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Catholic Truth

and

Historical Truth

By

G. G. COULTON, M.A.,

Author of "Mediæval Studies," "From St. Francis to Dante."

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PREFACE.

IN the *Contemporary Review* of December, 1905, I published an article on *Catholic Truth and Historical Truth*, which by the Editor's unvarying courtesy, I am able to reprint here. That article was only one of a series of similar challenges which have never yet been taken up. Convinced as I am that the temptation to overstate one's case in religious controversy is very great on either side, I have long sought (but hitherto in vain) to induce certain prominent Romanists to permit their statements to be printed within the same covers as the counter-statements of their adversaries, thus leaving the public to judge between them. This offer was repeated in my *Contemporary* article, but with the only result was that I was attacked by the well-known Jesuit controversialist, Father Gerard, not in the *Contemporary*, or on the neutral ground I had offered, but in the Romanist *Tablet*, in which he thought himself comparatively safe. Yet he would probably not have attempted even this, but that he imagined he had trapped me into a blunder; and it is to this chance that my readers owe a series of letters which admirably illustrate the historical methods of a man who enjoys a high reputation within his own communion. I am, unfortunately, unable to reprint his actual letters here. This permission he has flatly refused, and, from his point of view, wisely. No such summary as I can give here does full justice to the crookedness of his methods, but my own letters follow him closely enough through all his windings to give the reader at least a general idea of the desperate shifts to which he was reduced, until the Editor finally closed the discussion before any serious reply had been offered to my main evidence. How difficult it would have been to produce any such reply, the reader may gather from my last two letters.

I have added, as a pendant, a similarly one-sided correspondence with the Jesuit Father Rickaby, which also explains itself, although he is equally unwilling to see his own letters in print.

G. G. COULTON.

Catholic Truth and Historical Truth.

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BERTHOLD of Ratisbon, one of the most saintly and successful mission-preachers of the Middle Ages, notes that the Catholics of his day (about 1250 A.D.) fell away only too frequently into heresy; while, on the other hand, it was almost unheard-of for a heretic to become really reconciled to the Roman Church. His distinguished contemporary, Etienne de Bourbon, makes the same remark, and goes on to complain that the heretics taught their layfolk far more of the Bible text than the Orthodox; yet both of these learned and pious men shrink from drawing what seems to us the natural inference. Etienne, on the contrary, comforts himself with the reflection that wine turns only too easily to vinegar, while vinegar never comes back to wine; and this pessimistic fatalism may be traced in all, or nearly all, the apologetic writings of the time. Human frailty, they assumed, was constantly incapable of distinguishing between brightest truth and blackest error; thus pushing their disbelief in man to an extreme which implies almost equal unfaith in the goodness of God. To them, the Roman faith, the only saving faith, was as delicate as the reputation of Cæsar's wife: infinite the chances of infection from heresy, and infinitesimal the hopes of recovery.* Why, then, if orthodoxy seemed already so ailing was the Reformation delayed for three centuries longer? Simply because the thirteenth-century Church, maddened to cruelty by its own despair, elaborated an ubiquitous organisation for killing free discussion by brute force. To most English minds, the word *Inquisition* recalls only sixteenth-century Spain; but true religion was perhaps still more deeply disgraced by the Italian, French, and German Inquisitions in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries than even by Torquemada and Philip II. Innocent III., learned and pious man that he was, wrote public letters of congratulation on the indiscriminate slaughter of 20,000 persons in a single town, without distinction of age or sex. God in His mercy, he writes, instead of destroying these heretics with the mere breath of His nostrils, has wrought a double work of justice in allowing many of the faithful to win eternal salvation by slaughtering them with their own hands (Ep. xii. 136). And indeed this was the only logical consequence of a faith which

* Berthold reckons 150 different sects in his day. This may well be an exaggeration, but there is no doubt that society was honeycombed with heresy.

condemned all important variations as heresy, and denied salvation to the heretics* thus arrogating to itself the power which Christ expressly denied to God's angels, of distinguishing between the wheat and the tares during this mortal life. From this initial error, persecution follows as a matter of course. Nearly all denominations have persecuted at times of over-confidence in their own reason and their opponents' unreason; but, as no other Christian body has ever claimed infallibility to the extent to which the Roman Church claimed it, even in the Middle Ages, so scarcely any has asserted for a single rash period what Rome asserts even in these her riper and soberer days, the right of inflicting death upon those who fall away from her creed.† There are few more sickening pages in history than the childish sophisms with which naturally good and kind-hearted men smothered the first promptings alike of humanity and of Christian charity, and positively forced themselves to torture or burn their fellow-creatures as a religious duty.‡ The one overwhelming argument lay always in the background: "If these heretics are to live on, if men are to hear both sides, then our own faith is vain." The very saints were thus too often demoralised by one fatal weakness of their own creed. Nowadays, the same conviction in the minds of many Romanists finds its vent in a different course of action. The distinguished Jesuit preacher, Father Coupe, has published a little tract in which he explains that, if one Pope can be proved to have taught error *ex cathedra*, "the Catholic Church collapses like a house of cards, and Christianity collapses with it." "If there be no such teacher [as an infallible Pope] to enlighten us then Christianity is a delusion and a dream and there is nothing for us but, like the pagans of old, to cry out in anguish and desolation of heart, 'God there is none. Future life there is none. Let us drink and make merry, for to-morrow we die.'" § The prospects of several thousand Roman priests and seminarists,

* I am perfectly aware that most modern Romanists have learnt the folly of arguing thus; indeed many (*e.g.*, Father Rickaby) deny that their Church ever claimed coercive power over any but apostate Roman Catholics. But Father Rickaby's published arguments are in flat contradiction not only to common-sense, but also to the statements of far more distinguished and authoritative Romanist teachers: nor will he allow me to print a correspondence in which I exposed first his gross mis-statements, and then his lame attempts to justify them.

† Even Father Rickaby is forced to admit that his Church claims the right of inflicting temporal punishment on apostates; and a distinguished professor of Theology at Rome, de Luca, has recently reasserted the mediæval theory of persecution in all its nakedness.

‡ *e.g.* St. James of the Mark in Baluze—Mansi. Misc. vol. II. p. 599, St Bernardino of Sienna (Opp. I. 431), and Etienne de Bourbon (pp. 25, 286).

§ The Alleged Failures of Infallibility (Cath. Truth Soc. pp. 2, 3).

reinforced by thousands more of expelled monks and nuns from France, reverting by mischance to the ancient Catholic belief in Papal fallibility, and suddenly scrambling to make the most of this brief life with British beef and beer, is indeed a picture of Rabelaisian grandeur; but it is too painful to be contemplated here. We may therefore feel really grateful to Father Coupe for light-heartedly pronouncing on three of the main points at issue in the case of Pope Honorius III., without the least pretence of fresh evidence or one word of warning to his readers, flatly against the most learned and most recent authority of his own Church. There are minds to which the Roman faith extends a saving hand amid a raging sea of doubts and despair: and there is still, as there always has been, enough in that faith not only to comfort the weak, but also to satisfy and elevate very noble souls. If, therefore, Father Coupe alone were concerned—or the many others to whom Papal Infallibility represents the purest belief which they are capable of receiving, and who therefore cling to it with an instinct which needs no justification in reason—then we might wish them a very hearty God-speed; just as we wish a rather more contemptuous, but still sincere farewell to those who leave us for richer Church ornaments, a more elaborate ritual or “a religion blended with that which was loveliest in ‘Greek polytheism.’” However frivolous the reasons for a change of creed may sound they should always give us some twinge of shame: since if our own Church were all an ideal church should be, not levity herself could have quitted her for this tinsel. There is always, perhaps, more real religion in the change than we think at first sight: and even those who went over to hear the singing may after all remain to pray. The most convinced Anglican may thus acquiesce in many conversions to Rome with scarcely a tinge of Matthew Arnold’s contemptuous “For God’s sake believe it, then!” But there is another class of converts with whom we part far more reluctantly: those who have tried to follow reason rather than instinct in their change. It is but a partial consolation to reflect that such conversions enable us slowly to leaven Romanism with a broader spirit; and that the Theory of Development which Newman constructed as a bridge from Private Judgment to Authority is now crowded with Romanists eager to slip back discreetly from Authority to Private Judgment. Neither, again, can we always plead that we have been weighed and found wanting only on vague and abstract philosophical grounds; for some converts think to find their justification in the sober verdict of history. This, after all, is the real and final battle-ground between rival faiths. “By their fruits ye shall know them,” said our Lord; and while some will always be guided by random prejudices, others by unsubstantial speculations, the most convinced adherents of any religious system will always be those who feel it

truest at present because they know it to have been most fruitful of good in the past. This the modern Romanist frequently recognises; and here again he finds a terrible temptation in his traditional claim to a more exclusive possession of the truth than is possible in this mortal world. The logic of his Church, as Father Coupe plainly shows us, drives him into a corner in which ruin hangs above him by a single thread; and the exaggerated sense of this danger hypnotises not only his intellectual but too often his moral faculties. The same cruel sense of inward weakness behind the imposing bastions of the past; the same lurking disbelief in the power of his own "truths" to wither and destroy, in every honest mind, the "errors" which he attributes to all other denominations — these which drove him in the past to fire and blood drive him too often in our more peaceful days to the most flagrant falsifications of History. If any of my readers finds this phrase too harsh I only ask him to read me patiently to the end. I give my own experience here, with a full guarantee of good faith. Each of the well-known writers whom I here accuse by name has the easiest possible means of exposing me if my accusations are false or even only exaggerated. For I promise to accept from any one of them, who may notify within the next two months that he will take me at my word, a type-written reply amounting to six of these pages (3,000 words), which I will publish at my own expense without other comment than an equal number of pages by way of rejoinder. I may as well add here that eight of them have already been offered this opportunity of replying at my expense, but have steadily declined it for reasons best known to themselves.

Four and a half years ago (March 1901) I happened to notice a statement going the round of Romanist and High Church papers to the effect that statistics showed illegitimacy to be more frequent among Protestant than among Romanist populations. Knowing this to be false, I took the trouble of working out a full average of all the Government statistics given in the last number of the *Statesman's Yearbook* at my disposal, and pointed out in the *Catholic Times* that these gave a superiority of 10 per cent. to the Protestants. This led me to a long correspondence with many incoherent gentlemen backed up by the Editor, in which I am bound to confess that the latter's patience held out longer than I had feared at first, though I did my best to spare his susceptibilities. It only gave way when I asked him to print a brief letter showing that the one antagonist whom I had at first complimented on his candour had now twice palmed off a false quotation on me; and that the Editor himself had made himself responsible for the grossest arithmetical blunders in favour of his own theory. This letter he suppressed; no doubt his dignity left

him no choice; nor should I have mentioned this correspondence here but that it brought me face to face with a man to whom (judging from frequent allusions in print) the Romanists look up as one of their most distinguished champions. This was Monsignor J. S. Vaughan, Domestic Prelate to the Pope, and brother to the late Cardinal, who, in a book called *Faith and Folly*, had recently printed statistics designed to show an overwhelming preponderance of illegitimate births in Protestant countries. The Editor challenged me to face these statistics, and I had no difficulty in showing that the good Prelate had obtained his favourable average by omitting altogether from his calculations *the three best Protestant countries* on the one hand, and *the four worst Catholic* on the other; moreover, even among the twelve names which remained after all this juggling, he improved his results by counting Prussia and Germany as separate States! Incredible as this may seem, still more incredible was his answer when I pointed it out. He found nothing better to plead than that all statistics are one degree worse "d——d lies,"* quite forgetting that in *Faith and Folly* he had undertaken to prove the superiority of Romanist morality with no other argument than three bare tables of statistics, after which he had added, in triumph, "these figures speak for themselves." I pointed out this strange inconsistency; he vouchsafed no further explanation, and there the debate ended. A year later, however, this same Monsignor Vaughan wrote to the *Spectator*, accusing Protestants of composing history from tainted sources (August 30th, 1920); I, therefore, wrote in my turn recounting the *Faith and Folly* incident. Here, again, the distinguished Prelate relapsed into silence, though one of his co-religionists confessed the shame and indignation which honest Romanists naturally feel at such exposures. But, on the other hand, the Secretary of the *Catholic Truth Society* came into the lists against me. I had spoken of this society (trying at the same time to avoid unnecessary offence by bracketing it with an Anglican organisation which I knew to be immeasurably more truthful), as responsible for spreading partisan and misleading views of Church history. The Secretary, misrepresenting my words, challenged me to quote any false historical statement from the whole list of the society's pamphlets, and added that a pamphlet had once been honourably withdrawn in deference to such representations. Thus challenged, I replied by naming three of their most popular pamphlets which I knew, off-hand, to contain historical falsehoods: Father Coupe's *Infalibility*, Father Rickaby's *Persecution*, and Canon Foran's *Monks and Nuns*. I pointed out, as fully as possible within my limited space, the nature of those falsehoods; but, seeing that no secular periodical has room for anything like an adequate

* This phrase is, of course, not mine, but his.

discussion of such questions, seeing again that nothing would be gained if we simply exchanged the lie courteous without producing the necessary evidence on both sides, I offered to the secretary or his friends such facilities for proving their innocence as the *Spectator*, in the nature of the case, could not afford. I promised that if he, or any writer for the *Catholic Truth Society*, cared to take the matter up, I would correspond privately with them on the subject, within certain reasonable limits of time and space, and then print the correspondence, whatever might be its issue, at my own expense. This challenge, however favourable to their contentions, was studiously avoided. Father Gerard did, indeed, attempt to transfer the discussion to the columns of the *Romanist Tablet*, but I declined to waste my time in such a debate unless the Editor would guarantee to grant me the same opportunities of free discussion which I had offered to my opponents; and not to cut me short, like his colleague of the *Catholic Times*, at a critical moment. As the Editor gave no such guarantee, and Father Gerard declined to risk himself upon the neutral ground which I offered at my own expense, this matter again dropped. But, at different times since, I have repeated my challenge to some of these same gentlemen, to Dr. W. Barry, and to Canon Courtenay, who have all consistently declined to submit their historical mis-statements to the simple test of comparison with orthodox and authoritative witnesses of their own Church.

However, just as behind the *Catholic Times* I had found Mgr. Vaughan, and behind Mgr. Vaughan the secretary, and behind the secretary Father Gerard, so behind Father Gerard I found the already familiar figure of Abbot Gasquet. Not that Father Gerard was the first to mention his name: but one remark showed me that he relied more implicitly on the Abbot at his back than I should, *à priori*, have thought possible. It was plain, not only from his refusal to risk himself in the open, but also from half a dozen little cautious manœuvres in the *Tablet*, that he quite realised the difficulty of satisfactorily defending his three clients from the charge of having left their readers under a very false impression. But about Abbot Gasquet he betrayed no misgiving; and, just as he mistranslated a very simple German sentence to me in the serene ignorance and good faith, so he wrote apparently in the same serene ignorance of his colleague's recent exposure by the *Church Quarterly*. That periodical had lately shown by the plainest parallel quotations that Abbot Gasquet, in his *Old English Bible*, had dealt with documents in a manner which, if his evidence had been given on oath for a question of a few pounds, instead of on the honour of a high ecclesiastical dignitary for a question of Christian faith, might have had very awkward consequences. He had quoted words

which gave some colourable show of vague support to his theory, without referring to others, a few lines lower down, which flatly contradicted it; he had assured his readers that they would in vain search the Wycliffite Bible for "any trace" of thirteen separate sentences, which stand, in fact, written so plainly in the first sixty pages of the book that a board-school boy would have been overpaid with a few shillings for his labour in hunting them out. These, with half a dozen more almost equally inexplicable mis-statements, lay at the very roots of his theory; and the reviewer shows how systematically the abbot had presumed on the natural unreadiness of modern scholars to suspect, behind a show of scientific argument, a whole system of false references and mis-statements on matters of the plainest fact. Moreover, I knew that some of his main contentions in his *Henry VIII.* and his *Great Pestilence* rested on equally false references and equally startling misquotations with those exposed in the *Church Quarterly*. For three years I had been trying in vain to elicit from him, not lengthy explanations, but simply plain references in a few dozen words, for fundamental assertions which he claimed to make on the strength of certain MS. documents. So far as I knew the documents to which he apparently alluded, I knew them to tell plainly the opposite tale; and although I formulated my suspicions as plainly as politeness would allow, and offered him all the facilities in my power, I have not yet succeeded in inducing him to commit himself *even to the titles or the whereabouts* of these MSS. to which he had so confidently referred his unsuspecting readers. Such of his MS. references as I had as yet been able to trace betrayed either strange ignorance or falsehood; for the rest, I had already no doubt that they were as mythical as the famous treasure in the Humbert safe; and I have since found the best of reasons for adhering to this opinion.* It surprised and touched me, therefore, to find what simple faith Father Gerard had in the Abbot behind him; and here, as often before, I felt ashamed of the suspicion to which one is occasionally driven, that some of the most emphatic Roman apologists smile to each other behind the curtain like so many Roman augurs. In modern, as in mediæval Romanism, there are subtle shades of thought, for good or for evil, almost incomprehensible to the man in the street. Brother Salimbene of Parma, in his marvellously frank autobiography (1221-1288), first describes how one of St. Francis's nearest disciples, a very

*The reader may find detailed evidence for most of these accusations in *The Monastic Legend* (Simpkin, Marshall & Co., 1/-). I sent an early proof of this by registered letter to the abbot, offering him 4,000 free words within the cover of my pamphlet for any exculpations or contradictions he cared to make; he has not accepted this offer. I believe he has also maintained profound silence on the subject of the *Church Quarterly* exposures.

particular friend of his own, deliberately reinforced his revival-preaching by bogus miracles; and then goes on in the same breath to extol the *true* miracles wrought by the same brother.† Incomprehensible as it may seem, his faith in these latter was comparatively unaffected by his too intimate knowledge of the former. After all, had not these been concocted to help The Cause? and were not mediæval saints, even the best of them, constantly credited by their admiring biographers with similar pious frauds? Such were my reflections on realising Father Gerard's faith in Abbot Gasquet; and this is why it seems to me worth while to protest as publicly as possible against a system which is dangerous to society out of all proportion to its abstract immorality. One of the tragedies of our age is the violent revulsion of a soul staggered by the sudden discovery of certain pious unrealities in its early creed, and falling forthwith into doubt of everything:—

Of all the creatures under Heaven's wide cope
We are most hopeless, who had once most hope,
And most beliefless, that had most believed!

Yet, even so, we cannot bring ourselves to put the man who lies to obtain religious converts on the same moral plane with another who lies for a ten-pound note. The former's temptations may indeed not be unmingledly altruistic; for (as Mr. McCabe has pointed out) it is very pleasant to exchange plain Smith for "the learned Father Smith," and a dull country cure or monastic cell for the British Museum and literary luxury of London. But I freely admit the palliation which a thirteenth-century friar and bishop puts into the mouth of a pious knight, his contemporary: "These monks lie to me daily, but I believe that they lie by leave of their abbot." No doubt some Romanist historians have a high ideal of literary honesty; but these seem to work in by-paths, like the Jesuits to whom Mr. Andrew Lang bears such honorable testimony in the matter of Mary Stuart. Again, Rome has unfortunately no monopoly of false historical statements; but there is no other Church in which the initial temptation is so strong, or public opinion so lenient. The Roman priest is sometimes a really educated convert but he has too often been caught in boyhood, and carefully kept in a seminary from much that he might have learnt in the world. He is sent out without any intellectual equipment beyond the narrowest view of one single subject; for instance, the best Romanist Church history at present obtainable in English was found to be too truthful in its native German, and has therefore been garbled in some cases beyond recognition by its distinguished translators, who make unctuous

† See an article by the present writer in *The XIX. Century and After* for June, 1905.

protestations of faithfulness in their preface.* Thus betrayed from his boyhood into the most fatal kind of historical ignorance, he is compelled by his profession to assume more absolute infallibility than any other civilised creature except his own hierarchical superiors. If facts prove stubborn, these must be twisted or forced in somehow. Thus, by insensible degrees, he may easily lose the sense of reality, and blunder some day into statements which the merest worldly prudence might have bidden him avoid, as certain to be exposed sooner or later. Yet, even then, he has at his back the most highly organised caste in the world,† and the majority of his flock will loyally say, "I know Father — for a "good priest, and cannot believe him either so culpably ignorant "or so culpably imaginative as the naked facts might seem to "prove him." Under this double temptation, men are lured into literary dishonesty who would easily have resisted any more vulgar allurements. Moreover, as in the game of Russian scandal, the truth is imperceptibly but fatally distorted by each narrator's effort to give fresh point to his predecessor's story; for, with all their pretensions, few indeed are the Romanists in England who really study mediæval history at first hand. Father Coupe's falsehoods about Honorius seem only clumsy and over-emphatic reproductions from Father Ryder, whose reply to Littledale is a masterpiece of skilful suppressions and subtle implications, but very dangerous to paraphrase in plainer English. The Bishop of Newport, again, who published in the *Nineteenth Century* a certain statement about indulgences which seemed at first sight wilfully misleading, turned out merely to have swallowed unsuspectingly, in its natural sense, an equivocation which Abbot Gasquet had framed for Protestant readers—just as the harmless necessary house-dog will sometimes swallow the poison we lay for rats. Canon Foran himself blunders mainly by asserting too plainly, with little exaggerations natural to a popular preacher, the conclusion to which the same Abbot has led hundreds of candid readers, through a flowery maze of

* Alzog, translated by President Pabisch and Prof. Byrne.

† This is admirably illustrated by the case of the supposed relics of St. Edmund, imported from Toulouse for the new Cathedral of Westminster. Their spurious nature was so clearly proved by Oxford and Cambridge scholars that Cardinal Vaughan himself frankly gave them up. Yet it was only *after this exposure* that Abbot Gasquet confessed to having disbelieved in them "for many years," though for at least eight of these years a statement of his had been quoted, however absurdly, as telling in favour of the relics. Moreover, this quotation figured in a book by a monk of his own order, which Romanists treated as the main authority on that subject. See *Times*, Aug. 2nd—Sept. 18th, 1901.

skilful distortions and ambiguous phrases under a show of perfect frankness. There is an old story of a score of neighbours who agreed to fill a common cask by contributing a can of wine apiece. It was natural for each to reflect: "If I put in water "instead of wine, who will notice the difference among so many?" When the cask was tapped, each was sincerely shocked to find it brimful of unblushing spring-water. The Romanist historians who write at second, or third, or twentieth hand—and these are generally the most popular—seldom realise how much water has been poured into the apologetic cask long before it came to their turn; and if Father Gerard will some day risk himself to discuss on neutral ground these *Catholic Truth Society* pamphlets, I think I may promise to show him a good deal more than he yet suspects. Meanwhile the three pamphlets in question, with others of the same class, are not only sold still without alteration or apology, but are frequently advertised and pressed upon the laity by priestly and episcopal authority. The Pope sent his blessing the other day to all who were present at the Annual Meeting, with a message of warm praise for the society's work, so that all may henceforth purchase its pennyworths of historical falsehood with an added sense of security. This state of things would be, if not perpetuated, at least kept alive far beyond its natural date by the foundation of a private Roman Catholic University in the United Kingdom. All that is best in any creed is purified and strengthened by honest discussion; and the Roman Church itself would gain by abandoning this petty campaign of tricks and surprises, by which converts are indeed won here and there, but the more thoughtful adherents are gradually alienated beyond recall. The Apostles preached the truth in season and out of season, trusting in its inherent vitality; and so far as any religion shrinks from fair criticism, so far it partly confesses, partly fosters and perpetuates, the seeds of decay. The isolation of the clergy from national life and thought—especially of the cloistered clergy—has bred in nearly all Romanist countries a bitter anti-clericalism which has no parallel in modern Britain, where opposing schools have never as yet been able entirely to avoid listening to (and therefore respecting) each other. A heavy responsibility will rest upon any ministry which reverts to the principle of the closed door in education, and endows a system for perpetuating those bitter religious differences which owe half their force to purely artificial barriers between man and man.

CORRESPONDENCE IN THE *TABLET*.

December 9. Father Gerard published what the Editor introduced to his readers as "an amusing exposure" of my article. Father Gerard's main points were: (1) That I had shirked the quotations (from modern historians) with which he had attempted to meet me two years before; (2) That I professed to "see through millstones" in referring to his implicit reliance on the thoroughly untrustworthy Abbot Gasquet; and (3) That in accusing him of a blunder in translation from the German "he [Mr. C.] has fallen into a pit of his own digging, a feat which I have long expected, but which has been rather slow in coming off."

To this I answered (December 16):

SIR,—I see that Father Gerard is still in blissful ignorance of his blunder, to which however he attaches too much importance; it is a pity that he should have wasted half his space on a passing allusion of mine. The facts are briefly thus. In translating from Alzog (*not* Hefele), he confused *loben* (praise) with *geloben* (promise or vow), and thus made a mess of the sentence. Though *geloben* is a familiar enough verb to German readers, especially in theology (*e.g.*, Canaan is *das Gelobte Land*), its past participle is a well-known stumbling-block for beginners. Familiar as I now am with Father Gerard's method, I propose to obviate further discussion on this point by a reference to the senior German teacher at any university in the United Kingdom, at his own choice. If he has blundered let him pay £10 to any charity I name; If the mistake is mine, I will contribute the same sum to his charities. As to his counter-charge of mistranslation against me, it is purely imaginary. My *Spectator* quotations were, as I plainly warned my readers, from the standard English version (Clark's), which I made no claim to have verified; and Father Gerard, in speaking of the bad mistake in it as *my* mistranslation is simply saying the thing that is not. When, a few months ago, I found time to fulfil my promise of resuming our discussion, I realised at once not only Clark's blunder, but also the whole story which Father Gerard imagines he is telling me now for the first time. By correcting Clark silently, and by adding an extremely disingenuous footnote of his own, he had tried to trap me into this very accusation of mistranslating Hefele which he now imagines I have made: a childish trick over which I laughed heartily with a distinguished lawyer whom I happened to meet at that time, but which strengthened my conviction that Father Gerard was already bankrupt of more serious reasons. The

matter, however, was too petty to expose in the *Contemporary*; it had no vital bearing on either his case or mine, so I left it alone. He now confesses how pathetically he has waited to see me fall into the little trap; and, indeed, the matter is so small that if I had realised all the sickness of his hope deferred, I could almost have found it in my heart to console him by simulating the desired blunder.

The other part of his letter—his confessed inability to see how I inferred his reliance on Abbot Gasquet—shows at least equal ignorance. I had referred to “the official papers of the Church” as telling strongly against monastic morality. Father Gerard, in his reply, presumed that I must mean by this phrase, the “reports of the Royal Visitors.” If he had studied the monastic problem in its original documents, he would not have made so improbable a guess; but, on the other hand, to one who knew the story only from Abbot Gasquet, such a presumption was natural and almost inevitable. For, as I have recently pointed out (“The Monastic Legend;” Simpkin, I/-), Dr. Gasquet deliberately shirks one half of the evidence, and falsifies the other half, during the 400 years preceding the Reformation, in order to make his readers suppose that the whole question turns on what Henry VIII.’s visitors reported. This contention is utterly false, since, for at least 300 years before the Dissolution, reports of orthodox visitors had shown the monasteries to be in a state of moral and material decadence which would not be tolerated in any civilised country of to-day. The evidence to this effect which I have already published from episcopal registers and other unimpeachable Catholic sources, though scarcely a tithe of what I could give, is already quite sufficient to brush away many of Abbot Gasquet’s painfully-woven cobwebs. Father Gerard accuses me of “having the Abbot on the brain.” I know nothing of him, except what I have read in his books: but what I have thus learned has bred in me certain convictions which, as I now find, have been growing in the minds of other students also. The Abbot has persistently refused me the simplest guarantees of literary good faith, in the shape of references which, if he had them to give, could have been jotted down in five minutes. Furthermore, in several cases where I have been able to trace his references, I have found them grossly incorrect even upon the plainest issues. I have already published a brief exposure of his literary dishonesty, offering him eight pages of reply, at my own expense, between the same covers: he has not cared to face the evidence. Nor can he here plead his historical dignity, for that was upset five years ago by similar exposures, still unanswered, of the gross mis-statements in another of his books. (*Church Quarterly*, October 1900 and January 1901). If I have done him injustice, even to the extent of only exaggerating

his errors, it is still open to him or to any of the well-known writers whom Father Gerard names to expose me at my own expense.

Space fails me to deal with all the mis-statements which your correspondent has crowded into two columns of print: but I must refer briefly to the most important. He accuses me of shirking the quotations which he brought forward from Drs. Creighton and Gairdner in defence of Canon Foran. I have only to say (1) the sentence of Canon Foran's which I impugned is contradicted rather than supported by Dr. Creighton, especially by two sentences which Father Gerard has prudently omitted from his quotations. (2) The quotation from Dr. Gairdner, again, does not touch the real point, nor can I believe that the learned author, who is fortunately still with us, would allow this use to be made of his authority. His words refer to Cromwell's visitation, to which (as I have already said in my pamphlet) I attach hardly more importance than Father Gerard himself does. I am however, perfectly willingly now to discuss the matter as fully as Father Gerard may desire, in the *Tablet* or elsewhere, if only I may reprint the correspondence afterwards in order to leave the general public as arbiter of the real facts. If Father Gerard still means to avoid such an open confrontation of his views with mine, I think you will agree that he must discover very different reasons to those which he has hitherto given for his refusal. I feel strongly (as I have said elsewhere) what a leaven of sordid passion there is in this kind of discussion; but it is time that certain controversialists should cease to find immunity in the reluctance of honest students to descend into the lists with them.

December 23. Father Gerard replied with a letter, the tenour of which may be gathered from my very full reply: and Canon Courtenay, of Plymouth, wrote excusing himself on the plea that the Editors of the Plymouth papers declined to print his references to me.

To these I replied on December 30:

As Father Gerard's main complaint now is that I shirk his arguments and avoid giving quotations—a complaint which he repeats five or six times—you will, no doubt, pardon me if for this once I deal with him at greater length than I had intended or wished. I will take, in Father Gerard's own order, the only six points which could by any stretch be called the main points of his reply to my *Contemporary* article (*Tablet*, December 9):

1. After giving, very naturally, his own version of our first correspondence, he ends by asserting that, because he (Father G.) chose for that discussion a ground which I had expressly excluded from my challenge, viz., the columns of a partisan newspaper, "he (G. G. C.) accordingly considered himself absolved

"from any obligation of replying to my arguments." This, in plain language, is saying the thing that is not. My last words were, "Later on I hope . . . to pay as much attention to Father Gerard's arguments as he can wish"; and I am now fulfilling that promise. I only declined, at a moment when I was heavily overworked elsewhere, to waste further time in that *Tablet* correspondence, "*unless you yourself [Mr. Editor] can give me the guarantees for its continuance mentioned in my challenge*". Those guarantees were, I had plainly stated above, that you would not cut the discussion short until we had reached a space-limit to be agreed on beforehand. Please understand that I have never complained of your feeling unable to offer me those guarantees; but I submit that my offer to discuss the matter, under such guarantees, in an otherwise necessarily unfriendly paper, place Father Gerard's present assertion in the light of a plain perversion of truth.

2. He next accused me of "being independent of evidence" and "seeing through millstones" because I asserted his dependence on Abbot Gasquet for his facts. To this I have already replied by giving such plain proofs that even he attempts no rejoinder now.

3. He then accuses me of blinking "the authorities I (Father G.) *did* quote, somewhat fully, and upon whose testimony I grounded my case . . . Dr. James Gairdner and the late Bishop Creighton." To this I at once replied that Dr. Gairdner's words did not touch the real point (the defence of Canon Foran's pamphlet), and that I was sure Dr. Gairdner would not permit them to be so used. Is not this a plain enough answer, which Father Gerard might have dealt with if so inclined? Why, then, does he not deal with it, but take refuge in complaints of my shiftiness? The explanation may perhaps be found in this: Dr. Gairdner kindly permits me to state that he had no idea of writing anything which could be taken to justify Canon Foran's sweeping assertion: and, if Father Gerard doubts my accuracy, he has only to copy verbatim the sentences from Canon Foran of which I complained, and apply personally for the distinguished historian's judgment upon them.

With Creighton, again, I am accused of "brushing [his "evidence] aside with an *ipse dixit*." And here, unfortunately, the author is no longer alive to repudiate as energetically as Dr. Gairdner this attempt to shelter a *Catholic Truth Society* falsehood behind his authority. But I can at least give, side by side with Canon Foran's, the words which Father Gerard himself omitted, and now accuses me of not specifying fully for fear of damaging my case. (*Italics mine.*)

CANON FORAN: "All about Monks
"and Nuns" (C.T.S.), p. 14.

"With regard to immorality — that
"is, I may say, a comparatively
"modern charge. So far as history
"reveals the past, though there are
"many and various charges made
"against monks and nuns, the breath
"of slander never tarnished their fair
"name. *Their contemporaries in the*
"*midst of whom they lived thought no*
"*evil of them.*"

Passages omitted by Father Gerard
from the quotation of 27 lines
which he adduces from Creighton
in defence of Canon Foran's three
sentences. (*Tablet*, October 4,
1902).

"This last opinion [that the mon-
"asteries were not 'very well as they
"were'] was that of the great majority
"of Englishmen in the year 1530;
"and it was the existence of this
"opinion which made Cromwell's
"proceedings possible."

"Every one who wished to raise
"his voice in protest as a reformer
"in things ecclesiastical, political or
"social, always denounced the
"monks because he was sure of an
"approving audience".

Again the sentence immediately preceding Father Gerard's quotation begins: "We think that it is impossible for anyone to read the history of the previous century [before 1350], and not feel that some change [with regard to the monks] was inevitable."

How—except in desperation for something to say—can Father Gerard quarrel with me for having alluded briefly to these omissions of his without quoting them in full? He ought to have been very grateful for this and other cases, where in sheer weariness and disgust, I have passed lightly over passages in his letters with which I could easily have made sport for Philistines.

4. He then accuses me of having "cited Hefele as a damning witness against the much discussed orthodoxy of Pope Honorius." I did no such thing; on the contrary, I quoted Hefele as saying that "the Pope *thought* in an orthodox sense." I simply quoted him to show the bad faith of Father Coupe's light-hearted "most certainly not," "most assuredly not," "most assuredly not," on the three main points except the final conclusion.

5. He then denied that I had accurately described him (Father Gerard) as mistranslating a very simple German sentence. Here I was able to appeal straight to to any professor of German at his own choice; and he therefore grudgingly admits his blunder now.

6. But he made a counter-charge of mistranslation against me. To this I replied: "Father Gerard is simply saying the thing that is not"; and gave such plain reasons for so blunt a denial that he now silently drops the charge of mistranslation and takes refuge in stealthy innuendoes, which (for the last time, I hope) I must stoop to expose. I have already clearly explained how, in

my original *Spectator*, letter, I relied upon the authorised English translation of Hefele—upon which, I may add, the British Museum authorities have placed equal reliance; for they have placed it alone, to the exclusion of the German original upon the shelves for readers' ready reference. Surely there was no great crime in that, when I warned my readers plainly that I was quoting from a standard translation which I made no claim to have compared with the original? From beginning to end of the first correspondence with Father Gerard, I was out of reach of real libraries, and had to depend on my own notebooks, and to write mostly in railway trains. But, as he now complains, when at last I was able to verify his correction, it was dishonest of me to say (I take the liberty of quoting my own words instead of his distortion of them) "the matter [of my mistake and Father Gerard's trap] was too petty to expose in the *Contemporary*: it had no vital bearing either on his case or mine; so I left it alone." On the contrary argues Father Gerard upon [this] mistranslation was mainly based the charge of untruthfulness which he (G. G. C.) publicly brought against a Catholic writer." Here again he is saying plainly the thing that is not. I based my criticism of Father Coupe's assertions on four quotations from Hefele, which four quotations Father Gerard (as will be seen) admitted at the time to be "substantially correct." one of these, as we all know now, is very incorrect and worthless; but that quotation was *only my second string*, and its elimination still leaves Coupe in flat contradiction to Hefele, as the reader may see by the following verbatim reprint from my *Spectator* criticism. "[Coupe, p. 12] 'Did the letter of Honorius contain heresy? Most assuredly not.' [Hefele] speaks of the 'fundamental assumption' 'that the letters of Honorius are thoroughly orthodox' as 'inadmissible.'" Here we have Coupe still in plain contradiction with Hefele even on this simple point (to say nothing of the two others): with what face then can Father Gerard deny that the eliminated sentence "had no vital bearing" on my case? or asserted that I "mainly based my charge" on it?

But, with reference to this same point, he now again accuses me of suppression in what I said of his attempt to entrap me; I must, therefore (with many apologies), ravel out the whole matter here. When in 1902, he had caught me adopting Clark's mistranslation, his obvious course would have been to expose the mistake promptly and clearly, especially as it would have been the only mistake in which he could pretend to catch me. He owns now that he saw the mistake at the time; why did he not tax me with it at once? not because it was too trifling; on the contrary, he now pours all his vials of wrath on me for calling it "petty"; it was (he contends) an "enormity," a "howler" sufficient by itself to prove my ignorance or bad faith (*Tablet*,

December 9th.) Why then correct it so silently in 1902, and only rake it up after three years? Stranger still, why with this mistranslation of Clark's before him, *did he go out of his way to flatter me in my delusion that Clark was thoroughly trustworthy?* "I am prepared to admit" (he writes in that very same letter) "that Bishop Hefelee is cited by Mr. C. with substantial correctness, and that he held the opinions ascribed to him [by Mr. C.]. Moreover, all this is made only the more incomprehensible by his present contention that the footnote, which I called disingenuous, was really meant to draw attention to the blunder. That footnote ran; "References by volumes and pages are to the English translation, Edinburgh, T. & T. Clark, 1896." "The express object of this note" (he now explains by way of apology) "was "to call attention to the fact that my rendering contradicted "Clark's in an important particular."

He himself speaks of Dodson and Fogg: and I thank him for teaching me that word. Never, surely, since the immortal "mutton chops and tomato sauce," has a brief note been so strangely interpreted as Father Gerard would now have us interpret this! His "express object was to call attention to" a certain fact—that Clark had made a bad slip in one of the quotations I took from him. He therefore (1) makes no mention of this slip in his text, (2) goes out of his way, on the contrary, to give a quite uncalled-for testimonial of accuracy, and (3) adds a footnote which, so far from breathing any hint of the existence of a blunder, implies very plainly that Father Gerard, like myself, had adopted Clark's translation throughout as best suited for the purpose of our discussion! This alone is significant enough; but add to it his incautious words of triumph on December 9th, when he thought I had at last been misled into accusing him of mistranslating Hefelee (where he had in reality silently corrected Clark's mistranslation of Hefelee). He "has long expected" (he cries) to see me make this blunder, but it "has been rather slow in coming of." How should he have *expected it* if, as he now would have us believe, his note had been meant to *warn me against it*? Could anything more definitely condemn his present assertions than these past assertions of his which I have here quoted? What milder words could I have found for all this than to call it "disingenuous," and "a silly trick"? He complains that I do not give him credit for straightforwardness in controversy. How can I—how can others of your readers who take the trouble to follow these letters—in the face of his own words?

Since he now leads the discussion off to Alzog, and accuses me here again of guilty silence, I must deal shortly with this point. First I will note that Father Gerard seems to have committed another less ignorant, but all the less morally excusable, mis-

translation from this author. I have said nothing of it hitherto, partly because I wished to stick to the points which he himself had raised, and partly because, not having seen *all* the editions of Alzog, I know it to be just conceivable that one of those ten editions may justify Father Gerard, to whom I have, therefore, hitherto given the benefit of the doubt. What Alzog's original German says, in the edition from which Father Gerard seems to have translated, is that there were "many (*viele*) monasteries . . . whose monks . . . gave themselves up to secret vices" (*geheimen Lastern*): Father Gerard's translation in 1902, which he now adopts again, distorts this *many* into *some*, and omits the *secret* altogether. If he can quote me (with reference to the edition) words of Alzog's really answering to his translation, I shall be glad to apologise for my suspicions. Otherwise I must assert (and refer the matter again to any German professor he may choose) that he has mistranslated Alzog gravely to an extent which he can scarcely justify by any plea of ignorance.

But he accuses me of shirking Alzog's evidence. Alzog, of course, wrote from mediæval sources, but had access to far fewer than those which we now possess. Therefore, if Father Gerard will consent to discuss Alzog and his sources in *The Tablet*, and if you will give me leave to reprint the correspondence for my part (concurrently, of course, with your right of reprinting it) as soon as it has reached a limit agreed on beforehand—then I am quite ready for the discussion, though I feel strongly that Father Gerard has scarcely even a pretence of the special knowledge necessary.

May I beg you, therefore, to append a definite note to this letter of mine, stating whether or not you give me leave (1) to reprint the four letters already exchanged, with no addition beyond a couple of explanatory words approved by you? and (2) to reprint, with a similar brief and approved explanation, such letters as we may proceed to exchange under the conditions above suggested, or such other reasonable conditions as you yourself may suggest? I shall take your silence to mean that you cannot grant either of these guarantees; and without them I cannot waste further time on pursuing Father Gerard from one subterfuge to another unless he continues to accuse me of saying or doing that which I have neither said nor done.

As to Canon Courtenay, he carefully conceals the fact that my challenge to him was in no way dependent upon the two newspapers which he drags in to excuse his unwillingness to meet me. I offered to print at my own expense whatever he had to say, with only an equal reply of my own: and this I still offer. He explains that he has good reasons for ignoring this challenge: I readily believe him.

"P.S.—As my proposal above might naturally leave the impression, which you evidently share, that I cling to the strategic advantage of the last word, may I add that in asking for leave to reprint these four letters I am quite willing for Father Gerard to reply to this of mine *at whatever length he thinks fit*, provided only that I may have ten lines—literally only ten—to protest, if necessary, against fresh misstatements of fact? after which let him print ten lines also if he needs them, and therewith an end, that the whole may be printed and published under one cover. I should be sorry to have it thought that I fear either to allow him more words than I have used, or to leave to him the last word of all.

One this Editor noted :

"As far as we are concerned our correspondent is quite welcome to print what he pleases."

To this Father Gerard and Monsignor Vaughan replied with letters of which the reader can again judge by my reply. It is worth while, however, exposing here one mis-statement of the latter's, for which I did not trouble to turn aside from my main purpose in the *Tablet*. The first assertion by which he attempts to set me right is "I did not enter into controversy with Mr. Coulton at all." On referring back to Mgr. Vaughan's article in the *Catholic Times*, to which this astounding statement refers, I find, not only that the whole article referred to mine, but that he *four* times attacked me by name: "Let us examine Mr. Coulton's own arguments . . . Mr. Coulton's logic . . . I would gladly consider all Mr. Coulton's questions . . . Mr. Coulton has the hardihood to affirm . . ."

One could hardly find a better example than this to illustrate the remark contributed to this same issue of the *Tablet* by a Catholic who signed himself "A Lover of Truth," and who admitted that he knew "how great the temptation is for [Catholic authors] to write for "edification rather than for truth, and how deplorable their lapses "have often been in that respect."

My reply, which was held back by the Editor for three weeks from considerations of space, ran as follows :

"I must begin this time with an apology to Father Gerard. Not quoting him from memory, but misreading my notes, I ascribed to him that mistranslation of *many* into *some* for which (and for very many other still worse) the authorised Catholic translators of Alzog are really responsible. So far I readily admit a piece of culpable carelessness, for which I must apologise to him and to your readers. But this still leaves two of my three assertions untouched: (1) that Father Gerard, while asserting, on December 30, that I disingenuously avoided Alzog's evidence, and pressing that evidence upon me in a summary of his own, represented Alzog as only admitting the existence of "*some bad monasteries*" when he in fact admits the existence of "*many*;" (2) that where Alzog has "secret vices," Father Gerard in his own home-made translation omits the word *secret*, without any justification whatever in German scholarship or in historical accuracy.

I will now turn gladly to what Father Gerard *now for the first time* chooses as one single point to be dealt with before we go on to any other—to the question of Canon Foran. But here again it is necessary to begin by exposing his preliminary misstatements, by which at the same time I can expose those of Mgr. Vaughan in your present issue. Mgr. Vaughan wrote to *The Spectator* (August 23, '02) expressing a wish "that non-Catholics would always go straight to the *sources* of "history, and not trust so much to modern writers." I replied by pointing out in the same paper that Mgr. Vaughan himself had published a table of controversial statistics so grotesquely false that he must have "taken his figures at second-hand from somebody who "can scarcely be acquitted of deliberate fraud." I continued: "In "response to a definite challenge, I pointed this out in an issue of "*The Catholic Times* (May, 1901), and offered to make good my "assertions before three arbitrators, one Catholic, one Protestant, and "one co-elected, on the condition that the losing party should "contribute £100 to any charity named by the other. Not only "did Mgr. Vaughan decline this challenge, but in a long letter he "could find no better excuse than to plead that statistics are the "worst of lies, quite forgetting the fact that he himself had under- "taken in his book to prove a most important point by no evidence "beyond three bare tables of statistics, and had added in triumph: " "These figures speak for themselves!" Here the Secretary of the Catholic Truth Society stepped in, taking what still seems to me very needless offence at some of my words. He challenged me to point out historical untruths in any of his publications. "In the only "case known to us [he proceeded] in which a doubtful statement had "been accepted as accurate, we at once withdrew from publication "the pamphlet in which it occurred." I replied at once by quoting from three of his pamphlets, with brief documentary evidence of their inaccuracy, promising in each case to give far fuller evidence if he, or any of his writers, would enter into a public discussion of the subject *outside* the columns of partisan religious papers. This has never yet been accepted: but Father Gerard undertook in *The Tablet* of October 4 to defend two of the pamphlets impeached.

This, then, is the main question, beside which nearly all Father Gerard's letters have run on side issues. Have Canon Foran and Fathers Coupe and Rickaby, whose pamphlets are sold daily with the Pope's blessing, sinned against historical truth? Even if Father Gerard had exposed the same mistakes in me which in fact he has exposed in himself, the question would still remain: Did those three men write the truth? or, as he narrows it down now, to my great relief: Did one of them, Canon Foran, write the truth?

I thought that question was answered sufficiently in my last letter; but Father Gerard now forces me to go over it again. I had been accused of shirking Dr. Gairdner's evidence, so I unwillingly troubled Dr. Gairdner to pronounce in favour of my interpretation of his words and against Father Gerard's. I quoted this pronouncement verbatim in my last letter, and suggested that Father Gerard should verify it by applying straight to Dr. Gairdner. After this, I had a right to expect, if not the apology which some men would have offered me, at least further silence on this point. Instead of that Father Gerard now replies that "*without intruding upon Dr. Gairdner's privacy as Mr. Coulton suggests,*" he will—what? After his usual fashion, he will quietly drop the three quotations which he had twice accused me of disingenuously avoiding, and will produce another, quite different, from a review written seventeen years ago, with which he will beg leave to confute me instead! Yet, at the moment I read this *volte-face* in *The Tablet* of January 6, I had in my pocket a letter in which Dr. Gairdner writes: "My attention had already "been called to [*The Tablet*] by Father Gerard, who, seeing me "in the British Museum on Monday [*i.e.* January 1] *took the "course you suggested of applying to me personally.* I told him "simply what you yourself have said, that Canon Foran's "remarks were a great deal too sweeping; and he seemed quite "to acquiesce." (The italics, of course, are mine in both cases.) When next I read from Father Gerard some similar lofty disclaimer of "intruding upon the privacy" of a scholar who might perhaps give unwelcome evidence, can I avoid the suspicion that here also there may exist a similar tell-tale letter, which would be equally interesting to read side by side with his words? After this I do not feel it necessary to reply again to his confused attack upon me in the matter of Bishop Creighton's evidence. After we have done with the main point, I will deal with it as long as he likes: at present I would merely point out that the full passage, as he prints it at last by supplying both his and my omissions, does not "justify Canon Foran's sweeping assertion" any more than Dr. Gairdner does. This I can leave to the judgment of any reader who will take the trouble carefully to compare the two, as Father Gerard prints them in his last letter. Indeed, Father Gerard himself now practically admits that Canon Foran's words are a mere rhetorical exaggeration, which needs explaining away; and I do not see why he should not also frankly admit that rhetorical exaggeration is not historical truth.*

*Not having the pamphlet at hand for the next few days, I cannot tell what are the words I am now said to have suppressed: I can only point out that Father Gerard has been three years discovering a suppression which he now speaks of as so obvious.

Meanwhile I am anxious, as I have more than once said, to follow Mgr. Vaughan's advice and get to "the sources of history," while, on the other hand, Father Gerard has spent some 10,000 words or more in a conspicuously unsuccessful attempt to justify Canon Foran with the help of those "modern writers" on whom he, though a good Catholic, seems exclusively to rely. Let us therefore now turn to the mediæval evidence for my counter-assertions, which, if true, will reduce Canon Foran's statements to something a great deal worse than mere pious exaggeration. The passage quoted by "A Lover of Truth" is well known to me. I do not agree with all your comments on it, but I leave it alone because I restrict myself to the most unexceptionable evidence—that which we get from the three centuries preceding that date of 1530, after which monastic morality became a burning political question. And I contend that this evidence yields results which could not be guessed by any reader (1) of Dr. Gairdner, who deals principally with the Cromwellian visitation, and does not, like Father Gerard, rush off into periods of which he has made no special study; or (2) of Bishop Creighton's occasional essays, which again make no pretence of being more than *obiter dicta*. You will perhaps permit me to quote very briefly from my "Monastic Legend" (Simpkin, Is.), which Father Gerard might long ago have dealt with if he had really cared to see both sides of the subject. The whole evidence which I give in that pamphlet is not one-tenth of what I could produce from orthodox pre-Reformation sources; and I here quote only a few points, numbered in the order which I happen to have printed them there, so that my adversary may definitely reply, in the same order, to each singly.

1. Abbot Gasquet represents the Cromwellian visitors as having accused only 6 per cent. of the religious of immorality. Yet an orthodox and unimpeachable visitation of Bishop Nicke, in his diocese of Norwich, shows *seven* per cent. accused of immorality by their fellow-monks or nuns. This is the more important because Nicke's is one of the very few complete visitation records extant for England, and his visit took place so soon before the Dissolution (1514.) Although Abbot Gasquet refers more than once to Nicke's MS. (as it then was), he does so always in the most misleading terms.

2. Of all the cases which, from the mouth of Cromwell's visitors, Abbot Gasquet seeks to discredit as inherently improbable because they shock modern minds, there is not one which cannot be out-matched from the most unimpeachable mediæval sources, and generally *from those very MS. documents which he parades as witnesses for his defence!* Those who believed in this *argumentum ab incredibili* should read the report of Cardinal Morton's St.

Alban's visitation in 1489 or 1490 (Wilkins, "Concil." iii. 630 ff.), or the similar cases which I quote from episcopal registers in my "monastic Legend."

3. Tales against monastic morality were amongst the most popular in mediæval literature: and such stories, told in religious books to point a moral, are perhaps even more numerous than those told by the satirists to raise a laugh.

4. The following great mediæval writers attack monastic morality in terms which would seem bigoted in the mouth of a modern Protestant: St. Bonaventura, Roger Bacon, Cardinal Jacques de Vitry, Gerson, Trithem, Gower, Langland and Wycliffe. Of these eight, Wycliffe is far from being the most emphatic. Jacques de Vitry stigmatises the monks, before the Franciscan Reform, as "keeping an outward show of piety, but denying its inward virtue disobedient, murmurers, back-biters, bearing "Christ's Cross unwillingly, unclean and incontinent, walking after "the flesh and not after the spirit." Turning to the nuns he asserts that a girl's virtue was safe among none but those of the Cistercian rule ("Hist. Occ.", cc. 4. 15). The learned Gower, who hated Lollardy and chose to spend his last years within the priory of St. Saviour's, Southwark, complained how "in some monasteries" of his time chastity was dead, and lechery had taken her place; how "very many" monks (*plures*) went to hell for women, and how nuns were sometimes seduced not only by their confessors but by the very visitors who were supposed to guard them ("Vox Clamantis," iv. 327 ff., 461, 595). Gerson, among other remarks almost equally strong, says in one place: "I actually doubt whether boys and girls do not some-times learn worse morals at schools and among "monks and nuns than they would in brothels" ("in religionum "et scholarum contuberniis," ed. Paris 1606, ii. 628). Abbot Trithem, in a passage too long to quote fully here, complained to his colleagues in a General Chapter (A.D. 1493): "See the manner of "life both of abbots and monks the whole day is spent "in filthy talk they despise the vow of poverty, and "know not that of chastity" ("De statu et ruina," cap xi.).

5. It is more significant still, if possible, that there is the most remarkable avoidance of this subject among mediæval apologists. Canon Foran, following better-known writers, tells us that these accusations are comparatively modern: it is the apologies, on the contrary, which are modern. From December 4, 1903, to March 11, 1904, I appealed to readers, first of *The Church Times* and then of *The Catholic Times* to quote me only one or two cases in which mediæval apologists defended monastic

morality with even half the distinctness with which it was attacked both by saints and by sinners. Not a single such quotation was produced by my many opponents; and my own laborious reading among anti-Wycliffite apologists has produced none such. Bishop Pecock, for instance, says little more for the monks than that their worst enemies have exaggerated their faults. That I readily admit: for, if Father Gerard would from the first have faced my real points instead of wasting everybody's time on such vain matters, he would long ago have realised that I do not take the ultra-Protestant view of monastic morality. I only hold (to quote again from my "Monastic Legend") that the monks of the later Middle Ages were "so idle and useless as a body, so depraved "in many instances, that no sane man would wish to see them among "us again at this moment in the state in which the Dissolution found "them." For this I think I have now made out a *prima facie* case from mediæval documents, and I hope Father Gerard will deal plainly with my quotations.

I must now add a last word in answer to Mgr. Vaughan. I have already quoted part of my exposure of him in *The Spectator* of three years ago—an exposure more unsparing than that of which he complains now in *The Contemporary*. Yet in 1902, with all the documents readily accessible, he did not dare to write one word of reply, though a fellow Catholic wrote: "For my part, I cannot read such an exposure of cooked statistics . . . without a feeling of shame and "indignation" (*Spectator*, Sept. 6, '02). The only excuse I can find for Mgr. Vaughan's present letter is that it is avowedly written only from memory and in great irritation, and I shall be grateful to any of your readers who will look up *The Catholic Times* for May, 1901, and judge between us. I am very glad to hear that he has at last—after four years—repented of those disgracefully false statistics which aroused shame and indignation even among his co-religionists; I wish the same repentance, however tardy, to the Committee of the Catholic Truth Society.

I thank you heartily, Sir, for your full permission to print all this correspondence, past, present, and to come. Father Gerard, however, has not given me the same explicit permission, which (for aught I know) may also be necessary so far as his letters are concerned. Here again I must, next week, take silence for refusal, since there is no reason why his definite consent should not be either given or refused at once, as I, for my part, willingly permit Father Gerard to reprint my letters *in extenso*."

To evidence of this kind, coupled with so definite a request to allow our letters to be reprinted together, Father Gerard had, of course, only one answer. Without making any further attempt to disprove any of my assertions, he simply accused me in vague terms of discourtesy and misrepresentation, and emphatically refused his

permission for the reprint. At the same time Father Breen and Mr. Jones attempted to come to the rescue of the learned Jesuit: and the Editor having requested me to compress my reply into a space altogether disproportionate to that of my adversaries, I sent the following letter, at the end of which the Editor announced that the correspondence was closed. The discussion has, however, since been continued between Father R. H. Benson and myself in the *Contemporary Review* for April, June, and July, 1906.

"You ask me to reply to my three adversaries in considerably less than half the space occupied by their letters: I will do my best. Father Gerard's excuse for declining now to deal with the real evidence for monastic morality is simply ridiculous. So far from "refusing to face the points at issue between us," I have followed his twistings and turnings with even wearisome minuteness; I have convicted him of mistranslation, of misquotation, of repeated misstatements, and of two patently false disclaimers. A good deal of this, I am glad to think, will be plain to readers of my half of the correspondence, even though he refuses to let me reprint his half.

Your other two correspondents make no serious attempt to face the actual pre-Reformation evidence. Wakeman, from whom Mr. Jones quotes, expressly declines to decide, and qualifies even his strongest statement with an "as far as the evidence of the [episcopal] reports goes." He had plainly not studied those opinions of contemporaries which I quoted in my last letter; and, even in his estimate of the episcopal reports he equally plainly relied on those bold statements of Abbot Gasquet's for which, as we now know, the Abbot has no references to give. Instead of vague phrases, let me here supply a few figures from authentic pre-Reformation episcopal records. The first of Nicke's Norwich Visitations (1514) gives us 7 per cent. accused to the Bishop of immoralities: a percentage which, if the religious were proportionately as numerous amongst us now as they were in Tudor England, would give more than 5,800 monastic incontinents in Great Britain in this single year 1906. Even the thirteenth century visitations of Rouen, if we take the nuns only, would give us by the same proportional calculation more than 7,000 incontinents in twenty years. The percentage of "defamed" monks is lower, and, if counted in, would bring the above-quoted figure down to 3,900 incontinents in the twenty years. These figures make one understand how Gower, who chose to spend his last days among the religious, yet felt bound to proclaim that "very many" (*plures*) monks went to hell for unchastity. For Father Breen is utterly at sea in ascribing this mediæval criticism of the monasteries to enmity, or to "wild and whirling rhetoric." Three of the authors whom I quoted in my last letter—St. Bonaventura, Trithem, and Roger Bacon—were themselves very distinguished religious; Cardinal Jacques de

Vitry and Gower chose to live in monasteries; Gascoigne was one of the greatest Chancellors Oxford University ever had; Gerson, one of the noblest figures in the Church of all times. Those who would undertake to prove that these men were utterly mistaken about the monks of their own age must bring very different evidence to any I have yet seen. Here, again, is another gross mis-statement of Father Breen's. "Where any "abuse was found to exist," he writes, "the offenders were so severely dealt with as to prove that such things were not tolerated." This is simply another of the random mis-statements which Abbot Gasquet has set afloat.

To give a slight idea of the actual facts, let me sum up briefly here the evidence which I adduce from Nicke's *Visitations* on pp. 4 and 5 of my "Monastic Legend." Out of the thirty-four religious reported to the Bishop as incontinent, there are *only two* recorded punishments by him. One, for an unchaste nun, was ridiculously slight; the other, for the homicidal, adulterous, and thieving Prior of Walsingham, was simply enforced resignation, *with a competent annual pension for the rest of his life!* No punishment is recorded for drunken monks, for monastic peculators, for open adulterers, for a monk who had broken the seal of confession. Moreover, this was the general rule. Abbots like Trithem, apologists like Sir Thomas More, agree as to comparative impunity for even the gravest offences.

Though Father Breen's letter swarms with mis-statements, your space compels me to stop here. I will only add that he does me great injustice in supposing me to press against the modern religious in England these charges which I can prove to the hilt against their pre-Reformation brothers and sisters. I cannot now waste further time in dealing with correspondents who bring forward only second-hand evidence. The one Roman Catholic in England who professes to have found in the Registers first-hand proofs of monastic innocence, Abbot Gasquet, has steadily refused to give references, and is evidently determined to suffer the most ignominious exposures from without, rather than to expose himself further by attempting a reply. Unless some one else will step forward with real pre-Reformation evidence, that which I have already given will dispense me from further following correspondents like Messrs. Jones and Breen".

CORRESPONDENCE IN *THE MONTH*.

From the following correspondence it will be seen that Father Gerard has a worthy colleague in Father Rickaby, S.J., professor, first at Stonyhurst, and now at a Roman Catholic College in Oxford.

In February, 1902, having found in a *Catholic Truth Society* pamphlet by this gentleman a gross and palpable libel on Protestantism, I wrote to the Roman Catholic *Month* as follows:—

"I read at page 9 of Father Rickaby's *Catholic Truth Society's* pamphlets on 'Persecution' the following statement: 'The common Protestant notion is . . . that whatever belief or opinion a man holds, *he is not morally accountable to God or to man for believing so.* Of course this is not always asserted in its fulness, but often with hazy and ill-defined limitations.'" There is a footnote referring to a passage in the same writer's "Oxford Conferences," where, however, I find no authority given for this statement—nor indeed in the whole of the Conferences—except later on a very vague reference to the latitudinarianism of an Anglican Bishop of 150 years ago. Yet the words I have italicized are repeated later on, and form, in fact, one of the two main pillars on which the whole argument of the pamphlet rests. I am sure, therefore, that you will allow me to ask Father Rickaby, through your columns, for those references which he has forgotten to give either in his pamphlet or in his book.

I had imagined that all Christian sects, and even most non-Christian, affirmed man's responsibility to God, not only for all his actions, but for all his thoughts. As an Anglican I have not only neither heard nor read any assertion from a co-religionist even remotely implying this which Father Rickaby speaks of as the common Protestant notion, but I find that at least two of our thirty-nine Articles definitely imply, while the eighteenth asserts in the plainest terms, man's responsibility to God for his religious belief. Will Father Rickaby, therefore, kindly produce the full evidence on which he bases a statement so important and *a priori* so improbable? There are many Protestant confessions of faith, and Protestants have been at least as active as Catholics in publishing sermons and religious works. There can be, therefore, no lack of material to choose from, and I am sure the learned Jesuit will feel as strongly as I do the necessity of producing definite and complete evidence for an assertion on which the whole argument of about a quarter of his pamphlet rests."

To this the Editor of the *Month* replied that, his Review not being a newspaper or magazine, he never admitted correspondence, and had therefore sent my letter on to be answered directly by Father Rickaby. Here, again, permission having been refused me to print the other side of the correspondence, I must leave the reader to judge of Father Rickaby's lame excuses from my own replies, which followed him point by point, and certainly do not exaggerate the extraordinary vagueness and inconclusiveness of the six points (carefully numbered by himself) which he offered as proof of his accusation.

My reply ran:—

Thank you for your communication; but I am sure you will see on reflection that it does not answer my letter. You accused the mass of Protestants of holding a tenet in itself most improbable, (since the belief in an Almighty God naturally implies belief in our responsibility to Him for every thought as well as for every act); you neglect to give evidence for this in your pamphlet or your lectures, and that which you offer me now is, if you will pardon me the word, no evidence at all. To take your points in order:—

1. Bishop Hoadley, of 150 years ago, can give no conclusive evidence as to the Protestantism of to-day. Again, your own words show that his doctrine was *not* accepted as "the common Protestant notion"; and, even though all had accepted his doctrine that "God regarded nothing but sincerity" yet this, so far from supporting, actually destroys your case. To hold that God regards our sincerity in the matter of religious belief is to deny the tenet which you attribute to most Protestants, that we are not "morally accountable to God" for believing or disbelieving any particular doctrine.

2. How can an *obiter dictum* of Lord Brougham—a layman notorious for his discursive inaccuracy—be authoritative as to "the common Protestant notion"? You would at once see the absurdity of my quoting a single layman's ideas as proof of "the common Catholic notion," on any point of doctrine.

3. Even though "the Nonconformist conscience" had shown itself as indifferent to creed in religious matters as you assert, yet this would at most prove a disbelief of *man's* right (not of *God's* right) to draw a hard and fast line between one creed and another. On your line of argument, the parable in which Christ showed the powerlessness even of angels to separate exactly the wheat from the tares would prove an indifference on the part of the Divine Conscience to the distinction between good and evil.

4. "The existence in the Church of England of what is known as the Broad Church," and (5) "the dislike of dogmatism in the

University of Oxford," are points so utterly irrelevant to your original assertion that I can scarcely understand your mentioning them.

Finally, on No. 6 you quote a long book simply by name, without a hint of chapter or verse. It is a book I have sometimes referred to, and I should be greatly surprised to find that the author has ever said anything to support your point. In any case you will see that, for the present, your reference is no reference at all.

I cannot help feeling, therefore, that you are still in my debt for some real proof of your assertion, as to a reader who has looked in vain for the references which you might well have published on the very page of your Lectures on which you brought your strange accusation. If, "the common Protestant notion" is as you say, there must be literally hundreds of *direct* quotations to be found in the vast body of Protestant theological literature. I can only repeat for the present that it is a notion which I never heard during my forty years of Protestantism, and one for which, as yet, you have advanced no real proof. You will, no doubt, allow me to treat this correspondence as public, since it turns on an accusation to which you yourself have given every publicity in your power."

To this request for leave of publication, the learned Jesuit replied briefly that he was a hard-worked scholar, that he saw we should never understand each other, and that he "had a supreme dislike for wrangling," while especially "wrangling in the newspapers was his abhorrence."

To this I replied:—

I can quite understand your abhorrence for wrangling in the newspapers; and so far as I have only succeeded in occupying to no effect some of the time of a hard-worked scholar, I am sorry for my share in the correspondence. But it seems to me that this personal side of the question is overshadowed by its public side: you have given all the publicity in your power to an accusation which I regard as false and calumnious in effect, though no doubt not in intention: and I had hoped that you would see by this time its utter want of foundation, and realize the responsibility incumbent on a public accuser to produce equally public evidence in answer to any reader who challenges his accuracy. You will see that my first letter was public, and that the private channel by which it came into your hands was purely accidental; I can, therefore, not commit the slightest breach of confidence either in publishing both my letters or in mentioning that you (for reasons, which after a full view of the circumstances, I cannot understand), refuse absolutely to allow me to publish yours at the same time, for it is a matter in which my own interests run as deep as yours; and I am the less willing to drop the subject altogether, that I believe myself able to convict you of even more

important errors, if possible, in speaking of the customs of your own church.

I cannot conclude, however, without thanking you for the kindly personal tone of both your letters, and expressing my regret that our minds should be separated in these matters by the deep gulf to which you allude."

With this letter our correspondence naturally ended; nor has Father Rickaby answered my subsequent exposures of his mis-statements in *The Spectator* and the *Contemporary Review*. The reader will not fail to note here a very curious and subtle distinction in the Romanist mind. To make, before the public audience, accusations against a body of fellow-Christians which neither are, nor can be, substantiated by real evidence—to disseminate these accusations first by the thousands in a book, and then by the tens of thousands in a pamphlet—this passes for a form of "Catholic Truth," and qualifies the author for a high place in the Society which strangely arrogates to itself that high-sounding title. On the other hand, to give chapter and verse for such statements, or to meet the obvious criticisms which they bring upon their author, would be "conterovrsy" and "wrangling in the newspapers," a thing which every wise Catholic leaves—under certain circumstances—to Protestants. This point of view is all the more strange because Father Rickaby is not only one of the intellectual pillars of the Roman Church in England, but also, to judge from his letters, a good and kindly man in his private life.