

Defence

OF THE

REV. CHARLES VOYSEY, B.A.,

VICAR OF HEALAUGH,

ON THE HEARING OF THE

CHARGES OF HERESY

PREFERRED AGAINST HIM IN THE

CHANCERY COURT OF YORK,

ON THE 1ST DECEMBER, 1869.

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1869.

IN publishing the following pages as my defence before the Chancery Court of York, on the 1st December, 1869, I acknowledge, with the greatest pleasure, the invaluable services of my counsel, Mr. J. FitzJames Stephen, Q.C., and Mr. John Westlake, and of my solicitors, Messrs. Shaen and Roscoe. Their help in the preparation of this document must, indeed, be so obvious, that this acknowledgment is less necessary for the enlightenment of the ordinary reader than for the relief of my own almost inexpressible feelings of thankfulness to my legal advisers.

C. V.

HEALAUGH VICARAGE,
December 2nd, 1869.

March, 1869.

REV. CHARLES VOYSEY'S

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Subscriptions in aid of the defence of the Rev. Charles Voysey against the proceedings of the Archbishop of York are received by Messrs. ROBERTS, LUBBOCK AND Co., 15, Lombard Street, E.C., and by the LONDON AND WESTMINSTER BANK, St. James's Square, S.W., where accounts have been opened in the name of the above Fund; or by WM. HENRY DOMVILLE, Esq., 15, Gloucester Crescent, Hyde Park, London, W.

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If you should desire to assist, the favour of an early subscription is requested, and, it is hoped, with your name in full, for publication.

For those who may be interested in the progress of opinion within the Church of England, and who have not had an opportunity of reading the Rev. Charles Voysey's Sermons (for the publication of which he is being prosecuted), the following Preface to his 3rd Volume of the "Sling and the Stone" is now reprinted.

PREFACE.

"THE SLING AND THE STONE" is, and is meant to be, a challenge. Spectators, however, may quite fail to see what the challenge is, and to whom it is given. It would be, for instance, a great mistake to suppose that the author is giving a challenge to the ecclesiastical law, or that he is seeing how far he may try the endurance of polemical orthodoxy. Such contests are unworthy of one who feels the deep solemnity of the questions he has raised. The author of these Volumes is not at all overwhelmed by the fear of what course any Church or Section of Christendom may take with regard to himself or any other individual teacher. He cannot bring himself to identify the cause of truth with the attitude of any particular organization of men towards it, nor can he be so vain or foolish as to suppose that his own individual fate, whether prosperous or adverse, will have any permanent connection with the solution of the questions which he has submitted to public examination.

If the old folly of persecuting opinions be successfully repeated in his own case, the author knows quite well that it will not drown the voice which has already been heard, nor stifle one single enquiry to which his hearers and readers have been stimulated.

The challenge herein given is not, then, one relating to position in the Church of England, nor is it addressed to Archbishops, and Bishops, and Ecclesiastical Courts any more than to the whole laity of Christendom.

But to every man calling himself a Christian who may read these Sermons, they convey a challenge, the spirit of which may be thus briefly expressed—Are these things so? Is this true or false? An answer is demanded from every reader, not by the humble writer, but by the paramount importance of the questions themselves to these simple but momentous enquiries:—

Is it true that the human race was ever under the curse of God?

Is it true that God needs the intervention of another to mediate with men, and to bring them into a state in which He will be more favourable towards them than He is already?

Is it true that there is any God but He who made us?

Is it true that God ever was, or ever is, at a distance from this world, so that in any sense it can be true that He comes and goes to and from the earth, or sends some one to act as envoy on his behalf?

Is it true that the only or even the chief signs of God's presence and power are to be found in what is called "miracles"?

Is it true that such miracles would prove God's *constant* presence and favour, or only His *occasional* presence and favour?

Is it true that the doctrine of vicarious punishment is of any moral benefit to mankind, or at all redounding to the honour of God?

Is it true that men are to be saved or lost according to their religious belief?

Are we, or are we not, to look for answers to these questions among the Archives of the Church, and to be satisfied, as our highest duty, with the answers to be found there?

Are we, or are we not, bound to believe all that the Bible says on these and similar questions?

Let us consider on what grounds we should be compelled to accept any statement or opinion merely on the word of an apostle or an evangelist. At present, the sole ground offered to us is traditional authority. In plain language, we are required to accept every apostolic dictum as true because the Church believes that the apostles were infallible. Opponents are only shocked, they will not even condescend to argument, when an apostolic statement is challenged; and at present the only semblance of a reason given for this absurd reverence is that the Church has always held apostolic authority to be absolute.

But we are only arguing in a vicious circle, if we believe all that the Apostles said, because the Church which was founded upon them says we ought. Where shall we obtain an external authority on which to base anything like a logical structure.

The Church is a living fact—no doubt—and her assumption of being founded by Jesus Christ and the Apostles may be readily granted. But waiving the no less patent fact of her fluctuation of doctrine and manifest departure from the recorded teaching of Jesus, the question will be asked, On what does the authority of Jesus Himself rest? Are we to accept it as a matter of pure faith, or are there evidences for it independent of the Church and New Testament; which are both believed to depend entirely on the authority of Jesus?

These are matters of fundamental importance, and cannot be ignored by any one who intends to grapple with the scepticism of the age.

If we are to stand on pure faith, without evidence, let it be at once confessed; but it is only a waste of time and words to follow up such a confession by a parade of elaborate arguments. If the right to demand evidence be admitted, let all the evidence that is legitimate and trustworthy be at once produced. Those who are earnestly seeking rational grounds for accepting the authority of Jesus and His Apostles will not however be easily satisfied with Bible arguments. It is enough for them to have shown that there exist defects and errors in it, both moral and historical, theological as well as cosmological; that even Apostles were mistaken, and that the records of the noblest life are not without blemish.

The readers of these Sermons will discover without difficulty what is positive in their teaching without the necessity for recapitulation. They will find more agreement with Scripture and with the Great Master than might have been expected, considering what was said against the *Sling and the Stone* in Convocation. But whatever the author has said stands on its own merits, deriving no fictitious value from conformity with more ancient and consecrated opinions, nor weakened at all by divergence from them.

Conscious of some errors, the author commends his work, in all modesty, to the Christian peoples, neither fearing ridicule, nor deprecating just censure, but simply assured that what is erroneous in it will soon be forgotten, and that what is true in it can never be overthrown.

HEALOUGH VICARAGE,
December 1st, 1868.

The volumes of "Sling and Stone" may be obtained of Messrs. TRÜBNER & Co.,
60, Paternoster Row, E.C., at the prices undermentioned:—

Vol. 1 for 1866	...	...	...	6s.
Vol. 2 for 1867	...	...	...	7s. 6d.
Vol. 3 for 1868	(is now out of print).			
Vol. 4 for 1869	...	...	...	7s. 6d.

The Preface to Vol. 4 contains some remarks on the Chancellor's Judgment.

DEFENCE,

ETC.

MAY IT PLEASE YOU, SIR,

I appear before you to move that these Articles may be rejected, because they disclose no ecclesiastical offence. I also move that they may be reformed by the omission of all the references which they contain to authorities which are not in reality dogmatic, and in particular by the omission of all references to the Homilies; and further, by the omission of all charges which were not laid before the Commissioners of the Bishop of London. The first branch of this motion is of course the important one, and will involve a statement of the merits of my case, as there is no dispute as to the facts that I wrote and published the passages impugned. In supporting my motion, I have thought it best to commit to writing what I have to say. This will not only prevent misconception, but will have the incidental advantage of saving the time of the Court.

I propose, with the leave of the Court, to pursue the following course:—I shall not undertake to discuss word by word and sentence by sentence the legality of the passages objected to. I do not think that it would be just to myself or respectful to the Court to do so. I am quite sure that it cannot be your wish to lay hold of particular expressions for the purpose of condemning me. On the other hand, it is not my wish to quibble about turns of expression. The real question is, as to the substance of my teaching. If that is illegal, I have no wish to retain my preferment. For these reasons, I shall state, in the fewest and plainest words I can find, the substance of my teaching on the four points on which I am accused of having said that which the law forbade me to say. It is for the Court to decide whether or not I have done so. The truth of my teaching is not in issue; on that subject I am entitled to my own opinion, and no Court can in any event say more than that the Church of England is of a different way of thinking.

I must, however, say that I have set forth my views with a

most firm conviction that they are true; that they are entirely in agreement with the teachings of our Lord and Master, Jesus Christ; that the Bible abounds in proofs in support of them; and that they most surely tend to the honour of God, and the welfare of man. I have had before my mind the state of religious feeling in this country, and the many dangers with which our National Church is threatened. There is, on the one hand, a growing tendency—it cannot be denied—to restore, within our Church, the Roman doctrines against which our Articles were, for the most part, specially and distinctly framed; and, on the other hand, there is a growing contempt for religion altogether, arising, as I think, entirely from the false and repulsive views of God and of His relation to mankind which have been so widely preached. I have, to the best of my power, striven to uphold the Protestant character of our Church, and to restore true and reasonable religion to the hearts of the sceptic and the materialist. The main object of all my teaching has been to vindicate the veracity of history and the morality of the Divine government; and, because that has ever been my object, I am unable to treat with reverence or tenderness those inventions of men which appear to me as dishonouring to God, and as degrading to man, as are the darkest forms of heathen idolatry. Never has a word escaped me of treason against the existing laws and constitution of the Church, because, from the bottom of my heart, I have always been loyal to it, and have ever been ready to submit myself to those in authority over me, in every matter within their jurisdiction. I have so valued her protection as never to have consciously exceeded the liberty with which we are endowed; and it will surprise me greatly if an adverse sentence should prove that I have been mistaken.

With these observations I pass to the four charges against me, which I shall consider in their order, and which relate to

1. The doctrine of Atonement.
 2. The doctrine of Justification.
 3. The doctrine of Incarnation.
 4. The doctrines relating to the Bible.
- I. First, as to the doctrine of the Atonement.

I am charged, in the first place, in the 10th, 11th, 12th, and 13th of the Articles of Charge, with having in certain passages,

set out in the 7th, 8th, and 9th Articles, taught the following doctrines:—

1. That Christ has not made an atonement or reconciliation for sin, and has not been made a sacrifice to reconcile his Father to us.

2. That there is no need of any atonement or sacrifice, nor any place for such in the purposes of God.

3. That Christ did not bear the punishment due to our sins, nor suffer in our stead and for us; and that to think that he did, or that it was necessary that he should so suffer, is infinitely erroneous and dishonouring to God, and is the most revolting of all the popular beliefs.

4. That the commonly received doctrines of intercession and mediation by Christ, and atonement or reconciliation to God by the death of Christ, are all opposed to the perfect harmony and simplicity of the love of God, and to the teaching of Jesus Christ himself.

These four doctrines are alleged to be contrary to the 2nd, the 3rd, the 7th, the 15th, and the 31st Articles of Religion, several Collects, part of the Communion Service, a prayer in the Litany, a prayer in the Service for the Visitation of the Sick, expressions in the Communion Service, and also a passage in the first Book of the Homilies. All which authorities are set out at length in the 14th Article of Charge.

I will say a word or two in the first place upon these authorities. With respect to the Homilies, I altogether deny that I am bound to conform to their doctrine. All that is said of them in the Articles is that they contain a wholesome doctrine, and one necessary for these times (*i. e.* the times at which the Articles were framed).

This by no means binds the clergy of the Church of England to assent to every proposition or exposition of doctrine which they contain. It is, indeed, notorious that they contain much which in these days is generally denied by men of all parties in the Church. For instance, the doctrine of passive obedience is preached at length in the Homily on Rebellion, but it will not, I presume, be alleged that any one, in these days, is required to believe, or not to deny it.

With regard to the expressions quoted from different Collects, from the Communion Service, and from the Service for the

Visitation of the Sick, I remark that they are, without exception, hints which enunciate no distinct proposition whatever. The Thirty-nine Articles, I submit, form the standard of doctrine on this as on other subjects ; and it is a remarkable fact, to which I beg to call the special attention of the Court, that the word "*atonement*" is never once found in any of them.

Before considering how my views are related to them, I must state a principle on which I found my defence as to the first three charges.

It is that, inasmuch as many parts of the Christian religion, as stated in the Thirty-nine Articles, are confessedly mysterious, and inasmuch as the obligation of the clergy of the Church of England is to abstain from contradicting the Thirty-nine Articles, or any of them, it is lawful for clergymen of the Church of England to contradict any explanation of any mystery which is not inserted in the Thirty-nine Articles, and that without being called upon to supply any other explanation of their own.

I must be excused if I insist at some length upon this principle, as it is essential to my case, and not generally understood.

That the Christian religion, as stated in the Articles of the Church of England, contains mysteries, may, I suppose, be taken for granted. What is a mystery? There are only two legitimate senses in which the word can be used ; though, as I shall presently show, there is a third, and, as I think, an illegitimate sense, in which people are continually trying to use it.

The first legitimate sense of the word mystery is a proposition which is not understood. For instance, a proposition expressed in a foreign language, or in the technical terms of a science, is a mystery to those who are ignorant of the language or unacquainted with the technical terms of the science. The second legitimate sense of the word is a concealed fact, or state of facts. The contents of a sealed letter are a mystery until the letter is opened and read. We say, "There is some mystery in this," when we know that a person's conduct is influenced by considerations with which we are not acquainted. The word mystery can be used, in short, in an intelligible manner so long as it means either a proposition unintelligible to us, or a secret, and in either of these senses the proposition that mysteries are to be taught or believed is intelligible.

Believing a mystery means, I apprehend, believing that the pro-

position which contains it is true, whatever is its meaning. For instance, if a person who does not know Greek is told to believe that *ἐν ἀρχῇ ἦν ὁ λόγος*, he is told to believe that these words are true, whatever they mean, but he is not told to believe that "In the beginning was the word." Similarly, to deny a mystery is to deny that the words are true, whatever they mean, or that any true meaning can be attached to them. Now, the only legal obligation under which the clergy do or can lie is that of not denying what is contained in the Thirty-nine Articles. A man's belief is not, and cannot be, reached by the law. It is a matter of moral and religious obligation; but you, Sir, cannot inquire into it. I am not before the Inquisition, but in an English Court of Justice. You must look at *what I have said*, and cannot speculate as to what I think, and therefore the question is, whether I have denied the mysteries of the Atonement and Justification by Faith in the sense which I have just explained; whether, that is, I have contradicted in terms the Articles in which they are set out, or have asserted that those words, whatever they may mean, are not, and cannot be, true. I deny that I have done so.

I recognize and insist upon the necessity under which clergymen lie of addressing to their congregations language which they do not themselves understand, *e. g.*, when we have to speak of a Son who is actually co-eternal with his own Father, and of warning them of the fact that the fundamental terms of religion must always have reference to matters of which men are ignorant. So far, I presume, no one will say I am wrong. I differ from other clergymen rather in practice than in theory. Theoretically, they insist loudly upon the existence of mysteries. Practically, they are continually trying to explain them. The process is this:—

1st. You are told that a doctrine is a sublime mystery, which transcends the powers of the human mind.

The next step is to substitute for the mystery, as stated in the Creeds or Articles, a gloss or explanation which is quite intelligible, and as absurd as it is intelligible.

Finally, you are told that, because the gloss is equivalent to the mystery, you cannot expose its absurdity without denying the truth of the mystery; in other words, it is argued that you must not assert the falsehood of something which you do understand, because you must not deny the truth of something which you do

not understand. These are the steps by which people get that third sense of the word mystery of which I have spoken—a sense which I think illegitimate and immoral. According to it, a mystery may be defined as something which you must believe to be true and good, although you have every possible reason to think that it is false and bad.

I now proceed to apply this principle to the doctrine of Atonement which I am said to have taught.

The most explicit and fullest statement of the doctrine upon this subject, which the law of England forbids me to contradict, is to be found in the 2nd and 31st Articles of Religion, the words of which are these: "The Son was crucified, dead and buried, to reconcile his Father to us, and to be a sacrifice, not only for original guilt, but also for all actual sins of men."—Art. II.

"The offering of Christ once made is that perfect redemption, propitiation, and satisfaction, for all the sins of the whole world, both original and actual; and there is none other satisfaction for sin, but that alone."—Art. XXXI.

This is admitted to be a mystery; that is to say, an unintelligible proposition; and I think no one can read it without seeing that such is the fact.

It is obvious that the assertion, that the second person of the Trinity sacrificed himself to reconcile to us the first person of the Trinity, and that he thereby made a perfect redemption, propitiation, and satisfaction for all the sins of the world, is an assertion as to a matter upon which the human mind can form absolutely no conception at all. It is to us a statement as mysterious, as completely unmeaning, as a statement made in an unknown tongue. It may, indeed, be capable of being completed and explained by facts which are concealed from us, but this makes no difference so long as such explanation is withheld. The statement is as unmeaning, as mysterious, as a letter partly written in plain characters and partly in ciphers, which obviously affect the sense of the plain words, though we do not know what they mean. When we speak of *two men* as offering and accepting a redemption, propitiation, or satisfaction, we speak intelligibly; but the characteristic peculiarity of the doctrine under consideration is, that it cannot be affirmed that God the Father and God the Son are *two*, and that it can be affirmed that they

are not *men*. The mystery, therefore, consists in this, that we affirm an unknown operation, transaction, or relation, call it what you will, respecting an *inconceivable being*, who in some sense, it seems, may be called *inconceivable beings*. Where have I so denied that such an operation, transaction, or relation may or does take place or exist? Where have I asserted that no facts or relations exist anywhere of which the words of the 2nd and 31st Articles are a true account? Where have I said that whatever those words mean, they are false? If I have said any of these things, I have denied the truth of the Articles, and must take the consequences.

Not only have I said no such thing, but I cannot understand how any human creature should have the presumption to do so. Who can pretend to say what arrangement the first and second persons of the Trinity have made about the salvation of man? All that I have denied is, that the Father and the Son are to be regarded as beings as distinct as two men, driving a bargain, the nature of which bargain is, that the Father, in consideration of pain suffered by the Son, will abstain from torturing after death people whom he otherwise would have tortured. This theory, I say, is false and blasphemous. Let the mystery mean what it will, it does not and cannot mean that; but that is what it is supposed to mean by many of the laity, and asserted to mean by many preachers.

If, Sir, you read the different passages from my books which are extracted in the 7th, 8th, and 9th Articles of the charge against me, you will find that this in substance is what I have said, and all that I have said; though I have stated it in various forms and with different illustrations; and though particular expressions here and there may be open to criticism, I have nowhere denied what the Articles assert. I have, to the best of my ability, denied an interpretation vulgarly put upon them, and by which they are degraded from the position of ineffable mysteries to the position of intelligible absurdities.

If the Court should condemn my teaching on this head, it must do so by affirming what I deny. This Court must hold that the popular gloss upon the Articles is itself the doctrine of the Church of England. It must assert, for instance, what I have denied, that the doctrines of the Atonement and of Justification do impute to God prejudice, favour, spite, partiality; that they

do open to man an escape from a just penalty by bargaining, compromise, evasion, or substitution. You must affirm that God's justice and mercy *are* opposite feelings, which have to be reconciled by a compromise; that his justice *does* demand what his mercy would deny; that his mercy *can* only be exercised when his justice has been first appeased. These are the propositions which I deny with every faculty of my soul. I say that they are false, impious, and blasphemous; I assert that they strike at the root of all morals and all religion—that they make God a fiend, and man a liar and a slave.

Assert, if it be so, that they are the doctrines of the Church of England. It is in the power of this Court to do so, and it is in the power of the Court of Appeal to confirm your judgment. In that case, my prosecutors are right, and I am wrong. In that case, I have broken the law, and must lose my living. I have only to add that, if this is so, I shall thank my prosecutors from the bottom of my heart for the prosecution. I shall rejoice to be free from any connection whatever with doctrines so hideous as those with which the Church of England will then be for the first time identified.

II. So much for my teaching as to the Atonement. I pass now to the second charge, which relates to Justification by Faith.

In the 17th and 18th Articles of Charge I am accused of having taught—

1. That mankind are not by nature born in sin, and the children of God's wrath, and are not separated from God by sin and under his wrath, or under a curse, and that they are not in danger of endless suffering; nor is there any curse to remove by the shedding of the innocent blood of Christ, and that the doctrine of the fall of man is contrary to the teaching of Christ.

2. That mankind need no atonement or propitiation, that salvation is not through justification, and that the doctrine of Justification by Faith is contrary to the teaching of Jesus Christ.

This teaching is said to be opposed to the 2nd, the 9th, and the 11th of the Articles of Religion, part of the Catechism, parts of the other Services, Collects, &c., and certain passages from the Homilies.

The passages on which this charge is founded are quoted in the 15th and 16th Articles of Charge, but I am surprised that it should have been thought fair to omit from the very sermon

in which those passages occur, the following passage, which is absolutely inconsistent with any design of depraving or contradicting the 11th Article of Religion:—

“ Viewed in relation to the older notions of sacrifice and ceremonial justification, St. Paul’s doctrine of justification by faith was a great step onward, and, as our Article calls it (here I referred to the 11th Article), it is ‘ a most wholesome doctrine, and very full of comfort ’ to those who want it. Moreover, as established in our Articles, it still remains as a strong bulwark against the revived Jewish and Pagan doctrines found in another Church (*i. e.*, the Church of Rome), and actually taught by some of our own clergy. When these tell us that we are reconciled to God by the Sacraments, it is time to quote our venerable Article on ‘ Justification by Faith only,’ as the best answer we can give them—as perhaps the only one which they can understand. So these Articles are still wholesome and good, and while people are not set free from the older notions about God, they are also ‘ very full of comfort.’ ”

As to the authorities which I am alleged to have contradicted, I have only one observation to make.

A passage is quoted from the Homily on Salvation by Christ, which is alleged to be the one referred to in the 11th Article of Religion. How far the reference in the 11th Article embodies the Homily with it, is a legal question which I submit to the Court without presuming to argue it. I shall content myself with observing, that to hold that such is the case would be to increase very largely the responsibilities of the clergy of the Church of England, amongst the most eminent of whom, as the Court is no doubt well aware, very great differences of opinion upon the subject of Justification by Faith have always prevailed.

My answer to the charge itself is like that which I gave to the preceding charge. I am not obliged to attach any special meaning to the 9th and 11th Articles. They are confessedly mysterious, and the 11th Article is exceedingly vague. The meaning of the doctrines which they contain has been the subject of endless controversy, both within and without the Church of England, accounts of which are given in many places, and in particular in “ Burnet on the Thirty-nine Articles.” So far as my own teaching is concerned, I have over and over again

affirmed that we are all by nature sinful, and inclined to sin, and that God is angry with sin, and will surely punish it. What I have denied as to original sin is, not its existence, but the absurd theory that Adam was morally perfect, whereas he fell into sin at the very first temptation, as most of his posterity do now.

I have never denied that God is angry with sin; I have only denied that He is either excessive or unjust in His anger. Endless suffering would be an excessive and unjust punishment for the sins of beings who are born naturally inclined to sin. Therefore we are not born under a sentence of endless suffering, which is what is generally understood as being born under the curse of God. I entirely agree with, and have nowhere denied, that sin deserves God's wrath and damnation; the word damnation has been left undefined in the Article, and therefore it may be accepted as equivalent to the New Testament term *κρίσις*, or condemnation.

No doubt the theory which I am charged with denying, the theory that mankind are by nature the children of God's wrath, and that they (unbaptized infants, for instance) are under a curse, and are in danger (*i. e.* by the very fact of their existence, and apart from actual sins committed by them) of endless suffering, is one of the theories or glosses which have been put upon the Articles. If the Court considers that this, and this only, is the doctrine of the Church of England; if the Church of England really does teach what I deny, to wit, that when Eve ate the apple, God the Father cursed the whole human race and determined that they should all be perpetually tortured in hell-fire after death, and that either before, or at the time, or afterwards, he made a covenant—in the proper sense of the word, which implies distinct contracting parties—with God the Son, that if God the Son would be crucified (which the contracting parties regarded as equivalent to being accursed), God the Father would relieve all, or some of, the human race from the curse which he had set upon them, upon some condition as to their believing something or other, of which most of them never heard—if this really is the doctrine of the Church, let it be said so plainly, and let me be turned out for denying it. I shall be only too glad to go. No power on earth shall induce me to teach such an

odious mixture of falsehood and absurdity. If I had understood that the Thirty-nine Articles really meant what this Court is now asked to say they mean, if I had not been led by the caution of their language, and by the ambiguous, hesitating half-meanings which clergymen usually attach to these doctrines, to suppose that I was not pledged to the revolting theory which I have stated in order to denounce, I would have rather put my hand in the fire than have signed my name to such infamous blasphemy.

III. I now pass to the charge as to the doctrine of the Incarnation.

In the 23rd, 24th, 25th, 26th, and 27th Articles, I am charged with having taught—

1. That our Lord Jesus Christ is no more very God of very God, begotten not made, than we men are.

2. That the worship of Christ is idolatry, and is inconsistent with the worship of the true God, and that it is an instance of holding up our hands to a strange God, and outrivals the worship of the one true God, and draws away our highest homage and affection from God to another.

3. That the very idea of the Incarnation of the Son of God takes its rise in unbelief, and springs out of absolute infidelity.

4. That the expected return of Christ to judge the world takes its rise in unbelief and springs only out of absolute infidelity, and that such expectation is unreasonable, is opposed to the simplicity of the love of God as a Father, and is calculated to overthrow the moral government of God.

5. That the worship of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost is the worship of three Gods, and that the worship of the Son and the Holy Ghost is idolatry, and that the belief in the Godhead of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, as expressed in the Nicene Creed, weakens and disguises the belief in one God the Father, and obliterates the true name of God.

These doctrines are said to be opposed to many authorities, and in particular to the first three Articles of Religion, to the Nicene Creed, and to passages in the Homilies. Upon these authorities I have only to observe that unless the object of the prosecution is to give a sort of colour to the notion that every part of the Prayer Book, and the whole of the two books of Homilies, constitute dogmas binding on the clergy, I cannot understand their object in quoting so many authorities upon such

a plain question as the doctrine of the Church of England as to the divinity of Christ. Surely nothing can be added to what is said in the Nicene and Athanasian Creeds upon this subject, and no doubt they are embodied, by reference, in the Act of Uniformity.

My answer to the charge is as follows:—

As to the first head, that our Lord Jesus Christ is no more very God of very God, begotten not made, than we men are, I deny that this is heretical, unless it is read as a way of saying, that Christ is not very God of very God, because men are not. This is the very reverse of what I have said, which is that, in what I believe to be their true sense, the statements in question are as true of us all as they are of Christ. Whether this doctrine is true or false is not the question. This Court has no power to declare it to be illegal, unless it is expressly condemned in the Thirty-nine Articles, which it is not.

On this subject I must ask your Honor to allow me to explain myself more fully:—

No doubt the statement, that men are very God of very God, is most startling, and one which might easily be made in ignorant hands an instrument for convicting me, not of heresy, but of lunacy. But a fuller explanation of my views will, I feel convinced, show they are entirely consistent with both the Articles and the Prayer Book.

1st. Let me ask, is it Christ's body—his human nature—that we affirm in the Nicene Creed to be very God of very God, or is it not his divine nature? Of course all will answer, We say that of his *divine nature*, because it cannot be true of Christ's body, which had a beginning, but can only be true of his divine nature, which was begotten before all worlds, and has neither body, parts, nor passions. So it is not unreasonable to affirm, that while the bodies of men are born of their earthly parents, their divine nature is begotten or born of God; and, therefore, in a mysterious sense, that divine nature is very God of very God, begotten not made. This doctrine, which I have thus expressed, is the same as that found in many passages of Holy Scripture. In the Old Testament even, this divine element in man is spoken of as the Spirit of the living God. In the New Testament, the figure of birth, or begetting, is used repeatedly to express this mysterious relationship between God

and man. In the fourth Gospel, we read of men "who were born not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God." "That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit." Certain persons are spoken of as born from above, born of the Spirit, born of God. Of course we must interpret these phrases with a due regard to the first Article, which affirms that there is but one living and true God, everlasting, without body, parts, or passions. We must not divide the substance; and, therefore, if God was in Christ, and if he is also in man, the divine nature of man must be the same as the divine nature of Christ. Whatever is true of the Godhead of Christ, must be true in all times and in all places; and if it be true, as our Church declares, that worthy partakers of the Holy Communion dwell in Christ, and Christ dwells in them; are one with Christ and Christ is one with them, then it is true that those who are thus united to Christ must be very God of very God in their divine nature, or the words have no meaning. Moreover, the doctrine of the Holy Ghost, as set forth in Scripture, and in parts of the Prayer Book, actually teaches the same truth. As the Godhead is indivisible, therefore the Holy Ghost is all that can be predicated of God, and yet we read that God promises to pour out His Spirit on all flesh. "I will dwell in you, and walk in you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty." The Apostle Paul repeatedly asserts that God dwells in the hearts of the faithful. "Know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost, *which is in you?* Ye are the temple of the living God, as God hath said." I will not quote any more passages from Scripture, for they must be perfectly familiar to you. I need only very briefly refer to certain passages in the Prayer Book, which, if they mean anything at all, affirm distinctly what I have taught.

In our daily prayer we pray, "Take not thy Holy Spirit from us," which certainly implies that we have God's Spirit already with us, or within us. We pray in the Litany for the grace of God's Holy Spirit.

On Quinquagesima Sunday, we pray God to send His Holy Ghost. On the Fifth Sunday after Easter, we pray for God's Holy Inspiration itself. On the Sunday after Ascension Day, we pray God again to send his Holy Ghost to comfort us, and exalt

us to the same place whither our Saviour Christ has gone before. In Whitsuntide, we pray for the outpouring of the same Holy Spirit as was given at Pentecost:—"Grant us, by the same Spirit, to have a right judgment in all things." In the Office of Baptism, prayers of this kind abound, with praises for the actual and immediate answer to them—prayers and praises which have given rise to too many strifes and divisions in the Church, to need repetition here. Finally, in the Ordination Service for Priests, the Bishop is directed to say, at the moment of imposition of hands, "Receive the Holy Ghost for the office and work of a Priest." Moreover, the presence of God himself in the hearts of some men is affirmed in the 13th, 16th, and 17th Articles of Religion. Couple all these quotations with the definition of God laid down in the 1st Article of Religion, and one is forced to admit that God does not cease to be God because he dwells in the hearts of men. Nothing can by any possibility produce change or diminution or loss of honour in Him. The Divine Being must ever be the same. And, as God, Christ, and the Holy Ghost, are each and all affirmed to be in the hearts of some men, the Church has thereby furnished ample grounds for the proclamation of my belief, which is only a logical sequence from well-established and commonly received opinions. Moreover, the sacred name of "Father," by which we address God in nearly all the prayers of our Church, and that in direct obedience to the precept and example of Jesus Christ, is in itself a proof that we are regarded by the Church as the sons of God; and so long as those two words, Father and Sons, remain to us in their plain unvarnished natural sense, so long we are guilty of neither impiety nor presumption in endeavouring to realize ourselves, and to deepen the conviction in the souls of others, that we all stand in that most exalted relationship to the one God and Father of all, the Father of Jesus and the Father of men, "who is above all, through all, and in us all." If I am condemned or even reproached for doing this, I shall be condemned for insisting on the most vital truth of Christianity, the most frequently asserted of all the doctrines of our Church. Of course it must seem "too good to be true" in the eyes of those who regard God as hostile to sinful men and as absent from them, and who believe that they owe all their happiness here and hereafter to the vicarious punishment of Christ; but the belief in it

can only have the effect on the human soul of raising its highest adoration, and kindling its warmest affection towards God, which St. John expresses in the touching apostrophe: "Beloved, now are we the sons of God." "Behold what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God." "As Christ is, so are we in this world!" I hope now that it will be seen that *in my lips* the statement that we "men are very God of very God, in the same sense as Christ was," not only is not tantamount to a denial of the Incarnation, but derives all its force and meaning from the Incarnation. If Christ were not God incarnate, neither can we men hope or pretend to be. If God was not in Christ, we cannot believe that he is also in us. After this explanation, I trust that I shall be fully acquitted of any attempt to deny the doctrine of the Incarnation, as well as acquitted of the charge of having explicitly broken the law by my language on the subject.

As to the second head, that the worship of Christ is idolatry, my meaning has been misunderstood. My meaning in passages A and B* was that men may worship Christ, and actually have worshipped, and do worship him in such a spirit, and with such a conception of his character and nature, as to convert him into an idol, and to set him up in opposition to God the Father.

The words of mine on which this charge is founded do not contradict any Article. But the sense in which the word *worship* is here used by me makes all the difference to the harmony or disagreement of the sentence with the spirit of our formularies.

I was not referring *at all* to the forms of worship in the Book of Common Prayer, but only and exclusively to the very prevalent separation of Jesus Christ from the other persons of the Trinity, and to the heart's entire trust and adoration being exclusively given to Him—contrary to the doctrines of our Articles, the express language of our Creeds, and the bulk of our Liturgical forms.

I complain of this exclusive affection for Jesus Christ as a grave and dangerous departure from the teaching and practice of the Church of England. I do not complain of any part of our public worship, which is immensely nearer to what I believe to be the true worship than the heart-feelings of a large class of modern Christians, and which is, at least, consistent with the

* See Appendix I.

Articles of the Church. If God the Father occupied in the hearts of men only the same place as is assigned to him by the language of the Prayer Book, the Creeds, and the Articles, I should have had no cause to complain that so many professing Christians were idolatrous.

Moreover, the heart-worship of which I speak does not rise so much out of contemplating the eternal and divine part of Christ's nature, as out of contemplating his bodily or human nature; in other words, it is the historical Jesus idealized who is the object of this exclusive adoration, not the Son or Word of God, who was begotten before all worlds. It is the manhood, instead of the Godhead, of Jesus, which really attracts, and this is why I spoke of it as a specious form of idolatry. It is, moreover, absolutely true that such an exclusive heart-worship of Christ is inconsistent with that worship of God the Father which was taught us by Jesus Christ; which was the devout practice of all the holy men of God in old time before the birth of Christ, and which is most surely embedded in our own Services, Creeds, and Articles. It is an incontestable fact that men and women who in any moments of devotion exclusively adore Jesus Christ (and it is of this exclusive adoration only that I have complained), do not care about God the Father at all, and do not enter heartily into prayers and praises addressed to him, and cannot, therefore, be so consistent members of the Church of England as I am. We have only to look at the modern hymns, or some hymns of the Romish Church recently adopted in many of our churches, to see how completely the worship of the Father is ignored by those whose hearts exclusively worship Jesus.

A charge far more formidable might easily be brought against those who have accused me for endeavouring to subvert the teaching and practice of the Church. It is possible that, in proclaiming the error and the danger of holding it, I may have glided into language capable of bearing a doubtful interpretation; but, in such a case, it should be borne in mind that I was conscientiously contending for Church doctrine and practice against those who, in my opinion, are subverting both.

* This is the very error which, in old times, would have been described as dividing the substance of the Trinity. I have nowhere said that Christ is not to be made the object of worship at all. I have nowhere said that he was not God incarnate; on

the contrary, I have said that he was. The practice against which I have protested is as common with Protestants as the worship of the Virgin Mary is with Roman Catholics, and its character and practical effects are much the same. It consists in regarding God the Father and Jesus Christ as two essentially distinct and antagonistic beings, the one all power and the other all love, and in worshipping the second to the exclusion of the first. Of course, this is not always done in words. The theory which would justify the common practice would be repudiated, but I assert that it is done continually in spirit and in substance. I say you may observe in all directions, at the present day, a tendency, which shows itself in many ways, to separate the Son from the Father; to regard Jesus Christ, not as one with God the Father, but as a separate being of an opposite character. As an illustration of this, I need only refer to a text of Scripture which I have myself seen with horror on the walls of an infant school. "It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God." The outcry of indignation can be better conceived than described which would be raised if the text were to be read thus: "It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of Jesus." I may, of course, be wrong in this opinion, but it is an opinion as to a mere matter of fact; it is one of those estimates of current opinion and belief which the clergy ought to be continually forming, and on which they must model their teaching, if it is to be of any use. Now, suppose that my opinion was true, was it not my duty to warn my congregation against what I believed to be a serious danger? Was it not my duty to tell them that, if they did accustom themselves to think thus of Christ, their prayers, however orthodox in form, would, in substance, become idolatrous, inasmuch as they would be directed, not to God, but to a being whom they, in direct opposition to the most emphatic teaching of the Creeds and Articles, mentally separated from, and contrasted with, God?

I must now request your Honor to refer back to the Articles of Charge, and to compare them with my actual words, and with the explanation which I have just given of my views. I am charged with having taught that the worship of Christ is idolatry, and is inconsistent with the worship of the true God, and that it is an instance of holding up our hands to a false God, and outrivals the worship of the

one true God, and draws away our highest homage and affections from God to another. This is the Prosecutor's version of the substance of my teaching, as conveyed in passages A and B.* I repudiate it; I say that, if you read those passages, you will see that their substance is not what is stated, but is this,—that Christ may be worshipped in an idolatrous manner, inconsistent with the worship of the true God; and that such worship *would be*, and is, where it occurs, an instance of holding up our hands to a false God. To deny this proposition is to deny that there ever was, or can be, such a heresy as Tritheism, although that part of the Athanasian Creed which condemns those who divide the Divine substance is expressly directed against it.

I am charged with having taught that the very idea of the Incarnation of the Son of God takes its rise in unbelief, and springs out of absolute infidelity. The words which suggested that accusation are, "The very idea of Incarnation itself, which means Deity coming from heaven, and dwelling in an individual man for some years, implies a belief that God does not, nor ever did, dwell in the hearts of all men." Now, by the words "The very idea of Incarnation," I meant only the *vulgar* and *erroneous* idea of it. I certainly have, in this passage, denied the truth of that view of the Incarnation which regards it as "Deity coming from heaven and dwelling in an individual man for some years, and then going away again." If this be the only legal view of the subject, if all clergymen are bound to believe that God is absent from the world, and does not dwell in men's hearts, nor ever did, and that the Incarnation is what I have described, be it so; I have in that case no wish to be a clergyman of the Church of England, for I do not hold that doctrine, and I believe it, as I have said, to be the offspring of unbelief.

I am further charged with having taught, "That the expected return of Christ to judge the world takes its rise in unbelief." My answer to this is similar to my answer to the last accusation. I have nowhere denied that Jesus Christ will return to earth to judge the world. I only said that if he were to appear again on earth, we should not have God nearer to us than he is at this moment, and always was. That if Jesus Christ came (as many believe that he will come) to set aside the regular and divine

* See Appendix 1.

discipline of us which is already established by God on earth, it would be something short of a benefit or blessing. What Article or what Creed does this assertion of mine contradict? The Church has nowhere forbidden me to express such an opinion; and if I am condemned for saying so, a new and mischievous dogma will be erected. It will then be affirmed as a dogma of the Church, that until Christ comes again, God is absent from this world, and that when Christ comes he will set aside the regular order of God's providence and government of mankind. The Apostles' Creed says, that Christ ascended into heaven, "and sitteth on the right hand of God the Father, from whence he shall come again to judge the quick and the dead." As the 1st Article of Religion tells us that God has neither body nor parts, the expression, the "right hand of God," is clearly metaphorical. I should have inferred from this, that so much of the expressions which I have read, as do in terms assert that Christ locally departed, and will locally return to judge the world, might also have been regarded as metaphors, and that I might therefore have been permitted to warn my congregation against taking such a view of the subject as would lead them to look upon the world as altogether deserted by God, and so to regard God as a limited Being, interfering at long intervals with human affairs, and leaving them in those intervals to themselves. If you hold otherwise, if the Church of England requires its ministers to believe and to teach that God has a literal right hand, that Christ literally sat down on the right-hand side of God, and will literally return from that particular spot to judge the world on one specific occasion, so be it—I have no wish to teach such doctrine, or to be a minister of such a Church.

The last charge against me under this head is, that I have taught that the worship of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, is the worship "of three Gods, and that the worship of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost is idolatry, and that the belief in the Son and the Holy Ghost, as expressed in the Nicene Creed, weakens and disguises the belief in one God the Father, and obliterates the true name of God."

I repudiate this doctrine. I think you will see, on reference to the passages impugned, that what I have said is, that the three persons of the Trinity may be so worshipped as to involve

Tritheism, and the Nicene Creed might be understood in that sense. I point out that this is not its true sense, and that the first Article of the Creed denies the error which I denounce. I go on to say that the rest of it might, but ought not to be so read, as to weaken the leading assertion of the Unity of God. In this it is surely clear that I am right, inasmuch as the Athanasian Creed was intended to make the Nicene Creed more stringent, and to guard, amongst other things, against this very heresy of dividing the substance of the Trinity, and of making the three persons into three Gods.

IV. I have now come to the last set of charges against me—those which relate to my views on the Bible.

They are that I have taught the following doctrines:—

First, that revelation of the knowledge of God, by means of any book, is impossible; that all the knowledge of God comes directly from the law of God, written in men's hearts, and that all knowledge of God comes only from men's own sense of what he requires them to do; and that the only true revelation possible by God to man, is through the sense of God's presence, and is originated in the heart of man, independently of God's written word. This is said to be opposed to the 6th and 20th Articles of Religion, and I suppose is founded on two passages of my sermons, cited in the charge as F. and N.*

My answer is, that the passages in question, and the passages in the two Articles referred to, relate to totally different subjects. The 6th and 20th Articles of Religion define the limits of the jurisdiction of the Church, and give a list of the Canonical books of Scripture. The passages objected to relate to the question of the grounds which individuals have for their religious belief, and they declare that, in my opinion, men have what many writers have called innate ideas of God, and of right and wrong, and that the possession of these innate ideas distinguishes them from animals, and enables them to receive a moral and spiritual revelation, which at every step takes for granted a knowledge of God, and of right and wrong, and which it would be impossible to communicate to any one who had not that knowledge to set out with. My opinion is, that if a man had no knowledge at all of God, it would be as idle to tell him that God said or commanded this or that as to make such a statement to one of the

* See Appendix 2.

lower animals. What harm is there in this? It is a metaphysical or philosophical theory, which has been an established and well-known subject of discussion for thousands of years, and on which men always have differed, and I dare say always will differ; but who can believe that the 6th and 20th Articles have any relation to it at all? It is true that I have described this original knowledge as "the only real revelation possible by God to man," and the expression might no doubt be more guarded and more fully explained. I never meant to say that it was impossible for God to reveal to man, in writing or otherwise, matters of which he was not aware by the constitution of his nature. On the contrary, in my opinion, it is only by the primæval revelation which God makes to man, "the light which lighteth every one that cometh into the world," that man is enabled to receive subsequent revelation. My accusers charge me with denying the possibility of a superstructure, because I assert the existence of a foundation. They might as well charge me with saying that a man could not read because I had affirmed that all reading consisted of twenty-six letters. In the passage attacked, my meaning was that without the principles in question no revelation would be possible, and that none which contradicted those principles could be true.

The other charges against me I shall consider together. They are that I have taught—

1. That in God's Word written, Holy Scripture and Holy Writ, there are found manifest, palpable, and irreconcilable contradictions, and many places which cannot be expounded but so that they be repugnant to others.

2. That the authority of the Gospel according to St. John is doubtful, and that the said Gospel ought not to be applied to establish any doctrine; and that whole chapters of the said Gospel are crowded with passages which represent Jesus Christ as speaking words which he never could have spoken, and which, if spoken, would not have been believed.

3. That the said Gospel contains passages which can only be expounded so that they be repugnant to each other, or to other places of God's Word written, or Holy Scripture, and that the character of our Lord Jesus Christ, as set forth in the said Gospel, is quite irreconcilable with the idea of his being a

teacher sent from God, and is entirely different from the character of the Christ of the other three Gospels.

The authorities which these doctrines are said to contradict are collected in the 35th Article of Charge. They consist of the 6th, 8th, and 20th of the Articles of Religion, various Collects, parts of the Ordination Service, and a long passage from the Homilies.

I think the best way of dealing with the subject will be to state generally what I conceive to be the law of the Church of England upon this matter, and what I have thought myself called upon to teach upon that conception of the law.

There are three great questions about the Bible under which all subordinate questions may be ranged. These are—*First*, the question of criticism. What particular books and what parts of each book are genuine? In a word—What is the Bible? *Secondly*, the question of interpretation; that is to say, having ascertained what the Bible is, what does it mean? *Thirdly*, the question of inspiration, which in its broadest form is this: Is every part of the Bible absolutely true, and if not, what parts of it are false? I contend that the authors of the doctrine of the Church of England deliberately and intentionally abstained from laying down any doctrine at all on any one of these points, except for a limited purpose, and as against one particular set of opponents, the Roman Catholics. I say, that as against those who think as I do, they took no precautions at all; not because the opinions which I hold were then unknown—I can show that they were known—but because it was not considered desirable to enter upon the subject. I do not in the least degree deny that the opinions which I hold and have expressed would have excited intense disapprobation at the time of the Reformation. I have no doubt whatever that one reason why no Article was levelled against them was that they were practically little known and unimportant in England. All that I say is, that the question was left open. That being so, I have a legal right to say what I have said; and, believing what I said to be true, it became my moral duty to make use of that legal right.

First, look at the facts. The 6th Article asserts merely that the books therein mentioned are "Canonical," and that they contain all the doctrines which any man can be required to believe. It does not assert that every statement contained in them is true,

or that every proposition which can be proved from them must be believed.

The 20th Article says that it is not lawful for the Church so to expound one place of Scripture that it be repugnant to another.

The title of this Article is, "Of the Authority of the Church," and its meaning is obviously this: The power of the Church is limited to the exposition of the Divine revelation contained in the Bible; and, in order to discover what the teaching of the Bible is upon any given subject, it must take a comprehensive view; it must not erect one passage into a doctrine to the exclusion of, or in contradiction to, another. The Article does not say there are no contradictions in the Bible. It only says that the Church's public authority is to extract from the Bible a statement of the Divine revelation, which, amongst other things, it contains, and that it is to state it fairly. The inference from it would be that, if there are contradictory passages in the Bible, they are not to be made into doctrines. The object of the whole Article is to define the extent of the legislative power of the Church; and it cannot, without most violent abuse of language, be perverted into a declaration that no private person is to be allowed to say that particular passages of Scripture are inconsistent. As for the other authorities cited, none of them go beyond vague hints. They show that the expressions, "God's Word," "God's Word written," or "Holy Scriptures," occur in the Prayer Book; but surely such expressions do not amount to dogmatic propositions. I say it is impossible to reach my case unless you can produce some authority which says, in so many words, that a particular copy of a particular version, like the sealed copies of the Prayer Book referred to in the Act of Uniformity, is the Bible; unless you can point to a schedule to the Act of Uniformity, saying the book marked A, and deposited in the Tower of London, is the Bible referred to in the Articles of Religion, and that Book is throughout true and of Divine authority. This it is notoriously impossible to do. The attempt to do so has been made and has failed, as I shall show; and the result is, as I assert, that every clergyman has a right to criticise, as he sees fit, every part of the book commonly called the Bible. Commonly called, I say; for, strictly speaking, it is not the Bible; it is only a translation of a particular version of certain Greek and Hebrew MSS. The oldest of the Greek MSS. now extant was written

several centuries after the originals of which it is said to be a copy. The oldest of the Hebrew MSS. 1,200 or 1,300 years later than the date of the latest, and considerably more than 2,000 years later than the supposed date of the earliest of the books. The only limitations, as I contend, which the law lays upon a clergyman's right to criticise these books is that he must not deny that the Bible contains all things necessary to salvation, or that any of the books mentioned in the 6th Article are canonical, whatever that may mean. Possibly, it might be illegal to deny, in general terms, that the Bible contains God's word. Subject to these restrictions alone, I claim the right to say what I please about the Bible, or any part of it; and if I am wrong, if the Church of England has any rules upon this subject with which I am unacquainted, and which I have transgressed, I have no wish to retain my preferment.

I am of course aware that this claim will appear extravagant to those who have not considered the subject, but I think I shall be able very shortly and simply to establish the following propositions:—

First, that in point of fact the claim is well founded.

Secondly, that the practice of numerous writers, of the highest reputation for orthodoxy, shows that the right to say things identical in principle with what I have said, has always been recognized and acted upon in the Church of England.

Thirdly, that the Courts of Law have considered and have admitted it.

Fourthly, and lastly, that the liberty thus given is one which the Legislature alone can take away, and which cannot be taken away by the judgment of a Court of Justice without the usurpation by that court of legislative power.

First, in point of fact, the claim is well founded. This follows from an examination of the authorities, to which I have already referred. Twist them how we please, we shall get nothing more out of them than that certain books are Canonical; that they contain all things necessary to salvation, and that somewhere or other there is something to which such expressions as "God's Word written," and "Holy Scripture," may be applied. Nowhere will you find any specific statement to show what these general expressions mean in detail, and in particular whether they apply to the whole of what is commonly called the Bible, or only to

a part of its contents. I might stop here, but in further illustration of my argument I will make some remarks upon the nature of the questions which can be asked about the Bible, which will, I think, tend to set in a very clear light the fact that the Articles of Religion do not in fact deal with the question. There are two principal questions with which we are concerned on the present occasion. They are these :—

Be the Bible what it may, does the Church of England teach what particular books, and what parts of what books, constitute the Bible?

Does the Church of England teach that the whole Bible is absolutely true, and if not, does it impose any, and what, limit upon the right to assert that parts of it are false? If these two questions are answered in the negative, the answers would justify all that I have said.

Now, I challenge the Prosecutors in this case to extract from any authority to which I am bound to submit any distinct categorical answer to either of these questions.

I ask what is the Bible? Is the text of the three witnesses, "There are three that bear record in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost, and these three are one." 1 John v. 7.—Is this text part of the Bible or not? Is the history of the woman taken in adultery part of it or not? Are the last eleven verses of the Gospel of St. Mark part of it or not? No answer can possibly be given to these questions, to which I am bound to pay attention. The 6th Article does not solve the question. At least, if you construe it as doing so, you must convict of heresy many of the most illustrious scholars and divines, living and dead, of the Church of England. I cannot bring myself seriously to argue the question, whether it is lawful for a clergyman of the Church of England to discuss the authenticity of the verse about the Heavenly witnesses; but if it is, where will you draw the line? What schedule can you refer to, to see whether a given passage may be criticised or not, and by what arguments? I can tell you, Sir, what the prosecution would like you to hold. They would like you to decide that it is lawful to criticise particular texts and passages, so long as they are of no great importance, and so long as the arguments used are not such as by their tone or tendency would shock the feelings of a certain section of the people. They would

like you to say that I am welcome to cut with a blunt knife and to fence with buttons on the foils ; but I suppose I need not argue against a principle in favour of which it is impossible to say anything, either by way of authority or by way of argument, except that it would authorize the Court to condemn me.

Assuming, then, that a clergyman (the Dean of Canterbury, for instance) is at liberty to form his own opinion on the question whether the text of the three witnesses forms part of the First Epistle of St. John, why may not I form an opinion on the question whether the passages to which I have referred form a part of any genuine Gospel written by St. John? That they form part of King James's Bible is indisputable, but King James's Bible is at all events not infallible, and it was not written till about fifty years after the 6th Article. That the passages in question occur in the "Textus Receptus" is undoubtedly true, but I have yet to learn that Henry Stephens was infallible. I do not deny that they are found in the oldest MSS.; but these MSS., which vary considerably amongst themselves, were all written more than 300 years after Christ. What, then, have I denied? Simply that parts of an existing translation, based upon existing transcripts, could not have formed part of that lost original on which they profess to be based. If this in itself is not illegal, can it be said that the arguments which I have used are illegal? What are they? I have argued that Jesus Christ did not say certain things, because, if he had said them, they would have been false, and that I cannot think he would have made such a mistake as to foretell falsely the end of the world within a few years. I have also said that various statements attributed to him in the fourth Gospel are out of character, and cannot, therefore, be supposed to have been made by him. Before it can be said that this is illegal, you must assume the very point at issue, namely, the authority of the disputed passages; for I suppose that the Prosecutors themselves will not allege that I am bound not to deny the truth of anything which is printed in King James's Bible. Even upon their principles it is only the Bible—the original work—which I am bound to respect, or not to contradict; and surely it would be as monstrous as it would be gratuitous, to hold that in considering the question, whether a given passage formed part of that original, I am not to consider whether it harmonizes with

the character of the person to whom it relates, and with recognized principles of morality and well-ascertained historical facts. Conceive a judge laying down such a principle as this,—“It is lawful to criticise the authorized version in order to ascertain whether it corresponds with the lost originals; but it is not lawful, in doing so, to make use of any arguments which would throw any discredit on those parts of the authorized version, the genuineness of which is disputed. You are at liberty to say that parts of the authorized version are forgeries; but you are not at liberty, even for the sake of argument, to throw any imputation on the characters of the forgers, or to deny that the matter which you allege to be forged is perfectly true and absolutely good. So holy is the Bible, that even fraudulent additions to it are sanctified by contact.” Would it not be simpler to say at once what my prosecutors really want this Court to say. It is not lawful for the clergy of the Church of England to disturb devotional feelings, and to shock what are, for the time, regarded as hallowed associations.

I challenge my accusers to prove that the arguments which I have used are not fair critical arguments; that they are not such arguments, for instance, as Mr. Grote uses continually in considering how far the speeches in Thucydides represent what was really said, or whether Xenophon or Plato has more faithfully represented the character of Socrates. If, however, the Bible is to be criticised at all, it must surely be criticised upon the same principles as other books, for there is but one set of principles by which any books can be criticised.

There is upon the whole of this subject a constantly recurring confusion, of which it is as necessary as it is difficult to rid the mind. The word Bible is associated in our minds with a particular volume, which is admitted on all hands not to be the Bible. The Bible is a mere general name for a library, which it took perhaps 1,500 years to form, and of which the originals have all been lost for many centuries. So strong, however, is the association between the authorized version and the original books, that when any one attempts to ascertain what the Bible is, or rather was, and how far the existing copies represent it, he is accused of attacking the Bible. In other words, you are told you may consider the question, whether or not the existing copies are the Bible, as much as you please, so long as you

take it for granted that they are. I will put this in another point of view. We are told that between 1400 and 400 years B.C., and in the course of the first 150 years after Christ, a number of books were written which were absolutely true and perfectly good. It is admitted that the originals are lost. Certain copies are produced which are said to represent them; hereupon I and others point out that the copies contain various things which are not true, and not good, and we infer that these things cannot have been contained in the original books, which by the supposition were perfectly true, and absolutely good. Hereupon we are charged with attacking the Bible. Surely this is as absurd as to say that you attack a man's credit when you allege that a bill purporting to be signed by him is a forgery.

I think I am able to explain how the difficulty arises; and if my explanation is the true one, it clears up a great deal, and, as I submit, proves my legal right to say what I have said. The explanation is, that people tacitly consider that Biblical critics are to make certain preliminary assumptions as to the spirit in which they are to proceed. If those assumptions are made, criticism is not objected to. If they are not, it is. The most important of these assumptions are two—first, Biblical critics are expected to assume a totally different standard of probability in relation to events recorded in the Bible from that which they assume as to other events. They are expected to proceed upon the supposition that miraculous events are rather probable than not, and that it is to be assumed without proof that the sayings ascribed to Christ were correctly reported. You are to suppose yourself to be reading an account in which everything is wonderful, and in which every word has its mystical signification. So long as you do that, you may deal with details as you please. If you see no improbability in the darkening of the sun and the raising of the dead at the Crucifixion, you may be allowed to remark that the terms of the inscription on the Cross given by the different Evangelists are not identical. The second assumption which you are expected to make is, that a different standard of morals applies to matters related in what professes to be the Bible from that which prevails in ordinary life. You are to presume on all occasions that anything that may shock you is meant in some sense which is not merely unobjectionable but supernaturally holy. You are to look upon what would

elsewhere be called a wicked action as a sort of moral miracle. In short, in trying to ascertain what the Bible was, you are to approach the existing copies on your knees, and with your eyes bent on the ground.

Now, whether this is or is not right in a moral and religious point of view, I submit with confidence that no one can possibly be under any legal obligation to do anything so vague and indefinite. Where does the Act of Uniformity say that no one is to be permitted to criticise the authorized version unless he assumes the probability of miracles, and acquiesces in some ecclesiastical, or, if the term is preferred, some spiritual, standard of morals? It neither does impose, nor could it possibly impose, any such obligation at all; and in the absence of any such obligation, I say that I have a right to criticise the Bible just as I might criticise Livy.

I pass now to the second question. Does the Church of England teach that the whole of the Bible, be it what it may, is absolutely true, and if not, does it impose any limit at all on my right to assert the falsehood of parts of it?

I put the question in this form, because people may play at hide-and-seek for ever about theories of inspiration. The broad general question, Is the Bible all true from end to end? is one which can neither be evaded nor misunderstood. Now, I assert with the utmost confidence, that the Church of England nowhere says that it is all true, and that if it is once admitted that one jot or tittle of it is, or may be, false, it is utterly impossible to draw the line between what may be denied and what may not be denied, except by a specific enumeration of passages, which has never been made. It would be easy for me, upon this point, to accumulate arguments and authorities; I will not do so. I will content myself with referring to a few broad and notorious facts.

1. No one of the Articles alleges the absolute truth of the whole Bible. If it does, let the Article be produced. From this it follows that it is legal to deny the truth of parts of the Bible.

2. This liberty has been used by many of the greatest divines of the Church of England. The passages which prove this are collected in the published arguments of the counsel, and the parties in the Essays and Reviews cases. I will read a few lines from one of these arguments, which puts the result in a con-

densed shape.* The passages may be seen at large in the argument itself:—

“For a moment let me put together their different observations. Baxter asserts, in the strongest way, that the writings of all the authors of the Canonical books are more or less tinged by human infirmity, and applies that principle with a strength and boldness unequalled, and infinitely greater than anything which Dr. Williams ever used, to all the writers of the Old Testament, especially to David. Tillotson lays down the principle that you need not assume inspiration in any part of the Bible which might have been thought without inspiration. Burnet says, and Paley supports him in saying, that you are bound to agree with the apostles’ conclusions, but you are not bound to agree with their premisses. Butler treats ‘the whole question as a question of fact.’ Berkeley admits that the Bible was not intended to be strictly accurate in circumstantials with reference to history. Paley declares that it is dangerous to make Christianity answerable for the circumstantial accuracy of the Old Testament narratives. Scott says the same thing; so does Watson. Bishop Marsh says the same thing in a stronger form, and endorses the opinion of Michaelis, that the Gospels of Luke and Mark were not inspired at all. Horsley asserts his right, and says that he will pertinaciously contend for it, to differ on all but religious subjects from St. Paul, David, or any other Scriptural writer; and Archbishop Sumner’s language and the language of Dr. Whewell admit of no other construction than that if science and Scripture differ, science is right, and Scripture wrong. The same view is worked out at great length by Archbishop Whateley; and Bishop Hampden declares that the language of the Bible may contain much false moral philosophy. When you put that together, I say that you have established a degree of liberty upon the subject which it would be difficult indeed to transgress; and until you have a just notion of the liberty which is allowed, and has been exercised, by the Church of England upon those points, you cannot properly adjudicate upon this question.”

This, I submit, is evidence, as I believe a lawyer would say, of the *user* of the right which the silence of the Articles confers,

* “Defence of the Rev. Rowland Williams, D.D., by J. FitzJames Stephen” (Smith, Elder & Co., 1862), p. 179.

and that the evidence could not be in the smallest degree affected by any quantity of proof that these views have been exceptional, and that the general body of the Church of England divines have taken a more stringent view of the authority and character of Scripture. This may have a bearing on the truth of the views which I hold. It is as irrelevant to their legality as—upon the issue, whether or not a right of way existed—the evidence that a great many persons did not use the right of way would be, in answer to evidence that many persons had used it.

3. The right for which I contend, was affirmed by the Judicial Committee of the Privy Council, in the case of *Fendall v. Wilson*. One of the passages which was incriminated in Mr. Wilson's book, alleged that there was a dark crust of human passion and error over parts of the Bible. The Court held that these words were not criminal. It has thus been judicially determined that a clergyman of the Church of England may lawfully affirm that parts of the Bible, as we have it, are false and wicked; and it has never been decided how far he may go in this direction. What have I said which this principle does not cover? I have specified certain chapters of what now passes as St. John's Gospel, which appear to me to be part of the dark crust of error and passion, and I have given my reasons for so regarding them. Why may I not say in detail what Mr. Wilson was allowed to say in general terms? How can he have been justified in asserting that there was a dark crust of human *error* in the Bible, whilst I am to be punished for saying that part of that error consists in attributing to Jesus Christ a statement as to the approaching end of the world which, as a matter of fact, was untrue? How can he be permitted to speak of a dark crust of human *passion* in the Bible, and I be punished for saying that certain sentiments attributed, and, as I say, falsely attributed, to Christ, by the author of the fourth Gospel, are pharisaical and uncharitable? I quite understand how it has happened that my writings have given far greater offence to some religious people than Mr. Wilson's. Specific charges, supported by argument, always are more irritating than general allegations, which pass with little notice, but can any legal tribunal declare that there is, or can be, any difference at all legally between saying, in general terms, this document is in some respects false and immoral, and saying specifically, that this and the other statements are false, for such and

such reasons, and this is proud, that uncharitable, and the other malignant?

I will conclude this part of my argument by reading part of the Judgment of the Judicial Committee in the case of *Fendall v. Wilson*.*

“ In the 8th Article of Charge an extract of some length is made from Mr. Wilson's Essay, and the accusation is, that in the passage extracted Mr. Wilson has declared and affirmed, *in effect*, that the Scriptures of the Old and New Testament were not written under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, and that they were not necessarily at all, and certainly not in parts, the Word of God; and then reference is made to the 6th and 20th Articles of Religion, to part of the Nicene Creed, and to a passage in the Ordination of Priests, in the Book of Common Prayer.

“ This charge, therefore, involves the proposition ‘ That it is a contradiction of the doctrine laid down in the 6th and 20th Articles of Religion, in the Nicene Creed, and in the Ordination Service of Priests, to affirm that any part of the Canonical books of the Old or New Testament, upon any subject whatever, however unconnected with religious faith or moral duty, was not written under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit.’

“ The proposition or assertion that every part of the Scriptures was written under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit is not to be found either in the Articles or in any of the Formularies of the Church. But in the 6th Article it is said, that Holy Scripture containeth all things necessary to Salvation, and the books of the Old and New Testament are therein termed Canonical. In the 20th Article the Scriptures are referred to as ‘ God's Word written; in the Ordination Service, when the Bible is given by the Bishop to the Priest it is put into his hands with these words, ‘ Take thou authority to preach the Word of God;’ and in the Nicene Creed are the words ‘ The Holy Ghost who spake by the Prophets.’

“ We are confined, by the Article of Charge, to the consideration of these materials, and the question is, whether in them the Church has affirmed that every part of every book of Scripture was written under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, and is the Word of God.

* “ Ecclesiastical Judgments of the Privy Council.” Brodrick and Freemantle (John Murray, 1865), p. 285.

“ Certainly this doctrine is not involved in the statement of the 6th Article, that Holy Scripture containeth all things necessary to salvation. But, inasmuch as it doth so from the revelations of the Holy Spirit, the Bible may well be denominated ‘Holy,’ and said to be the ‘Word of God,’ ‘God’s Word written,’ or ‘Holy Writ’; terms which cannot be affirmed to be clearly predicated of every statement and representation contained in every part of the Old and New Testament.

“ The framers of the Articles have not used the word ‘inspiration’ as applied to the Holy Scriptures, nor have they laid down anything as to the nature, extent, or limits of that operation of the Holy Spirit.

“ The caution of the framers of our Articles forbids our treating their language as implying more than is expressed; nor are we warranted in ascribing to them conclusions expressed in new forms of words involving minute and subtle matters of controversy.

“ After an anxious consideration of the subject, we find ourselves unable to say that the passages extracted from Mr. Wilson’s Essay, and which form the subject of this Article of Charge, are contradicted by, or plainly inconsistent with, the Articles or Formularies, to which the Charge refers, and which alone we are at liberty to consider.”

This passage may not exactly cover my case, but it gives me a step towards it which is equivalent to a judgment in my favour. It authorizes me to say that the highest Court in the land has decided that it is not the law of the Church of England that the whole Bible is absolutely true and perfectly good. Then how much of it is? Where, and how can you possibly draw the line for legal purposes, except by a specific enumeration of passages which may, and which may not, be criticised? I say for legal purposes, because for moral or devotional purposes many lines may be suggested. You may say, with Horsley, that on religious matters only, the Bible is infallible. You may say, with Tillotson, that so much of it only is inspired as could not have been discovered by ordinary means. You may hold, if you please, that every word of it is perceived by a spiritual intuition to be true and good, but all these are mere private opinions, about which we may think what we please. For legal purposes, three positions only are possible. The law might be, that the whole of

a specified copy is true and good. It might declare that specified parts are true and good, and that the rest is open to criticism. It might declare that the whole is open to criticism. It is impossible to suggest any other legal position upon the subject. Now, the Privy Council has held that the law of England does not impose the first of these obligations on the clergy. Notoriously, it has not imposed the second, for if it has, let the Scheduled Bible be produced. Therefore the third position must be, and is, the law of England.

Part of the Articles charge me with having attacked the authority of the Gospel of John, notwithstanding my repeated use of it as an authority; and the prosecution seem to suppose that though particular passages in the Bible may be criticised, it is illegal to attack a whole book. I may observe in answer to this first, that the 6th Article merely states, as a fact, that certain books of the New Testament are received, of whose authority there never was any doubt in the Church. This is exceedingly vague; in the first place, "authority" is not defined; in the next place, the statement is rather a statement of fact than of doctrine. One thing, however, is clear. Whatever authority may mean, it cannot, after the decision in *Fendall v. Wilson*, be said to mean that every part of every book so named or referred to is absolutely true and perfectly good. What, then, does it mean? I submit that it means this: here is a list of books, more or less erroneous, but still containing, together with other things, a Divine revelation. They form the authorities to which, and to which alone, you may refer for the establishment of doctrines; but it is lawful, and even necessary, before using them for that purpose, to ascertain by criticism which parts of them are genuine and which parts are true. There is, as I am informed, a close analogy to this in legal matters. Lawyers habitually speak of certain writers—Coke, Hale, Blackstone, &c.—as authorities, and they distinguish, I am told, between authorized or authoritative reports of decided cases, and other reports which are not authorized; but surely this does not assert that any particular proposition in any such book is true, or that any particular case is correctly reported, still less that any particular edition is authentic. Would it, for instance, be said that any one denied Coke to be an authority, because he described his derivation of felon (*felleo animo*), or his

justification of the punishment of treason by reference to grotesque Biblical precedents, as childish? The most unsparing critic of Coke—Hobbes, for instance, or Foster—might fully recognize that, in fact, he is an authority in the law of England. The greatest admirer of Hale might distinguish his posthumous works, and the additions of his editors from his own original sentiments. Of course, in one sense, you lessen the authority of a book by criticising it, because every criticism which detects an error diminishes the probability that other statements contained in it are true; but this is a different sense of the word authority from that to which I refer. The authority of the fourth Gospel, in the sense in which it is affirmed by the 6th Article (if that Article does affirm it), is legal, ecclesiastical, forensic authority; it is scheduled amongst the books which the Church quotes, and from which it extracts Divine revelation; but it is not in itself divine and perfect. If the word "authority" goes beyond this, it is difficult to reconcile it with the decision in *Fendall v. Wilson*.

What, then, have I said about the fourth Gospel as we have it? I have said that it was not written by St. John the Apostle. I had a right to say so. It was decided in the *Bishop of Salisbury v. Williams*, that Dr. Williams might lawfully deny that Moses wrote the Pentateuch, Peter the Second Epistle of Peter, and Daniel the book of Daniel. Why, then, may I not say that John did not write the fourth Gospel as we have it?

I have said that it contains untrue statements! I have a right to say so by the decision in *Fendall v. Wilson*.

I have said that those untrue statements were in some respects immoral. The same case recognizes my right to say that. How can a crime be extracted out of three lawful assertions? If I am to be condemned, let it be plainly stated that it is because I have shocked some religious people and wounded some sensitive feelings. I know that I have done this; I have done it in teaching what I believe to be the truth. All men must do so who give effective opposition to superstitious ideas that have become traditional. Is it a crime to do so? Show me the section of the Act of Uniformity which forbids it.

4. I might, if this were the proper time and place, assign various reasons which may explain the fact, that all these questions were left open at the Reformation. I might enlarge upon

the difficulty which was obviously felt by Hooker, of avoiding on the one hand the Roman Catholic, who put tradition on a level with revelation, and, on the other, the Puritan, who substituted as the foundation of revelation, a Bible, of which the infallibility was supposed to be self-evident, for a Church, which claimed infallibility. I might develop the theory that the earliest writers of the Church of England—Hooker, Laud, Chillingworth, Jeremy Taylor, and others—founded the Church of England, the Christian faith itself, upon historical evidence investigated in the common way, and that these facts disinclined them to lay down any specific doctrine about the Bible, like the elaborate article upon the subject which stands first in the Westminster Confession. I might add, that the men of that age were perhaps hardly less sensible than this Court must be of the extreme difficulty of making any categorical statement upon the subject; that they did not believe that it was a pressing matter, and that they left it undecided upon the simple principle of *quieta non movere*; but, be all this how it may, my point is, that whatever reasons they may have had for so doing, they did leave open the whole question, and that as they chose to do so, nothing but the Legislature can now close it. Now, the Legislature has not chosen to do so. All through the eighteenth century, at all events, these matters were hotly discussed, and the Legislature remained silent. Eight years ago the matter was before the highest Court in the land, and they held that the question was an open one. Since that time no change has been made. Can you close the door which has thus been set open? It may be that the liberty thus allowed is inexpedient. I can well believe that it is so, from the point of view of my Prosecutors, though not from mine, and this is not the place to consider which of us is right. The present question is whether the liberty exists, not whether it is wise that it should exist; and I challenge my Prosecutors to point out any principle which will condemn me, and which would not have condemned Mr. Wilson, if it had been known to the law of England.

Sir, I have only to say a few words in conclusion. I am charged with having broken the law; I yield to no one in my respect for it, but when the law is ambiguous and undecided, when the question is, whether or not a given right exists, no one can be accused of disobedience, merely because he tries the right.

You are to determine upon my right in this matter. What your determination may be is to me, in a worldly sense, a matter of indifference. Bear with me if, before I sit down, I say a word or two upon my personal history. I have been seventeen years and a half in the service of the Church of England. For the first seven years I held the curacy of Hessle, in Yorkshire, and performed its duties without any stipend at all. For a year and three months I was curate under the Crown in the Island of Jamaica, receiving less than £300 per annum—an income equivalent there to £150 in this country. After that, for two and a half years I was successively curate at Great Yarmouth, St. Mark's, Whitechapel, and North Woolwich, receiving from £100 to £120 a year only. For nearly six years I have held the incumbency or vicarage of Healaugh, of which all the income together only amounts to £108 a year, with a house. I ask any one to judge from these facts whether my attachment and loyalty to the Church of my country can for a moment be attributed to worldly motives or love of gain. I deliberately sacrificed all hopes of preferment long since, when I wrote as I did, and accepted the anxieties and wants which belong to the condition of a poor gentleman. Any time within the last five years I could have secured a far better worldly position by deserting my Church. I ask that these facts may be remembered in the formation of your judgment.

My Prosecutors are well aware of the manner in which I have endeavoured to discharge my parochial duties—for the last ten years, at all events, of my ministry. I have not lived in a corner, nor worked unrecognized by the incumbents whom I have served, or by the bishops in whose dioceses I have been licensed. Let them say what they know of me as a parish priest, and it may yet be thought worth while to preserve instead of to banish a clergyman who at least loved his work for its own sake, and not for its rewards.

But if such considerations as these are of no weight whatever in my case, I will only add that there are some thoughts which console me for the injuries I have already suffered, and which give me strength to brave all that may yet come. The truth of my opinions, the truth of the doctrines of the Church of England, is not in issue in these proceedings; and no rational man can suppose that the decision of this or any other Court or assembly

whatever, can throw the smallest light upon that question. My personal character, too, is as much out of the reach of my prosecutors as my personal safety. This Court can as little injure me by decreeing me to be heretical, as it can burn me, which your Honor's predecessors probably would have done. To myself, personally, the result of these proceedings is unimportant. But to the Church of England it is all-important. The Church of England, and not I, is on its trial. Whether the clergy are, or are not, to be tied down to popular glosses upon mysterious doctrines, whether they are, or are not, to be compelled to conform to some principle or other as to the criticism and interpretation of the Bible which you are asked to develop out of the one word "Canonical," is a question of much importance to them. To me, except as one of the public, and as a member of the National Church, which may be saved or wrecked according to the way in which this case is finally settled, it is of no importance at all. I have done my part. I have said with perfect plainness what I believe, and why I believe it. I have endeavoured to fulfil my vows as a priest by teaching only what I was "persuaded might be proved from Holy Scripture." If you turn me out of my vicarage, the loss will be to my worldly advantage, though much to the disappointment of my hopes for the Church of England. But if you affirm my right to say what I have said, I shall have established a great principle. You will not have added one dogma to the Articles, nor taken one away, and the Church of England will have been forced to know her own mind on several matters of the utmost importance to her future influence on the people—nay, to her very life itself.

On the 2nd December the Chancellor gave judgment, rejecting Mr. Voysey's motion, and admitting the Articles to proof, with costs against the Defendant. Mr. Voysey, by his Proctor, thereupon applied for leave to appeal to the Judicial Committee of the Privy Council, which was granted. The appeal has since been entered, and will come on for hearing as soon as its turn is reached in the Privy Council.

APPENDIX I.

PASSAGE A.

“There are two ways of treating this subject—theologically and morally. We are liable to forget God, and to hold up our hands in worship to a strange god, by errors in our creed, by religious convictions which are essentially idolatrous, and by confessions of faith which virtually obliterate the true name of God, and draw away our highest homage and affection from Him to another. And we are also liable to forget the name of our God, and to hold up, not only our hands, but our whole selves, to that which is no God, by the habits of our lives and the principles of our conduct; and this is quite the worst of all idolatries, as it may be practised even when we are holding the most correct religious opinions as well as when our very creeds are false.”

PASSAGE B.

“The writer of my text” (meaning the writer of the 44th Psalm) “lived in days when idolatry was less polished and specious than it is in ours. The coarse brutalities which distinguished the rites of Baal and of Ashtaroth, of Chemosh and of Moloch, presented too great a contrast to the worship of Jehovah (which, however bloody, was at least decent) to beguile the hearts of upright men; but the idolatry which, in our own day and amongst Christian nations, outrivals the worship of the one true God, is decked with decency and garnished with spiritual attractions so closely resembling the true adoration of the Most High, that the best amongst us may be easily deceived by it, and allured by it far away from His true temple and worship.

“The God who made us, and who rules the world, had been so misrepresented, that the human mind could not possibly sustain the weight of fear which the thoughts of His nearness excited. It was not possible for men to take refuge in Him while His anger

was described as implacable fury, while His favour could only be purchased by the intervention of another Deity on man's behalf, and while every painful event and every earthly loss was attributed to the outpourings of His indignation upon a race which He abhorred. And so it was inevitable that men should turn elsewhere in time of trouble than to the God who made them ; that they should seek for a Deliverer whose sympathy need not be purchased, and whose faithful love required no stimulant, and could not be wearied. At the time when Jesus Christ, the Lord of men, appeared on earth, religious feelings towards God in the hearts both of the Jew and Pagan were such as to render impossible any repose in the bosom of the Creator. None could conceive of Him as even actuated by tender feelings, or as even guided by laws of justice such as were common among men. So the Christ, in his life of pity and kindness, began to be worshipped and loved, as infinitely nearer and dearer to human hearts than any Deity whom men had ever worshipped before.

“Not only was this perfectly natural, but, under the circumstances, it was infinitely creditable to mankind that they should worship and adore such an one as Christ was, instead of the Jehovah known to the Jews, and the Zeus and Jupiter known to the Greeks and Romans. Since the days of some of the Psalmists, the purer ideas of Jehovah had become miserably corrupted, and a whole system of propitiatory sacrifices had taken the place of their sensible and manly devotion. The Jehovah of the Jews, in our Lord's time, was a partial God—a God who loved only the Jews, and hated all the rest of mankind—a God whose service consisted in the artificial miseries and endless petty ceremonies of a proud but unhappy people, and so our Lord himself, when he proclaimed the Fatherhood, the Fatherly love and the Fatherly tenderness of the one living and true God, met only with opposition and disdain. Such goodness, such nearness, such Divine impartiality, were incomprehensible to the Jew, whose mind was already filled by an image of God, almost as false and distorted as it could possibly be.

“But as soon as ever the notion gained ground that Jesus Christ was engaged on man's behalf in assuaging the Divine wrath, all the love and trust of men rushed in a torrent towards Him, and they were quite content (as well they might be) to adore their Redeemer, and leave their Creator further off than ever. I do

not wonder at this. The wonder would have been if men had not clung to Christ—if they had refused to worship so glorious a manifestation of Divine love and goodness.

“Yet surely this is not what Christ would have of *us*. I always thought that He came to bring us to God. Whatever else may be recorded in the Gospels, most surely it is there recorded that He said all He could say, and did all He could do, to make men feel the Fatherly love of God for us all, to make known the Father in heaven, and to win back affrighted men from their ghastly dread. Jesus Christ desired and pressed upon us all to worship the Father—“His Father and our Father, His God and our God”—and none will dare to say that He ever stepped in between men and their Maker, to beguile their highest allegiance to Himself, to hide the Father’s face, or to close the portals of the Father’s home.

“If Christians have in any sense departed from their Lord’s most decisive lessons on this matter—if they have forgotten the name of the Lord their God—if they have obliterated all true meaning from that name of Father by their notions of His wrath against His erring children—shall not God search it out? We cannot hide ourselves away from His warning eye, nor drown the whisperings of His gentle entreaty, any more than could the Jews of Galilee and the Samaritans of Mount Gerizim escape the solemn appeals of Jesus of Nazareth. Once spoken, they will be incessantly repeated till the Christian ages have grown into the manhood of their Master. The hour cometh, yea, is now come, when the true worshippers shall worship the Father in Spirit and in truth, for the Father seeketh such to worship Him. Again this day the Christ has come to you and to me with these Divine words, God having sent Him to search out our treacherous hearts, to see whether our deepest affections are rooted in Himself, or still contented with an object of adoration other than that one whom our great Master Himself so faithfully revealed. No man can love more than one God supremely. I am bold to ask you, my friends, shall it be the God whom Jesus Christ taught us to love, or shall it not? Shall we make a pretence of worshipping three Gods, when Christ bids us worship the Father? Shall we accept any of the idols of Christendom in His place? God forbid! But if we do, we no longer deserve the name of Christians, we are no longer disciples of Christ.

“But there is a worse idolatry than that of the intellect and the religious affections. It is the making of gods out of earthly good. The worship of Christ exalts the mind, and at least tends to promote resemblance to His greatness and nobleness in ourselves; but the worship of this world’s good, of this world’s comfort and ease—which is only, after all, the worship of ourselves in disguise—does nothing but miserably debase us: finding us low and degraded, it makes us lower and more degraded still.”

APPENDIX II.

PASSAGE F.

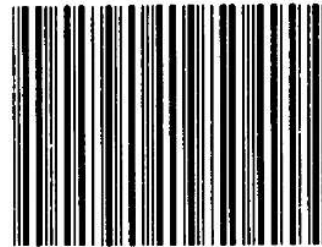
“This sense of God’s presence, and this entire confidence in it, coupled with a sense of our own faults, is, in my opinion, the supreme ideal of religion. . It is, of course, pure faith, originated in the heart of man by God, independent of books, churches, priests, and is the only real revelation possible by God to man.”

PASSAGE N.

“I am sure that the Jesus known to Peter must have been in some respects infinitely more noble than the Jesus described in the Gospels. Of course no immorality is anywhere ascribed to Him, no lowness nor coarseness of nature ; but in the Gospels we have the picture of one who, on many occasions, used His tongue in the very way which St. Peter and St. James both condemned. St. Peter describes our Lord as one who did no sin, neither was guile found in His mouth, who, when He was reviled, reviled not again—when He suffered, He threatened not. In SS. Matthew, Mark, and Luke we find reports of some sayings of Jesus full of revilings—revilings so hard and cruel, that Christians could not follow the example of using such language without forfeiting their Christian character. In St. John, Jesus is represented as wrangling in a very undignified manner with His opponents, and actually calling them the children of the Devil. Now, I prefer to accept St. Peter’s account of Our Lord ; but, if I do so, I must give up the others. Both accounts cannot be equally true.

“Hence we discover the true basis or foundation of all morality, and therefore of all true religion, to be in man’s own heart. It is not outside of him, in any book, or in any church ; no, nor even in the noblest examples which the world ever saw. These cannot

originate virtue—these cannot tell us what goodness is. The perception of goodness is instinctive in man ; and having first got that from heaven, he can run his eye over the throng of men around him, or over the pages of the world's biographies, and pick out here and there those whom he calls good—whose conduct excites his admiration—whose example he deems worthy of imitation. It is this faculty in us which determines our choice in the selection both of examples and of precepts. The Jesus represented by one writer we prefer to the Jesus represented by another. The sayings recorded by one historian we prefer to the sayings recorded by another."



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