

Theology on the Web.org.uk

Making Biblical Scholarship Accessible

This document was supplied for free educational purposes. Unless it is in the public domain, it may not be sold for profit or hosted on a webserver without the permission of the copyright holder.

If you find it of help to you and would like to support the ministry of Theology on the Web, please consider using the links below:



Buy me a coffee

<https://www.buymeacoffee.com/theology>



PATREON

<https://patreon.com/theologyontheweb>

[PayPal](#)

<https://paypal.me/robbradshaw>

A table of contents for *The Churchman* can be found here:

https://biblicalstudies.org.uk/articles_churchman_os.php

fortunes and convulsions of the island, it was found that none of the distressed dioceses have yet been forced to cut down any stipends. But this was largely due to the liberal and unsolicited help of the diocese of Down and Connor, and to some extent of Dublin also; and it is painfully evident that a much greater effort will soon be called for.

It must be repeated that the disturbing and incalculable element in Irish Ecclesiastical arrangements is that progressive social change, threatening the impoverishment or expatriation of many of the best and most loyal Irishmen, which English politicians have decreed for us.

G. A. CHADWICK.

ART. VI.—COMPREHENSION.

SECOND NOTICE.

I REJOICE to find that the views which I ventured to express in a former notice¹ on the principles of "Comprehension"—that is to say, the corporate reunion of Orthodox Nonconforming communities with the National Church—have elicited some interest in this delicate and far-reaching subject.

I thought it advisable, while freely expressing my own views, to call the reader's attention, for the purpose of clearing up the *possibilities* of "Comprehension," to the aspect in which it is viewed by the Sovereigns and Parliaments of England in past ages; and also to the aspects in which it is viewed by the three great schools of thought within the Church at the present day.

I am now urged, by not unfriendly critics, to apply my mind to the consideration of the *difficulties* of the subject; while, on the other hand, I am counselled by friendly advisers to insist emphatically upon the *duty* of reunion.

I shall endeavour, very briefly and very imperfectly, but with a due regard, I trust, to the claims of truth, to deal with the first of these two questions. I may, if an opportunity offers, deal at a future time with the question of the *duty* of reunion.

The difficulties, it is important to note, are not of Churchmen's raising. They are raised by Nonconformists. Churchmen stand with open arms, so to speak, ready to welcome back the Orthodox Dissenters to the ancient fold from which they, or their ancestors, have wandered; and to treat them, on a footing of

¹ IN THE CHURCHMAN of February last.

perfect equality, as dear brethren in Christ; but the Orthodox Dissenters recoil in alarm, afraid that the reunion will involve them in a loss of principle.

Some Conferences which were held under the auspices of the Home Reunion Society, at Salisbury, in January and February, 1878, were chiefly valuable as eliciting from a local Congregational Minister, the Rev. W. Clarkson (B.A. London), a very clear and temperate statement of those points of difference between Churchmen and Orthodox Nonconformists, which must, in the view of a highly intelligent Nonconformist minister, until satisfactorily arranged, be regarded as forming an insuperable barrier in the way of Corporate Reunion.

Three of the five points of difference mentioned by Mr. Clarkson relate to passages in the Prayer Book. The other two relate to Ritualism and the Union of Church and State.

I. Mr. Clarkson says:—

With the views we hold of the way of salvation in Jesus Christ we could not possibly be members of a Church which teaches every child, as the first thing it learns, that in baptism it was “made a member of Christ, a¹ child of God, and an inheritor of the Kingdom of Heaven.”

Mr. Clarkson’s objection is not a new one. It was one of the “exceptions” against the Book of Common Prayer, submitted by the Nonconformist Divines to the Savoy Conference:—

We conceive, they said, it might be more safely expressed thus:—“Wherein I was visibly admitted into the number of the members of Christ, the children of God, and the heirs (rather than inheritors) of the Kingdom of Heaven.”

The answer of the Bishops to this “exception” was as follows:—

We conceive this expression as safe as that which they desire, and more fully expressing the efficacy of the Sacrament, according to St. Paul, the 26 & 27 Gal. iii., where St. Paul proves them all to be children of God, because they were baptized, and in their baptism had put on Christ; “if children, then heirs,” or, which is all one, inheritors. (Rom. viii. 17.)

It would be useless to strike out the words, “a member of Christ, the child of God, and an inheritor of the Kingdom of Heaven,” in the Catechism, unless the whole Baptismal Service were remodelled. There is no doubt that tender consciences would be reassured by a remodelling of the Baptismal Service; but it is important to consider carefully the recent action of a sister Church—an intensely Protestant Church.

¹ An error for “the.”

The Church of Ireland has, after full discussion, declined to remodel the Baptismal Service. In the new Preface prefixed to the Irish Revised Prayer Book, are these words:—

In the Formularies relating to Baptism we have made no substantial change, though some have desired to alter or omit certain expressions, touching which diversities of opinion have prevailed among faithful members of our Church. At the same time we desire fully to recognize the liberty of expounding these formularies hitherto allowed by the general practice of the Church. And as concerning those points, whereupon such liberty has been allowed, we hereby further declare that no minister of this Church is required to hold or teach any doctrine which has not been clearly determined by *the Articles of Religion*.

The Church of Ireland thus makes the Articles of Religion the standard by which the language of the Baptismal Service and of the Catechism is to be judged.

Let us see what answer to Mr. Clarkson's objection may be drawn from the Articles of Religion.

Much turns on the meaning of the word "regeneration" (or "new birth unto righteousness," as it is termed in the Catechism). Regeneration is constantly used by the fathers of the Primitive Church, and by the English Reformers, as a synonym for baptism. But the very Article of the Church of England which uses them synonymously,¹ namely, the IXth. declares that "Original Sin,"—that "infection of our nature" which "deserveth God's wrath and damnation,"—"doth remain, yea, in them that are regenerated, whereby the lust of the flesh is not subject to the law of God."

The words of the Baptismal Service, "Seeing, now dearly beloved brethren, that this child is regenerate," must be read in connection with, *e.g.*, Article XXV., "In such only as *worthily* receive the Sacraments they have a wholesome effect and operation:" Article XXVII., "They that receive baptism *rightly*, are grafted into the Church," &c. Repentance and Faith are, in short, essential to a worthy reception of the Sacraments. And this is the express declaration of the Catechism itself. As for Holy Scripture, St. John the Baptist² calls baptism "the baptism of *repentance* for (literally, towards) the remission of sins"; and when the Ethiopian eunuch³ exclaimed, "See, here is water; what doth hinder me to be baptized?" Philip said, "If thou *believest* with all thy heart, thou mayest." Let us turn to the language of the highest Appellate Tribunal of the Church.

¹ "Renati" is the Latin version of both "regenerate" and "baptized" in this Article.

² St. Luke iii. 3.

³ Acts viii. 36, 37.

Sir Herbert Jenner Fust, in deciding against Mr. Gorham, said:—"In the case of infants there is no *obex* in the way." The Judicial Committee of the Privy Council, in their judgment on appeal from the Arches Court,¹ said:—

Although the respondent is made to state that in his baptism he "was made a member of Christ, the child of God, and an inheritor of the Kingdom of Heaven," it is still declared that "repentance and faith" are required of persons to be baptized; and when the question is asked, "Why, then, are infants baptised, when, by reason of their tender age, they cannot perform them?" the answer is not that infants are baptized, because, by their innocence, they cannot be unworthy recipients, or cannot present any hindrance to the grace of regeneration, and are, therefore, fit subjects for Divine grace, but "because they promise them both by their sureties; which promise, when they come to age, themselves are bound to perform." The answer has direct reference to the *condition* on which the benefit is to depend. And the whole Catechism requires a charitable construction, such as must be given to the expression, "God, the Holy Ghost, who sanctifieth me and all the *elect* people of God."

Such great divines as Archbishop Usher, Archbishop Whitgift, Bishop Pearson, and Bishop Jeremy Taylor, held (as shown by the Judicial Committee in their judgment) that "the inward and spiritual grace" did not necessarily accompany the outward visible sign. Bishop Prideaux says:—"Baptism only pledges an external sacramental regeneration, while the Church *in charity* pronounces that the Holy Spirit renders an inward regeneration." Even the judicious Hooker, a decided High Churchman, says:—"The Church speaks of infants, as *the rule of charity* alloweth both to speak and to think." Bishop Pearson says, "When the means are used, without something appearing to the contrary, we ought to *presume* of the good effect." This is the key to the Baptismal Service and the Catechism. They presume the good effect. The Baptismal Service *assumes* that God has heard the prayers of his faithful people, for the spiritual regeneration of the child, in conformity with the Divine promise:—"Ask, and ye shall have; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you." It encourages the congregation to take the spiritual change in the child for granted. "Doubt ye not, therefore, but earnestly believe."—"We being thus persuaded, and nothing doubting." And the child is encouraged in the Catechism to regard his baptism as his starting-point on the heavenward journey. Baptismal Regeneration, whatever it is, must not be confounded with "conversion," or with "renewal," neither of which applies to infants.

¹ Published at length in 1850 under the title, "Gorham v. The Bishop of Exeter." Painter, 342, Strand, London.

The Jews were called "the children of God;"¹ being, as Archbishop Secker points out, "the children of his covenant."² The "sign and seal" of the new covenant of grace is baptism. As Article XVII. expresses it: "The promises of forgiveness of sin, and of our adoption to be the sons of God by the Holy Ghost, are visibly signed and sealed." The language of the Article, it will be seen, approaches very closely to that of the Nonconformist divines at the Savoy Conference.

Let us compare with it the language of the Westminster Confession of Faith³—the Standard of the Church of Scotland, and of Presbyterians generally.

Baptism is ordained, not only for the solemn admission of the party baptized into the visible Church, but also to be unto him a sign and seal of the covenant of grace,⁴ and his ingrafting into Christ,⁵ of regeneration,⁶ of remission of sins.⁷

By the *right* use of this ordinance⁸ the grace promised is not only offered, but really exhibited and *conferred* by the Holy Ghost to such as that grace belongeth to.⁹

The Confession, however, like the learned prelates, cited by the Judicial Committee of the Privy Council in the Gorham case, declares that "the efficacy of baptism is not tied to the moment of time wherein it is administered."¹⁰ The Confession points to the story of Simon Magus, as showing that the grace of regeneration is "not inseparably annexed" to the ordinance itself. In the thirteenth verse of the eighth chapter of the Acts of the Apostles it is stated that "Simon Magus believed and was baptized;" yet he was told, almost immediately afterwards, by St. Peter, that he was "in the gall of bitterness and in the bond of iniquity!"

The Wesleyan Methodist Conference has set forth, by its authority, a Catechism which deals with the subject:—

Q. "What is the inward and spiritual grace signified by baptism?"

A. "The inward and spiritual grace signified by baptism is our being cleansed from sin, and becoming *new creatures in Christ Jesus.*" Acts xxii. 6: "Arise and be baptized, and wash away thy sins, calling on the name of the Lord."

But Mr. Clarkson is a Congregational Minister; and it is necessary very briefly to refer to the standards of his denomination.

¹ Deut. xiv. 1. ² Acts iii. 25. ³ Chapter xxviii.

⁴ Rom. iv. 11; Col. ii. 11, 12.

⁵ Gal. iii. 27 (the passage cited by the Bishops); Rom. vi. 5.

⁶ Tit. iii. 5.

⁷ St. Mark i. 4.

⁸ Gal. iii. 27 (the passage cited by the Bishops); Titus iii. 5; Eph. v. 25, 26; Acts ii. 38, 41.

⁹ St. John iii. 5, 8.

¹⁰ Chapter xxviii. 5.

In No. 1 (Second Series) of the "Congregational Union Tracts," intitled, "Christian Baptism," published by authority of the Union,¹ we find the following passages:—

"Baptism has taken the place of circumcision, as a seal or confirmation of the faithfulness of God's Word, being termed by the Apostle Paul, 'The circumcision of Christ'" (Col. ii. 11). "It is the initiatory ordinance of Christianity, *the gateway to the Heavenly Kingdom*, or Gospel dispensation, bringing the subjects of it into direct relation to the Christian economy." "Baptism is a badge of Christian discipleship, and by it we are admitted to the School of Christ." "Children are made disciples by baptism." "Children belong to the Heavenly Kingdom, and we may, therefore, thankfully place on them the seal of that Kingdom."

The Rev. Joseph Foxley, in an "Occasional Paper," published by the Home Reunion Society,² cites stanzas from "The New Congregational Hymn Book," which clearly show that Congregationalists distinctly follow the language of the Baptismal Service in asking God that the child may be spiritually regenerated in baptism:—

BAPTISMAL SERVICE.

(Church of England.)

Grant that this child may receive the fulness of thy grace.

Grant to this child that thing which by nature he cannot have; may he receive remission of his sins.

Wash him and sanctify him with thy Holy Spirit.

HYMN BOOK.

(Congregationalist.)

Let this infant find a place
In thy covenant of grace.

Let thy blood, on Calvary spilt,
Cleanse this child from nature's guilt.

Holy Ghost, to thee we cry,
Thou this infant sanctify.

If "baptismal regeneration" is, as is asserted in the Congregational Union Tract, "a doctrine which finds no warrant in the Bible," it is very strange that Congregationalists should so earnestly ask God to confer it upon their children!

It is clear, I think, that Presbyterians, Wesleyans, and Congregationalists, like Churchmen, look upon Baptism, in the language of the XXVIIth Article of Religion, as "a *sign* of regeneration" and "*seal* of the forgiveness of sins and of our adoption to be the sons of God."

Whether the "thing signified" always accompanies the "sign," they leave an open question, and so does the National Church.

II. The Congregationalist minister says:—

With the views we hold of the Christian ministry we could not possibly become members of a Church which authorizes any living man, in any office whatever, to say, "Receive¹ the Holy Ghost for the office and work of a Priest—whose sins thou dost forgive, they are forgiven."

Learned commentators have explained that the word "receive," in this passage, is in the optative mood and precatory, and not in the imperative mood, being equivalent to "May ye receive:" just as the words "Be happy" are equivalent to "May you be happy"—"Happy may you be." *Macte virtute esto.*

This view acquires support from the next sentence: "And be thou a faithful dispenser of the Word of God and of his holy sacraments;" where the words "Be thou" are clearly optative, and not imperative, being equivalent to "Mayest thou be."

"Whose sins thou dost forgive, they are forgiven: whose sins thou dost retain, they are retained."

These expressions, which are evidently taken from St. John xx. 23, have been considered as equivalent to those contained in St. Matthew xvi. 19, and xviii. 18, where the expressions "bind" and "loose" are used, instead of "remit," (or "forgive") and "retain;" to "bind," or "retain," meaning "to subject to ecclesiastical censures,"² to "excommunicate"—to "remit," "forgive, or "loose," meaning, "to absolve from those censures."³ This view appears to receive some sanction from the context in St. Matthew xviii. 18, where, immediately *before* using the words "Whatsoever ye shall bind on earth," &c., our Saviour declared that if a "brother" who had sinned against a disciple refused to "hear the Church," he was to be regarded "as a heathen man and a publican." The "keys of the kingdom of heaven" mean, in this connection, the power of admitting into and shutting out of Christian fellowship. Selden⁴ remarks that the expressions "binding" and "loosing" were used by the Jews in the sense of "excommunicating" and "absolving."

There is no doubt, however, that tender consciences, both in and out of the Church of England, have been wounded by the expressions in the Ordination Service singled out by Mr. Clarkson. In a Parliamentary Return, issued in 1854, will be found the alterations in "the form and manner of Ordering of Priests," proposed by the Royal Commission of 1689:—

The words pronounced by the Bishops at the imposition of hands, "Receive the Holy Ghost," &c., "Whose sins thou dost forgive," &c.,

¹ The words "Believe in" are evidently a clerical error in the report of the speech of Mr. Clarke for "Receive."

² See per Archbishop Secker, cited by Stephens, "Book of Common Prayer," vol. iii., p. 1669.

³ Wheatley, p. 378.

⁴ "De Syned. veter. Ebræor." l. i. c. 7, cited by Wheatley, *ubi supra*.

are struck out, and the following proposal and new form written on the interleaf :—

“Whereas it was the constant practice of the Church to ordain by prayer, which practice continued for many ages, and that the pronouncing these words, ‘Receive the Holy Ghost,’ in the imperative mood, was brought into the office of Ordination in the darkest times of Popery, it is humbly submitted to the Convocation, whether it be not more suitable unto the general rule the Church of England has gone upon of conforming herself to the Primitive Church to put these words in some such form as this :—

“*Pour down, O Father of Lights, the Holy Ghost on this Thy servant for the office and work of a Priest in the Church of God, now committed unto him by the imposition of our hands, that whose sins he doth forgive they may be forgiven, and whose sins he doth retain they may be retained, and that he may be a faithful dispenser of God’s holy Word and Sacraments, to the edification of His Church, and the glory of His holy Name, to whom, with the Father and the Holy Ghost, be all honour and glory, world without end. Amen.*”

The following note is written in the margin by a different hand, perhaps by Archbishop, then Dean, Tillotson :—

“S. August. l. 15, de ‘Trinitate,’ cap. 27 :—*Quomodo ergo Deus non est qui dat Spiritum Sanctum? imo quantus Deus est qui dat Deum? neque enim aliquis discipulum ejus dedit Spiritum Sanctum. Orabant, quippe, ut veniret in eos quibus manus imponebant, non ipsi enim dabant. Quem morem in suis propositis etiam nunc servat Ecclesia.*”

In the discussions which took place among the members of the Commission, the Bishop of Salisbury (Burnet) pointed out that the use of the phrase, “Receive the Holy Ghost” was “not above 400 years’ standing;” the ancient forms were by way of *prayer*, “Exaudi nos,” &c. “It was altered in Hilbrand’s time, when the design was to exalt the Priesthood.”

The recommendations of the Royal Commission were unfortunately rendered abortive by the obstructiveness of the Jacobite Clergy, who at that time swayed the Councils of Convocation.

The Church of Ireland decided not to alter the form of the Consecration of Priests, as it might give rise to some doubts as to the validity of the orders of Irish Clergymen in the eyes of the other Episcopal Communions. In the Preface to the Revised Prayer Book of the Church of Ireland, the following passage, however, occurs :—

No change has been made in the formula of Ordination of Priests, *though desired by some*; for, upon a full review of our Formularies, we deem it plain, and here declare, that, save in the matter of Ecclesiastical censures, no power or authority is by them ascribed to the Church, or to any of its ministers, in respect of forgiveness of sins after Baptism, other than that of declaring and pronouncing, on God’s part, remission of sins to all that are truly penitent, to the quieting of their conscience and the removal of all doubt and scruple; nor is it

anywhere in our Formularies taught or implied that confession to and absolution by a priest are any conditions of God's pardon.

Would Mr. Clarkson be content with a specific declaration like this, prefixed to the Prayer Book ?

III. Mr. Clarkson says :—

With the views we hold on this subject, we could not by formal membership sanction such a claim as is contained in the solemn words appointed to be used at the Visitation of the Sick :—“ By his authority (our Lord Jesus Christ's) committed to me, I absolve thee from all thy sins.”

Learned commentators¹ point out that where, as in the Daily Morning and Evening Service, the Absolution is declaratory, or, as in the Communion Service, the Absolution is in the optative and precatory, the language used by the Priest is “ Almighty God pardoneth ”—“ Almighty God pardon ; ” but in the Visitation of the Sick the language is in the indicative and peremptory, because the Priest is not conveying the pardon of God directly to the sinner's conscience, but exercising a *judicial* authority in restoring the sinner to the peace of the Church, which, he appears, by his preceding confession, to have forfeited ; though, in the existing laxity of discipline, sentence of Excommunication has never been formally pronounced against him. In proof of this, they point to the language of the prayer which *follows* the Absolution :—“ Open thine eye of mercy upon this thy servant who most earnestly desireth pardon and forgiveness,” “ which,” says Wheatley,² “ surely there would be no occasion for, if he had been actually pardoned and forgiven by God, by virtue of the Absolution pronounced *before*.” Then the Priest prays : “ Preserve and continue this sick member in the Unity of the Church,” “ which seems,” says Wheatley,³ “ to suppose that the foregoing Absolution had been pronounced in order to restore him to its peace.”

There is no doubt, however, that the special Absolution in the office for the Visitation of the Sick has, as stated in the Preface to the Revised Prayer Book of the Church of Ireland, “ been the cause of offence to many.”

The House of Lords, on the 1st of March, 1641, appointed a Committee, consisting of ten earls, ten bishops, and ten barons, “ to take into consideration all innovations in the Church respecting Religion.” On the 10th of the same month they were empowered to associate with them as many learned divines as they pleased. The immediate object of appointing this Committee was to inquire into some innovations introduced by

¹ See, *e.g.*, Wheatley, pp. 381, 382. ² P. 377. ³ P. 378.

Archbishop Laud and other Prelates, but there was a general understanding that they were to carry their inquiries into the whole field of doctrine and discipline, and suggest such measures as might tend to allay the then growing feeling of discontent with the Church. Among the bishops were Usher, Archbishop of Armagh, Williams, Bishop of Lincoln (Chairman), Moreton, Bishop of Durham, and Montague, Bishop of Norwich; among the divines, Prideaux (afterwards Bishop of Worcester), Saunderson (afterwards Bishop of Lincoln), Brownrigg (afterwards Bishop of Exeter), Hacket (afterwards Bishop of Lichfield), Warde, Featley, Holdsworth, Twisse, Burgess, White, Marshall, Calamy, and Hill,—“many of them,” says Dr. Cardwell, “eminent for their learning and their attachment to the National Church.” Among their “Considerations upon the Book of Common Prayer,” we find the following:—

In the Absolution of the Sick, were it not plain to say, “I pronounce thee absolved?” in other words, that the form of absolution for the sick should be made declaratory, instead of being authoritative.¹

In the first Book of King Edward VI., the rubric preceding the Absolution ran thus:—

Here shall the sick person make a special confession, if he feel his conscience troubled with any weighty matter; after which confession the priest shall absolve him after this form; and the same form of absolution shall be used in all private confessions.

The words “and the same form of absolution shall be used in all private confessions” were omitted in the second Book of King Edward VI. In the Prayer Book of 1662, 14 Car. II., as revised and settled at the Savoy Conference, the words “if he humbly and heartily desire it,” were inserted after the words, “the Priest shall absolve him,” thus throwing the onus of using this special form of Absolution on the sick person. Without such “humble and hearty desire” on the part of the sick person, no clergyman, I submit, would be justified in using this special form. This alteration in the rubric was made after the attention of the Bishops had been called to the objectionable character of the form of Absolution by the Nonconformist Divines, who suggested that “the form of Absolution be declarative and *conditional*, as, ‘I pronounce thee absolved’ (instead of ‘I absolve thee’), if thou dost truly repent and believe.” “The condition,” the Bishops said, “needs not to be expressed, being always necessarily understood.”

¹ Cardwell’s “History of the Conferences on the Prayer Book,” pp. 239, 240, 241, 276.

In the Parliamentary Return of 1854, will be found the alterations in "the Order for the Visitation of the Sick," proposed by the Royal Commission of 1689:—

The Absolution is struck out and the following form of Absolution substituted:—

"Our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath left power to his Church to absolve all sinners who truly repent, and believe in him, of His great mercy forgive thee thine offences; and, *upon thy true faith and repentance*, by his authority committed to me, I pronounce thee absolved from all thy sins, in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost."

The very point, therefore, on which the Nonconformist Divines insisted at the Savoy Conference to so little purpose, was conceded by the Royal Commission of 1689. Unfortunately the golden opportunity presented in 1689 was again lost.

The Church of Ireland has solemnly decided that this form of Absolution shall no longer disfigure their Prayer Book. The optative form of Absolution has been inserted instead.

"The Special Absolution" (thus runs the Preface to their Revised Prayer Book) "in the office for the Visitation of the Sick is a form unknown to the Church in ancient times, and as we saw no adequate reason for its retention, and no ground for asserting that its removal would make any change in the doctrine of the Church, we have deemed it fitting that, in the special cases contemplated in this office, Absolution should be pronounced to penitents in the form appointed in the office for the Holy Communion."

If the Church of Ireland has succeeded in getting rid of this obnoxious form, may not the Church of England be equally successful?

IV. "Ritualism."

We have to consider that by a very large and growing number of the Clergy the Formularies of the Church are being strained to their utmost tension to admit Sacramental doctrines and Sacerdotal usages.

Ritualism is a mere excrescence on the fair face of England's Church. It is not of her; and it cannot be denied that the whole current of modern legal decision has been hostile to Ritualistic pretensions.

I shall never forget the great upheaval of Protestant feeling in the House of Commons during the passage through it of the Public Worship Regulation Bill. It ran like an electric shock through the Members, Nonconformists as well as Churchmen. A firm resolve was on all sides expressed, that, so long as the union of Church and State remained, the Church of this Protestant nation should be a Protestant Church. Never did the late Earl of Beaconsfield achieve so great a triumph as when

he announced his intention of supporting Mr. Russell Gurney, and hurled the withering sarcasms of his eloquence at "the mass in masquerade." Even the Roman Catholic members cheered, because he carefully guarded himself by pointing out that what he was denouncing was not the real mass, but the sham one.

If the Church of England were severed from the State, her members would still uphold her Protestant character.

Has Mr. Clarkson considered fully the sin of holding aloof from the Church, and so depriving her of the advantages to be derived from the accession to her ranks of a vast body of "God-fearing men," deeply imbued with sound Protestant principles? I cannot conceive of any means more likely to "stamp out Ritualism" than the reinforcement of the ranks of Evangelical Churchmen by Orthodox Nonconformists.

V. The union of Church and State is Mr. Clarkson's remaining barrier in the way of corporate reunion of Churchmen and Orthodox Nonconformists. The "absence of self-government and discipline" is given as an illustration—"the dependency of the Church on the State." I have shown in my former notice that in the eye of the law of England, the Church and the State are, for many purposes, one, and that the Church is really the State viewed in its religious aspect. The English nation legislates for itself, in Church as well as in State. If "the Prime Minister," as Mr. Clarkson points out, nominates "the chief officer of the Church," he does so as the representative of the national will, not as a private individual. *Vox populi vox Dei*. The Lord Chancellor exercises his patronage in a similar capacity. Is a Prime Minister fallible, and a deacon infallible? Mr. Clarkson is the nominee, I presume, of his deacons and congregation, "the dependent minister of an Independent Congregation." Is the congregation to count for everything, and the national will to count for nothing? A nation surely owes duties to God, as well as the individuals of whom the nation is composed. How can there be a *national* recognition of Almighty God, as King of Kings, except through a National Church? The Christian Church, we are told distinctly in Holy Writ, was grafted upon the Jewish. The union of Church and State flourished under the Jewish theocracy. It is little short of blasphemy, I submit, to affirm that a system of Church government which has been blest and consecrated by God is sinful and wrong.

A word as regards discipline. The Public Worship Regulation Act, so far from emanating from a purely secular source, emanated from the Bench of Bishops, who found it impossible to maintain the discipline of the Church committed to their charge without it. It in an especial manner emanated

from the chief pastors of the Church, the Primates of Canterbury and York, and it was they who nominated Lord Penzance as the new Dean of the Arches.

The constitution of the Judicial Committee of the Privy Council has been severely criticised. It is a remarkable fact, that when the Church of Ireland had to reconstitute her Supreme Appellate Tribunal, she formed it chiefly of laymen, "each of whom shall be, or shall have been, Judge of any of the Superior Courts of Equity or Common Law in Ireland, or of the Court of Probate, or of the Landed Estates Court, the Court of Bankruptcy and Insolvency, or the Court of Admiralty, or of an Ecclesiastical Court in Ireland, or a Master in Chancery."¹ Who so fit as the Judges of the land to interpret the law of the Church? I sat in the General Convention of the Church of Ireland, and I can bear emphatic testimony to the desire of the clergy not to be placed at the mercy of theologians, but that the best legal skill should fill the Church's judgment seat.

Since Mr. Clarkson's denunciation of the "dependency of the Church on the State," the case of "*Jones v. the Rev. John Turner Stannard*" has been decided in the Chancery Division of the High Court of Justice.² In that case Vice-Chancellor Hall enjoined the Rev. John Turner Stannard not to exercise the office of pastor at the Ramsden Street Congregational Chapel, at Huddersfield, although he had been elected to that office by 184 votes to 69. The Vice-Chancellor actually set aside the decision of that large majority—and why? Because Mr. Stannard did not hold the doctrines of the universal depravity of man, of predestination and eternal punishment, in as full a manner as the persons who in 1849 framed the trust-deed of the chapel! If Mr. Stannard disobeys the injunction he will be sent to prison by the Vice-Chancellor for contempt of court! Is it not evident, on the one hand, that if the Church of England were severed from the State, the Mackonochies, the Greens, and Enraghts would still be amenable to the law of the land, and that the Congregationalists are, albeit Dissenters, liable to have their wishes overruled by the jurisdiction of a secular court?

WILLIAM T. CHARLEY.

¹ Statutes of the General Synod of the Church of Ireland, 1879, c. 1. 1st Schedule, ch. vii.

² See the report of the case in the *Times* of February 2nd.