

THE
MERCERSBURG REVIEW.

JULY, 1851.

VOL. III.—NO. IV.

OUR NATIONAL RELIGION.

How many quires have been filled with glowing descriptions of the already acquired greatness, and prospective glory of the Young Republic of North America! How many writers have vied with each other, in attempting to delineate in appropriate colors, the extent, fertility and natural beauties of her vast territory, and to exhibit in adequate numbers the sum of her agricultural wealth, and rich, ever expanding mineral and commercial resources! How many volumes might be gathered, if all that loving enthusiastic hearts, and admiring minds, have spoken and written, in the patriotic oration, the thoughtful essay, or the racy narrative, could be found and rescued from the must and moth! And yet the tithe of the reality has not been told. Although the subject has been the theme of many of the liveliest imaginations, and ablest pens, and much that was even wild and hyperbolic has been spoken and written upon it, no adequate conception of what our country really is, much less of what she promises to be, has yet been formed. The tithe of it has not been thought. Indeed the tenth of it has not yet had time to develop itself. Many even of our keenest-eyed Statesmen, though occupying a position commanding by its height a far-reaching view, have but recently begun to comprehend the ter-

VOL. III.—NO. IV. 20*

THE ANGLICAN CRISIS.

THE man who takes no lively interest in the present ecclesiastical troubles of England, under the notion possibly that they belong only to a standpoint of prejudice and superstition which he and the American world generally have happily left forever behind, has good reason to suspect some fatal flaw in the constitution of his own piety. Never since the age of the Reformation, has the progress of the Church presented practical questions of more solemn moment, or issues of more thrilling significance for the future. The course of events there now may be regarded as eminently *historical*, in the true and proper sense of this term; which is not reached by any means with the notion merely of passing years and their budget of facts, but implies the idea of actual movement in the world's inward life, the development of tendencies and principles into new results of general and lasting force for the nation and the race. Such palpably is the nature of the great church agitation, which has been for some time shaking England to its centre, and the end of which no one is able yet to calculate or foresee. It is no superficial or merely transient commotion. It is no play of simply pragmatical contrivance and policy, in the hands of men intent on altogether other ends; however ready the art of courts and political parties may show itself, as in all similar cases, to turn the movement into its own service. Under all such false purposes and aims, the ruling power of the agitation is undoubtedly a true interest of humanity, the working of religion, the most fundamental of all forces in history, in a form which it is quite possible that kings and parliaments may find as much beyond their control at last as the whirlwind itself.

Serious men feel this in England; and they are coming to feel it, more and more, also in other countries. Nor is this feeling confined by any means to those who are members of the Episcopal Church. It extends to all Protestant communions, just in proportion to their intelligence and their knowledge of what is going forward in the world. This itself may be taken as a criterion of the real general historical significance of the problem, which is here in the course of practical solution. It is only what is thus universally significant in its own nature, that has power to engage in this way general attention and concern; and then it is not so much through any personal reflection that this takes place, as in obedience rather to a sort of instinctive consciousness, by which men feel themselves sympathetically

borne along with the authority of such a movement, whether it suit their judgment and taste otherwise to make much account of it or not. It is curious to observe, how this law works in the case now under consideration. With all their professed indifference or hostility to the Establishment, Dissenters of every hue find themselves forced to mix themselves up to a certain extent with its controversies and quarrels, though hardly able to tell in many cases *where* exactly it becomes them to take their position. The Presbyterianism of Scotland too is not able to sit still; and even the Puritanism of this country, while it affects to despise the whole doctrine of the Sacraments and of the Church as it is here in controversy, sees itself constrained notwithstanding to acknowledge indirectly the deep solemnity of the struggle, as one in which some interest of its own is felt to be ultimately at stake. All this goes to show, we say, the profound meaning and far reaching importance of what is taking place. It is indeed a great crisis in the history of Protestantism, not for England only but for all countries; and *not* to see and feel the solemnity of it in this view, as we have said before, is to betray by the very fact a sad want of earnestness in religion altogether. Only the ignorant or frivolous can be indifferent to the progress of so great a question.

The critical character of the movement is shown, not only by the general feeling of anxious awe now mentioned with which it is fixing upon itself more and more the gaze of the world, but by the central relation also in which it stands plainly to the bearings of previous history. It is no sudden excitement, that comes no one can tell whence and looks no one can tell whither. In all parts of the world, Protestantism has been for some time past in a course of inward preparation, either theoretically or practically, for just such a powerful reaction in favor of the old idea of the Church, with its corresponding principles and doctrines. There must have been in this way a mighty predisposition in the English mind towards Catholicism, or at least a mighty dissatisfaction inwardly with Puritanism, to account at all for the rapid growth of the Tractarian system, since its first appearance fifteen years ago in Oxford. It is easy enough moreover to point out powerful tendencies, which have been working either negatively or positively in other lands also, in the same general direction. The time has not yet fully come indeed, to estimate these in their whole strength. But it is plain enough, for all thinking men, that the problem of the Church Question, as it enters into the controversy between Catholics and Protestants, has been for some time past challenging reconsideration

and demanding new settlement ; and that this call is powerfully enforced from all sides, by what we may style the whole experience of the age, in a political and secular as well as ecclesiastical view. The English movement falls in with this wide spread and manifestly providential tendency, as it is clearly also the fruit of it and one of its most startling and awakening results. This of course shows again its vast historical significance and force. It lies at the very heart undoubtedly of the general life of the age ; and it is all in order accordingly, that the earnest and thoughtful, who stand in the nearest sympathy always with this life, should regard what is passing with more than usual interest and concern.

Taking the controversy in the broad view now noticed, there is no reason whatever for restraining this interest to the bounds of the Episcopal Church. The question in agitation is something far deeper at last, than the proper view to be taken of the Protestantism of this particular body, or of its rights and claims over against the Church of Rome. It looks directly to the whole constitution of Protestantism, and grapples at once with the deepest and most universal issue that holds between it and Romanism. Episcopacy here becomes a mere circumstance ; it may be in itself an element of some considerable account for the final settlement of the subject in hand, but it is still a secondary and subordinate particular only, and by no means the central or main thing, the very root and marrow, as some affect to think, of the whole question that is to be solved. To make it so, either on one side or the other, is sheer pedantry of the poorest and most pitiful kind. The question which lies at the heart of this movement, and communicates to it all its depth and power, is of no such shallow range. It goes far below this, to the very foundations of the whole cause of the Reformation. It is not necessary that one should be an Episcopalian, to feel himself brought into direct contact with its vastly solemn scope. He may feel this also, and ought to feel it, as a Presbyterian, as a Methodist, and even as a Congregational Puritan. For under every such character, he is still bound to take a lively interest in all that concerns the general constitution of that common Protestantism, out of which these unfortunate distinctions spring. And this interest is due to the case before us, independently altogether of the view that may be taken of the main question in debate. Let it even be supposed, that the whole drift and aim of the Catholic tendency is false, and that the true perfection of Protestantism is to be sought only in its being stripped of the last shred of churchly feeling, (after the taste of the Baptists,)

then will there be only the more reason of course to watch anxiously the progress of the present movement, and to look forward earnestly to the day when this desirable consummation shall be reached. The sacramental and the unsacramental alike have a deep interest at stake, in the present transitional crisis of the Anglican Church; and just in proportion to their earnestness, may they be expected accordingly to turn towards it their most solemn regards.

Of the last class we know indeed that there are many, who make it a point to treat the whole subject with an air of easy superiority and disdain; as though there were no room in truth for any rational controversy in the case, and so of course no ground for apprehension with regard to its ultimate issues, and no occasion therefore for any special interest in its progress. It is wonderful really how easily and how soon this unchurchly and unsacramental school in general are able to make a full end of this deepest problem of the age, and to gain a height of serene conviction in relation to it, that sets them quite beyond the reach of all the doubts and difficulties that seem to surround it for minds of another cast and make. To them the whole church question, as it now disturbs the peace of England, is nonsense and folly; they see to the bottom of it at once, and only wonder that men of education and sense in the English Church should find the least trouble in bringing it to its proper solution. Romanism is a tissue of abominations and absurdities from beginning to end; Puseyism is made up of silly puerilities, that cannot bear the light of common sense for a single moment; and it only shows the misery of Episcopacy and the English Establishment, that it should have given birth to so sickly a spawn at this late day, or that it should now find it so hard to expel the thing from its bosom. The proper cure for all such mummery is to give up the church mania altogether, to discard the whole idea of sacramental grace, to fall back on the Bible and private judgment as the true and only safe rule of Protestantism, and to make Christianity thus a matter of reason and common sense. This too is clearly the order and course of the age; all is tending, by political and ecclesiastical revolution as well as by the onward march of science, towards this glorious result of independence and freedom; and it may well be expected therefore, that all these church crotchets will soon follow the other rubbish of the Middle Ages into the darkness of perpetual oblivion and night.

But it is just one of the great uses of instruction to be drawn from this movement, that it is eminently suited to convict all

such flippant thinking of falsehood, and to expose it for the seriously thoughtful in its true nakedness and poverty. The entire history of Christianity indeed, for one who is able to study it, is replete with instruction in the same form; it is impossible to have any tolerable familiarity with it, and not be filled with a sort of moral nausea towards all such crude and empty declamation, as being a libel on its whole divine significance from the start. But it is well to have the lesson brought home, as it is here, to the very door of our own life and day. And no one will pretend, that it is not so here under a form that carries with it extraordinary weight. So much is this the case, that even the class of whom we now speak, with all their self-complacent flippancy, find themselves forced, as we have already seen, to do some homage instinctively to the inherent solemnity of the crisis which is passing. With all their tone of contempt for it, they have no power to avert from it absolutely their eyes, or to speak of it with calm indifference; which they should be able to do certainly, if it were in its own nature really so puerile and weak as they pretend. And who may not see, that the instinctive feeling here is more to be trusted, than the empty judgment to which it gives the lie. If ever a movement deserved to be honored, for its religious earnestness and for the weight of intellectual and moral capital embarked in it, such title to respect may fairly be challenged by this late revival of the catholic tendency in the English Church. The movement is of far too high and ominous a character, has enlisted in its service far too great an amount of powerful intellect and learning and study, and has gone forward with far too much prayer, and fasting and inward spiritual conflict, and has taken hold far too deeply of the foundations of the best religious life of the nation, and has led and is leading still to far too many and too painful sacrifices, like the dividing of soul and spirit or of the joints and marrow—to be resolved with any sort of rationality whatever into views and motives, so poor as those which are called in to account for it by the self-sufficient class of whom we now speak. To charge such a movement with puerility, to set it down as destitute of all reason and in full contradiction to the clear sense of religion, as a mere rhapsody of folly without occasion or meaning in the proper history of the Church, is but to make ourselves puerile and silly in the highest degree. Plainly it is the part of true wisdom, rather to pause before such an imposing fact with a certain measure of reverence, whether our sympathies fall in with it or not, to study it carefully in all its proportions, and thus to turn it to some purpose of instruction and profit that may be

helpful in the end to others as well as to ourselves. There is no excuse for treating such a fact with mere ribaldry and scorn. We are bound in all right reason, as well as in all good conscience, to take it for granted that it is not without meaning, whether we have power to understand the sense of it or not. It is high time, we think, in view of what has taken place already in the history of this Anglican movement, and of what is now taking place—not to speak of events that are as yet only casting their shadows before them—that our popular declaimers on the subject, whether of the rostrum or the press, should pull in their zeal a little, and learn to proceed somewhat more moderately in their philippics and squibs. They are, in the usual style, quite too wholesale and sweeping. All excess at last cuts the sinews of its own strength; an argument which proves too much destroys itself; and so there is some reason to apprehend, that this anti-catholic and anti-sacramental ammunition may in the end lose its effect altogether, by being simply pushed too far and so made vile and cheap. The method is indeed short and easy, and answers an admirable purpose especially for our May anniversaries, where many of the orators, as we all know, would be sadly at a loss to get along at all, without the opportunity of such wholesale never-come-amiss vituperation of Romanism and Puseyism, with all that belongs to the sacramental system. But for all this, it is high time, we say again, that men who lay claim to so large a portion of all the knowledge and piety that are going, should begin to be a little more reserved at least in the practice of such polemics, as being more and more likely to make an impression on thinking people the very opposite of that which they themselves seek and wish.

We do not mean of course, that the personal credit of the party embarked in the Tractarian cause, whether still in the Church of England or gone over to Rome, is to be taken as an argument for the truth of the cause itself; or that this is to be made right and good, by any consideration simply of the learning and piety, the labors and sacrifices, which it has had power thus far to engage in its service. There are learning and piety also on the other side; and the question is not to be settled at once by any proof of this sort in either direction. All we mean is, that a cause which is thus circumstanced is no fit object of wholesale contempt. It has a right to be looked upon with respect, and to challenge sober and serious examination. More than this, it must include in its constitution some real meaning and reason, well entitled to consideration, which it is perfectly certain that those have never yet come to see or understand, who

affect to dispose of its pretensions in any such summary and sweeping style.

The catholic and sacramental tendency in religion is something too great, to be set aside lawfully by a flippant dash of the tongue or pen, or by a mere magisterial wave of the hand. All superficial criticism here is egregiously out of place. Never was there a case, in which it could be less reasonable and becoming to sit at the feet of fools for instruction; and it is truly humiliating to see, how readily this is done by a large part of the nominally Protestant world, to whom every strolling mountebank is welcome that comes among them as a lecturer on Romanism; as though the deepest and most sacred themes of religion, and questions that have carried with them the earnestness of death itself for the most earnest and profound minds age after age, might be satisfactorily settled in five minutes' time with a flourish of idle declamation, by men whose want of serious thought is as it were visibly stamped on their whole face. Such championship of Protestantism is of course disgraceful, and tends directly to kill its own cause; on which account we are not much surprised to learn, that a somewhat notorious renegade brawler of this sort, who is now scouring the country, has come to be regarded by some with suspicion as being possibly himself still only a cunning Jesuit in disguise. But the championship may be of a much more respectable order than this, and yet fall fairly notwithstanding under the same general charge of frivolous superficiality. It may proceed, not from fools and blackguards but from men of respectable education and apparently very serious piety, and yet be of such form and spirit throughout as to show manifestly, that it is dealing with a subject which it has never taken any serious pains to understand, and the merits of which therefore it has no power either to fathom or explain. So it must ever be, where it is assumed from the outset that the subject carries in it no real difficulty, that two or three obvious common sense maxims are sufficient to settle it immediately and entirely one way, and that it is only a sort of palpable hallucination to think seriously for a moment of settling it in any other way.

In the case before us, all such sweeping criticism, we repeat, is in danger more and more of fairly capsizing by its own spread of sail. Of this some seem to be growing at least partially aware, and we notice accordingly in the late Tabernacle oratory, as reported in the newspapers, an occasional lowering of the usual high tone in regard to the intrinsic folly and wickedness of the whole Catholic system. A few of the best speakers have

condescended to acknowledge, that this system is not so utterly destitute of all sense and piety as is often imagined, that the main power of it after all lies in the appeal it makes to some of the higher principles of our nature, and that it may be found in this way to carry in it a perilous charm, a true siren's voice, even for religiously earnest and learned men. nay, for this class perhaps, in certain states of thought, beyond all sorts of people besides. "The sacramental system," in the language of one of these speakers, "is susceptible of such an expression, that its repulsiveness may be concealed, and it may be rendered attractive and full of spiritual meaning; and this was the reason why it attracted many of the learned and refined. It was impossible to read the Oxford tracts, or to converse with some of those who had gone from among us, and not feel that Popery is a system that may be rendered attractive to certain minds. But, nevertheless, it is a false system; and it is in this *plausible* aspect that it needs to be met, as a false theory." But even this sort of concession, we feel bound to say, gentlemanly as it is in comparison with the tone too often adopted by others, falls altogether short of the respect that is justly due to the subject, and that *must* be felt as well as professed towards it, before it can be approached in any case with truly successful controversy and debate.

The air of *condescension* here is quite too palpable, implying as it does the sense of most complete personal superiority to the entire issue in hand, to allow the supposition that there has been any real mastery after all of its proper difficulties and merits. No man can be justified in the use of this tone in such a case, we say it respectfully but still with the most firm decision, who has not been led in the first place through much profound thought and earnest prayer to the platform on which he is brought finally to stand; and then the fruit of his experience will have been such, beyond all doubt, that it will be morally impossible for him not to allow a great deal more still in favor of the system, which he ventures thus intelligently and not blindly to condemn. It is not enough, to say that the sacramental system is very childish, and contrary to the Bible, and at war with the whole idea of evangelical religion; but that we may easily see still how it can have charms for persons of a sentimental and poetical turn of mind; and so are bound to acknowledge the learning and religious sincerity of many who are now yielding themselves to its power, while we pity and deplore their blindness as contrasted with our own light. The apology itself, in any such form, is intolerably superficial and slim. It may go down, as a nice

morsel of philosophical wisdom, with some dreamy audience of the Broadway Tabernacle, but it can never bring any true and solid satisfaction to wakefully inquiring souls that hunger after truth. All such see at once, that it needs something more than sentimentalism to explain a movement so vast and deep. The very fact that the system in question has carried in it such power, through all past times, to lead captive the minds of the cultivated and learned, as well as of the rude multitude, and that it is doing this now in so earnest a way, should be taken as itself solemn proof that it is not without some sort of cause and reason, in the religious wants of men and the revelation of grace with which they are met in Christianity. Why should the system be so hard to destroy, and whence should it have come to so powerful a revival in the very bosom of Protestantism itself, and by what means shall we account for its energy and zeal, if it be in itself after all so void of reason, and so diametrically opposed to every right conception of religion, as is taken for granted even by the more liberal representation of which we now speak. No such system could ever so prevail, if it were altogether without reason. No such system could so turn the heads of the best scholars in the English Church, if it were made up of mere puerilities and dreams. No such system could produce so much uncommonly earnest fruit, in the way of fasting and prayer and sacrifice, if it were a simple trick of Satan got up to put down Christ. Every assumption of this sort is violent, outrages reason, and flies in the face of clear facts; and no opposition which is made to the system on any such ground, however respectable it may be in other respects, will be found of any true weight in the end. We have a right to say to such opposition always: "You have never yet so studied this system, as to be justified in using towards it the tone of superiority with which you affect to speak: It may be open to censure in the form here noticed, and it is in truth of the utmost account, in such case, that its faults and defects should be brought fully and clearly into view: But *you* evidently are not yet prepared for any such work: Your supposed superiority to the party on whom you pretend to sit in judgment, is imaginary only and in no sense real: You must think more a great deal, pray more, wrestle more, before you can deserve to be regarded as in any state answerable at all in these respects to the moral weight of the movement on the other side: That all is so clear and easy to your view, only shows how dark in fact your view still is: The first and most necessary condition for fighting Puseyism and Popery to purpose, let it be well understood and borne in mind,

the most indispensable *sine qua non* of all right to be heard in the controversy at all, is power to perceive and acknowledge the vast body of awfully solemn and most deeply interesting and vital truth, which enters into these systems, and clothes them with their strange and mysterious authority for so many earnest minds."

What makes this Anglican crisis particularly solemn for serious thinkers, is the force it has to bring out sensibly the difficulties and contradictions that belong to the present state of the Church on different sides. In this respect, it may be taken as of a truly diacritical nature; for it goes to probe and expose the doubtful character at least of much, which was before rested in with a sort of passive acquiescence as good and sufficient, simply because it was put to no practical inquest and trial. It sometimes happens that what has seemed to work well enough for ages in this way, is at last suddenly found wanting, to the view of all who do not choose wilfully to shut their own eyes, by some new experiment it may be of a very few years; a particular turn or juncture in history, that serves of itself all at once to bring out, with glaring revelation, huge flaws and defects of which the world generally seemed to have no sense whatever before. Such a juncture, to our view, in the progress of modern church history, is the movement now under consideration. It is in this light especially, that we look upon it as eminently entitled to attention, and as more than usually pregnant with instruction.

Who that thinks seriously, for instance, can fail to be struck with the fearfully ominous posture, into which the whole open and professed no-church interest is thrown by the progress of this controversy. By such interest we do not mean of course those who repudiate the name and notion of a church out and out, but that large class of Protestants rather which has come to look upon the Church as only a notion or a name, disclaiming all faith in its proper supernatural character as we find this asserted in the Apostles' Creed. The opposition which holds between this sort of religion, whether on the outside of the Episcopal church or in the bosom of it, and the old catholic faith, has been all along felt; but there has been room generally for a certain amount of vague uncertainty and disguise in the case, which has kept the full sense of the issue always more or less out of sight. The no-church interest contrived too commonly not to come to any clear understanding with its own theory, finding it more convenient to take the general orthodoxy of it for granted, and to assail negatively the views of the other side at given points as unevangelical and absurd. But one grand effect now

of the crisis which is going forward in England, is to put a full end to all such dubious and deceitful twilight, and to drag this question so into the blaze of day, that all men may see and know where they stand with regard to it, and judge of themselves and of one another accordingly. The main significance of the crisis lies just here, that it goes so thoroughly to the heart and core of the church question, and shuts men up to the necessity of answering it in a direct way, if they answer it at all, with full view of what their answer means.

The force of the question in the end is nothing less than this: Whether the original catholic doctrine concerning the Church, as it stood in universal authority through all ages before the Reformation, is to be received and held still as a necessary part of the christian faith, or deliberately rejected and refused as an error dangerous to men's souls and at war with the Bible? No one will pretend to say surely, that this is not a great question, and worthy of being met with a feeling of sacred awe. It is so, whatever view we take of the proper answer; for let it be considered never so plain and certain, that the rejection of the old doctrine is required by common sense, and that to uphold it is the perfection of folly and superstition, it is still something exceedingly solemn to come in this way to full rupture with a creed, which has been of such wide dominion and of such ancient date, and that must be acknowledged by all too to have been crowned in times past with extraordinary power and fruit. To break faith and communion in this way, not only with such men as Anselm, Bernard, and others of like spirit in the Middle Ages, but with the fathers also of the fifth and fourth centuries, the Gregories, Basils, Augustines and Chrysostoms, who shine as stars of the first magnitude in that older period of the Church, and still more with the entire noble army of martyrs and confessors in primitive times, clear back as it would seem to the very age at least next following that of the Apostles; to break faith and communion, we say, with all this vast and glorious "cloud of witnesses," not on a merely circumstantial point but on a question reaching to the inmost life of christianity itself, is beyond contradiction a thought of such momentous gravity as might well be expected to fill even the most confident with some measure of concern.

Here comes into view the proper significance of the controversy with regard to Baptismal Grace. The idea that the holy sacraments are divine acts, that they carry in them a mystical force for their own ends, that they are the media of operations working towards salvation which have their efficacy and value,

not from the mind of the worshipper, but from the power of the transaction or thing done itself, reaches back plainly to the earliest times of the Church, and has been counted a necessary part of the christian faith by the great body of those who have professed it through all ages. Baptism has been held thus to be for the remission of sins, and to carry with it in some way an actual making over to the subject, on the part of God or Christ, of the grace it signifies and represents. In this view, we find it identified very directly from the first with the idea of regeneration itself. So through the whole period before the Reformation. The mystical sense of the sacrament, and its real relation to the new birth, are everywhere acknowledged, and appear intertwined with the universal system both of doctrine and worship. The use of infant baptism in particular turns altogether on the assumption of such an objective force in the ordinance, and must be surely undermined indeed, sooner or later, wherever this assumption is renounced. Protestantism in the sixteenth century had no thought of breaking here with the faith of previous ages; and the Baptists of that time were regarded accordingly with little less horror than the Socinians themselves. Luther insisted on baptismal regeneration in the strongest terms. Calvin is more guarded, but very firm also in maintaining the mystical supernatural power of the sacrament, as parallel in full with the virtue he supposed to go along with the holy eucharist. The baptism of infants was continued in the Protestant Church on this ground alone, and has been spoken of from the first as in their case emphatically the sacrament of regeneration. So we have it broadly and plainly represented in the English Liturgy. With Puritanism however, the tendency has been all along to make but little of sacramental grace, and to turn the laver of regeneration in particular into a mere bold figure; and we find it now taking its stand openly and decidedly against the ancient church spirit, in its late Anglican revival, just on the platform of this question, as one of central and main account for the whole controversy to which it belongs. The question in truth is thus central in its nature. It involves at bottom the whole force of the alternative, *Church or No-church*, in the form already presented, as a solemn choice in fact between owning or disowning the creed of all Christendom in former times. And the alternative is brought home in so practical a way, that it is no longer easy to evade the full sense and point of the issue, which is comprehended in it under this broad view. This it is that makes the "Gorham case" of such high moment and far reaching significance at the present time, far beyond what many

see or imagine, not only for the Church of England but for the cause of Protestantism in general.

For let it be well observed, that the controversy now at last regards not simply the use of the word *regeneration*, nor some one sense in which it may be taken on either side, nor the doctrine merely of the English Service Book in any sense, but the whole idea of *baptismal grace*, and along with this the whole conception of sacramental grace in any form, as an objective mystical and supernatural virtue going along with the holy sacraments, in distinction from all states and acts accompanying the use of them in the minds of men. We have no right to make this a question for Episcopalians only or for the English Establishment; as though it were a contest properly only between a high party and a low one in that semi-catholic communion, touching the construction of a few unfortunate clauses in their Liturgy; while other denominations may be considered as out of its range altogether. We ought to see and feel, that it is a question, not for Episcopalians as such only, but for all Protestants.

It comes just to this now more and more plainly, whether the old notion of baptismal grace, as it reigned through all ages before the Reformation, is to be still retained in any sense, or fairly expelled from the bosom of Protestantism as a foreign heterogeneous element which had no business to be there in the beginning, and that never can be brought to amalgamate with it in an inward and true way. The Puritan party in the English Establishment, and still more readily of course the Puritan and Baptist tendencies on the outside of it, are in the way of taking openly and with full consciousness more and more the broad ground, that the doctrine of the Prayer-Book on this subject is a pure superstition, as bad as the old dream of transubstantiation itself, and that the farther the Protestant world can get away from it the better. It was all a pernicious mistake, we are told, that the old church made so much of the supposed mystical force of the institution; there is no particular mystery in it; baptism is a sign simply of spiritual benefits to be received in truth in quite another way; and to attach to it any higher significance, to make it in any view a vehicle of grace, is to endanger seriously the interests of *evangelical* religion. It is to fall into the vortex of the sacramental system, against which the entire evangelical host of God's elect—whether known otherwise as Congregationalist, Baptist, Methodist, Presbyterian, Quaker, or what not besides—is bound to exercise watch and wage war forever, as

part and parcel of the policy of Antichrist to deceive the nations and destroy the Church.

Such is the issue here joined, between the churchly and unchurchly tendencies which are now brought to wrestle, as it were in final deadly conflict, for the mastery of Protestantism, in this great English movement. Need we say, that so apprehended the struggle is one of intense interest and solemn as the grave? We see not how it can well stop, till the question is practically settled, not whether regeneration in some particular sense of this term is always accomplished by baptism, but whether baptism is to remain a sacrament at all for Protestantism, in the old universal church sense. Sacrament or no-sacrament, is in truth the question to be decided; and decided it will be, with consequences of unutterable moment, accordingly as the Protestant world is brought to rest now prevailing in one or the other side of this ominous controversy. We wonder how any person of serious and intelligent mind can fail to regard the controversy, in such view, with profound solemnity and concern. For let it be taken as indeed destined to settle finally the question now presented, the question namely whether Protestantism is a "sacramental system" at all, or carries in it any acknowledgment whatever of sacramental grace, as this idea runs through the whole previous faith of the Church back to the days of Ignatius, Polycarp, and the Apostles, and who may not see that it is in fact a crisis for the whole Protestant cause, (and not for Episcopacy only,) equal to any perhaps through which it has been called to pass since its origin in the sixteenth century. In the naked and broad form in which it has come up for practical decision in the English Church, we are not surprised at all that so many of the best men in that communion have been led to look upon it as the very Thermopylae of the whole church controversy, a question of life and death in truth for English Protestantism. It is only surprising that Evangelical Dissenters so generally, as well as Low Church Episcopals, should have so little power apparently to look at the crisis in the same way. That the Baptists should desire to see the last trace of the old sacramental system obliterated from Protestant Christianity, is all in order; but how can Lutherans and the Reformed, Methodists, Presbyterians, or even Congregationalists of the old stamp, fall in with their perfectly unchurchly humor, and not be struck with some feeling of anxiety and dread at the thought of making Protestantism by its own voice and vote constitutionally baptistic and unsacramental, in any such open revolutionary style? Can they look the present issue solemnly and steadily in the

face, and say : " Away with this whole doctrine of the mystical objective force of baptism ; we hold it for no part of pure Protestantism ; we deliberately renounce here all fellowship with the Holy Catholic Church of other ages, and with the clear sense of the ancient creeds, and count it a gain for evangelical religion to get clear also of all such obsolete mystification as we find on this subject even in Luther, Calvin, and the English Prayer-Book." Is *this*, we say, what such warfare against the sacramental system means ? Is it at last in league with the Baptists and Quakers out and out, for the overthrow of the sacraments altogether ?

So much for the no-church, no-sacrament party of the day, whether in the English Establishment or on the outside of it, whether in Great Britain we may add or in this country. It is exposed here to a sifting probation, which is well adapted to bring out the true nature of its principles, and to make them for considerate men an object of wholesome apprehension and dread. But the crisis carries with it a sifting efficacy also in other directions.

It bears with trying severity on the pretensions of Episcopacy. This system, as it prevails in England and this country, admits either too little or too much for the stability of its own claims.

Take the Low Church ground in its communion, and it sinks at once plainly to the order of the sects around it, which have by open profession discarded the proper church theory altogether ; it is one simply among the various denominations of the christian world, arguing from scripture and reason as it best can for its own peculiarities, but not venturing to make them in any way of the very essence of faith. In this view, Episcopacy becomes at best a simply outward institute, a matter purely of authority and so in truth a matter of mere ceremonial and form ; of the same order precisely with the law and letter of other distinctions, on the strength of which the Baptists, the Scotch Seceders, and such like bodies, are accustomed to make a parade in true Jewish style of their great regard for God's will. The Baptist pleases himself with the notion of his strict conformity to the "*law of baptism*," without note or comment, in the rejection of its use for infants, involving the repudiation of the whole idea of sacramental grace ; while the Episcopalian pleases himself, in exactly the same way, with the notion of following the primitive and apostolical law of church government and worship, by acknowledging three orders in the ministry and the necessity of a public liturgy. This feeling indeed may go so far, that he shall appear to be anything but a low churchman in the assertion

of it; for as the distinction runs most commonly perhaps between high and low here, it regards rather the stress which is laid on this mechanical notion of Episcopacy, than the truth of the notion itself. The low churchman, in this view, rests his cause more on the ground of expediency and rational preference; whereas the so called high churchman affects to build upon the outward precept as the very rock, beyond which no church whatever can be supposed to exist. In this sense, the rigid Baptist is also a high churchman, who counts all baptism a nullity that is not suited to his own scheme; and so too is the stiff Seceder, who refuses to hold communion with such as stick not exclusively to the use of David's psalms. In truth however Episcopacy of this sort is low enough, and the difference between it and that which more generally bears that name, is more circumstantial than real. Nay, it is in some respects more unchurchly even than the other order of thinking, just because it goes more decidedly to resolve the idea of the church into the notion of an external law, and so into mere Jewish mechanism and form. The true high church theory requires something far beyond this, and is virtually surrendered in fact where it is made to rest on any such false and insufficient foundation.

The progress of the present Anglican agitation, extending as it must of necessity do more and more also to this country, is serving powerfully to illustrate and confirm what is now said. The false and suicidal position of that large class of Episcopals, whose church principles are confessedly only Evangelical Puritanism under the drapery of Episcopal forms, is becoming fast apparent to all men. Their peculiarity of faith and worship is vastly too small, their Protestant maxim much too large and wide, to justify the ground they take over against the other divisions of God's sacramental host, confessedly as evangelical as themselves. Nor is it any excuse, that all this is a matter of church order for their body, and not directly of their own choice and will. We all know the original meaning of this order; it turns on the old doctrine of no salvation out of the church, and assumes that the measure of the church is its own communion. What must we think then of those who reject every such thought, and yet show themselves as exclusive as though it were still the full object of their faith? It would be far more honest and manly, we think, if the school here noticed, both in England and in this country, would at once forsake Anglicanism as it now stands, and either pass over into the bosom of other denominations, or if more to their taste form a new Episcopal sect in open and free fellowship, (like a part of the Baptists,) with othe:

sections of orthodox Protestantism. How can they reconcile it with a good conscience, to postpone such an interest as this, with all that is staked upon in their own view for the cause just now of evangelical Protestantism, to the consideration of keeping up what they themselves regard as no better than a shadow and a lie—the Episcopal system claiming the prerogatives of a church, to which they allow it no title in fact! If this bold Puritanic view be correct, the Episcopal system, with its manifold reminiscences and echoes of the old church life, must be regarded as a perfect wilderness of contradictions, from which the party in question, one might suppose, would count it both a privilege and a duty to clear themselves as quickly as possible, for the sake of a purer and better faith. If Protestantism mean what *they* take it to mean over against Rome, they put the whole cause into peril by pretending to stand up as they do for *Episcopal* Protestantism, as being of any real account for the general interest. Their principles should carry them farther. Admit the force of their logic *quoad hoc*, and no one can see why it should not be of force very far beyond. It is childishly willful, to stop where they insist on stopping, and then pretend to play off the exclusiveness of Rome itself towards all who exceed such arbitrary bounds. If we are to have a *Thus far but no further* in any case, let us be saved from it at least, in all conscience, under every such purely capricious form! Romanism is more reasonable a great deal than Episcopalianism of this stamp, which first sinks its own authority to the same level with that of all surrounding sects, and then breaks fellowship with every sect besides to uphold it, as the imaginary palladium of the Protestant Reformation.

But what shall we say now of that other form of low Episcopacy, which calls itself *high* only because it is more exclusive in theory as well as practice, and lays greater stress on the legal obligation of its system, while the whole is taken still in the light of a merely mechanical appointment or law? We see not truly, how Episcopalianism in such shape deserves to be considered a whit less pedantic, to say the least, than the exclusiveness of the Baptists or Seceders under a like outwardly legal form. In both cases alike, the Divine element in religion is regarded as holding on the outside of it, in the way of precept, rather than in the very bosom of the system itself; the letter is made to go before the life, to underlie it as first in order and importance, instead of being joined with it in concrete union, and so deriving from it continually all its force. Thus the Baptist pretends to be scrupulously exact in obeying the law of baptism, according to his

own view of the particularities belonging to the rite in the time of the New Testament; the value of it in his eyes, its true use and necessity, is to be sought only in the notion of its being commanded and enjoined by God; and so he makes a religious merit of following the injunction, as he supposes, to the letter, unchurching practically all others—on the principle that the essence of religion is implicit submission to God's authority as made known by the Bible, and that it is rationalistic to vary from this a jot or tittle in any way. In truth however, the rationalism lies wholly on his own side; for the factors of his religion in such form are, not the word as life and spirit, and faith yielding to its plastic force, but the dead letter of the Bible merely and his natural intelligence making out of it what sense it best can. So with the greatest scrupulosity for the form and shell of the sacraments, the true heart and inward substance of them are discarded as a miserable superstition; the circumstantialia of baptism are made to be everything and its proper essential mystery nothing; the entire conception of the Church, as anything more than a natural human society, falls to the ground; and the glorification of God's authority in the Bible, (just because it is thus turned into a dead rule for the natural intellect of man to work by,) becomes in the end a horribly grinning satire upon itself, by resolving faith into common sense and subordinating the whole interest of religion to private judgment and private will. It is not by accident, in this view, that the Baptist spirit, loud as it is at the outset in its profession of being more bound than others by the "law and testimony" of revelation, has ever shown itself prone to make common cause in the end with all sorts of rationalistic radicalism in its open assault on the mysteries of Christianity; as it is not by accident either, on the other hand, that this radical humor, when it affects as it often does to be on the side of Christ, falls in with the Baptist tendency, in thought and tone, more immediately and readily than with any other short of open infidelity—having, with all its veneration for the Bible, the same dislike precisely of the Church, and the same horror of everything like sacramental grace. Such, we say, is the fallacy here of resting the idea of religion on the supposed word of God, taken in the light of a merely outward or legal institute. And now we ask, what better is it than this to make Episcopacy, with its outward succession from the time of the Apostles, in and of itself the article of a standing or falling church—on the principle simply, that Christ and his Apostles are supposed to have prescribed this form, and that we have no right therefore to vary from what must be regarded thus as a

strictly Divine rule? It is possible to take very high ground with this view, to be very aristocratic and very exclusive; but the view itself is low, and proceeds on the want of faith in the proper supernatural character of the Church rather than on the presence of such faith; on which account, the farther it is pushed it only becomes the more plainly empty and pedantic. Being of this character, it is found to thrive best, like all pedantries, in periods of mechanical humdrum and sham; while it is sure to be exposed in its true vanity, when the religious life is called to pass through a great general crisis, as at the present time. The more the church question is agitated in an earnest and serious way, and the more men's minds are fixed on its real meaning, the more evident must it become always that no such mechanical view of it as this can ever solve its difficulties or satisfy its requisitions. And such precisely is the way in which the profound Catholic movement now going forward in England, is making itself felt on the pretensions of Episcopacy in this simply outward style all the world over. It is showing them to be hollow and vain, no better in truth than an idle sham. It is causing the earnest minded, both in that communion and out of it, to see and feel, that either the church rights and prerogatives of which it makes a parade are nothing and form no special property whatever in its case, or that they must have far deeper and more solid ground on which to rest than the order of bishops or the use of a liturgy, regarded as a simply outward appointment. No *jure divino* constitution, in any such style as this, can uphold in a real way for faith the mystery of the one, holy, catholic and apostolical Church. The premises are either too narrow for the conclusion, or else a great deal too wide.

Faith in the Church, in the old ecclesiastical sense, is not a stiff persuasion merely that certain arrangements are of divine appointment, and a disposition to stickle for them accordingly as the lines and stakes that go to fix the conception; it is the apprehension rather of the Church as a living supernatural fact, back of all such arrangements, having its ground and force in the mystery of the Incarnation, according to the order of the ancient creed, and communicating to the marks and signs by which it is made visible every particle of virtue that is in them for any such end. This idea goes vastly beyond the notion of Episcopacy, Presbyterianism, or any other supposed divine right ecclesiastical polity of this sort; it looks directly to the original promise, *Lo I am with you always to the end of the world*; and lays hold first and foremost of the mystical being of the Church, as no mechanism of dead statutes, but the actual presence of an ever

living revelation of grace, (no less divine than the Bible itself,) a higher order of history, a strictly heavenly constitution on earth, (Christ's *body*, the fulness of Him that filleth all in all.) in virtue of which only, but in virtue of which at the same time surely, all organs and functions belonging to it have also a super-human and heavenly force. This does not imply that such organs and functions may be indifferently in any form, or in no form whatever, (a theory of *invisibleness* that turns the concrete mystery into a pure abstraction,) but it does mean certainly that the organs and functions make not of themselves the being of the body; they are parts only in any case, which owe their whole vitality and vigor to the general system in which they are comprehended, and away from this are of no worth whatever. If episcopacy and a liturgy be found to grow forth conclusively from the nature of the Church, in such catholic view, it is all well and good; let them then come in legitimately for their proper share of respect. But it ought to be plain "unto all men diligently reading holy scripture and ancient authors," we think, that the grand weight and burden of the question concerning the nature of the church rest not at all on these distinctions, and that to put them therefore ostensibly in any such form must ever smack of pedantry, and betray a poor and false sense of what this question means. All turns here on the *idea* of the Church, and this not only may, but must be settled to some extent in our minds, before we can go on to discuss to real purpose the divine obligation of Episcopacy, Presbyterianism, or any other polity claiming to be of such necessary force. Is the idea of a really supernatural constitution under this name, as it once universally prevailed, a sober truth still for Christian faith, or has it become a dangerous though beautiful *fiction*? That is the question; the first and most fundamental question here, before which the whole controversy about bishops and elders, liturgical forms and free prayer, becomes of only secondary account. For it is the answer we give to this question first of all in our minds, that must determine the sense of what we contend for at other points, or show it to be worth contending for one way or another. What is a *jure divino* polity, whether Episcopal or Presbyterian, or a *jure divino* system of rites and ceremonies, for a church that shrinks from proclaiming *itself* divine, and that has no faith practically in the supernatural character of its own constitution, as anything more than that of the American Tract Society or any other outward league of evangelical sects! In this view it is, that the question of sacramental grace is more profoundly interesting, than the question of episcopacy. It goes much nearer to

the heart of the main question, the grand ultimate subject of controversy and debate; for the sacraments are the standing sign and seal of whatever power is comprised in the Church; and as we think of this, so invariably also will we think of them; the one conception giving shape and form always directly to the other. But even here the right church sense is something more general and deep, than the right sacramental feeling. The notion of grace-bearing sacraments, sundered from the sense of the Church as still carrying in it the force of its first supernatural constitution, would be indeed magical, and must prove quite as pedantical in the end as a supreme regard for bishops in the same dead way. We must believe in a divine church, in order to believe in divine sacraments, or in a divine ministry under any form.

The feeling of this enters deeply into the Anglican movement; forms we may say the very soul of it; and is extended by means of it also far beyond the movement itself, with new and unusual force. This we take to be a great benefit, whatever may be thought of Puseyism, or of the tendency it shows just now to pass over to full Romanism. Be its issues as they may, the question here agitated is in itself of the most vast and solemn import, and we have reason to be thankful that it is thus carried from the mere outworks to the inmost citadel of the cause in debate. This Anglican controversy, and most of all we may say the form it is now taking as an open reconsideration of the controversy with Rome, is in itself and for Protestantism something far deeper than the strife for Episcopacy in the usual style of past times; no such strife, as holding simply between Episcopacy and Dissent, deserves to be considered of any real account in comparison; and we may well be glad, that both Episcopalians and Dissenters are now in the way of being forced to see and confess this more and more. The controversy here has to do, not with the accidents and circumstances of Protestantism only, but with the very foundations of its life; and we rejoice to believe accordingly, that it is fast turning into impertinence, for thoughtful men everywhere, the agitation of the church question in every lower view.

It cannot be denied again, that the course of this controversy, as thus reaching to the very heart and soul of the church question, is powerfully sifting and trying the ecclesiastical pretensions of the English Establishment as a whole. These proceed on the old catholic doctrine of the Church, and claim to be in harmony with it throughout. But the near and close competition in which it is now placed with Romanism, is causing it to appear

in a very different light. Think as we may of the aggressive movements of this last, in themselves considered, it must be confessed that so far as mere general *principle* is concerned the Catholic cause carries with it a better show at least of reason and right than that to which it is so daringly opposed. First in view is the high and solemn question of ecclesiastical supremacy, the true and rightful headship of the Church and its legitimate relation to the State. Who can doubt, but that the ground here taken by Cardinal Wiseman, and the Romanists in general, is of a higher character than that occupied by Lord John Russel and the English Establishment? On one side, the civil power is made to be the fountain of ecclesiastical authority; on the other, this authority is taken to be of an order wholly distinct from that of the State, independent of it, and for its own ends above it—derived originally from Christ, and having its seat perpetually in the spiritual kingdom of which he is the glorious though now invisible head. Can there be any question, which of these two views is most honorable to religion, most congenial to faith, most in harmony with the New Testament, most true to the authority of past history? It has been a great reproach to English Protestantism from the beginning, that it put the King into the place of the Pope, and referred all church offices and functions to him as their ultimate source. For refusing to acknowledge this royal supremacy in the affairs of the church, the Roman Catholics have been subjected in past times to persecutions and penalties, which those who are forever harping on the theme of Protestant liberality, as contrasted with the bigotry and intolerance of Rome, would do well to acquaint themselves with even in a superficial way. In the Establishment itself also, many have felt all along the disgrace and burden of the relation, and have often with feeble voice protested against it or tried to explain it away. But never before probably was there such a glaring exposure of the misery of it, as that which is taking place just at the present time. The whole Tractarian movement has been *against* the notion of such civil supremacy in ecclesiastical matters, in proportion precisely as it involved a revival of church principles generally, and a return to old catholic sentiments and ideas. The Gorham controversy might seem to have been providentially ordered, to bring out in broad caricature and irony the true sense of the force, when it was sure in this way to receive the most earnest attention. Here, a theological question, not of secondary but of primary consequence—going just now as we have before seen to the very root of Protestantism—is settled in the last instance by purely civil authority; and

the English hierarchy, with his Grace of Canterbury at its head, in the presence of the whole world dutifully succumbs to the insolent and profane dictation! How unlike the spirit of the Third Innocent truly, of Hildebrand, of Anselm, of Athanasius! No wonder the Bishop of Exeter, with such earnestness as he has in his soul, should feel such a crisis to be tremendously solemn. And now, to set the case in its worst possible light, England beholds in her bosom the sudden revelation of a full Catholic hierarchy, asserting the independence of the church in its own sphere, and taking thus with natural ease the very ground which the Tractarian tendency has been reaching after as necessary and right, but reaching after so far in vain. The contrast could hardly be exhibited under a more noticeable or clearly intelligible form; and it is full of disadvantage to the cause of Anglican Episcopacy.

For let it be kept in mind, what we speak of is not the Papal system as such over against the State system of Queen Victoria and the British Parliament, but the general *principle* merely that enters into this contest. That is capable of being considered and settled without regard to actual forms of administration; and must be so settled indeed, in order to be acknowledged at all in any true way. It is a very important question certainly, whether the headship of the visible church shall be taken to reside in a General Assembly, or an Episcopal Convocation, or a Pope; but of still greater importance than this, because back of it and under it in the order of truth, is the question, whether the church shall be allowed to have any such headship of its own at all, or be regarded as a mere branch and dependency of the civil government, like the judiciary, the army or the marine. This is the question, on which issue is now joined by the Catholic and State Church parties in England; and we have no right to close our eyes to the true significance of the principle involved in it, merely because it may seem to go in favor of Popery here, as they call it, and not in favor of Protestantism. The exodus of the Free Church of Scotland has been widely glorified, as a grand exhibition of martyrdom for the very principle now in view, the independence of the church in church matters, the "rights of King Jesus," as the Scotch phrase it, in opposition to all worldly political power whatever. The fountain of ecclesiastical law and order, the true and proper primacy in matters of religion, was loudly proclaimed in this case to be, not the British throne or parliament, but the supreme judicatory of the church itself; and in defence of this principle, the best men of Scotland, with Chalmers at their head, showed themselves ready

to brave, if need were, the greatest penalties and pains. Puseyism too has gained credit deservedly, for only seeing clearly, and saying plainly, that the civil supremacy in matters of religion is an abuse, at war with every right conception of the church, and for proposing, though thus far only in a weak and ineffectual way, a return to the old doctrine of ecclesiastical independence; and for all right minded men certainly, the Bishop of Exeter just now, by even the partial stand he is trying to make for this doctrine in the midst of the universal defection from it that surrounds him, is a spectacle of more moral dignity than the Archbishop of Canterbury, with the whole bench of bishops besides at his back, truckling in base subserviency to the nod of the civil power. And why then should we refuse to see or own the same moral significance, in the controversy between the Queen and the Romanists? In their own way these last claim the right, (indefeasible in its own nature and now solemnly guaranteed also by the British laws,) to render unto God the things that belong to God, and to carry out the full idea of a church, without dictation from Cesar or dependence in any sort on Cesar's will. But against this, Lord John Russel and the great majority of the English nation loudly and violently protest—calling it Papal aggression, a violation of the proper liberties of the country, an attack on the Queen's supremacy; as though it were not by act of Parliament years since settled, that allegiance to the Pope in things spiritual is perfectly compatible with the acknowledgment of this supremacy in things political, full as much as allegiance to the General Assembly of Scotland. The principle of the controversy thus is clear and plain. And so far as this is concerned, we say, the right is with the Catholics, and the wrong glaringly and grossly on the other side. We sincerely admire for our part the firmness and constancy of the Irish hierarchy in the case of the Government colleges, and the calm intrepidity displayed in the organization of the new hierarchy for England; and only wonder that so many otherwise sensible people should have no power apparently, through the mist of their prejudice against Popery, to look upon the matter in the same light. Let Popery be never so foul and false, in itself considered, it is still something great, in this age of mechanism and sham, to find a large body of men thus solemnly committing themselves on its behalf to the old catholic principle, (very apostolical too, as it strikes us, both in sense and sound,) that powers and rights ecclesiastical, come not from kings or civil parliaments, but from the divine constitution of the church itself upheld and maintained by the perpetual presence of its own head. There can be no

question in this issue, which side answers most impressively to the true ideal of the old church life, as it comes up to our minds when we think of such men as Cyprian, Athanasius, Chrysostom, Ambrose, or Augustine. There is a moral majesty in the present position of the Pope's hierarchy both in Ireland and England, which, poor and mean as it may outwardly appear, has the effect just now undoubtedly of casting a very sensible shade on the Queen's hierarchy, in spite of all its pomp and wealth. Why should Wiseman not stand as high here at least as Chalmers? Who among the Anglican bishops or archbishops can be said to present anything like the same imposing and sublime figure?

But the issue here is not simply as between two hierarchies, the one culminating in the Pope and the other in the Queen, in the form now stated; it goes beyond this to the universal question of religious liberty, the right of men to worship God according to the dictates of their own conscience, the principle of church toleration in the broadest sense; and in this view it concerns directly all sects and parties on the outside of the Government church, no less than the membership of this favored communion itself. Is it not the pride of the age, to be considered liberal, enlightened, tolerant in matters of religion? Is not this in particular the boast of Protestantism? Above all is it not the boast of English Protestantism, whether in Great Britain or in these United States? Has not England moreover only a few years since, after ages of most unrighteous persecution, solemnly *emancipated* her Catholic population, and admitted them to a gracious comprehension in this grand privilege of the nineteenth century? But how now does the case before us comport with all this; in which the first movement of the Catholics to carry out in earnest their own ecclesiastical polity, is met with noise and clamor from one end of the nation to the other, and mob and parliament and church-by-law-established are summoned angrily to unite for the purpose of putting it down! Thus ends the farce of toleration and freedom. One can hardly help being reminded by it of Pharaoh's liberality to the Israelites, when he graciously allowed them to go abroad for the worship of Jehovah, but at once set terms and bounds again to his own grant which made it no better than a hollow pretence. The liberty comes just to this: "You may live and serve God as good Catholics, provided only you consent in doing so to hold your ecclesiastical rights and privileges as a fief in fief from the English crown, and do homage for them accordingly, as is done by the regular government church, to her Majesty the Queen, as

true *Pontifex Maximus* of the British realm." Pagan Rome in the first ages, and the Persian Monarchy in the fourth and fifth centuries, might easily have been reconciled to the church on the same Erastian terms. But no true Catholic of course could so part with the substance of his faith, to be thus graciously *tolerated* in keeping the name of it afterwards and its mere empty shell. Say what men please of it then, the contest now going forward in England, between the Papal and Royal interests, is in truth a contest for religious freedom and the rights of conscience; and the fact is not to be disguised, that in this view, according to the established Protestant doctrine of the nineteenth century—the age of light, the flower of all ages—the wrong is palpably and egregiously on the Protestant side. This is so plain indeed, that the main body of the English nation itself, it seems to us, must soon be ashamed of its false position, and quarrel with its own passion for so upsetting the fair and even tenor of its way. It is only strange that the universal interest of Dissent should not at once have been prepared, to make common cause openly in such a case with the *persecuted* party—so far at least as the principle of religious toleration is concerned. A most curious commentary it is certainly on the reigning song of this class in particular about "freedom to worship God," the inalienable rights of conscience, &c., to find not only the Independents, Baptists and Methodists, of England, but the Presbyterians also of Scotland, holding up their hands for the royal supremacy in matters of religion against the Catholics, while yet professing to disown it for themselves. And what is if possible still more remarkable, even the Puritanism of this country, with all its antipathies for Episcopacy and law religion, is led by its still greater hatred of Popery to lean visibly in the same direction—as though in the presence of this Medusa's head the memory of Plymouth Rock itself should turn to stone! The doctrine of freedom to worship God according to his private judgment and conscience, and without dictation from the State, is good it seems for every fanatic who chooses to act the part of pope or pontifex maximus separately in his own behalf; but it is *not* good for such as acknowledge any such primacy in the Roman Catholic form. The question comes to this in the end; and is it necessary to say, that under such form it wears just now a very bad face, not only for the Protestant Episcopal church in England, but for the cause of Protestantism in general.

It amounts to nothing to say, that the Catholics are themselves constitutionally intolerant and exclusive, and therefore deserve

no toleration from Protestants. That is not the true modern doctrine of toleration—to allow the rights of conscience and “freedom to worship God” only to such as could be trusted to do the same thing, if they had full power in their hands. Tyrants reign and kill on precisely the same maxim. Protestantism is bound here to take the measure of its conduct from itself, and not from abroad, from its own theory of Christianity and not from any that may be held by others.

But Romanism is to be excepted from the law of universal toleration, we are told; on another account. it involves allegiance to a foreign power, and in such view is politically unsafe and so unworthy of trust. The settlement of a religious constitution under such form in the land, not holding as such from the British throne but from the Bishop of Rome, is taken to be an aggression, an invasion of the Queen’s right, which looks finally to treason and revolution, and fully justifies accordingly the most stringent action on the part of the Government to put it down. We have sometimes heard the same cry of the *Republic in Danger*, on this side of the Atlantic also, to get up a crusade against the Catholics, though the trick is happily waxing now rather stale and grannyish for much effect. The whole plea we hold to be perfectly idle and false. It is not upheld by either reason or history. No part of the English nation has shown itself—even through water and through fire, the persecution of the nation itself; almost forcing it the other way—more true to the government, more loyal and patriotic and worthy of trust in all respects, than just the body of whom we now speak. Nor has there ever yet been given in this country the shadow of an occasion, (other than the noise made by alarmists themselves,) for apprehending the least danger to our civil institutions; and for ourselves, we say it plainly, we believe the acknowledgment of the Pope’s spiritual primacy is just as little at war with a true American spirit, and carries in it just as little peril for our American liberties, as the acknowledgment of any like primacy in either of the Presbyterian General Assemblies, or in the American Episcopate, or in the private judgment simply of any true blooded Puritan Independent, who holds himself at liberty, if need be, to brave on the plea of conscience all human authority besides.

But into this question it is not necessary to enter at length in this place. What we wish to urge is, the wrong that is done practically to the Protestant cause itself, let the case be as it may with regard to the political character of Romanism, in supposing that this cause may not be left to take care of itself, even where

it has every outward advantage on its side, but is to be cared for only by a system of wardship and police, in which the free action of mind is to be as much as possible forestalled and forced into a given form. The genius of Protestantism, we are told, is not *lucifugous* like that of Rome; it seeks the light, has large trust in common sense and an open Bible, and asks only a clear field and fair play to get the better of Romanism in a short time even in France or Italy itself. Romanism indeed is so absurd as well as wicked, such a dark mass of fallacies and fooleries and vile abominations, that it might seem to have no chance of standing a moment in any such unequal contest, unless under cover of some such Egyptian darkness as brooded formerly over the Middle Ages. But now in the case before us the conditions of this trial are all against it, and in favor of the antagonistic cause. The Protestantism of England is not in its infancy, but of full age and growth, with its roots reaching out in every direction into the soil of the national life. It has learning, and wealth, and vast moral respectability, on its side. The government is in its hands, with boundless patronage and power. What can such a cause fear, thus inwardly and outwardly strong, from an interest so poor and weak and vile as the *thing* called Popery? One might suppose the English nation would only laugh at any show of serious competition, on British ground and in the middle of the nineteenth century, proceeding from such a quarter. And yet, strange to say, the simple erection of a Roman hierarchy, which can never be of more force than the mind and will of the people allow, has been sufficient to throw the nation into a sort of wild panic. There is a solemn self-contradiction in this, and what might seem to be an involuntary confession of weakness, which to the mind of an earnest Protestant, on either side of the Atlantic, can hardly fail to carry with it a somewhat portentous look. And it only makes the matter worse, when piety here turns into patriotism, and affects to be concerned—not just for any peril into which religion may be brought by so contemptible and barefaced an enemy—but for a future and distant peril of the State. This supposed political danger all depends of course, at the same time, on the *growth* of Romanism far beyond its present bounds; and such growth in England can come only by the activity of the British mind itself, exercised on the problem of the two opposing systems under the full meridian blaze of modern knowledge, with an open Bible and all sorts of outward force besides to stem the movement; in which case it would seem as if it must have some *right* to prevail, if a people have any right ever to think for themselves

or to follow their own mind. But the conservative humor of which we now speak, with all its faith in Protestantism, its huge contempt for Romanism, and its high opinion of Anglo-Saxon intelligence and common sense, is by no means willing after all to trust things in this way to their natural course. England must not have the opportunity even of making a fool of itself by turning Catholic, though this should take place with never so much intelligence and freedom. If a man is likely to become a maniac, and in that state to commit suicide, his friends think no harm of chaining him for his own good; and just so here, in view of this possible fit of Romanism and the farther possibility by it of political self-destruction, it is held to be wise and right to clap a strait jacket on the patient forthwith, for the benevolent purpose of keeping him in safety from his coming self. The imagination of John Bull is terribly frightened with the chimera that he is in danger of losing his senses, that his mind is not safe in his own care and keeping; and he comes to the sage conclusion, that the best thing he can do to avoid so deplorable a catastrophe is to part with his mind altogether, to put it into the hands of his own Prime Minister, the British Parliament, the Anglican Bishops, or anywhere in short that may seem fit, only so as to be fairly rid of it himself and in no peril thus of becoming crazy.

What a Circe after all this Popery must be, if the full grown Protestantism of England in the middle of the nineteenth century, with all sorts of patronage and prejudice to back it, may not be allowed to meet the hag or look her fairly in the face, even on its own soil, for fear of being bewitched by her sorceries into the similitude of a swine.

And how kind of the popular spirit now happily in the saddle, which is so well assured of its own sanity and can see this danger afar off, to break through its usual cant of free inquiry and free speech, its favorite cry of liberty and light, and to invoke the strong arm of power for the suppression beforehand of any and all workings of British mind that may look this way.

We have the same spirit in this country, officiously concerned to persuade the American people that Romanism is at war with the idea of a Republic, and that to guard against the danger of itself turning Catholic in time to come, and so by its own free choice committing political suicide, the part of wisdom is now, in obedience to the counsels of this far seeing and profoundly patriotic school, to forestall and cut off the exercise of all freedom in any such form, or in other words, by putting out the

light in season, to save the weak eyes first and then the weak life of the nation.

Seriously, we say, the cause of Protestantism is wronged, the cause of Romanism powerfully complimented, by every concession which implies in this way that there is any danger of an enlightened people, at this time of day, with its eyes open and its hands unbound, being led deliberately to exchange the boasted beauty and perfection of the first for the supposed ugliness of the second, at the cost of losing besides its most cherished privileges and institutions. Such extreme sensitiveness to danger, such spasms of morbid jealousy and fear, where the foe at the same time is represented as so poor and silly, so loathsome and vile, so miserably decrepit and weak, is to our mind we confess one of the most uncomfortable symptoms in the case of Protestantism at the present time. Why should a very ordinary Address of Archbishop Hughes, on its *Decline*, set so many angry pulpits and presses in motion, all over the land, to prove that it is in the full zenith of its prosperity? Why should our evangelical papers, of every denominational hue, feel it necessary to let no week pass without at least two or three squirts of foul water cast towards Rome, when on their own showing it were quite as wise to do battle in the same style with the Grand Lama of Thibet? Why should this English demonstration, which if Protestantism is to be believed in its own favor, deserves to be counted little better than some outbreak of Bedlam, have power nevertheless apparently to move the heart of the Queen of England, and the heart of her people, "as the trees of the wood are moved with the wind?" It would tell vastly more certainly for a cause that takes itself to be so good and strong, over against one that is reproached as rotten to the core and ready to fall to pieces by its own rickety weight, if it could only afford to enjoy this happy feeling of such vast superiority in a calm and quiet way, and with some corresponding self reliance and self-possession. Why should the bellowing of a Roman *bull* disturb, even for a moment, the serenity of the British lion?

The truth is however, that there is real room in the whole case for uneasiness, not just because Romanism may be seen to have power, but because Anglicanism is felt to be weak. The constitutional deficiency of this system, its want of ability to assert and carry out in full the proper functions of a church, is in the way of being exposed as never before by the progress of the present crisis; and so searching has this become in its operation, that there is now good reason to expect that it will lead in due time to the breaking up of the Establishment altogether.

It is becoming more and more difficult for the two tendencies it carries in its bosom, to move in any sort of union together; and we are not surprised to find that which still makes earnest with catholic truth leaning powerfully towards secession, whether it be to form a new body or to fall into the arms of Rome. The secessions which have already taken place in this last form, are exceedingly significant. No movement of the sort equally grave has occurred since the Reformation. The importance of it lies not just in the number of the converts, though this is serious enough; but in their character rather, and the circumstances of the change. Newman was the greatest theologian in the English church, and next to him probably Archdeacon Manning. The converts generally have been men of learning and piety, filling prominent stations and connected with the best families. Of their great moral earnestness, the step they have taken is itself the strongest proof. It has been well remarked that every one of them must have gone through a process of fiery probation, of which the world generally can have no conception, to break in such style with his whole previous existence, and pass over through all sorts of sacrifice to his new position. Every single conversion in such circumstances is a true *martyrdom*, in the full sense of the word. No single case of such martyrdom can ever pass without weight; and in such a time of crisis especially as the present, a hundred cases of the sort coming together must be allowed to carry with them a truly startling and awakening power. It is only the perfection of insipidity to pretend indifference to the fact, in the old world or in the new. The fact itself however, as is well known, is but part of a much wider and still more serious fact. It is no more than the beginning probably of a great church-slide, which is destined soon to shake the whole world with its thundering sound. Nearly two thousand ministers at least are reported as holding ground with regard to the Queen's supremacy, and the late governmental settlement of the question of baptismal regeneration, which will hardly allow them to stay much longer with a good conscience in the Government church. It is difficult to see how Bishop Philpotts can avoid going along with the movement. Such an exodus, whether it may lead at once to Rome or not, must be followed with still more failing of heart and confusion of mind in the Establishment, and with such palpable self-contradiction before the whole world, that it will have no power finally to uphold itself even in form against the forces that are at work on all sides for its overthrow.

In this way it is that the crisis before us, as we take it, is bring-

ing the pretensions of this Established Church to such a course of fiery trial as it has never been called to pass through before ; and the result of the trial is sure to be, that Anglicanism will be found wanting, having no power to make good its own high sounding promises and claims. It is some instinctive apprehension of this, we doubt not, that excites it so much just now against the so-called Papal aggression. With all its superiority of patronage and wealth, and Protestant prejudice to boot, Anglicanism very plainly is afraid to meet Romanism on fair terms, before the tribunal even of the Anglican mind itself. It virtually confesses judgment, and condemns itself by its own verdict. It must either give up the church doctrine altogether, and so fall down openly to the level of the lowest Puritanism, or else be led by it to proclaim itself the sham only of what Romanism has the show at least of being in fact ; and either horn of such a dilemma is " sharper than any two edged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit." Hard enough it is of a truth, in such circumstances, to be calm and quietly self-possessed. But the exposure is only aggravated by the want of power to meet it in this way. The style in which both parties in the Establishment, High-church and Low-church, allow themselves too generally to rail at Romanism and the late conversions, is anything but dignified or rational, and must in the end rebound with righteous retribution on the credit of their own cause.

It is easy enough to see moreover, that Episcopalianism in general, even as it exists among us here in America, is sorely tried also by this Roman movement in much the same way. It has had already a few secessions of its own, and cannot help feeling at the same time that the secessions in England, and the assumptions that go along with them on the side of Rome, strike directly at the very root of its own life. Hence we have no small display of the same sort of blustering petulant humor that is at work in England ; which however tells all the more badly here, in the case particularly of the high toned church party, that it contrasts so strangely with the bland liberality towards "our Roman sister" which was in vogue in this quarter only a few years since, and finds besides not even an inch of ground on which to build its pretensions in the political constitution of the country. In such circumstances it argues anything but a strong sense of truth and right, anything but real faith in a *jure divino* title, to fall upon nicknames and all sorts of unfounded scandal, the missiles always not of reason but of irrational passion, for the purpose of fighting off the opposite cause.

It is ridiculous for Anglicanism to claim an exclusive right to this country, over against Romanism, unless it be on the ground that this last has lost all church character, and that Anglicanism accordingly is the only true Catholic succession—ground which in fact this communion does not venture to take. What a farce then to talk as if Romanism *here* in America, (whatever it may be in England where Queen Victoria is the fountain of all church unity and life,) could have no right to exist, and must be held only an apostasy and *schism* if it dare to exist, on the outside of the Episcopal communion! “Pervers,” apostates and schismatics, all are taken to be, who fall away from this communion, whether it be to the side of Geneva or of Rome. It sets itself up thus for the one holy catholic church of these United States, out of which on either side there is no salvation. But why then should this same Anglicanism not go to France, or Spain, or even Rome itself, and there play off the same pompous pretence? By what right political or historical does it claim precedence here in such high handed style, that would not be of equal force in Italy or Austria? Why should the true and only valid ecclesiastical jurisdiction of Maryland for instance, originally settled as it was by Catholics, be taken to lodge now in the hands of the excellent Bishop Whittingham only, and not in the See of Baltimore made vacant recently by the death of the no less excellent Archbishop Eccleston? The question may be answered different ways; but let the answer go as it may, it will be found to bear hardly on the cause of exclusive Episcopalianism, involving in one view a great deal too little as in another a great deal too much for its hierarchichal claims. In this way, if we are not greatly mistaken, the present course of events is serving to unfold the weakness of such Episcopacy far more than its strength. The stream of the church question, so easy to wade through seemingly at first, is fast getting too deep for the legs of this system to touch bottom, and it must either swim beyond itself or sink. Plainly it has no power to give a satisfactory response to the problem of a truly Catholic Protestantism, the last and deepest interrogation of the present time.

It affords us no satisfaction to come to this melancholy conclusion. We would feel it a great relief rather, to be able to find in Anglican Episcopacy a truly rational and solid answer to the problem of which we speak, an Ararat of rest for the ark of Protestantism, so long drifted by any and every wind over what has been thus far a waste of waters only without island or shore. For most firmly are we convinced, that no *other* sect or fragment of the general movement carries in itself, as such, the power and

pledge of any such rest, or is ever likely to prove hereafter more than a weak approximation at best, on the most narrow and partial scale, to the true ideal and proper perfection of its own cause. The whole reflection is suited to make one sad. But it is still a gain always, to have fallacies exposed and delusions brought to an end; and in this view, as we have said before, there is reason to rejoice at what seems to be taking place in the ecclesiastical world, in the way of historical judgment and dissolution, by the winnowing process that has now begun. It is a great matter to have subordinate issues thrown back on their deepest and last ground, in such sort that men may be compelled to deal with this in a really wakeful and earnest way. So it is coming to be now more and more with the question concerning the true sense of Protestantism, and its right to exist, over against the pretensions of the Church of Rome. There are difficulties in Protestantism, which are not to be settled by the common issues between its sects, let the decision here go as it may. These need to be acknowledged and seriously looked in the face, in order if possible that they may be surmounted or set aside. To make no account of them, is only to make them worse. It is well therefore that the course of history is forcing the world to their solemn consideration, and causing it to see that the right settlement of them calls for something deeper and better than any of the schemes that are now paraded as sufficient for this end.

The day of mere outward tradition here, and blind passive trust in authority, is fast passing away. The mind of the Protestant world is in the course of being roused more and more, to a full revision of the first principles and primordial elements of its own life. What is the real meaning of its *protest* against Rome? Was it in truth, though not so meant at first, a complete rupture with the idea of the Church as it stood before, a full casting off of the old sense of this mystery as it was held for faith in the first ages; in which view Puritanism becomes right, and the best course for ending difficulty would be undoubtedly to give both Episcopacy and Presbyterianism to the winds, and fall over at once in mass to the cool latitude of Baptist Independence; or is it essential to Protestantism still to carry in it the sense of divine powers, and to assert them in the form of true sacraments and keys that are taken actually to open and shut the kingdom of heaven? And in this last case, can Anglicanism as it now stands be trusted to bear the whole weight of what is thus required, as being under Protestant form, by reason merely of its ecclesiastical machinery, what no Protestantism besides has any power to be under a different shape? And if no

such trust be found to stand, is there no help save in a return to Rome; or may the whole cause of Protestantism be supposed to carry in it the promise of a better future, in which it shall be brought to leave all these difficulties behind, by passing forward to a new and higher position that shall be both Catholic and Protestant at the same time? These are the deep questions that are coming home silently to the inmost heart of the age, by the church agitations of the present time; and so far have thought and doubt been stirred already with regard to them, that we hold it altogether idle and vain to think of a quiet and contented return hereafter to any past habit as in itself conclusive and sufficient. The past is not thus sufficient for the cause of Protestantism, in any part of the world. To say of it that it is so in any of its forms, is only a very bold or else a very ignorant lie; and no such lie now can long satisfy the mind of the age.

The Anglican crisis in this way involves far more than at once appears on its face. It is undermining confidence in much that has heretofore had a show of truth and strength, writing *Tekel* upon it, and turning it for the consciousness of men into mockery and sham. How far this reaches already, or where it shall reach hereafter, no one can tell. One thing is certain; the way is opening for a new revival of infidelity in England, in close connection with the latest and worst form of German rationalism, which is likely to go beyond all that has appeared there under this name before, and which can hardly fail to be felt powerfully also on this side of the Atlantic. It is remarkable too, that this alarming development seems to run in some measure parallel with the revival of the church tendency, as though it formed its natural alternative and reverse. It has entered the Universities, both Cambridge and Oxford. Puseyism in some cases has fallen over, with easy somerset, to sentimental Straussism. The movement includes a brother of *Froude*, and a brother also of *John Henry Newman*. To some, this connection may seem to be an argument against the church tendency; but in truth it is an argument in its favor; for darkness in the moral world follows light always as its shadow, and through the corruption of man's nature what is good is every ready to call forth what is bad, nay even to recoil seemingly itself at times into such conclusion, as a sort of Mephistophelian satire on its own beginning. Nor is it at all difficult to see, in the case before us, how the very same need in the course of religious thought, which urges some to lay new stress on the mystery of faith, may throw others into the stream of unbelief, or carry the same persons indeed first in one direction and then in the other. Let the foundations of a reign-

ing creed or habit in religion begin to give way, and there must be of necessity a movement on the part of such as think at all, towards either a more consistent supernaturalism or else a more clearly conscious rejection of the supernatural altogether. This, we doubt not, is just the relation that exists between the revival of infidelity, and what some take to be the revival of superstition, at the present time in England. Both tendencies in truth grow forth from the same ground; both argue the insufficiency of the established tradition, the breaking up of its authority, and the felt necessity of finding for the mind a surer and better resting-place. Both go in this way to show the truth of what we say, in regard to the far reaching character of the religious movement which is now at work. It cannot pass as a mere transient and partial excitement, to be followed by a full relapse afterwards into the old order of life and thought. The hollowness of this has been too far disclosed, all real faith in it is too far gone, to allow any such re-settlement under more than a factitious and hollow form. Politics and the interest of trade may prevail to bring back for a time such a reign of order in Warsaw; but it will be a reign at the same time of violence, of indifference and conscious shame, opening the way certainly to new and greater revolutions in time to come. The idea of the Church must become practically far more than it has been for English Protestantism, or it will inevitably become far less. And this alternative is comprehended itself in a more general issue, which will be found of force finally for the Protestantism of the whole world.

To some it may seem possibly, that putting the matter in this form is equivalent to a full surrender of the church question in favor of Rome. If it were so, we ought not to shrink certainly from the confession of clear and open truth, just for the sake of avoiding that consequence. Whether we choose to see it or not, the crisis now noticed is solemnly at work, and is sure to lead in the end to its appointed judgment and result. Protestantism must render a plain intelligible answer to the challenge:—“Church or No-church—Sacramental or Non-sacramental—Fidelity to the mystery of the ancient creed, or broad and full rupture with it as the opening revelation only of the Man of Sin?” We will not bear the thought of this answer falling the wrong way, to the side namely of a purely Gnostic naturalism, substituting its own spiritual common sense for the proper mysteries of faith; for that would amount at once to a sentence of condemnation on the whole cause of Protestantism, as complete as any its worst enemies could wish. The problem is then,

How shall the demands of the old Catholic faith be satisfied in true union with Protestant freedom? And for this, we say, no sufficient solution is found in the existing state of Protestantism, as any one may see who is honest enough to look at the matter earnestly with his own eyes. Not in the system as a whole; for it is intrinsically at war in such form with the whole conception. Not in any one part or section of it separately taken, whether in Europe or America. Can any thinking man seriously persuade himself, that Presbyterianism, under any of its multiplying constitutions, or Methodism, or American Lutheranism, or such chaos as now represents the notion of the church in Germany, carries in it the last sense of Christianity, and is in the way of solving hereafter the full burden of its awful riddle for the world's universal use? Can this be hoped of Anglicanism, or such Episcopacy as we have from this source in our own country? The times are working out a negative reply, in tones that are too loud to be overlooked and too clear to be misunderstood. Anglicanism can never cause itself to be accepted, with general faith, as in and of itself an adequate solution for the great church problem of the present time. These we say are *facts*, which we have no right to blink, let them lead where they may. The ostrich changes no truth, by simply plunging her own silly head into the sand. A cloud of arrows shot into the air may darken for a moment, but have no power to put out, the keen light of the sun.

There are however not simply two general alternatives here, but we may say four. The first is a deliberate giving up of the sacramental system altogether, the only proper end of which—short of parting with the Trinity and the Incarnation—is Baptist Independence, the extreme verge of unchurchly orthodoxy. The second is full despair of Protestantism, and reconciliation in form with Rome, as we have it exemplified with thrilling solemnity in the present English secessions. A third way of escape may be sought, in the belief or hope of a new miraculous dispensation on the part of God himself, through some special agency armed from his presence with fresh apostolical commission and corresponding powers, such as may supersede at once both Romanism and Protestantism as systems that have become historically powerless and dead. Swedenborgianism plants itself on this ground; and it is the ground taken also by Irvingianism—a far more respectable and significant birth of the modern church life than many, having no insight into its natural history, are disposed to allow; not to speak of the wretched caricature we have of the same tendency in Mormonism, which

also in its own way claims to be a revival in full of the otherwise lost gifts and powers of the apostolic age. A fourth and last resort is offered, the only one it seems to us which is left for the thoughtful, in the idea of historical development; by which, without prejudice to Catholicism first in its own order and sphere, or to Protestantism next as a real advance on this in modern times, though with the full acknowledgment of the faults and views of both systems, it is assumed that the whole present state of the church is transitional only and interimistic; and that it is destined accordingly through the very crisis which is now coming on—not just by a new miracle setting aside the whole past as a dead failure, but in the way of true historical progress, which makes the past always the real womb both of the present and the future—to surmount in due season the painful contradictions, (dialectic thorns,) of the Protestant controversy as this now stands, and so to carry it triumphantly forward to its own last sense, (the type neither of St. Peter nor of St. Paul but of both ✓ rather as brought together by St. John.) in some form that shall ✓ be found at the same time to etherealize and save, in the same way, the last sense also and rich wealth of the old Catholic faith.

One of the most interesting and richly suggestive books that have appeared in our times, is Thiersch's Lectures on Catholicism and Protestantism. (*Vorlesungen über Katholicismus und Protestantismus von Heinrich W. J. Thiersch*, son of the distinguished grammarian of this name, and professor of theology in the University of Marburg).¹ Through this whole article we have had it more or less in our eye, though it takes no reference directly to the course of things in England; and it is not impossible that we may make it hereafter the basis of another article on the same general subject, in the way of carrying out still farther the momentous discussion to whose threshold we have now come. It detracts not at all from the interest of the work in question, that its highly accomplished and most amiable author, since the first edition of it was published in 1845, has been led to adopt the third general answer, just stated, to the great question of the age, by espousing the cause of the Irvingites, which strangely enough has won for itself in Germany quite a number of converts. This fact rather only goes to show the more affectingly the trying nature of the subject, and the deep earnestness of the man. The frivolous and superficial not seldom find all

¹ Author also of the best work we have ever seen on the Canon of the New Testament, a. 1845, in opposition to the destructive criticism of the Tübingen school.

easy, where the truly serious in proportion it may be to the very amount of their knowledge itself are brought into the greatest straits. No one can question the learning of Thiersch; it is of the very highest order. And just as little room is there to question his piety and profound practical sincerity. He wrestles with the problem of his book evidently, not merely as a theoretic scholar, and much less as the organ merely of a theological party, but as one who feels that issues of life and death are suspended for himself and for the world on its proper solution. No one can follow him, without feeling that the subject is full of embarrassment, as well as big with importance, and that it is regarded throughout by the lecturer himself, whatever it may be for others, with intense interest and concern. When we hear of such a man seeking refuge from the difficulties of the church question, by falling in with the belief that nothing less than a new apostolate, sent forth with fresh commission directly from Christ himself, can restore Christianity to its proper form, and that such new apostolate has in fact appeared of late among the Irvingites—we may be well assured that there is here truly a *nodus vindice dignus*, that the difficulties in consideration are neither few nor of light account, and that to meet them properly is a task which calls for more than common earnestness in any part of the world. It is hardly necessary for us to add, that we have no sort of faith in the solution of the knot in this way. No scheme can command our regard, which nullifies virtually the doctrine of the indestructible life of the church, as well as the Divine promise on which that doctrine rests, by assuming a full failure and frustration of all the sense the church had in the beginning. We have no patience on this ground with that bald Puritanism, which fairly buries the church for a thousand years and more, in order to bring it to a more striking resurrection in the sixteenth century. As little can we be satisfied, on the same ground, with the visions of Emanuel Swedenborg; they proceed throughout on the assumption that the church as it started with the Apostles has run itself out, both as Catholicism and Protestantism, and that the world is to be helped now only by a new revelation appointed to take its place. Irvingism involves more or less distinctly, as it seems to us, the same dismal thought; and if this be so, it needs no other condemnation. If it come to a necessary choice between such a view and Romanism, the advantage lies decidedly we think on the side of this last. It is easier to believe that the original powers of the church still flow in this communion, though hidden for the most part from our common Protestant sight, than it is to suppose that they have

perished entirely, and now need a "*Lazarus come forth,*" or a second edition of the word "*On this rock,*" to come once more into full play for the salvation of a dying world. But, as we have seen, we are not thrown at once on any such desperate election. We may cast ourselves upon the theory of historical development, so as to make Protestantism itself, with all its painfully acknowledged miseries, the main though by no means exclusive stream, by which the general tide of the original Christian life is rolling itself forward, not without fearful breaks and cataracts and many tortuous circuits, to the open sea at last of that grand and glorious ideal of true Catholic Unity, which has been in the mind of all saints from the beginning.

It is but fair to add in the case of Thiersch, for whom we entertain a more than common affection and respect, that he is by no means unhistorical in his own mind, but altogether the reverse; and that so far as the objection here noticed has any weight, it is to be regarded as holding by implication only against the system, in whose plausible meshes he has allowed himself to be recently caught. His theory agrees in many respects with the scheme of historical development; only he counts it necessary to include in this the idea of such a failure of the first life of the church, as makes it necessary now that it should be called forth again from the grave as it were of its own past history by a second supernatural gift of the same sort. J. W. N.

MAYER'S CHURCH HISTORY.¹

THE title of this work is not to be judged exactly from the contents of the volume here offered to the public. It belongs rather to the whole plan, of which in the mind of the excellent author the present volume was intended to be only the threshold or vestibule. The history of the Reformed Church of Germany, in the strict sense, belongs to a later period, which it would have been necessary to take up in a separate volume, had the author been spared to execute his full task. As it is, the work before us is a History of the Swiss Reformation, and this only in part; for it does not come down even as far as to the death of Zuingli, but stops short with the posi-

¹ *History of the German Reformed Church.* By REV. LEWIS MAYER, D. D. Late Professor of the Theological Seminary of the German Reformed Church in the United States. To which is prefixed a *Memoir of his Life*, by REV. ELIAS HEINER, A. M. Minister of the First Reformed Congregation in Baltimore. Volume I. Philadelphia: Lippincott, Grambo & Co. Pp. 461, 8 vo.