

GSS 30

A SHORT CATECHISM
FOR THE USE OF
SCHOOL-BOARDS.

BY
AN EX-CLERGYMAN.

Q. What is the Established Church?

A. It is a pseudo Church, related to and depending upon the State, on the same footing as any other corporate political body.

Q. Why do you call it a "pseudo" Church?

A. Because as it was cobbled together, after what was called the "Reformation," of fragments of Catholicism and Protestantism, so its whole constitution is anomalous and chaotic; besides which, it is without any recognised living authority to decide any question or act in any matter.

Q. Is it really without any form of authoritative Government?

A. There is a branch of the Legislature called a Judicial Committee (which may consist entirely of Jews), which is supposed to have a voice in Ecclesiastical questions, which is a *vox et præterea nihil* as a matter of course. They have been known, however, on one or two occasions, to sacrifice some rash and unpopular minister who couldn't gulp down his modicum of heterogeneous fare in the regularly approved manner, to assuage what is called orthodoxy.

Q. What do you understand by orthodoxy?

A. Any opinion outwardly acquiesced in by a considerable number of respectable people.

Q. What do you understand by heterodoxy ?

A. The expression of any private opinion apparently at variance with orthodoxy.

Q. Are there not very highly paid officials, in a ministerial capacity, in the Established Church, in whom a certain amount of power is vested ?

A. There are certain functionaries called Bishops, about whom there still hangs a sort of traditional haze of authority in the minds of common people. Some of them have attempted to revive this in a practical form by passing a sentence of excommunication on one of their own order.

Q. What is excommunication ?

A. It means a form of casting a person out of the pale of the Church, and at one time involved social ostracism and a variety of disadvantages and losses. In the present day, except amongst a few fanatics, it ranks with exorcism, fortune-telling, enchantment, and such like. It is conjectured that there are not above two educated men out of a thousand within the Established Church who would not prefer excommunication by the whole Bench of Bishops, to the bite of a flea.

Q. What are these Bishops supposed to do for their money ?

A. Exclusive of some little periodical displays of professional skill they are supposed to prosecute offending subordinates before the Higher Courts, as the police do pickpockets before the magistrates ; but as the costs of such prosecutions fall upon the Bishops, it is superfluous to observe that they are not much in vogue.

Q. Is there anything definite required in the Established Church ?

A. Very little beyond compliance with certain forms, and subscription to certain portions of matter selected from the compound, as terms of admission into its emoluments and places. Anything in the

form of a trade mark of an accepted bearing or meaning could not be expected where the language used is necessarily regarded as a convertible medium, and black indicates white under such passwords as "non-natural sense" and "charitable supposition."

Q. Is there even uniformity in externals, as a rule?

A. There commonly is to a certain extent, but not necessarily, as in a system in which anarchy prevails, things may be said and done in any manner, altered, curtailed, or omitted, at individual option.

Q. What is the supposed object and use of this Established Church?

A. It is supposed to impart a Christian character to the State and to maintain and teach the Christian religion.

Q. What is the Christian Religion of the Established Church?

A. "Any doctrines within limits which only extreme subtlety can distinguish from Roman Catholicism on the one side, from Calvinism on another side, and from Deism on a third." (*Times* article.)

Q. How can we explain the fact of many educated, thinking, intelligent men, capable of usefulness in their day and generation, continuing to hold official positions in such an Established Church as this?

A. Because they are like Issachar, between two burdens, Conscience and Self-interest, and they see that glebe land is good and rest is pleasant, and they bow their brains, wills, inclinations, capacities, and tastes, to what they gulp down as the yoke of necessity, and so become tributary.

Q. Why do we find educated men in increasing numbers ceasing to attend the public services of the Established Church, though not avowedly separated from her?

A. Because it somehow strikes them that either from the nature of the services themselves, or from the effect produced by continual use upon the person

officiating, the whole performance is unreal and perfunctory, on one side; or they find an ornate display and reverential cultus, with which they have no sympathy, on the other. Many of them also consider that they derive more harm than advantage from what are called sermons, especially to their tempers.

Q. Why does the Dean of Carlisle, in a letter addressed to the *Rock*, which he calls the "efflux of an old Clergyman's heart," commit himself to such a statement as that "this Established Church is the greatest bulwark of the faith"?

A. Because his old clerical heart has become so saturated with the system that he has forced himself into the belief that the party to which he belongs (and which is diminishing in number and influence every day) represents what he calls "the faith," *i.e.*, of the Establishment, and also that he is contending for this "faith," and not for the pay and position of a Dean.

Q. How does the Archdeacon of Taunton express himself upon the subject?

A. He says that "if Parliament meddles with the creed of St Athanasius," there will be "no longer any room to doubt that the Establishment is operating actively to the undermining and overthrow of all sound religion."

Q. What is the Athanasian creed?

A. An anonymous, unauthoritative, unintelligible assortment of words.

Q. What is the conclusion of the whole matter?

A. That of the Archdeacon, without his hypothesis.