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THE PRICE
OF
PRIESTCRAFT

HOWARD EVANS



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THE
PRICE OF PRIESTCRAFT

A BOOK FOR THE PEOPLE.

BY

HOWARD EVANS.

“Above all, the Kingdom of Christ has no sacerdotal system. It interposes no sacrificial tribe or class between God and man, by whose intervention alone God is reconciled and man forgiven. . . . The officers are called stewards or messengers of God, servants or ministers of the Church, and the like; but the sacerdotal title is never once conferred upon them.”—BISHOP LIGHTFOOT.

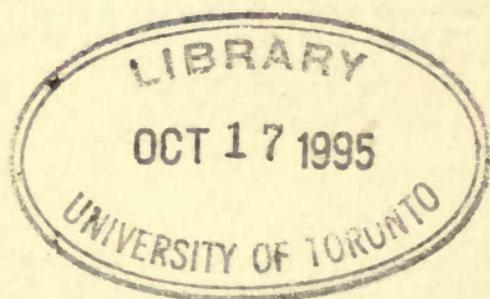
“It ought always to be remembered that ecclesiastical, and not merely papal encroachments, are what civil government and the laity in general have had to resist; a point which some very zealous opposers of Rome have been willing to keep out of sight. But the true enemy is what are called High Church principles, be they maintained by a pope, a bishop, or a presbyter.”—HALLAM.

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1904.

This book, which I have been impelled to write by the Education Act of 1902, I dedicate to the Convocations of Canterbury and York, who were the real authors of that measure.



Contents.

	PAGE
INTRODUCTORY	5
PRIESTCRAFT AND THE PIOUS FOUNDER	16
PRIESTCRAFT AND THE DEATH BED	26
PRIESTCRAFT AND GREED	35
PRIESTCRAFT AND THE INQUISITION	42
PRIESTCRAFT AND THE ADMINISTRATION OF JUSTICE	48
PRIESTCRAFT AND WOMAN	56
PRIESTCRAFT AND CELIBACY	60
PRIESTCRAFT AND MARRIAGE	64
PRIESTCRAFT AND TRUTH	82
PRIESTCRAFT AND WAR	90
PRIESTCRAFT AND CIVIL WAR	100
PRIESTCRAFT AND THE JEWS	105
PRIESTCRAFT AND IDOLATRY	111
PRIESTCRAFT AND THE TEMPORAL POWER	119
PRIESTCRAFT AND THE DRINK TRADE	127
PRIESTCRAFT AND THE DOUBLE TONGUE	131
PRIESTCRAFT AND PRESENT-DAY POLITICS	143
PRIESTCRAFT AND THE KINGDOM OF GOD	154

THE PRICE OF PRIESTCRAFT.



Introductory.

THIS book has been written to supply a need. Its brevity is due to the desire to appeal to a popular audience, for in these days comparatively few people will read a serious book of any length. The battle of the Reformation is being fought over again ; but too many citizens are indifferent to great questions, or only concern themselves with bread-and-butter politics. A revival of priestly power is one of the greatest dangers of the age ; it is perilous alike to civic liberty, to social progress and to the Kingdom of God.

The Church of Rome ardently cherishes the hope of the re-conquest of Britain. It demands the removal of the legal guarantees that the throne shall be occupied by a Protestant Sovereign ; it seizes every opportunity to quarter itself upon the rates and taxes ; it exerts its subtle power to influence the Press ; it builds its schools on a scale far greater than its needs ; it has made this country the dumping-ground of alien monastic orders. In France these orders threatened the very life of the Republic, so that the Government, in sheer

self-defence, had to cripple the revolutionary activity of "the Black International."

In England the Established Church is honey-combed by Romanisers who teach almost every Romish dogma except the supremacy of the Pope ; and whose leader, Lord Halifax, openly avowed, at an annual meeting of the English Church Union, which has 4,000 clerical members, that his ultimate object is reconciliation with Rome. Most of the English bishops are patrons, protectors, and promoters of the Romanisers, and treat the respectful complaints of laymen with indifference, sometimes, indeed, with rudeness and contempt. Four years ago the House of Commons, by an almost unanimous vote, expressed its disapprobation of the Romeward movement, but the Government continued to promote Romanisers ; and when at length the discontent of Protestant laymen was disagreeably manifested at by-elections, the Government sought to hang up the whole subject by the customary device of a Royal Commission.

Parliament has neither the time nor the capacity for dealing with ecclesiastical questions ; yet Parliament alone has the right to make laws for an Established Church. High Churchmen groan under the authority of a legislature largely composed of men who have no connection with their Church ; their impatience is natural and praiseworthy. But Parliament is not likely to surrender or delegate its powers, seeing that the Anglican clergy owe their exclusive enjoyment of the ancient national endowments for religion to the Acts of Supremacy and Uniformity. Equitably these endowments belong to the whole nation, and the Anglican Church does not include one-half of the

worshipping population. The Bishop of Norwich sorrowfully admits that among the Anglican laity there is an increasing distrust of the clergy ; and, for obvious reasons, the English Church Union resolutely opposes any scheme of Church reform which would concede to the laity any real power in matters of dogma or discipline. It holds that the priestly class should enjoy absolute power : it is enough for the laity to pay and obey.

Meantime a reactionary Government, which in 1900 retained office by false pretences and by an immoral combination of vested interests, passed an Education Act at the bidding of the Anglican and Roman priesthood, which threw their schools entirely on public funds, but shielded them from local public control—the only public control which can be effective. At the same time the Act destroyed the School Boards in the expectation that the new authorities would be more easily subject to clerical influence. To defend this Act and to secure permanent exemption from half their rates, the Anglican clergy will more than ever become a wing of the Tory party ; and if that party should retain power they will make yet further demands.

The time has come to frame an indictment of priestcraft in a brief popular form. Therefore it is not overloaded with references, though every important statement of fact contained therein can be verified and justified by chapter and verse from those who have studied history at first-hand. The resurgence of the priest in matters of education should compel attention to his position. Although the majority of English citizens are not formally connected with any Christian Church they are not hostile to Christianity. Their children are sent to our

Sunday-schools, and the propaganda of materialistic Atheism finds very small response. In England, as yet, Christianity and priestcraft are not regarded as identical, as they are in Roman Catholic countries. But the indefatigable industry of priests, and their humanitarian labours, are calculated to disarm suspicion, and to lead men to forget the intellectual and political serfdom which is involved in priestly domination. Such a book as this may help to correct the tendency.

The Church of Christ, using that term in the widest possible sense, has been a beneficent power in the world throughout its existence, even in the darkest ages ; but its usefulness has been constantly impaired and crippled by priestcraft. In the most corrupt Churches there have always been a multitude of good priests ; they have been good, not because of their priestly claims, but in spite of them. Such were St. Francis, Thomas à Kempis, Fénelon, Pascal, St. Vincent de Paul, Father Damien, in the Church of Rome ; such were Hooker, George Herbert, Leighton, Ken, and William Law in the Anglican Church. Their memory is hallowed not as priests, but as saints. True saintship is not confined to those Churches which boast of a manipulated Apostolical Succession. When Pope Leo XIII., like his predecessors, rejected the validity of Anglican Orders, Lord Halifax rightly made appeal to Christian experience. The Free Churches can do likewise. Howe and Bunyan, Wesley and Whitefield, John Howard and Elizabeth Fry, Carey and Knibb, Williams and Moffat, and Calvert and Chalmers, and a multitude of others demonstrate that the Divine Spirit is trammelled by no arbitrary human limitations.

The great majority of priests have always been

poor men, and are so still, even in the Anglican Church, which is now the richest Church in Christendom, and which shows the most scandalous inequalities of all, though the Ecclesiastical Commission has been at work for more than half a century. At the top there are prelates with seats in the House of Lords, where they never do any good service for righteousness and freedom; at the bottom are a multitude of holders of small benefices, worse off than an average skilled workman, and assistant curates who can hardly find employment after the age of forty. No wonder that candidates for Holy Orders are constantly diminishing in numbers, and that bishops, lapped in luxury, fail to persuade the youth of the great public schools to take service in the Church unless they have family livings or family influence.

The majority of priests in any Church where priesthood is recognised should be regarded with profound pity. In the Roman Church they are devoted to the priesthood at too early an age to enable them to give an intelligent consent, or to understand what are the obligations of a priest. They are trained in seminaries where they are kept in ignorance of the outside world; and when once they have taken priestly vows, emancipation is almost impossible, for they are unfit for secular life. Their minds have been trained to such habits of blind obedience that they are simply parts of a vast machine. We must always remember that these men are victims of a system, condemned in the very morning of life to poverty, celibacy, and intellectual slavery. Notwithstanding the unnatural conditions in which they are placed, large numbers of them are models

of piety and devotion to the poor and needy. No one but a demented anarchist would dare to say that a man is necessarily bad because he is a priest.

Probably many of the most headstrong champions of priestcraft believed that they were in the right and that they were doing God service. So did the prophets of Baal on Mount Carmel; so did Annas and Caiaphas, who condemned our Lord; so did the Sanhedrim, who ordered Stephen to be stoned to death. We may allow that Hildebrand and Becket, Whitgift and Laud were thoroughly sincere, and were ready to die for their opinions; but their sincerity does not sanctify their cause. We must admit extenuating circumstances on their behalf; but, all the same, we must pronounce judgment against them.

Exceptional circumstances sometimes demand exceptional rules of conduct on the part of those who would keep themselves unspotted from the world. The shameless profligacy of the stage in the days of the Stuarts justifies the rigid abstinence of the Puritans from the theatre, as in our own day the cankerous vice of betting justifies the rigid abstinence of evangelical Christians from the turf, although Oliver Cromwell himself enjoyed a horse-race. So in times of deep unrest and fierce persecution it was better for a Christian to deny himself the purity and sweetness of family relationship, while the pioneer missionaries to barbarous tribes sometimes found it needful to become as eunuchs for the kingdom of heaven's sake. But the holy enthusiasm of self-denial and self-surrender is no justification for the iron yoke of life-long vows enforced under threats of eternal damnation.

Finally, it must be remembered that this book

is a history of priestcraft, not a history of priests. The world owes a deep debt of gratitude not only to the secular or parochial priesthood, but to the monks and friars before they became corrupted by luxury and superstition. The men who were the pioneers of Christianity and civilisation; the men who reclaimed the waste places, and made the wilderness to rejoice and blossom as the rose, by their constant daily labour; the men who sent out from Cluny and Clairvaux, and Bec and Jumièges, scholars and statesmen and leaders of the world; the men who planned the stately fanes of Gothic architecture in mediæval Europe; the men who spent their time in the scriptorium, writing and illuminating copies of the sacred books before the art of printing was invented; the men who, at the call of St. Francis and his like, devoted their whole lives to the ministry of the poor and the afflicted, are worthy of all honour for their beneficent labours. All this is freely acknowledged, while the right of priestcraft to claim these men as the necessary and exclusive product of the sacerdotal system is as strenuously denied.

It is the fashion of certain High Church writers so to bring into prominence the resistance of English sovereigns, and even of some English bishops, to the ever-increasing encroachments of the papacy for two or three centuries prior to the Reformation, as to convey the impression that the Church in England enjoyed a position of semi-independence. This is a fiction which cannot be sustained; indeed, it is usually propagated by insinuation and the suppression of material facts rather than by direct assertion. From the time of the first Archbishop of Canterbury till the quarrel of Henry VIII. with the Pope, the spiritual authority of the Papacy

was never called in question. It is ridiculous to pretend that the Church in England was not of Roman origin. The North of England was, indeed, largely evangelised by missionaries from the ancient Celtic Church ; but the successors of these missionaries were soon brought under the Roman yoke. The Pope's supremacy over the Church was firmly established as early as the beginning of the seventh century, and successive occupants of the papal chair enlarged their claims until Boniface VIII., who became Pope in 1294, issued a Bull in which he said : " We declare, state, lay down, and pronounce that it is an indispensable article of faith for every human being that he is subject to the Roman Pontiff." Every Archbishop of Canterbury and York owned allegiance to the Pope from the time of Augustine to the time of Cranmer, and dared not exercise his office till he had sworn allegiance to him and had received from him the sacred pall. It is a falsification of history to describe the pre-Reformation Church in England as a separate entity ; Archbishop Arundel and other prelates knew nothing of the Church of England ; they spoke of " the Holy and Universal Church of Rome." As Lord Halifax truly said in a speech at Bristol (February 24, 1898) : " When for controversial purposes it is attempted to discover an origin for the English Church other than that of Rome, or to prove that England from the earliest times was not united to Rome by the closest ties of an external union and a common faith, those who are acquainted with the facts are tempted to doubt our honesty, or at least the trustworthiness of our historical methods."

Readers of this book who are attached to the " Church of England " are invited to keep in mind

the broad distinction between a Church and a Church Establishment. As the Archbishop of Canterbury has sadly acknowledged, an increasing number of Churchmen would welcome Disestablishment because they see that the State-connection is a great hindrance to the work of the Church as a spiritual force. The "Church of England" has always contained a small minority of enlightened clergy, like Stanley and Maurice and Robertson, who, in spite of the trammels of the Act of Uniformity, have strenuously and bravely striven to reconcile their Church with the modern spirit. It has contained a large minority of both clergy and laity who have devoted themselves mainly to the evangelisation of the masses, and to missionary enterprise abroad. How they can reconcile their position with the canons of their Church, and with certain portions of its Prayer-book, outsiders find it difficult to understand. But there can be no question as to the fact. In their ranks are included some of the most learned of scholars and theologians, to whom Free Churchmen owe a large debt of gratitude. Such men as Hort and Hatch and Lightfoot have dealt in such a candid and impartial spirit with priestly pretensions that their conclusions go far to establish the Free Church position. In proof of this it is only necessary to cite the words of Dr. Lightfoot, a former Bishop of Durham: "Above all the Kingdom of Christ has no sacerdotal system. It interposes no sacrificial tribe or class between God and man, by whose intervention alone God is reconciled and man forgiven. Each individual member holds personal communion with the Divine Head. The sacerdotal title is never once conferred upon the servants or ministers of the Church."

In dealing with priestcraft it is necessary to take into account the history and pretensions of the Church of Rome, and to accentuate the fact that it is now Ultramontane through and through. The author of this book, so far from sharing the views of those alarmist Protestants who see a Jesuit in disguise at every street corner, has repeatedly declared in the columns of the Press that the marriage returns of the Registrar-General demonstrate that Roman Catholicism does not grow with the increase of population. The Roman Catholic priesthood are adepts in the arts of advertising and political wire-pulling. They assiduously work the Press, they know how to make imposing effects with bricks and mortar, they turn the sacerdotal proclivities of the dominant party in the Anglican Church to the best advantage. But their successes are rather in the direction of influence than of numbers. Yet we cannot afford to treat their persistent efforts with indifference, seeing that a large and increasing number of the clergy of the Established Church are aiding their work, while too many Liberal politicians steadily shut their eyes to the danger of priestly ascendancy. Except in the United States and our self-governing colonies, where democracy is all-powerful, the Roman Church is essentially anti-Liberal and anti-democratic. As Mr. Gladstone said in his "Vatican Decrees": "No one can become her convert without renouncing his mental and moral freedom, and placing his civil loyalty and duty at the mercy of another," that other being a Church which has "equally repudiated modern thought and ancient history."

Certainly priestcraft is less corrupt, less greedy, less arrogant than in the Dark Ages, or in the days of our own Tudors and Stuarts. But the change

is not so much due to the desire of the priestly class to reform itself, as to the existence of Christian Churches which have more or less thrown off the priestly yoke. The Council of Trent effected reforms of no small value, but it was the Reformation which made the Council of Trent a necessity. The Anglican Church has practically abandoned the slavish doctrine of Passive Obedience which in the time of Laud and Sheldon was held to be one of the primary articles of the Christian faith; but this has been mainly due to the formation and growth of Nonconformist Churches. If Protestantism and Nonconformity were wiped out to-morrow, and Christianity were only presented to men in a sacerdotal form, the ancient audacious claims of the priest would certainly be revived. As far as women and children and the illiterate are concerned, such claims are still urged with unabated zeal.

H. E.

Priestcraft and the Pious Founder.

NOTHING can be more absurd than the assertion of Church Defence writers that at some remote period, nobody knows exactly when, every landlord in every parish of his own free will determined that one-tenth of the produce of his lands for ever should be devoted to the service of the Church. Such an event has never happened since. Who were these alleged "pious founders"? For the most part they were men of savage instincts and unbridled passions, whose religion was mainly composed of selfish fear, and who were led to believe that whatever their crimes, they could buy off eternal damnation by enriching the priesthood. Such writers as the late Lord Selborne were well aware of these awkward facts, but they carefully ignored them. The ancient ecclesiastical endowments consist mainly of tithes, and grants of land by kings and great landlords. Lord Addington's Return of 1891 shows that the annual value of these ancient endowments is £5,469,171; this is exclusive of modern private benefactions, which amount to £284,000 a year.

Tithes.

The origin of tithes in this country is stated by Freeman as follows:—"The Church preached the payment of tithe as a duty, and the State gradually

came to enforce the duty by legal sanction." Sir Walter Phillimore, the greatest living authority on ecclesiastical law, puts the matter more clearly: "There was no giving of tithe except by some early Saxons during their lives; all subsequent tithe is a tax imposed by the State for the benefit, in the first instance, of the Church." Sir L. T. Dibdin, another eminent ecclesiastical lawyer, says that: "The payment of tithe having been first taught as a Christian duty, came next to be also a matter of Church law; that the clergy then claimed the tithes as their right, and, finally, that this right became a part of the law of the land." Anyone can see that whenever the payment of tithes was first enforced by law, tithe became a tax. Even Lord Selborne was virtually compelled to admit this, for he says in his "Defence of the Church of England" that, "the payment of tithe originated in the acknowledgment of a moral or religious obligation, supposed to be incumbent on Churchmen generally, which, after acquiring first the force of custom, and afterwards the sanction of ecclesiastical law, passed, with the rest of that law, into the national jurisprudence of our own and other Christian countries." The bare truth is here concealed in a cloud of words; but substantially Lord Selborne is compelled to agree with the eminent authorities above quoted. Milman and Stubbs and other ecclesiastical historians take the same view. In fact, all who have studied the subject are substantially agreed on the main facts—tithe was at first a voluntary gift, then it became a custom, then payment was enforced by law. Dates are of no importance in this matter; whenever the law began to enforce payment of tithe it converted it into a tax.

The so-called grants of tithe by landlords to particular churches, which are sometimes cited, are not original deeds of gift by a voluntary donor, but donations of tithe, which was already enforced by law, to some particular church or monastery. The land-owner had the privilege of paying his tithe to the particular Church which he favoured, but the obligation to pay somewhere existed before he came into possession of the estate.

In Wales the payment of tithes was unknown until the irruption of Norman invaders. These marauders were under the law of our Norman kings, and whatever territory they conquered was subject to the payment of tithes. The vanquished Welshmen had the poor satisfaction of knowing that one-tenth of the booty stolen from them had to be handed over to the Church of the robber. The "pious founder" in Wales was simply an armed brigand, who had not the poor merit of making a free gift; the law of his sovereign compelled him.

Under the common law of England all land was titheable as soon as it was brought under cultivation. It would be hard indeed to discover a pious founder in the case of land which for a thousand years had been of no value. As a matter of fact about three-fourths of the cultivated land in England and Wales have been brought into cultivation since the Reformation, and nine-tenths have been brought into cultivation since the payment of tithes was first enforced by law.

Tithe included not only the tenth part of the harvest, but milk and eggs, fruit and garden herbs, furze, honey, and the young of domestic animals were also titheable.

Though the priests had at length secured com-

pulsory payment of the tithe of produce, they were not satisfied. They actually claimed a tenth of the profits of trade and labour. The ingenious special pleaders for Church Establishments who deny that tithe is of the nature of a tax, cannot conjure up pious founders of personal tithes with a right to dispose of a tenth of the labour of their successors to all time. It was ordered that all traders and workmen should pay a tenth of their clear gains, and in some places the very fish of the sea were tithed when they were caught. Here is a canon of 1250 :—“ We ordain that personal tithes be paid of handicrafts and merchants, and of the gains of negotiation ; as also of carpenters, smiths, weavers, masons, and victuallers ; that is, let tithes be paid of their wages unless they are willing (with the rector’s consent) to make some certain (fixed) payment for the benefit of the Church.”

It was not easy to enforce such a demand, especially as it was only supported by ecclesiastical law, and how far payment was made is doubtful ; but that these personal tithes were paid in some places is shown by the fact that in the reign of Edward VI. a law was passed ordaining that where for forty years past traders and handicraftsmen had paid such tithes, they should continue. Only common day-labourers were exempt. Unless there was a clear custom to the contrary, the tithe of fish taken in the sea was payable to the parson of the parish where the fishermen resided. Who were the pious founders who possessed the fish of the sea, and had a right to dispose of one-tenth of the fish to all time ?

Grants of Land.

Vast grants of land were made to the bishops and cathedral clergy by various Saxon kings. The

lands thus granted were for the most part folcland, *i.e.*, national property. Thus we read in the history of the diocese of Winchester that Ine, King of the West Saxons, gave to the church at Winchester 30 hides of land at Yaverland, 50 at Brading; and that his successor, King Cuthred, gave 40 hides at Muleburn, 25 at Ranewad, and 32 at Whippingham. As a hide was about 33 acres these few gifts amount to nearly 10,000 acres. As Dr. E. A. Freeman says:—"A very large proportion of the landed estates of the archbishops, bishops, and capitular (cathedral) bodies was given out of national property by Anglo-Saxon kings and their respective witenagemots." He vainly endeavours to show that these are not now national property, but he ridicules the cry of "sacrilege," and reminds us that "the right of disendowment is inherent in the supreme power." In our own country it has been exercised over and over again in all ages, but most notably on the greatest scale in the reigns of Edward II., Henry V., Henry VIII., Edward VI., Elizabeth and Victoria.

"Sordid Fraud."

Hallam, who has the reputation of being one of the most impartial of historians, says in the first chapter of "Europe during the Middle Ages":—"Many of the peculiar and prominent characteristics in the faith and discipline of those ages appear to have been either introduced or sedulously promoted for the purposes of sordid fraud. To these purposes conspired the veneration for relics, the worship of images, the idolatry of saints and martyrs, the religious inviolability of sanctuaries, the consecration of cemeteries, but, above all, the

doctrine of purgatory, and masses for the relief of the dead. A creed thus contrived, operating upon the minds of barbarians, lavish though rapacious, and devout though dissolute, naturally caused a torrent of opulence to pour in upon the Church." Yet further he says that the clergy "failed not, above all, to inculcate upon the wealthy sinner, that no atonement could be so acceptable to heaven as liberal presents to its earthly delegates. To die without allotting a portion of worldly wealth to pious uses was accounted almost like suicide, or a refusal of the last Sacraments."

Rich men and women were often persuaded to enter monasteries, and on doing so to surrender all their property. Others became "corrodiers," and gave away their lands for a life-pittance, to the wrong and detriment of their heirs. Others were induced to make gifts of their estates to take effect after their death. Crusaders were urged to go on warlike expeditions to the Holy Land, and to make over their property to the Church before they started. According to Hallam the clergy at one time possessed nearly half the land in England, and a still greater proportion in some other countries. Bishop Stubbs, whose ecclesiastical bias is conspicuous, states that on one occasion when the King of England demanded a subsidy, the clergy had to contribute one-third; this shows how large a portion of the property of the country was in their hands. The consequences of such an enormous accumulation of wealth by the priesthood was inevitable; Freeman, whose attitude towards the clergy is certainly favourable, declares that "the Church of the fifteenth century had become scandalously corrupt."

Forgery.

Not unfrequently monks fabricated forged charters and other documents in favour of their monasteries ; in ages when very few save clerics could write this was comparatively easy. Dr. Jessopp, an Anglican writer very favourable to the monastic orders, says : “The intense *esprit de corps* of a convent of monks went beyond anything that we can now realise, and led to grave sins against truth and honesty. The forgeries of charters, bulls and legal instruments of all kinds for the glorification of a monastery by its members was at least condoned only too frequently. It can hardly be doubted that the scriptorium of many a religious house must have been turned to very discreditable uses by unscrupulous and clever scribes, with the connivance, if not with the actual knowledge, of the convent, for such things were not done in a corner. If the forgeries succeeded—and that they often did succeed we know—the monastery got all the advantage of the rascality ; no inquiry was made, and it was tacitly assumed that where so much was gained, and the pride of ‘our house’ was gratified, the end justified the means.”

The Dead Hand.

Church Defence champions protest that it would be a sacrilegious act to devote these ancient endowments to any useful public purpose in which all citizens may share. That has not been the view of English monarchs and English parliaments even in pre-Reformation times. If it is sacrilegious to alienate such property from the Church, it is equally

sacrilegious to forbid such property to be bequeathed to the Church. Yet Magna Charta provided that if any from henceforth give his lands to any religious house, the gift shall be utterly void. As far back as the year 1279 the acquisition of such vast landed estates by ecclesiastics, who never bore their full share of the burden of taxation and the defence of the country, became such a public peril that the statute of Mortmain was passed to curb priestly rapacity. It was frequently evaded, and the law had to be strengthened in consequence to counteract artful clerical evasions.

The Plantagenet kings, though devout Catholics, had no scruples about the alienation of ecclesiastical property. The religious order of the Knights Templars was rich and powerful, but it was suppressed in the reigns of Edward I. and II., and its property confiscated to the Crown. That highly orthodox monarch, Henry V., though ready and willing to burn heretics, did not hesitate to seize the property of over a hundred monasteries because they were of foreign origin.

Cardinal Wolsey, a prince of the Roman Church, early in the reign of Henry VIII. arranged a further alienation of Church property in order to found a great school at Ipswich and a new college at Oxford, now known as Christ Church. He saw nothing sacrilegious in such an act. When Henry VIII. had broken with the Pope the remaining monasteries and chantries were dissolved, and their property was devoted to secular uses. Too often these lands were granted or sold at nominal prices to greedy courtiers, but a large portion was devoted to the foundation of grammar schools. Henry VIII. was as staunch a Catholic as Lord Halifax or Mr. Athelstan Riley, his only quarrel with Rome being

on account of Papal supremacy ; yet he saw nothing sacrilegious in such an act.

Let us pass on to the Reformation settlement under Elizabeth. In the first year of her reign Parliament passed two great Acts which completely changed the conditions under which Church benefices were held. Prior to the Reformation all priests who held benefices were subject to the Pope, and had to officiate at the Mass. It was a capital crime to deny the dogma of Transubstantiation, *i.e.*, the belief that in the Mass the bread and wine are changed into the Body and Blood of our Lord. The Act of Supremacy made it impossible for any priest to hold a benefice unless he repudiated the authority of the Pope. The Act of Uniformity made it impossible for any priest to hold a benefice unless he agreed to use only the Book of Common Prayer, which had been compiled by Cranmer and other Reformers. All the bishops living at the accession of Elizabeth refused to comply with the law and were deprived in consequence. Thus the ancient ecclesiastical endowments by the authority of the Crown and Parliament were taken from one set of persons in favour of another set of persons. The Romanisers in the Anglican Church ingeniously attempt to explain away these awkward facts ; but their quibbles are futile, seeing that the Act of 23 Elizabeth, cap. 4, makes the performance of Mass, or even attendance thereat, a criminal offence. Protestant defenders of the Church Establishment are in an equally unsatisfactory position. Their Church, as separated from the Church of Rome, is compelled to rely upon a Parliamentary title. Such a title is strong and good so long as it exists ; King Edward VII. holds his crown by the same title. But what Parliament has a right to do, it

may equally undo, and no Protestant Churchman can question the authority of Parliament to deal in any way it pleases with the ancient endowments. In recent times the Anglican Church never had a more loyal son than Mr. Gladstone; yet he was the author of the Act by which the Irish Church was disendowed, and in his later years he supported the disendowment of the Anglican Church in Wales. He saw nothing sacrilegious in such an Act. The surplus funds, after providing for life interests, would be used for old-age pensions, the advancement of education, the support of hospitals, in which all who need might share; and the service of humanity is truly the service of God.

Why should we make a fetish of the superstitions of the dark ages? The so-called pious founder was taught that he could buy an entrance into heaven by impoverishing his children for the enrichment of the priests, and to make assurance doubly sure he very frequently directed that a certain portion of his wealth should be used in paying priests to say masses for the repose of his soul. Who will dare to maintain that if the property is hereafter alienated to public uses the pious founder will become an outcast from heaven? Certainly, since the Reformation the Established Church makes no claim to "the power of the keys"; on the contrary, it condemns the sacrifice of masses as "blasphemous fables and dangerous deceits." The sacro-sanctity of superstition and selfishness is a flagrant absurdity.

Priestcraft and the Death Bed.

Bequests to the Church.

ACCORDING to the Apostle Paul it is an essential qualification for the Christian ministry that a man shall "not be greedy of filthy lucre." So long as the Church was persecuted it preserved its primitive purity, but when it became tolerated and at length patronised by the State, men were attracted to its service who made a gain of godliness, and even clerics who were not covetous for themselves became covetous for their order. The evil was early recognised, and the clergy were forbidden to interfere in the making of wills. In 370 the clergy were prohibited from even visiting the houses of widows and wards, because women are peculiarly susceptible to clerical influences. Dr. Hatch, in his "Bampton Lectures" (p. 149), says: "The merit of bequeathing property to the Church was preached with so much success that restraining enactments became necessary." But as the Church became more powerful, and also more covetous and corrupt, these salutary precautions were swept away, and priestly greed was not only unrestricted, but was sanctioned and abetted by the laws of the Church. Thus a canon of 734 provided that the priest who visited a dying man should take with him two or three persons, "lest the kindred of the deceased, out of covetousness, contradict what is said by the ecclesiastics."

The clerics who framed this canon evidently regarded covetousness as a sin peculiar to laymen. To make sure that the priest should not miss his opportunity a canon was enacted in 1229 which forbade a doctor to exercise his skill till the priest was called in, the acquisition of gain to the Church being, of course, much more important than the preservation of life.* A little later the cord was yet more tightly drawn, for in 1236 another canon provided that a priest must be present when a man made his will. Here are the exact words:—"We charge that laymen be often forbid to make their wills without the presence of a parish priest."

As not a few persons died without making any will at all the cord had to be drawn still more tightly, and a canon of 1261 provided that "the Church have her right out of the estate of the deceased," in the case of a layman who left no will behind him. That which was at first preached as a duty, step by step became a legal claim. Later still, a canon of 1343 denied Christian burial to any man who did not leave a share of his goods to the Church. This canon was expressly framed to prevent obstructions against the laws and customs of the Church, and the evident injury of ecclesiastical right. If a lunatic died, his lands and tenements were to be used for the benefit of his soul. So carefully was the net cast at last, that it became almost impossible for any man who possessed property to escape from the exactions of the priests. According to Lyndwood, the great English legal authority of the period, the

* This regulation was revived by Pius V. in 1566, and still more recently by Pius IX., who required the physician to cease attendance when the patient neglected after three days' warning to send for a confessor. (*Lee's Studies in Church History*, p. 446.)

Church seized everything, except land, when a man who died without making a will left neither wife, nor children, nor parents; when he left a wife, it took one-half; when he left wife and children it took one-third. "These are they that devour widows' houses, and for a pretence make long prayers."

To make assurance doubly sure every will had to be proved in the court of the bishop, who was sure to take care of the interests of the Church. The bishop himself distributed the property of those who had made no will, and he took the portion of the Church, even though the creditors were left unpaid. This shameful robbery of the living was checked by a statute of Edward I., which provided that the bishop should pay the creditors whenever sufficient property was left. A later statute of Edward III. compelled the bishop to allow the next of kin to administer the property, but the next of kin was charged to "dispend for the soul of the dead."

It is a shameful misuse of words to speak of wealth thus acquired as "voluntary" gifts. Men only submitted to such extortion because they had been taught to believe that the priests held the keys of the kingdom of heaven, and could shut them out unless they paid tithe and toll to the Church. To this day many English children in the Anglican Church are taught that the priests have the power of "binding their sins upon them." This belief was universal in the dark ages. Men supposed that if they died without priestly absolution they would be outside the pale of salvation, more especially if the Church refused Christian burial. Sometimes this awful penalty was imposed for what we should regard as very trivial offences.

By a canon of 950 a man was denied Christian burial if he married the daughter of his godfather without leave of the Church; and by a canon of 1378 a man incurred the same penalty if he neglected to take the Sacrament at Easter. Such men were as hopelessly doomed as an unbaptized baby, who dies "a heathen" as a canon of 963 declares.

The superstition is of yet older date. A canon of 740 runs thus: "Let the parent whose child is dead without baptism, through his neglect, do penance one year, and never live without penance. If the priest whose duty it was neglected to come though asked, let him be chastised by the law of the bishop for the damnation of a soul. Nay, it is commanded that all men should snatch a soul from the devil by baptism." Could human language be plainer? The lack of a few drops of water and a formula of speech involved the perdition of the innocent soul of an infant, and the devil himself gathered all such lambs into his fold!

The Anglican Church still countenances this superstition as far as it dare. The Burial Service of the Prayer-book must not be read over an unbaptized infant. The chief inspector of Church schools in London teaches that "the child is put into the water a child of wrath and is taken out a child of grace." Very recently, in an official magazine of the Anglican Church (under the patronage of the two Archbishops and all the bishops), a mother was represented as crushed with grief because her baby had died unbaptized, and therefore the Burial Service could not be read over its body. She cries out: "Oh! what does the Bible say about the burial of a dog?"—a question which all the bishops, Concordance in

hand, would be unable to answer. Of course, no Roman or Anglican priest, in discussing such matters with intelligent people, would seriously maintain that anything that he did, or left undone, would necessarily result in the salvation or damnation of any human soul; but priests allow ignorant people to believe such degrading notions, and circulate many pernicious books of devotion which sanction and enforce such teaching. A Church cannot thus play fast and loose with truth except to the grievous loss of moral influence.

Mortuaries.

The laws of the Church very properly prohibited the clergy to take money for the burial of the dead, but priests are adepts in the art of evading laws which are irksome and inconvenient to themselves. In our days the Church Association has spent about £80,000 in endeavouring to restrain the ritualistic extravagances of a section of the clergy, and yet has practically obtained nothing for its money except a few judgments which have not been enforced. In the dark ages the priests evaded the provisions for free burial by exacting "mortuaries." The history of mortuaries is very similar to that of tithes; at first they were voluntary gifts, then they became customary, and at last the custom was enforced by law. In the reign of Edward I. an Act was passed which empowered the bishop to punish those who refused to pay mortuaries in places where it had been customary to give them. The character of these extortions may be seen by a canon of 1367, which provided that if the deceased had possessed three or more animals, the best should be taken by the lord of the manor, the next best by the Church, while the

family were allowed to retain the remainder. If the man only left two animals the Church mercifully forbore to plunder the widow and the fatherless. No wonder that our fathers had a saying, "Two things are boundless—the love of God and the greed of a priest." An Act of Henry VIII. put a curb on such exactions. Those who died possessed of less than ten marks were exempt. Ten marks equalled £6 13s. 4d., which should be multiplied by twelve to get at their present purchasing power. A little later in the same reign another Act was passed which, like the former Act, regulated the payment of mortuaries on a sliding scale, and it recited that when a man died the clergy sometimes took the ninth part of all his goods, and sometimes even the third part. Is it surprising that men readily lent an ear to the teachings of Wyclif, who urged that the clergy should voluntarily surrender their possessions and return to their original poverty? Men who, under the influence of his "poor priests," had reverted to the primitive simplicity of the Gospel, and no longer based their hopes of heaven upon ceremonial incantations, naturally revolted against mortuary exactions as superstitious and cruel. "Pure religion and undefiled is to visit the widow and the fatherless in their affliction"—but not to fleece them.

Masses for the Dead.

The Thirty-Nine Articles of the Anglican Church, to which all its priests must express their assent at their ordination, declare the sacrifices of masses to be dangerous, blasphemous fables and deceits. In former times it had been customary for rich men to bequeath property so that masses should be continually said for the repose of their souls.

The "chantry priests," as they were called, who discharged this office for a bare pittance, were an utterly useless section of society. Their purchased prayers for men and women, whom in most cases they had never known, were such palpable absurdities that the chantries were swept away at the Reformation; whether the founders of these eccentricities of selfish religiosity suffered in consequence has, of course, never been ascertained. Where the Reformation did not prevail the country swarmed with priests. In France, for example, at the beginning of the eighteenth century, with probably half its present population, there were 160,000 priests, most of them very poor no doubt, but most of them as useless to the country as the paupers in a workhouse. Of course, this observation does not apply to the parish priests of whom Rousseau's "Savoyard Vicar" was largely a fair representative.

The Corpse Tax.

Lord Stowell says that "very ancient canons forbid the taking of money for interment, upon the notion that consecrated grounds are among the *res sacræ*, and that money payments for them were, therefore, acts of simoniacal complexion." Apparently burial fees were only charged in this country subsequent to the Reformation. The parson's burial fee is not enforced by canon or statute law, but by custom; and the same may be said of fees for the erection of monuments, &c., which are often exorbitant. There is some show of reason for the exaction of a fee for the burial of a non-parishioner, or where the officiating clergyman has to travel some distance to a cemetery, but not otherwise.

The clergy made much profit by the churchyard,

and in great towns by the church itself. A canon nearly a thousand years old provided that no man should be buried in a church unless he was deemed worthy of such special honour, but in modern times the odious and dangerous practice of interment within the vaults of the parish church, or in the ground beneath the floor, was simply a matter of extra payment. In the vaults the coffins of the dead were sometimes piled up a dozen deep, and not unfrequently of late years sanitary considerations have compelled the removal of these human remains to a safe distance at the cost of a special rate levied on the parishioners.

By a series of Acts of Parliament, from 1852 onwards, Burial Boards were created for the formation of parochial cemeteries. The ratepayers had to purchase and lay out the ground, which was divided into consecrated and unconsecrated portions, and in the former part the burial fees of the clergy were still to be levied. The old churchyards were full, but the vested interests of the clergy were maintained in the new consecrated cemeteries; thus the legislature provided a new endowment for the parochial clergy at the expense of the ratepayers. Even in the proprietary cemeteries around London the vested interests of the clergy were carefully preserved.

Burial Boards in many cases strongly objected to consecration, and sometimes successfully. Their resistance was not due to any objection to consecration as a religious ceremony, not even when there was a Nonconformist majority on the Burial Board, as is shown by the fact that in a few cases where a bishop was willing to perform a "dedication" ceremony, no opposition was offered. Nonconformists were quite willing that a bishop

should "dedicate" the whole cemetery. Consecration was simply a question of money. The fees of the bishop's officers amounted to only about £20, but wherever the legal ceremony of consecration was performed it carried the right of the parochial clergy to levy a corpse tax. A single illustration from a great London parish will suffice. Lambeth had four or five churchyards which were full, when the parish acquired a large new cemetery at Tooting. A chaplain was appointed for the consecrated part at a salary of £150 a year, little enough for such a lugubrious office; but the fees amounted to about £400 a year, and the balance was regularly divided among certain parochial clergy, who rendered no service at all for the money they received.

It was only in 1900 that an Act was passed, abolishing fees in new cemeteries, except for service actually rendered; and in parochial cemeteries then in existence the fees without service are still continued for a term of years. In the churchyards the clergy still levy fees for interments and for the erection of monuments, even when Nonconformists are buried and the service performed by their own ministers.

Priestcraft and Greed.

FROM the coming of Augustine to the time of the Reformation the spiritual authority of the Pope was never questioned in England. It is true that, in the Saxon period, appeals to Rome were few and far between, the journey being long, difficult, and dangerous; and the country, often desolated by civil war and barbarian invasion, being too poor to make it an object of Roman cupidity. Dishonest attempts have been made to show that the Church in England during the Saxon period was practically independent, but it is a sufficient answer that every Archbishop of Canterbury had to obtain his pall from Rome, and that on one occasion the Pope appointed one Archbishop who had never been in England before. The Norman Conquest certainly brought England and Rome into closer relations with each other. But Peter's Pence, the Pope's tax of a penny from every household in the kingdom, was levied even in Saxon times, and continued to be paid with more or less irregularity from the eighth century to the sixteenth.

Under the Plantagenet kings, Peter's Pence was the smallest of the papal exactions. In the reigns of Henry III. and the first three Edwards, the Pope collected for himself a tenth of the ecclesiastical revenues of England. It may be said that so long as these revenues were enjoyed by the priests the

people were not much concerned in the division of the spoil; but the Pope's share was a drain on the limited resources of the country; the English clergy at least spent their money in England, the Pope's share was so much clear loss.

The next encroachment of the papacy was to claim first-fruits, the first year's profits of every benefice. Like tithe, this was at first a voluntary offering, but it was soon treated as a legal claim. In the reign of Henry VIII. it was stated in the Act transferring these payments from the Pope to the King that between 1486 and 1531—a term of forty-five years—they amounted to £160,000. Taking into account the difference in the value of money at the present time, it was as though the Pope drew £40,000 a year.

An artful device of the Court of Rome was the system of translation from one benefice to another. When a rich piece of preferment became vacant, a man was promoted who held a less profitable post, which in turn became vacant; so a third and a fourth man or more was shifted from one post to another, and each displacement was a gain to the Pope's coffers.

Perhaps the most mischievous and exorbitant demand of the Popes was their claim to appoint to a large number of dignities and benefices, thus dumping down upon the country a multitude of Italian ecclesiastics who were ignorant of the language and the manners and customs of the English people. Thus in 1240 Pope Gregory IX. directed the Bishops of Lincoln and Salisbury to provide for 300 foreign priests, and Pope John XXII. reserved to himself the right to appoint to the majority of English bishoprics. The Popes also claimed the right to appoint successors to any

English bishops dying in Rome. It was an aggravation of the grievance that the bishops and mitred abbots who sat in the House of Lords actually outnumbered the lay peers, so that the Popes introduced a foreign element into the English legislature. Frequently, however, the Italians who were appointed to English bishoprics were absentees, who contented themselves with drawing the revenues, and appointed deputies at a small salary to do the actual work.

The Popes derived, also, large profits by the system of Appeals to Rome, which has been explained in another chapter. These appeals were very frequent. Between 1215 and 1264 no less than thirty disputed elections to ecclesiastical offices were carried to Rome for decision. A French historian has truly said that, "in the capital of the Christian world neither law, nor principle, nor morals were recognised; ecclesiastical dignities were sold like merchandise exposed in the open market." This testimony is fully confirmed by Bishop Stubbs, who says in his "Constitutional History of England" (Vol. III., p. 379): "Every bishop had his accredited agent at Rome, and by presents and pensions had to secure the good offices of the several cardinals and other prelates."

The papal power in this country was largely increased by the appointment of Legates who were the direct agents of the Pope. Sometimes the Archbishops of Canterbury claimed that if the Pope appointed a legate at all, they had a prescriptive right to the office; sometimes the entrance of a foreign legate was stoutly resisted by the monarch; but not unfrequently the legate of the Pope made his appearance. A legate had the power to call Synods, to fill up vacant dignities and benefices,

to absolve the excommunicated. Moreover, legates of a particular kind could hold councils, promulgate canons (Church laws), depose bishops, and even issue interdicts.

The taxation by the Pope of both the clergy and laity, the presence of papal legates in England, and the presentation by the Pope to English benefices are a complete answer to those audacious champions of the English Church Establishment who, in order to maintain its claim to the national endowments, apart from any parliamentary title, seek to hide papal authority and jurisdiction, and pretend to treat that which Archbishop Arundel called "the holy and universal Church of Rome" as a separate entity.

An old Act of Henry VIII. forbids the people of England to obtain from Rome licences and other documents "by which the Bishop of Rome, of his covetous and ambitious mind, with the intent to enrich the See of Rome, did extort great sums of money from the people of this realm." That is the naked truth, and what the Pope did in England he did in every other country which acknowledged his authority.

The rapacity of the Popes and their Italian followers was as great a burden in France as in England. Louis IX., otherwise known as St. Louis—a man who well deserved the unique title of "Saint" among the kings—loyal son of the Church as he was, published in 1268 a Pragmatic Sanction, directing that the exactions by which the Court of Rome ruined France should no longer be levied. Pasquier declared that at this period the legates of the Pope appeared to come into France to sweep away all the kingdom. A little later Philippe IV., being in need of money, put

a tax upon the clergy. The Pope denounced excommunication against anyone who paid such taxes without his consent, and the quarrel only ended with the death of the Pope. A little later the Pope demanded that the clergy should pay a tenth of their incomes to himself. The French King (Charles le Bel) refused to allow this, but ultimately it was agreed that they should divide the money between them.

When the prolonged struggle against royal and episcopal tyranny which lasted for the century, in which England was ruled by the Stuarts was terminated by the accession of the House of Hanover, the Established Church, though greatly shorn of its power, sat down rich, infamous and contented. Canon Molesworth, in his "History of the Church of England" (p. 296), rightly says: "Never, perhaps, had any religious Communion sunk so low as had the Church of England at this conjuncture. Rich in the world's wealth, probably beyond any other religious Communion in the world, in spiritual gifts it was miserably poor. Great multitudes of the bishops and higher clergy were non-resident and utterly careless of their duties, which they delegated to curates, who were often miserably remunerated for the services they rendered. . . . Men were often appointed to important positions in the Church by means of bribes given to the king's mistresses or others who had influence at the Court. The highest places in the Church were filled by furious controversialists or corrupt nepotists, who loaded their relations with rich preferments often held in plurality." These evils lasted throughout the eighteenth century, and in the earlier part of the nineteenth. Less than a hundred years ago Bishop Sparke and his relatives,

most of whom he had appointed, held preferments to the value of nearly £40,000 a year, and a son-in-law of Archbishop Sutton was appointed to eight preferments valued in all at £10,000 a year. Archbishop Vernon and his five sons drew over £37,000 a year. These are only samples from the sack. In Ireland the scandal was even worse than in England. Over 3,000 ecclesiastical preferments were shared by about 850 persons, who drew from that poor country nearly £1,500,000 annually.

When the first Reform Bill was passed the demand for some reform became irresistible. A Royal Commission was appointed, and reported that the Archbishop of Canterbury received £22,000 per annum, the Bishop of Durham £21,000, the Bishop of London £15,000, the Archbishop of York £13,000, while 153 beneficed clergy received from £1,000 to £7,000 per annum. At the other end of the scale were nearly 2,000 beneficed clergy receiving £100 per annum or less, and the average pay of a curate was only £81.

In 1836 the Ecclesiastical Commission was appointed, by Act of Parliament, with large powers. Unhappily too many of the Commissioners were dignitaries of the Church, and, as Lord John Russell declared, they largely wasted their resources, for in the first twenty years of their existence they spent £170,000 upon bishops' palaces. In more recent years the Commissioners have expended the funds with greater advantage to Church extension and to the provision of additional clergy.

Greed of gain is certainly not a prevalent clerical vice in the twentieth century. The vast majority of Catholic priests are poor. In France, for example, the salary of a priest is from £40 to £60 a year, usually with a house; even if fees are taken into

account, a French priest only gets a living wage, and a bishop with his salary of £300 cannot afford to live a luxurious life. Probably the Catholic Church in France is all the stronger, because its ministers are no longer gorged with wealth as they were before the Revolution.

In England the bishops are sometimes taunted with their large salaries, but they no longer amass great fortunes out of the Church. They have to live on too large a scale. Some of their episcopal palaces are veritable white elephants, and bishops are expected to subscribe largely to diocesan organisations because of their large salaries. It would be better for the Church, and for the bishops themselves, if there was a big reduction all round. As for the parochial clergy, most of those whose poverty is distressing are located in parishes with a mere handful of population. On the other hand, a considerable number are scandalously over-paid, and will continue to be so as long as the patronage system exists. In the City of London, for example, fifty-five rectors and vicars divide amongst them about £45,000 a year, without reckoning their parsonages, though the whole resident population is only 26,923, a large proportion of whom are Jews.

Priestcraft and the Inquisition.

THE story of the Inquisition is the foulest chapter in human history—a chapter which the modern champions of priestcraft, as far as possible, ignore. When they are compelled to deal with it they plead that the Inquisitors were, at any rate, sincere in their belief that the eternal interests of human souls required that heresy should be ruthlessly extirpated. Such a plea is equally valid for the authors of the Armenian massacres. Such a plea would amply justify those who use it in reviving the horrors of the Inquisition if they had the power. Such a plea might be urged in favour of the priests who condemned Jesus Christ to death, and who stoned the first preachers of His Gospel.

The unspeakable atrocities of the “Holy Office” are so widely known that it seems hardly necessary to dwell upon them, yet they cannot be wholly ignored in this indictment, more especially as the Inquisition never was an English institution, and too many Englishmen have but a slight acquaintance with the history of any country but their own.

The Reformation was not only a revolt of reason against superstition, and of honesty against greed, but of humanity against torture. The “Holy Office” had never taken root here, but it had come into dangerous proximity to our fathers. In the days of the Stuarts the greatest dread of English-

men was the restoration of Popery ; its cruelties were feared even more than its dogmas. The grandfathers of the men who sat in Parliament at the time of the Gunpowder Plot had seen men and women roasted alive in a score of English towns ; the fathers of some of them had talked with English sailors who had been stretched on the rack in the dungeons of the Spanish Inquisition ; the older among them had seen some of the ships of the Armada which bore engines of torture as part of their cargo. Therefore they hated Rome and all its works. Many Englishmen of to-day have never heard of the appalling crimes of the "Holy Office," and very few have any clear idea of the devilish ingenuity of the saintly vivisectors of human flesh.

It may be a debatable question whether priestcraft would again resort to such methods if it possessed the power, but every dispassionate observer will agree that in such a matter we had better run no risks. This much is certain, that while priests have sometimes tried to ignore the crimes of the Inquisition, and have sometimes tried to explain them away, they have never repudiated their authors. How could they ? They teach people that outside of their Church men can only expect everlasting damnation, and the logical consequence of such teaching is that heretical opinions should be stamped out like the rinderpest. Every human creature tainted with this moral infection should be ruthlessly slaughtered, lest he or she should convey the infection to others.

When Constantine corrupted the Church with the patronage of the State it was a natural consequence that the persecuted became persecutors. The Church continued to use the language of charity,

but it eagerly grasped the sword which its Master forbade it to use; and smote with savage cruelty. It assumed judgeship and lordship in spite of the express command of Christ, and that in the most odious form, for the bishops became judges in their own cause.

St. Dominic was created the first Inquisitor-General by the Pope early in the thirteenth century. A little later the miscreant Inquisitor who first introduced the burning of heretics was also elevated to the rank of saint. In Spain alone, from first to last, 32,000 persons suffered death at the hands of the Inquisition. Every species of inhuman torture was practised by the Inquisitors, who exercised infernal ingenuity in inventing fresh pains. The pulley and the rack were employed to dislocate the joints of the victims. Burning coals were applied to the soles of their feet. Cords were tightened round their limbs till they cut to the bone. Water was poured into their mouths till they nearly burst asunder. A sharp pendulum was swung over them, which by slow degrees cut into their bodies till death put an end to their misery. All these things were done at the direct instance of the pontiff who called himself "the Vicar of Christ." Who can wonder that honest men with tender hearts revolted from such iniquities?

It is not necessary to cite Protestant writers as witnesses to the wickedness and cruelty of the "Holy Office." That learned historian, Lord Acton, who lived and died a Roman Catholic, in his recently published letters to Mary Gladstone (pp. 185-6), says: "The principle of the Inquisition is the Pope's sovereign power over life and death. Whosoever disobeys him should be tried and tortured and burnt. If that cannot be done,

formalities may be dispensed with, and the culprit may be killed like an outlaw. That is to say, the principle of the Inquisition is murderous, and a man's opinion of the papacy is regulated and determined by his opinion about religious assassination. . . . If he accepts the Primacy with confidence, admiration, unconditional obedience, he must have made terms with murder."

The triumph of the modern spirit in modern times has brought to light the hidden things of darkness, not only in the Roman Inquisition but elsewhere. Sixty years ago Charles Dickens visited the seat of the Inquisition at Avignon, where the wretched prisoners were deprived of food and drink for forty-eight hours to prepare them for their trial before fiendish priests, who actually had the parable of the Good Samaritan painted on the walls of their chapel, and had a high funnel-shaped roof to their chamber of torture to stifle the cries of their victims. An old woman, whom Dickens calls "Goblin," describes the methods of the Inquisitors: "Goblin is up, in the middle of the chamber, describing with her sunburnt arms a wheel of heavy blows. 'Thus it ran round!' cries Goblin. 'Mash, mash, mash!' An endless routine of heavy hammers. Mash, mash, mash, upon the sufferer's limbs. 'See the stone trough,' says Goblin, 'for the water torture.' Gurgle, swill, bloat, burst for the Redeemer's honour. Suck the bloody rag deep down into your unbelieving body, Heretic, at every breath you draw! And when the executioner plucks it out, reeking with the smaller mysteries of God's own image, know us for His chosen servants, true believers in the Sermon on the Mount, elect disciples of Him who never did a miracle but to heal; who never struck

a man with palsy, blindness, deafness, dumbness, madness, any one affliction of mankind ; and never stretched His blessed hand out but to give relief and ease !

“ ‘ See ! ’ cries Goblin, ‘ there the furnace was. There they made the irons red-hot. Those poles supported the sharp stake on which the tortured persons hung poised, dangling with their whole weight from the roof. But Monsieur has heard of this tower ? Yes ? Let Monsieur look down there ! ’ She has opened, while speaking, a trap-door in the wall. Monsieur looks in. Downward to the bottom, upward to the top of a steep, dark, lofty tower. The executioner of the Inquisition flung those who were past all further torturing down here ! ”

But is not the Inquisition dead ? Yes, it is ; but it was the laic, not the priest, that killed it. And it has not been dead very long. In Spain, where it burned or tortured to death more than 32,000 men and women, it was not finally abolished till 1820. In the Papal States it lingered on till the Temporal Power of the Pope was destroyed. When Garibaldi was driven out of Rome, and Pius IX. was propped up with French bayonets, the Inquisition was revived. In 1850 it issued an edict reminding the faithful that the penalties of the offences it denounced were “ excommunication, or imprisonment, or fines, or castigation, or exile, or even death.” The Inquisitor-General in 1851 strictly commanded the people, “ under all the penalties prescribed in the canons, decrees, constitutions and bulls ” of the Popes, to give information against others. These others included all heretics, all who wrote against the priests, all who possessed heretical books without a licence, all who in any

way hinder the proceedings of the "Holy Office." By this time it had become impossible that Inquisitors should maim and hack human bodies, dislocate human joints on the rack, saw into human flesh with their sharpened pendulums, crush human bones with their torture wheels, roast human beings alive in the name of the All-Merciful God. But wild beasts had not been converted into lambs. All that had happened was that laicism had drawn the stings of the holy vipers. The empty threats of the modern Inquisitors remind us of the vivid picture of Giant Pope in "The Pilgrim's Progress," "grumbling and mumbling at the mouth of his den." It is only the power for mischief that has been destroyed; the will is still there. A leading Romaniser lately bade us believe in an infallible Church. We do. Priestcraft will never fail to equal its past record of wickedness and cruelty and crime if we are so supine as to allow it to regain its lost power.

Priestcraft and Justice.

WHEN the Roman Emperor Constantine cursed the Church with the patronage of the State, the poison of corruption spread rapidly through the Church's veins. Until that time the Church had won its way by the simplicity of its Gospel, and by the high morality and unselfish devotion of its ministers and members. The officers of the Church either earned their living by secular callings or were supported by the free-will offerings of the faithful. Constantine and some of his successors lavished wealth upon the Church, and men crowded into its service actuated by low worldly motives. Such men naturally sought to increase their power by fostering superstitious dogmas and observances which were unknown in the primitive Church. The priesthood became a separate privileged class; they were exempted, as Dr. Hatch has pointed out in his Bampton Lectures, "from public burdens and from ordinary courts." Thus the wells of justice were poisoned at the very fountain-head. A man in Holy Orders could commit almost any crime with impunity, for the oath of a priest was held to be of more value than the oath of a layman. Under a canon of 696, a priest charged with an offence had only to swear *as a priest* that the charge was false and he was liberated; and from an old law of Edward III. we learn that offenders thus liberated might sue their accusers for damages in the court of the bishop, where laymen were always at a disadvantage. In Saxon times in this country

the bishop and the civil magistrate sat side by side in the same court ; but when William the Conqueror filled the English sees with foreign ecclesiastics, who were mostly unacquainted with the language of the people, the bishop sat in his own court alone. True, there was a final appeal to the Court of Rome, but in that court a layman was likely to get less justice than in the court of the bishop.

The privileges of the clergy were practically the same in all countries, but for the sake of brevity we will confine our attention to England.

No priest could be arrested for crime either in the church or churchyard, or when carrying the Sacrament through the streets ; and in the reign of Richard II. the clergy secured the passing of another Act which practically exempted them from arrest altogether. If a priest was found guilty of a felony in the King's Court, he had only to plead that he could read and write, and he was sure to escape the gallows, however much he deserved it. The criminous clerk was handed over to the bishop, and each bishop had a prison of his own. The benefit of clergy, as Froude has well said, " was little else than a privilege to commit sins with impunity."

The consequences of exempting one class of citizens from the operation of the ordinary law of the land, and of giving them the privilege of being judged by men of their own order, must be obvious to everyone. Not only are the worst members of the privileged class encouraged to commit crimes, but evildoers seek to enter its ranks in order that they may give the rein to their lawless passions. Thus the moral status of the clergy rapidly degenerated. Bishop Stubbs, who is always very tender to his own order, says that in the bishops' prisons " the clerk convicted of a crime, for which

had he been a layman he would have suffered death, endured life-long captivity ; here the clerk convicted of treason or felony in the secular court, and subsequently handed over to the ordinary (bishop), was kept in safe custody." The truth is, however, more clearly set forth in 23rd Henry VIII., cap. 1, sec. 2, wherein it is declared that "continually manifest thieves and murderers, found guilty before the king's justices, were, by the usages of the common laws of the land, delivered by such justices to their bishops as clerks convict, who were speedily and hastily set at large by the ministers of the said ordinaries for corruption and lucre, to the great slander of such as pursue the misdoers, and to the pernicious example, increase and courage of such offenders." What a testimony ! And the bishops themselves, as Members of the House of Lords, were in part responsible for this Act.

Dr. Gardiner, one of the most impartial of historians, puts the case thus : the clergy had "encroached on the royal authority, and claimed to be responsible, even in criminal cases, only to the ecclesiastical courts, which were unable to inflict the penalty of death, so that a clerk who had committed a murder could not be hanged like other murderers. As large numbers of clerks were only in the lower orders, and as many of these had taken those orders to escape from the hardships of lay life, their morals were often no better than those of their lay neighbours."

This was the root of the quarrel between Henry II. and Archbishop Becket, a quarrel renewed more than once in after times till it was settled once for all at the Reformation. During the troublous reign of Stephen the priests had taken advantage of civil wars to claim separate class privileges, and

to appeal from the Royal Courts of Justice to the Court of Rome. When Henry II. became king, he directed some of his older nobles to set down in writing the customs observed under his grandfather, Henry I.—these are known as the Constitutions of Clarendon. Among the most important were these : (1) That a criminous clerk (clergyman) should be tried in the King's Court ; (2) that no appeals to the Court of Rome should be allowed, except by the king's leave. Readers of Tennyson's "Becket" will remember the passionate complaint put into the king's mouth that a priest whose hands were red with murder could not be brought to justice. The poet has faithfully voiced the king's contention.

Becket's story is one of the most familiar in English history. The Archbishop fiercely and obstinately opposed the king. Unhappily he is too often represented as making a stand for the rights of the Church, and the ordinary reader of history thinks of such a Church as he knows, whose bishops are appointed by the Crown, or rather by the Prime Minister, whose Prayer-book is a schedule of an Act of Parliament, and whose endowments are held by a Parliamentary title. But in Becket's time the Church simply meant the clergy, and Becket was the champion of their exclusive privileges. His own words are the best proof of this fact. When for a moment the threats and remonstrances of the barons wrung from him a reluctant assent to the king's demands, it was always with the reservation, "saving the privileges of my order." His was the battle not of the people but of the priests. Becket was, for a time, driven into exile ; when he returned he was slain in Canterbury Cathedral by four of the king's knights, and the priests taught the ignorant and superstitious people

to regard him as a martyr. He was not a martyr for Christ or Christianity, or for nationality, or for freedom ; he was simply a martyr for priestcraft, which was the deadly enemy of just and equal government.

The quarrel was renewed in the reign of John, one of the worst of kings, against whom the nobles and prelates combined in order to wring from him the great Charter. Credit is due to Archbishop Langton for his share in the work as far as the liberties of the people are concerned ; but it certainly was not to the advantage of the people that the power of the priesthood should be increased. At the beginning of the Charter it was declared that the Anglican Church should be free. What "the Church" meant to Becket it also meant to Langton. When they spoke of the Church they simply meant the priests.

Certain champions of our modern Church Establishment audaciously insinuate that the expression used in the Charter meant that the Church in England was a separate entity, and that it should be free from the Pope. All this is absolutely false. The very Archbishop who presented the document to the king, and who probably drew it up, was himself the Pope's nominee. The words meant that priests should be free from the jurisdiction of the ordinary Courts of Justice, and that they should be free to appeal from the courts in England to the court at Rome. The very words which are so impudently cited as a proof of the independence of the English Church meant its subjection to the papacy, and the escape of criminal priests from the just punishment of their crimes. Where is the layman to-day who, having been robbed or maltreated by a priest, would be content that the case should be tried by a bishop ?

From a rational point of view no special favour

should be shown to the criminous clerk. His position as an educated man, and as a teacher of morality and religion, rather aggravates than extenuates his offence. Why, then, should there have been one law for the layman and another law for the priest? Why was the privilege of the priest maintained with such pertinacity by Becket and others, even to the very point of rebellion, against the Crown? The learned Johnson, whose "Collection of the Laws and Canons of the Church of England" has been re-published in the "Library of Anglo-Catholic Theology," shall answer the question. He says: "Nor was it out of love to the clergy that these privileges were claimed, but to maintain the sole dominion of the Pope over the whole body of ecclesiastics, and to keep the civil powers and laity in awe from offending against those who were then deemed the peculiar subjects and property of the Pope."

The Reformation in England swept away most of the exclusive privileges of the clergy, but the power of the bishops as judges in things ecclesiastical, including jurisdiction in matrimonial causes, and the proving of wills, still remained. The bishops' courts were bad enough, but in 1583 that cruel persecutor, Archbishop Whitgift, persuaded Queen Elizabeth to set up a Court of High Commission. It was composed partly of prelates and partly of laymen, but the clerical judges were always predominant. Its main business was to coerce the Puritan clergy, who were deprived of their livings and thrust into prison, when they refused to obey the arbitrary orders of the Court. Gardiner, the most impartial of historians, says: "Not only were the Church Courts oppressive and meddlesome, but plain men were disgusted at a system in which

ignorant and lazy ministers, who conformed to the Prayer-book, were left untouched, whilst able and energetic preachers who refused to adopt its ceremonies were silenced."

In the reign of Charles I., when Laud was Archbishop of Canterbury, this travesty of justice became still more active. It inflicted ruinous fines upon clergymen who dared to preach against Popery—sometimes £1,000, equal to perhaps £5,000 of our money, the alternative being imprisonment in a loathsome gaol. Practically the bishops were both prosecutors and judges; and as usually happens when priests sit in the judgment-seat, the bishops made their own law. Clarendon, though a staunch Royalist, makes this remarkable admission: "The bishops grew to have so great a contempt of the common law and of the professors of it, that prohibitions from the supreme courts of law, which have, and must have, the superintendency over all inferior courts, were not only neglected, but the judges reprehended for granting them."

This abominable court was abolished in 1641, but at the Restoration there was no necessity for reviving it because the Cavalier parliaments, in their drunken fury, prostituted the statute law to the service of the priests. Thus the persecution of Nonconformity in both England and Scotland continued, until the Papist James II. virtually commanded the Anglican Church to commit suicide. Its leaders, in their extremity, turned for help to the Nonconformists; but no sooner was Queen Anne, their subservient tool, on the throne, than they recommenced their old game of persecution, which was happily cut short by the accession of George I. In more recent times the spirit of persecution has again and again revived,

but its power has been happily limited. The imprisonment of not a few Nonconformists in the last century for the non-payment of Church rates, and of not a few Nonconformists to-day for the non-payment of Church school rates, shows that the spirit of Whitgift and Laud is not yet dead.

Happily for the Church and for the State also, clerics are no longer shielded by privilege from the ordinary course of the law. But as regards ecclesiastical offences they still enjoy immunity. The Established Church is not the Church of the people, but the Church of the clergy. A priest who is newly appointed to a benefice may altogether change the character of the services in the parish church, and introduce all kinds of innovations which are obnoxious to the parishioners, and practically they have no redress. The complaints of aggrieved parishioners are treated with indifference, and not unfrequently with contempt by the majority of the bishops. To appeal to the law is a luxury which none but the very wealthy can afford; and as if this were not enough, the bishop has the right to interpose his veto upon legal proceedings. Thus the laity are practically denied any redress, and the Romanisers are "a law unto themselves." Five years of active Protestant agitation have only resulted in the enforced resignation of four beneficed priests and three curates, and all these speedily found other employment in the Church, except two who chose to go over to Rome. A Church layman, bred and born a Protestant, however attached to his parish church by the most sacred associations of a lifetime, has no rights which a priest or his bishop is bound to respect. The government of the Established Church is an anarchy on the one side, a priestly despotism on the other. ...

Priestcraft and Woman.

THE ancient Hebrew Scriptures invest womanhood with grace and dignity. Woman is pronounced by the Divine Voice to be a "help-meet" for man. In the story of the "Fall" she is, indeed, represented as more easily tempted, but Eve is a companion, a comrade, rather than a toy or a slave. In the patriarchal age woman holds a place of honour, though slavery and concubinage have degraded a class of women to an inferior position. Yet even the sons of Jacob's concubines have a recognised position in the household. The Mosaic law, in regard to the sanctity of marriage, was terribly severe; in other respects it dealt tenderly with womanhood. The stories of Miriam and Deborah and Judith show that Hebrew women, on occasion, could occupy a prominent position in the life of the nation. In the Psalms and the Proverbs especially woman is constantly treated as man's "help-meet." It is the wife and mother who is exalted. "Thy wife shall be as a fruitful vine by the sides of thine house; thy children like olive plants round about thy table." "Her children arise up and call her blessed; her husband also, and he praiseth her." Even the sons of Aaron were a married priesthood, and marriage was held in such honour that it was a necessary qualification for a seat in the Sanhedrim—the Hebrew Ecclesiastical Council.

The New Testament invests woman with still greater dignity. It has no sanction for polygamy, it accords to woman an important position in the Church. We read of women who were prophetesses, and deaconesses, and servants of the Church, and helpers of the apostles. Marriage is declared to be "honourable in all," widows were the especial care of the infant Christian communities. Some, at least, of the apostles were married men. If the Apostle Paul seems to favour celibacy, it is rather on account of "the present distress," and the imminence of fierce persecution, than because he regarded celibacy as of superior sanctity; and even then he showed himself sensible of moral perils that might arise. If the same apostle deprecates the assumption by women of positions of prominence in the assemblies, it must be remembered that the social life of the Greek cities in which he laboured made this expedient, if not absolutely necessary.

In the New Testament narratives woman occupies an even higher position than in the ancient Bible stories. The Virgin Mother from her very relationship to our Lord holds a unique place, because in her the ancient hope of Israel had been realised. Women were constantly the "ministering angels" of Jesus; women were among His most devout and most enlightened disciples; women like Dorcas and Lydia, and Priscilla and Phœbe and Persis, had no small share in building up the primitive churches. There is no indication that any of these separated themselves from the ordinary concerns of life; all the evidence points in the opposite direction. Bad women like bad men are sternly rebuked in the apostolic writings; but womanhood is always regarded with honour.

Now, by way of contrast, let us turn to the "Directorium Sacerdotale: A Guide for Priests in their Public and Private Life," by Father F. Benedict Valny, a French Jesuit. This book, according to its editor, has met with much success in France and has passed through many editions. A fifth edition, in English, published by M. H. Gill and Son, Dublin, is that from which the following quotation is taken. Its importance is due, not only to the fact that it has passed the censorship and has the imprimatur of the Roman Catholic Primate of Ireland, but because it is mainly composed of citations from the writings of "Saints." Of course, it may be said that a class of men professionally condemned to an unnatural kind of life need exceptionally stern warnings; but it is not woman, but the unnatural life that should be condemned. The language used is not only a scandalous libel on womanhood, but a blasphemy against the Creator's fairest handiwork. Let the reader judge.

Under the heading, "Dangerous Connections," one reads at p. 68, "What is woman? S. Jerome [died 420 A.D.] gives the answer: 'She is the gate by which the devil enters, the road that leads to sin; she is what the sting of the scorpion is.' And in another place he says: 'Woman is a fire, man the tow, and the devil the bellows.' S. Maximus [died 662] writes of a woman: 'She makes shipwreck of men, she is a tyrant who leads them captive, a lioness who holds them fast in her embraces, a syren decked out to lure them to destruction, a malicious, evil beast.' And S. Anastasius the Sinaite: 'She is a viper clothed with a shining skin, a comfort to the demon, a laboratory of devils, a flaming furnace, a javelin wherewith

the heart is pierced, a storm by which houses are overthrown, a guide leading to darkness, a teacher of all evil, an unbridled tongue speaking evil of the saints.' S. Bonaventure [1221-1274] writes : 'A fair woman tricked out with her finery is a keen and sharp-edged sword in the hands of the devil.' And Cornelius à Lapide [Jesuit, died 1637] adds : 'Her glance is that of the fabled basilisk, her voice a syren's voice—with her voice she enchants, with her beauty she deprives of reason—voice and sight alike deal destruction and death.' God grant that sad experience may never convince you [the unmarried priest] of the justice of these expressions."

Priestcraft and Celibacy.

PRIESTLY celibacy is not a Divine ordinance. On the contrary, the tribal character of the Jewish priesthood made marriage necessary to its continuance. Some of the apostles were married, St. Peter himself among the number, and St. Paul expressly claimed the right to marry and take his wife on his missionary journeys if he chose. The obligation of celibacy was rejected by the Council of Nice in the fourth century ; it was only imposed upon bishops at the close of the seventh century, and upon the clergy generally at the close of the eleventh century. As this book is not written for the gratification of prurient curiosity, we will pass lightly over the tremendous evils which resulted from a regulation which was devised, not for the promotion of public morality, but for the exaltation of the power of the priesthood. Human nature, when repressed, asserts its claims with terrible force, and the compulsory celibacy of the priesthood was the degradation of morals as well as marriage. It was a cruel outrage upon womanhood, and the victims were often punished with savage severity. Of course, concubinage became common among priests, and was often winked at by their superiors who had concubines of their own. A concubine is a wife without the legal status and protection that marriage affords, and the unfortunate children of

such a connection are punished for the parent's offence. The morality of humanity, untainted by priestcraft, exalts marriage and deprecates concubinage. The morality of priestcraft took an opposite view. It condoned concubinage and treated marriage with savage severity. Thus Lyndwood, writing on a canon of 1222, says of concubinary priests: "They are excused as to the punishment though not as to the crime." Contrast this with a canon of 963, which says: "If a mass-priest or monk, or deacon had a lawful wife before he was ordained and dismisses her and takes Orders, and then receives her again, let every one of them fast as for murder, and vehemently lament it." What vile cruelty to the woman! The Church declares marriage to be indissoluble; yet a man who is tired of his wife has only to become a priest and then he can repudiate her. There is no legal provision for her maintenance; she may not marry another man, for her husband is still alive; but if the old love revives in the heart of the man and they come together again, then their offence is likened to murder by the inhuman law of the Church. Two reasons were alleged by the canons of 1237 against the matrimony of priests—because of the perdition of souls and the lessening of the goods of the Church; the latter reason being, of course, the more important. But what if a priest had wife and children after all? When the husband and father died they were plundered without mercy. "And if after such matrimony they have gotten any goods by what means soever, let them not be applied to the use of their children or wives of this sort, but to the churches in which they were beneficed." In those days there was no poor-law; the Church flung the widow and the orphan

out to beg or starve. Even as late as 1540, six years after Henry VIII. had repudiated the Papal authority, a statute was passed declaring the priest who lived with his wife or with whom he had contracted matrimony, and the woman also, to be felons. In 1548-9 this law was repealed, but in 1553 it was restored, and it was not finally abolished till 1603, though during the reign of Elizabeth it was never enforced.

It is hardly necessary to say that the unnatural law of Hildebrand did not promote purity of life even among the princes of the Church. Not a few of the Popes kept concubines and were the fathers of illegitimate children. The same may be said of the cardinals. Among those who have made themselves conspicuous in history may be cited Wolsey in England, Beatoun in Scotland, Richelieu in France. The Divine law as set forth in the Scriptures brands as sinful any sexual union which is not hallowed by marriage; the priestly law, which has no sanction whatever in the Scriptures, formally forbade matrimony to priests, and yet winked at the inevitable consequences which followed—the concubinage which degraded the woman and bastardised the child. Womanhood and childhood were thus immolated on the altar of the priestly Moloch.

Monastic Vows.

It cannot be pleaded in excuse of the sexual slavery of monasticism that it is a purely voluntary engagement made by full-grown men and women, who are fully aware of the meaning of their own engagements. That, indeed, would be but a very poor excuse, for no man or woman at the age of twenty-one can be sure that the right conduct of life will always remain the same. But too often

immature lads and girls are enticed into celibate vows before they are fully acquainted with the strongest passion of human nature as devised by the wisdom of the Creator Himself. This is an ancient outrage upon humanity against which there has been a continuous revolt. Where is the reader of Scott's "Marmion" who has not felt deep pity and indignation at the fate of Constance? Yet, after all, there is a deeper wrong. The compassionate Saviour of men is degraded to the level of a Turkish Sultan, who in his jealous fury condemns a woman of his Seraglio to be tied up in a sack and thrown into the Bosphorus.

We might go yet further and say that the priest has degraded the Messiah into a Moloch, whose worshippers caused their children "to pass through fire." Here is a canon of the Church, dated 740, which runs thus: "Whosoever hath been settled in a monastery by his own parents, let him know that he is always there to remain. For Hannah offered her son Samuel to God when a child and now weaned, and he continued in the ministry of the Temple." Yes, so he did; but that did not hinder him from becoming a husband and a father, for we read of the sons of Samuel. Put the priest and his false morality out of sight for a moment. Where is the right of a parent, who has brought children into the world by the process of Nature, to determine that such children, from their very infancy, shall be condemned to renounce the very kind of love to which they owe their own existence? These vows of immature youth are not only a refined cruelty, but are a blasphemy against Nature and against God.

Priestcraft and Marriage.

By the law of Nature man and woman are formed for each other and for the propagation of the race. Marriage makes the relationship permanent and thus sets up the family, its design being to give to the woman a constant protector, and to provide a bread-winner and a home for every child. Apart from priestly pretensions, marriage is essentially a moral relationship. According to Genesis God bade man "increase and multiply." According to the Gospel "marriage is honourable in all." The Scriptures know nothing of what Milton calls the "unbreathed virtue" of the cloister; one of the apostles condemned those who went about "forbidding to marry." Like other human institutions marriage has to be subject to necessary restrictions as to age, capability, and near blood relationship; but outside these limitations, the multiplicity of hindrances to marriage inevitably tend to the prevalence of irregular sexual connections.

The attitude of priestcraft towards marriage has been singularly dubious. It bestowed its benediction, but in the most grudging manner; it even directed the priest in the confession to assure himself that a married woman rendered "due benevolence" to her husband, but it also treated the whole subject of marital relations in such a manner as to cast a slur upon the very provision made by the Creator for the perpetuation of the human

race. The natural love of man and woman for each other, even though consecrated by marriage, was regarded as a fault ; and a fault is hardly to be distinguished from a sin. It was wrong for husband and wife to come together for at least twenty-four hours after their wedding, or on the eve of taking the sacrament, or on a Sunday, or a Wednesday, or a Friday, or in Lent at all. But yet, further, a husband was only absolutely free from fault if his sole desire was to become the father of a child—which, of course, was a physical impossibility. On a subject so delicate it is desirable to speak in guarded words, but the reader may be assured that the position is stated in the most moderate language. That which is here affirmed is put in far plainer words by Pope Gregory in his advice to Augustine, which will be found in Bede's "Ecclesiastical History." He actually supports the view he takes by quoting a verse from the Psalms : "Behold, I was shapen in iniquity, and in sin did my mother conceive me." Such was the priestly idea of motherhood, which no man who has had a good mother or a good wife can read without a feeling of indignation. To such an extent was this shameful idea carried that one of these priestly saints—canonised by the Church—was so brutal as to refuse to see his mother at all because she had committed the crime of giving him birth. The inevitable consequence of such offences against human nature was the prevalence of the most abominable of crimes, over which one is glad to draw the veil of decency.

Civil Marriage.

There is not a single word in the New Testament which indicates that any of the apostles, or any of

the ministers of the churches which they founded, either solemnised a marriage or gave a formal religious sanction to the civil ceremony. In primitive times, as Dean Hook says in his "Church Dictionary": "The law of the land regarded marriage as a civil contract, and the Church did not annul or disallow the legality of such marriages, or solemnise them again on the parties becoming converts." But one or two passages in the writings of the fathers show that as early as the second century Christians were recommended to take this yoke upon them with the sanction of the bishop (or presbyter). Not until a much later date did priests presume to make laws in regard to marriage and to multiply vexatious restrictions.

At the present time the Church of Rome puts its ban upon civil marriage by denouncing it as sinful. From the priestly point of view it is no marriage at all. This was stated in the plainest language by Pope Pius IX. in an allocution delivered July 15, 1871. He said: "Civil marriage, celebrated independently of the Church, is considered, as it is in reality, as mere concubinage" ("filthy concubinage," according to the Italian version). Mr. Gladstone, in his "Vaticanism" (1875, p. 26), says that in the Exposition of the Syllabus, Cologne, 1874: "It is distinctly taught that with marriage the State has nothing to do; that it may safely rest upon the Church; that civil marriage, in the eyes of the Church, is only concubinage." On this theory the great majority of the people in this country are in a very parlous condition, for we must always bear in mind that from the Pope's point of view there is no real Church except that of which he is the head.

Attempts are sometimes made by the Romanising

party in the Anglican Church to degrade civil marriage in the eyes of the ignorant. Cases have occurred where clergymen have persuaded poor people who have been married in a Nonconformist place of worship to be married again ; and only the gross illegality of such proceedings and the vigilance of Free Church organisations prevent the frequent recurrence of such scandals. Visiting Church ladies have been known to tell cottagers that only in Church can people be properly married. Not long ago, in the official magazine of a great Church Society, a story was printed, the express object of which was to cast a slur upon marriages not celebrated by a priest. The same tendency is to be found in the persistent attempts of the sacerdotal party to compel a divorced person who wishes to marry again to resort to the Registrar's office. The law does not oblige a priest to perform the ceremony, but it secures to the parishioner the use of the church. The most popular Church newspaper, nevertheless, exhorts the clergy to lock the church gates and defy the law.

It is beyond the scope of this work to trace the rise and progress of priestcraft in the Christian Church and the steps by which it acquired control over the institution of marriage. Suffice it to say that in a few centuries the old Roman law had given place to the law of the priest which is embodied in the canons. The Canon Law as regards marriage was based on the general law of the Roman Empire ; but it introduced many prohibitions heretofore unknown. In this country, as in most others, the ancient Canon Law of the Church is now obsolete. The Romanising party in England, which is steadily working for reunion with Rome and is ready to make almost any sacrifice to secure this end, yearns

for a revival of ecclesiastical discipline, and would reimpose upon us this intolerable yoke if it only had the power. Let us proceed to consider some of the monstrous restrictions upon marriage which priestcraft at one time or another has set up.

Relationship.

The canons of the Church forbade the marriage of persons related to each other, even in the seventh degree ; but the prohibition of marriage to the seventh degree proved to be so irksome that the Council of the Lateran in 1215 decreed that the prohibited degrees should not extend beyond the fourth degree of consanguinity. A canon of 950 says of any man who has offended against the restriction, " If he die in his unrighteous marriage, let him forfeit holy sepulture and God's mercy." Thus the Church taught that cousins who married each other and died in that connection were consequently damned to all eternity. It is unnecessary here to discuss the controverted question of cousin marriages, but if the Church is right the position of not a few princes of the Royal house in the life to come is awful to contemplate.

In the dark ages such restrictions might not be of much inconvenience to the common people who did not keep genealogical records ; it was otherwise with monarchs and nobles who only married within their own order and whose family history was well known. A Scottish historian has told us that before the Reformation the noble houses of that country were so few and were, consequently, so related to each other that it was virtually impossible for a Scottish noble to marry at all unless he first obtained a dispensation from the Pope, of which

more hereafter. Let us take a few historical illustrations.

One Saxon king, Edwy or Eadwig, married a kinswoman ; the Archbishop of Canterbury therefore caused her to be exiled, or, according to another account, to be first branded and then murdered.

William the Conqueror married a kinswoman, Matilda of Flanders. The relationship was not very close, for historians have never been able to discover exactly what it was. The Pope objected to the marriage as uncanonical, but William was a strong ruler and refused to separate from his wife. The Pope was too prudent to treat such a man with severity, and was content that the husband should build the *Abbaye aux Hommes* and the wife the *Abbaye aux Dames* at Caen as an expiatory offering. We may leave to ecclesiastical hair-splitters to determine whether a breach of the canons of the Church is an offence against the Divine law. If it is, no Pope can convert wrong into right ; if it is not, no Pope can be justified in condoning such an offence in the one case and in refusing to do so in another.

King Robert II. of France had been far more harshly treated. He also married a cousin, an amiable princess who was in every way a fit consort. She, however, was a widow, and the king had been godfather to one of the children of her first marriage. Certain French bishops had given the king a dispensation in order that the marriage should take place ; but the Pope, enraged at any interference with his supposed prerogative, dissolved the king's marriage, and condemned both king and queen to seven years' penitence. When King Robert, who loved his wife, refused to thrust her away, the Pope placed the whole kingdom under an Interdict.

All public services were stopped and the dead remained unburied in the fields. The superstitious people shrank from the king in terror as though he were a leper, and at last he was forced to yield. He abandoned an excellent wife and took another, who afterwards proved a curse to the country and tried to rob her eldest son of the succession to the crown. Henri I., son of Robert, warned by the sad experiences of his father, took for a wife the daughter of Jarodislas, Czar of Russia, a country which was then practically beyond the bounds of civilisation, deeming it necessary to seek a wife in a distant land whose family could not be even remotely connected with his own.

It would be easy to adduce many other examples, but two will suffice. Philippe I., King of France, repudiated his wife, Bertha, though she had borne him several children. By means of falsified genealogies he showed that she was within the prohibited degrees. Of course, a Pope whose predecessor had condoned the uncanonical marriage of William the Conqueror might have regularised the marriage of Philippe I., but that was not what the king wanted. Philippe abducted the wife of the Count of Anjou and married her, and the Pope, who at that time had taken refuge in France, sanctioned the adulterous union. In the middle of the twelfth century another French king, Louis VII., justly indignant at his wife's bad conduct, resorted to the usual expedient of alleged relationship and repudiated her. She soon after married our own Henry II. According to some historians the divorce was rather the work of the wife than of the husband; but, either way, it was alleged relationship which was the ground of the dissolution of the marriage.

It would be unjust to the Papacy to convey

the impression that papal dispensations in regard to the prohibited degrees were always granted from mere mercenary considerations, or that they always operated hurtfully. A signal instance to the contrary is the dispensation granted to our own Henry VII. When the prolonged and bloody Civil War of the Roses ended by the victory of the Lancastrians on Bosworth Field, Henry VII. conceived the idea of uniting the Houses of York and Lancaster by his marriage with a daughter of Edward IV. Such a union would not establish a clear legal right to the crown, but it was calculated to disarm Yorkist hostility. The marriage was only possible on a dispensation from the Pope, because both husband and wife had a common ancestor in Edward III., who died a hundred years before. The dispensation was rightly given, but its very necessity is a proof of the unreasonable character of the law of the Church.

Sponsorship and Baptism.

We have seen that the marriage of Robert II. of France was annulled partly on the ground that he had acted as godfather to one of his wife's children by a former marriage. This view of what was called "spiritual relationship" was as irrational as it was cruel. The object of sponsorship is to secure to the child a religious education; and if the sponsor was at all fit for his office he could best perform that duty by bringing the child into his own house, as he would naturally do if he married its widowed mother. But this was sternly prohibited by the Church. The prohibition was comprehensive. The son of a sponsor might not marry his father's godchild. It would have been

bad enough if such restrictions merely prevented a marriage at the outset; but they had a retrospective effect so as to annul a marriage long years after it had been performed. Usually it was the wife who suffered from this flagrant wrong; a woman could be never quite certain whether she was married or not, and whether her children would inherit.

The fatuous folly of some of these old laws of the Church may seem incredible to modern men. Take baptism as an example. Baptism was held to be necessary to salvation. Prebendary Reynolds, the present chief diocesan inspector of religious instruction in the diocese of London and the Archbishop's visitor of all Church training colleges, says, in his "Handbook to the Book of Common Prayer," that "the child is put into the water a child of wrath, it is taken out a child of grace." As we have seen a canon of 740 put it more bluntly. "If the priest whose duty it was neglected to come though asked" (to baptize the child), "let him be chastised by the doom of the bishop for the damnation of a soul. Nay, it is commanded that all men should snatch a soul from the devil by baptism." Common humanity, therefore, demanded that in extreme cases baptism by laymen, by women, and even by heathen should be permitted. If a child was likely to die before a priest could be fetched, its own father might baptize it; but if he did he ran a terrible risk in doing so. He was held to have entered into a spiritual relationship with the child and its mother, and henceforth it was incest for him to live with his own wife. Thus those whom God had joined together the cruel law of the priest put asunder. As, according to a canon of 693, a father who had neglected to have

his child baptized was liable to forfeit all his goods if the child died at over one month, in remote places it would sometimes happen that a wretched father had before him the grim alternatives of confiscation or divorce. It is true that one of the canons of the Church, in 1200, abolished this absurdity, but its very abolition proves its former existence.

Pre-Contracts.

This was another abominable device by which honest women were shamefully wronged when inconstant husbands were rich enough to purchase a divorce from the corrupt court of Rome, where almost anything could be obtained for money. When a king or a nobleman grew weary of his wife, and was unable to show that she was within the prohibited degrees of marriage, his next move was to pretend that before the marriage took place she had been promised to some one else. By bribed witness, and sometimes by collusion, this was comparatively easy. Breach of promise of marriage sometimes entailed far more serious consequences than than now. Mere money damages would not atone for it; the original promise might upset the subsequent marriage altogether. There was no escape by lapse of time; no statute of limitations made a marriage secure. A matron who had become a grandmother might be put away on account of a promise made when she was a mere child. This is no exaggeration. The fact is clearly stated by our own statute law. An Act of Henry VIII. confirmed by subsequent Acts of George II. and George IV., is the proof. This Act declares that "many persons after long continuance in matrimony have by an unjust law of

the Bishop of Rome been divorced by proof of a pre-contract . . . very slenderly proved, and often surmised by the malice of the party who desired to be dissolved from the marriage which they liked not." Marriage dissolved by pre-contract! Think of the monstrous wickedness of priestly law, ye happy wives and mothers! If you were under such a law as that you would be liable to be turned out of house and home, along with your children, if only it could be made to appear, truly or falsely, that you had been promised in marriage to somebody else ten or twenty years ago.

Divorce ab Initio.

According to priestly law marriage is indissoluble; but human nature is such that under certain circumstances it has been compelled to allow divorce, and a divorce which not only involved separation, but allowed both parties to marry again. Sometimes dynastic considerations have been allowed to override the eternal law of righteousness. Had not the Empress Josephine been childless, so far as her marriage with Napoleon I. was concerned, she might have shared the throne till her husband's downfall. Because she was barren and Napoleon desired to found a dynasty, the timid successor of Hildebrand enabled the Emperor to marry Marie Louise, although he had "a canonical wife" living.

Notwithstanding the holy horror of the priest for divorce, it is true that divorce has always been in existence even when the priest was everywhere dominant. But the divorce permitted under priestly law was unnatural, cruel, and therefore essentially immoral. The Church allowed divorce

in two ways—either by ordaining a separation, in which case husband and wife were to remain celibates during the lifetime of either, or by annulling the marriage from the very beginning. As to the first form it may be confidently affirmed that separation from bed and board almost inevitably leads to concubinage, if not to worse evils. The natural outcome of concubinage is bastardy, and that involves upon innocent children a brand of dishonour, and exclusion from inheritance, unless the father takes unusual precautions.

The divorce *ab initio*—ie., from the very beginning—is an expedient almost infernal in its cruelty, and women are necessarily the chief sufferers. Words are insufficient to describe the cowardly cruelty of this ecclesiastical abomination. To rob a woman of her honourable position as wife and mother, and to deprive her children of their patrimony, is the very depth of wickedness. With little or no knowledge of the intricacies of law, in all good faith, she had knelt at the altar of the Church, and had faithfully kept her vows, to find at last the law of the priest striking her and her children down to ruin. An innocent woman suffers much, when after silent endurance of wrongs which wound her most keenly, she at last is driven to seek redress in a divorce court; but her pain is small compared with that of the woman against whom a fickle husband and a tyrannical Church combine to dethrone her from her place as an honourable wife and mother.

Modern Developments.

The relief from the marriage bond, frequently granted by the Popes, almost always for a valuable monetary consideration, often caused cruel suffering

to innocent women and children ; but it afforded emancipation in some cases where the tie had become intolerable on both sides. In this country, since the Reformation, no relief at all has been granted until recent times, unless the aggrieved party was rich enough to obtain a private Act of Parliament dissolving the marriage. In 1857, the Divorce Act was passed, in spite of the strenuous opposition of the sacerdotal party, which enabled a husband to divorce his wife on the ground of adultery, and the wife to divorce her husband on the grounds of adultery and cruelty, provision being made to prevent collusion between the parties. Such divorce is absolute, and gives either party the right to marry again. This divorce law is far more conservative than that of some of the United States of America, or even than that of Scotland, where continuous desertion is sufficient for the dissolution of a marriage. A concession was made to priestly prejudices by exempting a clergyman from any obligation to marry divorced persons ; but as the parish church belongs to the parishioners, and not to the priest, a divorced person has a right to the use of the church, if any clergyman can be found willing to perform the ceremony.

As the divorce law is in accordance with the views of the vast majority of laymen, its repeal is hopeless ; but sacerdotalists persist in bullying and boycotting any clergymen who hold reasonable views in regard to divorce. Not unfrequently public protests have been made in church against the marriage of a divorced person, on the ground that he or she has a " canonical " wife or husband living. The very expression is a proof of the desire of priests to revive the iniquities of the obsolete canonical law if they ever have the opportunity.

The sacerdotalists justify their contention on two grounds: (1) That whom God hath joined no man should put asunder; (2) that our Lord allowed divorce only if a woman had been unchaste before marriage. The answer to the first plea is that adultery has put the parties asunder already; the answer to the second plea is that it depends upon the erroneous, and indeed absurd, interpretation of a single word. On this latter point it is only necessary to remark that even the sacerdotalists have to admit the right of divorce for some cause. But which is the greater wrong—for a woman to conceal her fall before marriage, or to be false to her marriage vows, and introduce into the family a child which is not her husband's?

The attitude of the priestly party in the Anglican Church is worse than that of the Church of Rome. As we have seen, the Papal Church has resorted occasionally to clumsy and even cruel expedients to temper the rigidity of ecclesiastical law. But the Anglican Church has no dignitary exercising powers of dispensation or dissolution of marriage. If the priests were strong enough to bring the law of the land into conformity with the law of the Church, the innocent party would be denied any redress whatever.

The very entrance of a man or woman into matrimony is strong evidence that he or she has no vocation for the single life. But priestcraft says to the victim of marital unfaithfulness—You shall be condemned to celibacy during the lifetime of the offender, unless you are willing to condone the offence or enter into a relationship which the Church rightly pronounces to be “deadly sin.” What kind of morality is that which inflicts upon an innocent person a double wrong, and

declares that a wife who is false to her husband shall also by the very injury she inflicts upon him condemn him to the life of a monk so long as she herself lives, unless indeed he is poltroon enough to bring up another man's child as his own. Tennyson makes King Arthur say :

“I hold that man the worst of public foes
Who, either for his own or children's sake,
To save his blood from scandal, lets the wife
Whom he knows false abide and rule the house ;
For being thro' his cowardice allow'd
Her station, taken everywhere for pure,
She like a new disease, unknown to men,
Creeps, no precaution used, among the crowd,
Makes wicked lightnings of her eyes, and saps
The fealty of our friends, and stirs the pulse
With devil's leaps, and poisons half the young.”

The position of the priestly party in the Anglican Church, as regards marriage with a deceased wife's sister, is equally obnoxious. This prohibition is a survival of the time when all second marriages were discountenanced. A canon of 967 says : “Nor let any priest be at a wedding where either the man or the woman is married a second time, nor bless their conjunction. Let such an one be so marked, as that it had been better for him to have continued in chastity ; yet the layman may, by the apostle's permission, marry a second time if his wife fail him. But the canons forbid a blessing to it, and appoint a satisfaction (penance) by such men.” It is well for the Duke of Norfolk that he lives in the twentieth century instead of the tenth ; as also for Lord Rosebery, whose punishment would have been far worse, for, as Phillimore says in his “Ecclesiastical Law” (chap. vii., sec. 2) : “By the ancient law of England, if any

Christian man did marry with a woman that was a Jew, it was felony, and the party so offending should be burnt alive."

The prohibition of marriage with a deceased wife's sister is based upon alleged Biblical grounds. Some audacious priests pretend to find it in the law of Moses, though the Jewish rabbis, who are the best interpreters of their own law, say the contrary. Any man who is able to read can judge for himself—"Thou shalt not take a wife to her sister in her lifetime to vex her." This was evidently a law for a nation in which polygamy was practised. Those who realise that they cannot support their view from the Mosaic law fall back upon the words, "They twain shall be one flesh." A host of Christian divines repudiate the deduction drawn from this language. The sacerdotalists, no doubt, honestly believe that such marriages are sinful; nobody wishes to compel them to marry a deceased wife's sister. But why should they impose their yoke upon others—upon the majority of the nation? Such marriages are lawful in all the great self-governing colonies of the British Empire. In this country almost all Free Churchmen would abolish the prohibition. The average Church layman is of the same mind, as repeated majorities in both Houses of Parliament have demonstrated. Even the Church of Rome allows such marriages by papal dispensation. But the present law is stubbornly defended by all the arts of obstruction by the so-called Church party in the House of Commons. How much longer shall a small sacerdotal minority continue to bind their yoke upon the British people, and deny to a bereaved husband the right to give the best possible guardian to his motherless children?

Any Church which is simply a voluntary society has a clear right to impose upon its own members any restrictions which it pleases ; but no Church has a right to demand that its laws of membership shall be imposed by statute law upon all citizens.

The Bitter Fruit of a Corrupt Tree.

The policy of the priest in regard to marriage has had far-reaching effects. As we have seen in the previous chapter, the priests themselves have often been unable to bear the yoke imposed upon them. The papal court itself has too often set an evil example to the world. When the successors of the apostles were themselves living negations of the pure pristine morality as taught in the apostolic epistles, they not only became unable to rebuke wickedness in high places, but they led the common people to regard the worst moral offences as mere peccadilloes. This is not a mere matter of ancient history. Within the memory of living men the so-called " nephews and nieces " of princes of the Church have furnished many a gibe for the crowd. The licentiousness of the Latin nations has been attributed to racial temperament, there is at least as much reason to believe that it is as largely due to proximity and subserviency to Rome.

Almost equally pernicious is the power of dispensation. It is always dangerous to press the question, When is a sin not a sin ? even in a problem play. It is most dangerous of all if the answer is given, When the head of a Church, for political or financial or other material reasons, declares that to be lawful which is ordinarily unlawful. Then the moral standard becomes a mere question of money or of worldly influence. There is no exemption for priests and princes in the eternal law of

righteousness. John the Baptist, the hermit preacher of the wilderness, stood before King Herod and said, "It is not lawful for thee to have thy brother's wife." The Roman Pontiff, with whom the aggrandisement of the Church was the supreme object, claimed a Divine right to suspend, or dispense with, the Divine law. Thus the pure and strenuous morality of Christ and His apostles degenerated into a mere matter of ceremonial and ecclesiastical uncleanness. The morality of a religion becomes atrophied when it depends upon the arbitrary decisions of a High Priest whose primary consideration is not purity of life, but the vested interest of the class to which he belongs.

What is the result? A feminine religion! In Latin countries, where the spirit of persecution still sufficiently survives to keep positive nonconformity to the dominant Church under a social ban, the only alternative is a negative nonconformity. The manhood of the Latin nations by an overwhelming majority rejects the claims of the only Church with which it has any real contact. Those who deplore this the most can hardly refuse to admit that under like circumstances they would be rebels against the only Church they knew. The Romanisers in England are doing their utmost, all unwittingly, to excite a like revolt against Christianity by the manhood of England.

Priestcraft and Truth.

THERE is an organisation in this country which bears the name of the "Catholic Truth Society." The title is admirable now that the noble word "Catholic" has lost its original meaning and simply connotes the narrowest and most intolerant religious organisation in the civilised world. "Catholic *Truth* Society"! Yes, Catholic truth is an essentially different thing from any other kind of truth. It is truth which is contrary to the evidence of the senses, truth which is essentially irrational, truth which is directly at variance with all human experience. It is truth which despises enlightened laws of evidence, truth which enforces its claims with threats of eternal damnation, truth which presses evasion and equivocation and duplicity into its service, truth which entrenches itself behind false documents and false translations, truth which sets at nought the Scriptures in favour of vain traditions, truth whose ultimate refuge is in the infallibility of a man.

An upright man of the world prides himself on his truthfulness. His word is his bond; you can offer him no greater insult than to call him a liar. This is the morality of the New Testament, which not only exhorts the disciples of Christ to be always truthful, but condemns all liars in the sternest language. It is otherwise with priestcraft. Lord

Acton, though a Roman Catholic, declared that ultramontaniam "not only promotes, it inculcates distinct mendacity and deceitfulness. In certain cases it is made a duty to lie. But those who teach this doctrine do not become habitual liars in other things." Possibly this last statement may be true of the teachers, but those whom they teach are only too liable to reckon that if it be a good thing to lie for the benefit of the Church it cannot be a very bad thing after all to lie for their own benefit. Be that as it may, we have here unimpeachable first-hand testimony to the lawfulness of lying in certain cases.

Lord Acton is not the only Catholic witness. Mr. Robert Dell, a London journalist, who before his conversion to Rome was an Anglican Church Defence lecturer, has been shocked at the behaviour of the Jesuits. He writes in a Catholic newspaper: "The Society of Jesus has been a stone of stumbling and a rock of offence, not—as the Church must be—to the children of this world, but to the members of the Church of Christ." What is his reason for such a declaration? Because very recently a Jesuit father stated in print that a woman guilty of unfaithfulness to her husband is justified in denying the fact if her husband questions her, and that a man who had led a girl astray, under promise of marriage, is not bound to fulfil his promise if he is of much higher rank or much richer than she. Upright men of the world will agree with Mr. Dell that "Jesuit moral theology is at bottom an attempt, not so much to raise humanity to the level of Christian morality, as to adapt morality to humanity as the Jesuits understand it."

But, unfortunately for the Roman Catholic Church, the Jesuits have St. Alphonsus Liguori on

their side. This distinguished theologian was canonised as a saint as recently as 1839—after his works had been again and again rigorously examined, judgment being pronounced that they did not contain one word worthy of censure. The Church of Rome, therefore, takes full responsibility for the judgments of St. Alphonsus Liguori, and it so happens that he is exactly in agreement with the Jesuit father. Here is the judgment of the saint! “She is able to assert, equivocally, that she did not break the bond of matrimony, which truly remains; and if sacramentally she confessed adultery, she can answer, ‘I am innocent of this crime,’ because by confession it was taken away.” Which is the superior morality, that of the Church or of men of the world outside the Church? Of what value at all is the morality which teaches that a woman may lawfully lie to her husband so long as she tells the truth to the priest?

The same eminent authority lays it down that a Romanist may conceal or deny his or her faith, under certain conditions, for the advantage of the Church, “for it is often more conducive to the glory of God and the utility of your neighbour to cover the faith than to confess it; for example, if concealed among heretics, you may accomplish a greater amount of good.” A fine lesson this for nurses, domestic servants, tutors and governesses, who from the priestly point of view may often accomplish a greater amount of good by concealing the fact that they belong to the most proselytising Church in the world!

A third leader of the same party, even before he went over to Rome, Mr. W. G. Ward, said: “Make yourself clear that you are justified in deception, and then lie like a trooper.” Exactly so. It is

easy for men of this type to persuade themselves that they are justified in deception when the supposed interests of a Church are concerned. The lesson has been learned only too well. Speaking deliberately, and with knowledge of disagreeable facts, the present writer would warn all persons who are not rich enough to fight a costly lawsuit, not to make any specific statement concerning priests and their doings. No matter how true the statement may be it is unsafe to make it. They have wealth at their back, and they will crush you without remorse. The slightest error in a date or any other detail will be fatal; and even if such trivial inaccuracies are wanting, they can usually fall back upon social pressure or the multiplication of hostile witnesses. The supposed interest of the Church is the primary consideration, to which everything else is subordinate. Unhappily, too, the demoralising poison so far permeates the governing classes, that if a sacerdotal judge is on the bench, a man who repudiates the pretensions of the priest can hardly hope for justice; and otherwise, a single priest-ridden jurymen can prevent a just verdict. Where the priest is concerned, justice is too often poisoned at the fountain-head. Unless you are in an independent position, and, even then, so well off as to be able to fight an expensive lawsuit, you cannot afford to fight a priest, though you have truth and justice on your side. The priest cares nothing for truth and justice where his class interests are at stake.

Secrecy is the blood relation of falsehood; even when there is no evil to conceal it almost inevitably leads to false accusations against those who are innocent. Primitive Christians under the Pagan Roman Empire were often compelled to resort to

secret assemblies, but had their worship always been open to all spectators they would have escaped foul and cruel charges which were altogether without foundation. The Jews in the dark ages would have been saved from the blood accusation had they worshipped in full publicity. The frequent open-air services of the early Methodists sometimes subjected them to violence from brutal mobs, but in the end disarmed hostility. One of the most solid guarantees of religious freedom in this country is the obligation that all services shall be conducted with unlocked doors, just as the right of the public to be present in the Courts of Justice is a safeguard for the impartial administration of the law. The open door should be jealously preserved.

Secret political societies, whether their aims are legitimate or not, have always excited prejudice, and have often unconsciously made themselves the prey of perjured informers. In Ireland they have wrought untold mischief, and in England also, prior to the time when trade unions were legalised. The mummery of secret oaths and pass-words consigned many an honest man to imprisonment and transportation. Secrecy naturally excites the suspicion of outsiders; the more so in an age which freely recognises the right of free speech and free association. Either from necessity or choice the leaders of the "Oxford Movement" in the Anglican Church chose the crooked path of concealment.

The Oxford Movement was the greatest Mutual Admiration Society that ever existed. Almost every man who took a prominent part therein has written a defence of it, and most of these apologies have been elaborate and prolix to the last degree. However plausible their arguments, they utterly fail to explain away the charge of conceal-

ment. The outrage upon truth is proved up to the hilt.

The wide circulation of Mr. Walter Walsh's unanswered and unanswerable "Secret History of the Oxford Movement" makes it unnecessary to deal with this subject at length; but for the benefit of those readers who have not read Mr. Walsh's book it may be desirable to cite a few salient facts. The Oxford Movement was long known as the Tractarian Movement, because it was at first propagated by certain "Tracts for the Times." In Nos. 80 and 87 of these tracts, Isaac Williams advanced the doctrine of Reserve and Economy, which really meant that an Anglican priest was justified in outwardly holding by the Prayer-book and the Thirty-Nine Articles, while secretly teaching nearly all Romish dogmas to those whom he could trust. Dr. Pusey himself held the same view, for he avowed in a private letter that he was in favour of "disposing of ultra-Protestantism by a side wind, and teaching people Catholicism without their suspecting it." Newman put this policy into action. In 1841 he told his friend Isaac Williams that "he thought the Church of Rome was right and we were wrong, so much so that he thought we ought to join it"; it was in that year that he published the notorious Tract XC., which was condemned by the University of Oxford, because it suggested modes of interpretation, "evading, rather than explaining, the sense of the Thirty-Nine Articles; but it was not till 1845 that Newman was formally received into the Roman Church.

Newman, in his "Apologia pro Vita Sua," writes: "For myself I can fancy myself thinking it was allowable in extreme cases for me to lie; but never to equivocate. . . . A secret is a more

difficult case. Supposing something has been confided to me in the strictest secrecy, which could not be revealed without great disadvantage to another, what am I to do? If I am a lawyer I am protected by my profession. I have a right to treat with extreme indignation any question which trenches on the inviolability of my position; but supposing I was driven into a corner, I think I should have a right to say an untruth."

In regard to the Confessional, Pusey uses very similar language: "No confessor should ever give the slightest suspicion that he is alluding to what he has heard in the tribunal, but he should remember the canonical warning, 'What I know through Confession, I know less than what I do not know.' Pope Eugenius says that what a confessor knows in this way, he knows it '*ut Deus*,' while out of Confession he is speaking '*ut homo*'; so that, 'as man,' he can say that he does not know that which he has learned as God's representative. I go further still. As man he may swear with a clear conscience that he knows not what he knows only as God."

In one of Browning's Dramatic Lyrics he tells a story of the Confessional in Spain. A girl speaks in one of the dungeons of the Inquisition. She had a lover, and in the secrecy of the confessional-box she tells the story of her love to the old, white-bearded priest, who tells her: "I will turn this love of thine to lawful love, almost divine." He bids her entice her lover to tell his secrets, and she shall save his soul by repeating them again in Confession. She obeys the priest. Two days after, to her horror, she sees her lover slaughtered on the scaffold in the market-place, and she wails:

No part in aught they hope or fear,
No heaven with them, no hell! And here

No earth, not so much space as pens
My body in their worst of dens,
But shall bear God and man my cry,
Lies, lies again, and still they lie !

Was Browning a libeller ? No, he gave us a true picture of the priest serving his Church by treachery and falsehood. That priest could justify his conduct completely from the works of St. Alphonsus Liguori. The end justifies the means.

If the husband, as well as the wife, is in bondage to priestcraft the difficulty will not arise ; but if, as sometimes happens, the wife becomes a convert to Rome, then the man is amply justified in keeping at arm's length the woman who shares with the priest his most sacred confidences, especially in countries where priestcraft is fighting a strenuous battle. The emancipated man who with open eyes admits the interference of the priest into his domestic concerns has no right of complaint ; but if he finds, after marriage, that the disturber of family harmony has penetrated into his household, the law of the land should afford him redress ; the attendance of the wife in the Confessional-box should be a sufficient ground for a judicial separation.

Priestcraft and War.

Is a follower of Christ justified in taking part in a strictly defensive war? Is a follower of Christ justified in drawing the sword on behalf of civil or religious freedom? Is a follower of Christ justified in becoming a professional soldier? These are debatable questions about which good men have always differed, and which need not here be discussed. But few Christian men would dare to maintain that Christians should engage in wars that are flagrantly unjust. If war is justifiable at all, it is at the best a sad necessity. The narrow patriotism which means national selfishness is easily led astray, and Christian morality should act as a correction. Too often the exponents of Christian morality have failed in their duty when national jealousies have been aroused, even if they have been free from State fetters. But whenever they have been State officials they have failed invariably.

Let us take, for example, the history of the Anglican Church since the Reformation. Britain has waged over a hundred wars, great or small. Never once have the official representatives of the Established Church exercised a restraining influence; on the contrary, they have invariably declared that the wars of their country have been waged in a righteous cause. The liturgy of our "National" Church always assumes that justice is on our side. The men who drew up that liturgy and their immediate successors might well plead that

they had invaders in their thoughts. But since their time no actual invasion of England has taken place, and only once or twice has there been any serious attempt. Yet men still constantly pray: "Give peace in our time, O Lord: because there is none other that fighteth for us, but only Thou, O God." A very singular prayer! It suggests the questions, Why should we be so anxious for peace if Omnipotence is always on our side? and Why should Omnipotence be always on our side if we are not always in the right? The bishops of the State Church constantly assume that we are in the right. They assume the infallibility of their human makers, which their makers, indeed, have a right to expect.

When the Bulgarian atrocities filled all Europe with horror the Tory administration, then in power, held fast by its traditional policy of maintaining the power of "the unspeakable Turk." Lord Salisbury in his later years admitted that we had all the time "been putting our money on the wrong horse"; but at that time he had not made the discovery. When the Russian armies had brought the Sultan to his knees, we were on the very brink of a war in support of the infernal rule of the Turk. From that crime against humanity England was delivered by the strenuous labours of Mr. Gladstone. Though he was successful, English diplomacy at Berlin, under the guidance of Lord Beaconsfield and Lord Salisbury, succeeded in handing back millions of Christians in the Balkan peninsula to the tender mercies of the Sultan and his Bashi Bazouks. A handful of noble-hearted Churchmen like Canons Liddon and MacColl aided Mr. Gladstone at this great crisis, but the sympathies of most of the leaders of the Anglican Church were with Lord

Beaconsfield. In the thick of the struggle Mr. Gladstone made this significant admission: "I am a decided member of the Church of England. I have been there all my life, and there, I trust, I shall die. But that will not prevent me from leaving my emphatic testimony to this, that the cause of justice, the cause of humanity, of mercy, of truth, of right, for many millions of God's creatures in the East of Europe, has found its best, its most consistent, and its almost unanimous supporters in the Nonconformist Churches of the land." This commendation of Free Churchmen is an implicit condemnation of the leaders of his own Church.

Towards the close of his life Mr. Gladstone used equally emphatic language in regard to the political conduct of Free Churchmen generally, in which the contrast is more directly made. In August, 1894, when his political life was closed, he wrote in *The Nineteenth Century* of Nonconformity: "We cannot curse what God seems in many ways to have blessed and honoured, in electing it to perform duties neglected by others, and in emboldening it to take a forward part, not limited to our narrow shores, on behalf of the broadest interests of Christianity. Here, indeed, I may speak as one who, in some degree at least, knows that whereof he is talking. I have seen and known, and but too easily could quote the cases, in which the Christian side of political controversies has been largely made over by members of the English Church to the championship of Nonconformists." The reason of this is obvious. The Free Churches, having no vested interests to think about, were free to consider moral questions from the Christian standpoint. But for the existence of the Establishment the Anglican Church would have been an equally great moral

force. It never will count as such until it has renounced the patronage of the State.

The brotherhood of man is one of the primary elements of Christian doctrine. At the outset of His ministry Jesus Christ proclaimed, "Blessed are the peacemakers: for they shall be called the children of God." An official clergy have never earned for themselves this benediction, and never will. They have regarded war as "a regrettable necessity"; yet in the march of the ages law has been continually, though slowly, winning fresh triumphs over brute force. It may fairly be urged on behalf of the clergy in the Middle Ages that when private wars were frequent between turbulent nobles, they strenuously sought to impose what was called "the truce of God," though not very much was gained by postponing a fight from Saturday evening to Monday morning. It may also be urged that the Church on the whole used its influence to induce those who triumphed to be merciful in the hour of victory. But such palliations are of small moment in presence of the grim fact that the priests have never set themselves in opposition to war itself.

No doubt it would be easy to find passages from eloquent sermons by dignitaries of the Established Church in praise of peace in the abstract, but such platitudes are worthless, and too often hypocritical. Never has the Established Church used its great influence in favour of a pacific policy; never has it uttered an effective protest against an unrighteous war. Bright uttered his strenuous protest against the Crimean War, and was driven for a time from public life in consequence. Some years later Richard Cobden was invited by Lord Palmerston to take a seat in his Cabinet, and he replied, "For twelve years

I have been the systematic and constant opponent of the principle of your foreign policy. I believe you to be warlike, intermeddling, and quarrelsome, and that your policy was calculated to embroil us with foreign nations. . . . Should I not expose myself to severe suspicions if I were to step from an Atlantic steamer into your Cabinet ? ” Whenever did an archbishop or a bishop speak with like frankness to a British statesman ? It may be urged with some plausibility that when a nation is on the brink of war any strong protest may lead the enemy to believe that the nation is divided, and so encourage him to assume a rigid attitude ; but Cobden’s determined stand was made when there was no threatening cloud of war, and any other man could have made it without being reproached with lack of patriotism. When has a prelate enforced the duty of a pacific policy not merely in pulpit platitudes, but from his seat on the episcopal bench in the House of Lords ?

The chief end of priestcraft has always been to glorify itself and aggrandise its power. That is its supreme morality. Its policy is the exploitation of God and humanity for its own ends. No doubt many of its devotees honestly believe that its exaltation means the service of man and the service of God, but their fetish is none the less mischievous. Priestcraft is always ready to condone the crimes of such throned criminals as Napoleon I. and Napoleon III. if only they will protect its selfish interests. Nearly the whole priesthood of France endorsed the *coup d’état* of Napoleon III.

When France, bleeding at every pore, began to recover itself after the disastrous war of 1870, Gambetta uttered his famous saying, “ Clericalism is the enemy ! ” That was profoundly true, and

its truth has been repeatedly demonstrated. The Royalist de Broglie and the Bonapartist de Fourtoun united only by a common hatred of liberty, sought to strangle the new Republic. Their most powerful ally was the priest. A few years later, the rival monarchical factions entered into another conspiracy, of which the empty adventurer General Boulanger was at once the figure-head and the dupe, and once again it was the priest that constituted the chief danger. Yet more recently, the reactionary forces combined as Nationalists, and nearly plunged their country into the horrors of a civil war ; yet again it was the priest who made the conspiracy formidable. By devoting themselves to higher education the clericals had honeycombed the high places in the French Army with sedition, and in sheer self-defence Frenchmen who were jealous of the freedom which had been so hardly won by a century of effort were compelled to grapple with a clericalism which was the implacable enemy of the Republic. It was not the parochial priesthood who were chiefly at fault, but the Janissaries of the Papacy, known as "the congregations," or, as we should say, the monastic orders—the men and women to whom treason is a sacred duty if the State is not the servile tool of the Church. The French Republic has righteously expelled these Black Anarchists, many of whom have taken refuge in this country to carry on their work with impunity.

We can see the same evil leaven at work throughout Europe. In Germany the Catholic party, under the bondage of the priests, is ready and willing to barter its votes. If the Government will consent to give the Jesuits a free hand it is prepared to endorse the exorbitant demands of militarism. In Austro-Hungary the subserviency of the clericals

has actually produced a revolt against Rome among thousands of hitherto faithful Catholics. In Belgium, by means of an unequal electoral law, the clericals have thus far been enabled to thwart the moderate demands of the Labour Party. In Spain the clericals have excited the detestation of the workmen of the great towns. In Italy the Papacy has been for a whole generation in direct antagonism to national aspirations. Everywhere clericalism is the enemy of peace.

The evil is still more conspicuous in Russia, the only nominally Christian country in Europe which is without representative institutions; the only such country where the priests have sufficient power in the State to secure the punishment of Nonconformists on a large scale; the only such country which has in its government a ministry of persecution. Russia is not so much a despotism as a bureaucracy. Its official religion is rather a superstition than a faith. Its priesthood are, for the most part, the ignorant and degraded tools of the oppressor, and are content to be, so long as they have a monopoly of privilege. They have done their worst to make the people believe that the present conflict with Japan is a holy war of Christianity against heathenism, though a large number of Japanese are Christians, while those who are not are humane and tolerant and enlightened, and are far higher in the scale of Christian morality than those who malign them.

Leaving on one side the wars of aggression in which the Russian bureaucracy, with the benedictions of the Russian priesthood, has constantly indulged, the governing class in Russia has for generations been the ruthless destroyer of human freedom, and the priesthood has

been its willing tool. In Poland, in the Caucasus, in Finland, its record has been equally odious. Finland was a Protestant country with representative institutions. Though conquered by Russia, its liberties have been thrice guaranteed by the most solemn engagements. In recent times the rights of the Finlanders have been ruthlessly destroyed, and every patriotic protest has been savagely suppressed. A military satrap of the worst type, General Bobrikoff, had almost trampled out the last spark of resistance, when a young patriotic Finn, son of an ex-senator, maddened by oppression, shot down this modern Gessler and then took his own life. Whatever we may think of tyrannicide in the abstract, no one can harshly judge this William Tell of the twentieth century. But what was the attitude of the orthodox Church? Mgr. Antonius, Metropolitan of St. Petersburg, despatched this laudatory telegram concerning Bobrikoff: "All true Russian patriots followed his work in Finland with admiration, and with great hopes. May his memory be everlasting! He died at his post, a true Christian, like a hero, and like a great citizen." Such is the infamy of the State Church of Russia, with whose prelates some of the chief dignitaries of the State Church of England ostentatiously fraternise in the futile hope of obtaining recognition of their own orders. It is well that Anglican prelates should be reminded of this odious fact at a time when the widest publication is given to Count Tolstoi's indictment of the warlike policy of Russia; but the priesthood of Russia only follow the priesthood of England in bestowing benedictions on every war that the Government chooses to wage.

The Bishop of Hereford (Dr. Percival), in a recent

speech (May 4, 1904), asked: "How is it that, looking over Christian Europe, we see it bristling from end to end with implements of warfare? How is it that the dominant spirit is not that of peace, such as we are taught by the Gospel of Christ, but is the principle of pride and domination?" Well, one of the chief reasons is that the Christian Church has almost entirely failed to do its duty. The small body of Quakers, a Christian community which has always set itself against priestcraft, has always protested against the lawfulness of war. Other Free Churches have generally approved the principle of arbitration, though they have not always been eager to apply it. But in recent times the peace movement has had but languid support from the professed ministers of the Prince of Peace; and hardly any at all from the dignitaries of the Established Church. With the exception of the present Bishop of Hereford (Dr. Percival) and the late Bishop of Durham (Dr. Westcott), it would be impossible to find a prelate of the Established Church in this country who has lifted a little finger on behalf of peace and arbitration. This is all the more deplorable because the vast majority of the Anglican laity are attached to that political party which favours an aggressive and immoral Imperialism. Over this large portion of the nation the Anglican bishops might have exercised a salutary influence if they had had the courage to apply Christian principles to political life. It may be truly said that their failure is one of the inevitable consequences of the alliance of the Church with the State. But the explanation does not alter the fact.

All this applies to the dignitaries of every State-supported Church in Europe. From an orthodox Christian point of view the present position is

terrible. Throughout Continental Europe the only effective protest against war comes from the Socialists, who are almost to a man Freethinkers. A single Socialist leader like M. Jaurés, in France, or Herr Bebel, in Germany, has dealt more effective blows against barbarous and savage militarism than all the priests of all the Churches put together. For one Anglican clergyman who is working on behalf of peace there are a hundred who are diligently training English boys in the art of soldiering, and this in a country secured from invasion by the rampart of the silver sea, and which is to-day squandering millions in thrusting its domination on half-barbarous tribes who only ask to be let alone.

Just at the present moment there is a fashionable reaction in favour of peace, because the influence of the throne is decidedly pacific, and because the commercial class suffers from the burdens entailed by the recent war in South Africa ; but before the accession of King Edward those who strenuously laboured for peace in this country, and especially for a cordial understanding with our near neighbours, were few and far between. Among Church dignitaries they could be counted on the fingers of one hand. The same may be said of the Established clergy in every nation in Europe. Everywhere on the Continent it is the Socialist party, who have raised the cry—*à bas les frontières*. It is they who have the mind of Christ. One of the main causes of the alienation of the masses from Christianity is the zeal of the priests for dogma, and their lukewarmness in the cause of humanity. The Socialists have the courage of their convictions, and have not quailed when taunted with lack of patriotism. When it is a question of applying the teachings of Christ to political life the priests deny their Master,

Priestcraft and Civil War.

THE English Reformation was quite as much political as religious. In sheer self-defence of its own rights the State had to repudiate the monstrous claims of the Papacy. Cranmer drew up a collection of passages out of the Canon Law to show the necessity of reforming it. A few citations will suffice to show that the Papacy was the fomentor and abettor of treason when the monarch was content no longer to remain its pliant tool. For any persecution Catholics have suffered they have primarily to thank the head of their Church, who erected high treason into a cardinal virtue. Here are a few of Cranmer's excerpts:—

“Princes' laws, if they be against the canons and decrees of the Bishop of Rome, be of no force nor strength.”

“All kings, bishops, and noblemen, that believe or suffer the Bishop of Rome's decrees in anything to be violatē, be accursed, and for ever culpable before God as transgressors of the Catholic faith.”

“The Bishop of Rome may excommunicate emperors and princes, depose them from their states, and assoil (absolve) their subjects from their oath of obedience to them, and so constrain them to rebellion.”

“It appertaineth to the Bishop of Rome to judge which oaths ought to be kept and which not, and he may absolve subjects from their oath of

“fidelity, and absolve from other oaths that ought to be kept.”

“The Bishop of Rome may compel by an oath all rulers and other people to observe, and cause to be observed, whatsoever the see of Rome shall ordain concerning heresy, and the fautors (favourers) thereof; and who will not obey, he may deprive them of their dignities.”

Those who accepted such doctrines as these necessarily found it difficult to remain loyal citizens where the sovereign did not comply with papal requirements, and with the more eager spirits the Catholic religion was above all things a political conspiracy.

When Henry VIII. repudiated the authority of the Pope, Clement VII. published a bull charging the nobles and others to rise in arms and drive him out of his kingdom, as well as urging foreign princes to make war against him. This was no idle menace. It led to the Pilgrimage of Grace, when 40,000 men followed the banner of the Church against their king.

We who regard with derision the slavish subserviency of the Anglican Church during the Stuart period must not forget that it was in part a reaction against the pernicious disloyalty dogmatically proclaimed and actively fomented by the Church of Rome. The Elizabethan laws which punished with heavy fines and imprisonment recusants who stayed away from church were directed mainly against Romanists, and the plots to murder Elizabeth and to blow up James I. and his Parliament drove men to the other extreme of Passive Obedience.

The Church of Rome reckons among her “martyrs” men who sought their ends by assassination. In 1570 Pope Pius V. issued a bull absolving

the subjects of Elizabeth from their allegiance which was a direct incitement to treason, and an indirect incitement to murder. At any rate the Jesuits so understood it, for their chief men in England, Campion and Parsons and Allen, plotted the assassination of the Queen, the first being executed for his crime. When priests resort to such means to gain their ends they have no just cause to complain of the inevitable consequences.

France suffered from the machinations of the Pope and the priests far more seriously than England. Ignatius Loyola, the founder of the Jesuits, was a Spaniard, but Paris was the birthplace of his order. Founded in 1534, it was condemned by the Sorbonne in 1554, and the Jesuits were expelled from France in 1594. They soon returned, but were again driven out in 1764. All the while France was a Catholic kingdom. At different times this order has been expelled from Spain, Portugal, Venice, Holland, Russia, Belgium, Germany, Austria and Italy, so perilous was their action to the public peace. This is not a matter of ancient history; within the last forty years they have been driven out of Germany, France, and Italy. The Governments of these countries have not been animated by a spirit of religious persecution, but have acted in sheer self-defence. Even our own Catholic Relief Act gave no immunity to the Jesuits, though they have not recently been molested.

To return to France. The Protestants of France were driven into rebellion by savage persecution. Like most civil wars the conflict between Catholics and Protestants was characterised by great cruelty on both sides. During a truce between the rival parties, the massacre of St. Bartholomew was

perpetrated in Paris, when over 10,000 Protestants were treacherously slaughtered, and a far larger number in the provinces, the Pope causing a Te Deum to be sung, and a medal to be struck to commemorate the event. The Edict of Nantes, promulgated by Henri IV., for a time gave the Protestants peace and toleration ; but Louis XIV., at the instigation of the priests, revoked this edict in 1685, and so fierce was the persecution that followed that 50,000 families were driven into exile. Those who remained were still persecuted. Even in the middle of the sceptical eighteenth century, when many men who held high places in the Church had ceased to believe their own fables, persecution did not cease. Voltaire has been falsely accused of saying *Écrasez l'infâme* (crush the infamous), meaning thereby Jesus Christ ; the fact was that his indignation had been aroused by the fate of the Protestant Calas, who was broken alive on the wheel on a false charge. The infamous thing that he denounced was a corrupt and cruel Church, whose crimes caused the name of Christ to be blasphemed.

Let us turn to the Anglican Church since the Reformation. The Romanising party in that Church regard Archbishop Laud as a saint of the most exalted character. Every unprejudiced student of English history knows that he constantly endeavoured to convert the English monarchy into an absolute despotism. But that was not his worst crime. For centuries England and Scotland had been frequently at war, and the misery inflicted on the border counties of each country was at last ended by the peaceful accession of James VI. of Scotland to the throne of England. Both countries had liberated themselves from Papal rule ; but England had a Prayer-book, and Scotland

had none. Laud instigated King Charles I. to force a Prayer-book upon the Scottish people ; who, of course, resisted. Then King Charles raised an army in England to coerce the Scots, and he only desisted when he found that Englishmen were not at all disposed to slaughter Scotchmen in such a quarrel. The crime of Laud was none the less heinous because his designs were not accomplished ; when he perished on the scaffold he only met his deserts.

Priestcraft and the Jews.

THE cruelty of the Christian to the Jew is one of the darkest chapters in human history. To discuss the good and evil characteristics of the Hebrew race is impossible within the limits of this book. Suffice it to say that those who derive the whole of their sacred writings from the descendants of Abraham should at least have treated the Jews with consideration and forbearance. The crime of Calvary was, after all, a terrible blunder. Let it be allowed that the Jews ought to have recognised in Jesus the true Messiah, it yet must be admitted that they did not, and that, as the Apostle Peter affirmed, they crucified Him in "ignorance"; as He Himself testified in His dying prayer—"Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do." Even were it otherwise it is monstrous that the whole race should continually be punished for the crime of a single day. Yet, as a matter of fact, the Jews have been continuously tortured for the misdeeds of Annas and Caiaphas.

England has had a large though not the worst share in these miserable persecutions. In 1189, at the coronation of Richard I., the Jews of London were massacred at the instigation of the priests. In 1269 a law was passed forbidding Jews in England to own land, and it was not repealed till 1723. At the beginning of the fourteenth century the Jews

were banished from this country, and not till Cromwell was in power, 350 years after, were they allowed to return. No Jew even then could become a naturalised citizen unless he took the Sacrament at church. Even as late as 1835 a Jew was not allowed to act as Sheriff of London but in that year an Act was passed enabling him to do so. In 1849 Baron Rothschild was elected a member of the House of Commons, but nearly ten years elapsed before he was allowed to take his seat, the Bill for the removal of Jewish disabilities having been repeatedly thrown out in the Lords, the bishops being active in opposition. But for the accidental baptism of Lord Beaconsfield in his infancy he would have been shut out from a political career.

In the dark ages any accusation, no matter how absurd, was sufficient excuse for the persecution of the children of Israel. Thus at Brussels they were accused of stealing consecrated wafers, and of sticking needles therein, whereupon blood was said to have gushed out. A whole hecatomb of Jews were slaughtered in consequence.

An equally cruel and groundless charge was that on the occasion of the Passover the Jews required a human victim in the shape of a Christian child. The atrocity of the crime is only equalled by its monstrous improbability. In the Jewish sacred writings human sacrifices are mentioned with horror. Yet this abominable accusation has been revived again and again, even to the present day, and in Austria has been the excuse for outrages by fanatical and priest-ridden mobs. The religious teachers of those who believed this fable must bear their share of responsibility. A public declaration by the head of the Church of Rome would have effectually checked this barbarous superstition. The late

Pope, Leo XIII., was invited to denounce the shameful blood accusation, but he did not do so. He remained as quiescent as in former days, when he was Archbishop of Perugia and refused to restrain the Papal soldiers when they ruthlessly slaughtered the people of that city.

Russia has been the theatre of the worst outbreaks of savagery against the Jews in recent times, continuous oppression being sometimes varied by wholesale massacre. An ignorant and degraded populace in such a country is far less to blame than the Imperial Government and the Orthodox hierarchy. The man most responsible is Pobiedonostzeff, the Minister of Public Worship.

In recent times the most flagrant instance of inhuman cruelty towards the Jew in Western Europe is the barbarous treatment of Captain Dreyfus in France, which was fomented and defended by Catholic and priestly journalists. For some years these apostles of the gospel of hate had conducted an "anti-Jew" propaganda. To revile and injure the Jew had become a distinguishing mark of Catholic orthodoxy. Captain Dreyfus, an Alsatian Jew, whose patriotism had led him to choose the military profession, was falsely accused of selling information to the German Government, and was condemned by a court-martial to rigorous imprisonment in a tropical island, where he was treated with brutal cruelty. The condemnation was obtained by the grossest perjury and forgery; and when at length a fresh trial was secured, it was shown on the clearest evidence that some of the highest officers in the French Army—who were devoted to the interests of the Catholic Church—had suppressed the truth, had countenanced forgery, and had conspired to

deny justice to an honest man because he belonged to the Jewish race. The fury of a blind patriotism and a blind orthodoxy was stirred to the utmost depths ; and it was left to Freethinkers, like Zola and de Pressensé, to make a brave stand for common justice. To such an extent was the savagery of orthodox Catholicism provoked that Maître Labori, the eloquent counsel of Captain Dreyfus, was shot down in the streets of Rennes, where the second trial was held. The innocence of Dreyfus was clearly proved, but his priest-ridden military judges refused to acquit him, and the Government had to resort to the expedient of granting him a pardon for the offence which he had never committed. The case has since been referred to the Court of Cassation, and there is reason to hope that at last justice will be done ; but the tardy vindication of an honest man can never atone for the crimes committed against him by military tools of the Catholic priesthood.

Cardinal Vaughan audaciously declared that the Popes and the Catholic Church had always been the defenders of the race of Israel, and even some historians have inconsiderately given credit to the Popes for protecting the Jews in Rome ; they did not know, or had forgotten, that some of the bulls of the Popes claim that they were directly authorised to inflict Divine judgments upon them for the crucifixion of the Saviour, who prayed upon the cross : "Father, forgive them ; for they know not what they do !" Other historians with a fuller knowledge and with a nearer acquaintance of the facts have told a different story. Take, for example, Farini, author of "The Roman State from 1815 to 1850," whose elaborate work in four volumes was translated under the direction of

Mr. Gladstone. He says (Vol. IV., p. 275) Pope Boniface IV. (seventh century) "restricted the Jews to the Ghetto on the left bank of the Tiber, a damp and confined locality, and prohibited them from possessing real property, hampering their commerce and their trade. They increased in numbers with the lapse of centuries, but were still obliged to confine themselves within the same narrow limits, which caused such a crowding together, such filth and defilement of the atmosphere, as generated nothing but disease and fuel for pestilence. On account of being only permitted to carry on petty traffic, they led a poor and wretched life. Beside other taxes, they had to pay an extra tax to the House of the Catechumens, to the monastic Order of the Converted, to the Catholic parish priests near the Ghetto, a premium to the Treasury, another to the Camera Apostolic, the expenses of the police under the command of the Cardinal Vicar, the sbirri who tormented them; they even paid for the Carnival spectacles of the Christians. . . . They could not go out of their enclosure and leave Rome without a written permission from the Vicariate; they were prohibited from holding intercourse with Catholics." Such was the grudging toleration of the Popes, and then only granted because a Jew was a man who could be easily and profitably plundered. The victims of such toleration realised only too well that "the tender mercies of the wicked are cruel."

As the Popes exercised despotic authority in Rome they must be held responsible for what occurred there. But their responsibility was personal as well as official. Paul II. (1464) compelled the Jews in Rome to run a foot race in a state of

almost complete nudity, after having been gorged with food. The Pope himself enjoyed the spectacle. For two hundred years this shameful practice continued. Browning alludes to it in "Holy Cross Day," where the Jews say :

A herd of us picked and placed
Were spurred through the Corso stripped to the waist:
Jew brutes with sweat and blood well spent
To usher in worthily Christian Lent.

Under Innocent III. hundreds of Roman Jews were slaughtered by the Inquisition. Pius IX. in more modern times treated his Jews kindly at the beginning of his reign, but no sooner had the French destroyed the Roman Republic and set up clerical government again than the houses of the Jews were ransacked and plundered.

Priestcraft and Idolatry.

THOUGH a priest is not necessarily an idolator, priestcraft tends to idolatry. Worship is certainly a wide term. A corporation is "worshipful"; a bridegroom promises to "worship" his bride. But worship in the sense of prayer is a very different thing; prayer to the saints assumes their omnipresence. It is useless to offer prayer to the Virgin unless she can hear you, and she is supposed to hear you wherever you may be. Simple-minded people cannot distinguish between *latria* and *dulia*, between the honour paid to God and the honour paid to His creatures when they are reckoned to possess Divine attributes. When John, in the apocalyptic vision, fell down at the feet of the angel to worship, he was met with the rebuke, "See thou do it not, for I am thy fellow-servant."

The priest urges that the worship paid to a graven image of the Madonna is not offered to a block of stone or a piece of wood, but to the person represented by the image. That is the very same defence that was offered by the heathen who worshipped at the shrine of Jupiter or Apollo. No Greek who knew anything of Homer, no Roman who knew anything of Ovid, supposed for a moment that a block of marble was actually a god. The ancient heathen believed that their gods and goddesses were living beings—magnified men and

women—who ate and drank, who fought and played, who married and begat children. The images simply represented them, but their devotees were none the less idolators as St. Paul said to the heathen Athenians—“Being then the offspring of God, we ought not to think that the Godhead is like unto gold, or silver, or stone, graven by art and device of man.”

Let us allow that the priest himself is not an idolator, those whom he leads are too often betrayed into this error. How does the worship of images work out in the minds of the ignorant? Is every Madonna equally sacred to them? Not at all. The image is elevated to the rank of a local goddess.

Go to such a cathedral as that of Chartres, where the Virgin has been made so completely to dethrone her Son, that the very altar-piece is a beautiful block of white marble representing the “Assumption.” You will probably find the “Assumption” deserted; but, not far off, a crowd of female devotees will be found kneeling in adoration before a black doll, clothed in a robe encrusted with jewels, and surrounded by a hundred lighted candles. That is “the Virgin of the Pillar,” and that particular image is the object of special veneration.

Quite a multitude of special local goddesses are to be found in Catholic countries. Let us take one as a sample, none the less interesting because it has now perished. The port of Boulogne for centuries had its local goddess, honoured with peculiar veneration, the more so because of its legendary origin. It is said that, nearly 1,200 years ago, a vessel without oars or masts or sailors arrived at Boulogne, containing a wooden image of the Virgin, which soon became a special object of

veneration, and possessed the power of working miracles of healing. Pilgrims came from many countries to worship at the shrine of this Christian Diana, which was as profitable to the Boulonnais as the heathen Diana was to the ancient Ephesians. Kings and queens sometimes came and bestowed rich gifts. When the English captured Boulogne in the time of Henry VIII., they carried away the image, but in the reign of Edward VI. it was restored, to the great joy of the inhabitants. During the Huguenot troubles it was thrown down a well, but after forty years it was again recovered, but with its nose broken off. The monks of St. Wilmer, for their own profit, had meantime set up an image which they declared to be the "old original" Virgin, but the Boulonnais made a raid on the monastery and carried it off in triumph. The sacred image continued to be adored by the faithful till 1793, when it perished in a bonfire kindled by the Jacobins.

Let us cite a more modern example, from the South of France this time. At the little village of Lourdes, in 1858, a girl named Bernadette declared that the Virgin Mary had appeared to her. Of course she spoke in French—beatified saints understand all languages—and these were the curious words she uttered: "Go to the fountain, eat of the grass beside it, pray for mankind, tell the priests to build me a chapel; I am the Immaculate Conception!" It may seem strange that a person should speak of herself as a process of nature, or rather as a dogma, but it is not unaccountable. Only four years before, the Pope had issued a bull declaring this dogma to be an article of faith, and charging with heresy those who doubted or spoke against it. A miracle was needed to emphasize this

deliverance, and the heated imagination of a peasant girl, who probably had but a dim idea of what the phrase "immaculate conception" meant, soon supplied the want. Within six months 150,000 people went on pilgrimage to Lourdes. In 1872, no less than 20,000 people visited the place on a certain day. A magnificent church was built; the little village rapidly grew into a big town. From a material point of view, the vision of Bernadette was a splendid success. Thirty-five prelates assisted at the consecration of the church. A railway to Lourdes was constructed, a large number of restaurants and hotels were built, and whole streets of shops devoted to the sale of ecclesiastical trinkets. Beyond all question, many suffering pilgrims have been cured of their ailments; John Alexander Dowie, and the Christian Scientists, and the Peculiar People can truthfully boast of similar cures, which can be easily explained by those who have made a study of faith-healing. All miracle-workers, however, whether orthodox or heterodox, stop short at the restoration of an amputated limb.

Loretto, near Ancona in Italy, is, or was, an equally famous shrine. The faithful are invited to believe that the house in which the Virgin Mary lived at Nazareth remained there for thirteen hundred years. This in itself was an astounding story, but not altogether incredible. The assertion that it was the veritable house of the Virgin must be taken on trust. It is said that the Empress Helena visited it in the fourth century, and St. Louis in the thirteenth—a wide gap of 900 years. At last the angels grew alarmed for the safety of the place, and they intervened effectively. Why they should be more solicitous for the house at

Nazareth than for the Holy Sepulchre at Jerusalem does not appear. One day the house vanished; the angels had carried it right across the Mediterranean to the coast of Dalmatia, where it remained for three years. Then the angels took it on another journey across the Adriatic Gulf to Loretto. Eight months after they took it another journey a mile further, and some time after they removed it again to its present position. It seems a pity that the angels showed so little judgment in selecting a proper site. Of course, Loretto possessed not only the house of the Virgin, but an image of the Virgin, which was reputed to be almost as old as the house. The story goes that it was carved by no less a person than St. Luke. Its shrine was one of the richest in the world. Among other adornments it had a golden crown with 304 diamonds and 88 rubies, also a golden sceptre with 82 diamonds and 57 rubies, the gift of that royal murderess Christina of Sweden. During the French revolutionary wars the shrine was sacked, and the image was carried away, without any angelic intervention. It was restored when Napoleon Bonaparte made terms with the Pope, and even now its treasures are contained in about seventy cabinets. A few years ago the revenues of this shrine were estimated at over 60,000 scudi (£12,000) a year. The Loretto image has been credited with similar miracles to those of Boulogne, Lourdes, and other famous places.

We will endeavour to look at the matter dispassionately. Let us be content, for the moment, to allow that the Madonna is a proper object of adoration—the Madonna enthroned in heaven. Worship paid to her through an image could be equally paid through any image, or, at all events, through any image in a consecrated place of worship. But

one particular image out of several such in the same city, and even in the same cathedral, is supposed to have special properties, and is adored before all the other images. Where the element of locality comes in, there idolatry makes its appearance, and, with ignorant people at least, the image itself is of primary importance. If a miracle is prayed for and expected, the virtue is in one particular image rather than in the healing power of the Madonna enthroned in heaven. That is the ultimate reason of the second commandment, which is absolute and without limitations—"Thou shalt not make to thyself any graven image."

This is not a narrow Puritan view. The Huguenots and Puritans who destroyed so many images had great provocation; the extravagances of idolatry caused such a strong reaction as to lead to the extravagances of iconoclasm. But in these days we need not object to images as mere ornaments. Who has ever seen devotees kneeling before the Madonna at the porch of St. Mary, Oxford, at the porch of Amiens, or at the northern doorway of Westminster Abbey? But should such images ever become objects of worship, it were better to treat them as King Hezekiah treated the brazen serpent, when he called it Nehushtan, and ground it to powder.

Even those worshippers of Mary who can and do distinguish between the local image and the person whom it represents cannot escape the condemnation due to those who worship the creature rather than the Creator. Prayers are addressed to Mary in the most extravagant language. One specimen from a Roman Catholic book of devotion—the "Manual of Indulgences"—must suffice, though it would be easy to multiply examples. It runs thus;—"O

Most Holy Virgin, Mother of the Incarnate Word, treasury of grace, and the refuge of us miserable sinners, we betake ourselves to your maternal love with lively faith, and we ask of you grace to do always the will of God and of yourself. We place our hearts in your most holy hands, and we beg the salvation of our souls and of our bodies. We assuredly hope that you, O most loving Mother, will hear us, and for that reason, with lively faith, we say 'Ave Maria.' ”

Thus the mother of Jesus, rightfully called the Blessed Virgin Mary, is elevated to the rank of a goddess, and, indeed, is openly called “the Queen of Heaven.”

Let us take another illustration—an idol of a different kind. Charles Dickens, in his “Pictures from Italy,” describes his visit to the Church of the Ara Coeli at Rome :—“The hollow-cheeked monk, number One, having finished lighting the candles, went down on his knees in a corner; and the monk number Two, having put on a pair of highly ornamented and gold-bespattered gloves, lifted down the coffer with great reverence, and set it on the altar. The ladies had been on their knees from the very commencement, and the gentlemen now dropped down devoutly, as he exposed to view a little wooden doll, in face very like General Tom Thumb, the American dwarf, gorgeously dressed in satin and gold lace, and actually blazing with rich jewels. There was scarcely a spot upon its little breast, or neck, or stomach, but was sparkling with the costly offerings of the faithful. Presently he lifted it out of the box, and carrying it round among the kneelers, set its face against the forehead of everyone, and set its clumsy foot to them to kiss. When this was done he laid it in the box again. . . . I

met this same Bambino in the street a short time afterwards, going, in great state, to the house of some sick person. It is taken to all parts of Rome for this purpose constantly ; but I understand that it is not always as successful as could be wished. . . . It is a very valuable property, and much confided in—especially by the religious body to whom it belongs.”

Wherein does this Bambino differ from any other ? As images of the same Holy Child they should all be equal.

Priestcraft and the Temporal Power.

IT is impossible in a small book like this to give even a sketch of the history of the temporal power of the Pope. For centuries it inflicted terrible evils upon Europe, and upon Italy in particular. The papacy and the priesthood were also among the sufferers. The position is admirably summed up by Kingsley in "The Roman and the Teuton." The policy of the Popes, he says, was "to compound for their own independence by defending the pretences of foreign kings to the sovereignty of the rest of Italy. This has been their policy for centuries, and that policy has been the curse of Italy. This fatal gift of the patrimony of St. Peter—as Dante saw, as Machiavelli saw, as all clear-sighted Italians have seen, as we are seeing now in these very days—has kept her divided, torn by civil wars, conquered and re-conquered by foreign invaders. . . . The bane of Italy, from the time of Stephen III. (752) to that of Pius IX., has been the Temporal Power. . . . Having committed themselves to the false position of being petty kings of a petty kingdom, they (the Popes) had to endure continual treachery and tyranny from their foreign allies; to see not merely Italy, but Rome itself insulted, and even sacked by faithful Catholics; and to become more and more as the centuries rolled on, the tools of those very kings whom they had wished

to make their tools." Let us pass over the centuries and come to our own times.

The worst form of government is government by priests. This has been demonstrated even when the Pope himself has been a person of blameless life and gentle disposition. The late Pope Leo XIII. had a high reputation for amiability, but when he was Archbishop of Perugia he would not lift a finger to save his flock—men, women and children—from wholesale slaughter, and Pius IX. actually promoted the chief author of the massacre. The nominal sovereignty of the Pope meant the actual sovereignty of the priestly class, of rulers like Cardinal Antoinelli, whose life was a public scandal. The late Signor Zanardelli, an Italian Prime Minister, said in a speech at Brescia: "The Church appears better than it once was. I no longer see in Rome what I used often to see in my young days, ladies driving about the streets with their coachmen and footmen in the liveries of their respective cardinals. Has this improvement come about because the Church is really growing better? Nothing of the kind. It is because the strong arm of the law checks the villainy of the priests."

Under the Papal Government spies were everywhere, justice was nowhere. The ignorant were demoralised and pauperised; men of education and enlightenment found existence almost intolerable. The city swarmed with beggars, and the surrounding country with brigands, the latter being often under the protection and patronage of priests, who shared the plunder. The special correspondent of *The Times* at Rome accused the police of the Pope as actual accomplices of the brigands.

The proofs of the abominable character of the Papal Government are overwhelming. Here is the

testimony of Lord Macaulay : " I can conceive of nothing more insupportable than the situation of a layman who should be a subject of the Pope. In this Government there is no avenue to distinction for any but priests. Every office of importance—diplomatic, financial and judicial—is held by the clergy. . . . Here every man who takes a wife cuts himself off for ever from all dignity and power. The Church is, therefore, filled with men who are led into it merely by ambition, and who, though they might have been useful and respectable as laymen, are hypocritical and immoral as Churchmen. . . . Corruption infects all the public offices. Old women above, liars and cheats below—that is the Papal administration. The States of the Pope are, I suppose, the worst governed in the civilised world ; and the imbecility of the police, the venality of the public servants, the desolation of the country, and the wretchedness of the people force themselves on the observation of the most heedless traveller. It is hardly an exaggeration to say that the population seems to consist chiefly of foreigners, priests and paupers." (" Life and Letters of Lord Macaulay," chap. vii.)

If it is objected that Lord Macaulay wrote this sixty years ago, let us take a more recent witness. In *The Quarterly Review* for January, 1875, an article appeared, which *The Tablet*, no doubt accurately, ascribed to Mr. Gladstone, in which the Papal police were described as " the scum of the earth." As the Temporal Power came to an end in 1870, the writer of this article had an opportunity of comparing the criminal statistics of Rome before and after that event. In 1868 there were no less than 236 highway robberies in Rome, by 1873 the number had sunk to 26. Comment is superfluous.

The priests who governed the Eternal City were so fully occupied in suppressing every aspiration after freedom that they had no energy to spare for the detection and punishment of crime.

The Papal throne was in a rickety condition from the outbreak of the French Revolution. In 1798 France proclaimed the Roman Republic; in 1808 Napoleon annexed Rome to the new Kingdom of Italy, and a little later his infant son was proclaimed King of Rome; in 1814, on the collapse of Napoleon's power, the Pope was restored, and with him the Jesuits, the Inquisition being again set up. In 1848 an insurrection compelled the Pope to accept a free constitution, but he soon after fled, and the Roman Republic was proclaimed. The Pope then appealed to the Catholic Powers to restore him by armed force, and France sent a French army to conquer the city. After a brave resistance by Garibaldi, the French army stormed the city and re-established the Pope's authority. Insurrection after insurrection broke out in the Papal States, being suppressed with ruthless slaughter by the Papal army at Perugia and elsewhere. Meanwhile the Kingdom of Sardinia had become the Kingdom of Italy, and in 1861 Count Cavour claimed Rome as its capital, but the French occupation continued.

From the restoration of Pius IX. in 1850 to the final destruction of the Temporal Power in 1870, the government of the infallible Vicar of Christ was the meanest, foulest, most ferocious of modern despotisms. Aliens were its soldiers, priests were its judges, brigands were its police. Under such a *régime* there was neither justice nor mercy. The vilest scoundrel could bear secret testimony against an honest citizen, who was not even allowed to confront

his accuser, and the Government even encouraged perjury by the offer of half of any fine to the informer. Even under such conditions, if proof was wanting, the accused often did not escape; frequently he was punished, not because he was found guilty, but simply because a charge had been made against him. The most trivial political offences were punished with the most savage severity. Five young men were sentenced to the galleys for twenty years, simply for letting off fireworks which showed the Italian colours. The victims were confined in filthy prisons swarming with vermin, and fed on loathsome food and filthy water. Many of them were subjected to the *bastinado*, a form of torture which had been revived by that savage brute Cardinal Antoinelli, the chief minister of the Pope. Prisoners sentenced to death were kept for weeks and months with the death sentence hanging over them, liable at any hour to be led out to execution. In ten years more death sentences were passed in the small Papal States than in all Europe put together, with the solitary exception of Austria. All this can be proved up to the hilt by the testimony of the most distinguished Italian writers, and by the official documents of the Papal Government itself. It had come to this, that the temporal rule of the Pope was the very negation of God.

In 1867 Garibaldi and his Italian volunteers made a fresh effort to secure Rome, but were defeated at Montana by the French and Papal forces. It was not till 1870 that French troops finally evacuated Rome, on the outbreak of the war with Germany; the same year the Italian army entered Rome after a very slight resistance from the motley army of the Pope, and a plébiscite

being taken, 133,681 votes were given in favour of union with Italy, to 1,507 against. From this brief record of facts it will be seen that for many years the Papal power was only propped up by foreign bayonets. All men who are not blinded by religious prejudices must acknowledge that Rome is the only possible capital for a united kingdom of Italy. It is irrational to suppose that the national aspirations of 32 millions of people can be permanently thwarted by the Papal claim to Temporal Power. If the Pope were for a moment restored Rome would remain the open sore of Italy. Nor would Italy be the only sufferer. The preservation of the Temporal Power would become the prime factor in the policy of the Catholic political party in every country in Europe, not only in nominal Catholic countries, but in all countries where the tools of the Catholic priesthood are a parliamentary force. For nearly two centuries religious strife was the great curse of Europe. Wars of religion are now almost as obsolete as wars of dynasties, but the restoration of the Temporal Power of the Pope would mean the putting back of the clock of time, and the revival of a constant source of discord.

All rational men now profess to hate war in the abstract; but too many deprecate war only so long as they can get their own way. Those who really regard war as an evil, no matter which side is successful, are anxious, above all things, to diminish the possible causes of war, as did the late Lord Salisbury when, with admirable foresight, he induced the Powers to parcel out Africa into "spheres of influence." The establishment of the High Court of the Hague, which was the outcome of the action of the Tsar of Russia, was another great stride in the same direction. But the restoration

of the Temporal Power of the Pope, if successful for a time, would become a perennial disturbance. It could only be revived after a great European war had utterly exhausted the strength of the Italian kingdom ; it could only be maintained by the continuous presence of a foreign army on the banks of the Tiber. The Power that undertook the task would find in Italy an implacable enemy always ready to take advantage of any opportunity to regain its lost capital, and the democracy of Europe would be always in sympathy with Italian aspirations. No more formidable menace to the tranquility of Europe could be conceived. The cost of the maintenance of the Temporal Power to France has been terrible.

M. Henri Genevois, in his book "*Les Responsabilités de la Défense Nationale*," says that in 1869 Italy longed for a Franco-Austro-Italian alliance ; and the Chevalier Nigra, Ambassador at Paris, made overtures to Napoleon III. The negotiations failed, and General Menabrea had to exclaim, when leaving the Emperor, who was then subjected by the Empress to the clerical party, "May your Majesty not have to regret some day the 300,000 bayonets which I would have brought you." Nevertheless, *pourparlers* continued, so much did Victor Emmanuel desire to unite himself to France against the menacing ambition of the King of Prussia. In April, 1870, the Archduke Albert came to France with a secret mission. The war broke out in July, 1870, and on the 3rd August, at Metz, the Italian envoy presented that treaty of alliance which might have been the salvation of France. Napoleon III. refused it because the treaty stipulated the retreat of the French troops from Rome. In proof of this M. Genevois quotes

from the official "*Histoire de la Guerre de 1870-1871*" — "The Emperor would not yield on the settlement of the Roman question, in which Austria supported the demands of Italy, and he refused to sign the treaty, in spite of the urgency of Prince Napoleon." Yet further proof is given by a citation from Prince Napoleon's book, "*Les Alliances de l'Empire*," as follows:—"The unfortunate issue of the war of 1870 came from the occupation of Rome, and the maintenance of the Temporal Power of the Popes has cost us Alsace-Lorraine." In July, 1871, while the Germans were still in occupation of France, a motion was carried in the National Assembly declaring that "the honour and dignity of France commanded her, in spite of her misfortunes, to intervene in favour of the Holy Father." From that time Italy made part of the Triple Alliance.

The plea that the Temporal Power is necessary to secure the spiritual independence of the Pope is utterly false. The rule of the Pope in Rome was far from securing that independence, as we have already seen in our brief summary of recent events, and the fact would be still more clearly demonstrated if our survey was extended further backward. On the other hand the Papacy has never enjoyed so much spiritual independence as during the last thirty years. The decline of the Pope's political power has tended to disarm the hostility of those who reject his authority, and has rallied to him the sympathy of the faithful. His freedom of action is complete, his moral authority is unimpaired, and at the recent election of a new Pope the choice of the Cardinals was altogether unfettered. Catholicism as a spiritual force has nothing to gain by the re-establishment of the Pope-king.

Priestcraft and the Drink Trade.

THE Temperance movement in this country was born in the ranks of the people, and at first had very few champions in any of the Churches. Among its pioneers half a century ago were Father Mathew among Roman Catholics, Canon Ellison among Anglicans, Dr. Jabez Burns among Baptists, Dr. Newman Hall among Congregationalists, but for a time the majority of ministers of all Churches held aloof. The Free Churches, being more in touch with the people, soon wheeled into line, and at least a generation ago the majority of their congregations had begun to take an active part in Temperance work.

Up to this time the majority of the Established clergy were quiescent, though a few, like Archbishop Temple and Dean Farrar and Canon Ellison, ranged themselves with the new movement. At first the Church of England Temperance Society was very weak in numbers and influence, but its dual basis enabled people to enroll themselves in its ranks whether they were abstainers or not, whether they were prohibitionists or not; and as the Temperance movement gathered strength, it was largely patronised by many whose primary object was the defence of the Church Establishment. The aim of Church defenders of late has been to sectarianise everything, from kindness to animals to economy in funeral expenditure, from the care of servant girls to the training of citizen soldiers.

From a political point of view the Temperance movement in the Established Church has been little better than an organised hypocrisy. The Established Church has never ceased to make friends with the mammon of unrighteousness. It has become the almost exclusive Church of the brewer and the distiller. The new cathedral at Dublin, and, to a large extent, the new cathedral of Southwark, owe their existence to the "beverage." Not unfrequently brewers are liberal church builders, but in towns where a brewer has built and endowed a church the people derisively point to it as a big fire insurance premium. The distillers are as good supporters of the Church as the brewers; not long ago the head of a firm whose gin has a high reputation among spirit-drinkers devoted several thousand pounds to the laudable object of increasing the incomes of the poorer clergy in the diocese where he resided. It is only natural that these wealthy donors to the Church should feel exasperated when bishops ask for effective Temperance legislation; according to the Archbishop of Canterbury and the Bishop of London, some of them have already threatened to withdraw their subscriptions to Church funds. Bishops may advocate total abstinence on platforms, but they must not demand legislation which would interfere with the profits of "the trade," in which, by the way, a thousand clergymen are interested as shareholders.

Under threats of withdrawal of votes and influence from the Tory party—threats which were carried out at more than one bye-election—Mr. Balfour promised "the trade" that he would introduce a Bill to cripple the powers of local magistrates to refuse the renewal of licences. This measure will be of small benefit to the publicans, for the rapid

extension of the tied-house system has converted the great majority of the publicans into mere public-house managers, or brewers' servants, who are compelled to push a trade, under penalty of losing what little money they have invested. Hitherto the law has not taken cognisance of the iniquitous and demoralising tied-house system; under the new law that system will be entrenched behind almost impregnable fortifications. The Brewers' Endowment Bill was enthusiastically received by "the trade" generally, and the brewers in the House of Commons showed conspicuous activity in engineering it through committee. On the other hand, almost every man who had taken an active interest in Temperance work viewed the measure with alarm, though party loyalty induced most of those connected with the Church of England Temperance Society to confine themselves to the demand for "a time-limit," which meant that the licensing magistrates should be only fettered in their discretion for a term of years. Mr. Balfour curtly refused to insert such a provision in the measure. What was the attitude of the Established Church after this refusal?

On July 7, 1904, for the first time, the Convocations of Canterbury and York, together with their Houses of Laymen, met as a Representative Church Council. This body has no legal status, but the Archbishop of Canterbury claims that it represents the mind of the Church, and we must admit the assertion. The whole day was occupied in discussing the Brewers' Endowment Bill, and a resolution expressing approval of the measure was moved and seconded by two Tory M.P.s. An amendment in favour of a time-limit was lost on a show of hands, and then, by a majority of 157 to 64, the

Council voted its approval of the Brewers' Bill. Twelve prelates, indeed, voted against the resolution, seven in its favour, and one remaining neutral; but the great majority on the side of the brewers cannot be explained away. It has, indeed, been urged that the Lower Houses of Convocation are largely composed of cathedral dignitaries; but surely these men represent the Church. It is also urged that curates have no votes in Convocation; but what reason have we to suppose that the unbeneficed clergy have different views from the rest? As for the members of the Houses of Laymen, they are chosen by Diocesan Conferences, who naturally select men who are most zealous in ecclesiastical business. The Church must bear the responsibility of the acts of the Representative Church Council which its leaders have called into existence. This much is certain, that the Established Church has failed in its duty on a great moral question at the decisive moment. The Free Churches have strained every effort to defeat a measure which gives a permanent endowment to the brewers, who have already been immensely enriched by licences which have given them a protective monopoly. Had the Established Church wheeled into line the Government, whose majority had sunk to 40 on the vital question of a time-limit, would have been unable to force the measure through Parliament. Therefore, the Established Church must bear the lasting shame of its betrayal of great moral interests. Had it been a question of legislative prohibition of the drink trade, the clergy might have pleaded that it is dangerous to legislate too far in advance of public opinion; but in this case they are below the level of public opinion. All the leaders of labour are on one side, the majority of the clergy are on the other.

Priestcraft and the Double Tongue.

THE greatest of the apostles said, "Let your yea be yea, and your nay be nay"; priestcraft holds a contrary view. We may leave to evangelical Church controversialists the task of proving that the views of the followers of Lord Halifax do not follow the Prayer-book and the Thirty-nine Articles in the plain and literal sense. There is much to be said on both sides, but even Canon MacColl has admitted that the Thirty-nine Articles have suffered a strained and cracked interpretation for three centuries. Suffice it that the English Reformation was an attempt at a compromise, and that some of its formulas are couched in ambiguous phrases; the result being that to-day the leaders of the Church Association explain away the sacerdotal portions of the Prayer-book, while their opponents virtually contend that there was never any Reformation at all. We are concerned with matters of even greater importance.

Priestcraft, whether Roman or Anglican, has two voices whenever its representatives are hard pushed in controversy. The priest has two convenient formulas. He will tell you that a heretic or a heathen may be saved because of his "invincible ignorance," and that if he is a good man he may be saved because "he belongs to the soul of the Church though he is not of its body." The latter assertion is hardly distinguishable from the Protestant idea that a man may belong to the invisible Church of Christ,

though not to the visible. But such humanitarian teaching is reserved for the educated and intelligent. The simple and ignorant who accept the ministrations of the priest are taught that hell is the eternal destiny of the obstinate heretic, and that the larger his intellectual influence the more certain is his damnation. If anyone doubts this let him inquire among the peasantry of Ireland, or Spain, or Belgium, or any other Catholic country.

On the other hand, if you talk to a cultured and amiable priest of the Roman Church, he will represent his Communion as the most large-hearted of all religious bodies, holding views which are hardly to be distinguished from Universalism. As Father Faber says:

—the love of God is broader
Than the measure of man's mind,
And the heart of the Eternal
Is most wonderfully kind.

None the less, the vast majority of the Roman Catholic laity devoutly believe that there is no salvation outside the pale of their Church, and that all outsiders are doomed to everlasting perdition. This belief would not exist if it had not been instilled into them by their priests. When the Church of Rome has to deal with men of culture it assumes an air of liberality and gentleness; among the simple-minded and ignorant it is not a Gospel of love, but a Gospel of hate.

Let us turn to the Anglican Church. Such men as Canon Henson and Dean Fremantle are worthy of all honour. When the Dean was at Oxford he repeatedly broke down ecclesiastical barriers by appearing in Nonconformist pulpits; Canon Henson, as a matter of discipline, respects these barriers, but protests against their existence. The

Canon in his hot youth was so fierce in his antagonism to Nonconformity that he was rebuked by his own superiors he has since made a serious study of Free Church history, and has made handsome reparation for his earlier indiscretions. But such men as the Canon and the Dean do not represent the mind of the Church of England, and their utterances are sometimes used to misrepresent the actual position.

There are other Church dignitaries whose sympathies are broader than their ecclesiastical limitations. The Archbishop of York and the Bishop of Lichfield have entertained Nonconformist ministers, and held prayer-meetings with them in their own palaces. His Grace of York has gone further, and has expressed the desire that Nonconformists should be welcomed to the reception of Holy Communion without submitting to the rite of Confirmation, or expressing any intention of doing so; notwithstanding the language of the rubric, which says that only those should present themselves who have been confirmed, or are willing to be confirmed. All this is satisfactory evidence that an increasing number of Anglican clerics are growing restive under the rusty fetters forged by prelates of the Tudor and Stuart periods. Every step in this direction is published to the world, for newspaper editors report the sayings and doings of men, not so much because of their wisdom as on account of their official rank. Thus the outside world is led to believe that the Anglican Church is broad, comprehensive, and tolerant.

But the Anglican Church has prelates of another kind. Recently the Bishop of Manchester forbade a clergyman from giving an evangelical address in a Wesleyan mission hall; the Bishop of Bristol

forbade a clergyman from presiding at a meeting of Christian Endeavourers. The Bishop of Truro has publicly deprecated the appearance of clergymen with Nonconformist ministers on the platform of the Bible Society. There is hardly a bishop on the bench that deigns to speak of the Free Churches as Churches at all; yet these prelates are so timid that if a clergyman ventures to appear in a Nonconformist pulpit in spite of their prohibitions, they dare not institute a prosecution against him.

The question at once arises—whether Dean Fremantle or the Bishop of Bristol is in harmony with the laws of the Anglican Church. We may leave out of consideration the followers of Lord Halifax, whose constant fear is that the recognition of Nonconformists as Christian brethren would make ultimate reconciliation with Rome more difficult. The point at issue should be determined, not by the predilections and preferences of any number of men, but by the actual legal position. The mind of a Church is to be found, not in the speeches and sermons of its prelates, which are, after all, only expressions of individual opinion, without binding authority, but in its laws.

Once, and once only, since the Reformation (in 1603) has the Anglican Church formulated a set of canons (ecclesiastical laws). A second attempt was made in 1640, but it happily failed. The canons of 1603 are still in force, except in so far as they conflict with the laws of the land, and the courts have decided that they are still binding on the clergy. They cannot, therefore, be regarded as obsolete; certainly they are not so regarded by the clergy themselves. Convocation amended them as recently as 1865, and had then ample opportunity of altering or abrogating any of them which

seemed unreasonable, odious, or unChristian. Still later, when Parliament in 1887 extended the legal hours for the performance of the marriage ceremony, at the instance of Mr. Carvell Williams, a leading Nonconformist, one of these canons was amended to bring it into line with modern legislation. Yet more recently these canons have been republished in a cheap form by the Society for the Promotion of Christian Knowledge. When James I. ratified these canons he ordered that they should be read once a year in every parish church. It is almost a pity that this ordinance is not observed now, so that the laity might be reminded that the intolerant and bitter spirit of Archbishop Bancroft, the persecutor of the Puritans, is the law of the Anglican Church unto the present hour. The dead hand of that cruel prelate is still strong, and there is not a single member of the Convocations of Canterbury or York bold enough to make a futile attempt to shake it off.

Those canons which are first in the order of precedence are almost exclusively aimed against Nonconformity—a fact which clearly indicates the dominant idea of those who framed them. Of the first twelve of these laws no less than eleven end with a curse. This might have been expected, for cursing has always been the distinguishing note of priestcraft. Whosoever denies what the canons affirm “let him be excommunicated *ipso facto* (by the fact itself) and not restored but by the Archbishop after his repentance and public recantation of these his wicked errors.” This excommunication is the “greater excommunication,” which means that any loyal son of the Church may not sit down to a meal with the excommunicated person, even though he may be his own father or

brother. Clergymen who refuse to allow the children of Nonconformists to act as pupil-teachers in their schools, or who exclude the children of Nonconformists from school treats, are only obeying the canons as best they can.

Who are the persons thus excommunicated? If you deny the royal supremacy in ecclesiastical matters you are excommunicated. If you deny that the Anglican Church teaches and maintains the doctrine of the apostles you are excommunicated. If you say that the Prayer-book contains anything repugnant to the Scriptures you are excommunicated. If you say that the Thirty-nine Articles are in any part superstitious or erroneous you are excommunicated. If you deny the Scriptural authority of archbishops and bishops you are excommunicated. If you form a separate community of Christians outside the Anglican Church you are excommunicated; aye, even if, without joining them, you dare to affirm that these assemblies of Christians are true Churches, you are excommunicated. The prelates of the Anglican Church are, of course, acquainted with the laws of the Church to which they belong, and therefore cannot be blamed for their uncharitable behaviour to other Christians; but they are responsible for the fact that they have never made the smallest effort to bring the laws of their Church into harmony with the modern spirit of free inquiry and tolerant reasonableness.

The Toleration Act drew the teeth and clipped the claws of these shameful and cruel ordinances, but they still remain unrepealed. But for the law of the land which overrides them, it would be the duty of the bishops and clergy to see that everybody who refused to attend church should be

solemnly excommunicated and the names read out every six months in the parish church and in the cathedral of the diocese, "that others may be thereby admonished to refrain their company and society, and excited the rather to procure out a writ against them." This is the mind of the Established Church in regard to those who will not conform.

These canons lay down "distinctive Church principles." Any person who believes in these authoritative Church principles and acts upon them is manifestly unfit to give religious teaching to the child of a Nonconformist. There is no escape. Many broad-minded clergymen, no matter of what school, would shrink with horror from the task of teaching the child of a Nonconformist that its parents are heretics, but if he fails to do so he does not act up to the canons of his own Church.

Yet it is a grievous and a bitter thing that boys and girls, and silly women, and ignorant people generally are frequently taught "distinctive Church principles" in language which leads them to believe, and is intended to make them believe, that millions of their fellow-countrymen and fellow-Christians are outside the pale of salvation. It is needless to cite Gace's catechism. Gace is dead and his Catechism, may be buried with him. There are other catechisms and books of devotion which are very much alive.

Specimens of these productions have been repeatedly published in the daily Press, and the chief dignitaries of the Anglican Church have been invited to express an opinion on them, both publicly and privately, seeing that the books in question are circulated by not a few of their own clergy. They remain obstinately silent, or if they express disapproval, they are careful to mark their letters "private." There is hardly one among them who

has the courage to openly rebuke his own Romanisers.

The first specimen is a penny book entitled "A Catechism for Catholics in England, with which is incorporated the Church Catechism, that is to say, an instruction to be learned by every person before he is brought to be confirmed by the bishop." Observe the Jesuitical artfulness of this title. The boy or girl to whom the book is given naturally supposes that the whole of this unauthorised production must be learned before confirmation; and to make the delusion more certain the book is "inscribed to the Archbishops and Bishops of the provinces of Canterbury and York." This book is in its sixth edition, and the publisher is W. Knott, 26, Brooke Street, London, E.C. Page 2 of the cover gives directions how to make a confession, with a form of confession which begins, "I confess to God Almighty, the Blessed Mary, and all the saints, and to you my father," &c. Page 48 gives "A list of some false religions, about which our blessed Lord says, 'Beware of *false* prophets,' " &c. In this list are enumerated Baptists, Presbyterians, Congregationalists, Methodists, Quakers, and the Salvation Army. The child is directly taught that to be present at a Nonconformist service is a breach of the first and second commandments.

The second specimen is "A Book for the Children of God," price 6d., same publisher as the foregoing. On page 77 is this passage: "The Catholic Church is the home of the Holy Ghost. It is His only earthly home. He does not make His home in any dissenting sect. Sometimes people quarrel with the Church and break away from her, and make little sham churches of their own. We call these people Dissenters, and their sham churches

sects. The Holy Ghost does not abide—does not dwell with them. He goes and visits them perhaps, but only as a stranger.”

On page 100 we are told that “the Bible is the Book which God has given to his Church, and it belongs to the Church alone and not to any dissenting sect. No one but a Catholic can safely read the Bible, and no Catholic can read it safely who does not read it in the Church’s way.” The impudence of this statement is amazing considering that the Anglican Church called in some of these wretched Dissenters to assist in the work of a Revised Translation.

On page 129 the dogma of Transubstantiation is taught in the most direct manner. “We have received God into our bodies as well as into our souls.” The obligation of fasting communion is thus taught: “To make your communion after breaking your fast dishonours Jesus; it is a sin against God and the Church; it is a sin against the Holy Ghost; and if done wilfully and against light, *it is a mortal sin*” (*sic*). A score of passages equally striking might be cited from the same book.

The third specimen is a book called “Handbook to the Book of Common Prayer, for the Use of Teachers and Students.” (Rivingtons.) Its author is Prebendary Reynolds, who describes himself as “Archbishops’ Inspector of Training Colleges and Chief Diocesan Inspector of London.” The official position of Prebendary Reynolds insures that his book shall be widely used not only by Church teachers in the diocese of London, but also throughout the country. An evangelical Church teacher, or pupil-teacher, in the hands of such an inspector is a person to be pitied, for this handbook, though couched in guarded language, is thoroughly

sacerdotal in its tone from beginning to end. A few samples will suffice.

On page 24 appears this slander on the Puritans : “ Irreverence was the secret of the attacks on the Prayer-book. The Puritans looked upon worship from man’s point of view, not from God’s. They did not hold that worship is in the first place for the glory of God.” The authority of the priest, on page 52, is set forth as follows :—“ The priest stands in a position of authority ; he does not say the Absolution, he *pronounces* it—that is, he speaks as God’s *nuntius* or herald. The Absolution is the actual *conveyance* of pardon by the priest in virtue of his office.” Then follows on page 55 a “ Blackboard Sketch ” :—

Christ gave His apostles power to forgive sins.—ST. JOHN XX. 22, 23.

This power given to every priest at ordination. Therefore, by Christ’s authority, forgiveness is conveyed to the penitent.

This is quite sufficient to show the unfitness of any Church teacher who follows Prebendary Reynolds to give religious instruction to the child of any Nonconformist or Protestant Churchman.

We may go further and say that a teacher who follows Prebendary Reynolds is unfit to give religious instruction to the child of any man who in politics is a Liberal or a Democrat. The Prebendary says (page 79), in regard to the prayer for the King in the morning service : “ It expresses in the language of the time the doctrine of ‘ Divine Right of Kings’ (‘ the only Ruler of princes’). Children should be taught that loyalty is a Christian

duty. Rulers are placed where they are by God, and it is sinful to disobey them unless they command what is contrary to the law of God." Here is the slavish dogma of passive obedience, naked and unashamed, which even the Anglican Church had to abandon when James II. virtually commanded the happy dispatch. The chief director of religious instruction in Church schools actually directs it to be taught to the children of free Englishmen in the twentieth century!

In close connection with this absurdity is the note (on page 118) on the prayer for the High Court of Parliament, wherein the sovereign is described as "our most religious and gracious King." Prebendary Reynolds says: "The words were first applied to Charles I., whom they aptly described." As all the world knows, Charles I. was a most religious and gracious liar, whose word no man could trust—not even his faithful Minister, Strafford. But the phrase has been continually applied to every sovereign since—to Charles II., James II., George I., George II., George IV., each of whom in turn has been designated as "our most religious and gracious King." Prebendary Reynolds feels that some apology is needed. Here it is: "The King, being anointed, is officially a religious person"—the lamest apology for a sanctimonious falsehood that was ever offered by a State official.

This is not the only occasion when the Prebendary is consciously walking on thin ice. Perhaps he is at his worst when dealing with the Athanasian Creed and its tremendous anathemas. The words of this creed are strait and explicit. It begins, "Whosoever will (or willeth) to be saved"; this is softened down to "Whosoever wisheth to be

in a state of salvation." This is repeated in explanation of later clauses more than once. We are further told that the damnatory clause, affirming that unless a man holds to the propositions of this creed, "without doubt he shall perish everlastingly" (including, necessarily, such wicked heretics as Channing and Martineau), is the converse of the words: "God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth on Him should not perish, but have everlasting life." On such a statement it is difficult to restrain indignation; suffice it that this is the "distinctive religious instruction" in Church schools as arranged by the chief director.

Only three books are here quoted, but it would be easy to quote thirty if space permitted. Whenever such damning evidence is produced, the bishops are either silent or they put forth excuses which are sometimes frivolous and sometimes false. The latter excuses are put into their innocent mouths by men who pervert the truth, and who astutely reckon that if they can only put their misrepresentations into the speech of a bishop they ensure the widest publicity for their boldest inventions.

It is deemed a sufficient explanation for a bishop to say that one author is dead, that another wrote his book so many years ago, and even to deny that a book was circulated among students, though there are living witnesses to prove the contrary. All this is very painful, but the most deplorable fact of all is that there is hardly a bishop on the episcopal bench with sufficient courage to openly declare his disagreement with the blind bigotry and narrow sacerdotalism which he at heart despises. Men who are guilty of such cowardice must bear their share of responsibility.

Priestcraft and Present-Day Politics.

PRIESTCRAFT is the most disturbing factor in modern political life. Not a few good priests hold themselves aloof from politics altogether; considering their official position this is the utmost we can hope from them. The Lammenais and Lacordaires are, sooner or later, sure to be crushed in the iron grip of the system. In the Church of Rome the priest who dares to think freely and speak freely is doomed. In nominally Catholic countries where the greater and nobler part of the manhood of the nation is already alienated, but with lazy tolerance leaves the priest to work among the women and children, the secular clergy would often be too glad to be let alone; but they have to satisfy rich political Catholic laymen with reactionary tendencies. And the influence of the monastic orders (with their vast wealth), who act under the direct orders of Rome, not under the local bishops, is entirely reactionary.

Germany.

The policy of Rome is to make men papalists first and patriots afterwards; the love of country is always subordinated to the supposed interests of the Church. Germany furnishes a conspicuous example. For a time the arrogant pretensions of

the Catholic priesthood were kept in check by the May or Falk laws ; but in Germany the Ministers of the Empire are chosen by the Emperor, and their chief task is to obtain a majority in the Reichstag (the Parliament of the Empire) to carry their measures, more especially to sanction the crushing burdens of military and naval expenditure. The Reichstag is broken up into a number of groups—Conservatives, Agrarians, National Liberals, Progressives, Social Democrats, and Catholics. The Catholic or Centre Party is a minority, but a strong minority. The chief, if not the sole object of this party is to advance the interest of the Catholic Church ; it is the one party whose aim is ecclesiastical. That means that it can be bought with a price. Bismarck, strong as he was, had to pay the price, and his successors have had to buy at a dearer rate still as the Social Democrats have gained in strength. One of the consequences of the creation of the new German Empire was that the Catholic or Centre Party acquired a position which it never could obtain in Prussia. The Catholics of the left bank of the Rhine and of Southern Germany gave that party so much strength in the Reichstag that, when the Franco-German War was over, the Pope sought to obtain the restoration of the Temporal Power from Germany. Bismarck did not hesitate to denounce the Centre Party as “a mobilisation against the State.” Gradually the May Laws have been repealed, and the Jesuits are now allowed a free hand in Germany, for of late the priest-ridden minority in that country have been able to dictate their own terms to the German Chancellor as the brewers in England have been able to make Mr. Balfour pay their price for their support.

France.

No nation in modern Europe has made such sacrifices for the Papacy as France, and no nation has paid such a terrible penalty. Napoleon I. re-established Catholicism, but the Pope had to endure intolerable humiliations to secure his favour. Under the Bourbon and Orleanist monarchy, and under the second empire, the Papal Church enjoyed the ostentatious patronage of the throne. Napoleon III., even before he had assumed the imperial crown, to his indelible disgrace sent a French army to crush the young Roman Republic and restore the Pope. Both at the beginning and the end of his lurid career the interests of France were sacrificed to the interests of the Papacy. As we have seen Prince Napoleon, son-in-law of Victor Emmanuel, the creator of modern Italy, left it on record that when France was threatened by Germany an Italian alliance was offered to Napoleon III., which probably would have averted war. It was a necessary condition that the Temporal Power of the Pope should no longer be propped up by French bayonets. At the instance of the priest-ridden Empress the proposed alliance was rejected, and France had to pay a terrible price for her support of the Papacy. This humiliation was not enough. When France lay crushed and bleeding at the feet of the invader, the clericals, who were in a majority at the Assembly of Bordeaux, were so infatuated as to carry a resolution declaring that, in spite of the national misfortunes, it was the duty of France to maintain the Temporal Power, which had actually ceased to exist. The inevitable result was that Italy was driven into an alliance with Germany,

and was alienated for thirty years with a near neighbour whose friendship was of vital importance.

The French Republic has paid heavily for this folly. It is true that the late Pope, Pius IX., from considerations of policy, tried to keep on good terms with the Republic, especially in more recent years, when its foundations seemed more securely laid, but he never had the power, or even the will perhaps, to put an effectual restraint upon the militant priests of France, whose first care was for their own ascendancy. His position was certainly difficult. Few French Republicans were honestly and ardently Catholic. On the other hand, all the reactionary parties in France profess warm allegiance to the Catholic Church. The Pope did his best to make terms with the party in power, and even encouraged Catholics to rally to the Republic; but it was evident that his object in doing so was not out of any love for the modern spirit, but to influence the Republic, if possible, in a Catholic direction. All the while the reactionaries continued their propaganda as Bonapartists, Legitimists, Orleanists, or Nationalists, and they drew their chief strength from the adherents of the Church. At the very outset, Gambetta, with a true statesman's foresight, recognised the danger. Moderate Republicans, like Jules Simon, insisted, in the name of liberty, that even the clericals should have a free hand. Events have proved that Gambetta was right. The dishonest and disgraceful conspiracy, of which Boulanger was the figure-head and the puppet, was largely the work of the clericals and their lay allies, who fomented blind hatred alike against the Protestant, the Jew, and the Freethinker. When Boulanger blew out his brains on the grave of his mistress and

the name of "the Napoleon of the music-halls" was no longer of any use, the factions of the reactionary revolution was again combined as "Nationalists." They drew their chief strength from the clericals, especially from the clericals of the monastic orders and their dupes, who, by means of higher education under their exclusive control, had honeycombed with disaffection the higher ranks of the French Army. They had done this at their own charges; here in England the clericals are now conspiring to do the same thing at the charges of the State.

Let thoughtful Englishmen, who now rejoice over the present *entente cordiale* between this country and France, reflect that this is the work of the Republic. When Louis Philippe was king we were almost on the brink of war with France on account of his detestable intrigue in regard to Spanish marriages; more recently we were again on the brink of war under Napoleon III., when Tennyson wrote :

'Tis true we have a faithful ally,
But only the devil knows what he means.

The Republic gives us not only peace but cordiality. Its foremost statesmen have no sinister ends in view, and are our fast friends because they seek the welfare of their people and not the interests of the priests.

It is only due to some of the French prelates to say that they have done their best to keep on good terms with the Republic, and that they deplore the machinations of the monastic orders. One brave bishop, to his honour, exposed and denounced the nuns who sweated and half-starved the girls under their charge. The Bishops of Dijon and

Laval have been required by the Roman *curia* to resign their offices, and four archbishops and two other bishops have been ordered to go to Rome in order that they shall be bullied into submission. All this only shows that the Papacy is determined to extinguish every spark of independence and to make every priest its abject slave.

Russia.

In Russia the disastrous consequences of the connection of the Church with the State are more conspicuous than in any other country. The modern spirit more or less prevails in every other civilised nation, and priestcraft is compelled to moderate its arrogant claims. This is true, not only in Protestant, but in Catholic countries. In spite of the priests, the State has found it necessary to guarantee a certain amount of religious liberty in France, in Italy, in Austro-Hungary, in Belgium, and even in Spain. But in Russia the State Church persecutes without mercy. Those who dissent from it are dragooned into submission, and those who hold fast by the rights of conscience are plundered, imprisoned, torn from their homes by thousands. The unholy Orthodox Church of Russia has an inquisition constantly in working order, and the chief inquisitor is a member of the Imperial Government. Had English Bishops gone to St. Petersburg to plead on behalf of the Stundists (the Baptists) of Russia and other Russian Nonconformists, all Christians would have applauded such a Christlike mission. But they have done nothing of the kind. They have arrayed themselves in copes and mitres, and adorned great ecclesiastical functions, and fraternised with the

Inquisitor-in-Chief. They have never pleaded for mercy for those who were persecuted for Christ's sake ; their one object has been to secure recognition from the corrupt and degraded hierarchy of Russia for their own priestly claims. What a disgusting, degrading spectacle ! They have not succeeded in their pitiful purpose, though they have been, of course, treated with polished courtesy. Rome rejects their pretensions, so they turn to Russia ; and Russia rejects their pretensions also, taking care to treat them with marked politeness. The Anglican Church has indeed fallen upon evil days when it has to suffer such a double humiliation. But the humiliation is well deserved. Lord Halifax turned to Rome for recognition, Bishop Creighton turned to the Holy Orthodox Church of Russia for the same purpose, and both alike were snubbed for their pains. All the while the Churchmen represented by both these ecclesiastical leaders seek every opportunity to denounce as heretics their fellow-Christians in their own country, who are equally loyal to Christ, but who deny their exclusive pretensions. Yes, the priests of the Church of England disown fellowship with their own fellow-countrymen and fellow-Christians, whose only crime is that they deny their exclusive priestly pretensions, in the vain hope of obtaining recognition for these pretensions from the inquisitors of Russia and of Rome.

Italy and Spain.

Priests are no longer allowed to teach in the public schools of Italy ; here, as in France, their presence in the schools was found to be a peril to the State. The same instinct of self-preservation has compelled the State to curb the growth of the

monastic orders. All kinds of devices have been used to evade the law, but of late years 45,000 religious houses have been suppressed, yielding a yearly revenue of £2,000,000, an enormous sum for so poor a country.

Portugal has also found it necessary to legislate against the monastic orders.

Even Spain is in revolt against priestcraft. As far back as 1857 it was provided that only three religious orders should be domiciled in that country, but the law has been constantly violated, and about 60,000 persons belonging to these orders are now to be found in Spain. They are largely engaged in trade as cloth-makers, perfumers, distillers, silk manufacturers, &c. Much indignation has been aroused by the framing of a new Concordat, under which the orders will be placed under the protection of the law. The priests are becoming more and more unpopular in the great towns. Even in orthodox Spain the manhood of the nation is repudiating the Church of Rome, and, unhappily, Christianity is not presented to the Spanish people in any other form.

England.

While France and Italy and Spain are shaking off the bondage of priestcraft, England is, to a large extent, oblivious of the encroachments which priestcraft is constantly making. The priest is as much the enemy of justice, of freedom, of progress here as he is elsewhere. Cardinal Manning said: "I shall not say too much if I say that we have to subjugate and subdue, to conquer and rule an imperial race. . . . Were heresy conquered in England it would be conquered throughout the world." Those who acknowledge the Pope as the

infallible head of the Church have far ampler liberty of worship in England than they possess in Catholic countries like Italy and France. They march in procession through our streets, their schools are largely subsidised by the State, members of monastic orders who are under vows of poverty teach in schools, draw pay from the State, and hand it over to their Church; the unauthorised congregations which have been expelled from France as a public danger take refuge in England to carry on their propagandist work. England has become the dumping-ground of Jesuits and Assumptionists and all the other swarms of clerical locusts.

When the Catholic Emancipation Act was passed, those who framed it guarded their country against the operations of the monastic orders, who are not even under the control of the Roman Catholic bishops, but own no master save the Pope himself. Nearly a dozen clauses in that Act were devised in order to guard against the danger. Only last Session a Bill was introduced into Parliament by Lord Edmond Talbot, brother of the Duke of Norfolk, and half-a-dozen other Roman Catholic Members, whose object is to repeal these clauses, as well as clauses in other Acts which were framed to restrain the activity of the monastic orders. This Bill provides that Jesuits may acquire and hold property in like manner, and to the same extent, as communities of women; that they may wear their peculiar garb in public places; that they may assemble for worship without certification and in a private chapel with locked doors. Even the oath of allegiance is dispensed with.

But even this is not enough. The Pope himself has publicly acknowledged that his servants enjoy a larger measure of freedom than in some Catholic

countries. They use their freedom to strive after ascendancy, and will never be satisfied so long as the law of this country provides that the sovereign shall be a Protestant. It is hardly necessary to remind the reader that such a provision is requisite on purely political grounds. The Protestant succession is guaranteed in various ways. The Act of Settlement vested the right to the crown in the Electress Sophia of Hanover (granddaughter of James I.) and the heirs of her body, being Protestants. A second guarantee was the Coronation Oath, wherein each monarch has to swear to maintain the Protestant religion as by law established. But neither of these guarantees were deemed sufficient, because of the lax views of truthfulness held by Catholic theologians. Accordingly it was provided that, at the very accession of each sovereign, he or she should make a solemn declaration of personal disbelief in the dogma of Transubstantiation—a declaration which no Catholic dare make, even though he is making it falsely. The declaration is couched in strong language, and it is a debatable question whether its terms might not be modified and yet leave it effective. But the object of the Duke of Norfolk and other Catholic legislators is to abolish it altogether, and the very strenuousness and persistency of their efforts should put Protestants on their guard. It is noteworthy that among the foremost advocates of the abolition of the Declaration are Lord Halifax and *The Church Times*. Their object is apparent. They would thus sweep away one of the chief obstacles to that reunion with Rome for which they are constantly working.

But, it will be said, we have an Established Church which is “the bulwark of Protestantism.”

If ever that was true, it is certainly untrue now. Politically the Established Church is already the ally of Rome ; and a large party in that Church would make it the bond-slave of Rome if they only had their way. The iniquitous Education Act of 1902, by which the Anglican priesthood vainly hoped to stamp out Nonconformity, was carried by a political combination of Anglicans and Catholics, equally intent on public plunder.

We should never forget that the theory of Rome is that the State should be subordinate to the Church. A priest-ridden sovereign of this country would either bring about another revolution or destroy English liberty ; for, as Mr. Gladstone truly said, " Individual servitude, however abject, will not satisfy the party now dominant in the Latin Church ; the State must be a slave."

Priestcraft and the Kingdom of God.

PRIESTCRAFT is not only the enslaver of man, but the most formidable foe of the Kingdom of God. We have to consider not only those whom it guides, but those whom it repels. The masses of the people in France, Italy, Spain, Austro-Hungary, Belgium, Russia, only know Christianity through the priest; and the priest makes it odious to lovers of human freedom and social justice. He claims to be regarded as a sacred person, and declares that his distinctive dogmas are essential to salvation. Unless a man accepts him and his dogmas, without doubt he shall perish everlastingly. That is the teaching of his Church for the masses, though with explanations and reservations for the men of culture. With characteristic astuteness he puts forth the very dogmas which exalt his own power, and tells the people that to doubt or reject them is blasphemy against Christ.

¶ If Jesus Christ is God the Son, then, to use the words of St. Paul, "He dwelleth not in temples made with hands, neither is worshipped with men's hands, as though He needed anything." A thoughtful man, who is a devout worshipper and believes in the Divine Immanence, shrinks from anything that appears to localise God. He is ever present, and His ear is ever open to the cry of His children.

Reverence and love are assuredly possible to the man who cannot localise the Saviour of the world in a piece of bread. Even if it be allowed that to some natures the dramatic presentation of the great sacrifice of love on Calvary is a means of grace, it does not follow that those who think otherwise are cast out of the kingdom.

But such a view is incompatible with priestly pretensions ; therefore, unless a man worships the Saviour in the Sacrament, he is a hopeless heretic. This was the crucial point in the trial of the martyrs who perished by fire in the days of Queen Mary. The priest makes such a determined stand for this particular form of worship because his own miraculous powers are asserted therein. The homage paid in the Sacrament is really homage paid to the priest, for there, to use the words of Cardinal Vaughan, "God is reduced to a condition of dependency."

Now let us see how the Royal Declaration is regarded by a prince of the Church of Rome in England at the present time. The late Cardinal Vaughan sent his brother to Spain to collect funds for the completion of his new cathedral at Westminster. Father Vaughan was furnished with a circular letter of commendation to the Spanish bishops. Here are a few extracts :—

"England, as my illustrious predecessor, Cardinal Wiseman, wrote, is the only country which has repeated and renewed in every generation during three centuries the formal act of apostasy—exactng from every sovereign, in the name of the nation, a special declaration that certain Catholic beliefs are superstitious and idolatrous. This has taken the form of a national sin of blasphemy and heresy ; and the dogmas against which they have

been directed* are principally two : Transubstantiation and the worship of the Most Holy Virgin. These, therefore, ought to be the objects of the devotion of the Catholics in England. . . . The Rev. Kenelm Vaughan has laboured incessantly to foment a special devotion for the Most Holy Sacrament in expiation of the national apostasy and the sins of man. . . . To Spain, therefore, we turn again"—(yes, as Catholic priests turned at the time of the Spanish Armada)—“that there may be again kindled among us the flames of love and devotion for the Sacrament of Jesus, and that they may unite with us in offering to God the only expiation that can blot out three centuries of blasphemy and heresy against the Divine Majesty.”

This document clearly shows how a most solemn and religious act is blurred and distorted in the eyes of the priest. The sovereign of this realm is crowned with an elaborate religious ceremony—that is nothing. The Coronation Oath is taken upon the Holy Scriptures—that is nothing. The Anglican Church accepts the Apostles' Creed, the Nicene Creed, and the Athanasian Creed—that is nothing. Because the law of the land demands that the sovereign shall repudiate any belief in the alleged power of the priest to bring down Christ from above and to convert a wafer into His flesh, it is denounced as blasphemy and heresy. The repudiation of a priestly miracle, which is contrary to all the evidence of the senses, is reckoned as a denial of Christ Himself. The Church of Rome, which is so voluble and bitter in its curses against all who disown its authority, regards any repudia-

* Cardinal Vaughan [is, of course, not responsible for the grammar of the translator.

tion of one of its most distinctive dogmas as intolerable outrage. What wonder is it that men in Catholic countries who cannot believe in the priestly miracle turn away from religion altogether!

In these days not a few good and brave men have sought to reconcile the teaching of the Catholic Church with scientific discovery and the tendencies of modern thought. These loyal sons of their Church have honestly sought to render it service; their efforts have always been treated as criminal. With the exception of the few who have completely emancipated themselves, these are of all men the most miserable. Sooner or later they are crushed into silence. A single example will suffice. The late Dr. St. George Mivart was one of the few eminent scientists who remained faithful to the Church of Rome. Instead of regarding with tender sympathy his strenuous efforts to reconcile reason with faith, it cast him into outer darkness. More recently the Abbé Loisy has narrowly escaped the same fate.

Many thoughtful and intelligent Christians—both Catholic and Protestant—no longer believe in an everlasting hell of material fire nor in the inerrancy of the Scriptures. Dr. Mivart had the temerity to say so in a magazine. Cardinal Vaughan's method of dealing with this distinguished writer was to draw up for him a confession of faith, which would nearly fill a column of a daily paper, and then order him to sign it. Among other things, he was required to express his belief in the perpetual virginity of Mary, the mother of our Lord; in the theory that the sin of Adam involved the guilt of the whole human race; in the everlasting punishment of the wicked; and in the Divine authority of the Vulgate translation of the Bible. As Dr. Mivart

could not and would not sign this extraordinary document, the Cardinal issued a notice to all the priests in his diocese forbidding them to administer the Sacraments of the Church to him. Thus Dr. Mivart died under the Church's ban. He is only one among many. The stories of Lammenais, Lacordaire, Loyson, Didon, Döllinger, Campello are equally painful. What else could have been expected from such a Church, seeing, as Macaulay says, that "to stunt the growth of the human mind has been her chief object?" No wonder that among the Latin nations men who dare to think for themselves are alienated by its puerility, its bigotry, its unreasonableness, and, above all, by its violations of truth and its outrages upon humanity.

Yes, the priests are the worst enemies of Jesus, the greatest hindrances to His reign on earth. What do we see in Paris at the present hour? In Paris—where St. Louis raised that miracle of beauty, the Sainte Chapelle, as a shrine for the crown of thorns; Paris, whose streets ran with the blood of St. Bartholomew; Paris, which is to-day the seat of a Government that in sheer self-defence drives out the monastic congregations. What do we see at the present time? Its greatest living dramatist, Victorien Sardou, has produced a tragedy in which the greatest of living actresses, Sarah Bernhardt, takes the leading part. *La Sorcière* is historically true.

It is the story of the loves of a Spanish noble and a Moorish girl soon after the final victory of the Christians. Zoyara is dragged before the inquisition of the priests. They have two witnesses against her—one an imbecile old woman, whose idiotic babble they greedily accept, the other a

wretched creature who will only testify under threats of torture. The accused, who is charged with impossible crimes, cries aloud in her despair, "If I am condemned beforehand, I shall at least have the joy of proclaiming my hatred of this tribunal of the Church, which should be more humane than others, and which is more savage. Yes, I hate you! I hate you priests—you who batten on a conquered people as the jackals, after a battle, on the bodies of the dying. It was too little for you to heap upon us misery, famine, and the brutality of the soldier. The more refined cruelty of the monk was needed, and you invented the Inquisition. Thus you could give us over with a glad heart to execution as hardened Pagans, or cause us to perish in your dungeons, or burn us alive in the name of your Gospel, which preaches only pity and goodness. And in the name of this prophet—your God—crucified by the inquisitors of His time! A martyr of whom you make an executioner! (*Here the prisoner apostrophizes the crucifix.*) God of the Christians! they have nailed Thy feet and hands that Thou shouldest not come to the aid of the wretched. But if Thou canst not detach Thyself from the cross, cry at least to these infamous judges not to seek elsewhere Hell and the Witches' Sabbath. Hell is here, where they sacrifice to Thee human creatures; where they offer to Thee as hymns the groans of the dying, and for incense the odour of grilled flesh. Hell is here! Hell with its furnaces, Hell with its damned, Hell with its devils."

Oh, the pity of it! That Jesus Christ, whose "sacred heart" the priests ostentatiously adore, should have to be defended from their calumnies by a dramatist and an actress in a Parisian theatre! Is not the Freethinker, with no belief except in

our common humanity, as he applauds the despairing apostrophe uttered by the great *tragédienne*, nearer to the Kingdom of God than the priest, whose clerical organ of falsehood and slander, *La Croix*, is adorned with a crucifix on its front?

When Gambetta proclaimed that clericalism is the enemy he meant that it is the enemy of the Republic. It is far more than that. As has been shown in these pages, it is the enemy of peace, the enemy of justice, the enemy of truth, the enemy of light, the enemy of progress, the enemy of love—above all, the enemy of Jesus Christ, the Saviour of the world.

