Scripture is the sole rule of faith, establishing it on Scriptural and Patristic grounds. To the proofs therein adduced from the later may be added some of the earlier and more reliable Fathers. Thus *Ignatius* (A. D. 101) brings every matter of doubtful disputation to the test, "*Is it written?*"

Polycarp, (108) writing to the Philippians, refers to Paul's Epistle as a safe and sufficient guide, and commends them as "well exercised in the Holy Scriptures." Justin Martyr (140) says: "Those who have left us a relation of all things that concern our Saviour, Jesus Christ, have thus taught us, that the knowledge of *all things might be conveyed to us by their being committed to writing.*"

Irenæus, (167) (a favorite sometimes with "C." and his coadjutors) makes this very clear declaration, "*By no others have we come to the knowledge of the Plan of our Salvation, but those through whom the Gospel came to us in the Scriptures, to be the FOUNDATION AND PILLAR OF OUR FAITH.*" The references can be given if required, of those, and extracts of a kindred import from over thirty of the best of the Fathers down to the close of the sixth century.

"Since the Doctors (said Luther) all labor to prove what they wrote, by the Holy Scriptures, it follows that Scripture must be clearer and more conclusive than their writings. Who would think of proving what is in itself obscure by the help of something obscurer still?"

"Most wondrous Book! bright carol of the Lord!
Star of Eternity! the only star
By which the Bark of man can navigate
The Sea of Life and gain the Port of Bliss securely."

