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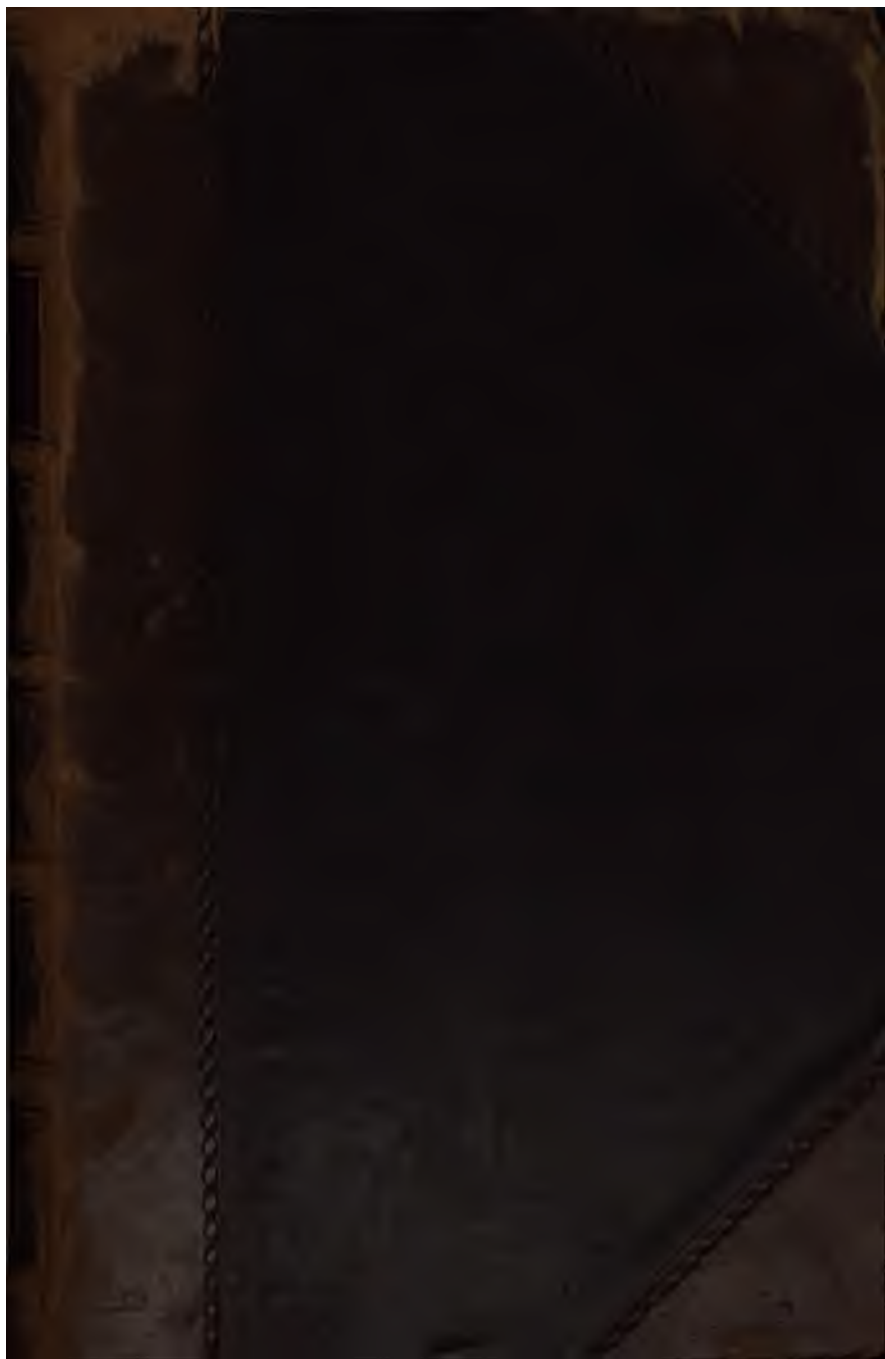
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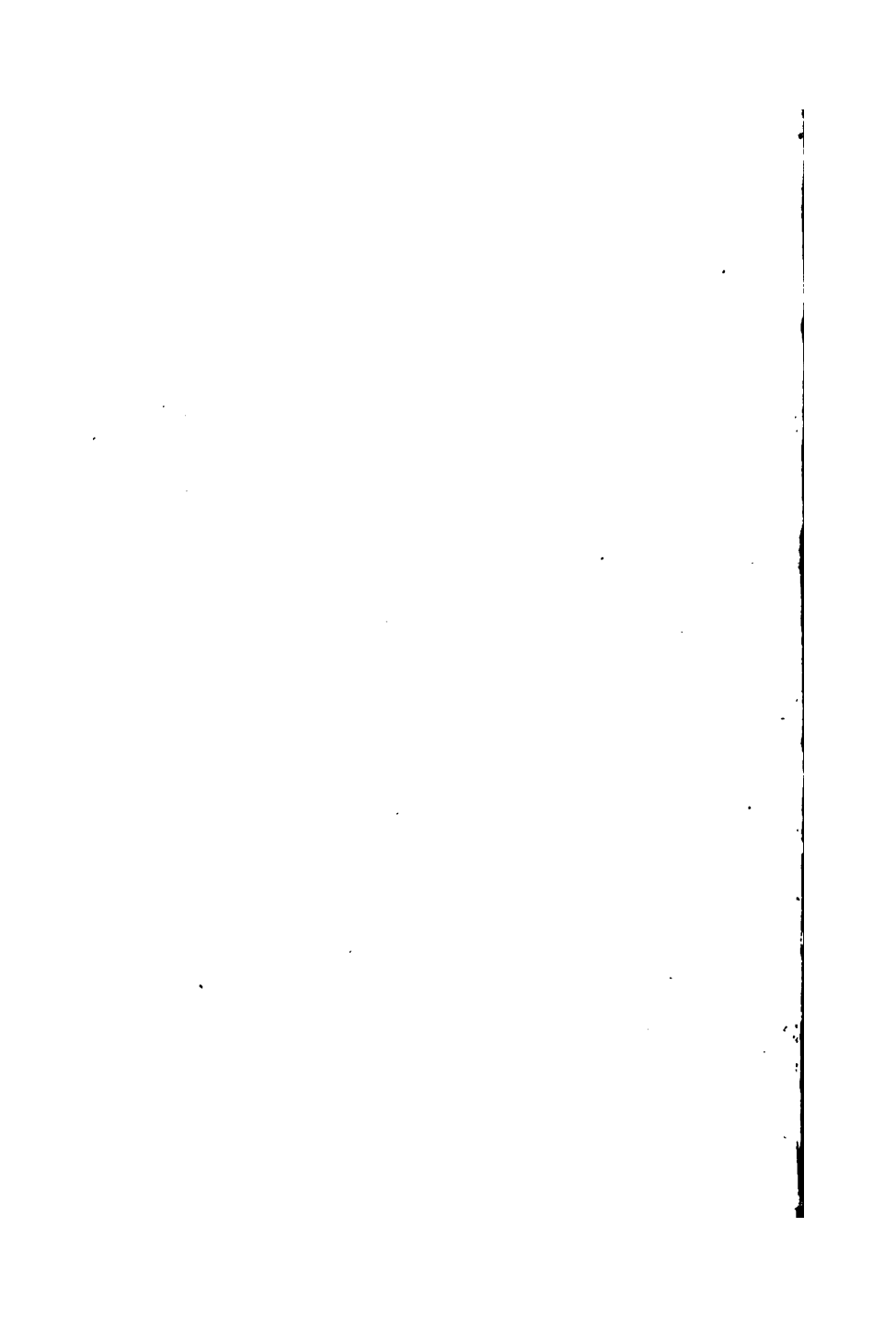
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TWO SERMONS

PREACHED IN THE

Parish Church of Watton,

MARCH 10, 1850.

THE SUNDAY AFTER THE FUNERAL

OF THE REV. E. BICKERSTETH.

BY THE REV. EDWARD AURIOL, M.A.

AND

THE REV. H. M'NEILE, D.D.

With an Appendix.

 Seeleys.

FLEET STREET, AND HANOVER STREET,
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MDCCL.

Fourth Edition.]



THE LOVE OF GOD IN CHRIST ; THE BELIEVER'S
PRINCIPLE IN LIFE AND HOPE IN DEATH.

A SERMON

PREACHED IN THE PARISH CHURCH OF WATTON,
ON THE 10th OF MARCH 1880.

THE SUNDAY AFTER THE FUNERAL OF
THE REV. EDWARD BICKERSTETH,
RECTOR OF THIS PARISH.

BY

THE REV. EDWARD AURIOL, M.A.
RECTOR OF ST. DUNSTON'S IN THE WEST, LONDON.

"He being dead yet speaketh."—Heb. xi. 4.

SERMON I.

ROMANS VIII. 38, 39.

“ I AM PERSUADED, THAT NEITHER DEATH, NOR LIFE, NOR ANGELS, NOR PRINCIPALITIES, NOR POWERS, NOR THINGS PRESENT, NOR THINGS TO COME, NOR HEIGHT, NOR DEPTH, NOR ANY OTHER CREATURE, SHALL BE ABLE TO SEPARATE US FROM THE LOVE OF GOD, WHICH IS IN CHRIST JESUS OUR LORD.”

WHAT a song of triumph is this ! what a glorious conclusion of a chapter filled with the enumeration of the Christian's blessed privileges and animating hopes ! And does the language of triumph become us on the present occasion ? We bless God that it does. We are called indeed to mourning ; nor is our sorrow confined to a single family or parish, or neighbourhood. The loss which has been sustained in the removal of one so long sent in the providence of God to minister among you, is a loss which is felt by the whole Church ; and, I believe I may truly say, the more spiritually-minded, the more devoted, the more single-hearted are any members of that Church, the more deeply do they feel that they have lost in him a loving brother, a

ready helper, a faithful counsellor, and a sympathizing friend. But we have cause for triumph. We have cause to thank God for what He was pleased to make our dear brother amongst us : we have cause to thank and praise Him that He brings before us now, in so remarkable a manner, the certainty of His faithful servant's everlasting triumph in Christ. And although the time of sorrow and bereavement should be doubtless a season of humiliation before God, and when the Church is called upon to lament the removal of one whom the Lord has been wont to use as an instrument for carrying on His own work amongst us, it most becomes her to regard it as a chastening from Him, and to "hear the rod and who has appointed it,"—yet we cannot disconnect even this from a view of the consolation afforded us by the unceasing presence of the Lord Himself ; we must not lose sight of the fact that even "in all these things we are more than conquerors through Him that hath loved us ;" and sure I am, that the language which your late dear minister would most have desired that we should use on this occasion, would be that of humiliation mingled with praise and hope.

In complying with the request that I would occupy this pulpit to-day, I have been led to select for our meditation the words of my text,—because I understand that in one of those intervals when our beloved brother woke up from a state of unconsciousness which was the effect of his disease, it was in these words that he expressed his own sure confidence, his undoubting faith, that death had no sting for him, and that the victory over the grave was assuredly his ; and also because the principle set forth in them, appears to have

been the ruling, the prevailing principle in his soul, which, by the grace of God, made him what he was. In discharging this solemn and responsible duty, I need much the support and help of your prayers. I have been asked to undertake it partly because of the close intimacy which through the mercy of our God, was permitted to grow up between our families for the last few years; (and if any had cause to love him who is gone I am sure that I and mine had most reason to do so);—partly because it has been my privilege to share with him in an interest in many of those blessed institutions in which he so long, and so indefatigably, and so cordially laboured, and especially as a member of the Church Missionary Committee, who have been ever foremost to acknowledge their appreciation of the value of the services which our dear friend for so many years rendered to the cause in which they are engaged; and partly because, as having often been permitted to sojourn for a season here, I do not speak altogether as a stranger to those amongst whom he laboured in the Gospel of Christ. May the Lord Himself be present with us, and mercifully help us to meditate on the subject before us in such manner as may be profitable to us all, for His own Name's sake.—

The subject to which my text directs us is the believer's persuasion of the unalterable, the invincible, the inalienable love of God in Christ Jesus to him. We will consider.

I. THE SUBJECT ITSELF.

II. THE EFFECTS OF SUCH A PERSUASION WROUGHT IN THE BELIEVER'S SOUL.

III. WHAT PRACTICAL LESSONS IN CONNECTION WITH IT WE MAY LEARN ON THIS SOLEMN OCCASION

I. WHAT A SUBJECT THIS IS—the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord. What a blessed object of contemplation. It is no new subject to you. It is the theme which has been brought before you times without number, sabbath after sabbath—week after week, in the Church, in the school-room, in the cottage, by one whose voice you must hear no more, who has delivered his Lord's message to you for the last time, who has finished his course, who has been faithful unto death, whose stewardship is over, but whose testimony amongst you, with all the responsibility attached to it, remains as a witness before God. The love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord, having its source only in His own Divine mind. The love of God, from eternity, to guilty sinners who deserved nothing but His wrath. The love of God, which, as is declared in the 5th chapter of this epistle, is commended to us by the very fact that "when we were without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly." The love of God, which is thus free, undeserved, eternal. The love of God, which provided a full, perfect, and sufficient atonement and satisfaction for the sins of a guilty world, though that atonement was only brought about by the gift of His own Son, as we read in this chapter,—it is the love of Him "who spared not His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all." It is distinguishing love; the love of God which brings the soul that believes in Jesus into a new state of relationship towards Him, which justifies through His merits, pardons for his sake, accepts "in the Beloved." The love of God which adopts us into His family; the love which by the power of His Holy Spirit regenerates, sanctifies, purifies, makes us His. It is the love of God in Christ Jesus, which gives us the distinguishing grace

of His Holy Spirit, distinguishing His people from the world, leading them, witnessing with them, being in them a Spirit of adoption, making them spiritually-minded, and giving them life and peace. "For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God. For ye have not received the spirit of bondage again, to fear; but ye have received the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba! Father. The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God."

Let me remind you, how your beloved pastor began his ministry amongst you, by testifying to you the Gospel of the grace of God. In his first year's address to you he wrote;* "Oh, my dear friends, what tongue can utter, what mind conceive the amazing value of an immortal soul. I view you every one as candidates for never-ending happiness. My blessed office is to assist you, all that is in my power, to attain the favour of Almighty God, our heavenly parent, to escape endless misery, and to attain eternal joy and glory. I know that there is full redemption through His blood, even the free forgiveness of all your sins in Christ Jesus. Yes! there is a Saviour, able to save to the uttermost, and willing to receive all that come to Him. I can promise in His great Name, pardon for every sin, righteousness to justify you before God, adoption into His family, the gift of His Holy Spirit to sanctify you, and eternal life, a life beyond the grave, a life of joy unspeakable and full of glory, to each who turns from sin, and trusts to Him. It is my office and my privilege to invite every one to partake of these rich blessings; but it is my duty also to warn you of the danger of neglecting this great

* First address to the parishioners of Watton. Occasional Works, p. 61.

salvation. The preaching of the cross is, to them that perish, foolishness ; but unto them who are saved it is the wisdom of God, and the power of God. Take heed then how ye hear. Receive with meekness the engrafted word which is able to save your souls."

And, in a subsequent address, he says : * " It is my bounden duty, as your minister, to testify that, " except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of heaven :"—That those who are of the world, will love the world, and will perish with the world ; and that " except you be converted, and become as little children, you shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven." It is my duty thus to warn you, but I heartily rejoice, that it is also my privilege to tell every sinner, without any exception, that God has promised to give " a new heart, and a new spirit," to them that ask them of Him. My high privilege indeed I do esteem it, that I am commissioned to assure the most profane and wicked in the parish, that this is the day of salvation, that pardon, peace, and life, may yet be obtained by all who will repent, and turn to God : that, if in this accepted time, they will but fly to the fountain opened for sin and uncleanness, and trust in Christ as the only Saviour, they will surely obtain mercy and be everlastingly saved.—Oh, then turn ye, turn ye, why will ye die ? "

Now such was the faithful testimony borne by your beloved minister to the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

But, my brethren, the text speaks further of the persuasion of the love of God in Christ Jesus, towards us *personally*, as giving us an interest in Him with all its sustaining energy, depriving every enemy of the

* Fourth address. Occasional Works, p. 77.

power to hurt us, triumphing over every fear and doubt, filling the soul with the greatest comfort and joy, securing it against the malice and violence of the most powerful opponents, and giving us the fullest enjoyment in the anticipation of the consummation of all, at the "appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ." (ver. 14—16.)

And how is such a persuasion to be our's? It is founded upon the sure word of God, simply trusted in, believed in, lived upon, *because it is the Lord's word*.—It is God's own precious gift, a matter of experience, the work of His own Holy Spirit in the soul; and it is just this persuasion in its operative character, in its blessed effects, in its holy, animating, sanctifying influences, which it has been our privilege, dear brethren, not only to have had declared and preached to us, but to have seen exemplified and set forth in the whole course, character, and spirit of that dear departed one of whom our minds are so full, and of whom we delight to speak to you, because we glorify God in him.

And this leads us to the second point which we propose to consider.

II. WHAT ARE THE EFFECTS OF SUCH A PERSUASION BROUGHT BY THE SPIRIT IN THE BELIEVER'S SOUL? Let us consider these as exemplified in the peculiar characteristics of our dear departed friend.

And *first*, such a persuasion leads to singleness of object, and simplicity of purpose; and—the more truly it is at work in us,—to energy in carrying out that purpose with all the ability which our God may give us. How undeniably was this singleness of purpose manifested in him. He was one of whom it might be said, "this

one thing" he did. No one ever doubted, no one ever could doubt, what was his object, what he had most at heart; it was, that "God in all things might be glorified through Jesus Christ."

I need not here refer to his writings,—this spirit, this object appeared conspicuous in all; in the love and zeal and animation with which he readily, and to the utmost of his power, gave his mind to any cause which he believed to be for the glory of God: this led him into the ministry; this took him to Africa; this caused him to work so zealously and so perseveringly for the Church Missionary Society. This afterwards engaged his interest so warmly in the cause of the Jews, because he saw, from Scripture, peculiar glory to be brought to his Saviour by their means. This made him so bold, so zealous, and so earnest for the truth, in opposition to all antichristian error. This made him so fervent in his protest against the spirit of popery, infidelity and lawlessness. This made him so willing to seize every opportunity for spreading the Gospel and seeking to deliver souls from the dominion of Satan.

It was a remarkable feature of his character, that when anything was to be done for the cause of the Lord, he was always ready to be the doer of it: and yet no man thought less of himself in doing it. "Here am I, send me!" was his willing answer to the question, "Who will go for us?" Witness the spirit with which he entered into the Jubilee of the Church Missionary Society, and the zeal with which, in the very last years of a most laborious life, he exerted himself for the cause of the Church Missions to the Roman Catholics in Ireland. Nor was this only zeal; there was in him

as you well know, a most unusual mingling of the diligent and pains-taking habits of the laborious student, an eagerness—and yet patience in acquiring information from any and every source which might afterwards be brought to bear on any undertaking for the furtherance of the Lord's cause, with the activity, the life, and spirit of one, who was ready to carry out into active operation the scheme which had been devised in the closet. And whence was this singleness of object, but from the principle laid down in my text ;—the full persuasion of the love of God in Jesus Christ ? To him it was a reality ; it was a truth lived upon ; always uppermost in his mind ; always nearest his heart,—it was shed abroad largely *there*, by the Holy Ghost which was given him, and therefore it was his heart's desire that, if it might be, every one might know the same love of God in Christ Jesus. He would have had every obstacle to the spread of this knowledge taken out of the way. Nor was it only in his public character that this was conspicuous. Those who knew him best, knew how it entered into all the proceedings of his domestic and social life. They saw how it shone out in his family expositions and instructions, how it was introduced in connection with every family meal, and how it was the subject of interest to him in all his conversations, so that it was not too much to say of him, that whether he ate or drank, or whatever he did, he did all “to the glory of God.” This was the one business of his life, and in this he was certainly “not slothful in business, but fervent in spirit, serving the Lord.” You know that, in the message he sent to you from his dying bed, he desired your prayers, “not for his recovery, but that he might, throughout his affliction,

glorify God by fresh exercises of faith, patience, and resignation, and when the Lord's work should be accomplished, depart hence, to which (he bore testimony,) he had ever looked forward as the highest consummation of a faithful minister of Christ."

It was this oneness of desire for the honour of his Master, which made that great object of his hope, the glory to be revealed at the coming of Christ, a subject of such joyous and constant anticipation to him.

But secondly, such a persuasion must produce unworldliness of spirit. "Whatsoever is born of God overcometh the world. And this is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith. Who is he that overcometh the world, but he that believeth that Jesus is the Son of God?" (1 John v. 4, 5.) Such a persuasion gives us higher things to care for, higher things to aim at, than all that the world can offer us; and this too was conspicuous in our dear brother in the Lord. No one could even for a moment accuse him of a worldly spirit. He lived above it. He carried an unworldliness of character into all his intercourse with us. In the blessings and comforts, which the Lord mercifully gave him in his own family, God was recognized; and they were used, as the Christian should always use them, as affording fresh occasions for thanksgiving, according to the spirit of the apostolic injunction—"in every thing give thanks, for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you." (1 Thess. v. 18.)

And this leads me to another point—the uniform cheerfulness of his religion, which was quite remarkable. Who ever doubted the sincerity of the feeling which called forth so frequently, at the opening of a speech in public, those well-known words, "Thanks be

to our God !” He seemed to live in an atmosphere of cheerful recognition of God in everything ; yea, in times which might have induced depression of spirit, in the midst of the trials and sickness of the dear members of his family, or when he himself lay on the bed of suffering, it was his part to see cause for praise, mercy in every trial ; nay, when obstacles appeared in the way of some object which he had much at heart, even then he was accustomed to look upon it only as a cause for fresh, and more animated, and more hopeful energy : and when from his study of the prophetic word, he anticipated dark times of trial, and severe judgments on the church, his spirit rose above every gloomy fear, and he spoke of these troubles, as only hastening on the approach of the Lord’s coming.

And what was with him, what, with the Christian, is the source of such cheerfulness ? Is it merely the effect of natural temperament ? or does it not rather necessarily flow from the firm hold of this truth : “ I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord :” from the assurance of the certainty of the promise, “ All things shall work together for good, to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose.”

But we proceed now to notice another effect of the love of God towards us in Christ Jesus. I refer to that which, of all his other graces, was particularly conspicuous in our dear brother ; I mean, a loving spirit. It was impossible to know him without remarking this as the grace that abounded in him ; so candid, so com-

prehensive, so truly catholic was his mind. Though his own opinions were formed on what he thought scriptural grounds, yet how candid, how forbearing, how full was he of tenderness and love to others who differed from him ; he never shrank from stating his own convictions ; he might differ from many of his brethren on various points, but he never allowed such differences to interfere either with the feeling or the exercise of love. He desired with all his heart to love all who "loved the Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity ;" to take counsel with them as brethren, to engage with them in whatever might further the cause of their common Master, to carry on His work, to help them forward in it, to set others to labour for that cause, and himself to rejoice in their labours and success. The extent of his correspondence, and the character of that correspondence, most strikingly bear testimony to this. How did his loving spirit gladden every roof, and cheer every heart where he came ! How did it bring Christian brethren together, and soften down the asperities of some ; and even when he stated his own views on any subject, so certain were all who differed from him of the sincerity and the love with which he spoke, that this very conviction on their part afforded him an opportunity of bearing his testimony to the truth, which he valued above all for its own sake.

Those who knew him most intimately felt most of all the sunshine of that love ; that it was in him, as every thing was, a reality ; that in him was exemplified the force of the Apostle's injunction, "See that ye love one another with a pure heart, fervently ;" (1 Peter i. 22.) for whatever he was known to be in his public character, that was he in private in a still more

eminent degree. To refer to the closing scenes of his life ; what testimony can his children, and attendants, and servants, bear to the tenderness, the gentleness, the overflowing love with which he received all their attentions.

And he himself has taught us, whence was the spring of that love. In one of his sermons, I meet with this passage,* “The love of God alone first designed the plan of our recovery ; the love of God alone sent His Son to die for us ; the love of God sends His Gospel to us ; the love of God gives us willing hearts to embrace it ; the love of God sends the Spirit to make us here like Himself, and thus meet for our heavenly inheritance ; all, all from first to last is free, rich, sovereign, unceasing love to sinners. It is love too that produces its own likeness, and fills the sinner’s heart, once contracted, selfish, and earthly, with all kind, benevolent, holy, and heavenly feelings towards others.” Of this spirit of love he drank deeply through the abounding grace of God thus manifested in him.

But my brethren, there is another important proof of the love of God in Christ Jesus working in us, which whilst it is a proof of the existence of such a principle, is also the means of maintaining it within us. I mean the habit of prayer and close communion with God. Now, my brethren, God was pleased to give our dear brother much of this spirit of prayer. None but He who seeth in secret can tell how many hours were spent daily in private devotions in his house, or when he went out, like Isaac of old, to meditate ; or how real and earnest was the spirit of prayer in him at those times ; but he has left his dying testimony to the effi-

* Sermon on the overflowing of Christian grace. Occasional Works, p. 507.

cacy of prayer. He said to a dear relative, "No prayer is lost ; they are living and lasting ; it is a wonderful thought, no prayer is lost ; they ever live, they are as it were, indented round the throne of God : and when God looks around, He sees the prayers of His people covered with the sweet incense of the Saviour's righteousness." And how many such prayers for his parish, for his friends, for his dear family, thus remain recorded. Oh ! if in this only he had been a blessing, how great would be the blessing !

Those who ever had the privilege of joining with him when he offered prayer, witnessed the fervency of spirit, the tone of deep earnestness, the sense of our fallen condition, and the certainty of the promises which appeared in those addresses to the throne of grace. We have reason to believe, brethren, that here his real strength lay. It was from communion with God in his own soul that he came forth with that unfailing spirit of love and devotedness, which every one that conversed with him observed in him, and which sought to influence all whom it reached. And what is it that gives any poor sinner, (and such our dear brother never forgot to acknowledge himself to be,) free access to the throne of grace : what gives a poor sinner comfort, happiness, yea, real enjoyment in the presence of a holy God, but the full persuasion wrought in his heart by the Holy Ghost which is given him, of the love of that Holy God even to him in Jesus Christ, a love from which nothing can separate him, because it is of God ?—

But I must hasten to the last particular which I would mention, of the effect of this precious gift of the persuasion of the love of God to us in Christ Jesus :—

That it gives peace, and hope, and joy, to the be-

liever in dying. How remarkably this was the experience of our dear friend, the manner in which he connected the words of my text with the fifty-first verse of 1 Cor. xv. is sufficient to shew. And how much cause have his dear family and friends to bless God for His mercy to them in those precious intervals of consciousness granted him in his last illness, in which he was able so strikingly to testify of the supporting power of the grace and love of his Saviour, of the inward peace which he enjoyed, of the satisfaction which he felt that the time of his work was ended, and of his longing desire to "depart and to be with Christ."

How striking are these words, with which he welcomed one of his dear children ;—“ You see me a wreck, but Christ is on board, and all is well.” And again, “ I am a poor mass of mortality, but Christ is the strength of my life, and my portion for ever.” Or when he expressed his own desire “ to depart and be with Christ, which is far better,” observing, “ They say there is no hope, but what they call no hope, I call most hopeful of all things, to go and be with my Saviour.” Or again, when he replied to the remark, “ This is troublesome to you,” “ Though I walk in the midst of trouble “ Thou wilt revive me. Oh the resurrection-glory ! “ what will that be, when these vile bodies are fashioned “ like unto the glorious body of Christ ! This hope “ supports me through all.” And, oh, brethren, is there any one who ever heard that much-loved name, or knew any thing of what he was, who doubts for one moment in his case the truth of the statement in my text,—who could admit the thought that any change which he has undergone in dying, has been able to separate him from the love of God in Christ ! No, we

may in imagination follow him into the immediate presence of his Saviour. We recognize, at once, without any difficulty, that he is one of those with whom we on earth, who are joined to Christ, have still communion, when, in the exercise of a living faith we "come unto Mount Zion, and unto the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem ; and to the innumerable company of angels ; to the general assembly and church of the first-born which are written in heaven, and to God the Judge of all, and to *the spirits of just men made perfect*, and to Jesus the Mediator of the New Covenant, and to the blood of sprinkling, which speaketh better things than the blood of Abel ;" (Heb. xii. 22—24.) only we are certain, that he is nearer the throne than any of the most devoted saints yet in the body ; and we look forward with sure and certain hope to that day to which he so often delighted to direct our thoughts, when, "them also which sleep in Jesus, God will bring with Him," and we are certain that he will be there, and according to the Lord's command, we "comfort one another with these words ;" and why ! "Because we are persuaded that neither death nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord," those to whom, "to live is Christ, and to die is gain."

And now, brethren, before we separate, we proceed to point out very briefly,

III. WHAT PRACTICAL LESSONS IN CONNECTION WITH THIS SUBJECT WE MAY LEARN ON THIS OCCASION. First, in the way of solemn warning and instruction. We have seen that all that our beloved brother was in the

church below, all that we are sure he is in the church above, is to be traced to that which he continually set before you, not only in his preaching, but by exemplifying in his own person amongst you the blessed effects of receiving it;—"the love of God to poor guilty sinners in Christ Jesus."

How great is your responsibility to receive that love, to walk in it, to seek by the grace of God that it may, make you what you are called to be, as followers of those who, "through faith and patience inherit the promises." It was Christ's teaching, Christ lived upon, Christ looked to, Christ believed in and hoped for, which made him what he was. You may indeed be called to a different position in the church of Christ, to the practice of very different duties, but see that the example of singleness of purpose, of cheerful obedience, of loveliness of spirit, and above all, of a habit of devout communion with God be not lost upon you. Whether your talents be few or whether they be many, whatever you have by which you may glorify God, the persuasion of the love of God to you in Christ Jesus the Lord, which gave Him to die for you, calls you to abstract them from selfishness and the world, and to dedicate them to His service in singleness of heart and conscientiousness of spirit as unto the Lord.

And oh ! am I speaking to any who have heard often from his lips the word of life, and have heard it in vain, who have not been delivered by it from the bondage of sin, who are living still in the practice and love of sin, or who know not the way of salvation from it, or their great need of that salvation ; are you not pricked to the heart this day ? Is not your spirit overwhelmed within you ? Oh, that being dead, he may

yet speak to you. Tremble at the thought of the account which you must give of neglected opportunities. What solemn, awful words are those of God to Israel,—“they shall know that there hath been a prophet amongst them.” But that which is yet set before you this day, for you, guilty, polluted, defiled, is just that which he delighted to set before you, the love of God in Christ Jesus even for the most guilty who will but come to God through Him ; love in the full, free, unmerited pardon of all your sins : love in the real and spiritual new-birth wrought in your souls, that you may not “henceforth live to yourselves, but to Him who died for you and rose again.” Oh ! “hear, and your souls shall live,” desire earnestly even now to be taught of God the Holy Spirit to receive that “grace of God which bringeth salvation,” which whilst it directs you only to the cross of Christ for pardon, and to His meritorious obedience for righteousness with God “teaches us that denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly in this present world, looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God, even our Saviour Jesus Christ, who gave Himself for us, that He might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto Himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works.” (Titus ii. 11—14.)

We would apply the subject in the way of comfort to the mourning and bereaved flock. How full of consolation is it ! “I am *persuaded* !” With respect to him whom you loved, and who is gone before, you are certainly so persuaded ; and with respect to yourselves,—are you following Christ ? are you looking to the same Saviour ? You too may be persuaded ; seek to be so, not by man’s reason, not by man’s teaching, not by

human arguments, even founded on the word of God itself, but by the teaching of the Holy Spirit : by Him who can and does bind up the broken heart, and pour in healing unction to the humble, waiting spirit ; by Him whose office it is to “ take of the things of Christ, and show them to us : ” whose name is the “ Holy Ghost,” the “ Comforter.” In a time of sorrow and bereavement, I am sure of this, there is none that can persuade us of these things, none that can comfort us by them as He can.

And lastly, brethren, let us not forget that God calls every one of us in the Church of Christ to prayer, to more earnest exertion, to greater watchfulness and devotedness to His work. A standard-bearer is taken from our ranks : we are persuaded, that he is not separated from the love of Christ, and we may be persuaded too, that the captain of the Lord’s host still remains amongst us. O brethren, how ought we for his Church’s sake, for the sake of the cause of Christ, for the sake of the world, to be earnest in prayer, that He will raise up others, affection forbids us to say, to fill, but to supply the place which seems to us to be now vacant. None would have rejoiced more than he who is gone, that others should enter into his labours. But it is the Lord who must provide this.—Let us entreat Him to do so, let us beg of Him, that a double portion of his servant’s spirit may be given to those, whom He calls to stand up in His servant’s place, to fight under His banner, especially that they may carry with them wherever they go, in the advocacy of the cause of their Master, that spiritual tone, that unction, which, in the case of our dear brother, so remarkably commended to the con-

sciences and the hearts of the Lord's servants, those objects, the claims of which he advocated.

I would remind you of his own words in the commencement of his sermon on the removal of his dear friend and fellow-labourer in the gospel, the Rev. Josiah Pratt. * "Lo, I am with you always, to the end of the world, is the assurance of the Captain of our salvation, Every departure, then, to his glory, of a faithful soldier of Jesus Christ, is but a trumpet-call to fresh conflict, fresh progress, fresh victories. The fulness of our God and Saviour is exhaustless, and it is a growing fulness of blessing that He designs for His people. If Moses be removed, Joshua must enter Canaan. If David die, Solomon's glorious reign must commence, and the temple of the Lord be built. If our Lord Himself be removed, His Church must be established on a "rock, against which the gates of hell shall never prevail." If Stephen be stoned, the disciples shall be scattered to diffuse blessings through wider and distant regions. Jesus shall never fail, never be discouraged, till He have set judgment in the earth, and the isles shall wait for His law." O brethren, be persuaded of these things, and you will at once see the connection between the assurance of victory, and the animating injunction which follows: "Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye stedfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labour shall not be in vain in the Lord." (1 Cor. xv. 54—58.)

* Sermon after the Funeral of the Rev. Josiah Pratt, p. 6.

THE FAITHFUL SERVANT REWARDED.

A SERMON

PREACHED IN THE PARISH CHURCH OF WATTON,
ON THE 10TH OF MARCH 1850.

THE SUNDAY NEXT AFTER THE FUNERAL
OF THE REV. EDWARD BICKERSTETH,
RECTOR OF THE PARISH.

BY

THE REV. HUGH M'NEILE, D.D.

HON. CANON OF CHESTER, AND INCUMBENT OF ST. PAUL'S, PRINCE'S PARK,
LIVERPOOL.

“ I will not leave you orphans (*ὀρφανούς*).”

St. John xiv. 18.

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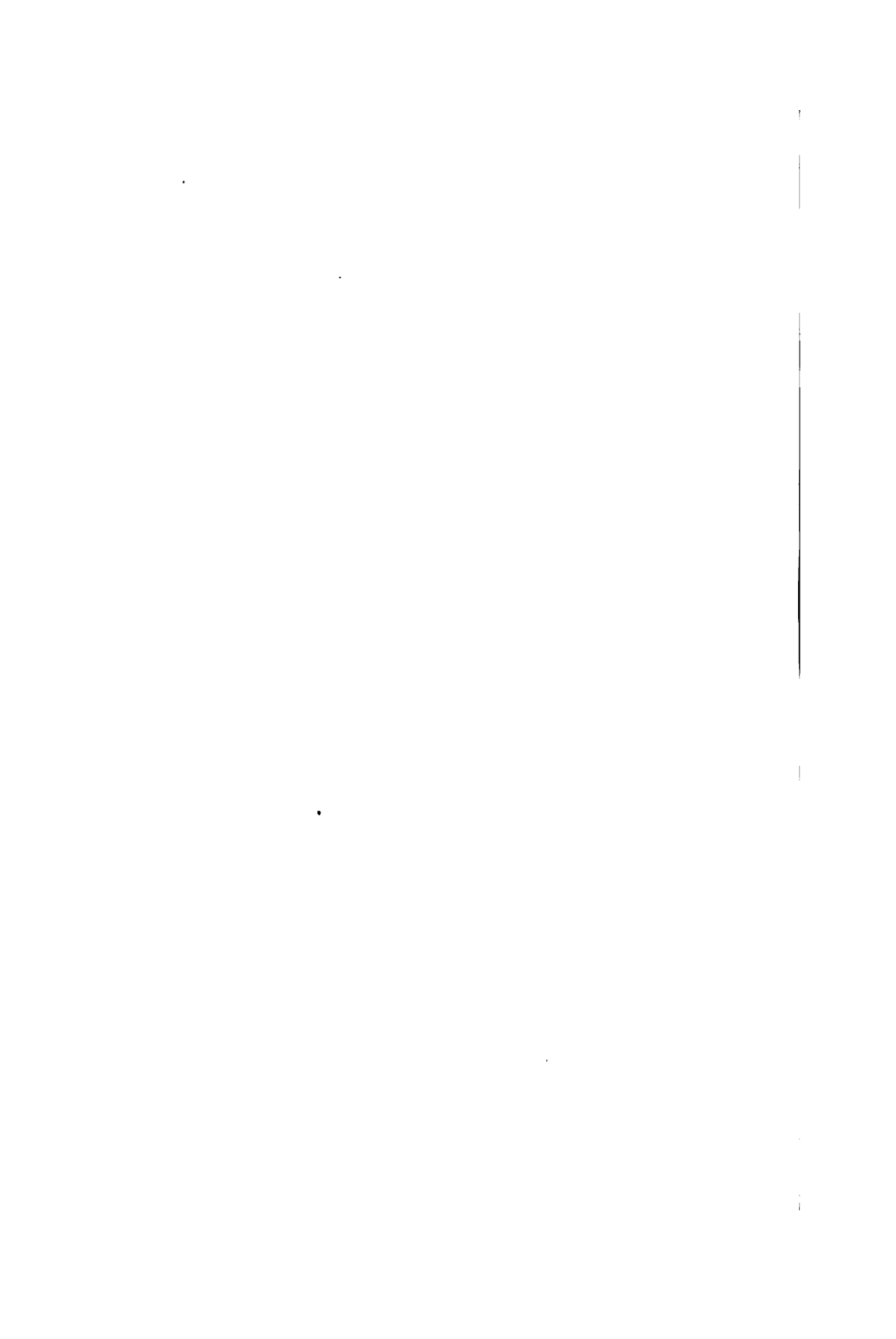
PREFACE

THE following Sermon is certainly very unlike what the Author would have preached on the occasion, under other circumstances of time and leisure to refer to the words and deeds of his departed friend.

The request of the family reached him late on Thursday night, by Electric Telegraph. Friday was inevitably by pre-engagement, a day of incessant occupation. The Sermon was premeditated on the journey from Liverpool to Watton, on Saturday. And, a departure from one part of it—and that the most carefully-considered part, treating of the great principle on which a faithful servant of Christ acts, and by which he is sustained—was rendered imperative by the discourse of the Rev. Edward Auriol, after the first service on the Sunday.

The Author feels impelled to this note of apology, because, on reading the Sermon for the correction of the Press, he finds it disappointing to his own heart, and unworthy, in his estimation, to be recorded as even a faint memorial of his genuine admiration of, and cordial affection for

EDWARD BICKERSTETH.



SERMON II.

MATTHEW XXV. 23.

“ HIS LORD SAID UNTO HIM, WELL DONE, GOOD AND FAITHFUL SERVANT ; THOU HAST BEEN FAITHFUL OVER A FEW THINGS, I WILL MAKE THEE RULER OVER MANY THINGS : ENTER THOU INTO THE JOY OF THY LORD.”

SUITABLE words on this solemn occasion ! Who among you, my brethren, can hesitate for a moment in feeling their propriety, and the justice of their application ? A good and faithful servant of the best of Masters, was your dear and lamented pastor. From my valued fellow-labourer in the services of this mournful day, you have already heard what was the animating and sustaining principle of your pastor's life. He did indeed possess, in an eminent degree, the real secret of both goodness and fidelity. He *loved* his Master, and he *loved* his work. He did nothing for Christ by constraint, but all willingly. Religion in him had long lost, if it ever wore, the aspect of mere duty, however solemn and however imperative. It had become an instinct, acting with all the unbidden fervour and energy of an habitual and constraining enjoyment. Jesus was

as truly his object for this life, as He was his confidence for eternity. He had no party spirit, no sectarian rivalry, no partizan zeal. The cause of truth, wherever found, of pure, simple evangelical truth, wherever struggling against falsehood, was what he lived for in public, and prayed for in private. Hence his unfeigned love for all those who loved the Lord Jesus in sincerity and truth. He was a Churchman, from enlightened conviction and deliberate preference, but wholly free from bigotted exclusiveness. He was not cast in that strong ecclesiastical mould, wherein the angles of uniformity are as unyielding as the body of essential truth, and the time-hallowed traditions of men are elevated into a parallelism of importance with the word of God. His was the more truly catholic temperament, which consents to subordinate every thing, except essential truth, for the sake of peace, and harmony, and love, and co-operation among dear brethren.* A peace-

* This is spoken generally. I was not able to concur with my friend in the particular line which on some occasions he saw it right to adopt. But there is a difference between a principle, and the extent to which it ought to be carried in any particular case. Catholic Christianity appears to me to demand the principle on which Mr. Bickersteth acted; while the most sincere Christians may differ in judgment and discretion as to the practical application of it, in any special circumstances of a country, or a Church, or a neighbourhood. This is not the place for any lengthened discussion of this subject, but here I gladly transcribe a passage from the writings of the *Provost of Oriel*, which commended itself as fraught with truest wisdom to my friend's mind, as it does to mine—

“ Could we, indeed, but keep *salvation* ever in our view, happy would it be, both for the conduct of our own lives, and our estimate of the spiritual condition of our brethren. There may be a wide difference between the speculations of the closet, and that practical, real sense of the gospel, its end and scope, which is felt in the very heart of the Christian minister, as he prays by the side of a departing brother. Rigid, exclusive theories of the Church are forgotten amidst the thoughts of death and judgment, our deep natural corruption, the need of repentance and faith, the great atonement, divine grace; yet this is not said, as if mat-

maker he desired to be, and by the blessing of God upon his prayers and labours, a peace-maker he was. And "blessed are the peace-makers, for they shall be called the children of God."

And as he loved the brethren around him, and won them to love one another, so he loved the heathen, and he loved the Jews, and he loved the poor benighted victims of Antichrist in all lands, and especially,—for Christian patriotism gave direction to his Christian zeal,—especially in Ireland. Hence his missionary enterprise, and indefatigable exertions in support of our various admirable Societies. He felt that the time was short, and the Lord at hand, to reckon with his servants. He pretended not to be of the number of those to whom ten talents are entrusted; but he knew that the great question, when the Master shall appear, will

ters of Christian order, and much less of holiness and truth, were matters indifferent. Nothing can be unimportant which, even in the least degree, ministers to salvation. But it highly concerns us to appreciate, as justly as we may, the *relative* importance of different subjects, ceremonies and holiness, order and truth. *Unity of spirit and unity of faith* there may be, amidst much *diversity in external forms*; and, indeed, the more completely the Church becomes universal, the more will some diversity in outward things become unavoidable and necessary. The *principle of order*, indeed, is essential. Society cannot exist without it. But *forms of order* and government may vary, whilst the principle is preserved. One form of Christian order, nevertheless, may be far better and more scriptural than others; and we only do our duty in not only preserving for ourselves, but earnestly recommending to others, whatever form we are persuaded is the most scriptural and most apostolical. Yet let us be well assured, that whensoever we press what is good and right one point beyond the warrant of Scripture, asserting that to be absolutely and strictly *essential*, which we cannot prove from Scripture to be more than right and sound and apostolical, if haply we may thus alarm some into acquiescence, we shall only repel others; we shall prolong the impressions, irregularities, or offences, which we deplore; strengthen schism, confirm disunion, and delay indefinitely the desired return of all our brethren to the most perfect order, and unity, and brotherly love and truth."—*Sermons on the Church*, by Dr. Hawkins.

not turn on the number of talents given, whether ten, or two, or one ; but on *fidelity* in the use of what was given. He was faithful therefore to Him who appointed him, and he persevered in his fidelity through the trying scenes of a laborious and protracted ministry, till the gracious sound came forth ;—

Servant of God, well done !
Rest from thy loved employ :
The battle fought, the victory won,
Enter thy Master's joy."

But it is not to eulogize my long-tried and much-loved friend, that I now stand in this sacred place : in ready compliance with the request of one whom your ears are not yet accustomed to hear called a widow, but for whom I would now affectionately excite in your hearts all the tender sympathy which so naturally attaches to that bereaved condition. In her presence, and the presence of her beloved family, I may not say what my heart would prompt.

Neither may I continue to speak of him who is taken from them. Were I to do so,—were I to occupy your time in speaking of him, the remembrance of his simplicity and fidelity as a witness for Christ, would rebuke me. Were it permitted to him, at this moment, from the bright and rapturous presence-chamber of the Lamb, to send a voice of warning and instruction into this house, he would say, ' Waste not, O ! waste not their precious moments in speaking of me ; speak to them of my Lord, my precious Saviour, his love, his life, his death, his resurrection-glory, his coming again to judgment. Comfort the mourners indeed, but let it be with the assurance, that Jesus is coming, and will bring his saints with him. Rouse the slumbering to

watch and pray ; but let it be with the urgent call to be ready, since they know neither the day nor the hour when the Son of Man cometh. Tell them, O ! tell them again and plainly, how sweetly Jesus receives his own, blotting out all their transgressions. Tell them, O ! tell them again and plainly, how solemnly Jesus will judge every man according to his works.'

To this last truth, my text and the parable from which it is taken direct our attention. Yes, my brethren, that every man shall be judged according as his work shall be, is a great scriptural truth. It is thus stated by St. Paul : " God shall render to every man according to his deeds : to them who by patient continuance in well-doing seek for glory and honour and immortality, eternal life : but unto them that are contentious, and do not obey the truth, but obey unrighteousness, indignation and wrath, tribulation and anguish, upon every soul of man that doeth evil, of the Jew first, and also of the Gentile ; but glory, honour, and peace, to every man that worketh good, to the Jew first, and also to the Gentile : for there is no respect of persons with God." Rom. ii. 6—11.

This is clear, and clearly revealed. No truth is more so. That God hath chosen a people out of mankind, to be saved in Christ, is clear and clearly revealed, but not more so than this. That the chosen of God are predestinated to the adoption of sons : that they are given of the Father to the Son in everlasting covenant : that in the fulness of the appointed time they are united to the Son by faith, justified in Him, sanctified by His Spirit, and kept by the power of God, through faith unto salvation,—all this is clear and clearly revealed, but no one part of it more clear or more clearly revealed than this,

as again expressed by St. Paul : " For we must all appear before the judgment-seat of Christ ; that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad." 2 Cor. v. 10.

This is involved in the parable before us, and constitutes one of its chief difficulties, to persons who make what they consider the gospel to consist in one narrow line of doctrine, in accordance with a human system : just as the sovereignty of God, in the election of his grace, is the stumbling difficulty to others who make the gospel to consist in another narrow line of doctrine, in accordance with another human system. I have made the word *human* emphatic ; because, beyond all doubt there is a system, and a system of perfect harmony in the Bible. But it is divine, and its harmony (as might reasonably be expected, nay, as is absolutely inevitable, if it teach us *anything* of God) is too high for human attainment, too deep for human penetration. No human sagacity can demonstrate its perfect unity ; and no human ingenuity can convict it of contradiction. Its bold outline is plain to every reasonable creature, as the rainbow to the naked eye of the peasant ; while the delicacy of its mingled shadings baffles the most improved optics of the deepest theologian. Your beloved Pastor knew this well : and while he received the combined truth as a little child, and delivered it impartially as a faithful witness, he did not frustrate it by vain attempts to compromise or explain it away.

Consider this parable,—

- I. ITS CONNEXION IN OUR LORD'S ADDRESS TO HIS DISCIPLES.
- II. THE NATURE OF THE DILIGENCE IT INCULCATES.

III. THE RELATIVE REWARD OF FAITHFULNESS IN
A FEW THINGS.

IV. THE POSITIVE REWARD OF FAITHFULNESS ITSELF.

I. THE CONNEXION in which this parable stands. In the preceding chapter, we read our Lord's prediction of his second coming, its suddenness, and the separation between his people and his enemies, which shall take place on his arrival. Arising out of this prediction, he insisted upon two things, as especially becoming, yea, as absolutely necessary, in his faithful servants who are waiting for Him—watchfulness, and diligence. His prophecy, in the matter of suddenness and final separation, is given thus;—

“But as the days of Noe were, so shall also the coming of the Son of man be. For as in the days that were before the flood they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day that Noe entered into the ark, And knew not until the flood came, and took them all away; so shall also the coming of the Son of man be. Then shall two be in the field; the one shall be taken, and the other left. Two women shall be grinding at the mill; the one shall be taken and the other left.” Matt. xxiv. 37—41.

Watchfulness is then urged—

“Watch, therefore: for ye know not what hour your Lord doth come. But know this, that if the good man of the house had known in what watch the thief would come, he would have watched, and would not have suffered his house to be broken up. Therefore be ye also ready: for in such an hour as ye think not the Son of man cometh.” Matt. xxiv. 42—44.

And then diligence—

“ Who then is a faithful and wise servant, whom his lord hath made ruler over his household, to give them meat in due season ? Blessed is that servant, whom his lord when he cometh shall find so doing.” Matt. xxiv. 45.

The object of the twenty-fifth chapter is to press these exhortations upon his disciples with still further urgency. This is done by two parables—the virgins, and the talents—followed up by a sublime description of his Judgment at his Coming. These parables may indeed answer other purposes, and contain a vast deal of information on other subjects—such fulness is characteristic of the divine word—but their direct and primary object in the discourse, taken as a connected whole, is clearly to inculcate watchfulness and diligence.

That, to press the duty of watchfulness, is the main scope of the parable of the virgins, seems placed beyond reasonable doubt, by our Lord’s own application of it at the thirteenth verse. And that to press diligence in duty, is the object of the Parable of the Talents, will appear equally undeniable, when we read it carefully in its connexion.

It commences at the fourteenth verse, and I must invite you to *look* at it, that you may see the form of the sentence as it opens, and its bearing on the close. Omitting the italics, the sentence begins in a broken form, instituting a comparison, which does not find its counterpart, till the whole parable is finished, and the truth to be illustrated by the parable begins.

Read it, bearing this in mind, and carrying forward into clause after clause, the note of comparison “*as*” Thus, we have this general statement, that AS a man travelling into a far country, called his servants and delivered unto them his goods in various proportions

pointing out their respective duties, and saying, "Occupy till I come;" and AS, when he came, he reckoned with all the servants, good and bad, according to their diligence or negligence; SO, when the Son of man shall come in his glory, shall He do with all his servants good and bad, separating them one from another, as a shepherd divideth his sheep from the goats? A description follows, of the ground of the separation, which is nothing else, than diligence on the one side, and negligence on the other.

II. We now consider secondly, THE NATURE OF THE DILIGENCE HERE INCULCATED. In the language of the parable, it is trading with the talents entrusted. The meaning is, faithfully availing ourselves of the gifts, opportunities, and advantages, which it has pleased God to bestow upon us, and which it is our obvious duty to use FOR HIM.

Every man has some talent, in this sense, bestowed upon him by the good hand of God. Take it first in its lowest and widest application, looking on man, merely as distinguished from the lower animals. God has given him *reason*, and for the right use of his reason, he is righteously responsible. How humiliating it is, to see that even the unreasoning creatures preach instruction to inconsistent man! Each of them has its appropriate and distinguishing gift or talent from God, and is diligent in the exercise of the same. Not one of them is content to exercise a gift inferior to its own. The hare to which God has given swiftness in the race, is not content to crawl like the worm. The hawk, to which God has given the rapid wing and darting flight, is not content to run along the ground like the hare. But

man, to whom God has given reason, and reflection, and conscience, and immortality, is content to live like the beasts that perish.

“Hear, O heavens ; and give hear, O earth ; for the Lord hath spoken : I have nourished and brought up children, and they have rebelled against me : The ox knoweth his owner, and the ass his master’s crib : but Israel doth not know, my people doth not consider.”
Isaiah i. 2, 3.

Now, the better any possession or talent is, the more wicked and inexcusable is the abuse of it. Is a crawling hare that will not run, silly ; and does it deserve to be caught ? Is a running hawk that will not fly, silly ; and does it deserve to starve ? Much more, a carnal man, who will not think and reason and look before him into eternity, is worse than silly, and deserves to be lost “Consider this, and shew yourselves men.” If you were as true, as practically true, to the moral powers that are in you, as the animals feeding in the field are to their instincts, selecting what is nutritious, and refusing what is poisonous, your souls would be saved. If you were faithful in a few things, you would be advanced to the management of many things. Remember the words of the Lord Jesus, how he said, “If ye have not been faithful in the unrighteous mammon, who will commit to your trust the true riches ? And if ye have not been faithful in that which is another man’s, who shall give you that which is your own ?” * If you have not been faithful in those natural opportunities and advantages, which are not inalienable, but may be taken from you ; how can you expect to be put in possession

* St. Luke xvi. 11, 12.

of those spiritual blessings in Christ, which, when once given, are your's and are never taken away ?

Your dear dying pastor felt concerning many of you, that you required a warning voice like this. One of his treasured sayings, during his last few days, was this—“ Oh ! that I could get a warning and invitation to the careless souls at Watton ! ” Hearken, my brethren ; being dead, he yet speaketh. A fellow-labourer of his in the same glorious gospel, utters among you the desired warning and invitation—“ Awake ! thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead ! and Christ shall give thee light.” You have resisted the affectionate ministry, and the long and consistent life of your faithful pastor. Let his death prevail ! Gracious God, speak Thou in their consciences, move Thou in their wills, crown Thou with saving success, the prayers of thy waiting Church !

But we must occupy higher ground. Our Lord was speaking to his own disciples throughout the whole discourse before us. It is manifest that many of the particulars mentioned in this 25th chapter, could not have any application except to persons who call Him Lord, and have opportunities of doing good to his brethren around them, or of neglecting to do that good, as they please.

The diligence to which the Lord's disciples are exhorted in this place, is the love of the brethren, as the beloved disciple expressed it, “ not in word nor in tongue, but in deed and in truth.” * Some of Christ's brethren are poor in this world, and some of them are rich. Some very poor, and some very rich. These distinctions must remain. They have been, are, and shall be. They are not inventions of men, for the ele-

* 1 John iii. 18.

vation of a class, and the oppression of a class, as reckless agitators endeavour to persuade the ignorant and discontented. They are not infirmities of men in a state of barbarism : if they were, they might perhaps be done away by man in a state of civilization. But they are of God, and man cannot change them. "The poor shall never cease out of the land," and God hath chosen some of the poor in this world, to be rich in faith, and heirs of the kingdom. Some of the Lord's brethren here on earth are afflicted, and some at ease. Some are hungry, and some have abundance and to spare. Some are naked, and some have two or ten coats. Some are strangers, wandering and destitute, some in comfortable, some in splendid habitations. Some are in prison or slavery, some are free. Some are still ignorant of the gospel, while some are well instructed. Here is the Lord's distribution of gifts or talents for diligent use. Here are the Lord's opportunities to us, of shewing how we love Him. Here is the Lord's field for the trial of his faithful husbandman.

Of this our loved and lamented friend availed himself zealously. Who was weak, and he was not weak, with tender sympathy? Who was offended, and he burned not, with fellow-feeling, and anxious desire to heal the wound if possible and prevent strife? What cause required assistance, and he laboured not? Concerning whom, among all his contemporaries, could it be said with such emphasis of truth, that he bore in his heart *a care for all the churches?*

Brethren, be followers of him, as he was of Christ, and be indeed faithful in the few things entrusted to you. The poorest have still something, whereby they may testify their love to their brethren and Christ's

brethren around them. Take the case of the most distressed labouring man, among all who are now before me, a man who can with the greatest difficulty procure food and raiment and fuel sufficient to meet the daily and urgent wants of himself and family : what talent, it may be asked, is he in possession of, whereby he may exercise Christian diligence, and shew practical love to his Christian brethren ? In reply, I observe that our Lord, in enumerating the tokens of love, which in the persons of his members, he had received on earth, not only says " I was an hungered and ye gave me meat," but also, " I was sick and ye visited me." He received sympathetic self-denying kindness, as well as substantial relief. Here then is the answer. Who is so poor and destitute that he cannot sympathise with an afflicted neighbour ? that he cannot, as St. Paul expresses it, " weep with them that weep ?" Dear brethren, true love is ingenious in devising modes of being kind. If a real lover among you be too poor to make costly presents, he will supply the want by such kind attentions and smaller benefits, as will abundantly prove, that if he gives no more, it is not for want of inclination.

You see your calling then : it is to practical love, manifested in various ways and measures. Your several abilities and opportunities to feed, clothe, shelter, visit, and teach, the brethren around you, are the several talents which the Master, the Lord Jesus, has entrusted to you to trade withal, and now over your dear pastor's tomb, commit yourselves afresh, to a solemn prayerful determination, by God's help, to be faithful in your few things.

To those who are rich among you, I give this charge, yet not I, but the Lord the Judge. " Charge them that

are rich in this world, that they be not high-minded, nor trust in uncertain riches, but in the living God, who giveth us richly all things to enjoy ; that they do good, that they be rich in good works, ready to distribute, willing to communicate ; laying up in store for themselves a good foundation against the time to come, that they may lay hold on eternal life." 1 Tim. vi. 17—19. That the Lord Jesus may say to you at his coming : " Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world : for I was an hungred, and ye gave me meat : I was thirsty, and ye gave me drink : I was a stranger, and ye took me in : Naked, and ye clothed me : I was sick, and ye visited me : I was in prison, and ye came unto me." Matt. xxv. 34—36.

To those who are rich in measure, the same language applies in its measure, according to your several ability. And thus saith the Lord, who knows all the secrets of your circumstances, your opportunities, and your family wants : " He which soweth sparingly shall reap also sparingly ; and he which soweth bountifully shall reap also bountifully. Every man according as he purposeth in his heart, so let him give ; not grudgingly, or of necessity : for God loveth a cheerful giver. And God is able to make all grace abound toward you ; that ye always having all sufficiency in all things, may abound to every good work." 2 Cor. ix. 6—8.

To those among you who are not rich, the Lord says by his inspired apostle,—

As to your state of mind : " Godliness with contentment is great gain. For we brought nothing into this world, and it is certain we can carry nothing out. And having food and raiment let us be therewith con-

tent. But they that will be rich fall into temptation and a snare, and into many foolish and hurtful lusts, which drown men in destruction and perdition. For the love of money is the root of all evil : which while some coveted after, they have erred from the faith, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows." 1 Tim. vi. 6—10.

As to what you cannot give : " If there be first a willing mind, it is accepted according to that a man hath, and not according to that he hath not." 2 Cor. viii. 12.

As to what you can give : " Be kindly-affectioned one to another with brotherly love ; in honour preferring one another. Bless them which persecute you : bless and curse not. Rejoice with them that do rejoice, and weep with them that weep." Rom. xii. 10, 14, 15.

To all of you, this is the word of the Lord : " Let love be without dissimulation." " Remember them that are in bonds, as bound with them, and them which suffer adversity, as being yourselves still in the body." " But whoso hath this world's good, and seeth his brother have need, and shutteth up his bowels of compassion from him, how dwelleth the love of God in him ?" 1 John iii. 17. " Love worketh no ill to his neighbour : therefore love is the fulfilling of the law. And that, knowing the time, that now it is high time to awake out of sleep : for now is our salvation nearer than when we believed. The night is far spent, the day is at hand : let us therefore cast off the works of darkness, and let us put on the armour of light. Let us walk honestly, as in the day ; not in rioting and drunkenness, not in chambering and wantonness, not in strife and envying. But put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make not

provision for the flesh, to fulfil the lusts thereof." Rom. xiii. 10—14.

For if any evil servant shall say in his heart, the day is not at hand, the Lord delayeth his coming, or is not coming, and shall thereupon begin to injure, or despise, or even to neglect his brethren and fellow-servants; "the Lord of that servant shall come in a day that he looketh not for him, and in an hour that he is not aware of, and shall cut him asunder, and appoint him his portion with the hypocrites."

Observe, I beseech you, my brethren,—observe carefully the ground, the immediate ground of everlasting condemnation throughout this solemn discourse of the Lord Jesus. It is *omission* of known duty, nothing else. The foolish virgins are not accused of any positive commission of evil. They are excluded for ever from the presence of the glorious Bridegroom, because they *omitted* to have oil in their lamps. The unprofitable servant is not accused of any crime of commission. He did not squander his talent in evil living. He hid it, flattering himself that if he made it no better, he would at least make it no worse. He *omitted* only to exercise his talent, and he was cast into outer darkness. The wicked on the King's left hand are not charged with any evil *committed*: they are consigned to everlasting misery, because they *omitted* only to do the good which they might have done.

Observe also the master-hindrance to the exercise of Christian diligence, betrayed in the excuse which the slothful servant pleads for himself. "Lord, I knew thee that thou art an hard man, reaping where thou hast not sown, and gathering where thou hast not strawed; and I was afraid, and went and hid thy talent." He

was ruined by a wrong apprehension of the character of God. He looked upon God, as a hard, unreasonable, unfair Master, expecting more than his servant can render, more than his servant had opportunity of rendering. This is indeed ruinous. And it is inevitable, so long as God is viewed through the medium of conscience, and not in Christ. You must *love* God, before you can truly and acceptably serve him ; and in order to love him, you must know him, as he has been pleased to reveal himself in his dear Son, reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses.

Here is peace, and here only. "I find all my principles confirmed," said he whom we now lament, "by my last hours. I have believed in Jesus Christ, and he supports me now."

And when the voice of solicitous affection said, "You require rest, dearest father," his reply was, "Quiet rest is in the sense of duty performed."

But I must hasten to consider,

III. THE RELATIVE REWARD OF FAITHFULNESS IN A FEW THINGS.

The master and Judge says, "I will make thee ruler over many things." If the connexion between fidelity in service, and advancement in service, rested solely upon the Lord's promise, this would be sufficient for every loving confiding servant, though he were unable, for the present, to perceive the nature of that connexion. But the connexion may be perceived, and is, in truth, most practical and most precious.

Practices persevered in, become habits : habits indulged become a second nature. Moral powers duly exercised, become moral powers, thereby, and propor-

tionably, enlarged. The more determinedly diligent a man has been, the easier it becomes to that man to be diligent. The more practically unselfish a man has been, the easier it becomes to that man to be unselfish. This is true of every moral excellence ; and this is sufficient to shew, how advancement to the power of ruling many things stands connected with persevering fidelity in ruling over or arranging a few things. This is the history of the most remarkable advancements among men, to be found in the annals of our world. Joseph supplies an example. He was faithful in a few things at home with his father. Through much tribulation he was advanced to the management, successively of the establishment of Potiphar, and of the state prison of Egypt. In these responsible situations, he was faithful in more things. And then, we find him advanced to be practically " ruler over all the land of Egypt."

This illustrates the principle which there is no reason to suppose is confined to our present state of existence. If then there be vast varieties among the capacities of the blessed, both as to original gift, and as to strenuous cultivation ; and if, seeing that all God's works in every department repudiate equality, there be varieties of mansions of our heavenly Father's house, and varieties of governments, over one city, or five cities, or ten cities in his kingdom ; we see how capacity to rule, and therefore in His impartial hands, actual rule over many things, in our advanced state of being, stands connected with fidelity, real and conscientious, in the management of a few things in our present state. We see also how comparatively great capacities here, if unaccompanied by faithfulness to Him who gave them may dwindle away, and leave their possessors disap-

pointed and degraded. In this sense, many that are first in the service of men, having never practised or even attempted any service of God, shall be last. And many that are last among men, having devoted all their energies to the service of God, shall be first.

To this higher range may be applied another of the death-bed utterances of your lamented Pastor, which he probably intended to apply only to the advancement of divine truth in this present world, when he said ;— “ God works most by simple persevering industry.” Doubtless He does, both in the effects produced by it upon others, and in the cultivation for higher and nobler employments, carried on by it, in the diligent worker himself. Fidelity in a few things is a moral seed-time, the legitimate harvest of which is, to be put in possession of many things. “ In the morning sow thy seed, and in the evening withhold not thine hand ; for thou knowest not whether shall prosper, either this or that, or whether they both shall be alike good.”

True indeed, only the great Lord of the harvest can either give seed to sow, or prosper the seed sown ; but He has appointed means, and he honours his own appointments. “ An idle soul shall suffer hunger,” and “ the thoughts of the diligent tend only to plenteousness.” “ The hand of the diligent shall bear rule.” “ The substance of a diligent man is precious.” “ The soul of the diligent shall be made fat.” Be encouraged, then, my Christian brethren of low degree and obscure station, who have no opportunity to be engaged in what man considers great things. Your reward shall not be measured by the *amount* of what is now entrusted to you, but by the *fidelity* with which that trust is discharged.

IV. "Enter thou into the joy of thy Lord." Here is the POSITIVE REWARD OF FAITHFULNESS ITSELF.

The joy referred to is, the perfected felicity, both in body and soul, of the children of God, at the resurrection of the just. This is plain, because the period referred to, is the time of the Lord's return to reckon with his servants—verse 19—and "they that are Christ's" rise at his return, to "meet him in the air," and to be transformed into his likeness. 1 Cor. xv. 23 ; 1 Thess. iv. 13—18. This is our blessed hope. For this we look Phil. iii. 20, 21., we shall be satisfied, when we awake up *in his likeness*, Psalm xvii. 15. "Oh, that resurrection-glory," exclaimed your beloved Pastor on his bed of suffering unto death, "what will it be, when these vile bodies are fashioned like unto his glorious body—that hope supports me through all."

Concerning the state of the disembodied "spirits of the just" before the coming of the Lord, we are not taught much, and we can adequately imagine but little. The joy of the Lord Jesus! To see the everlasting purposes of Jehovah, which were purposed in Christ, and are to be performed by Christ, advancing towards completion, another and another of the chosen living stones wrenched from the quarry, shaped, and polished, and builded upon the sure foundation! To recognise the all-sufficient reasons for what man accounts delay in the gracious process, and anticipate, with full assurance, the triumphant success with which the headstone of the corner shall be brought forth! For the joy that was set before him, Jesus suffered. For the perfection of it, He still waits, desiring to see the full fruit of the travail of his soul, and to be satisfied. His saints wait with Him, entering into the joy of the Lord,

And not redemption only, but to read creation also "in the bare bosom of the Deity." No longer groping, if haply they may find, with telescope or microscope : no longer toiling in artificial contrivances for improved observations, or in elaborate calculations leading after all to baffling results ; but having at once a full clear flood of light thrown upon the wonders, great and small, of the wonder-working hand of God. To grasp with satisfying intelligence, the myriads of suns and starry systems, which our Father's hand has scattered through the depths of space ; and not their sizes only, and motions, and relative distances, but what is of infinitely deeper interest, their contents, and whether they are indeed, have been, or shall be, the abodes of intelligent creatures, capable of worship and obedience, and subjected to moral trial !

The joy of the Lord to which we are heirs, my Brethren—"heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ"—is indeed "an inheritance incorruptible and undefiled, and that fadeth not away." "If these things were believed, they would persuade for themselves ; we should not need any entreaties to move you to seek after this inheritance. Have we not experience enough of the vanity and misery of things corruptible ? and are not a great part of our days already spent amongst them ? Is it not time to consider whether we be provided with any thing surer and better, than what we have here ; whether we have any inheritance to go home to after our wandering ? or can say with the Apostle—"We know that if our earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens."* *

* Leighton.

Happy are they whose hearts the Spirit of God sets and fixes on this inheritance. They cannot be taken by surprise. Come when it may, either the hand of God laying them to sleep in Jesus, or the voice of the archangel and the trump of God, waking them in Jesus, they are ready. Your beloved Pastor was ready. "Salvation to be *sought*," he said, "is painful and doubtful: salvation *found*, is strength, and peace, and joy."

" At midnight came the cry
To meet thy God prepare :
He woke, and caught his Captain's eye ;
Then strong in faith and prayer,

His spirit with a bound,
Left its encumbering clay.
His tent, at sunrise, on the ground
A darkened ruin lay.

The pains of death are past,
Labour and sorrow cease ;
And, life's long warfare closed at last,
His soul is found in peace.

Soldier of Christ ! well done !
Praise be thy new employ ;
And, while eternal ages run,
Rest in thy Saviour's joy."

APPENDIX.

HAVING been requested to add a short account of my beloved father's last illness, I could not refuse to retrace those farewell hours, which were, I feel, so much to the glory of God, and may, I trust, be recorded to the solace of many who love our Saviour, and the memory of his departed servant. The nature of his dying illness—congestion on the brain—precluded the possibility of his wonted vigour of thought; the intervals of lucid consciousness were limited and scattered; and even then we were forbidden to suggest any new subject, for fear of excitement. So that on reviewing the last four weeks of his life, we cannot but feel that the many bright expressions of faith and assurance, and farewell messages of love, were especially given to us by God, when, from the usual character of his disease, we might have anticipated nothing but incoherent unconsciousness and despondency. Many of these thoughts which his children will be forgiven for treasuring as gems of truth, have been embodied in the sermons of his beloved friends; but to be permitted to record any that remain, and to attempt to give his beloved parishioners and friends some impressions of the holy peace of his departure, must be a task eminently soothing and blessed.

His uninterrupted cheerfulness and glowing love, in a gathering of our family, in the middle of January, prevented our tracing the beginning of that fatal dis-

ease, which it seems had for weeks impressed others who only saw him from time to time. One valued friend wrote at his death—"Having heard from so many quarters of what might be daily expected, it was almost a relief to know that the pilgrim had passed the river. Seeing him, as I have done for several months past, at intervals of two or three weeks, and always remarking a difference, I could not but feel that his work was nearly accomplished, and think how rapidly he was hastening to enter in at the beautiful gate of the city." But, perhaps from the tender mercy of our God, the dark cloud was concealed from our view, till it suddenly overshadowed us. His last sermons were preached on Sunday, January 27th, on the significant text, "Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world." Matt. xxv. 34. He expressed himself peculiarly drawn out by his subject. Was it the prelude of that glory he was so soon to enter? He took his evening school-room lecture as usual, which was his favourite Sunday service: thus even to the end working diligently in the Lord's vineyard. He was over-wearied at night, but joined his family in singing—

"Jerusalem, my happy home,
Name ever dear to me,
When shall my labours have an end?
Thy joys when shall I see?"

Tuesday, January 29th, was the first day we were seriously alarmed by his extreme debility and languor; and his medical adviser, at once discerning the nature of his attack, absolutely forbade all mental work and excitement, and for the next two or three days active remedies were used; but he could hardly be per-

sueded to relinquish any of the arduous work which he had marked out for himself. On Saturday evening he sang his last hymn—

“ Oft in sorrow and in woe,
Onward, Christians, onward go.”

He was much disturbed by distracting pain in his head during the night, and said, “Heaven is near.” During the day, when somewhat relieved by the remedies used, his own clear happy faith shone out uncloudedly as ever. “What a comfort,” he said, “it is, not to have to seek salvation now! I can enjoy salvation found: I know in whom I have believed: the Gospel is a reality; I find it so now.” And afterwards: “Salvation sought is with fear and trembling; salvation found is always ready.” When asked what message should be sent to some absent members of his family, he said, “Tell them I am very happy in God’s love.” Again he said, “I have so many mercies: I ought to be full of praise! How easy love makes every thing, when we know the love of God! That is a sweet direction—‘In every thing give thanks, for this is the will of God.’ It is a bit of gold that enriches. They talk of the gold of California—but the gold of that land is good.” He said to one of his children, “You have a very angelic office, my child, ministering to an heir of salvation:” and he repeatedly regretted giving so much trouble, saying, “This poor body is not worth it.”

On Monday, February 4th, was the first of those marvellous rallyings which so characterised his illness, and raised the hopes of those around him. He walked down stairs, had an hour’s conversation with his brother, who had come from Liverpool to see him, over the Gorham cause, and other matters; dined with his

family, and spent chief of the afternoon in reading : but this unnatural strength and excitement sank again into his former weakness and torpor. He asked one, "What have you been reading?" "The Bible." "That is best : what different aspects it has, under different experiences ! Passages read in a sick room come with more power than ever they did before : what part are you reading ?" "Because thou hast been my help, therefore under the shadow of thy wings will I rejoice." That is, past experience leading to future joy and future faith. "The shadow of thy wings !" beautiful expression ! under the mercy-seat of the parent-hen ; so near to Him—yes, nestling in all His warmth and love."

When one of his children brought him refreshment, he said, "I will give you a cup of living water for your cup of tea ; it is this,—I have been thinking of it for a long time," "but, ye beloved, keep yourselves in the love of God, building up yourselves in your most holy faith, looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life ;" Jude 20, 21, there may be pleasant rooms to dwell in, mentioning many rooms in the house, but the best room of all to keep in, is the love of God, and what a prospect we have from it, "looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life,"—what boundless mansions of glory are these ! "keep yourselves then in the love of God." To another he said, "The heights of glory are what will humble us, there is no humiliation like that," and again, he expressed, "how the visions of glory had been quite indescribable, and how all the images of Revelation fell far short of the reality." When asked if he needed anything, his characteristic answer was, "No, only a more thankful heart." When

one said, "the medicine makes you weak," he replied ; "but grace makes me strong : they that wait on the Lord shall renew their strength." At another time he asked, "What passage have you got for me ?"—Isaiah xxxii. 2, was read. "There is all we want, protection, shade, refuge."

On Saturday evening, February 9th, when most of his family were with him, he said, though every word was an effort, "I have no confidence in any goodness or merit of my own. I place my whole trust in the Lord Jesus Christ,—on that account I am accepted ;—I believe I have faithfully preached his gospel ;" and taking the hand of one of his children, he said, "Renounce every confidence but in the death of the Lord Jesus," then, in a distinct, but hurried whisper ;—"Oh death where is thy sting, oh grave, where is thy victory ? Thanks be to God, who giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ." Afterwards, alluding to his sister, who fell asleep in Jesus last year, he said, "I shall soon follow her, who would wish to linger in this dying world ?" In the night, as he was being raised, he whispered, "I pray God this may be sanctified to me and my family ; it will be, with God's grace ; it won't be without." To his suffering child, he said, "Wearisome days and nights are appointed us, my F——, but all will be well." He spoke much about the service and sermons for his funeral, and looking earnestly at me said, "He is not dead, but sleepeth : take that text." He had before given me, "Those that sleep in Jesus, will God bring with him ;" and to another of his children, "The Lord bless thee, my child, and make thee a blessing, if we honour our Saviour and His truth, He will honour us, if we rally round his

truth, He will make us strong to support it." From this time he grew so rapidly and alarmingly worse, that we had treasured these as his last words,—the last charge of the dying Christian warrior, as if committing the standard he had so long and faithfully guarded to our unworthy and unequal hands.

It was a lovely spring morning, the lark was singing its first spring welcome, the soft sunshine poured through the open window into that room, where we all, as we thought, were watching our father's dying hours, but the loveliness of creation, when the pang of parting was over, seemed not to jar, but intimately to blend with the peace of the dying Christian ; his child-like sleep, the songs of glory awaiting him, the sunshine of heaven to which he was hastening, and the near prospect of the resurrection morning were all in harmony with nature's exultation. All hope of recovery had died in our hearts, his children from a distance were summoned to watch his departing spirit, when, by the tender lovingkindness of our God, he was yet restored to us for a few more days, to animate, and cheer, and bless.

It seemed almost miraculous to hear him speak once more,—almost his first words were those already mentioned in the sermon ; " I am a poor heap of mortality, but Jesus is the strength of my life, and my portion for ever ;"—"you see me a wreck, but Jesus is on board, and all will be well ;" and to another of his children, " you have been a long sufferer, my child, and now I have had to suffer for a little while, but it will soon be over now."

He especially enjoyed draughts of cold water, saying, " I connect it with spiritual blessings.—' He that drinketh of this water shall thirst again, but he

that drinketh of the water that I shall give him, shall never thirst, but it shall be in him a well of water, springing up unto eternal life ;'—the excessive coldness of the water, its rich abundance and refreshment, typifying just what the soul wants ; nothing seems to me so to resemble the pure refreshing waters of salvation as this." To his medical attendant he said, "you have had a troublesome office, but it is nearly over now," and when assured the trouble and sufferings had been his, he replied, "Nothing compared with my deservings ; I find all my principles confirmed by my last hours ; I have believed in the Lord Jesus Christ, and He supports me now ; I commend Him to you, as an only and complete Saviour ; you have done all you could for my poor body,—it is right that I should commend Christ to you." When entreated to rest, he answered ; " Quiet rest is in the sense of duty performed." With peculiar earnestness he said to me, " You preach the premillennial advent. I know you do, because you believe it, I have never regretted the Lord's giving me to grasp that blessed truth."

To another of his children he said, " You never saw a deathbed before ; did you ?" And when told we could not yet give up the hope of his being raised again, he answered, " That is not in the least likely, nor is it in the least desirable. I desire to depart and be with Christ, which is far better. Why should I be raised up, except for my family, and God will be with them : if I were raised, it would be to a body of much weakness and suffering : if I am taken, it is to glory ; the sufferings of this present are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be." His mind ran much on his poor people and his school-children, wishing us

to distribute copies of the Sinner's Friend, and Simeon Wilhelm among them ; and he was very anxious that "a voice of warning should be sent to the careless souls in Watton," and he said to his son-in-law and me, "I wish one of you would make arrangements to stay at Watton for a few weeks. I hope this time of my illness will be a great blessing to my dear poor people ; and how delightful it would be to have you the fountain-springs of these blessings." To his son-in-law he said, "I have finished my work, I am longing for my rest, my children must not detain me by their prayers." And again, "I hope the faith of my dear children will not be weakened, but confirmed by their father's last hours." But what seemed to us a yet more perfect triumph of God's grace in him, was his resignation to the will of God, though his faith was so clear and his assurance so unclouded. He said to me, "I have been talking with my dear brother," who had again come from Liverpool to see him, "as to whether this will be my dying illness : he tells me he does not say there is no hope ; now what he calls no hope, I call the most hopeful of all things—to go and be with my Saviour. He said it would be so for me, but I must cherish the hope of life for my family and my parish and the church of God. Well, the comfort is, that it does not depend on our wishes : it is God's will that orders all."

On Monday, February 18th, he called one of his children, and said, "My child, I want to dictate something to you on the mercies of God in my last illness." When entreated to leave it for the present, "No," he replied, "the desire for God's glory will enable me to do it ; I think such a paper might be blessed to my family when I am gone ; there is the mercy of my dear

brother being here, of our all being together a united family, having one heart and mind with me in the things of Christ, and of knowing that all things work together for our good ; glory be to God for all, goodness and mercy have followed me all the days of my life, my cup runneth over with His love : I record it as my dying experience of God's faithfulness, that though weighed down with a suffering body, I have found it true : 'As thy day, so shall thy strength be,' and, 'They that seek the Lord shall want no manner of thing that is good.'" His child begged him to leave off for a time, saying that she hoped that he would have many opportunities of finishing it. Looking earnestly at her, he said, "I do not deceive myself, a dying man has not many opportunities. I desire to glorify God, and to be a blessing to my flock and my children : 'He died for all, that they which live, should live not unto themselves, but unto him which died for them.' I trust my children may be better Christians for the experience of the past week ; God grant it." And when another of us came in, he continued, "Let us do what we can, while we can." He sent this blessing to his grandchild : "God bless her and give her more grace than her grandfather, and less suffering ; yet perhaps this is hardly a legitimate prayer for a child, for suffering is so needful for growth in grace." To his sister, "The great thing in love is to seek each other's spiritual benefit : remember that, dear sister, for yourself and your children. Seek to glorify Christ yourself, and seek that your children may glorify Christ !" Perhaps observing our eagerness to catch his words, he said, "I am afraid lest my children should think what I say is oracular ; it is nothing at all, except so

far as it is according to the will of God. I am anxious you should bear this in mind." At another time: "We are none of us exempt from affliction; nor can we wonder if even our blessed Saviour was made perfect through suffering, that we should share in them." At another time, he asked for Psalm cxxx.; he seemed to drink in every word, and when it was finished, said, "Beautiful it is; that is your father's only ground of confidence." And afterwards: "How truly this is called the body of our humiliation; well, 'it is sown in corruption, it is raised in incorruption; it is sown a natural body, it shall be raised a spiritual body.'"

On Tuesday, February 19th, in the night, when one of his children said she feared he was uncomfortable, "No," he replied, "I am very comfortable, I have had a pleasant dream, I thought I was in the green pastures with all the flock of Christ, wandering beside the still waters, and resting in the cool green pastures, was not that pleasant?" When asked if he saw Jesus there, "Yes," he replied, "that was the delight of it, to be with Him, and while He was there, every want was supplied—the Lord is my Shepherd, I shall not want, He supplies the wants of the whole world by the atonement He has made with His flesh and His blood: that is a wonderful thought, 'My flesh is meat indeed, and my blood is drink indeed,' while we have that we cannot want." In the after-part of the night he said, "Such multitude of thoughts come into my mind, passages of my past life,—I have had a busy life, and 'in the multitude of my thoughts within me, thy comforts refresh my soul.'" In the morning when the post was come, his son-in-law told him that Merle D'Aubigné sent his affectionate Christian remembrances to him,

he answered, "Tell him from me, my heart is with him, and all the dear foreign brethren, and I hope the Lord will bless them greatly in their efforts to spread His truth among the foreign churches." When his attendant, in dressing his wounds, said, he is a great sufferer, he whispered "'If we suffer we shall also reign with him.'" Of one of his parishioners in attendance upon him, he asked, who had died lately in the parish, and when informed, replied very quietly. "Mine will be the next death, let us all be ready." Speaking of his beloved friend Mr. Spencer Thornton's removal and his own, he wished that they might be as lamps in the dark valley of the shadow of death, shortly after again repeating, "I have no other ground of confidence but the Lord Jesus Christ, Christ first, Christ last, Christ all in all."

On Friday, February 22nd, he said to his son-in-law, "I have been thinking of that precious promise, 'Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid; ye believe in God, believe also in me,' to believe in Jesus is the great comfort; we must try to be better ministers, the good of the people is the great thing, all beside is a passing dream." No murmur ever escaped his lips, he had some word of counsel or consolation for all who approached him, and we believe some of his attendants will never forget the simple earnestness with which he addressed them. On the evening of this day, he sank into one of those heavy unconscious sleeps which this time lasted for near three days and nights without intermission. We never thought to see light in his eye again, or hear words from his lips; he seemed already parted from us, and gathering round his pillow, we commended ourselves to the God of the fatherless, our father's God, and our's.

But near midnight, on Monday, one of his children was holding his hand, when suddenly his eye lightened up with mind again, as if his spirit had returned from the border land of eternity. "Dearest father," she exclaimed, "Is Jesus with you?" his lips tried to move, but in vain. "If He is, will you press my hand?" he did so most distinctly, looking earnestly upon her. "Have you no fear?"—again he tried to speak, but unable, he gave the desired recognition. She asked a third question, but the momentary gleam was gone. The intervals of consciousness returned more frequently, and the next day he gave her this rich blessing; "The Lord bless thee, my child, with overflowing grace, now, and for ever."

At seven o'clock on the following Thursday morning, Feb. 28th, he became much worse, his breath so hurried, and the pulse quicker than could be counted. He continued in this state the whole morning, and except for the laboured breath, his appearance was that of a tired infant falling gently and wearily asleep. He was not conscious towards those around him, but seemed evidently conscious towards God, for his eyes were clear and raised upwards, reminding them of the motto he had chosen for the year—"Looking unto Jesus," but those lines describe it most faithfully:

How sweet the hour of closing day,
When all is peaceful and serene,
And the broad sun's retiring ray
Sheds a mild lustre o'er the scene.

Such is the Christian's parting hour
So peacefully he sinks to rest,
And faith rekindling all its power
Lights up the languor of his heart.

There is a radiance in his eye
 A smile upon his wasted cheek,
 That seems to tell of glory nigh,
 In language that no tongue can speak.

A little before five o'clock, the breath which had been drawn at longer and longer intervals suddenly ceased, but with one sob life returned, and this was repeated six or seven times. A shade of deeper solemnity, as at the approach of death, passed over his face, which then kindled with an expression of radiant joy. His breathing became noiseless as an infant's, the eye fixed upward grew brighter and brighter, till it was glorious to look upon, and he seemed enjoying visible communion with that Saviour whom he loved unseen.

One gentle sigh his fetters broke,
 We scarce could say he's gone,
 Before the willing spirit took
 Its mansion near the throne.

Light lingered in his eye even after the faint breath returned no more, and we scarcely knew the moment when the spirit returned to the God who gave it.

EDWARD HENRY BICKERSTETH,
Banningham, Norfolk

END.



A PLAIN SERMON

ON

2

CONFIRMATION,

BY THE

REV. ROBERT WM. BACON, M.A.

CURATE OF WATTISHAM, SUFFOLK.

LONDON:

LONGMAN AND CO. PATERNOSTER ROW; AND J. MASTERS,

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Price Sixpence.

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TO MY
PARISHIONERS OF WATTISHAM,

MORE ESPECIALLY

TO THOSE WHO ARE ABOUT TO BE CONFIRMED,

This Sermon is Dedicated,

WITH THE EARNEST PRAYER THAT THEY WILL EVER

BEAR IN MIND

THEIR BAPTISMAL COVENANT,

AND THE GRACE GIVEN THEM THROUGH

THE LAYING ON OF HANDS,

ON THE DAY OF CONFIRMATION, JUNE 28, 1850.



A S E R M O N.

ACTS viii, 14—17.

“NOW WHEN THE APOSTLES WHICH WERE AT JERUSALEM HEARD THAT SAMARIA HAD RECEIVED THE WORD OF GOD, THEY SENT UNTO THEM PETER AND JOHN: WHO, WHEN THEY WERE COME DOWN, PRAYED FOR THEM, THAT THEY MIGHT RECEIVE THE HOLY GHOST: (FOR AS YET HE WAS FALLEN UPON NONE OF THEM: ONLY THEY WERE BAPTIZED IN THE NAME OF THE LORD JESUS.) THEN LAID THEY THEIR HANDS ON THEM, AND THEY RECEIVED THE HOLY GHOST.”

Brethren, if at all times I address you under a sense of awful responsibility, much more so now, when many among you are about to be Confirmed, and all of us, I trust, will be brought to reflect soberly and seriously upon our solemn obligations towards Almighty God. They *must* be discharged at the peril of our soul. We cannot escape from them. We may waste our time in idle disputations, in open sin,

or death-like indifference ; we may give ourselves wholly to the cares of this world ; but God's eye is upon us, reading our thoughts, discerning our hearts, hearing our words, noting our doings by night and by day : and heaven, or hell depends upon the issue.

Whatever may be the impression on those who hear me, these are awful truths pressing continually upon the mind of the preacher. Preach we must ; woe be unto us if we preach not the Gospel ; and the fruits of our preaching are to some a blessing, to others they serve only to increase their damnation. What saith St. Paul ? “ We are unto God a sweet savour of Christ, in them that are saved, and in them that perish : to the one, we are the savour of death unto death ; and to the other, the savour of life unto life. And who is sufficient for these things ? For we are not as many, which corrupt the word of God : but as of sincerity, but as of God, in the sight of God speak we in Christ.” (2 *Cor.* ii, 15—17.) And as it is with preaching, so is it with all other means of grace, with Baptism, Confirmation, the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper, the reading of God's word, private prayer and public worship ; they may be, nay they *must* be used or abused, observed or neglected ;

there is no escaping ; they are offered to all, freely offered by Christ in His Church, to be received or rejected ; and in the one case, they are the savour of life unto life, in the other, the savour of death unto death.

What an awful thought is this, my brethren : and what a solemn occasion for those who are shortly to be Confirmed ; surely I may trust that they will be earnest and prayerful, humble and reverent, and glad to be instructed in the work of preparation ; and if Christian sympathy has not utterly died out, if there be left even a shadow of Christian unity in the midst of our deplorable, heart-rending divisions, surely the prayers of pastor and people, of parents and children, of rich and poor, of old and young, will ascend up together before the throne on high, to bless this work ; that if to others it has been, or is likely to be a savour of death unto death, to these it may prove, through the sanctifying grace of the Holy Spirit of God, a savour of life unto life.

Brethren, you will remember, that upon a former occasion, after stating and refuting a few idle objections, I called your attention to the directions of the Church with respect to Confirmation ; but I pur-

posely abstained from entering into the nature and meaning of that Ordinance.

Unhappily of a morning there are not many present ; I would it were otherwise : if there were more of Christian zeal and piety, whatever the difficulty, it *would* be otherwise. My ministrations thereby are greatly hindered ; but oh ! much more is this carelessness, and disregard of public worship, a hindrance and stumbling-block to your soul's salvation.

Religion is a *habit* ; I know not how a *habit* of religion is to be acquired by a mere occasional attendance upon the House of God. Nay rather the fruits of such conduct as this must be a habit of irreligion, an earthly temperament, worldly-mindedness. If for every day in the year the Church provides service twice a day ; *fourteen* times a week ; surely we should endeavour, yea delight to be present in this House of prayer, and praise, and thanksgiving, twice on a Sunday. I not only wish, brethren, and heartily pray, that you may be at Church more frequently, but that you may be more devout in public worship, stirring yourselves up to take an active part in it ; joining aloud, where you are required to do so, in the singing, (if able,) in confession, in the

creed, in answering Amen heartily and reverently to every prayer. Then would there be more of life in our services ; and the effort required by each individual would awaken us to the reality of public worship, convincing us that it is a truly spiritual exercise, full of comfort, delight, and blessedness to every loving Christian soul. Then, brethren, would you discover what a spirit of fervent sober piety, of truth and wisdom, of the pure word of God, breathes throughout the services of the Church of England, furnishing us with prayers for all we need, with praises and thanksgivings for every blessing which God pours out upon our souls and bodies, our Church and Country.

Upon the present occasion I am anxious to make plain to you the teaching of the Church upon the subject of Confirmation.

On turning to the Confirmation Service let us enquire, in the first place, What is it called ? "The Order of Confirmation or laying on of hands upon those that are baptized and come to years of discretion." Plainly, therefore, Baptism must *precede* Confirmation : this indeed appears from the very meaning of the words. Confirmation is the renew-

ing, confirming, strengthening of the grace of Baptism: Baptism is the Sacrament of Regeneration; in Baptism we receive our Spiritual birth; we are born again of Water and the Spirit; in Confirmation we receive, through the laying on of hands, a further gift of the Spirit to confirm us in the faith, and strengthen us spiritually; that we may grow up from the infant grace of Baptism towards Christian maturity, or spiritual manhood. Thus much we learn from the very title of the service. Then comes the Preface, wherein we find the following statement of the object of Confirmation. "That children, being now come to the years of discretion, and having learned what their Godfathers and Godmothers promised for them in Baptism, they may themselves, with their own mouth and consent, openly before the Church, ratify and *confirm* the same; and also promise, that by the grace of God they will evermore endeavour themselves faithfully to observe such things as they, by their own confession, have assented unto." Now observe, my brethren, for this has been a point of much misconception, and perverse misrepresentation; the Christian does not here take upon himself for the first time the solemn obli-

gations of the Gospel Covenant; this was done in Baptism once for all; and, without Confirmation, from infancy to old age; from the cradle to the grave, they continue upon him; but in Confirmation, he is required to bear witness before the Church to the truth in this matter; openly, with his own mouth to confess and declare, that he acknowledges himself bound to believe and to do all things to which he was pledged in his Baptismal Covenant; and that, God being his helper, he will endeavour to observe them.

This will appear from the very solemn question addressed by the Bishop to all that are to be confirmed—"Do ye here in the presence of God, and of this congregation, renew the solemn promise and vow that was made in your name at your Baptism, ratifying and *confirming* the same in your own persons, and acknowledging yourselves bound to believe, and to do, all those things, which your Godfathers and Godmothers then undertook for you.?" And every one shall audibly answer, "I do."

I will just notice here that the Bishop of this Diocese, in his circular letter to the Ministers of each parish, expresses his trust that those who are to be

confirmed will be so instructed, that every one shall audibly answer, "I do," as directed in the order of Confirmation. Now I earnestly hope that this request of the Bishop will be strictly attended to by those whom I shall present before him from this parish. It is grievous to find that from the neglect of responding in the services of the Church, there should be a like neglect, and unwillingness to make answer aloud, and from the heart, in so solemn a matter, upon so important an occasion.

This then is one part and object of Confirmation; to confirm and renew in our own persons, openly before the Church, and in the presence of God, the solemn obligations of the Baptismal Covenant.

But this, though a part, is by no means the principal part of Confirmation. Its essential character, its particular object, is the *confirming* us in the faith, strengthening us spiritually by the power of the Holy Ghost vouchsafed through prayer and *the laying on of hands*. The Bishop, therefore, after all have acknowledged by their answer the solemn obligations of their Baptismal Covenant, prays that they may have grace and strength to fulfil them, in the following words:—"Almighty and

ever-living God, who hast vouchsafed to regenerate these thy servants by Water and the Holy Ghost, and hast given unto them forgiveness of all their sins ; strengthen them, we beseech thee, O Lord, with the Holy Ghost the Comforter, and daily increase in them Thy manifold gifts of grace ; the spirit of wisdom and understanding ; the spirit of counsel and ghostly strength ; the spirit of knowledge and true godliness ; and fill them, O Lord, with the spirit of Thy holy fear, now and for ever." Then all of them in order kneeling before the Bishop, he shall lay his hand upon the head of every one severally, saying, "Defend, O Lord, this thy servant with Thy heavenly grace, that he may continue Thine for ever ; and daily increase in Thy Holy Spirit more and more, until he come unto Thy everlasting kingdom. Amen !"

Thus, brethren, I have set before you, clearly and distinctly, the teaching of the Church on the subject of Confirmation ; I have shewn you, I trust, and enabled you to understand, that it is a holy Ordinance wherein we confirm and renew before the Church the promises and vows which were made for us in Baptism ; but that more strictly speaking, and

in its essential character, it is that Holy Ordinance wherein through prayer and the laying on of hands, the Holy Spirit is given to confirm us in the faith and endue us with strength to observe to the end the solemn obligations of the Gospel Covenant.

And now let us compare the teaching of the Church with the practice of the Apostles, and with the word of God.

In the eighth chapter of the Acts, after relating the conversion, and baptism of the Samaritans by Philip the Deacon, it is thus written—"Now when the Apostles which were at Jerusalem heard that Samaria had received the word of God, they sent unto them Peter and John, who, when they were come down, prayed for them that they might receive the Holy Ghost, for as yet He was fallen upon none of them, only they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus. Then laid they their hands on them, and they received the Holy Ghost." Here you will observe that Philip was a Deacon; St. Peter and St. John were of the number of the Apostles. To the Apostles alone was permitted the office of *the laying on of hands*; whereby in those days, in addition to the ordinary Christian graces, there were given through

the Spirit, extraordinary gifts, the power of working miracles, speaking with tongues, healing the sick ; which Simon, when he saw, was so wicked as to imagine he might purchase with money.

Well then, my brethren, now that miracles have ceased, or are no longer vouchsafed in like manner to the Church, the Bishops, nevertheless, as successors of the Apostles, not only in England, but in the whole Church throughout the world, continue to observe this holy Ordinance. In the rite of Confirmation, and in that of Ordination, it is their office to confer, though merely as instruments in the hand of God ; as the representatives on earth of the Great Head of the Church, Who is reigning in heaven, those ordinary gifts of the Holy Ghost, which are as necessary now for the work of the ministry, and to confirm the baptized in the faith, and fear, and service of God, as in the time of the Apostles, and in all ages of the Church ; for Christians are now the same as ever, weak in themselves, looking for strength to the silent, secret, wonder-working operation of the Holy Ghost upon the soul.

Again, in the nineteenth chapter of the Acts of the Apostles, we read that St. Paul, when he came to

Ephesus, found certain disciples, to whom he said, "Have ye received the Holy Ghost since ye believed? And they said unto him, We have not so much as heard whether there be any Holy Ghost. And he said unto them, unto what then were ye baptized? And they said, unto John's Baptism." Now you will remember, brethren, in St. Matthew, the testimony of St. John to the difference between his and Christian Baptism—"I indeed baptize you with water unto repentance, but He that cometh after me is mightier than I, Whose shoes I am not worthy to bear, He will baptize you with the Holy Ghost and with fire." (Matt. iii, 11.) In obedience therefore to St. Paul, an inspired Apostle, these disciples at Ephesus, "were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus, and when he had laid his hands upon them, the Holy Ghost came on them, and they spake with tongues and prophesied."

Brethren, these passages of Holy Scripture must surely commend to you the practice of the Church.

But lest you should imagine that the laying on of hands was an act altogether of an extraordinary kind, to cease with the Apostles, I will point out to you, lastly, a passage in St. Paul's Epistle to the

Hebrews, the 6th chapter, the first and second verses, where *the laying on of hands* is spoken of as following after Baptism, and is declared to be one of the first principles of the doctrine of Christ; it is absolutely spoken of as a matter of doctrine, as familiar to Christians, as faith and repentance, and the resurrection of the body, and the day of judgment. "Leaving," saith the Apostle, "the *principles* of the doctrine of Christ, let us go on unto perfection, not laying again the foundation of repentance from dead works, and of faith toward God, of the doctrine of Baptisms, and of laying on of hands, and of resurrection of the dead, and of eternal judgment."

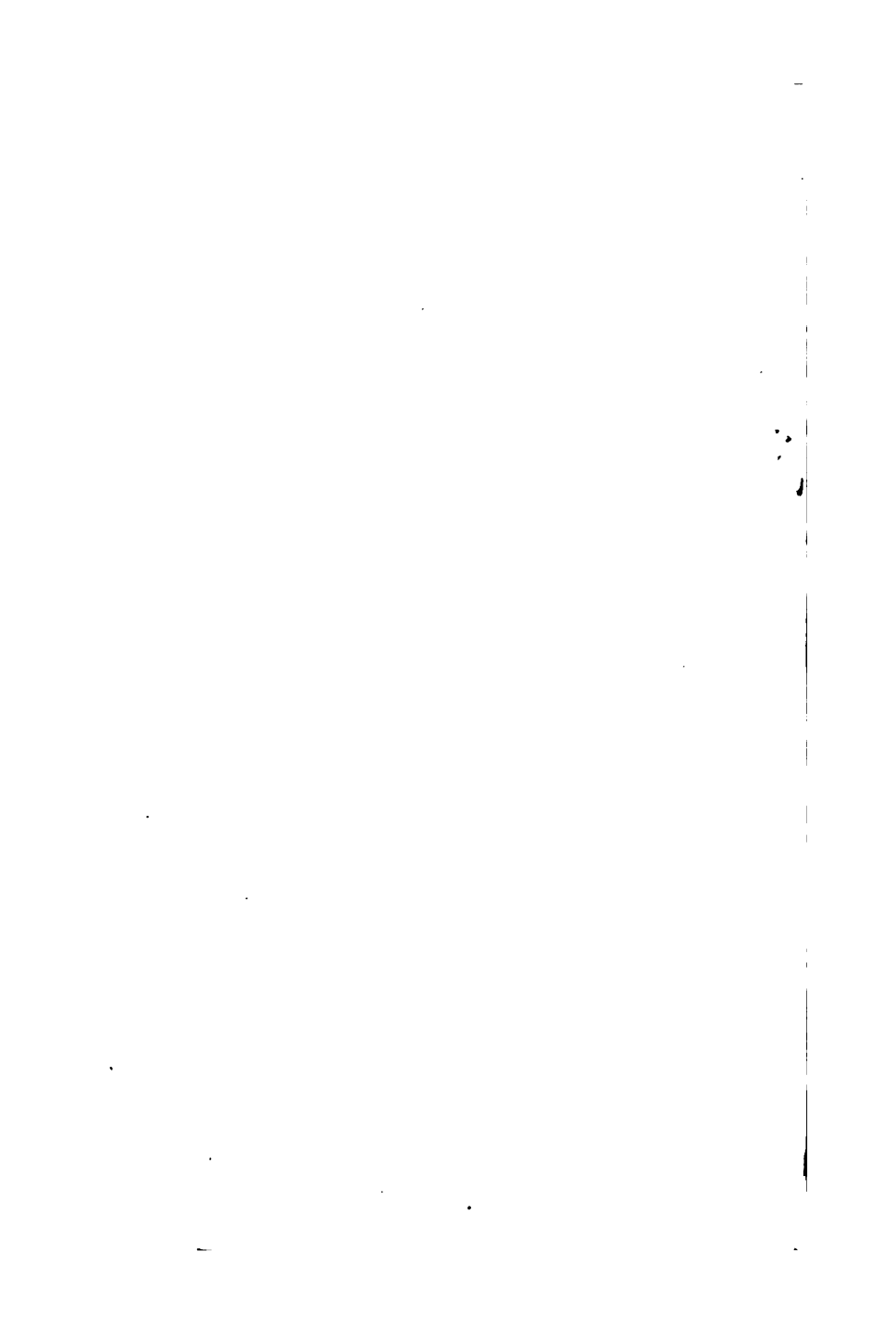
Surely, my brethren, I need say no more to show you that the doctrine and practice of the Church is handed down from the Apostles; is the doctrine of Scripture; and is altogether the will and purpose of God, carrying with it a blessing to all generations.

I am unwilling for the present to detain you longer, but the matter is important, and again and again must be the subject of my discourse to you for several Sundays.

This only, I beseech of you, to lay these things to heart, and in our work of preparation for *the laying*

on of hands, to be earnest and prayerful, humble and reverent, and of a teachable spirit ; always remembering, that, although Christ himself is our only Saviour, it is by faith and repentance ; by holiness of life ; by the word of God ; by prayer and sacrament ; by the fruits of the Spirit wrought out in our hearts through the habitual use of the means of grace, that you and I, brethren ; pastor and people ; young and old ; can look without terror, yea with hope and comfort, not in ourselves, but in the Lord Jesus, to the resurrection from the grave of our mortal bodies, and to the day of judgment. *Amen.*





“ W E E P . N O T . ”

3

A Funeral Sermon,

PREACHED AT WATTISHAM,

On the 23rd of June, 1850,

BY

THE REV. ROBERT WM. BACON, M.A.

CURATE OF BRICET AND WATTISHAM, SUFFOLK,
AND
FELLOW OF KING'S COLLEGE, CAMBRIDGE.

LONDON:

LONGMAN AND CO. PATERNOSTER ROW; AND
J. MASTERS, ALDERSGATE STREET;
AND PAWSEY, IPSWICH.

3



TO MR. WILLIAM HARVEY,

OF WATTISHAM HALL,

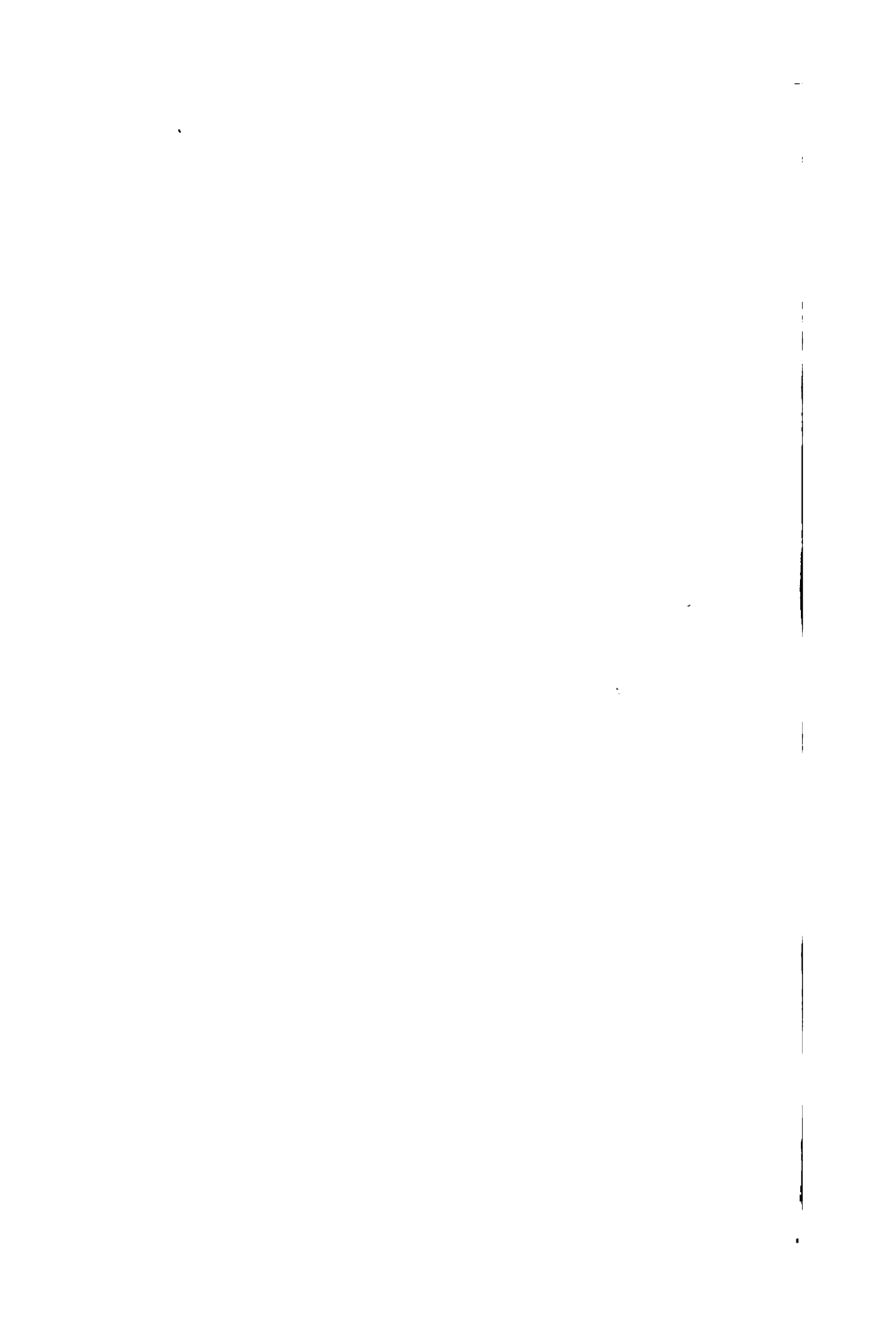
Churchwarden,

THIS SERMON IS DEDICATED AS A TRIBUTE OF

SYMPATHY, RESPECT, AND ESTEEM,

BY THE REV. ROBERT WILLIAM BACON,

CURATE OF BRICET AND WATTISHAM.



A Sermon.

LUKE vii, 13.

“AND WHEN THE LORD SAW HER, HE HAD COMPASSION ON HER, AND SAID UNTO HER, WEEP NOT.”

Brethren, we have met together in a season of affliction ; I may say of more than common affliction ; not because on this occasion both high and low have been brought alike to the same level in the grave ; for the Church knows nothing of worldly distinctions ; the Church would have us look upon all her children as one family in Christ ; whether high or low, rich or poor, they are dear alike to their only Saviour ; the dearest are those who are most abased in their own esteem ; the highest in heaven are those who on earth are the most holy and humble of heart.

Look upon that holy Font; there we, each one of us, from the prince to the peasant, receive alike our spiritual birth. Look to the holy Altar, there as Christians we eat of the same bread; we drink of the same cup, that we may grow in grace, and be drawn together in love one towards another; that we may be made one with Christ, and Christ with us. Here, in this holy, heavenly sanctuary, this house of prayer, do we assemble, not for private, nor family worship, but as one family in Christ, with the whole Church throughout the world, to offer up those praises and thanksgivings on earth, which we humbly trust, it may be ours to offer up with the whole company of the redeemed, with Angels and Arch-angels, and with the Saints made perfect, before the throne in heaven. And as we pass hither from hall or cottage, young and old, "high and low, rich and poor, one with another;" as we bend our steps, blessed as yet with health and strength, through the hallowed resting-place of a thousand generations; of husband or wife; father or mother; parent or child, what do we learn? What

lesson do we learn from the sacred, silent, speechless dead? Surely this lesson;—that, although for the best and wisest purposes, there are differences of rank in this world of probation; social distinctions which it is no less our wisdom than our duty to observe, yet after all we are but dust and ashes, soon, very soon, to be summoned to the grave; and when not only we poor creatures of an hour, who are but as grass; but when “the heavens shall pass away with a great noise; and the elements shall melt with fervent heat; the earth also, and the works that are therein, shall be burned up;” then shall the voice of that very Jesus, Who at the gates of Nain, had compassion on the weeping widowed mother, and dried up her tears, and touched the bier, and said unto the dead, “Young man, I say unto thee, Arise;” then shall that voice which gave life to the cold and breathless body, and was heard by the spirit which had departed from it into the unseen world, not only be heard in one solitary spot, but resound throughout every quarter of this visible universe; through heaven, and earth,

and sea, and air, and all shall hear ; “ the dead, small and great, shall stand before God ; and the books shall be opened, and the dead shall be judged out of those things which are written in the books, according to their works. And the sea shall give up the dead which are in it ; and death and hell shall deliver up the dead which are in them, and every man shall be judged according to his works.”

I say then, my brethren, that it is not because this person or that person is removed from us, that our affliction is great ; although here too there is indeed a source of sorrow ; for do we not suffer a two-fold loss, especially the poor, when one is taken away, whose hand and whose heart would have been ever with them ; who, if it had pleased the Almighty to spare her yet a little, would have shewn forth the pureness and simplicity of her faith in ministering to your wants ; in visiting the fatherless and widow in their affliction, while she kept herself unspotted from the world ? Undoubtedly this, to her a blessing, is to you, and to me, my poorer brethren, a source of more than common

sorrow ; our own hearts bear witness to it ; yet we grieve not for her only, but for a poor aged sister, both in one week taken from our little narrowing circle ; filling many a loving heart with sadness ; and bidding us all in Christian sympathy be mindful that we are called upon “to bear one anothers burdens ;” to pay our poor tribute of respect to the departed, and to “weep with them that weep.”

Nay more, as your Minister, your own common Pastor and servant in Christ, I cannot but regard as united in one those two little flocks, which God in his providence has committed to my care ; and so I am reminded that sickness and death have indeed of late been busy amongst us ; one called away with very little warning, with scarce time for preparation, to his solemn account ; and another, very dear to us, brought so near the grave, that they who stood by her, and watched over her anxiously, could scarcely, as it pleased God to answer their prayers ; to spare her for a season ; to give her back to them once more almost from the dead ; I say they could scarcely have had less

cause for consolation and thankfulness than this widow of Nain, who having been schooled in affliction by the loss of her husband, was following to the grave, the pledge of his love, the stay of her years, her only son ; “ and when the Lord saw her, He had compassion on her, and said unto her, Weep not. And He came and touched the bier, and they that bare him stood still. And He said, Young man, I say unto thee, Arise. And he that was dead sat up and began to speak. And He delivered him to his mother.”

My brethren, I pass over, I am constrained to do so, many a lesson of heavenly warning, and heavenly wisdom, which our Lord would have us learn from this miracle.

I have selected for my text one single portion of it ; not that we would exclude all consideration of the rest ; but simply because it contains in it that which is most appropriate to the present occasion ; that which, I trust, if with God's good blessing we meditate on it aright, may speak of comfort to every mourner's heart.

“ When the Lord saw her, He had compassion on her, and said unto her, Weep not.” These were no words of formal sympathy, or of human consolation. Figure to yourselves the scene. It must have been a startling moment that, when the Saviour of the world, both God and man, though to all appearance no more than man, stood in the way ; arrested the solemn funeral procession ; commanded the bearers to stand still ; and behold ! at His word, he that was dead, not only the body, but he that was dead, was animated once more by the departed spirit ; and the heart began to beat and the blood to circulate, and the limbs to move, and the eyes which had closed over this passing scene, to kindle once more with the light of life ; and the tongue was loosed, and “ he that was dead sat up, and began to speak. ”

We might naturally inquire, What were the words which escaped the lips of one arisen from the dead ? What did he utter who had passed through the grave to that unseen world, where at the very moment of departure, each one of us here present, it may be to-day, it may be to-

morrow, shall inevitably be found ; either with Dives in torment, or with Lazarus in paradise ; either with the spirits of the blessed, or with the spirits of the damned ; according to the deeds done in the body, whether they be good or evil.

Brethren, we know not ; the words which he uttered are not recorded ; the whole narrative is brief, yet beautiful and affecting, past all expression.

We pass on from the miracle to those words of Jesus spoken to the sorrow-stricken widow of Nain, " Weep not. "

Are they not spoken to us, my brethren ? Did not He Who uttered them, even the Lord Jesus ; He Who " has the keys of hell and of death ; Who openeth and no man shutteth ; and shutteth and no man openeth ; " He Who is " the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever ; " He Who, though man, is the Everlasting God, to Whom the present and future are both alike ; did not He know well that these life-giving words would be recorded in Scripture, and repeated in the ears of future generations ; and bring comfort to us who are here assembled,

and to all who have faith to look unto Jesus as their only refuge ; “ a very present help in trouble ? ”

Yes, brethren, to us ; and to all who are mourners, like this widow of Nain, our Saviour would say, “ Weep not.” Not that it is a wrong thing to mourn under bereavement, God forbid ! but to weep immoderately ; to allow our sorrow to be without hope ; or to exceed those limits which God would set to it by the spiritual consolation to be derived from prayer, and godly meditation, and self-denying resignation to the Divine Will.

I ask you then, dear brethren, to meditate on these things. In listening to the words of the blessed Jesus, “ Weep not,” let us ask ourselves the question, Wherefore should we weep for the dead ? Is it really true that we do weep for them ; or is it not for ourselves ; for our own bitter loss, and not for the sacred, peaceful dead that our tears are flowing ?

Brethren, these questions would be answered best by asking another, Where are the dead ? Not the mere body ; not the mere earthly taber-

nacle of the soul : but where are they, at this very moment, who from the beginning of the world, throughout every generation, have departed hence in God's faith and fear? Are they not blessed?

What are those words which fall sweetly on the ear when we commit to the grave the mortal body, which though returning to its earth, is not to be despised; is to be handled reverently; for it shall rise again, changed indeed, yet the same body; though sown in corruption, it shall be raised in incorruption; though sown in dishonour, it shall be raised in glory; though sown in weakness, it shall be raised in power; though sown a natural body, it shall be raised a spiritual body, and re-united for ever with the undying soul. What are the words which speak to us then, at that sorrowful moment, of those who have fallen asleep in Jesus? "I heard a voice from heaven, saying unto me, Write, from henceforth blessed are the dead which die in the Lord; even so saith the Spirit; for they rest from their labours." But if this be so, would you break in upon their rest?

Would you wish to bring them back again ? It may be that in the infirmity of our poor selfish sorrow, such might be our wish. But would it become the Christian to pray unto Him Who heareth prayer ; to ask of the living, loving Jesus, Who is no less with us now, though we see Him not, than of old when on earth He spake the word, and the blind saw ; and the lame walked ; and the lepers were cleansed ; and the deaf heard ; and the dead were raised ? Would it become us Christians, to whom life and immortality are brought to light through the gospel, to ask of the Lord to give back our dead ; to give them back again to the trials and troubles of this mortal life, again to suffer, and again to die ? Should we really desire the Lord Jesus to speak to us from heaven ; to say to us mourners, as to the widow of Nain, " Weep not ;" and to our dead, " Arise ?" No, brethren, the words of the compassionate Jesus speak better things to us ; they tell us not of a present, but a future resurrection, when we shall go to them, which is better, far better, than that they should come to us. They teach us mode-

ration ; and they teach us resignation under the most bitter bereavement. They turn our thoughts to those most comforting words of the holy Apostle: "I would not have you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning them which are asleep, that ye sorrow not even as others which have no hope. For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring with Him. For this we say unto you by the word of the Lord, that we which are alive, and remain unto the coming of the Lord, shall not prevent them which are asleep. For the Lord Himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the Archangel, and the trump of God ; and the dead in Christ shall rise first ; then we which are alive and remain, shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air, and so shall we ever be with the Lord. Wherefore comfort one another with these words."

Brethren, I pray that indeed ye may be comforted by these truthful words. I pray that the Holy Spirit may sanctify to your present and

everlasting peace these waters of affliction ; that, although bitter to the taste, like the waters of Marah, they may be sweetened by the cross to your souls profit.

Rather than bring back the sacred dead from their peaceful resting-place, let us feel what we say, when in our extreme affliction we are cast down in the flesh, but sustained in the spirit ; and can stand over the very grave, and have faith to declare in the words of our beautiful funeral service—"Almighty God, with Whom do live the spirits of them that depart hence in the Lord, and with Whom the souls of the faithful, after they are delivered from the burden of the flesh, are in joy and felicity, we give Thee hearty thanks for that it hath pleased Thee to deliver this our sister out of the miseries of this sinful world." O let us have faith not only to utter, but to feel in our hearts the truth of these words, for they are holy, and scriptural, and becoming a Christian.

Rather than disturb the repose of the dead, let our hearts' best affections, as link by link

they are severed on earth, be raised above earth and earthly things, and follow the spirits of the Saints departed into the repose of Paradise, and the presence of Jesus.

Rather let us pray, not that the Lord may say unto us here in this world of trial, "Weep not;" for it is good to be afflicted; the sinner stands in need of God's chastening hand; but pray we rather so to live, that after this life ended, when it shall please Him "to accomplish the number of His elect, and to hasten His kingdom, we, with all those that are departed in the true faith of His holy Name, may have our perfect consummation and bliss, both in body and soul, in His eternal and everlasting glory, through the same Jesus Christ our Lord." Amen.



CHRISTIAN BAPTISM;

OR

. THE BAPTISM OF CHRIST.

5

DO THE CHRISTIAN CHURCHES GENERALLY
ENTERTAIN SOUND SCRIPTURAL VIEWS
RESPECTING IT ?



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CHRISTIAN BAPTISM ;

OR THE BAPTISM OF CHRIST.

DO THE CHRISTIAN CHURCHES GENERALLY ENTERTAIN
SOUND SCRIPTURAL VIEWS RESPECTING IT ?

SUCH an inquiry is forcibly suggested by the controversy, which has existed for a long period, and especially of late, in the Protestant Episcopal Church—a controversy, by which many are confirmed in the belief, that neither party takes a scriptural and adequate view of the subject.

During the dark ages of the apostacy, when ignorance and superstition enveloped and debased the minds of men, religion was deemed principally to consist in outward acts and ceremonial observances. Spiritual and even miraculous effects were attributed to some of these, and many of them were dignified with the title of mysteries or sacraments; the latter word being borrowed from a Roman military oath. In the twelfth century, seven in particular obtained this character, and were termed baptism, the eucharist, confirmation, penance, priestly orders, marriage, and extreme unction.

By the reformers at the time of Luther, only the first two were allowed to retain the rank of sacraments; the five others were pronounced to have been improperly regarded as such. Many good and en-

lightened men entertained, however, great doubt, as the Waldenses and others had done long before, on the claims of water baptism and the supper, to that degree of importance, and to the production of those spiritual effects, which were generally attributed to them ; believing that the subject was abstruse and questionable, and that further light might be expected to arise upon it. They saw that the Reformation, which had been commenced, had to deal with antiquated and deep-seated errors and prejudices ; that superstition, after so long a reign, could not be reasonably expected to be overthrown at once ; and that divine worship and religious services were not likely to be speedily purged from the various corruptions, with which they were masked. Many sincere reformers deeply regretted that human policy, worldly wisdom, and secular authority, exerted a great influence, in hindering the work of thorough renovation in the church, and in keeping alive, under vain pretences, suggested by self-interest, much that ought to be destroyed. The people had been accustomed to a round of ceremonies and exhibitions, captivating the senses with pomp and splendour, and the imagination with an air of solemn mystery. They were unwilling to be deprived of these imposing spectacles, and unprepared to accept religion in her simple, genuine form. The ministers, having assumed the title of priests, found the numerous performances a lucrative source of income, and the means of securing reverence and authority ; they had an interest, therefore, in retaining some rites ; while many adhered to them probably in great sincerity,

their minds being still blinded by early prejudice. Luther especially was of the last description, contending earnestly for outward views and practices, but slightly removed from Romanism. Several of his contemporaries were not a little disappointed and dissatisfied in this respect, and looked forward with anxiety to further reformations, which they felt unable to carry out, amid the opposition surrounding them.¹

Great were the differences of opinion among the leading reformers, as to the effects produced on the recipients, by the use of the two rites still retained as sacraments. It had been the doctrine of the Roman Catholic Church, that the due administration of them conveyed spiritual grace to all who received them, *ex opere operato, i. e.*, by the very act itself, whatever might be the moral qualifications either of the minister or the receiver. Few, if any, of the Reformers adopted this extreme view; but some of them held that, whatever the spiritual condition of the minister, yet if he had been duly ordained, and if he had administered the rite according to the approved form, grace was conveyed to the receiver, provided the latter had faith. Others, however, maintained that, unless the minister were faithful, all his ministrations were vain and ineffectual, notwithstanding his authority derived from man.

It may not be necessary here further to pursue the general subject, the present question being as to the

¹ D'Aubigné's Reformation, vol. iv. book 13, &c. Fox's Acts and Monuments, vol. iii. ann. 1555. Mosheim's History, 16th century. Milton's Considerations on Hirelings, &c.

true nature and effects of Christian baptism. The author desires to speak diffidently and charitably throughout these pages, and to wound or offend, as little as may be, the feelings of those, who conscientiously believe the application of water to be either that baptism itself, or an essential part of it. To all such he would respectfully submit the following remarks, for candid and serious reflection. Formularies of man may be either clear or ambiguous; judges may decide, and councils may reverse their decisions; but after all, the great question too little regarded, is, What says the Scripture?

All true believers in Christ readily admit, that the cleansing and purification of the soul is essential to salvation, and is the great purpose of Christian baptism. Outward washings and sprinklings can be of no avail, except they tend to this result. Let us, therefore, consider, whether they can convey even to adults any spiritual grace or purity? and further, whether they can possibly benefit infants, who are neither conscious of their need, nor able to appreciate either the means or the object?

Spiritual grace is essential to religion under every dispensation. Without it none ever truly worshipped the Father. It has produced the same heavenly and regenerate nature in the faithful, of every age and country. It is the very life of religion in the soul of man. Shadows and signs have no moral nature or virtue in themselves, nor any natural or necessary connexion with the spiritual things which they have been employed to represent. Even shadows of material objects, though they indicate the existence

of bodies projecting them, have nothing of their reality, substance, or life, and therefore cannot communicate the properties of those bodies.

Spiritual grace and a sign or shadow do not involve or produce each other ; essentially different in nature, as matter and spirit, their properties cannot pass from one to the other, but must subsist separately in each. A man may be regenerated by the Holy Spirit, before he is immersed or sprinkled, or without ever undergoing either ceremony ; and, on the other hand, he may have been sprinkled or immersed, yet he may never be regenerated. This is the language of common sense, and is it not also the general testimony and evident tenor of Scripture ? But further, though every shadow is essentially different from the object itself : yet brutes mistake shadows for bodies ; children are imposed on in the same way, but are soon sensible of the deception ; even men, when distance favours the illusion, may be deceived for a time. Such errors often produce inconvenient results : but to confound outward material objects or actions with inward spiritual graces, involves consequences far more serious. Purifying water is an appropriate emblem of the sanctifying Spirit ; but the whole of its significance lies in the figure ; it washes the body, as the holy Spirit cleanses the soul. The invisible grace is altogether of the Spirit, and its mode of operation is spiritual, consistently with the dignity of the Agent, and the nature of the human soul, to which it is communicated.¹ Many other signs are

¹ See Melville Horne on Regeneration and Baptism.

equally significant; and may they not be presumed to be equally efficacious? The washing of the feet,¹ the refining of metal,² the sweeping of a floor,³ the burning of chaff,⁴ the purging of vine branches, and other operations, are mentioned in Scripture as emblems of the purification of the heart; and if, by performing any of these, our thoughts and desires are seriously turned to the cleansing of the soul, and to the necessary work of regeneration, is not this all that, at the utmost, can be accomplished by sprinkling or immersion?

But what are the consequences of admitting that the use of water in infancy constitutes Christian baptism, without which none can be saved? Would it not follow, that the salvation of a child might be lost, through the mere neglect or misapprehension of his parents, without any fault whatever in himself; and that it would depend on the performance or the omission of an act, over which he has no control, of which he is not even conscious—on what may be termed an accident, as regards himself?

Again, let us consult the plain dictates of right reason, very generally corresponding as they do with the evidences of revelation; and consider, without prejudice, whether the application of water to an innocent unconscious babe, and the sign of the cross marked on his forehead, can cleanse his yet undeveloped soul from sin, make him “a member of Christ, the child of God, and an inheritor of the kingdom of heaven.” But here another, and a pre-

¹ John xiii. 10. ² Mal. iii. 3. ³ Mat. iii. 12. ⁴ John xv. 2.

vious question, presents itself: is there actual sin to be cleansed away, by man's aid, in this poor infant, for whose salvation, as well as for ours, Christ has died? Before he has done or imagined either good or evil, is he to be punished everlastingly? The thought is monstrous, and is repugnant to all our moral convictions, and to the most adequate ideas which we are enabled to form, of the goodness, equity and justice of our Almighty and all-gracious Parent. The Scriptures declare that "sin is the transgression of the law,"¹ and also that "sin is not imputed where there is no law."² That the poor helpless infant, who knows no law, has not himself actually committed sin, surely all rational persons must agree. Is he then to be condemned eternally, for the sins of his progenitors? Far is this from every scriptural view of the glorious Divine attributes.

Let us further appeal to common experience, and to such results as are within our own observation. If sprinkling or immersion be so effectual in a moral and spiritual sense, we may fairly expect to perceive the beneficial effects in those around us. Let us consider as respects this ceremony, the various classes of persons, comprehending the community at large.

Professing to be first in antiquity is the Roman Catholic Church, regarding all Protestants as heretics, and claiming for its own priests the sole authority to administer baptism. Are there in its members, who have thus received the rite, any general tokens of having been born again, distinguishing

¹ John iii. 4.

² Rom. v. 13.

them from the rest of the professing Christian world?

Secondly, are found the large number who have been sprinkled by Episcopal Protestant ministers, many of whom also assert that the ceremony is valid and efficacious, only when performed by them. Have all these really received "the baptism that now saveth?"¹

With respect to both these classes, do we perceive in them any evidence of a regeneration of heart, that can be referred to the ceremony of baptism, which they underwent in infancy? Can we discover it even in the early periods of life? And in mature age are they more pure, more humble, more temperate, more spiritually-minded than other Christians? Is there, in fact, any characteristic spiritual superiority, by which we can discern that such persons have been duly baptized, and that others have not? Or, on the contrary, is it not palpably manifest, that they are just like the rest of the community, and evince no benefit whatever attributable to the rite which they have undergone? That they are included in one or the other of two great divisions, more or less distinguishable, viz:—those, who, through repentance and faith, are subject to the converting power of divine grace; and those, who, through unbelief and hardness of heart, resist that grace, which is the purchase of the Saviour's blood? Or, to use scriptural figures, those who, having entered the strait gate,² are walking in the narrow way that leads to life; and those who, having passed through the wide gate, are treading in the broad way that leads to destruction: those in

¹ 1 Peter iii. 21.

² Matt. vii. 13.

fact, who, having received the baptism of the Holy Ghost, are spiritually-minded ; and those who, having rejected this baptism, are carnally-minded ? Is not this, altogether irrespective of any outward ceremony, the true and grand distinction to be traced between the righteous and the wicked—between such as have accepted the mercy of God in Christ Jesus, and the offers of his grace, and such as refuse him for their Mediator and Lord ? How dangerous is it then to frame another distinction, resting entirely on the use or disuse of this ceremony,—for such must be the case, if the professions respecting its efficacy are sincerely entertained—and to hold up the observance of a mere rite as the one thing needful, the *sine quâ non*, the element of regeneration, and the passport to the kingdom of heaven !

Thirdly, are those that have been sprinkled in infancy by nonconformist ministers, said by some of the Episcopalians to possess no valid authority to administer the rite. Have all these really received that Christian baptism which purifies the soul ? Holding, as they do, a middle position, between such as have been professedly baptized with full authority and validity on the one hand, and others who have never undergone the ceremony on the other, they are not to be distinguished from either party by any particular moral evidences, corresponding with their standing in this respect. For we find that those, baptized by ministers, subject to all the alleged disadvantages of the want of due ordination, show no evidences in after life, either of spiritual loss resulting from the imagined deficiency, or of benefit derived from the rite received.

Of the fourth class, to which the writer belongs, it becomes him to speak with diffidence. Yet he may appeal to his fellow-christians, whether any indications are manifest, of a lower spiritual or moral condition, in the members of that religious community, which altogether rejects water-baptism, than in professors generally of other denominations—whether their children exhibit more evidences of the fall of man ; and whether their adults, notwithstanding many acknowledged and lamented deficiencies, are not bringing forth, without any general distinguishable inferiority, the fruits of the Spirit, in life and conversation.

But among those who have been baptized with water, there is another distinction, viz., such as have received the rite in infancy, before they were capable of faith, or even conscious of the fact ; and others who have received it in mature age, when they may be presumed to have conscientiously desired it. It would be reasonable to expect from the latter such fruits of holiness, as are consistent with the desire to be found obedient to the divine will, whether correctly comprehended or not in reference to this question ; these fruits being altogether independent of the ceremony itself. But if any reliance be placed on it for spiritual graces, the condition of such is decidedly worse, and they are in circumstances of great danger to the soul's health ; while the period of infancy, most commonly selected, utterly precludes the reception of any spiritual or permanent impression.

In truth, little further remark seems necessary to the unprejudiced mind, on the total inefficacy of such a practice, whether in infancy or in adult age, to produce any substantial benefit to the soul. Yet the

Campbellites, a large sect in the United States, are said to believe that the outward ceremony alone is essential and sufficient ; and to deny the influences of the Holy Spirit on the human mind in the present day. On the other hand, in the reign of dark superstition, a people in Syria, named Jacobites, gave a literal interpretation to Christ's baptism "with the Holy Ghost and with fire," and actually used fire in administering the rite.¹ To what fearful and absurd lengths may extreme outward views carry misguided man !

Turning again to the several classes which have been enumerated, it is presumed that, on impartial reflection, the reader will be brought to the conclusion already adverted to, that neither the performance of this ceremony, whether by ordained or not ordained ministers, whether received in infancy or in mature age, nor its non-performance under any circumstances, produces any discoverable difference, in respect to holiness or otherwise ; but that the rite is altogether inoperative, and tends to no apparent purpose of good. If then the facts are such—and of these the writer would intreat every one to consider and judge seriously for himself,—the inquiry strongly forces itself on the mind, whether experience or reason warrants the opinion, that an observance so solemn in profession, and so imposing in character, can have been prescribed by the great Founder of our holy religion, to be perpetually observed in his church ; and yet causing apparently no beneficial effects ? If it were really so designed by him, if it were necessary

¹ See A. Clarke on Matt. iii. 11, and Trapp on Acts viii.

to regeneration, and productive of it, surely we have reasonable ground to expect that its good results would be manifest to the world, and would be signally blessed to the individuals who have received it, and to the communities which uphold the institution; that the tree being made good, its fruit would be good also. But instead of any such happy consequences following the reception of this ceremony; we discover a liability to mistake the application of water for true Christian baptism—a sign for the substance—to rely on it as efficacious to salvation; and in the same proportion, to lose sight of and neglect that great work of repentance, conversion and holiness, without which we are assured that no man shall see the Lord?

Are no effects then really produced by baptism, and clearly attributable to it? Is it merely a nominal thing, a profession, a nonentity; or is it truly a positive operation and change, effecting the purification of the soul?

Baptism is unquestionably a most important and essential part of the experience of every true Christian, one of the first steps in his spiritual progress, the very foundation and origin of his character. "Not by works of righteousness which we have done," said the apostle Paul, "but of his mercy he saveth us, by the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Ghost, which he shed on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Saviour."¹ Those who have experienced this "one baptism"² of the Spirit, are they, who, independently of any outward rite, have

¹ Titus iii. 5.

² Ephes. iv. 5

known the work of regeneration, by "being born of the Spirit," and who, if they continue stedfast in the faith, bring forth its fruits in life and conversation. While those who have not in some degree witnessed it, whatever external ceremony they may have passed through, are still in the natural, earthly, unregenerate condition, bringing forth the works of the flesh. This is the grand distinction between the righteous and the wicked—a distinction which can never be traced to the mere use or disuse of any outward observance, but which is the effect of the gracious baptizing influence of the Holy Spirit on the mind of man on the one hand, or of the rejection of it on the other—a distinction manifested by devotedness of soul, by holy or unholy fruits, and not by superficial professions or observances.

Yet some would fain make this great work almost a matter of rote, a mechanical performance, to be done for them in infancy, without the trouble of their co-operation, and even without the condition of their knowledge. And the imitation of this and of other spiritual processes, forms, with professed priestly services, a standing source of income, a transmissible ground of authority and reverence, not to be enjoyed but by dignified ecclesiastics and privileged apostolical successors, claiming to be the only authorized expositors of holy scripture! Alas! the cause of Christ is wounded by these vain fallacies and assumptions; his church suffers from their existence, and is weary with their repeated contentions; one shade of error jarring with another shade of error, one degree of outwardness with another degree of outwardness;

one class of men undertaking to cure the souls of the rest of the world, mixing up external performances with the great spiritual work of regeneration, mistaking the one for the other, and propagating the delusion, to the imminent danger of the souls of the people. Thus encouragement is afforded to forgetfulness and neglect of that great and real work of Christian baptism, without which man can never be made in truth a "member of Christ, the child of God, and an inheritor of the kingdom of heaven,"—in other words, can never be purged from sin, and become a partaker of the righteousness of Christ.

But the observance is alleged by some to be *generally* necessary, desirable or advantageous. This view of it is by no means intelligible. The expression "generally necessary" approaches very nearly to a contradiction in terms. A thing is either really necessary, or it is not really necessary. If it is not necessary at *all* times and in *all* cases, the necessity is destroyed. If it convey no spiritual grace, the advantage is none. But this ceremony of infant baptism is in itself of no moral character, or inherent holiness, the mind of the recipient is not even a party to it; it reaches no further than the body or skin. That it should produce future benefit to the soul of an unconscious babe, would be a perpetually recurring miracle, of no common stamp. It partakes too much of the exploded theory of exorcism and mysticism. It demands too large a surrender of the use of our senses, and affords no reasonable ground for that demand. We can understand well how one thing, or one condition of mind, which naturally involves the

fulfilment of other moral conditions, should be necessary to salvation; but when several things, quite independent of each other, are stated to be necessary, and one or more of them are not of a moral nature, and of no holiness in themselves, this is by no means clear. If I possess the moral qualities required, but have not obtained the other qualifications, what is my situation? And if I have obtained those which are not of a moral nature, and am without those which are moral, what is my situation then? These are not imaginary contingencies, but daily recurring circumstances. Let us remember too that a large proportion of the nations of the earth never heard of the supposed ordinance. If the presumed necessity be admitted, what must *their* situation be?

But it will be necessary to look at another view of the subject, entertained conscientiously by many religious persons.

Some christian communities, and a large number of individuals in others, admit that it may be a mistake to attribute to water baptism any spiritual benefits, or to conclude that this ceremony possesses any vital efficacy, in effecting the great work of regeneration. Yet they sincerely believe, at the same time, that it is a part of Christian baptism, to be received either in early or in adult years; that it was commanded by our Lord, and practised by his apostles, as initiative into his professing church; as "an outward and visible sign of inward and spiritual grace," if not conferred, yet signified, and to be devoutly prayed for; as a public token of membership in his body; and as a perpetual ordinance to be practised by christians.

Among this large class of persons, opinions doubtless differ widely, as to the advantages to be derived from the observance; some denying them altogether, and others estimating them more or less highly; but all acting on the conviction of the divine authority of the institution, and therefore being careful to retain the sign in some way or other, in order to fulfil the apprehended duty.

We can understand the value and necessity of signs in the former dispensation, when they were employed to prefigure the spiritual blessings, more fully to be enjoyed under the gospel; but when these are come and realized through Christ, it appears consistent neither with scripture nor with right reason, to suppose that signs of them are still to be continued; the utility and end of such having been already answered, and the danger being very serious of mistaking them for the spiritual reality.

Water baptism appears to have been performed at first by immersion. It was only with the sick that any exception was made, and in such cases it was administered by sprinkling. Many, however, considered that this was not a valid form.

It is worthy of note, that by far the larger number of those, who profess to believe that baptism with water is obligatory on Christians, use nevertheless only sprinkling. This is not the place to enter into the question between that practice and immersion, the present object being to plead against both, either as true christian baptism, or as its necessary accompaniments. Sprinkling is deemed by many to imply an admission, by those who use it, that the full obser-

vance is unnecessary ; and that if only a vestige of the rite be retained, it is sufficient.

Infant baptism began to be publicly advocated by Irenæus in the second century ; towards the end of which it was zealously opposed by Tertullian. The notion of a magical influence, connected with the rites termed sacraments, gradually gained ground. Regeneration was confounded with baptism ; and, about the middle of the third century, the unconditional necessity of infant baptism was pronounced by a provincial council held in North Africa. Several symbolical forms were added by degrees, and the various modes and questions connected with the ceremony gave rise to great contentions. The church of that country soon after sanctioned the practice of giving the bread and wine to children, termed " the communion of infants," which also prevailed very extensively ; and under a mistaken view of our Lord's meaning in the 6th of John, was deemed, like baptism, absolutely necessary to their salvation.¹

The sprinkling of infants does not appear to have been generally introduced into England till about the year 1600.² The common custom of protestant Episcopalians is, to use this partial sign of that which is in itself a symbol, to add the mark of the cross, to garnish it with circumstances of festivity and gaiety, to practise it only on unconscious infants, and to uphold it as almost necessary to procure the title of a christian, or the registration of the birth and name.

Thus we are compelled reluctantly to believe that,

¹ See Neander's *History of the Church*, vol. i. p. 305, &c.

² *Encycl. Britt.*, art. Baptism.

in one or more denominations of christians, the religious character claimed for the institution is in great measure lost, as respects most of the parties ; that the solemn vows and promises uttered by the sponsors are not usually intended to be performed ; and that the spiritual grace, pronounced by the minister to be imparted by the ceremony, is not really experienced by the infant. How fearful is this view of the case !

If then a strict compliance with the supposed original institution is by most Christians not deemed to be necessary, does not a more enlarged and spiritual view of the whole question still demand their serious consideration ? And would it not lead to the conclusion, expressed in the words of our Lord himself, that "it is the Spirit that quickeneth, the flesh profiteth nothing ;"¹ or to the same conclusion, conveyed in nearly similar terms, by the apostle Paul, "the letter killeth, but the Spirit giveth life ?"²

The subject of infant-baptism or sprinkling, has been chiefly dwelt on in these pages, because this is the prevailing practice of the community ; many of the foregoing remarks equally apply, however, to the immersion of adults, as used by one or two denominations. It is apprehended that these do not usually consider the rite to be productive of spiritual grace ; but that they submit to it, under the belief that it is required of all Christians, by the tenor of the New Testament, and as an open profession of their faith. By how many other and more edifying means may this profession be really and effectually made ! The

¹ John vi. 63.

² 2 Cor. iii. 6.

obligation supposed to be derived from scripture will be considered hereafter.

If the things which have been alleged are really so, —and whether they are so or not, let every one deliberately judge for himself without prejudice;— they impose a strong obligation on the christian churches in general to consider most seriously, whether our Lord and his apostles did, or did not, really institute this outward ceremony, to be for ever observed in his church, as a necessary means of regeneration and salvation.

The forcible inquiry, *cui bono*, what is the benefit? also applies; and a strong presumptive reason is afforded for questioning the divine authority of the rite; and for submitting whether there has not been some great misapprehension on the subject, a literal and erroneous interpretation of injunctions designed to be spiritually accepted: whether the idea of many of the early reformers is not well founded, that this mysterious subject is yet but ill understood, and that more light must be sought for upon it; and whether, in fact, the reformation from the darkness, corruptions and superstitions of the Romish Church, as respects this observance, has attained its intended completeness.

These are considerations deeply momentous to the cause of religion, and of revealed truth, which the writer desires, in all tenderness to the consciences and prepossessions of others who think differently, to recommend respectfully to their candid and serious thoughtfulness. Conscientious conviction, even when the ground is questionable, is entitled to charity and deference from those who differ in opinion; and for

such feelings he hopes he may receive credit, though the nature of the inquiry demands that the subject should be treated without reserve, and closely viewed in its different practical bearings.

The conclusion arrived at is this, that there are no traces of spiritual benefit or superiority, arising from the reception of this ceremony, to be discovered in the minds or lives of those who have partaken of it ; that there is no apparent result leading to the un-biassed judgment, that it has been blessed to individuals or to religious communities ; and that its total disuse would be injurious to the cause of vital religion, and to the best interests of the church of Christ. Are there not, on the contrary, strong reasons to fear, that the impressions made on the minds of the young and unreflecting are calculated to produce, either total unbelief on the one hand, or on the other, false notions of real christianity, and vain presumption on an outward *rite*, accompanied with a disregard and neglect of personal holiness ?

Alas ! then, that those who profess the name of Christ should thus disfigure their holy religion, and present it in so unfavourable an aspect, for the acceptance of those numerous and sincere inquirers, who cannot reconcile such futile, superficial ideas with the general tenor of the gospel, or with the convictions of their own minds and senses ! May we not with much reason conclude, that such observances are among the corrupt, superstitious traditions and practices, introduced in a dark and degenerate age ; and therefore, though they have, among some professors, survived one reformation, that they are yet to be

wholly swept away, by the gradual progress of another, from the fair edifice of Christian truth ?

But, after all, our appeal must be made more directly to the New Testament, as the rightly acknowledged standard of Christians ; to ascertain whether it affords sufficient evidence for the belief, that the practice of immersion in water, or of sprinkling with it, forms any part of that baptism, which all true believers acknowledge to be essential to salvation.

Historians and commentators relate, that it was customary among the ancient Jews, to baptize proselytes with water, on receiving them from heathenism into the new profession. And thus, when John the Baptist, the concluding prophet of the legal dispensation, preached the coming of the kingdom of heaven, and repentance for the remission of sins, he also, according to his special calling, baptized those who came, as converts to his doctrine and fellowship. Our blessed Lord, therefore, submitted to this, as he did to the other ceremonies of the Jewish Law, in order "to fulfil all righteousness."¹ John was, however, very careful not to mislead the people, by directing their expectations to himself ; on the contrary, he distinctly pointed their attention to Christ, saying, "Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world."²—"I indeed have baptized you with water, but he shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost,"³—"He must increase, but I must decrease."⁴ These last words foretold a gradual conclusion of the former dispensation, and also a progressive

¹ Matt. iii. 15. ² John i. 29. ³ Mark i. 8. ⁴ John iii. 30.

establishment of the new one, which proved to be the result. Following the prevailing practice, the disciples of Christ also baptized converts at times with water, as they used circumcision¹ and other legal ordinances,² more or less, for a considerable period.

But it is worthy of special notice, that our Lord himself did not so baptize,³ and that, when his baptism is expressly spoken of in the New Testament, it is generally stated to be with the Holy Ghost or Spirit;⁴ the phrase "with fire," being occasionally added, to show its powerful nature in the destruction of sin, and the contrast to the baptism with water. Thus John said, "I indeed baptize you with water unto repentance; but He that cometh after me is mightier than I, whose shoes I am not worthy to bear, he shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost and with fire; whose fan is in his hand, and he will thoroughly purge his floor, and gather his wheat into the garner; but he will burn up the chaff with unquenchable fire."⁵—"He that sent me to baptize with water, the same said unto me, 'Upon whom thou shalt see the spirit descending and remaining on him, the same is he which baptizeth with the Holy Ghost.'⁶" Christ also declared, "John truly baptized with water, but ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost."⁷ From these and other passages, it is evident that Christ's baptism is expressly that "with the Holy Spirit," as distinguished from the baptism "with water;" and that if we are received into his communion, it must be by our

¹ Acts xvi. 3. ² Acts xxi. 24. ³ John iv. 2. ⁴ Mat. iii. 11.

⁵ Mat. iii. 11, 12. ⁶ John i. 33. ⁷ Acts. i. 5.

submission to the purifying operations of his Spirit on the soul.

Spiritual agents, operations and effects, are often described figuratively in scripture, for the purpose of greater illustration and force, by terms borrowed from outward objects. Hence are such expressions as the following, and many others that might be quoted. The baptizing with the Holy Ghost,¹ the fire of Christ's baptism, the burning up of the chaff, the laying of the axe to the root of the corrupt tree,² the water that shall be in him, a well of water springing up into everlasting life,³ the eating of Christ's flesh, and drinking of his blood,⁴ the supping with him,⁵ Christ formed in you,⁶ &c., &c. For want of enough considering the metaphorical nature of the language thus employed, and the spiritual character of the gospel as distinguished from the law; and also in consequence of a natural tendency in man, to prefer and depend on that which is visible; many professing Christians have evidently been led into serious and dangerous mistakes, on the very important subject of gospel requirements and privileges.

The baptism with the Holy Ghost or Spirit is an early part of that great work of the soul's sanctification, which, together with justification, is spoken of by the sacred writers, under various figures of speech. Such as "the washing of regeneration,"⁷ "being washed from sin in the blood of Christ,"⁸ "sprinkled from an evil conscience,"⁹ "made free by the truth,"¹⁰ "born

¹ John i. 33. ² Matt. iii. 10, 11, 12. ³ John iv. 14.

⁴ John vi. 53. ⁵ Rev. iii. 20. ⁶ Gal. iv. 19. ⁷ Titus iii. 5.

⁸ 1 John i. 7. ⁹ Heb. x. 22. ¹⁰ John viii. 36.

of the Spirit ;”¹ “ the robes washed and made white in the blood of the Lamb,”² “ the purging out of the old leaven,”³ “ washed, sanctified, justified, in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God,”⁴ &c. To the coming of Christ, and to his death on the cross, as a sacrifice for the sins of the world, the glorious gospel privileges thus pourtrayed are to be reverently ascribed. It is He, who, by his Holy Spirit, with or without human instruments, must and does baptize all true Christians, purge away their defilements, and make them new creatures ; producing so great a change of heart, that it is termed by our Lord, a being “ born again.”⁵ No outward ceremony can effect this great spiritual work.

Thus the New Testament plainly declares, that the subjects of Christ’s baptism are the souls, and not the bodies of men, that its effect “ is not the putting away of the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience toward God ;”⁶—that the heart is purified by faith ;⁷—that it is “ by one Spirit” that Christians “ are baptized into one body ;”⁸—that “ such as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ ;”⁹—that this is the baptism which effects regeneration or the new birth ; and that thus man “ is born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever :”¹⁰ for “ that which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the spirit is spirit.”¹¹

¹ John iii. 6.

² Rev. vii. 14.

³ 1 Cor. v. 7.

⁴ 1 Cor. vi. 11.

⁵ John iii. 3.

⁶ 1 Pet. iii. 21.

⁷ Acts xv. 9.

⁸ 1 Cor. xii. 13.

⁹ Gal. iii. 27.

¹⁰ 1 Pet. i. 23.

¹¹ John iii. 6.

Christ then is the great baptizer of his followers, and his baptism is absolutely essential : it produces a " new man,"¹ with new desires, new affections, new hopes, and new confidence. This conversion is sometimes effected as in an instant, but more frequently it is a gradual, progressive work, often interrupted by human instability and sinfulness, yet graciously renewed again and again. It is that great spiritual operation and change, which presumptuous man has so long been imitating and professing to perform for his fellow-man ; but which every one must experience for himself, through the operation of Christ by his Spirit on the mind. Man cannot effect it without him ; but Christ can and does perform it, with or without external human agency, as he pleases. " The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh or whither it goeth : so is every one that is born of the Spirit."²

The two dispensations, the law and the gospel, are strikingly contrasted by the Apostle Paul, under the similitude of the two wives of Abraham and their sons ; the one Agar, a bondmaid, representing the law, with its burthensome ritual and ceremonies ; the other Sarah, a free woman, signifying the gospel of truth, liberty and salvation. The one, he says, " answers to Jerusalem that now is, and is in bondage with her children : " the other, or " Jerusalem which is above, is free, which is the mother of us all."³ Well worthy of the serious consideration of Christians is this view of the opposite characters of the two

¹ Col. iii. 10.

² John iii. 8.

³ Gal. iv. 25, 26.

systems. The practical advice which follows is also full of important meaning. "Nevertheless, what saith the Scripture; Cast out the bondwoman and her son, for the son of the bond woman shall not be heir with the son of the free woman. So then, brethren, we are not children of the bondwoman, but of the free.¹ Stand fast therefore, in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free, and be not entangled again with the yoke of bondage."²—"For in Jesus Christ, neither circumcision availeth anything, nor uncircumcision, but faith which worketh by love."³

The legal dispensation consisted, to a great degree, in outward observances, "in meats and drinks, and divers baptisms and carnal ordinances, imposed until the time of reformation,"⁴ and was eminently figurative and emblematical; being preparatory to the perfect and spiritual revelation of the gospel. In this it was fulfilled, by the sacrifice of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ on the cross, as an atonement for the sins of the world; and by his coming in spirit, to abide for ever, as a light to illuminate the darkness of man, and as the baptizer, leader and comforter of all who submit to Him. The types and signs of the law were surely not to be fulfilled by other types and signs under the gospel,—which would have been to impose another yoke of bondage. They betokened the free spiritual operations and blessings, the divine gifts and graces of the gospel; and when, in the fulness of time, these were experienced, then those shadowy rites and figurative observances were to be done away, and men were to be released from the

¹ Gal. iv. 30, 31.

² Gal. v. 1.

³ Gal. v. 6.

⁴ Heb. ix. 10.

yoke of ceremonies, which neither the Jews "nor their fathers had been able to bear."¹ Thus believers are declared to be "complete in Christ,"² who "took the handwriting of ordinances out of the way, nailing it to his cross,"³ and not substituting others for them, as superstition would vainly represent. If, then, "grace and truth,"⁴ the spiritual substance, are come by him, and are to be experienced by all true Christians; wherefore should we retain signs and types, as under the former covenant?

Yet so outward are the views of many professing Christians, especially on the subject of baptism, and so riveted are they to the notion of the necessity of water; that their attention requires to be often recalled to the great object of Christ's baptism, viz., the cleansing of the soul and conscience from the defilements of sin. Whatever means he may be pleased to use for effecting this purpose, will promote his true baptism with the Holy Spirit. Whether the mind is humbled by afflictions, or convicted by the preaching of the gospel, or visited by remarkable providences; all these, as they are rightly received, contribute to lay us low before the Lord, to show us our own fallen state, and to prepare the soul for that baptizing, sanctifying influence of the Spirit of truth, which can wash away every pollution, and make us new creatures in Christ. The same effects are also produced at times without those means, by the immediate visitations of divine love and grace.

Our Lord said of himself, "I have a baptism to be baptized with, and how am I straitened till it be

¹ Acts xv. 10. ² Col. ii. 10. ³ Col. ii. 14. ⁴ John i. 17.

accomplished."¹ In these words, it is evident that he did not refer to any outward ceremony; but to that agony, which, though painful to his human nature, was part of the great work and suffering which he had to accomplish, for the salvation of mankind.

The passing of the Israelites under the cloud and through the sea, is mentioned by the apostle Paul in these remarkable terms, "And," they "were all baptized unto Moses in the cloud and in the sea."² Hence it appears, that by these great trials, miraculous events and deliverances, they were brought low in spirit, humbled before the Lord, made to repent and to acknowledge his might; as well as introduced into close fellowship with Moses, and faith in his dispensation. In somewhat of the same manner and sense, are all true believers "baptized into Christ"³ by himself; not with any external rite, requiring no correspondence of mind; but often by outward trials, inward convictions and provings, through deep prostration and contrition of soul, are they brought into submission to the Lord's reducing, purifying power; and made, in the nothingness of self, and in living faith, to be real partakers of the efficacy of his regenerating grace.

Much stress is laid by some of the advocates of infant baptism on the fact, that young children were brought to Jesus, and that, when some forbade them, he said, "Suffer the little children to come unto me, and forbid them not, for of such is the kingdom of heaven."⁴ This passage, however, says nothing in favour of that rite; on the contrary, its tendency,

¹ Luke xii. 50. ² 1 Cor. x. 21. ³ Gal. iii. 27. ⁴ Mark x. 14.

if impartially considered, is quite in the opposite direction, as was long since observed by Bishop Taylor.¹ Jesus said, "Suffer the little children to come," but it does *not* appear that he baptized them with water. What authority then have Christians from this passage to do it; or to forbid those who bring them to him without it?

From the declaration of our Lord to Nicodemus, "Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God,"² an argument is attempted to be drawn in favour of water baptism. If we consider that these words refer to the second or spiritual birth, we must, with most protestant commentators, understand "water and the spirit" to mean the same as "the Holy Ghost and fire," viz.: the powerful, purifying agency of the Divine Spirit. If the expression had alluded both to outward water and the second birth, it is but fair to conclude that the term "water" would have been coupled again with "the Spirit" in the next verse; whereas Christ says, that "that which is born of the Spirit is spirit,"³ without any reference to water. This interpretation would likewise imply two Christian baptisms, although the Apostle Paul speaks of "one baptism."⁴ Christ declares, that "Except a man be born again, (or from above,) he cannot see the kingdom of God,"⁵ also, that "the flesh," the outward, in its effects and productions, is still flesh and "profits nothing;" but that "it is the Spirit that quickens,"⁶ or gives birth to spiritual influences and graces; and that these operations are like the wind, whose nature is invisible.

¹ Liberty of prophesying.

² John iii. 5.

³ John iii. 6.

⁴ Eph. iv. 5.

⁵ John iii. 3.

⁶ John vi. 63.

The general tendency of our Lord's reasoning on this occasion, appears to be totally opposed to the reception of spiritual benefits from the use of water baptism. For if "that which is born of the Spirit is spirit, and that which is born of the flesh is flesh," the spiritual must proceed from a spiritual and not a material source. But water is material, is of the outward; and, therefore, cannot produce the inward, the spiritual.

The commission of the Saviour to his disciples, when he was about to leave them, is often quoted, as conveying an injunction that they should use water baptism: "Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in (or into) the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost."¹ No express mention of water is made in this passage; and when we consider that Christ himself did not baptize with water, that his baptism is one, and is repeatedly stated to be with the Holy Spirit, and that that which now saveth is not the putting away of the filth of the flesh, are we not justified in concluding that his meaning was a spiritual one? The Apostle Paul expressly declared, in reference to water baptism, that he had been sent, "not to baptize, but to preach the gospel."² This affords additional evidence, that our Lord, in his commission to his followers, did not allude to water. He commanded them to "teach—baptizing"—terms not inapplicable to the reaching, converting, subduing nature of true gospel ministry. Paul speaks of himself as ministering the Spirit; and Peter, when he preached to the Gentiles, in conformity with Christ's command, was enabled, through the divine power and blessing

¹ Mat. xxvii. 19.

² 1 Cor. i. 17.

³ Gal. iii. 5.

attending his ministry, to baptize them thereby into the name of Christ, so that "the Holy Ghost fell on all them that heard the word."¹ Thus he was reminded of the promise, "John indeed baptized with water, but ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost;" which he now found to be fulfilled. When he queried, "Can any man forbid water, that these should not be baptized, which have received the Holy Ghost as well as we?"² is there any ground to suppose that he regarded the baptizing with water, as any thing more than the mere rite of receiving a proselyte from heathenism, which has been already alluded to, as customary with the Jews?

And does not the true preaching of the gospel, in the present day, when accepted with faith, produce, through the help of the Spirit of Christ, a baptizing effect; melting the stony heart, convicting the soul of its natural sinfulness, and directing it in faith and hope to the Saviour of men, and to the teachings of his grace? May it not be thankfully and reverently believed that, in such cases, it baptizes spiritually those who accept it, and powerfully promotes the great work of regeneration and sanctification in their souls; and that thus the Saviour's commission is by such ministers really fulfilled?

Another imperative injunction of our Lord, but clearly referring to the external use of water, is interpreted in a figurative sense by most Christians, in conformity with the view of his meaning suggested with respect to baptism. "If I wash thee not," said Christ to Peter, "thou hast no part with me." And soon after he thus addressed them: "If I

¹ Acts x. 44.

² Acts x. 47.

then, your Lord and Master, have washed your feet, ye also ought to wash one another's feet. For I have given you an example, that ye should do as I have done to you."¹ Both in this case and in that of baptism, it is believed that his design was, not to institute any outward ceremony, but to enforce the great and necessary work of abasement and purification of heart.

It is readily admitted, as before observed, that the early apostles did occasionally baptize with water; but it will be remembered that they also used circumcision and other Jewish rites, in that time of gradual transition, from the figurative dispensation of the law, to its spiritual fulfilment in the gospel; in which respect they are not to be imitated by us. When the great question was considered by "the apostles and elders at Jerusalem,"² what observances should be practised by the Gentile converts, no mention whatever is made of baptism with water, or of any other ceremony, as substitutes for those of the law, which were to be done away; but the hearts of such believers were expressly declared to be "purified by faith."³ This afforded a proper opportunity to acknowledge and enforce any outward rites, if these had been considered necessary; but the account of this conference affords conclusive evidence that none such were deemed to be obligatory on them; and consequently they are not incumbent on us their successors.

The effect of the baptism of Christ is the purification of the heart, and therefore by most believers it is necessary to be repeatedly known; but the term baptism is especially used for that early, effectual visitation by the power of the Holy Spirit, in which

¹ John xiii. 8, 14.

² Acts xv. 4.

³ Acts xv. 9.

the soul is stripped of its old coverings, and plunged, as it were, into a new spiritual element. Of this, the baptisms of the law and of John were appropriate figures. Christ, however, often referred to the cleansing of the inner man, as the great thing required; and he reproved the punctilious washing of vessels, with this instructive and close remark: "Cleanse first that which is within, that the outside may be clean also."¹ He is declared to have been made "a priest for ever, —not after the law of a carnal commandment, but after the power of an endless life."² In his sermon on the mount, we do not find outward ceremonies enforced, or their observers commended; but the blessings were pronounced on "the poor in spirit," "on them that mourn," "the meek," "the merciful," "the pure in heart," "the peacemakers."³ &c.

Greatly, then, is it to be desired, that the attention of the professors of Christianity should be specially directed to the necessity of experiencing the true spiritual baptism of Christ, and those holy dispositions, through a lively faith in him, and submission to the teachings of his Spirit; and that they should be convinced of the total inefficacy of any outward ceremony to confer regeneration or spiritual grace. Thus, there is strong reason to believe, that a great difficulty would be removed out of the way of serious inquirers, and that the kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ would be more exalted than it now is in the hearts of the people—even that kingdom which "is not meat and drink; but righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost."⁴

¹ Matt. iii. 26.

² Heb. vii. 16, 17.

³ Matt. v. 3-9.

⁴ Rom. xiv. 17.

Reader, whatever may be thy religious profession, whether thou hast been sprinkled in infancy, or immersed in mature age, or wholly unbaptized with water, may it be thy frequent and earnest concern to consider what thou art really knowing of that death unto sin, and that new birth unto righteousness, which are the certain results of the baptism of Christ. Whether thou hast in truth "put off the old man, which is corrupt, according to the deceitful lusts, and art renewed in the spirit of thy mind, having put on the new man, which, after God, is created in righteousness and true holiness."¹

Or whether thou art, on the contrary, in the unhappy and dangerous condition of caring for none of these things, or viewing them chiefly as questions of speculation for such as profess religion. Whether thou art without living faith in Christ, without sincere repentance, and yet in thy sins. If so, be assured that, notwithstanding any external circumstances or pretensions, thou hast no part with Christ; and if thou continue in this state, whither he is gone thou canst never come. Oh then, before it be too late, with a submissive heart, believe in Jesus, listen to the teachings of Divine grace, yield to the influences of heavenly love, submit to the baptism of the Holy Spirit. And may the writer be thy companion herein. That so, through the mercy of God, every defilement may be washed away, by the precious blood of Christ, and we may be made, in heart, and not in profession merely, new creatures in Him!

¹ Ephes. iv. 22-24.

THE AGGRESSIVE CHARACTER OF THE
CHURCH OF ROME.

A SERMON

PREACHED IN THE

Cathedral Church of S. Peter, Exon,

ON TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 5, 1850,

BY

J. BARTHOLOMEW, A. M.

ARCHDEACON OF BARNSTAPLE, AND RECTOR OF MORCHARD BISHOP.

EXETER:

HENRY J. WALLIS, HIGH STREET.

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S E R M O N .

St. Matthew, chap. vii., v. 12.

“WHATSOEVER YE WOULD THAT MEN SHOULD DO TO YOU,
DO YE EVEN SO TO THEM, FOR THIS IS THE
LAW AND THE PROPHETS.”

THIS is a painful day to think of in the Calendar of the Church of England; and the Service in which we are engaged is also painful. We like not to bring into the House of God the memory of past wickedness, and we should not, I trust, be still commemorating such day, and such wickedness, if the commemoration were not intimately connected with the mercies of God, as manifested in the deliverance of His people, and in the bringing to nought the counsels of the wicked.

If the danger had been from a common enemy, there still would have been, doubtless, a grateful sense of the orderings of God's Providence in bringing to light the hidden and fearful Treason; but, coming as it did, from those who professed to be God's servants, and to do it for God's honor, and for the good of men's souls, we feel that, in proportion as men were secure and confident in thinking that no servant of Christ could have taken in

hand any enterprize so opposed to the spirit of His Master, and the precept contained in the Text, so we ought to be sincerely thankful that the dark design was defeated, and that the love and mercy of God prevailed over the malice of a bitter and cruel enemy.

I have said that the Service is one which distresses us ; the proof of which is, that, perhaps, on no other day, as appointed by authority, is less interest shewn in the act of thanksgiving and prayer. We are too far removed from the time at which this fearful treason was meditated, either to enter fully into the fear which it excited, or the joy which men felt, that it had been averted ; and, with a Christian feeling of forgiveness, and a Christian wish to forget, we have many of us, year after year, wished and desired, that the day might pass as any other day, and the celebration be omitted. The very words of the Saviour have, perhaps, had their effect in making us kindly disposed towards the Church of Rome and the members of her Communion. Whatever their fathers were, we have hoped, that, in the present day, the same unchristian spirit could not be charged upon their sons ; and we have felt, that, if we were in the same position, we should desire that such sad commemoration of our fathers' guilt should be suffered to pass into oblivion.

It is, therefore, with no little pain and sorrow of heart, that we find ourselves awakened by recent events to a different feeling, and are conscious, that there is working within us some portion of

that unkindly spirit with which our fathers regarded the Church of Rome ; for, though the spirit of the age will not permit and sanction a deliberate crime, though we are willing to believe that our brethren of the See of Rome would not, at this time, abet the assassination of monarchs, or the massacre of those whose Faith was opposed to their own, or the fires of Smithfield, or the proceedings, (the Acts of faith as they are called,) of the Inquisition,—we yet see that Rome has not laid aside her ambitious views, she is unchanged in her intolerant disregard of the claims and rights of other branches of the Universal Church, and has totally forgotten, in her late proceedings, that precept of the Saviour which I have taken for my text, and which is appointed to be read at the Holy Table in the most solemn part of the Service of this day. The precept attaches to communities as well as individuals, to religious as well as to civil bodies, and is specially a note and mark of the Church of Christ. If, too often, it has but faintly shewed itself, if any Church, if we ourselves have lost sight of it, there must have been, during such time, a departure from the mind and spirit of our Master,—the evil spirit taking advantage of human infirmity, and persuading men that the glory of God could be consulted by putting aside the meekness and lowliness of Christ, and taking instead, the impetuous and, sometimes, honest violence which springs out of the weakness of human passion. But the sword of Peter was not approved of, even in the personal defence of the Son of Man,

and the miracle of healing, on the part of the Master, was necessary to do away and efface the violence of the servant ; perhaps, in that hour, the Spirit which was to bring all things to the remembrance of the Apostles, whatsoever the Master had said and done, may have brought to the recollection of St. Peter that saying with which we have to do at this present time, "Whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye also to them ;" such remembrance would have been soothing to the awakened and startled conscience, as it shrunk from the more fearful words called forth in the moment, and meant to operate on the fears of the natural man, "They that take the sword, shall perish by the sword."

I have said that there have been times when the fierce passions of men have been put forth with a show of jealousy for God's honour ;—few religious bodies are free from the charge of having, at some time or other, in seasons of excitement, so forgotten the example and precept of their Divine Master : but, without even the pretence of religious motives, ambition and the love of aggrandizement have had their share in producing this forgetfulness of the mind and spirit of Christ ; the ambition of individuals, also, has influenced, but too often, the whole body of which they were members ; and it is impossible not to see that the tone and character of the Church of Rome has ever had a large leaven of this unholy and unchristian spirit.

The great fields for conversion of the heathen

must have been, from the beginning, great, and powerful, and populous cities; and to win to Christ those, whose influence and power in those cities was the greatest, must have ever been the desire and prayer of the first servants of our Lord. *There* was the part of the Lord's vineyard specially marked out for His labourers; *there* was the greatest work; *there* might be expected the most abundant harvest. It was thus that Rome, as having been Mistress of the world, became a Metropolitan See; and, as heathenism sank, and imperial authority declined, the Christian faith, and the influence of the Christian Bishop, rose on their fall and ruin: then came the temptation that Christian Rome should be supreme as a city, and her Christian ruler be what Cæsar had been. To be Cæsar, or nothing, became the temptation of him who, with seeming humility, styled himself "the Fisherman;" and the equality which, remembering the lesson given to the sons of Zebedee, had been maintained by the several Bishops in their several Sees, was destroyed, as time went on, by the ambition of Boniface III. That which Gregory I. denounced, he obtained from the Emperor Phocas, not without much opposition; and from the beginning of the seventh century, the ambition of Rome, the establishment of her supremacy over kings and kingdoms, and all nations of the earth, has been a leading feature in the history of the Christian Church.

But before this great event, there arrived in this country, torn by intestine wars and divisions,

and occupied by heathen invaders, a small missionary band from Rome, whose leader was the monk Augustine. He found here but too many heathens, and, by God's blessing, he converted them; but he found also, in different parts of the island, Bishops long established, claiming to be independent of the See of Rome, who, in maintaining their claims, withstood him to his face, because he was to be blamed: but the power of Rome prevailed, and, by degrees, the pure Faith of the Ancient British Church was overlaid with the growing corruptions of Rome. The Reformation, which restored to the English Church its primal independence, swept away those corruptions, leaving us with, what our Articles assert to be, the note of a true Church,—“the pure Word of God preached to a congregation of faithful people, and the Sacraments duly ministered according to Christ's ordinance in all those things that, of necessity, are requisite to the same.” The whole realm, Clergy and Laity, concurred in thus removing the corruptions of the Romish Church. It was no new Church which they established, but the old Church, purged, purified, restored, and error and corruption removed. Can we wonder that a change, which cut away the very ground on which Roman Supremacy and superstitious influence was built, should be denounced by the See of Rome which would admit of no change? Can we be surprised, looking at the history of the Roman Church, that her rulers, forgetting the Lord's precept, “Whatsoever ye would that

men should do to you, do ye also to them," should have endeavoured to sustain themselves by violence; and, in the prospect of recovering their supremacy, and re-establishing their doctrines, should have made trial of cruel burnings, have absolved her subjects from their allegiance to the Queen, and, finally, should have contemplated that fearful act of violence, by which, as on this day, King, Lords, and Commons, were to be destroyed without pity, and without remorse? Can we be surprised if our fathers felt and acknowledged the mercy and love of God in their deliverance, and the providence of God in the manner by which they were delivered?

Doubtless, we cannot entertain the same fears of like violence in the present day, but the love of power is the same at Rome *now* as it was *then*; and in proportion as she feels her weakness at home, she would be glad to strike her roots deeper in foreign lands. The freedom which we all enjoy—the toleration we extend to all—gives her hopes that she may prevail. She dares to do here, what, in no other country in the world, she would be permitted to do. She, who permits not that the members of *our* Church should celebrate Divine Worship within the walls of Rome; she, who thrusts us forth beyond her gates and walls as outcasts and aliens, abandoned by God and condemned of man, not even permitting that we should worship God, and preach His Word, and minister His Sacraments in a Church built reverently for the purpose, but restricting us to a hired room—she dares

to assume to herself here, without leave or licence, with a proud contempt for the nation at large, for the Church, for the Queen, its Supreme Governor under Christ, the right to partition the whole country into several Sees, under a Metropolitan ; proclaims us virtually to be excommunicated heretics, without God in the world, without a Church, aliens, outcasts, under sentence of eternal damnation, to be released from it only by reconciliation with the successor of St. Peter. She takes for her Bishops titles of honor conferred by the Pope, from places in Her Majesty's dominions, which own not his Supremacy,—from one, especially, connected with our ecclesiastical and civil history by the noblest recollections ;—she invests them with jurisdiction in English Sees, as if resuming in triumph possessions of which she had been unjustly deprived ;—she does all this without one thought of the precept of our Lord, “ Whatsoever ye would that men should do unto you, do ye also to them,” and takes her haughty and worldly march through the length and breadth of the realm, having neither the consciousness of having conceded to others what she thus claims for herself, nor yet of doing here as she would allow others to do in places subject to her dominion and influence.

It is, perhaps, by the mercy of God and of His good Providence, that she has been permitted to take this false step ; that she, in a manner, compels us to meet her proud aggression, with the majesty of the law which she offends ; that she gives us just cause to put some restraint on our too indul-

gent, too tolerant spirit. It may be, that this aggressive step on her part will open the eyes of the whole nation, enabling and encouraging all men to try her spirit, whether it be of God; making all men bear witness to the truth, that the undue assumption of a power which she does not possess, only makes more evident her spiritual defects. It may be, that she is putting the seal to her own shame and mortification, (God so willing it,) in this unprecedented, unwarrantable intrusion; and that her attractive ceremonials, her seducing doctrines, will be powerless with those, whose just and righteous indignation has been first called forth by her arrogant pretensions. And if it be so, we cannot be sufficiently thankful: for who can think of her unscriptural additions to the true doctrine and faith, without fear and trembling? Who can think of her creature-worship, without the earnest prayer that we may never be brought into subjection to such blasphemous iniquity? Who can hear of a *new* Article of Faith propounded in this eighteenth century, with one only object in view, and that not to exalt Christ, but the Virgin Mary, asserting that she was not conceived and born in sin? Who can look on the honor paid to her, the prayers offered to her, the attributes assigned to her, and not be thankful that we have hitherto been preserved from such abomination, by the pure and holy teaching of our pure and holy Church? And shall we, as a nation, lend our aid to such fearful doctrine? Shall we permit that, as if sanctioned and approved by us, the Bishops

holding office from the See of Rome, shall take their titles from English towns and English cities, as if the Pope had right to confer, as titles of honor, the names of places, over which and in which he has no power or authority? The spirit of the Christian precept will not carry us so far. "Whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye also to them." We give them liberty of conscience; we grant them the free exercise of their spiritual calling; we would not debar them from any rights and privileges which we would claim and desire for ourselves. But, there is a limit even to Christian toleration; and if the Bull of Pope Pius IX. be overbearing and insolent; if the tone and teaching of those who regard him as the Vicar of Christ, be bold beyond, and in opposition to, the spirit of Christ; if they manifest alike in their recent proceedings, contempt for the Holy Church to which we belong, and defiance of the Law, and with it of public opinion; they must be dealt with, as those who forget what manner of spirit they are of, as those who, taking the highest place, are to be compelled with shame to take the lowest room. They might have remained Vicars Apostolic, exercising the Episcopal function; but their titles should be derived from the dominions of their foreign master and lord, and not from those of the Queen of this Realm of England.

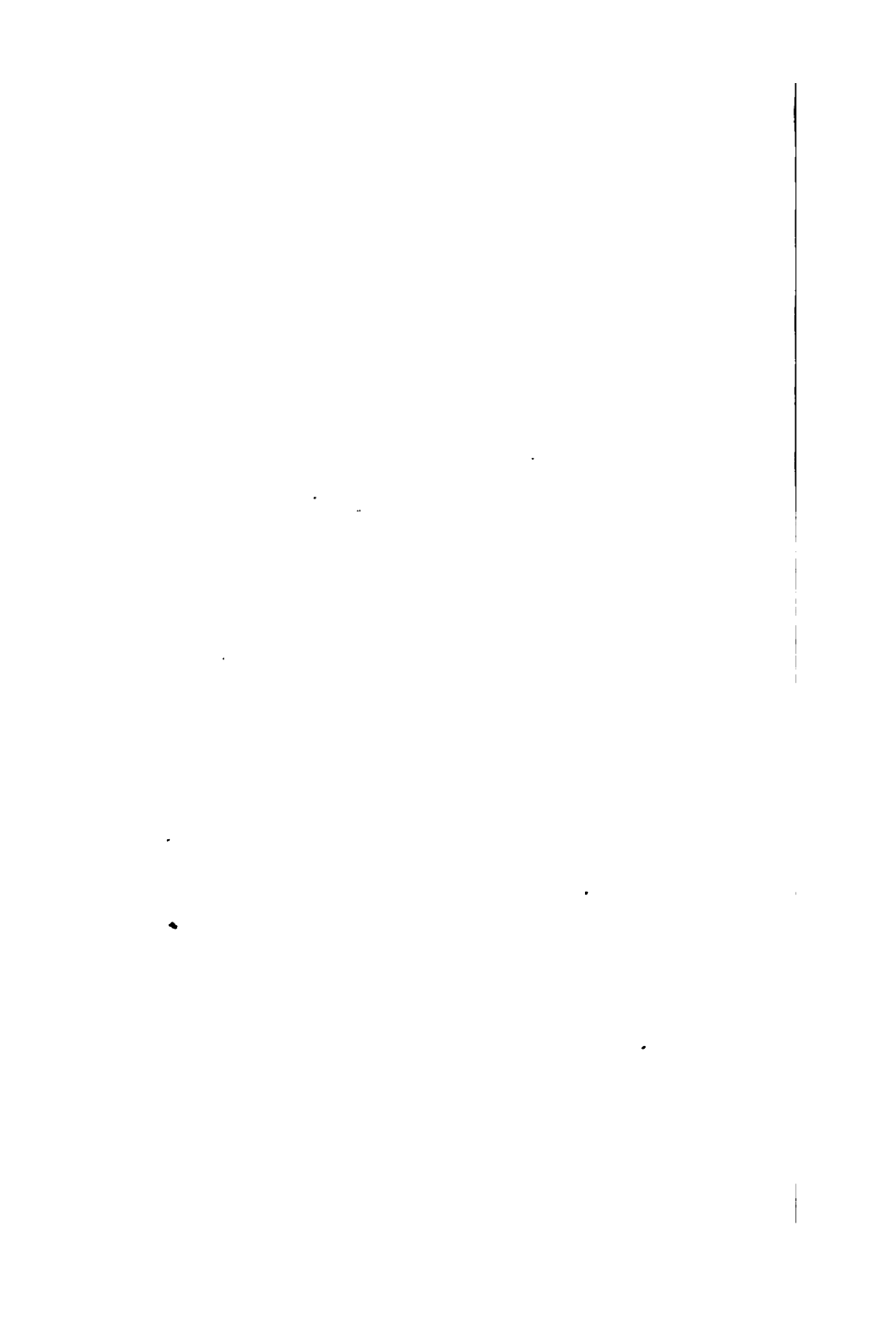
It is thus that we shall best vindicate the Supremacy of our Queen, the offended majesty of the Realm, the slighted authority of the Law;

it is thus that the Bishops in connection with the Pope of Rome will be seen and known as the official servants of that foreign Prince, Prelate, and Potentate, whom they acknowledge as their Head. Their spiritual jurisdiction being derived from him, let their titles proclaim the connection. They are members of a Church which maintains the pre-eminence of the Papal power, his paramount authority over Kings and Kingdoms, his right to bind or loose from the obligation of all oaths, according to his Sovereign will and pleasure; and in all this we see nothing of the mind of Christ, nothing which can prove that he, and the Church over which he bears rule, receives or acts upon the precept contained in the text;—they set at defiance the Law and the Prophets, and the authority of Christ himself.

I end as I began,—it is painful to have such day, and such commemoration, in our Calendar. It is painful so to speak of those who hold the Truth, but have overlaid it with error, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men;—so painful, that even whilst I write, it almost seems as if I were myself offending against the precept which I charge them with having so often forgotten: but there is a great duty come upon us,—to maintain Truth against error, and the Doctrines of our Lord against the unauthorized traditions and manifest corruptions of that Church, which is denounced in the Book of the Revelations of St. John the Divine. It is a sore trial to be opposed Church against Church. We must fear for our own frailty,

for our own infirmity, lest we make shipwreck of love and charity, and, in our jealous regard for the Truth, permit ourselves to be angry, and forget to stop short of sin. We cannot, without the deepest pain and sorrow of heart, look around us, and see noble examples of all that we are accustomed to regard with respect, men powerful in intellect, loving and devout in mind and spirit, who have suffered themselves to be seduced from their "first love," and, after they had borne testimony to the Truth, and denounced the corrupt doctrines and errors of Rome, have gone out from amongst us, and given themselves over, bound hand and foot, to him whom they style, and believe to be, Infallible and Supreme. We look up to the Throne of God, in all humility, from thoughts like these; and, whilst we pray that we may not speak in harsh and unchristian terms of any, merely because they think not with us, merely because we think they have lent themselves to their own falling away from the Truth, we can also pray heartily and humbly, that we may be preserved, as from superstition and error, so from unbelief. Whilst we mourn over those that fall, let us watch and pray, that we may be enabled, by the Grace and Power of the Holy Spirit, to stand; and, whilst we see the marks and signs of an intolerant spirit in the Church of Rome, which wants, we fear, but the opportunity and the power to develope itself in the persecution of those who would call in question the Infallibility and Supremacy of the Pope, the

worship of the Virgin, and all those unscriptural doctrines which give power and authority to the Priest, rather than honour and glory to God, let it be our care not to offend against the precept which says, "Whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them:" and, at the same time, let us resolve, by God's grace, to permit nothing, to sanction nothing, in their proceedings, which shall argue on our part indifference to the Truth, as it is in Jesus Christ, rather than the Christian Spirit of tolerant forbearance.



ABUSE OF OATHS.

A Sermon,

PREACHED AT ST. JAMES'S, WESTMINSTER, ON
SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 8TH, 1850.

BY

THOMAS BEAMES, M.A.

PREACHER AND ASSISTANT.

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ABUSE OF OATHS.

EXODUS, xx. 7.

“Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain ; for the Lord will not hold him guiltless that taketh His name in vain.”

THE custom of confirming testimony by oath seems to have been common to the Jew and the Gentile. Men affirmed that which they believed to be true, and called upon the High and Holy One to bear witness to their sincerity. He knew the heart ; He could in a moment call the perjurer to judgment. With the idea of God is connected all that is most solemn and awful, and they who are dead to every other impression, owning no other bond, would here, at least, be awed into truth. Soon, however, the custom was extended, which at first was reserved for the tribunals of their country. Men thus in ordinary conversation affirmed

with an oath, and thence very early grew up the want of this commandment; and as oaths became common, so they lost their influence; the Jews began to perjure themselves, used adjurations to sanction falsehood, rather than to guard truth. Against perjury first, and then against any abuse of God's holy name, was this commandment directed.

Thus, in our Lord's time, there were many forms of adjuration. They swore by heaven, by the earth, by the temple, by Jerusalem, even by the name of God; and this they did, not only on solemn occasions, but for the most trivial causes: and thus the title which the Most High has given himself was dishonoured, though guarded by this special commandment. Our Lord expands, or, rather, applies these words of our text, when He says, "I say unto you, Swear not at all: neither by heaven; for it is God's throne: neither by the earth; for it is His footstool: neither by Jerusalem; for it is the city of the Great King. Neither shalt thou swear by thy head, because thou canst not make one hair

white or black." He would seem to have looked forward to later times, when the name of God and our blessed Redeemer is used on the most trivial occasions, irreverently, blasphemously—when to the catalogue of those oaths which our Saviour mentions others have been added, which express anger, hatred, and malice—when every bad passion can clothe itself in a corresponding malediction—when, as by a sort of refinement in wickedness, men are enabled to give vent to the deadliest malignity in the pointed oath, to call down the vengeance of that Being whose great commandment is love upon the head of his creatures. Let us, then, consider the words of our text, and by God's blessing apply the injunction to ourselves.

1. In the very plainest form they forbid us to pronounce the name of God irreverently: it is surely no answer to this to say that swearing is become a fashion, a habit of speech. When men use the name of God without thinking on the Being on whom they call, employ it on the most trivial topics as a mere ejaculation, they tell

you no harm is meant—that we shall be judged by the thoughts and intentions of the heart—and that, inasmuch as the exclamation meant nothing, it can carry no blame with it. It might be sufficient to answer, that it connects irreverent thoughts and actions with the Creator of the world—that we begin by speaking lightly of sacred things—irreverence extends, we break down one barrier after another, till carelessness or indifference becomes the habit of our mind. The most awful mysteries of the Christian faith are treated with levity, which begins with the tongue and ends with the heart.

But this will be plainer by the following considerations. Among the most careless some reverence is supposed to be due to a parent, and the courtesies of society seem to demand it, even if the higher sanction of religion had not set its seal upon it. By this reverence we do not merely mean obedience to the commands of a father, but that his words should be received with attention, the place of honour yielded to him by his children—that he should not be made the subject of jests, which towards those of our

own age might be harmless—that we should study his comfort, his ease, his welfare—that we should dread his anger, and be careful not even to call forth his displeasure—that we should repeat his name with respect and guard his reputation with jealous honour—his conduct should never point our sarcasms, nor be the open subject of our reproach.

These rules the world, with few exceptions, seems content to observe, or, at least, to visit with its censure those who break them.

But if we thus honour the creature, shall we dare to offend, by a profane use of His name, the great and holy God? The stricter Jews would not even pronounce it; they expressed it in a paraphrase, lest, even unwittingly, they should dishonour it. In the language of the prophets it is “the frontlet to the eyes,” “the wall of fire,” “the eternal,” “the immortal,” “the unchangeable.” Prophets bless it, psalmists delight to honour it, kings bow down before it; with it are connected the glad tidings of redemption through the death of Christ,

the comforts of His Spirit, the hopes of heaven.

Shall we, then, deny to it that reverence which an earthly parent does not want at our hands?

Can the *habit* of naming God without respect be harmless? Can we defend it because it has passed into a custom? Are the glaring vices of the day harmless because thousands indulge in them? and which among them is the source of greater sin than this?

2. If, then, swearing were defended because from frequent use it had become involuntary, this would not prove the swearer guiltless; but the plea itself is unsound: in the outset such a practice is not involuntary; and though it may become at length imperceptible to him who is its victim, this can only be so at times. For the most part it must be, "That out of the fulness of the heart the mouth speaketh." Recollect, we are considering the habit of an intelligent being; words represent ideas, are signals thrown out to tell the inward

thoughts. Suppose a person to have learnt our language, but not our habits, he would attach a very definite meaning to oaths. Some of them he would suppose to be the prayers of persons in great trouble of mind, body, or estate—ejaculations in the name of God would be of this kind; so that the very expressions which men use carelessly and profanely, describe the most touching emotions of the Psalmist in the deepest sorrows of his changeful life. The foreigner who thus interpreted our oaths would in this instance err, but in the general principle of supposing that words represented ideas, he would be right. But other oaths closely correspond to the state of our hearts at the time we utter them,—the curse or denunciation, for instance. For the most part, when men swear they are irritated; we shall hereafter show that they often mean exactly what they say: but let us, first, consider swearing as a proof of irritation.

A man has been injured, his injury great or small, as the case may be,—a pointed sarcasm is sufficient to rouse such show of passion, and the oath at times is so fearful

that the loss of fortune or reputation at the hands of another could hardly provoke a fiercer. He who has been enraged cannot avenge himself by open violence on the spot; he cannot put the laws of his country into force at once: yet he smarts—rather writhes, under the feeling of injustice; he desires vengeance, and he thinks to unburthen the full heart by curses: or he has sustained an affront—a slight one perhaps, yet he winces under it; he is an excitable man, he vents his feelings in an oath. This remedy may become habitual, like many other vices; resorted to at first only on great and rare occasions, at length the common language of the lips, when the slightest annoyance ruffles the temper.

This habit of speech, then, as you call it, betrays irritability, which it is your duty to check; you call this a little sin, yet it has divided friends, armed men's hands against their brethren, and often, when unchecked, degenerated into insanity. So that, if swearing were no more than the sign and token of an irritable temper, you are bound to unlearn it—bound, if you wish

for peace here—bound as you would out off one occasion of losing your own soul.

This swearing is, as it were, the hectic on the cheek, which speaks of the inward consuming fever, of the disease which is making sure its hold upon the constitution of the sufferer.

Verily, out of the fulness of the heart the mouth speaketh: the blasphemer cannot be happy within himself, rebellious desires are fixing their fangs in him; there is a contest within, and these its outward tokens; in the most favourable view of the case there must be contempt towards him whom your oaths revile: it is well if sterner passions are not struggling beneath the surface.

3. The habit our text condemns implies irritation then. Yet surely, it will be urged, we have made too much of this: ungenerous actions provoke virtuous indignation. There is a righteous anger excited, because of wrong done to another: we are bound by our office, perhaps, at times to censure, and censure will vent itself in strong terms; why then are we thus severe? We answer,

That virtuous indignation does not need the aid of profane oaths—and in using them degenerates into sinful passion; and this irritability we have described is a very different thing—it is the pettishness of a spoiled child, or the uncontrolled vehemence of one who is at war with the world; and, in either case, the blasphemer is encouraging a dangerous enemy.

But suppose a man to be actuated by the deadliest malignity, could words describe it more accurately than oaths, which are common amongst us, which you hear as you pass along the streets, and sometimes, even to the shame of their parents, on the lips of young children?

You curse him who has offended you. What is a curse? The fearful imprecation of ruin upon his head—that the terrors of vengeance should be let loose,—on whom? On a brother, and by a fellow-sinner! Suppose you called down on him the plagues of man's wrath, human punishment, fire, and the sword, it would be bitter enough; but you are invoking God's wrath on him—that terrible wrath, beneath which we hear

of cities crumbling, of nations blotted out, of the elements melting with fervent heat : this is God's vengeance—this a curse imprecates on the head of him who has done you wrong.

But you answer, I do not mean this ; it is a most violent exaggeration to suppose so. Well-nigh ridiculous, because of the extent of the hyperbole ! Such, at least, the term *curse* implies,—such it has been again and again meant to import. Men use in common parlance words which have represented the bitter vengeance of one pierced to the quick. More than this, they employ in their anger that very term by which our Lord describes the final condemnation of those who rejected Him as the Saviour of the world.

Take the worst passions, envy for instance—the eye jaundiced by the prospect of another's success. We have set our heart on an object, toiled long for it, done and suffered much to reach it ; it has claimed our thoughts by day, our dreams by night have been shaped by it,—one has stepped in between us and it, and seized the prize,

and we have groaned in the bitterness of our soul, and our envy vented itself in a curse. Has this been fiercer, expressed more revenge, than those which we hear daily ?

Is it any defence to plead, you do not mean all you say ? You are sanctioning a usage which pollutes your mother tongue ; you are setting an example which *young* children, the creatures of habit, imitate ; you are finding an expression for bad passions which, if they lacked this, might have slept, and even worn themselves out for want of nourishment. You are feeding—adding fuel, rather—to the fiercer attributes of your nature, so that you begin by employing language you do not mean ; you end by meaning all that you employ. The effervescence of youth has settled into the habits of age ; the inevitable disappointments of life have not softened, but rather steeled the heart ; dislike has become hatred to your kind, and thus the aged blasphemer is the moral Ishmael of his race—his hand against every man, and every man's hand against him.

4. Swearing is the abuse of one of God's noblest gifts. Speech was given to us to convey to others the ideas with which our minds were peopled, to stamp on others the impressions we had ourselves received. The emotions of that world within are called forth by their corresponding objects ; we collect our stores, we arrange them, we draw inferences, and each contributes his stock for the amusement or the benefit of the body to which he belongs. Yet if he lacked speech, how could this be? In rapid and burning words the orator rivets in your hearts the thoughts he would impart, sways you, moves you as he will : at one time you melt beneath the persuasive influence of honied words ; at another you are lashed into indignation by the fiery appeal to the passions. You send forth as into the world, by the aid of speech, the opinions you have formed in the retirement of your own mind, and open thus the treasures you have amassed. Wonderful then is this gift of speech, its varied uses ; we praise God, thus uttering forth the outpourings of a grateful soul ; accents of affection are thus wafted to

the hearts of those we love ; we take counsel with one another, and are thus mutually enlightened, as though the sentiments of the speakers were mapped out before us. By the aid of language the mother teaches the youthful mind of her offspring his earliest duties and his infant prayer ; in the failing accents of the departing spirit the old man falters forth his latest counsels to his surrounding children. Such, then, are some of the uses of this gift of speech ; we excite by it at once the deepest and the softest emotions, it is the channel of God's noblest gifts, Yet we must render account for it, and great as is the endowment, great must be the punishment of its abuse. Shall we then employ it to pollute the moral atmosphere around us ? shall we teach men expressions for their fiercest passions ? shall young children learn fearful imprecations from us, and betray the ungodliness of their home as they utter words whose import they cannot know ? shall the name of God, which should attune the heart to prayer, and praise, and holy meditation, be blasphemed by sinful thoughts, and coupled with the language of

scorn? Think, *when alone*, that great name can be used without sin. When you worship in the sanctuary, when you teach, when you warn, when you would convince, when you stand before the tribunal of your country; when the happiness or the misery, the life or death of a fellow-creature hangs upon your evidence; when, because other sanctions might cease to weigh with you, and other bonds had lost their obligation for your soul, the judge adjures you by your hopes of eternity to speak the truth; then pity, even affection, may weigh no longer with you; conviction of the offender's guilt, desire to avenge the memory of the departed, may not urge you to add or diminish from the truth; when in nothing may you extenuate or aught set down in malice; when in the oath you take, if you take it falsely, you are pronouncing a verdict on your own head,—then thus summoned by him who, as God's minister, wields the powers of life and death, you pronounce that holy name as binding on your inmost soul. You do this, and you do it as the highest duty and the most solemn act of reverence, and you are

guiltless ; but who, if he thought of it, would dare to drag those awful words from the dread province in which alone they can do their office, into the levity of 'daily converse ? who would weaken the ties which they still rivet on the heart ? Reverenced as it should be, pronounced but seldom, and then only on occasions worthy of it, the name of God would be the rallying point of expiring virtue ; and heard once again, after a long interval by the sinner, it might win him back to the prayers of his childhood and the faith he had forgotten, but not renounced.

5. Yet is there one argument, the last, the most powerful, which may weigh with many whom we now address, when the rest have failed to move them. "If any man be in Christ Jesus," says the Apostle, "he is a new creature." "As many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God." That great moral change is spoken of without which our salvation is hopeless :—the submission of the will, the discipline of the affections—in a word, the renewal of the inner man to righteousness

and true holiness. We must be ripe for heaven before we enter upon its blessed privileges and its blissful heritage; yet, to tempers unsanctified and hearts unchanged, even God's presence would not be heaven, or our blessed Redeemer a herald of good tidings of great joy. But can the blasphemer point to any evidence of the Holy Spirit's work in his own soul? "The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance." We do not learn these holy tempers at once—we do not, in a moment, under the teaching of the Spirit, put on the new man; only gradually can the disciple of Jesus, say he is crucified to the world. But, oh! let us ask ourselves, as intelligent beings, Is there any symptom of this gradual ripening for eternity in the blasphemer? Other sins have their plea in the strength of the passions—the engagements they promise, the fascinations with which they are surrounded. Deceitful, indeed, is such plea. But swearing wants even this; it seems the first sin which the really renewed man would renounce: it

would cost him less sacrifice, it is less imbedded in his nature than others.

But does it not forbid the growth of those fruits of the Spirit which the Apostle enumerates? It is the very antidote to love : for that flows with sympathy towards, this burns with indignation against, a brother. Peace would be scared away by the blasphemer's presence ; long-suffering, which another's errors ask for, and which we shall one day implore through God's mercy in Christ, pleads in vain to him who retaliates with a curse ; faith in that dying Saviour, whose cross is the strongest protest against sin, cannot linger in company with oaths ; and that temperance, which is the discipline of a holy life, is daily done despite to by the rebellious heart.

Oh, brethren, as you value your everlasting welfare, take heed of this ! Can you point to any sign of God's great work in the blasphemer's life? Can you believe he is an altered man whose very tongue betrays him? Are not his very words traitors to their Master's interests? We want not the subtle artifice of the casuist,

—we want not even the experience of the man of God to convict him—the child singles out the blasphemer, the very child who has been nurtured by a Christian parent recoils at the oath which shocks his infant mind, and he exclaims against the sin.

Would you willingly, my brethren, break down in yourselves or others that lingering reverence for holy things which, to many, is the only remaining hold upon eternity? Is not every feeling of devotion, every motive to holiness, weakened by blasphemy? Does it not drag into the profane and common uses of our daily life words which should be symbols of our most chastened emotions; which should rouse the soul to meditate, to pray, to bare itself before its Maker; which, in a word, should open the door of the inner sanctuary within the heart?

Would you willingly coin expressions which shall not only clothe the bad passions, but excite them, bring them to the surface, when else they would slumber or decay? Thus envy paints itself in true colours;

anger, hatred, and revenge array themselves in the garments which suit them well.

Shall your children grow up blasphemers, taught by your example, that they may turn against you the weapons put into their hands, and so reproach you for this legacy of woe, perhaps brand you as the destroyer of their souls before the judgment-seat of God?

Shall prayer and praise be hypocrisy on your lips, because oaths have polluted them and made them unfit to repeat the name of God? Shall the gift of speech, the handmaid of the holiest feelings, be prostrated to your own condemnation?

No, brethren, be very jealous with yourselves—bind yourselves by the sternest penalties—constrain yourselves by the deepest vows—implore God's grace again and again, with strong crying and the most fervent prayer—study the language of piety and devotion till it has become your mother-tongue, and thus cast out this evil spirit—subdue, by the thoughts of eternity, not only the greater passions, but even the pass-

ing thought, or the faintest gesture of irritation. Above all, in strong faith in the infinite virtues of the cross of Christ, throw yourselves on His mercy, the aids He has supplied you in holy ordinances and His blessed word; and God, for His dear Son's sake, shall deliver you from the tempter; and you, putting off this bondage of the corrupt heart, through Him awake to newness of heart.

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AT

AN ORDINATION,

HELD

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On Trinity Sunday, 1850.

BY THE REV. WILLIAM BOYD, M.A.,

Rural Dean, and Vicar of Arncliffe,

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TO THE PRIESTS AND DEACONS ORDAINED

ON TRINITY SUNDAY, 1850,

THIS SERMON,

PREACHED ON THAT OCCASION,

AND NOW PRINTED AT THEIR REQUEST,

IS RESPECTFULLY INSCRIBED BY

THE AUTHOR.

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A SERMON.

EPHES. IV. 11.

“And He gave some Apostles, and some Prophets, and some Evangelists, and some Pastors and Teachers, for the perfecting of the Saints, for the Work of the Ministry, for the edifying of the Body-of Christ.”

It is not easy, my brethren, to conceive the Church of Christ engaged in a more important work, than that for which we are assembled this morning. The Chief Pastor of the Lord's flock in this diocese, with priests assisting, is about to lay hands on such as have been found apt and meet to serve in the sacred ministry of the Church.

To all who are present, and engaged in it, it is a most solemn work; but to you who are now to be called to this office and administration, it is the most serious and momentous event, that can mark the current of your lives. The whole Church is called from the world, but you are now to be called especially from the ranks of the Church: henceforth you have to save, not yourselves only, but others also. “Ye are now to be the choicest of God's choice,...vessels of honour for your Master's use, appointed to teach others, authorised to bless in His Name.”*

* Taylor's Sermon. p. 168, fol.

I would, then, bid you all, my beloved brethren, as the Prayer Book suggests to us on this occasion, look to the duty and office of the ministry, to its solemn responsibility, to the qualifications of such as are or shall be admitted to it,—and also, how the people ought to esteem them in their office.

The divine likeness in which man was created at the first, was soon marred and spoiled by sin: when Adam by transgression fell, he lost that intercourse with the Almighty, which he had enjoyed aforetime. And the loss was bequeathed to his offspring,—“for Adam begat a son in his own likeness, after his image,”* now no longer the image of God. And from this impaired condition man could not of himself recover. But as had been determined in the merciful counsels of God, and as had been in part, and by degrees, revealed to man, a Deliverer, and Restorer in due time appeared—God Himself, “the Word, was made flesh and dwelt among us;”† “He became the Head of man’s race that in Him we might recover the likeness of God, which in Adam we had lost.’” “The cause of Christ taking upon Him our nature was to change it, and to better the quality, and to advance the condition thereof.”‡ In His own Person our nature was now ennobled and dignified, and again made capable of the Divine likeness and image, “for He was the brightness of His (Father’s) glory, and the express image of His Person.”§ And in Him, we partake, according to our measure, of the dignity

* Genesis v. 3.

† John i. 14.

‡ Hooker p. 596.

§ Heb. i. 3.

and blessings procured for our fallen race by His life, and by His death. For His blessings were not withdrawn from His body the Church, when He left the earth: with it He abideth for ever. "He gave Himself for it, that He might sanctify and cleanse it, with the washing of water by the Word, that He might present it to Himself a glorious Church, not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing: but that it should be holy and without blemish."* He still gives to His Church the blessings of His spiritual Presence. He is to be found still of His members who seek Him: in His sacraments, in His ministry, in His word, by prayer and meditation, and "wherever two or three are gathered together in His Name, there is He in the midst of them." When he ascended up on high, "He gave gifts to men," To dispense these to His people, and to take charge of the flock for whom He shed His blood, He appointed divers orders of ministers in His Church: to them He has committed the solemn duty and office to keep alive, and to carry forward, the sacred Torch of Truth from generation to generation: to testify to all mankind of Him who became the Son of Man: and to lead them to union with Him who is the Redeemer and Restorer of their race.

The form and economy of this ministry, we of the Church of England have received from Apostolic times, and have kept it too, as a sacred trust: through good report and evil report, in the days of prosperity and adversity, through days of darkness and of light, we have by the good providence of God

* Ephes. v. 26.

kept unimpaired that succession of authority and order handed down to us of our Fathers. And thus our Church teaches us in her Ordinal,—“It is evident unto all men, diligently reading the Holy Scriptures, and ancient authors, that from the Apostles’ time there have been three orders of ministers in Christ’s Church—Bishops, Priests, and Deacons ;” and therein also she has made express and exact provision for the continuance and permanence for ever, of such functions.

Nor do the words of the text militate against this assertion. We have a kindred passage in the same Apostle’s Epistle to the Corinthians,—“God hath set some in the Church, first, Apostles, secondarily, Prophets, thirdly, Teachers, after that miracles, then gifts of healing, helps, governments, diversities of tongues.”* In neither case is the Apostle enumerating the orders of the ministry, but the “sundry gifts and graces and abilities” which Christ bestowed on His servants for the benefit of His people, for the edifying of His saints. Some of them are the ordinary and some the extraordinary gifts which were needed for the building up of the Christian Church in her infancy. Any of them might be, and many were exercised by those who had been duly called to the ministry by the laying on of Apostolic hands. The prophets, evangelists, and teachers, spoken of were not distinct and permanent orders, but vocations and varieties of graces exhibited (through the gift of the Spirit) by those who were apostles, or priests, or deacons. And thus our own Hooker says, “no

* 1 Cor. xii. 28.

man's gifts or graces can make him a minister of holy things, unless Ordination do give him power. And we nowhere find either prophets or evangelists to have been made such by ordination, but all whom the Church did ordain were either to serve as presbyters or deacons."*

I cannot doubt, my brethren, that ye have well weighed and examined the foundation, and Apostolic authority of the sacred ministry, into which ye are now to be called. But if one consideration more than another can increase the seriousness of our thoughts on the subject, it is, that the ministerial office is the most important which man can undertake,—an office and a function in the very service of Christ's mediatorial work. It is as impossible to have too high a conception of the reverend dignity of this ministry, as it is to have too low an estimate of ourselves who are entrusted with it. We cannot magnify our office too highly; for wherein we magnify the office, therein we multiply our responsibilities. If we look solely at ourselves, at our own unworthiness and unfitness for so holy a work, we shrink back in dismay, and hide ourselves with shame,—we must consider also Him who is our Master. In the great work of Man's Redemption, He is pleased to use our poor services as His instruments: and forasmuch as the instruments are most unworthy and insufficient, He is pleased to give us his gifts and graces, through which our weakness is made perfect by His sufficiency. And what is the work to which ye are to be called?—It is none other than the restoration of a

* Hooker, p. 10.

fallen world,—it is to bring back to the likeness of God, those who have lost the image in which He made them at the first,—it is to carry on, and to perpetuate the wondrous work of redemption and mediation wrought for His Church by our blessed Lord, the Restorer of our race,—it is for the perfecting of the saints, for the edifying of the body of Christ. Our work is to be ambassadors and messengers from God to man: each of us in our allotted portion of the Vineyard is “to seek out and provide for Christ’s sheep, and for His children who are in the midst of this naughty world, that they may be saved through Christ for ever.”*

Now, it is some comfort to reflect, that, in this arduous work, He has not left us without guidance, or without means and instruments appointed for us to use in “the work of the ministry.”

The Bishop, after laying on his hands, delivers to each of the priests, a Bible, and says, “Take thou authority to preach the *Word of God* and to minister the holy *Sacraments* in the congregation where thou shalt be lawfully appointed thereunto.”*

That blessed Word is the treasury of our faith. From this fountain of life we may learn not only so much of His nature, and being, and attributes, as our finite capacities can attain to, but all things whether of doctrine or of practice that are necessary for our salvation. This is our sacred record of instruction—this our warrant for those truths with which we are to teach the Lord’s family,—to edify and build up a sacred temple, holy to the Lord. We may

* Ordination Service.

not presume to teach as matters of faith any one thing that may not be proved hereby; we may not go beyond this rule; but neither may we come short, for we must "declare all the counsel of God;"—nor yet must we trust to ourselves, we are to shew to our people what the Church teaches, and also that all her teaching is exactly accordant to the very Word of God. And in these days, and indeed in all days, we must be careful in this behalf, to let our people know distinctively and thoroughly what the Church does teach as of necessity to be believed for salvation, not only because it is our bounden duty, but because such teaching is the best safeguard against error in religion, and viciousness of life,—the best security "for ripeness and perfectness of age in Christ."*

But to use this instrument aright, sharper than any two-edged sword, we must give heed that we are fully instructed therein ourselves,—we must draw all our studies this way; hereto we must apply all our talents and abilities, that we may be as "men of God, thoroughly furnished unto all good works."†

And so with regard to the other means of grace referred to in the service,—one especial office of the priesthood is rightly and duly to administer Christ's holy Sacraments. And here, surely, a weighty responsibility lies on every one who has undertaken, or is going to undertake this ministry, to give especial heed, that as far as may be done, we acquaint ourselves with the import, the dignity, the solemnity of these two holy mysteries. Happily indeed for our people, the blessings they convey are not impaired

* Ordination Service. † 2 Tim. iii. 17.

by our unworthiness ; but woe be to us, if, in either case, by our ignorance, by our want of reverence, or by our presumptions, (I dare hardly say by our unholy lives,) we teach others, yea, even one of God's children to undervalue, or lightly to esteem either of these two sacred ministrations of grace. Can we conceive a servant of the Most High, offering a deadlier insult to his Lord and Master, than to be the means of having these His own ordinances despised? Surely better for us never to have been born! For are they not the two especial instruments of birth and life to the Christian? "Sacraments are the powerful instruments of God to eternal life. For as our natural life consisteth in the union of the body with the soul, so our life supernatural in the union of the soul with God."*

When Adam sinned he fled to the darkness to hide himself from God : Christ Jesus would bring us back to light and to God's presence. He would restore us to the blessed privilege of intercourse with God. For this He adopted us to be His children, and makes us, by union with Himself, partakers of the blessings He purchased for us. For the beginning of this union—this life in Christ—this entrance into a state of grace and salvation, one Sacrament is appointed ; and the other, for its preservation and continuance, "till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ."†

But, here again, how much care does this very

* Hooker, v. p. 50.

† Ephes. iv. 13.

Sacrament of Baptism, lay upon us. The lambs of the flock thus rescued from the wolves, must be watched and nurtured and cared for. They require our especial watchfulness. They are committed to our care by the Church from their (spiritual) birth; as though the Church said to us in the words of the wife of Pharaoh,—“take this child and nurse it for me,”—we are to watch over their souls through all the changing scenes of life, never ceasing our oversight of them till we commit their bodies to the ground, and their spirits return to God who gave them. We must feed them, as they are able to bear it with the sincere milk of the Word, that they may grow thereby. We must wait on them (as the Church bids us,) with her own Catechism, “or instruction which she gives to be learned of every person, before they be brought to be confirmed by the Bishop.” We are to teach them to apply to their own souls the benefits of Baptism by their own individual faith and repentance. And as they grow on, we are to bid them watch against the increasing temptations that beset them as they mix in the busy throng of the world. We are to warn them of their dangers, and guide them to their Armoury of Strength. We are to tell them that for their increasing wants, increasing grace is needed, and is ready for their use; and thus we are to fit and train them for the sacred rite of Confirmation, that so their graces and Christian purposes may be strengthened and confirmed by the laying on of the Bishop’s hands.

Nor must our care for them cease or even flag during the next important period of their lives: for,

now, the enemies of their souls redouble their efforts to gain them to their ruin ; the world, the flesh, and the devil would fain draw our tender ones away from the fold. The natural man of the heart waxing strong, the world with its temptations luring them to so called liberty, are wont to press so sore upon them, that to the anxious watcher for their souls they are always a source of anxiety, and too often of bitter disappointment. It often comes to pass, indeed, that our only hope left in their behalf, is to pray for them,—a holy office, it is true, which their sinful waywardness may never deprive us of. We must next hold out to the earnest and faithful among them—(for alas, there are too many, who, for all our care,—all our instructions, and all our prayers, are yet insensible to their birthright, and dead in cold indifference,)—we must hold out to the faithful among them the blessed means of spiritual strength and life in the Holy Sacrament of the Eucharist. On us lies the duty to teach them the purpose, and value, and dignity of that Holy Mystery. Our duty is to exhort them to search and examine their own consciences, that they may come holy and clean to that heavenly Feast,...and be received as worthy partakers of that holy Table ; so that their union with the Head of the race may be continued to their life's end.

These, my brethren, are among the ordinary instruments placed in our hands, as at the first were those extraordinary gifts of the Spirit mentioned by the Apostle in the two passages referred to. And by these, together with our exhortations and admonitions, our calling to prayer and meditation, our people are

“to be built up a spiritual house, for an habitation of God through the Spirit.”*

And all the while, my brethren, we must give heed that none of any age, rank, or condition, suffer through our remissness. What! if one soul for whom Christ died, shall perish through our neglect! fearful thought that for all committed to our care, whether many or few, whether the crowded city or the few sheep in the wilderness,—for all, we are to give account at that day! What! if one impenitent sinner reproach us and say, “I am thus, for no man cared for my soul,” “For me too, Christ died, but you His appointed messengers, told me not of the healing blood of the Cross.” May such anguishing reproaches, my brethren, never be laid to our charge! To prevent it, as far as may be, we must give ourselves, body, soul, and spirit, to the all-important work committed to our trust. And indeed the Parochial system as we have it in the Church of England, comprises the most perfect machinery for meeting and overcoming the vast mass of ignorance and depravity which mark, I fear, the body of our population: to resist the evil, all we want is, (which would that we could hope to see!) that the system be fully and fairly developed; and that the clergy devote themselves wholly and entirely, heart and soul, to the holy work.

We must keep a watchful and affectionate eye on all. The young may be our first care, but the more advanced in years must not be overlooked. Some of these may seem set and hardened in their forgetfulness of God, or in a death-like indifference, or con-

* 1 Pet. ii. 5; Ephes. ii. 22.

firmed in error and a false creed, but yet we must never despair even of them. With our Almighty Master nothing is impossible,—no heart is so hardened that it may not yield to the softening influences of the Holy Spirit; and so we cannot tell but that, by the importunity of our remonstrances, by the evident diligence in our ministry,—by our earnest love for their souls,—by our unceasing prayers for them, they may yet be moved to pray for themselves, and turn to our gracious Lord, who is ever waiting with a blessing for the penitent and the contrite. And oh! blessed shall we be in our work, if we be the honoured instruments of turning even one aged sinner to righteousness and the service of His God.

But, my brethren, for this, and such like work as this, which of us can bring ought that is sufficient. "It will be work enough for every man to give an account for himself: but to stand charged, and to be accountable for many others, who can think of it without trembling:" even the Apostolic Bishop Wilson said, "O God, how presumptuous was I to be persuaded to take upon me this charge."*

Even an angel's tongue could not fully recount the honourable dignity or the incessant difficulties of our holy functions. And who are we that we are accounted worthy to be sent to take spiritual charge of the Lord's family: to be fellow-workers with Him in recreating and regenerating a fallen world? Had we but this thought ever in our minds, that we are not only messengers to convey the glad news of the

* Sac. Priv. p. 77., Ox. ed.

Redeemer's love, not only watchmen, on the Lord's watch tower to mark and give notice of the approach of whatever "may assault and hurt the soul," but also fellow-workers *with God* in man's restoration, how much more devoted to our work should we be, how should we never cease our labour, our care and diligence till our task be done! Nay, if we have not this love, all else will be cold, and formal, and ruinous. But working with this love to Christ and Christ's Body, tempered by judgment and wisdom, many a saint may be perfected and edified in Christian graces. This we must have; yea, if the love of Christ constrain you not, your talents, your abilities, all, though consecrated to God's service this day will but add to your condemnation when our Master shall visit His vineyard, and ask you of the souls committed to your care. What need of devotion of life and purpose of heart! what need of zeal for God's glory and love for men's souls! for we have not only to save ourselves but them that hear us. If the ordinary Christian have so many difficulties in his pathway that he may scarcely be saved, how will it fare with the pastor? "Not rashly do I speak it," (are the oft quoted and yet awful words of St Chrysostom) "but as I am affected and feel! I do not think that there are many among the priesthood who will be saved, but many more who perish, for it requires an elevated mind."* Ministering, as we do, about holy things there is much danger, lest, if they do not soften and hallow the heart they will harden and condemn it.

* Quoted in Wilson's Sac. Priv.

We must bring to our work, wisdom of understanding and simplicity of life; "in malice be ye children, but in understanding be men." "Be wise as serpents and harmless as doves." Let the wisdom of the serpent be sanctified by the innocence of the dove. It is true, some may disparage the need of a learned ministry; and we must not set up learning before piety and love; but to make the perfect minister, neither can be safely dispensed with.

With regard to the wisdom of the serpent, we solemnly vow to give ourselves wholly to the study of the Sacred Scriptures; and that vast store-house cannot be searched into without continued and untiring study—nor need such study unfit for parochial work. "Who," says Bp. Jebb, "have been the most exemplary, the most indefatigable of our parish priests? who but our Hookers, our Hammonds, our Pocockes, our Beveridges, and our Bulls? Men, of whom it has been truly said, that their speculative knowledge, which gave light to the most dark and difficult subjects was eclipsed by the more dazzling lustre of their *practice*! Men, who came forth from the recesses of their well-stored libraries, and from the devout retirement of their closets, like angels on missions of mercy, conveying light and love and consolation to the cottages of the poor, to the chambers of the aged, and the decrepid, and the bedsides of the sick and the dying."*

And, moreover, even for the due deliverance of our message as preachers, we must ourselves continually draw from the Fountain Head. If we add

* Jebb's Pas. Theol. vol. ii. p. 191.

not to our own store week by week and day by day, how shall we be as good householders—"able to bring forth from the treasury things new and old." "The priest's lips must keep knowledge, and they should seek the law at his mouth: for he is the messenger of the Lord of Hosts:"* "He must be a kind of repository or treasury of knowledge, fully furnished himself, and able to instruct others that need."† Our people have a claim and a right at our hands to look for that which will edify them as members of Christ's Body, and lead them on unto perfection. And if we are but babes ourselves, or if we are but blind, how can we lead the blind, or gently guide the young? "Meditate on these things," says the apostle to the youthful Timothy, "give thyself wholly to them, that thy profiting may appear unto all:" "take heed unto thyself, and unto the doctrine: continue in them: for in doing this thou shalt both save thyself and them that hear thee."‡ Our office, indeed, affords many a subject for thoughtful meditation,—ordinary men may meditate and forecast, but we can never be ready to meet every emergency, or bear up against every disappointment; we must, indeed, give ourselves wholly to these things.§

Your task, I mean, is not done when holy hands have been laid upon you—"you must stir up the gift that is in you by laying on of hands."|| You, for instance, who are candidates for the higher order

* Malachi, ii. 7.

† Bull—quoted in *Roses Four Sermons*, which cannot, I think, be too strongly commended to the study of candidates for Holy Orders.

‡ 1 Tim. iv. 15, 16.

§ See Bp. Jebb.

|| 2 Tim. i. 6.

of the ministry, might I not ask how have you demeaned yourselves in the lower? have you deservedly "purchased to yourselves a good degree?"* How have you, in the first months of your trust, discharged you of your high responsibilities? Have you given, in the sight of men and of angels, nay, before the Lord Himself, full proof of your ministry; earnest, and evidence, that you are fully minded, the Lord being your helper, to give yourselves wholly to the yet more important office and order to which ye are now to be called?

Again, my Rev. Brethren, we must all be men of prayer. Our people most take note of us that "we have been with Jesus." Our wearied spirits must flee to Him and seek His presence for our own comfort and refreshment, as well as to sue for blessings on the souls committed to our charge. It is an instrument of strength and power in the ministry we can never exhaust;—let us not be wanting in the diligent use of it.

In ordinary times there are manifold occasions, on which we do well to come here for strength: every day, and many times a day, needs must that we commend our flock to the Lord; and as with shepherd's eye we recount them, we must seek for such grace as may suit the occasions of each; and in all times of difficulty and perplexity, or of rebuke;—in all times of disappointment when the most hopeful of our flock are found wanting, how soothing, what a privilege, to be able to retire from the bustle and throng of the world, and hold converse in our closet,

* 1 Tim. iii. 13.

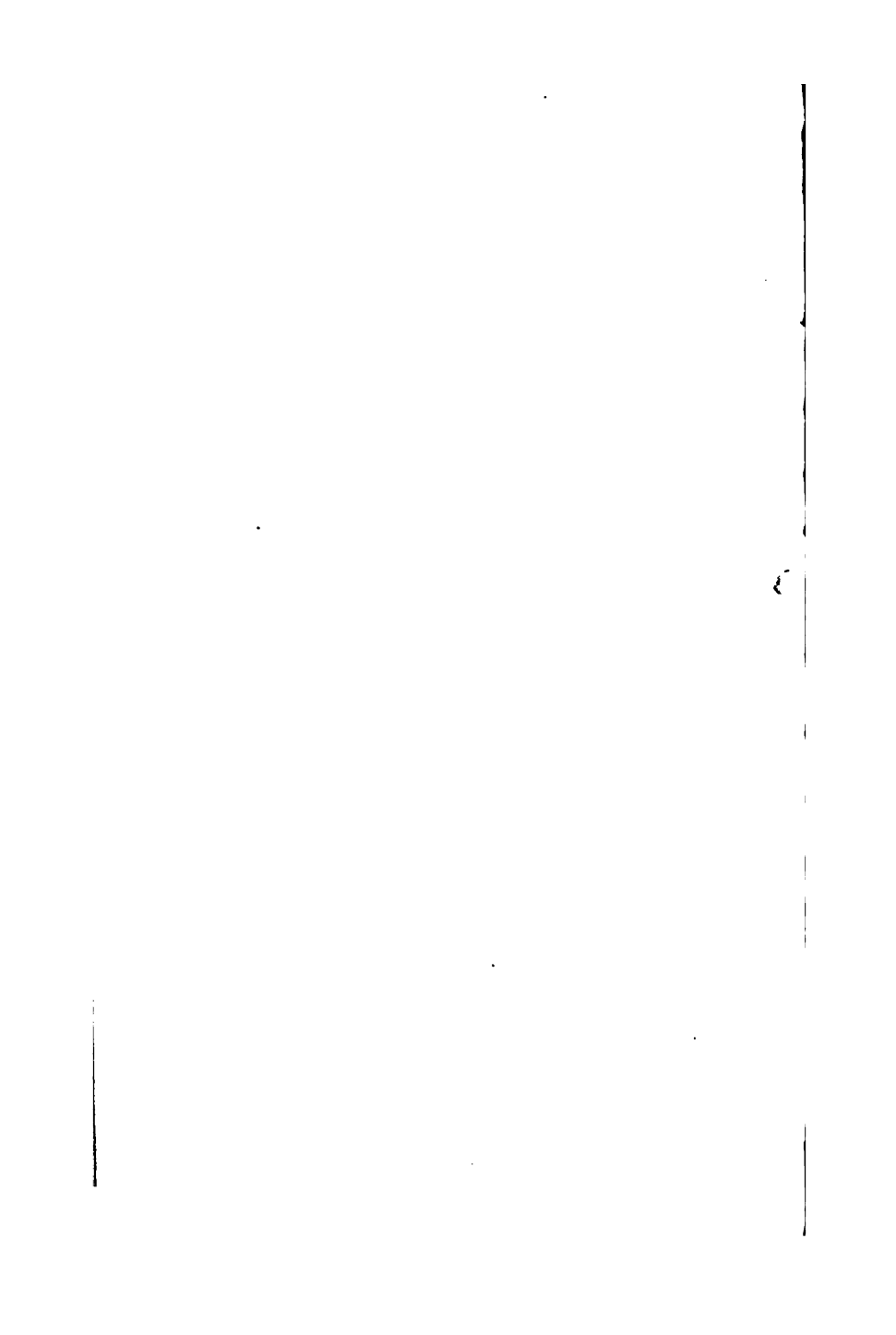
or in His own Sanctuary, with our unchanging Master! How do we rise from such communion refreshed and animated for the arduous work of our calling! Here, in weariness we find strength, encouragement in distress, hope in disappointment, and comfort at all times.

And for you who are present here, as witnesses of the Church's doings this day, if in your ears we have spoken of the importance and dignity of our office, of the difficulties in the way of a right discharge of it, of our own weakness and insufficiency, and of the awfulness of our responsibilities, on you lies the duty to esteem that sacred office very highly in love; not to have regard to our persons, or our attainments, but to the *commission* we bear from the Almighty God; remembering, that the work is for your benefit,—for the edifying of the body of Christ, of which ye are members, your parts and duties it is to assist us, and uphold us in this our work, to the uttermost of your power. By yourselves taking heed to the things spoken by your minister; by yourselves striving to grow up under his hand “in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ;”* by yourselves encouraging every good and holy work in your proper spheres, you must fit yourselves to be living stones in the everlasting Temple of God.

Finally, brethren, pray for us; not only in our work to day, but as is your bounden duty, at all times. Pray for us, not only that God's work be not

* 2 Tim, iii. 18.

hindered through our insufficiency, but that the gifts and graces needful for the due performance of it, be not wanting in any of us.—That the Spirit of the Lord may dwell in our hearts, and the dew of His blessing be upon us for ever.—AMEN.



The Old Paths of the Church of England.

A

S E R M O N

PREACHED IN

ST. JOHN'S CHAPEL, ST. MARY-LE-BONE,

ON SUNDAY, NOV. 10, 1850.

BEING THE TWENTY-FOURTH SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY.

BY

DANIEL BUTLER, M.A.

ASSISTANT MINISTER.

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A

SERMON,

&c.

“Thus saith the Lord, Stand ye in the ways, and see, and ask for the old paths, where is the good way, and walk therein, and ye shall find rest for yourselves.”

IF this Divine counsel, spoken by the Prophet to God's ancient people, may be at all times profitably brought to our recollection—if it must be good for us, under all circumstances, and in every stage of our Christian course, “to stand in the ways, and see”—to pause and consider if our steps be indeed set in the right way; remembering that “there is a way which seemeth right unto a man, but the end thereof are the ways of death;” to take heed that we be not following a way of our own choosing, but that which God hath appointed us to walk in, and to which alone therefore there is a promise of a blessed termination; if such wariness be always our duty, always necessary to the health and safety of our souls;—it would seem to be especially required of us at a time like the present, when, amid the din of angry disputants, the still,

small voice of truth would seem to be but little heeded, pointing us to the ancient way, that we should walk in it, when we would turn to the right hand, or when we would turn to the left.

Of the manifold ways which lie around us, and invite our pursuit, we are here reminded by the Prophet, that it is in the old paths that "the good way"—the way of peace and salvation—is to be found. At the present time, there are three ways more especially which claim the attention of Christians in this land. These are—(1) the way of the Church of England; (2) the way of Dissent; and (3) the way of Romanism. It will be my object to show you this evening, as distinctly as the limits of a single Sermon will allow, and in humble reliance upon the Divine blessing, that, in the first of these ways, as it stands distinguished from the other two—in the way of the English Church, of which by God's good Providence we are members—there is found assuredly "the good way;" in which, therefore, it is not at the option of any to walk or not as it may seem good in his own eyes, but which he cannot, consciously and wilfully, forsake without peril to his salvation; in which, in proportion as he walks, by the grace of God, stedfastly and faithfully, he shall find rest to his soul.

The old paths for which we Christians are concerned to ask are evidently those of the earliest days of the Gospel. We are to look for that truth which was first proclaimed at Jerusalem—for that system of doctrine and of polity which dates from the Day of Pentecost. And this is the system which we believe to have been preserved to us, in all its essential features, in the Church of England. She claims our allegiance, on the twofold ground of having inherited the

fellowship and maintained the *faith* of the Apostles. Their *fellowship* is continued to us by the succession of her Bishops, which has been preserved unbroken since the days when our pagan ancestors were converted to the faith of Christ, possibly by the preaching of St. Paul himself; at all events, in the Apostolical age, or in that immediately following, and by the agency of men to whom the Apostolic Commission had been transmitted.

The present chief pastors of the English Church are the undoubted spiritual descendants of the Bishops by whom the British Church was represented, in the fourth century, at the great Council of Nicæa. It is true that another line of Bishops was introduced from Rome consequently upon the mission of St. Augustine at the end of the fifth century, to convert the Saxons, but the ancient British succession was still preserved. There was also, in the seventh century, a mission from Ireland, by which a great portion of the pagan invaders of Britain were converted to the faith. And these Irish Bishops also were followed by a long line of successors, who governed dioceses in our island. From this threefold source accordingly is the later English Episcopate derived; so that it dates its origin, not merely from the times of Augustine and Patrick, but from the very earliest period at which the Gospel was first preached in the land. It is most important to bear in mind that there was no interruption of this ancient line of the Episcopal succession at the time of the Reformation. By that event the Church of England was but restored to the position it occupied before the seventh century. It was no new order of Bishops which was then established: it was not the formation of a Church, as our adversaries are fain to

represent it, and as some, alas! who call themselves Churchmen, are found to speak of it, but it was its re-formation.

To be a Church at all, it must be able to trace its descent by means of a validly ordained ministry from the holy Apostles. To date the origin of our Church, therefore, from the period of the Reformation is, obviously, suicidal. It is to forfeit its character as a member of the mystical body of Christ, a branch of the one Catholic and Apostolic Church, which is His ordinance for the salvation of mankind. The English Episcopate was not founded, then, at the time of which we speak; it was but freed from the jurisdiction of the Papal See; which, as it had been from the beginning a mere usurpation, submitted to, indeed, on the part of the English Bishops without remonstrance, but not the less a violation of the Canons of the Universal Church, it was no more than a fitting assertion of that liberty wherewith Christ had made them free to release themselves from its yoke. It is plain that the continuity of the Church itself could not be affected by this renunciation of an authority to which, in its earliest days, it was a stranger, and which had been from the beginning of its exercise an unwarranted, though an unresisted, invasion of its rights. It is the same Church, therefore, since the Reformation as before; and thus it comes before us at the present day, as the true descendant and representative of that spiritual society into which the first believers were gathered at Jerusalem; even as it is written, that "the Lord added to the Church daily such as should be saved."

In respect, then, of the Apostolical fellowship, as it is transmitted from age to age, by a series of valid

ordinations to the sacred office of the ministry, we are bold to affirm that "the old paths," for which we are bidden in the text to inquire, the paths by which Christ's faithful servants from the beginning have entered into rest, are the paths of our own ancient Catholic, and now happily reformed, Church of England. In her communion "the ministry of reconciliation," first committed to the Apostles, is exercised on our behalf. The holy Sacraments, the instruments of that spiritual union with our Divine Head, in which the salvation of the Gospel pre-eminently consists, are duly administered; and all other ordinances of His grace, by which He holdeth our souls in life, are dispensed in the midst of us.

Nor is it otherwise in respect of her *faith*. The faith of the present Church of England is the old faith of the Gospel, as it was maintained by the Primitive Church, and by it derived from the inspired teaching of the Apostles. It was the declared object of the English Reformation, whatever may have been the case in other countries, to recover in its purity the doctrine of the early Universal Church. It recognised as its rule of faith Holy Scripture, interpreted not according to each man's private fancy, but by the teaching of the undivided Church. Thus we find frequent reference, both in the Articles and the Homilies, to the ancient Bishops and Doctors; and it cannot be too often repeated, in times like the present, when the real principles of the Reformation are so widely misunderstood, that in the same Convocation which confirmed the Articles the following Canon was enacted:—"The Clergy shall be careful never to teach any thing from the pulpit, to be religiously held and believed by the people, but what is agreeable

to the doctrine of the Old or New Testament, and collected out of that same doctrine by the Catholic Fathers and ancient Bishops."

Here, you will observe, is an explicit declaration, not by any individual divine, however eminent, but by the Church of England itself; as it was represented in lawful Synod, that Holy Scripture, as it was understood and expounded by the ancient Catholic Church, is the standard by which her own doctrine is determined. In faith then, no less than in polity, she would direct the steps of her children into "the old paths." She requires us to believe, as necessary to salvation, no more and no less than that which the Holy Church throughout all the world, in her earliest, purest days, while yet she was built as a city that is at unity with itself, did, with the sure warranty of Holy Writ, require of her children. With the pure word of God in our hands, and with the Creeds of the Universal Church continually on our lips, we must possess, if it be any where to be found upon the earth, the faith which was once delivered to the Saints; the faith which it was St. Paul's consolation to have "kept," when he was now ready to be offered; the faith for which, in the days of fiery persecution, multitudes of Christ's true servants were content to die.

Such, then, is the twofold claim by which the Church of England demands our allegiance, and by which, as we said at the outset, it stands distinguished from Dissent on the one hand, and from Romanism on the other. As regards Dissent, how shall it lead any into "the old paths," as respects the fellowship of the Apostles, when it is based upon the renunciation of the principle of an apostolically ordained

ministry, as it had been received and acted upon by universal Christendom for fifteen hundred years ?

Dissent has, obviously, no connexion with the historical Church of Christ, the Church which has existed in unbroken continuity from the days of the Apostles until now. It does not claim to have any. It rests its pretensions solely upon private interpretation of Holy Scripture, and the denial of the visible Church as a Divine institution.

The paths of Dissent then, in respect of Church communion, are new paths ; the followers of them may find, as they suppose, a justification in their own independent deductions from holy writ ; but they cannot say that they are walking in the footsteps of any of those worthies of the old time, whose praise is in all the Churches, who shone like lights in the world, adorning the doctrine of God their Saviour, in their generation, by the heavenly purity of their lives, and many of whom glorified Him by the constancy of their faith, even unto death ; they cannot say that they are followers herein of any of those, even among the earliest generations of believers, who through faith and patience now inherit the promises.

And in like manner, in respect of *faith* ; holding in light esteem the ancient creeds and formularies of the Church, in which the primitive truths of the Gospel are embodied, they profess to derive their faith immediately from Scripture, the real difference being, that they are guided in their interpretation of the Bible by the authority of some modern teacher, after whose name perhaps they are called, while the Church of England refers us, as we have said, to the united testimony of the Fathers and Doctors of the ancient Church. But, in truth, the doctrines of Dissent are

as various as are their forms of worship, and of government. Having no common standard by which their interpretations of Scripture are regulated and controlled, their faith is of necessity shifting and uncertain; how then can there be preserved amongst them the "one faith" into which the first generation of believers were baptized, and of which the "one body" of Christ's holy Church universal is the appointed guardian and witness?

And now, to speak of Romanism, the third of these systems into which the Christianity of our land is in these days divided.—Our attention is peculiarly directed, at the present moment, to the claims of the Romish Church, in consequence of the recent act of unwarrantable aggression, by which the Bishop of Rome has essayed, on his own usurped authority, to plant a new order of Diocesan Bishops in the midst of our Church and nation. By this act, he virtually denies our very existence as a Church; he seeks to supersede the ancient sees which are established in this kingdom, according to the Canons of the Universal Church, and to set up a hierarchy composed of his own emissaries, as if for the conversion of a heathen nation to the faith. Against this audacious and unprecedented intrusion, we are bound, as English Churchmen, strenuously to protest, and to use all lawful means to prevent it from being carried into effect. Apart from all consideration of the errors of Romanism in matters of faith, which, however, constitute another most reasonable and weighty ground of resistance to this daring plan for propagating its influence; but apart from this, we cannot allow this last encroachment of papal usurpation to pass unnoticed and unrebuked, without relinquishing our claim to be *the* Church of Christ in

this land, *the* appointed instrument of salvation to the people of this country.

Our present Bishops, as we have said, are the successors of the earliest Bishops by whom the Church of this land was governed. The Romish Bishops, who, until now, have exercised their functions under the title of Vicars Apostolic, have been the mere delegates of the Pope; "they cannot by any possibility" (I use here the words of an eminent living writer¹) "trace their spiritual descent by ordination from the original pastors of our Churches: for their line of succession began at Rome scarcely more than two centuries ago, and none of them have ever received ordination from any British or Irish Bishops, descended from the ancient line of prelates, who for so many ages have represented the Apostles in these realms." How then shall "the old paths" of Apostolical fellowship be found in the Romish communion, as it exists amongst ourselves; a communion which, in defiance of the ancient Canons of the Church, sets up Bishop against Bishop, and altar against altar, and whose existence here as a communion, separate from the English Church, is only as of yesterday?

And if we turn to the doctrines of Romanism, *i. e.* of course its peculiar doctrines, those against which many of the Articles of our Church were unquestionably designed to protest,—what are these but *novelties*, innovations, and corrupt additions to the Catholic faith, as it was maintained in the ancient Church? Much of the teaching of the present Roman Church, much which is now made most prominent, and pressed with peculiar urgency, was absolutely unknown, or else known only to be censured, in the three first centuries

¹ See Palmer's *Origines Liturgiæ*, vol. ii.

of the Church's annals. And, indeed, it was not until the sixteenth century, the era of our own Reformation, that most of these novelties were adopted into her Creed, and so constituted articles of faith to be believed on peril, as it is said, of damnation. Though many of them may have prevailed more or less extensively in the Church of the middle ages, it was the Council of Trent which first stamped them with authority, and placed them on a level with the verities of the ancient Creeds. Of the dangerous character of these doctrines, it is not my immediate purpose to speak; I am rather concerned at present to remind you of their novelty, and so to make it manifest, that, as in the case of Dissent so also in that of Romanism, we shall look in vain for "the old paths," whether of Christian fellowship, or of Christian faith, for which it behoves us, according to the Prophet's admonition, to inquire, while they *are* provided, as I have attempted to show you, in that portion of Christ's holy Catholic Church, which is happily planted in this land, and to which it is our great privilege to belong.

And now suffer me, in conclusion, to call your attention, for a few moments, to the remaining part of the Prophet's counsel; on our observance of which the fulfilment to us of the accompanying promise will certainly be found to depend. It is not enough for us to have found the old paths where is the good way, but, having found it, or having been placed in it, as it is our happier lot to have been, by the appointment of God's good Providence, the Divine precept continues: "Walk therein, and ye shall find rest to your souls."

It is not enough that we can discern the errors of other systems, and admire the comparative excellence

of our own; it is not enough that we can vindicate the claims, and appreciate the distinctive advantages of the Church of England; that we can assert the purity of its faith, and the validity of its ministry. —All this is not enough for any practical purpose of benefit to our own souls; but we must remember for what end it is that the truth hath been committed to us, and the means of grace which Christ hath ordained in His Church, are freely dispensed towards us. We must seek to order our lives according to our favoured position, or that position will serve only to our greater condemnation before God. Be it our care then, brethren, to *walk* in the old paths of the Church, by striving to apprehend, more and more perfectly, the several Articles of our faith, contained in Holy Scripture, and embodied in the Creeds, as the great realities of our being; let us not only contend for our Creed, but manifest its sanctifying, elevating power in our life and conversation; let us remember that “unto whom much is given, of him will much be required;” that the ordinances of grace, which it is our privilege to enjoy, are designed to advance our steps in the way of godliness; and that many who have lived and died without the peculiar blessings which are the heritage of the Church, having been faithful to the light which is in them, and true to their lower opportunities, will rise up in the judgment against us and condemn us, if we be not careful to walk before God in newness of life, and to let our “conversation be as it becometh the Gospel of Christ.”

And here let me remind you that both, as regards faith and practice, the test of our consistency, as Churchmen, is, conformity with the Prayer Book. We are *walking* in the old paths of the Church in pro-

portion as the doctrines of the Prayer Book, in their entirety, the doctrines of the whole Prayer Book as they are taught explicitly in the Catechism, or implied no less authoritatively in its various offices—the offices not only of Morning and Evening Prayer, with which many of us are most familiar; but those also for the administration of the two Holy Sacraments of Baptism and the Communion; for the Visitation of the Sick; the Ordination of the Clergy,—and the rest;—are steadfastly believed, and resolutely maintained by us, however obsolete some of them may be accounted, and however distasteful they may be to the world, calling itself Christian, which is around us. And, in like manner, to be “*walking*” in the paths of the Church, we must be following her rules of godly living; her observances of fast and festival must be, not a dead letter, but recognised as a real, living obligation; a *law* which we may not venture to neglect or disobey. Whether in our attendance upon public worship, or in the ordering of our private and social life; the rules of the Prayer Book must be not merely acknowledged, but acted upon, if we would prove ourselves Churchmen, not in name only, but in deed and in truth.

And, finally, in a time of eager controversy like the present, while we are ready, as it behoves us to be, to contend earnestly for the truth; while we use every needful effort to defend the walls of our Zion; and to guard from corruption the pure faith of the Gospel, which is entrusted to our keeping; let us beware of dishonouring our holy cause by the display of angry or uncharitable tempers; and while we are resisting the assaults of a common adversary, let us rather invite to reconciliation and union, than provoke to jealousy and separation amongst ourselves. While

we complain of the intolerance of Romanism, let us not manifest the same spirit towards any of our own brethren, members together with us of the same spiritual household ; let all heart-burnings and suspicions, one of another, be put aside ; and let us seek rather to provoke one another to love and to good works. Let us strive, one and all, according to our place in the Church, whether as ministers or people, to walk, humbly, diligently, patiently,—leaning only on the hope of God's heavenly grace;—to walk in "the old paths" of faith and obedience ; being ready indeed always to give an answer to every one that asketh a reason of the hope that is in us ; but answering "with meekness and fear ;" remembering always the Apostle's admonition (2 Tim. ii. 24), that "the servant of the Lord must not strive : but be gentle unto all men, apt to teach, patient (or as the margin renders it—*forbearing*) in meekness, instructing those that oppose themselves : if peradventure God will give them repentance to the acknowledging of the truth." In a word, let us be Churchmen, not in theory only, and by profession, but in spirit and in practice ; so shall we best commend to others that "more excellent way," in which, by the Divine goodness, our own feet have been set ; and so, amid the strife of tongues, we shall be hidden safely in the tabernacle of God, and the Angel of His Presence shall save us from all evil ; and in the way of His commandments we shall enjoy that peace which passeth all understanding ; yea, we shall find rest for our souls.

THE END.

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THE SIN OF DOUBTING THE PRESENCE OF
CHRIST IN HIS CHURCH.

A

S E R M O N,

UPON EXODUS XVII. 7,

PREACHED IN

THE PARISH CHURCH OF PODINGTON,

IN THE COUNTY OF BEDFORD,

ON SUNDAY, OCTOBER 6, 1850.

BY THE

REV. EDWARD THOMAS CARDALE,
VICAR.

LONDON:

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PREFATORY NOTE.

The simple object which prompts the publication of a discourse delivered to a country congregation, and which has no pretension to any thing but simplicity earnestness, and truthfulness, is, a desire to direct attention to the point—whether the first step to the now prevalent sin of perversion does not consist in permitting a doubt to dwell upon the mind as to whether the Lord is among us in our pure and apostolic branch of His Church.

This, of itself, is, in the language of the text, a tempting of God: it is the not holding the Head, from which all the body, by joints and bands, having nourishment ministered and knit together, increaseth with the increase of God. And, therefore, we cannot wonder that such are beguiled of their reward in a voluntary humility and worshipping of angels, intruding into those things which they have not seen, vainly puffed up by their fleshly mind. And the transition through which this is effected is sufficiently obvious. When the presence of her great Head within the Church ceases to be realized, there must necessarily

ensue a failure of peace and profit in her ministrations. Thence will follow restlessness under her teaching, and, finally, unbelief in her mission and catholicity.

If the perusal of these pages should, under the blessing of the Divine Spirit, enable any to detect that their unsatisfied yearnings of soul, or low state of spirituality, arise, not from any failure in our Church, (which at the present day is the too successful suggestion of our great enemy,) but from their own individual faithlessness in the spiritual presence within her of our Divine Redeemer; and they should thereby be led, through earnest prayer for an increase of that faith, to give glory to the Lord their God before He cause darkness, and before their feet stumble upon the dark mountains:

TO HIM BE ALL THE PRAISE.

A S E R M O N,

&c.

EXODUS xvii. 7.

“ And he called the name of the place Massah, and Meribah, because of the chiding of the children of Israel, and because they tempted the Lord, saying, Is the Lord among us, or not ? ”

THE condescension and goodness of God in deigning to regard us, his unworthy and rebellious creatures, is, beyond comparison, wonderful and excellent. That the high and lofty One that inhabiteth eternity, whose name is holy, who dwelleth in the high and holy place, and who humbleth Himself to receive even the praises of angels, should take an interest in the affairs of this lower world, and of us men who are in so many respects inferior to the angelic existencies ; while it may well awaken our surprise, ought to command our gratitude. But what shall we think of human nature, if, when we contrast the greatness and majesty of God with the insignificance, guilt, and danger of man, we realize the truth, that while He is ready and willing to care for and protect us, to guide and direct us, yea, to dwell with us and abide within us, we are ready to doubt his presence, to disbelieve his operations, and even to say unto Him, “ Depart from us, for we desire not the knowledge of thy ways ? ” Yet, brethren, such is a true

statement of what our fallen nature inclines to, not only at the present day, but also throughout all ages in the history of our race.

The very first effect of their disobedience upon our first parents was, to lead them who had previously enjoyed immediate and unlimited intercourse with their good and gracious Creator, to hide themselves from his presence. And ever since, man has endeavoured to avoid an approach to God; has been unwilling to recognize his interference in his own creation: yea, has been desirous to banish Him from the Church which He has established to be a testimony for Him before an unbelieving world; so that, while his chosen people under the Old Testament dispensation tempted the Lord by saying, "Is the Lord among us, or not?" there are many under the New Testament dispensation, and amongst us at the present day, who, like the Gergesenes, in their hearts beseech God to depart out of their coasts. And while this conduct has been the same in all ages of the world, so also have the motives from which it has sprung,—and these have been throughout a love of sin and a prevalence of unbelief. We delight in sin, and thereby we becloud our spiritual apprehensions; while, at the same time, we are unwilling to believe in God's presence amongst us, because we know that the realization of that truth must deal a death-blow to the indulgence of our lusts. It may not then, I hope, be unprofitable, that I should enlarge upon the words of my text, by considering,—

I. *Firstly*,—Their application to the children of Israel of old; and,—

II. *Secondly*,—Their application to ourselves.

Now, in considering their application to the children of Israel, we must bear in mind, that they were the descendants of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, to

whom the Gospel promise was made, that in their seed (that is Christ), all the nations of the earth should be blessed ; that they were, under the Old Testament dispensation, the chosen people of God ; that, agreeably to God's promise, they had just been delivered by Him from Egypt, their house of bondage, by means of a series of judgments inflicted on their enemies, and of miracles of mercy displayed on their behalf ; that already had their journey through the wilderness been refreshed by the special interposition of God, in sweetening the bitter waters of Marah, and in raining down upon them manna, that heavenly provision for their hunger ; that Moses stood before them as their leader and commander, especially appointed for that office by God, and divinely gifted, so that through him, as by an instrument, all God's miracles of mercy were wrought on their behalf ; and that, above all, Jehovah Himself went before them by day in a pillar of a cloud to lead them the way, and by night in a pillar of fire to give them light, thus supplying them with these visible tokens of his constant and continual presence amongst them. It was then under these circumstances, that, as we read in the two first verses of this chapter, the children of Israel had, "according to the commandment of the Lord, pitched in Rephidim, where there was no water for the people to drink. Wherefore the people did chide with Moses, and said, Give us water that we may drink. And Moses said unto them, Why chide ye with me ? wherefore do ye tempt the Lord ?" This remonstrance, however, was not sufficient. They continued to murmur against Moses, so that in his cry to God for help, he could say, "they be almost ready to stone me." And though once more God interfered for their relief, and, by directing Moses to smite the rock in Horeb with

his rod, water was brought to them out of the stony rock, yet this their great and grievous sin is recorded for our warning and instruction ; for the text tells us, that Moses "called the name of the place Massah (which means temptation), and Meribah (which means chiding or strife), because of the chiding of the children of Israel, and because they tempted the Lord, saying, Is the Lord among us, or not?" With the view, then, of connecting these words with the conduct of the children of Israel at this place, I propose to show you one or two particulars of which their sin consisted.

And Istly,—There was here the sin of unbelief ; notwithstanding all God's wondrous interferences on their behalf, they still doubted his presence amongst them. For his own all-wise purposes, and probably as a trial of their faith in Him, God had brought them to a place where there was no water. They had to learn a lesson of their dependence upon Him for their daily necessities. Already had the manna descended from heaven with such regularity, that they began to forget that it was the special gift of God ; and, therefore, would God lead them to see that they could not live on bread alone, and that they must, if they would retain his favour, be assured of his presence, place confidence in his care, and secure its exercise by prayer.

And as a further object for bringing them into their difficulty, we may well believe that God was desirous to strengthen their faith by a fresh manifestation of his divine power in their relief. But how, under these circumstances, did the people act ?—Instead of believing in God's promises, and feeling assured of his presence and protection, instead of crying unto God in their troubles, and patiently abiding his time for their relief, they chide with Moses, they murmur

against God's minister, yea, they tempt God Himself by saying, "Is the Lord among us, or not?" This, then, I say, showed the presence of unbelief amongst them. If they had known their privileges as the children of promise and as God's chosen people, they would not have doubted that this was one of the chain of God's providences, which was to end in the accomplishment of his purposes respecting them. If they had unreservedly acknowledged the hand of God in their deliverances, and in the help already afforded to them in their necessities, they could have no ground to fear that He would now forsake them, and leave them to die of thirst. If they had recognized in Moses God's ordained servant, and his minister, appointed by Him to be their leader and commander, they had not dared to chide him or murmur against him for what he had done *as such*. If they had realized that the pillar of cloud and the pillar of fire which accompanied them were the visible symbols of Jehovah's presence amongst them, they dared not to have tempted Him, saying, "Is the Lord among us, or not?"

Be assured then, brethren, that unbelief was one great feature of their transgression; and it was this that led the Psalmist, on the recollection of their sin, to call upon them to reassert their faith in God in those inspiriting words which our Church makes use of for the like purpose in our Sunday morning's service, "O come, let us worship and bow down: let us kneel before the Lord our Maker. For He is our God; and we are the people of his pasture, and the sheep of his hand. To-day, if ye will hear his voice, harden not your hearts, as in the day of provocation, and as in the day of temptation in the wilderness: when your fathers tempted me, proved me, and (or

though they) saw my works¹." This it was that prompted the Apostle in his Epistle to the Hebrews, after referring to the passage just quoted from the 95th Psalm, to say, "Take heed, brethren, lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief, in departing from the living God²."

But, 2ndly, the conduct of the Israelites upon this occasion evidenced a love of sin as well as a prevalence of unbelief. Their hearts were set upon Egypt, and upon the profligacy and idolatry there uninterruptedly and shamelessly practised—"Wherefore (said they to Moses, as we read in the third verse) is this that thou hast brought us up out of Egypt, to kill us and our children and our cattle with thirst?" Just so (as you may read in the preceding chapter and the third verse) when they desired bread, they expressed their murmurings in similar language, "Would to God that we had died by the hand of the Lord in the land of Egypt, when we sat by the flesh-pots, and when we did eat bread to the full!" On both these occasions, and on other subsequent ones; their natural lusts and desires were the causes of their sins; not that it was sin in itself to desire to satisfy the cravings of nature for meat and drink; but that it was sinful to look back upon Egypt, and to desire to return to it, instead of looking up to God, and entreating of Him to satisfy their necessities in the wilderness. In this respect the children of Israel were like ourselves in our Christian course. Egypt represents the state of every one amongst us, as long as we continue in captivity to sin and Satan; and when we hear the voice of God speaking to us by the Holy Spirit, through the ordinances of Christ's Church, it is as though God was saying to us, as He

¹ Ps. xciv. 6.

² Heb. iii. 12.

did to the children of Israel through Moses, "I am the Lord, and I will bring you out from under the burdens of the Egyptians, and I will rid you out of their bondage, and I will redeem you with a stretched out arm, and with great judgments: and I will take you to me for a people, and I will be to you a God^s." Thenceforth we set out on our Christian pilgrimage, and have the promise of the heavenly Canaan for our hopes to rest on; but no sooner have we set out, than we discover the difficulties of our path. Satan and our evil hearts are continually reminding us of the time when we yielded to sin without remorse; and we are tempted to wish ourselves back again in Egypt, revelling in the indulgence of our unsubdued, yea, unrestrained lusts, following the wicked imaginations of our own hearts, and, while forgetful of his presence, living without God in the world. It was, then, mainly a love of sin, and an *unwillingness* to believe, as well as the prevalence of unbelief, which prompted the Israelites, upon the occasion referred to in my text, "to tempt the Lord, saying, Is the Lord among us, or not?"

II. But I proceed to consider, whether these words are not susceptible of an application, nay, of the like application, to ourselves.—Brethren, there were no promises of God's presence and protection made to his people Israel more distinct and specific than those made by our Lord Jesus Christ to his Church; and the blessings and privileges offered to all the nations of the earth under the Gospel dispensation far surpass all that Israel of old could realize.

They, indeed, looked forward in faith upon the promise of the coming Messiah, while we have the fulfilment of the promise as it were before our eyes.

^s Exod. vi. 6, 7.

By evidence which none can gainsay, we have in our hands full particulars of the Saviour's birth, life, death, resurrection, and ascension. In the Church of Christ, instituted by Himself, and founded upon the holy Apostles, we have had delivered down to us through intervening ages the testimony of those who were eye-witnesses of these things; and in the inspired writings of the holy Evangelists and Apostles, there is plainly set before us the blessed words of Him who spake as never man spake; the fulfilment of the types and the objects pointed at by the ceremonies of the Mosaic law are clearly explained; the purposes of God towards fallen man are cleared up; and the way of salvation by faith in Christ Jesus is placed before all, so that he who runs may read it.

So, if we further trace out the resemblances between the Christian Church and that in the wilderness, we cannot fail to see that our privileges do, and our responsibilities will far surpass theirs. If they were delivered from the bondage of Egypt, so are we from the bondage of sin. Had the Israelites before their eyes the judgments of God upon Pharaoh and his land, and their glorious deliverance at the Red Sea; how can this compare to the victory achieved by our Divine Redeemer, who by death hath overcome death, and him that had the power of death, that is the devil? Had miracles of mercy been displayed on their behalf, and who shall not extol the Saviour's miracles, which enabled Him to say, "Go and shew John again those things which ye do hear and see: the blind receive their sight, and the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, and the deaf hear, the dead are raised up, and the poor have the Gospel preached to them?" Had the Israelites manna rained from heaven, and have we not the true bread from heaven, even He

⁴ Matt. xi. 4, 5.

which came down from heaven, and giveth life unto the world, and who said, "I am the bread of life, he who cometh to me shall never hunger, and he that believeth on me shall never thirst?" Had they water out of the stony rock, and have we not the Holy Spirit amongst us as the Saviour's abiding gift to his Church; for He Himself tells us, that while those who drink from earthly springs shall thirst again, whosoever drinketh of the water that He shall give (viz. of the Holy Spirit), shall never thirst; but it shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life⁵? And again: "In the last day, that great day of the feast, Jesus stood and cried, saying, If any man thirst, let him come unto me, and drink. He that believeth on me, as the Scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water. (But this spake he of the *Spirit*, which they that believe on him should receive: for the Holy Ghost was not yet given; because that Jesus was not yet glorified⁶.)" Had they the two tables of the Law laid up in the ark of the testimony, and have we not the whole Canon of Holy Scripture, which containeth all things necessary to salvation preserved to us in, and delivered down to us by the Church, of which she is at once witness and keeper? Had they Moses and Aaron as their leader and priest, and have we not in the Church of Christ a ministry of bishops, priests, and deacons, duly consecrated and ordained, and tracing their orders to the Apostles, and their mission to Christ Himself? And once more, had they the pillars of cloud and of fire as the visible symbols and tokens of the presence of Jehovah, and have we not in the blessed Sacraments of Baptism and the Lord's Supper, ordained by Christ Himself, the water visibly representing to us the washing away of our sins (the

⁵ John iv. 13, 14.

⁶ John vii. 37—39.

great blessing of the Gospel), and the bread and wine, which with equal distinctness, place before our eyes the Divine Redeemer's body broken, and his blood shed upon the cross for our salvation? And finally, had they the promise of an earthly, and have we not that of an heavenly inheritance? Had they the gracious assurance on their pilgrimage thitherward, that God's presence should go with them, and give them rest; and have we not in the Church the no less encouraging promise, "Lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the world?" How then, brethren, do you act under your Gospel privileges? Do you chide with God's ministers? Do you murmur at his dispensations? Do you tempt the Lord, saying, "Is the Lord among us, or not?"—Brethren, I believe this to be the great and prevailing sin of the present day—we do not realize God's presence in our Church and amongst us; nay, if we honestly examine our own hearts, we shall discover that we are not willing to have Him amongst us. It is, indeed, very needful that we should have creeds and liturgies, formularies of faith and doctrine, and forms of prayer and praise; and thanks be to God that He and his Church have provided us therewith; for if we had been without them in these days, when every man thinks he may do that which is right in his own eyes, how could we have retained the faith as once delivered to the Saints? But, having them, is it not, alas! too possible for many of us to profess religion, to attend the ordinances of the Church, and to pass among men as a religious person, without having any heartfelt devotion, any deep convictions, any influential realizations of God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Ghost, and of their presence within the Church, giving life to her ordinances and profit to the means of grace?

But, brethren, I cannot allow myself to rest with addressing, upon this point, those only amongst you who make a profession, without seeking or desiring to experience the power, of religion. I would further entreat such of you as really are in earnest about the salvation of your souls, to examine yourselves whether you are not depriving yourselves of much of that joy and peace in believing which arises from an assurance of God's favour and blessing, and from a well-grounded hope of eternal happiness hereafter, by low and unbelieving views of Church membership and Church ordinances. The question is, whether our National Church is or not a branch of that one Holy, Catholic, and Apostolic Church which is built upon the foundation of the Apostles and Prophets, Jesus Christ Himself being the chief corner stone; in which, as in a temple, God has promised to dwell by his Holy Spirit, through which Christ, as the head, distributes his grace, and spiritual life, and energy to every member of that, his body, and to which He Himself has promised his continual presence? If it be not such—I say it advisedly—it is a mass of deception; and the sooner it be swept away by the breath of the Almighty, the better for the cause of truth. But if it be such (as it is in deed and in truth), Why will you regard with doubt and uncertainty whether the Lord is amongst us or not? Why will you deem it a matter of indifference whether you are in communion with her or not? Why do you not realize the especial presence of God in this his own house? Why do you not assure yourselves of an answer to the prayers which you here offer up? Why do you not expect a blessing every time that you enjoy the ordinances of hearing God's word read and preached? Why do you shrink from believing

that Christ is indeed present at holy Baptism, and through it communicates to the baptized Infant, regeneration and the other spiritual benefits therein promised ; and, so believing, Why do you not strengthen your faith, and hope, and confidence by a continual recurrence to the blessings and privileges vouchsafed to you therein ? Why do you not rejoice in a sense of forgiven sin when, having penitently confessed it, the minister of Christ, by his authority, declares to you the pardon, through his atonement, granted you in the Court of Heaven ? Why do you not experience a monthly increase of spiritual life, a monthly strengthening of spiritual strength, when you partake sacramentally at the Lord's Table of the Body and Blood of the Lord Jesus Christ ? And, finally, why do you go on full of doubts and fears as to your eternal safety ? Brethren, one short reply will answer all these questions.—You do not *exercise* faith in the presence of Christ within his Church. I do not accuse you of denying it altogether. The most bitter of those who separate from us scarcely venture to do that. But you question it in your hearts, or at the best do not realize it ; you do just as the Israelites did ; you tempt God, saying, “ Is the Lord among us, or not ? ” And this unbelief and want of full faith in the best of us is just what hinders, if I may so speak, the Lord Jesus Christ from manifesting Himself more gloriously amongst us. How was it that in the days of his flesh, it is recorded of one place that He did not do many mighty works there *because of their unbelief* ? Alas, brethren, this was his own country, and among his own kindred according to the flesh. And is it not so, that now, in his own house, yea, among the very members of his own body, wide-spread unbelief prevails ? We do not live under the continued convic-

tion that God is with us of a truth. We do not expect spiritual blessings through the means our Divine Redeemer has ordained for communicating the same, and therefore we do not have them. We do not claim the continued supplies of the Holy Spirit as our baptismal birthright in answer to our prayers, and, therefore, our graces languish, our devotion flags, and our hopes of heaven are beclouded. If, on the other hand, we fully realized that our Church is indeed the house of God, "the Church of the Living God, the pillar and ground of the truth," and that the Lord hath chosen this our Zion, and hath desired it for his habitation, saying, "This is my rest for ever: here will I dwell; for I have desired it. I will abundantly bless her provision: I will satisfy her poor with bread. I will also clothe her priests with salvation: and her saints shall shout aloud for joy;" then, indeed, would her light rise in obscurity, and her darkness be as the noon-day; and the Lord would guide us continually, and satisfy our souls in drought, and make fat our bones; yea, she should be like a watered garden, and like a spring of water whose waters fail not⁹. And then, instead of members of our Church rushing out of her Communion into a foreign Church—less primitive because less pure in faith than our own,—instead of Separatists and Schismatics abounding around us, and inconsistent professors, half-hearted Churchmen, and self-excluded Communicants multiplying amongst us, we should all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ.

Let me then, in conclusion, urge upon you,

⁷ 1 Tim. iii. 15.

⁸ Ps. cxxxii. 14—16.

⁹ Isa. lviii. 10, 11.

from this subject, to seek after an increase of *faith* and *holiness*. As a first step you must seek after *holiness*, a conformity of heart, and thought, and will, as well as of word and deed to the Divine character. As long as you regard iniquity in your hearts, as long as you love sin and the ways of the world, as long as God and his glory are not the great objects upon which your hearts' best affections are placed, you are not in a state either to pray for or receive a realizing sense of the Saviour's presence in his Church. And just so long, brethren, you are not filling up your place in the Church, as 'a member of Christ, a child of God, and an inheritor of the kingdom of heaven.' Nay, you are infecting her with coldness, and worldliness, and sin, which are elements infused by Satan with the view of making the tabernacle of the Saviour's presence upon earth unfit for his abode. Forsake, then, wilful sin, conform yourselves to God's word and will, and earnestly pray for the promised indwelling of God the Holy Spirit within you to sanctify and purify your hearts, and thus prepare you for realizing the nearer communion between your souls and God, which is now hindered by your practice and love of evil. And when you are thus prepared to desire this realizing sense of God's presence, then exercise *faith* in the words and promise of our Divine Redeemer. Are these not his own words, "And I will pray the Father, and He shall give you another Comforter, that He may abide with you *for ever*, even the Spirit of Truth¹⁰;" and again, "*I will not leave you comfortless, I will come unto you*¹¹;" and once more, "*Lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world*¹²?" And if so, no longer doubt their fulfilment.

¹⁰ John xiv. 16, 17.

¹¹ Ibid. 18.

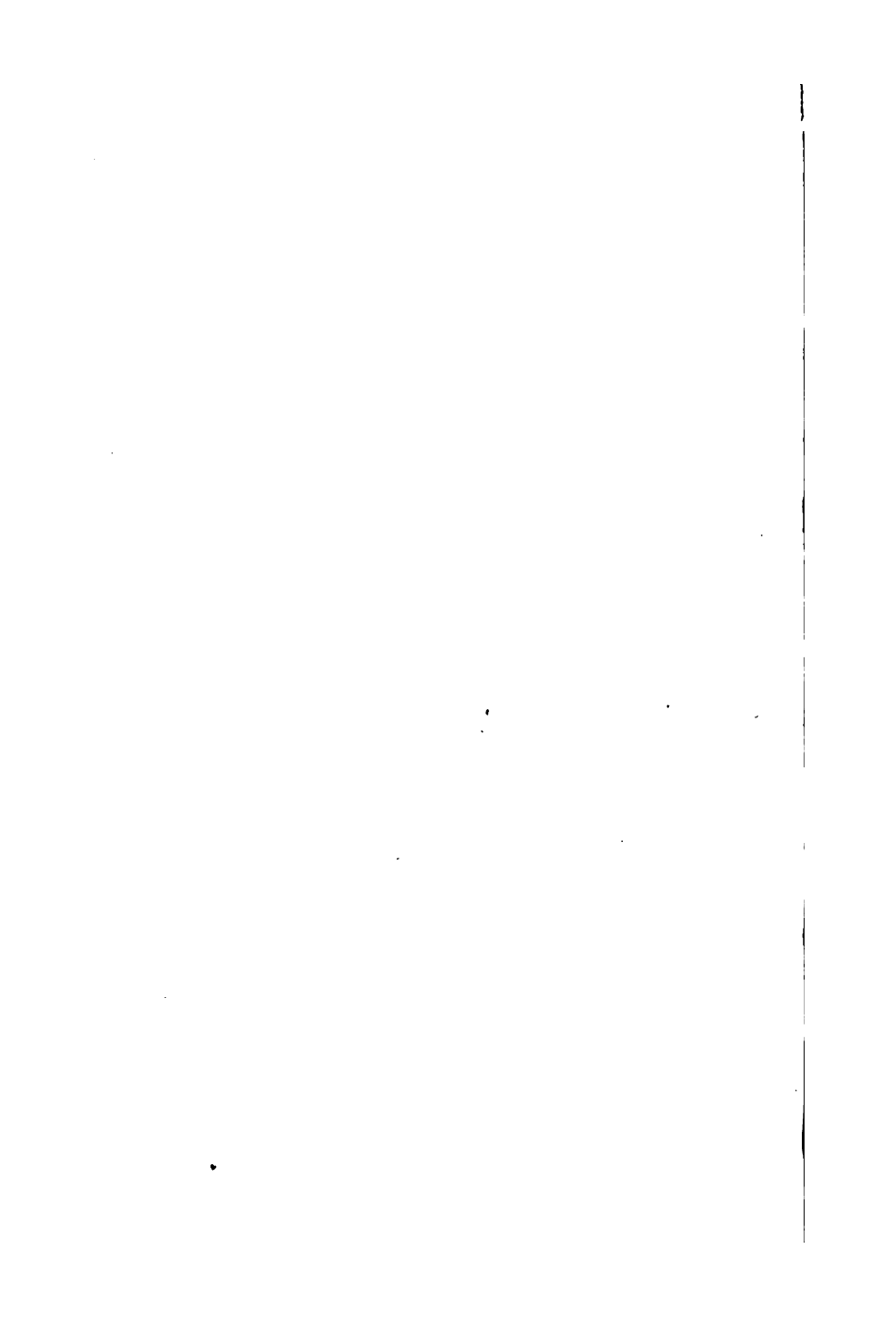
¹² Matt. xxviii. 20.

Awake to a consciousness of his presence amongst us. It is, indeed, only by the eye of faith that you can discern Him ; yet is He as truly, though it be spiritually, near us now, as when through the senses of sight and feeling He convinced the previously unbelieving Apostle of the truth and verity of his resurrection, saying, " Because thou hast seen me, thou hast believed ; blessed are they that have not seen me, and yet have believed ¹³."

Oh that our God may, by giving each of you spiritual discernment, open your eyes to see and rejoice in this great truth ; then shall you indeed be led to worship Him in the ordinances of his appointment with lively faith and glowing confidence, as well as with reverence and godly fear, to receive his truth as delivered to you in his Church, and by his ministers without murmuring and disputing, and while you are bringing glory to his great name, by filling up your place in the Church of Christ his household here upon earth, He shall be preparing for you mansions above in that " house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens."

¹³ John xx. 29.

THE END



A

SERMON

PREACHED

AT THE ORDINATION

HELD BY THE

LORD BISHOP OF OXFORD

AT CHRIST CHURCH CATHEDRAL

ON THE FOURTH SUNDAY IN ADVENT, 1849,

BY THE

REV. T. T. CARTER, M.A.

RECTOR OF CLEWER, BERKS,

AND PRINTED ACCORDING TO THE WISH OF THE CLERGY THEN ORDAINED,

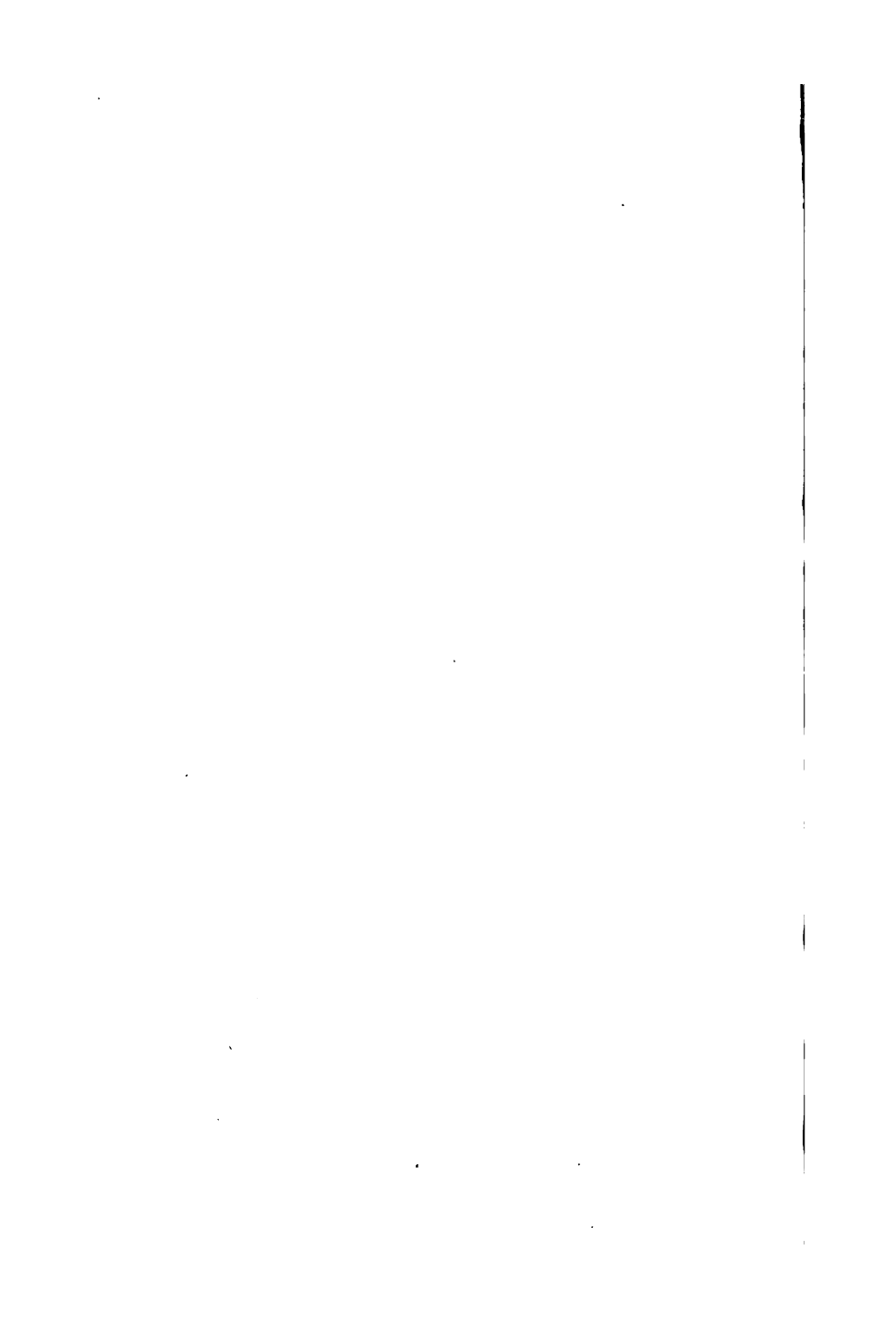
WITH THE APPROVAL OF THE BISHOP.

OXFORD AND LONDON,
JOHN HENRY PARKER.
1850.



BAXTER, PRINTER, OXFORD.

TO
THE RIGHT REVEREND FATHER IN GOD
THE BISHOP OF OXFORD;
AND TO
THE REVEREND CLERGY
WHO WERE
ADMITTED BY HIM TO THEIR SEVERAL OFFICES
IN THE
HOLY APOSTOLICK MINISTRY,
ON THE FOURTH SUNDAY IN ADVENT, MDGCCXLIX,
THIS SERMON IS,
WITH GRATEFUL AND RESPECTFUL AFFECTION,
INSCRIBED.



S. JOHN xiii. 14, 15.

If I then, your Lord and Master, have washed your feet, ye ought also to wash one another's feet. For I have given you an example, that ye should do as I have done unto you.

It was towards the close of the Paschal Supper, that the Son of God "took a towel, and girded Himself," and pouring "water into a bason, began to wash His disciples' feet;" not *before* the supper, as was the ordinary custom, but toward its close, and just before the institution of the Blessed Sacrament of His Body and His Blood. It seemed to mark the momentous change from Judaism to the Gospel; as though the former covenant with the Paschal Supper were passing away, and a new ministry of mercy with the holy Eucharist had opened on the world. This almost incredible condescension of our Lord was in private with the Twelve. It was indeed the closing scene of a long course of teaching to the chiefs of His ministry: the gathering up in one deeply symbolic action all past precept and example; and fixing on their minds, before they went forth, each on his separate mission through

the earth, what their future service would be. His own application thus most touchingly brought it home. "If I then, your Lord and Master, have washed your feet, ye ought also to wash one another's feet. For I have given you an example, that ye should do as I have done unto you." What He had begun, they and the long line of their ministry were to perpetuate, or rather He in them, in an uninterrupted succession. Thus, what S. John said at the beginning of the chapter as the explanation of the wonderful scene, that "having loved His own, which were in the world, He loved them unto the end," He thus fulfilled, by ordaining an unceasing ministry of mercy, which flowing out from that upper chamber, was to flow onward with them and their successors through the earth. In this mystical scene, then, we may see some characteristics of our ministerial work.

First, it manifestly shewed, that our call is to labour; it is the girding of ourselves up to service. Those very men, the first of our line, were to go forth almost instantly from that upper chamber; and must resign for ever on earth the silent contemplation of their Blessed Master's words, actions, countenance, which for three years had been their life; they were to pass at once into intense toil of mind and body, which would cease only when the evening of life had closed in. So is it with us who are called to the same Ministry. We pass at our Ordination from the peaceful listening to the instructions of the wise and good, which had been our joy; and as the last blessing falls on us, our work has begun, and it will

thenceforth never cease. Then comes the call to give up the morning study of early life, the leisure meal, the quiet evening, to go forth at all hours to labour and to long-suffering. Even the rest of the Sabbath is suspended for the Ministers of the Sanctuary, that their work may be even as the work of God, which day and night stays not. Our Lord rested not: can we? Far better would it be, to be spent in the most ill-directed zeal, though that is evil, than to slumber or to muse amidst dying souls. There were some who would have drawn down fire from heaven, to consume an enemy: they knew not "what manner of spirit" they were of; but yet they became the chiefest Apostles. But he who wished to "go first and bury" his "father," and he who could not risk an uncertain resting-place for his head, were rejected as unfit for the Ministry of the kingdom of God.

And here comes before our minds the danger of the student habits and the domestic ease of an English home: lest in its refinement or its tenderness, the early spirit of an Apostle of God be lost. We are bound by ties, surrounded by seductions, in the midst of which it is often difficult to trace the likeness of the Ministry of the Son of Man. Perhaps, speaking outwardly, the truest copy of that Ministry is the homeless Missionary of some foreign land. If we would present the same likeness here in England, and most surely we may, it must be by infusing that spirit into our more ordinary, but, as it may be, as hard and self-denying a service. If we still have the blessing of a settled home; still may see the face of

father, mother, brother, sister; or bind around us the still tenderer ties of wife or child; we must, in a very special manner, be "as though" we "had none." Otherwise even the commonest ministries of earth would put us to an open shame. The physician is seldom seen at social meetings; is called out, and busy often at dead of night. The soldier moves at the instant call of military duty. 'Throughout city and village, the lights burn long' for the millions who ply, early and late, every earthly creation. (Note 1.) Shall we, who deal with the dangers and distresses of souls; who are to catch all men; who, if we lose one sudden call, may lose all for eternity, be more engrossed in the soft calls of social life; we who, if we win, have the brightest reward; if we fail, the most shameful and hopeless condemnation?

Further, we here learn that our Ministry is the remedy for the daily wants of fallen humanity. The washing of the feet, is a symbol of the relief that should be given amidst the evils which settle upon man in his continual struggle with the world. All mercies centre in the Apostolic commission. Even the widow's daily food was ministered by Apostles. When it devolved on others, still it was an emanation from the fulness of their Ministry. Now, in the revolution of ages, all these humblest cares have amongst us again fallen on the Priesthood. We are the almoners to the poor; we are the recognised instruments in all the charities of the land. If we are ever tempted to cast these calls aside, as "serving tables," we may remember, that at the very beginning

it was so. Perhaps we may even be thankful, that, since we have to move amidst an alienated people, when the ties of reverence for the Priesthood are well-nigh broken, this charge, which has the readiest access to the hearts of men, is become ours by a common consent. We may reconcile men to ourselves, and to our ministry, and even to our Master, by the unquestioned exercise of an universal charity. Only in this service, let no degradation be deemed too low; no want too mean. We are but filling up in our own body the work of Him who knelt to wash His disciples' feet. Is it not the property of the greatest minds to embrace the least, as well as the largest subjects, with the same deep intelligence? Such a Pastor's love should be. While we embrace the noblest schemes for a nation's good, we must cherish a heart that feels, as with a mother's care, the cry of the meanest child. Tenderness to all human necessities, an unwearied readiness to hear, a watchful eye, an ever kindly answer, are not merely human charms that must win hearts, but in us should be the manifest graces of the Blessed Spirit, Whose very Name is "the Comforter."

There is one kind of tenderness that I would briefly point out, because the circumstances of the time especially require it in the Ministry. I mean that charity which can breathe peace over the discord of conflicting minds. O it is most painful to see the spirit of a hard unsympathizing controversy stirred within the very Sanctuary. Yet this is one of the most characteristic sins of our order. Our very

earnestness fosters it. We can scarce distinguish it from zeal. And so we narrow the sympathies of Christ to one set of men, and to one tone of thought. Do I say that we should sacrifice the truth for peace? God forbid. We must "earnestly contend for the faith." We must not shrink even from sending "a sword upon earth," if need be; but what I mean is, that we must hold the truth in patient tenderness. 'The love of party is but the love of self.' In our party we see ourselves reflected, as in a glass; and therefore we love it. The love of God kindles at whatever is of God, wherever it be found. We must clear away the differences which long habit, or varieties of education, or associations long cherished, must of necessity induce among men; and in the midst of these we must prize every lineament of good. Diversities of expression, of formulæ of word or manner, are things which pass away: but who can now tell the remorse that will embitter us for having cherished hardness at such difference in a brother who may stand side by side with us in heaven? Let us draw nearer to each other, in freer intercourse, in kindlier associations, in a humbled sense of a common infirmity; and as we enter deeper into one another's hearts, as we join more confidently together in works of common love, believe me, we shall find those hard diversities of manner be as though they were not, and heart will draw to heart, if only each heart turn to the One true common Centre. Even a St. Peter could shun a St. Paul, though preaching the same Gospel: who would not long to have been the Son of consolation, who

could bind together those great hearts, that beat so truly, though they knew it not, to the same Lord?

But further, we are to gather a still deeper meaning, than has as yet been at all hinted at, from this mystical action of our Lord. When He so earnestly rebuked St. Peter for refusing that washing: when He used those startling words, that if "not washed," "he had no part with Him;" and when He connected this idea of being washed with the cleanness that all but one possessed; there was a deeper meaning than the mere relief of suffering humanity. It is evident that the ancient commentary on this remarkable passage, is the only adequate one; (Note 2.) viz. that it implied the cleansing power of the very Blood of the Lord, which would reach their inmost souls to wash their guilt away, and renew them with the purest life. When He committed this same charge to the Apostles, "If I then, your Lord and Master, have washed your feet, ye ought also to wash one another's feet;" it most surely meant, that as "the Son of Man had power upon earth" to forgive sins, so that power was to be extended onward evermore through the work of the Apostolic Ministry. (Note 3.) Thus He shed on us the highest glory, in associating us with Himself in the ministrations of the mercies of His Atonement. We are the stewards of His mysteries. We are the ministers of reconciliation. We dispense the benefits of absolution. To our intercessions special promises are given. All that belongs to us short of this; all that beneficence can effect; all that tenderness of manner can avail; all that we can do to raise

the social state of a distressed people, is but as the whitening of the sepulchre : our real work is in the depths below, where we must, through His grace, purge away the very "dead men's bones, and all uncleanness." This cleansing power is the one only adequate end of all our ministrations. In every ordinance, in all our teaching, we must bring out this their great reality, for which man's labouring heart pants. One secret of success, my brethren, is, that we have this faith in them ourselves. Perhaps in the convulsions and schisms of these latter days, one condition on which the very life of the Church of England hangs, is that her Clergy have this faith in her and her ordinances ; that we believe that she has within herself the forms and powers of a saintly life ; that she needs but to revive her own ; that she has a character of her own ; that she can guide penitents ; that she can train saints ; that she can "bring out of her treasures things new and old ;" that it is not a mere national form in which she lives and moves and has her being ; that while we praise our national life as the rudiments of a noble people, we feel that it is all "unclean, unclean ;" but that He, our Lord and Master, is, through us, stretching over it His healing hand to form out of us unto Himself "a peculiar people, zealous of good works."

Yet, if even with this faith we were to trust to our public ministrations alone, still we should utterly fail. We have to ply a still closer work with the individual consciences of men. Even as the Lord moved round that upper chamber, and knelt to each one by one,

and touched each, so must it ever be, in communion with each separate soul, that the work of salvation is to be carried on. Our ordinances may be administered in the most impressive manner, our preaching may be with the tongue of an Angel; yet we may leave the darkest sins unhealed, untouched, unless we can learn what stirs within those troubled depths, where the powers of evil are in perpetual conflict with the light and life of God. Each heart has its own fearful history. Each needs a cleansing peculiarly its own. No physician could give the same remedy in the same proportion to all sicknesses. He mixes his different ingredients: suiting the quantities to every separate case. So the Gospel is to be administered; sometimes gentlest sympathy, sometimes merciful encouragement, sometimes a wise direction, sometimes sharp rebuke, or stern warning, suiting our 'ghostly counsel and advice' to the need of the individual soul.

And this personal dealing with the consciences of men absolutely requires a most searching knowledge of our own. It is to be observed, that in the English Church there is no authoritative text book for the guidance of the conscience. (Note 4.) No doubt it has been so ordered wisely, and for our good; for her Pastors are driven to study themselves all the more deeply. Out of the fulness of the experience of our own hearts, we must learn to solve the secrets of the hearts of others. We must know our own struggles, and what remedies we have ourselves found to avail; and so we can speak to others, "what the Lord hath done" for our own soul. Probably thus a manlier

and truer life grows. Probably our spirit becomes all the more compassionate, as well as true: because we are not so much guided by artificial rules, but in the humbled remembrance of the sins of our youth, and in the consciousness of our frequent falls, we learn to pity others more darkly tempted, and more sorely tried than ourselves.

One further suggestion here arises from this mystical action of our Lord; that, following Him in our earnest search for souls, we are to leave none, no, not even the most abandoned, untried by our hand. Even Judas was washed. The Lord was seeking even then to awaken his darkened soul, before Satan finally "entered in" and possessed him. So surely would a Pastor fail to fulfil the commission of his Master, if he pass one house as too degraded for his foot, or leave one soul as beyond hope. It should rather be one special care of our present ministry, to blot out what has been the reproach of past ages, that we have neglected the "offscourings" of the flock, and cast them away. That shrinking fear, or that false refinement, which has shunned the most degraded, instead of "compelling them to come in," is perhaps the natural snare of a Clergy highly educated, often highly born; but can there be a more fatal departure from the ministry of Him, Who came "to eat and drink with publicans and sinners?"

So again in dealing with such miserable souls, we learn an important lesson here from the fact, that there was no distinction made in our Lord's approach to Judas, from the rest. He was treated as an Apo-

stle, even when the resolution of apostacy was complete. Moreover, when He washed his feet, as of the rest, He recognised a still greater washing than had been received before. "He that is washed, needeth not save to wash his feet, but is clean every whit." Does not this warn us, that in each soul to whom we minister within the kingdom of God, we should remember the baptism of earlier years? (Note 5.) We should never forget, that they have been, even as we, recipients of His grace: nay, we may believe, what we shall seldom fail to find, that in every man, beneath the most rugged manner and coarsest spirit, there is some, if it be but one, remaining element of good. If it be no more than the love of mother, or of child, or the faintest remembrance of childhood's innocence, who can tell, but that out of this unquenched feeling of better days, as from "the smoking flax," "the lamp of God which had gone out," may yet kindle into life again? It is an universal precept, "honour all men." The precept has a spiritual application, and it is this,—that in dealing with another's soul, we should still ever appeal to the higher spirit with respect. Believe that the most fallen may have the consciousness of his fall; and can at times respond to the highest appeals of love, when all lower motives have failed.

Once more, briefly, I would remark on this passage, that we learn here, in all our intercourse with men, to stoop before them in the unbought grace of a chastened humility. We pass at our Ordination out of our previous standing in the ranks of society; our

relative rank has changed. We are no longer of any rank in the world, or rather we are of every rank. The Priesthood of the Lord absorbs all distinctions of birth or fortune. Aaron's rod has swallowed up all the rest. We stand among mankind as the visible representatives of the Son of Man, in whom the diverging lines of the human family all meet. We are the consecrated centres and symbols of union for all classes; "bond and free, made one in Christ Jesus." And this truest dignity of our order we maintain by becoming the servants of all. The greatest height at which we are to aim, is to humble ourselves to the very least of the brethren of our Lord. We must, therefore, put off all false reserve, all cold distance of manner, all mere hereditary sense of station, and put on a noble courtesy, a generous openness, a more free and winning converse; recognising in all men a common humanity; or rather the new brotherhood in Jesus Christ. It is most needful to remember this now; for in great portions of our society, almost the hardness and cruelty of Eastern caste has separated man from his brother. It is an outgrowth of the iniquity of the latter days, when "the love of many has waxed cold." We are specially called to join the many noble hearts who among us are striving to remedy this deep disease. We must strive, God helping us, that so, in serving all men, we may, by the gracious attractions of a humble love, reconcile man to man, and "all men in one body unto God in Christ Jesus our Lord."

If, in the last place, we turn from our work more

closely to ourselves, I would add, that just as it is necessary for us to have the experience of our own sin, ever fresh and deep, that we may know the sin of others; so likewise must we experience within us the cleansing touch of Christ's hand, that we may be able to speak, as of things well known to us, of the virtue of our Saviour's Blood, and the wondrous power of His Spirit. It is a most distressing mockery of a most divine gift, when a man, enlightened only with the cold glare of learning, can speak, like Balaam, what he *must* speak, because a vow is on his lips; but yet, like him, cannot speak with that sweetness, that relish, that persuasive warmth, which the beating of the heart alone can infuse into the words. It is like looking on the marble statue of a dear friend: there are the very eyes, the very lips; but *where* is the life? So is it to a real Christian to hear the formal speech of one ordained to the awful ministry of souls, but who has not the heart-thrilling sense which alone communicates life. O remember the deceitfulness of the mere profession of a sacred calling; how common is it! It has become a proverb in every ecclesiastical foundation; it has haunted the most splendid shrines; it has mingled with the richest music; with the deepest devotion. When the occupation of the sanctuary has been the most frequent, the most intimate; often the more stonelike has been the coldness of the voice, the more irreverent the routine of the service. We all know how the hired guide of the loveliest scenes of the earth moves round the appointed circuit; points out with readiest ac-

curacy every form of beauty: the name of every hill, and every valley: the height, and depth, and breadth of every historic monument: his wand guiding every eye; his voice drawing every stranger; his practised statements treasured up to be the food of many years, when the traveller has passed on his journey homewards; *himself* all the while unmoved; the only one unmoved in all the goodly company: and day by day, as he takes the same round, less moved; and, as he tells the oft repeated tale, becoming at last unconscious of all but the wretched hire of his most heartless service. Oh! is it not so, at times, that the hiring Priest can speak of all points of duty, can reveal the mysteries of the Sacraments, can picture the great facts of our Blessed Redeemer's last awful days, His glories in His Ascension, His terrors, and His rewards of mercy in His second coming, and thus becomes the guide of many "a way-faring man;" the teacher of souls who live on those glorious scenes which his words describe: yet *himself* all the while owning no sympathy; feeling no ardent longing; cherishing no deep love; perceiving no transcendent beauty in all those mysteries which his round of service is ever revealing to others; and thus working miracles in a Saviour's Name, Whom yet he knows not, neither is known of Him. We may, it is true, nay, we must preach above our own standard; we must paint scenes which we can descry only "very far off;" this is no hypocrisy; it is only that our Gospel is greater and higher than ourselves; but ever to praise what we do not long for; to comfort

with what we have never tasted; to command sacrifices which we have no zeal to make; to urge to a spirituality of life which we do not, and will not struggle to attain, is a deceit, at which good angels sadly weep; which is very "nigh unto death;"—would to God that it may never be the condemnation of any one of us! Oh! let us fear this: let us bear in mind, that to minister after our Lord's ministry should be the grateful outpouring of the soul, which has been itself first ministered to by Him; "as I have washed you, that ye also wash one another." In our own cleansing we are called away to the cleansing of our brethren. Our love to Christ for having cleansed us is to flow onward in love to our brethren, that we may cleanse them. It was to St. Peter, so eager himself to be washed, to whom the Lord spake, "When thou art converted, strengthen thy brethren." Oh! let us pray ever more fervently, that we may feel more in our own souls the cleansing of our stains away, as His hand passes over us: that He would wash not our "feet only, but also our hands and our head;" yea, wash us that we might "become whiter than snow;" yea, that "our hearts may know joy and gladness;" that 'our sinful bodies may be made clean by His Body,' and our spotted 'souls cleansed by His most precious Blood;' yea, that He would "cleanse us even from our very secret faults:" that so we may be able "to preach Thy ways unto the wicked, and sinners may be converted unto Thee." Yea, 'Lord God, Lamb of God, Son of the Father, that takest away the sins of the world,' for

the world's sake, as well as our own, take away ours; that so even now we may walk in the pure white robe; that as we have an angel's name, and an angel's ministry, so we may have an angel's spotlessness, and an angel's burning love; and yet may be able to tell, for our brethren's comfort, what an angel never knew, how that the Lord, even Jesus, "passed by" us, "and saw" us "polluted in" our "blood, and said unto" us, "even when" we "were in our" blood, 'Live;' yea, said unto me even when I was yet in my blood, 'Live;' and "spread" His "own skirt over" me, and "covered" my "nakedness," and "sware unto" me, and "entered into a covenant with" me, and, saith the Prophet, "I became" His; "yea He thoroughly washed away" my blood for me, and "anointed me with oil;" "and clothed" me "with broidered work," and "girded" me "about with fine linen," and "put a beautiful crown" upon my "head."

NOTES.

Note 1, page 8.

The recollection of a Sermon by the Rev. E. Monro, on the "Fulfilment of the Ministry," suggested some thoughts and expressions in this paragraph.

Note 2, page 11.

"He laid aside His garments, when, being in the form of God, He emptied Himself: He girded Himself with a towel, took upon Him the form of a servant; He poured water into a bason, out of which He washed His disciples' feet. He shed His Blood on the earth, with which He washed away the filth of their sins."

St. August. quoted in Catena Aurea.

Note 3, page 11.

"Is not a brother able to change a brother from the pollution of sin? Let us confess our faults one to another, forgive one another's faults, pray for one another's faults. In this way we shall wash one another's feet." *St. Aug. ibid.*

“The object of the Master is to make His disciples as Himself: and our Saviour, beyond all other masters and lords, wished His disciples to be as their Master and Lord, not having the spirit of bondage, but the spirit of adoption, whereby they cry, Abba, Father. . . . They then are able to imitate their Master, and to wash the disciples’ feet by their doctrine.” *Origen, ibid.*

Note 4, page 18.

We may believe, that as the Bible is, in the English Church, the authoritative standard for doctrine, so that “whatsoever is not read therein, nor may be proved thereby, is not to be required of any man that it should be believed as an article of faith;” so likewise the same unerring Word of God is among us to be regarded as the authoritative guide in the direction of the conscience. The writer was led by the train of thought pursued in the Sermon, to dwell only on the guidance afforded by the divinely enlightened mind. The full truth, however, would be, that the *practical precepts of holy Scripture, deeply studied, and then applied, realized and tested in one’s own soul*, is the guidance appointed. Of course, it is not intended to disregard the invaluable aid provided for us for this purpose, through God’s gracious Providence, in such works as Taylor’s Holy Living, and other such writings of his; Wilson’s *Sacra Privata*; Hammond’s Practical Catechism; or in such teaching as is treasured up in Barrow’s, and Saunderson’s Sermons; or in rules of life in the history of such men as Hammond, Herbert, Fell, Judge Hale, &c. &c.

Still, with all such helps, in no part of our ministerial work is our insufficiency so deeply felt, or the

Divine aid so earnestly to be sought, as in this. Yet it is an office, for which we must needs seek diligently to prepare ourselves, if we would be "workmen that need not to be ashamed." The more will its necessity be forced upon us, as increasing earnestness of religious life is stirred up. If we approach the work in sincere humility, with strict truthfulness, in faithful accordance with holy Scripture, and the teaching of our Church, with special prayer in all cases, we may hope that, however much we may fall short, we shall not err, nor cause "the blind to go out of the way." Truthfulness and reality should be the prevailing features; the highest standard of holy living, the fixed aim of all such teaching. To the younger Clergy, indeed, the direction of the conscience must ever be a duty, which above all others is to be regarded with extremest diffidence, and requiring the continual counsel of elders.

It may not be unnecessary to add, that it would be most fatal to the cause of Truth, as well as to our own character, if our private counsel should be at variance with our public teaching. While our Church fully recognises the necessity and the blessings of "ghostly counsel and advice;" still nothing can justify in her Clergy, whatever the seeming advantage may be, any secret advice, or private permission, which is not warranted by her reformed system of faith and duty.

Note 5, page 15.

"The whole of a man is washed in baptism, not excepting his feet; but, living in the world afterwards, we tread upon the earth. Those human affections then, without which we cannot live in this world, are, as it

were, our feet, which connect us with human things; so that, if we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves. But if we confess our sins, He, Who washed the disciples' feet, will forgive us our sins, even down to our feet, wherewith we hold our converse with earth."

St. August. ibid.

THE END.

THREE SERMONS,

DELIVERED

IN THE WESLEYAN CHAPEL,

CHURCH STREET, SALISBURY,

BY

THE REV. DANIEL CHAPMAN.

LONDON:

W. & T. PIPER, PATERNOSTER ROW.

1850.

PRICE ONE SHILLING.



S E R M O N I.

SUNDAY EVENING, JULY 7, 1850.

“And, Thou, Lord, in the beginning hast laid the foundation of the earth; and the heavens are the works of thine hands: They shall perish; but thou remainest; and they all shall wax old as doth a garment; And as a vesture shalt thou fold them up, and they shall be changed: but thou art the same, and thy years shall not fail.” — HEB. 1. 10—12.

THE idea of a change is one of the most important ideas we can entertain. The idea of a change is one of the most extensive and comprehensive of all the ideas we can entertain. The idea of a change is not a universal idea; the range of change is not a universal range: it is extensive, but not infinite; it is comprehensive, but not all-comprehensive. The circumstance of change is one that affects us personally—one that affects us entirely—one that affects us absolutely. The process, the vicissitudes of change, is one that we continually undergo—it is one that we inevitably undergo—that we visibly undergo. The process of change, of which we are the subjects,—of which we are the inevitable subjects,—the process is constant, it is visible, it is demonstrable; it appertains to every part of our nature—corporeal, intellectual, moral. It appertains to every part of our existence—

present, future, eternal. It appertains to every part of our constitution—to every part of our condition—to every part of our position. The occurrence of change in all that concerns human nature is ceaseless : it is endless. We are sometimes taken by surprise, sometimes suddenly surprised at the occurrence of unforeseen change ; the surprise we feel is generally an indication of the ignorance of which we are the subjects. Nothing is causeless ; There is no effect without a cause : The cause may have been latent, but it existed. The development of the cause ; the instantaneous production of all the effects which have been gradually accumulating may have been sudden ; but its suddenness are only proofs of the ignorance of which we are the subjects. Whatever occurs, whether regular or irregular, whether grateful or disagreeable, whether pleasant or painful, whether advantageous or injurious, is merely in effect. The effect is assignable to some cause. A knowledge of the cause would have prepared us for the occurrence of the event. The process of change is one that we continually undergo. I wish it could be arrested. It is a pity that the body should be defaced ; it is a pity that the energy should be crushed. It is a pity that the enjoyment should be interrupted : it is a pity (but, though it is a pity, it is one for which there is no remedy) that the figure must be paralysed. The chain must be broken, the link must be severed, the union must be dissolved, and all that is now constructed must be demolished. The lapse of a few years will complete the process—it is now in a state of actual progress. The process of this change is constant. The production of its effects is constant—the evidence of those effects is constant.

The progress of time is extremely soft, but it is extremely swift. The globe we occupy, is 25,000 miles in circumference; every part of that circumference makes a complete revolution, and moves 1000 miles an hour. You talk of railway speed—that is nothing. It is but the crawling of the worm compared with the rapidity with which the earth revolves on its axis every 24 hours. You talk of the flash of the lightning—the rapidity of the rail—but the rapidity of these objects contrasted with the velocity with which the earth moves, sinks into contempt and insignificance.

The progress of time is soft, but it is swift. It is the extreme swiftness that renders you insensible to speed. You think that you undergo comparatively few changes. The lapse of a few years appears to produce comparatively little impression. It is only at different and distant intervals that you discover the greatness of the speed with which you have moved, and the vastness of the effects that have been produced. It is extremely unpleasant to become old, withered, shrivelled—but it is unavoidable. It is extremely unpleasant to become emaciated, decrepid, to endure agony, and to die; but it is unavoidable. These changes are unavoidable, absolutely unavoidable.

The most important of all the changes which we undergo are those of a spiritual nature. The most lamentable, but not irreparable, of all the losses we have to sustain, is the loss of innocence—primeval innocence. The original state of our nature was that of pure perfection, of absolute (but not divine) perfection. The life of innocence ought never to have been extinguished—the enjoyments of nature ought never to have been forfeited—the purity

ought never to have been corrupted ; the beauty ought never to have been soiled ; virtue ought never to have been excluded ; vice ought never to have been perpetrated ; guilt ought never to have been committed. The change we have undergone, in this point of view, is the most lamentable of all changes. Great condemnation, perdition, with all its concomitant evils, are the result of that first dire change—the corruption of our nature. The favour of God, the image of God, has been lost ; the displeasure of God has been excited. The penalties of the law have been denounced : eternal bliss forfeited, everlasting woe incurred.

The experience of one change involves the necessity of another. The introduction of evil involves the necessity of annihilation : the most important of all changes we are now required to undergo, is the change of our nature from corrupt to pure—the change of our conscience from condemnation to acquittal—the change of our character from improper to excellent—the change of our nature from wrong to right. It is the most important of all changes ; the experience of it is indispensable : “Marvel not that I said unto you, Ye must be born again.” The possibility of this experience is one of the most delightful revelations that God has made. The curse which we have incurred is not inevitable ; the eternal destruction of our entire race is not unavoidable ; the original purpose of God may still be realised ; His original intentions may still be executed. Eternal felicity may still be secured : the chain may be broken ; the bondage may be removed ; the dungeon may be converted into a palace ; the sinner may become a saint ; and, being pardoned and exalted here, may be glorified and exalted hereafter.

The greater number of those other changes we undergo is unavoidable. Immortal youth belongs to eternity, not to time : illimitable duration belongs to eternity, not to time. Time and change are synonymous ; life and change are synonymous ; earth and change are synonymous. They are terms which are interchangeable with each other, and may very frequently be substituted for each other. The globe, it revolves : we have change of seasons. The aspect of life is never invariably the same : the changes of its aspects are constant, frequent, great, if not extreme. It is a source of endless amazement to observe the innumerable modifications of changes which take place : the great theatre of life—the great stage of the world—the great trainer of society, are all fraught with interest. The interest of life is intense ; the feeling of that interest is immense. The experience of some individuals is one of intense excitement ; the objects of their contemplation are fraught with vastest interest ; the anxiety, of which they are the subjects, is incalculable. No sooner has one thing disappeared than another presents itself ; as one view of life has vanished another view is steadily, visibly, gradually, taking its place ; and the moment one becomes entirely extinct the other is entirely perfect. “The world in fashion passeth away.” Breath, life, death, production, action, fruition, exertion, acquisition, privation, enjoyment, exhaustion, cessation,—these all characterise human nature.

You are gliding rapidly towards eternity ; with what are you freighted ? You are spiritual, moral vessels ; are you freighted with corruption—guilt—woe ? Is it with this freight that you are loaded, floating in the stream of time towards eternity. If you are, and if the freight remains

the same, the moment you reach the ocean you will sink, disappear—lost in the gulph of eternity! Ask yourselves with what you are freighted—what is the kind of freight? Are you freighted with knowledge—with Christ? Invaluable freight! With love? Invaluable freight! With life? Invaluable freight! Are you freighted with salvation? Invaluable freight! the treasure is invaluable. Mark the shoals! mind the moving sands! be careful of the rocks! Be deaf to the silent voice of temptation. Observe the chart,—the celestial chart. Keep the eye of your steady spiritual observation fixed on Christ Jesus. Caution is constantly required—danger is constantly around. “Let him that thinketh he standeth take heed, lest he fall.” The loss of that treasure is an incalculable loss. If thou art freighted with this invaluable treasure, let it be an object of supreme importance to avoid the loss of that treasure. Such losses have been sustained, and the loss once sustained can never be recovered. I know that there is a portion of you which once basked in life; is the life extinguished? that once enjoyed uninterrupted communion with God; has it ceased? that once walked in the pure bright light of the Divine Countenance; is it obscure? that once had an unobstructed view of the celestial paradise; has anything obstructed that view? that once had a clear evidence of the Divine favour; has it been nullified? Where is your religion, in profession or in action? The importance of religion is always the same—it never varies, never ceases: the possibility of its accomplishing its purpose is always the same. The crime of apostacy from God is an awful crime, of enormous guilt. But it is not an unpardonable crime; the

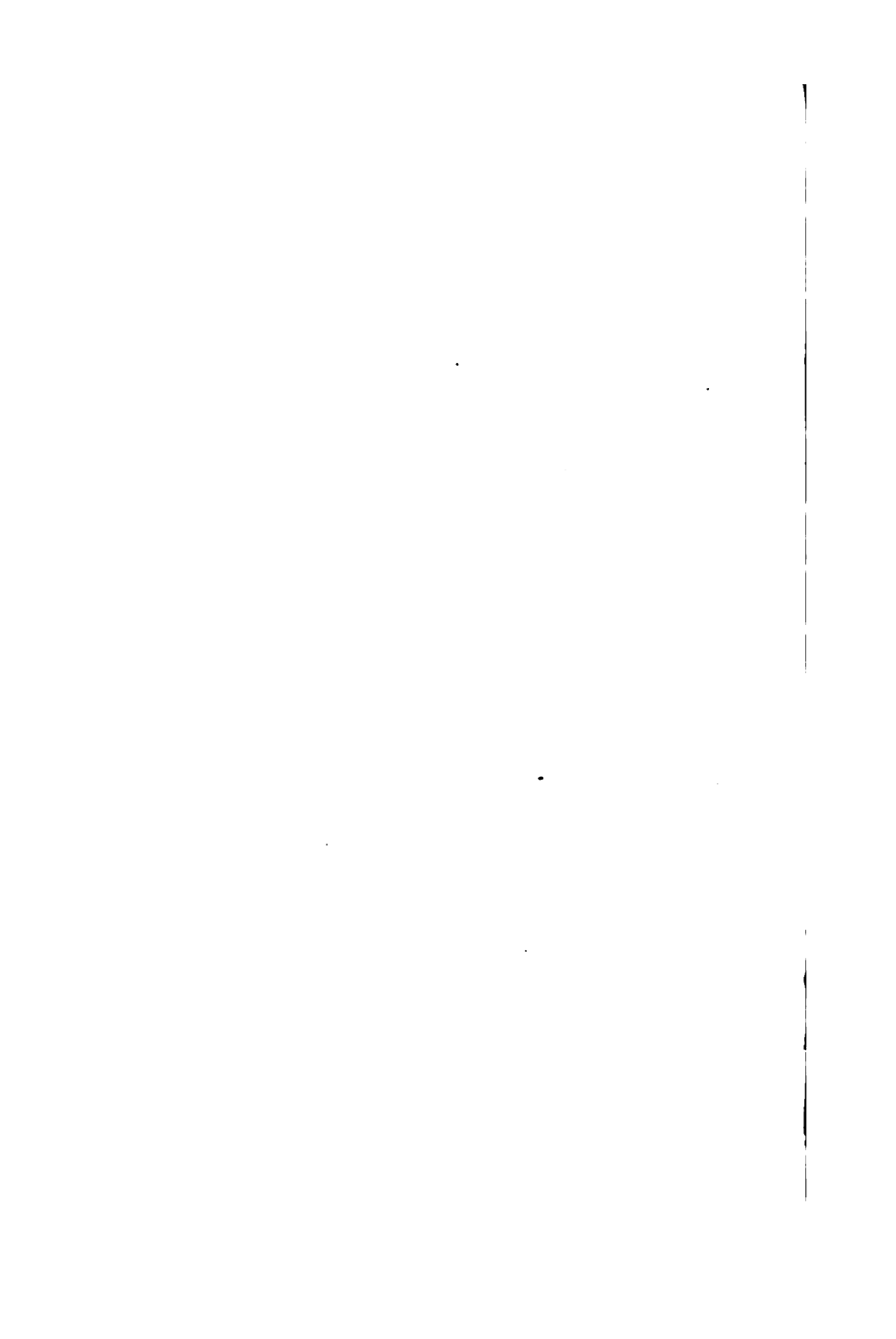
loss is not an irreparable loss—the recovery of what has been forfeited is not impossible. The backslider must repent; but of what? Not of the sins he once repented of. God, when He once pardons, has eternally pardoned. It is the crime of infidelity with which he is chargeable. The backslider must repent of his apostacy—of his ingratitude and infidelity. He must dissolve the union—he must cease to do evil, and bring forth fruit meet for such a kind of repentance. He must ask for forgiveness. One of the most important duties of the Ministerial character is, to induce you to return to God.

The last of all that series of changes which time embraces is death. It is a change that all will experience, whoever they are, whatever they are; it is a road that all will travel—a direction in which all simultaneously move; it is the final home—it is the “house appointed for all living.” We shall all meet there. We meet, we part, here; we shall all meet there. We shall return to dust; we shall feast the worms: male or female, it is a matter of no moment: single or allied, it is a matter of no moment, so far as this change is concerned, the impossibility of its being avoided, and the certainty of its occurrence. “As dieth the fool, so dieth the wise man: one event happeneth to all.” It is the last of all terrestrial changes, are you prepared, entirely prepared,—spiritually, morally, scripturally prepared? Has the cup of repentance been drunk,—the vision of a crucified Saviour been engraven on thy heart? Has the infinite mercy of God been obtained? Has conversion been realised? Is the testimony of thy acceptance with God imparted? Ask yourselves these questions.

Events shall subsequently appear, but no changes of

an essential nature. The body shall be interred, human nature shall eventually become once more complete ; it is rendered incomplete by death. The soul disembodied is imperfect ; it is only a part of the whole. The loss of the body is the consequence of sin. The experience of this change, the restoration of the body, is the only change of a corporeal nature which we shall subsequently realise ; no change of a moral nature will ensue. Once damned, damned for ever ! once saved, saved for ever ! No repentance, no faith, no petition, none that is of any avail. The damned may repent, but their repentance is of no efficacy ! The dies will be cast,—the die, having salvation on one hand, and damnation on another, and placed in the hands of a free agent,—and the moment it has been cast, the surface it presents will be presented for ever. Now is the time—the accepted time ; now is the day—the day of salvation ; and the day of salvation shall become the eternal day of salvation, if you repent and believe, or, having repented and believed, improve the talents committed to your care. It is a matter of very little notice what becomes of our bodies after our souls have left this world, or what becomes of time and of the earth after we have ceased to exist. The earth will undergo a change : the whole of the created universal matter is subservient to the purposes of created intelligent existence ; and when their purposes have been accomplished, then so much of the universe as have aided this purpose shall undergo some other change. But amidst all these changes God is the same : He changes not. “ He is the same yesterday, to day, and for ever.” The same before creation, through creation, and after creation, a being of infinite benevo-

lence, of inexhaustible goodness ; a being of perfect love. “ And, Thou, Lord, in the beginning hast laid the foundation of the earth ; and the heavens are the works of thine hands : They shall perish ; but thou remainest ; and they all shall wax old as doth a garment ; And as a vesture shalt thou fold them up, and they shall be changed : but thou art the same, and thy years shall not fail.”



S E R M O N I I .

SUNDAY EVENING, AUGUST 4, 1850.

“ And the Lord passed by before him, and proclaimed, The Lord, The Lord God, merciful and gracious, longsuffering, and abundant in goodness and truth, Keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin, and that will by no means clear the guilty; visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children, and upon the children's children, unto the third and to the fourth generation.”—EXOD. xxxiv. 6, 7.

THE existence of God is the greatest of all truths ; the existence of God is the sublimest of all doctrines ; the existence of God is the most comprehensive of all subjects ; the existence of God is the foundation of all existence ; the existence of God is the basis of all truth ; the existence of God is the first element, it is the universal element, it is the indispensable element, of all existence, of all intelligence, of all enjoyment. The discussion of this subject, therefore, is the noblest of all discussions. It is a subject, the very investigation of which requires powers superior to human powers—superior to created powers ; for the Being to whom we now refer is, in every point of view, infinite. It is impossible for finite to measure infinite ; it is impossible for that which is limited to measure that which is

illimitable ; it is impossible for the creature fully to comprehend the Creator. An eternity of investigation will not exhaust the subject ; an eternity of contemplation will not comprehend the subject ; an eternity of description will not do adequate justice to the subject. This one Being alone is sufficient to engage the attention of other beings—to impart full employment and perfect enjoyment to all other beings ; this Being alone is an inexhaustible source, of which all other beings can acquire, or desire, or enjoy. The essence of God—the pure essence of God—is to us inscrutable ; the essence of created objects, whether material or mental, is to us inscrutable : how much more inscrutable must the essence of God Himself be ? What matter is, no philosopher can absolutely define. The properties of matter are known, the combinations of matter are known, but there is a certain limit in the investigation of the essence of matter which cannot be passed. Matter is not impenetrability, though matter is impenetrable ; matter is not motion, though matter is moveable. The properties of matter to which we now refer, are not the essence of matter. There is a something, whatever that something may be, to which these purposes belong. The property of a thing is one thing, the thing itself, essentially, is another.

The attributes of God are known ; the perfections of God are known ; the essence of God, in which those attributes and perfections exist, is to us inscrutable. The inscrutability of created objects, and the essence of those objects, being once admitted, as it must be, the inscrutability of the Divine nature is no objection against the existence of the Divine Being. If the creature of God refuses to admit the existence of God until he can

comprehend what He is, universally it will be the result, that there will be a belief that no God exists. That God exists is indubitable, is demonstrable, is undeniable. It is God who produces all ; it is God who sustains all ; it is God who regulates all. A perfect knowledge of His nature is not essential to the enjoyment of those advantages which we derive from the existence itself. It is proper for us to attempt to investigate the Divine character ; the impropriety that usually attends the making of such attempts, is that which renders the existence of our faith dependent on the perfections of our knowledge. The existence of matter must be denied if a perfect knowledge of its essence is demanded : the existence of God Himself must be denied if a perfect knowledge of His essence is demanded. Investigate, contemplate, and describe ; but when you have reached the ultimate limits of investigation—the extreme boundary of contemplation, the extreme limit of description—be thankful that the Divine Being is infinitely too great to be grasped—too vast to be contemplated—infinately too excellent to be described. If it were possible for us to obtain a perfect knowledge of God, the existence of that possibility would be a proof that the being whom we considered God was not God ; for all the purposes of infinity are essential to the nature of such a being. It is in God that all live, and move, and have their being. From God that all existence emanates ; in God that all existence centres ; from Him that all life proceeds : it is in God, as the centre, that all things turn ; by Him, as the circumference, that all is embraced, sustained, preserved.

The attributes of God are appreciable. It is to the consideration of these attributes that we ought to direct

our attention. The exhibition of these attributes is constant, is brilliant, is glorious. What the attributes of God are, it is possible for us partially, at least, if not completely, to discover; what the energies of God are it is possible for us partially, at least, to discover. The modes in which the attributes of God are exercised it is difficult to comprehend; the precise mode of creative power it is difficult to investigate. There was a period of vast creation, in which the only being who existed was God; a period of vast creation existed when there was no universe—when there was only God, who is Himself infinite. Eternity of existence is the precise meaning of the term Jehovah. It is a Hebrew word, and one of the most beautiful of all the terms which that language contains. The Hebrew language is remarkable for its simplicity—for its perfect simplicity. The more you investigate the nature of that language, the more convinced you are that it is worthy the use to which it is appropriated—the medium of a Divine Revelation from God to man. The acquaintance of this language is partially difficult and partially easy, as it is the combination of a few simple elements. There is no term of that language more beautiful and explicit than is the name of the Being to whom we now refer, Jehovah. It is derived from a Hebrew verb; the meaning of that verb, is to be, to exist. The form in which the word occurs, is a form which embodies two tenses, denoting three periods of existence—the past, the present, and the future. The word Jehovah, literally translated, means the Being that was, that is, that is to be. If there were no God, there would be no other existence. The annihilation of God would involve

the annihilation of all other beings. It is from that source that all other existence emanates, and on that source that all other existence depends. The absolute eternity of God is the most comprehensive of all the attributes of the Divine Being.

The goodness of God is an inexhaustible thing. The adequate discussion of this theme would embrace all infinity, for it is full of God; it would embrace the whole of the visible universe, for it is full of God; it would embrace the whole of the invisible universe, for it is full of God; it would embrace all the laws of the universe, the laws of matter, of mind, for they are full of God. It is the goodness of God which is the gracious source of all other goodness. The goodness of God is the origin of all existence. The exercise of creative energy is an infinite manifestation of the essential attributes of God. The goodness of God appears to be the one attribute that involves all other attributes. The more you investigate the works of God to ascertain the nature, the design, the end of those productions, the more indelible will your convictions be that the goodness of God is an indissoluble and inseparable attribute from the Divine Being. There is nothing of a creative nature that is not good, or that is apparently, essentially evil. Evil is not good; but evil has not originated in God. Evil cannot originate in God; it is not attributable to God: it is the result of our misconduct; it is the result of our abuse; it is the result of our ambition; it is the result of an improper use of reason, conscience, law.

The nature of man was originally perfect; the law of God was originally perfect; the perfections of human

nature and the perfections of the Divine law were exactly suitable to each other; but man was free, and free to do that which was right, and to realize the blessings of that obedience,—free to do that which was wrong, and to suffer the final and eternal consequences. The being that is not free in the exercise of moral liberty, is not responsible. The atoms of nature, subject to an irresistible—to an external impulse, are not responsible. The objects of that matter, whatever they may be, whether a world or a system of worlds, are not responsible. They are all subject to an irresistible external impulse. The existence of free agency, therefore, is an essential element of moral responsibility; it is an essential ingredient of conscience; it is an essential ingredient of religion. If man had been absolutely compelled to adopt a certain course, he would have been a subject of vitality, not a free agent,—he would have been a mere machine; it would have preserved him from the commission of guilt, and the infliction of punishment. The course of action was described—the rule of action prescribed—Do this (I speak reverently): it would have been an insult to enjoin obedience and rectitude, if it were impossible; it would have been a reflection on the consistency of the Deity; it would have been an insult to man. Man might have avoided sin; man might have observed the moral law: he might have continued in it; he might have avoided criminality; he might have continued upright, and might now have been free from all those evils, internal and external, of which he is the subject and victim. He might have been entirely free. It is not in God, infinitely good, that evil of any kind originated. The infliction of

punishment is not an essential evil,—it is not an essential part of moral government. It is a natural consequence of impropriety. The consequence of virtue and vice, if these were one and the same, would prove that virtue and vice were one and the same,—that light and darkness were one and the same. But things that are totally different cannot be one and the same. The consequence of virtue must be good, fraught with pleasure; the consequence of vice must be evil, fraught with pain. It is not in God that any evil exists. If I sin, I sin voluntarily; if I perish, I perish voluntarily. God is good, and the law itself is holy, just, and good. It is not in God who is infinitely good, that any kind of evil originates. Go to the devil,—there you will find evil; go to hell, and there you will find evil: in God you will not find it. Neither in heaven—in the law of God you will not find it, in the providence of God you will not find it,—neither in the character, the essence, the perfections of God, will you find it. It is an exception; it is the dire thing; it is the damnable thing; it is the destructive thing; it is the fatal thing; it is that which disturbs—which destroys.

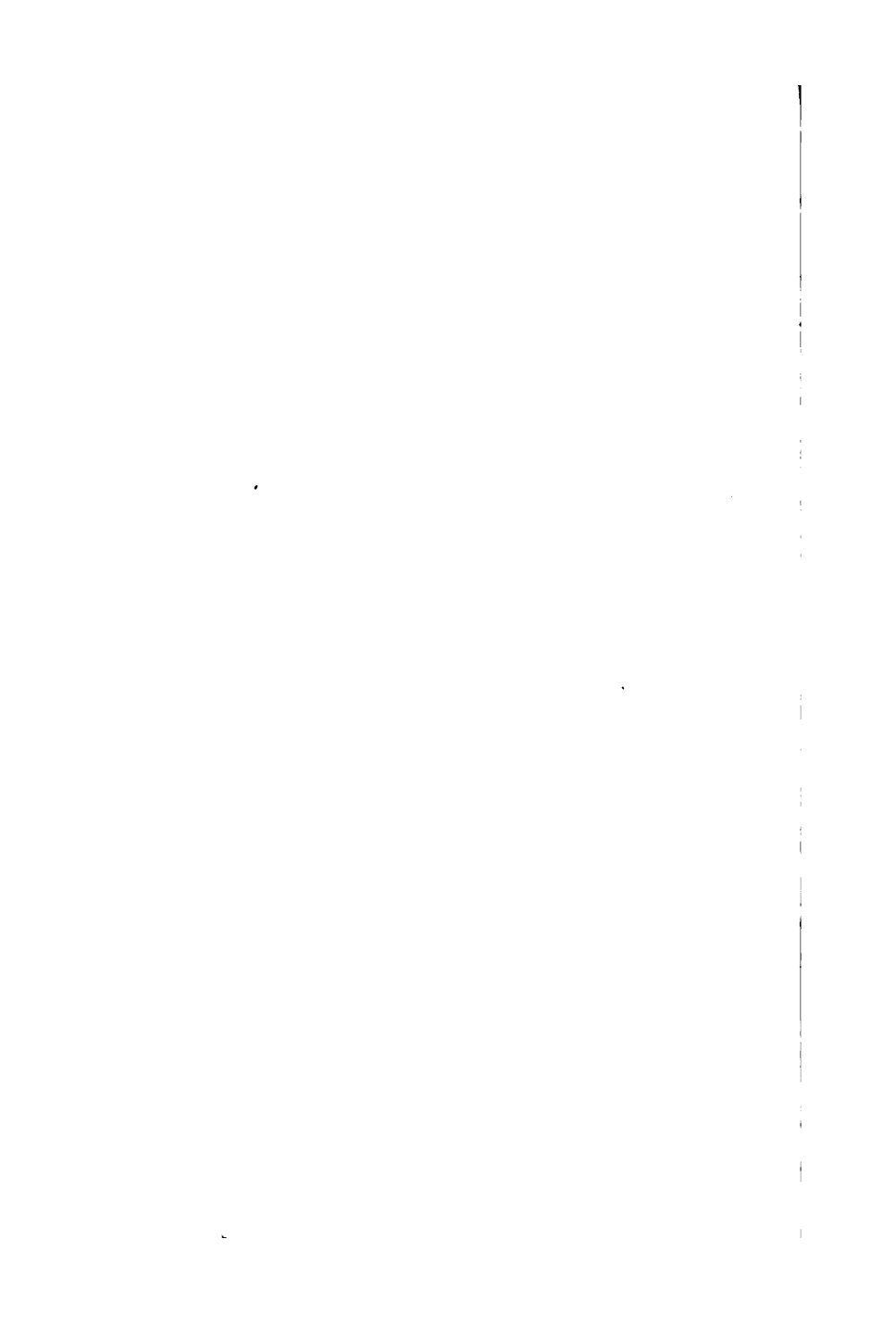
The existence of evil is not an eternal existence,—it has no existence in God inherently. It is the result of my conduct and thine, and a being such as thou and I. Our conduct is unjustifiable, inexcusable. I appeal to the measure of experience of which you are the subject. Do you ever regret that you are good? Did you ever regret that you do that which is good in any sense whatever? Is there any darkness in this perfect light? The pleasure of that which is good is a pure pleasure,—it is a Divine pleasure, the enjoyment of which, when

it is perfect, is heaven. The goodness of God, therefore, excludes all evil as an element of his own nature ; it excludes all evil as an element in the original formation of all laws.

The manifestations of his goodness are so numerous, that to enumerate them all would be to enumerate all that God has made ; the forms of His goodness are so numerous, that to contemplate them would be to contemplate all that God has made. Select any one of the creatures of God : examine him ; observe him ; test him. The result of this investigation will be to discover a perfect adaptation of the being to the circumstances in which he exists. Whether the object of your investigation is the soaring eagle, the insinuating mole, or the creeping worm, you will discover the perfection of adaptation to all the circumstances of that being to the necessities of which he is the subject. There is a perfection and adaptation observant. It is God who feeds them continually ; it is God that infuses fertility into the earth, on the products of which they exist,—that maintains that involuntary action on which all life depends. There is a God who sustains thee,—a God on whom thou livest, movest, and hast thy being. If the affections of thy soul were such as they ought to be, God would be the object of thy ceaseless adoration and devotion,—the object of thy perfect, supreme, eternal adoration. God is good ; God is love,—pure perfect, universal love.

The most extraordinary manifestation of his love is the adaptation of infinite goodness to the present circumstances of human nature ; the provision of an adequate atonement for sin ; the offer of a full and

free pardon; the communication of free grace. I ask not whether thou hast sinned, whether thou hast broken the law: it is unnecessary to make such an enquiry. I ask not whether thou art condemned; but I ask whether thou art willing to receive pardon, to accept life, to escape death? for if thou art, the Being who created you will pardon you; the Being who sustains you will regenerate you; the Being who loves you will sanctify you. The goodness of God is manifested in the redemption of the world by Jesus Christ—the restoration of all forfeited good on the condition of repentance and faith. If thou perish, the fault will be thine; if thou perish eternally, the misery will be thine. God, against whom thou hast sinned, is able and willing to pardon. He has pledged His veracity, and has made the declaration, which is too plain to be unintelligible: “And the Lord passed by and proclaimed (the description is one given of Himself by God), the Lord, the Lord God, merciful and gracious, long-suffering, and abundant in goodness and truth; keeping mercy for thousands; forgiving iniquity, transgression, and sin; visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children (when they adopt the same vicious principles—on that condition and no other,—when they pursue the same evil course, the same abominable career), to the third and fourth generation.” If thou lovest thyself, if thou lovest posterity, then avail thyself of the former part of this description, and avail thyself of all the benefits which will result from thy acceptance of this offer.



S E R M O N III.

SUNDAY EVENING, AUGUST 18, 1850.

"Therefore leaving the principles of the doctrine of Christ, let us go on unto perfection."—HEB. vi. 1.

THE idea of perfection is the most beautiful, the most delightful, and most sublime of all ideas. It is an idea, the formation of which is a source of pure pleasure; it is a quality, the existence of which is a source of pure delight: the doctrine of perfection is, therefore, the most rational, the most sublime of all doctrines. The discussion of this doctrine is not improper; the desire of this quality—this eminent quality—is not improper: the more perfect we are, the better, proportionately, we are; the less perfect we are, the less good, proportionately, we are. It is impossible that any objection can be urged against the attainment of perfection. The more excellent we are in any point of view, the better we are in that point of view.

The idea of perfection is a final idea. It is not only complete and all-comprehensive, but it is final, it is extreme. It is impossible to exceed perfection; it is impossible to transcend perfection; it is impossible to be more perfect than perfection; it is impossible to be

more excellent than perfectly excellent. The doctrine of perfection, then, is a final and extreme doctrine : it comprehends all others, it bounds all others, it includes all others. The idea of perfection appears always to have been involved in the parting benedictions of the Apostle. In one part, he closes his Epistle with—“ Finally, brethren,”—what ?—“ be perfect.” I have endeavoured to instruct you ; see that you learn. I have contributed to raise you to a certain elevation ; soar. I have endeavoured to lay the foundation ; erect, construct, complete.

In one of his Epistles, the Apostle exhorts the Church in that place to be “ of good comfort.” There is sufficient externally to annoy, and disturb, and distress ; it is in your power, however, to secure tranquillity, to enjoy confidence. He then exhorts them to be “ of one mind.” It is proper that men should be of one mind. Perhaps the probability is, that an absolute unity of sentiment has never existed, and never will exist. The only universal principle which cleanses this principle is the principle of love—of universal love. The sentiment of opinion may be different, but the affections and sentiments cherished may be the same. Love cements all, love dissolves all, love transforms all, love unites all ; it is the Divine cement ; it is that which unites, and blends, and binds. “ Finally, brethren, be of good comfort, be of one mind.” The present state of this large society is more or less an exemplification of this principle. Approximate as closely as possible in opinion, coincide as nearly as possible in sentiment ; but in affection, love, be one : in the supreme love of God, be perfect. The advice would have been very

objectionable—the last advice of the Apostle,—if it had been the reverse. It would have been properly rejected if it had involved the recommendation of collision or conflict ; the recommendation of envy, the recommendation of separation, of destruction. It is not such advice as this that the Apostle gives us in the text : “ Therefore,” says he, “ leaving the principles of the doctrine of Christ, let us go on unto perfection.” The idea of perfection is not, therefore, an objectionable idea ; the attainment of perfection is not an impracticable attainment ; the enjoyment of perfection is not an impossible attainment. The only kind of perfection that is absolute, in the literal sense of that term, is Divine ; the full comprehension of that perfection, since it is infinite, is impossible ; the absolute perfections of the Deity exclusively belongs to him ; it involves those elements of infinity which exceed the largest grasp of human intellect : of existence, eternal ; of knowledge, omniscient ; of power, omnipotent ; of presence, omnipresent ; of goodness, supreme, universal. The attainment of such perfection is to us impossible. The most gross of all the absurdities that man has ever committed, is the ascription of anything like Deity to human nature. The gods that are created by the exercise of human fancy must all be finite, and therefore they are not gods. There is nothing divine that is not infinite. The attainment of such perfection is to us impossible. It is not desirable, therefore, that we should attempt such perfection. The idea of finite attaining infinite, is an absurdity. The absolute perfections of the Divine Being are such as to entitle him

to universal homage, obedience, and love. It is, however, possible for us to attain a kind of *relative perfection*. The idea of such perfection is not irrational—it is not impossible; for there is no point of view in which it is impossible for us to be better than we really are. The model of human construction, physically, bodily considered, is a perfect model; but the existence of disease is undeniable; the elements of mortality are inherent; the complete destruction of the corporeal fabric is inevitable.

The changes that transpire in the ordinary course of life, fraught with concern as they are—the ordinary changes, the separations of life—are only emblematical of the eternal change that shall dissolve all union, break all bonds, and shall dissolve all distinctions—a change which all must undergo.

The occurrence of that change is unavoidable. The slightest intimation has in no instance been given that we shall be excluded from that universal sentence, “Dust thou art, and unto dust thou shalt return.” The preservation of health is proper; the postponement of our final exit as remotely as possible is proper; but to escape death is impossible. We are come into existence terrestrial; we shall cease to be terrestrial.

The restoration of the human body is ultimately certain: the Being that originally created will restore. The countless dead shall be restored to life. The doctrine of the resurrection is one of the most sublime of all the doctrines that can be entertained. The corporeal edifice shall be reconstructed; the period shall eventually come when the power of God shall be omnipotently

exerted, and the result of that exertion shall be the resurrection of all. But while some shall rise to "everlasting life," others shall rise to everlasting shame and death.

The attainment of absolute perfection in knowledge is impossible. The wisest of all may become more wise. The possibility of constant acquisition to the store we possess is evinced in the present state of things. Knowledge is desire; the gratification of this desire is proper, its indulgence is most salutary. Be not satisfied with the mere elements of knowledge—with the mere first principles of knowledge—with the mere general information that floats on the surface of society—with these mere general universal ideas that all more or less possess—but inquire, and inquire diligently; penetrate, penetrate deeply. Endeavour to discover to trace the connexion that exists between the principle and all its final developments. The intellectual improvement of society is an object of primary importance—it involves the best interests of all members of society.

The most important of all objects to which we should aspire are those which are of a moral, religious, spiritual, eternal character. These are of supreme importance. It is the destruction of all moral evil entire—the removal of all guilt entire—the attainment of all purity entire—the experience of an entire transformation to the moral image of God; it is the enjoyment of uninterrupted intercourse with God—it is the attainment of these objects that is most important—that is supremely important, infinitely, eternally important. I know that the nation, of which you form a part, is a Christian

nation ; I know that the government under which you live is a Christian government ; that the education you have received is a Christian education ; and that the creed you adopt is the Christian's creed. In all these points of view you are decidedly Christian. Are you experimental, practical Christians ? Have you been the subject of genuine repentance ? Have you exercised genuine faith ? Have you become the subjects of genuine grace ? Have you experienced genuine comfort ? Have you experienced the result of genuine reformation ? The knowledge of these things is excellent, most excellent ; the reduction of this knowledge to experience, to practice, is the most excellent of all. The measure of your evangelical perfection is according to the measure of your practice and knowledge. It is good to know—it is better to feel—it is best of all to do.

The attainment of knowledge requires the exercise of the intellect ; the enjoyment of intellect requires the exercise of conscience. The alphabet of Christianity must be studied ; the elements of the alphabet must be all combined with each other ; so that the perfection of Christianity may be the result—perfect in knowledge, perfect in experience.

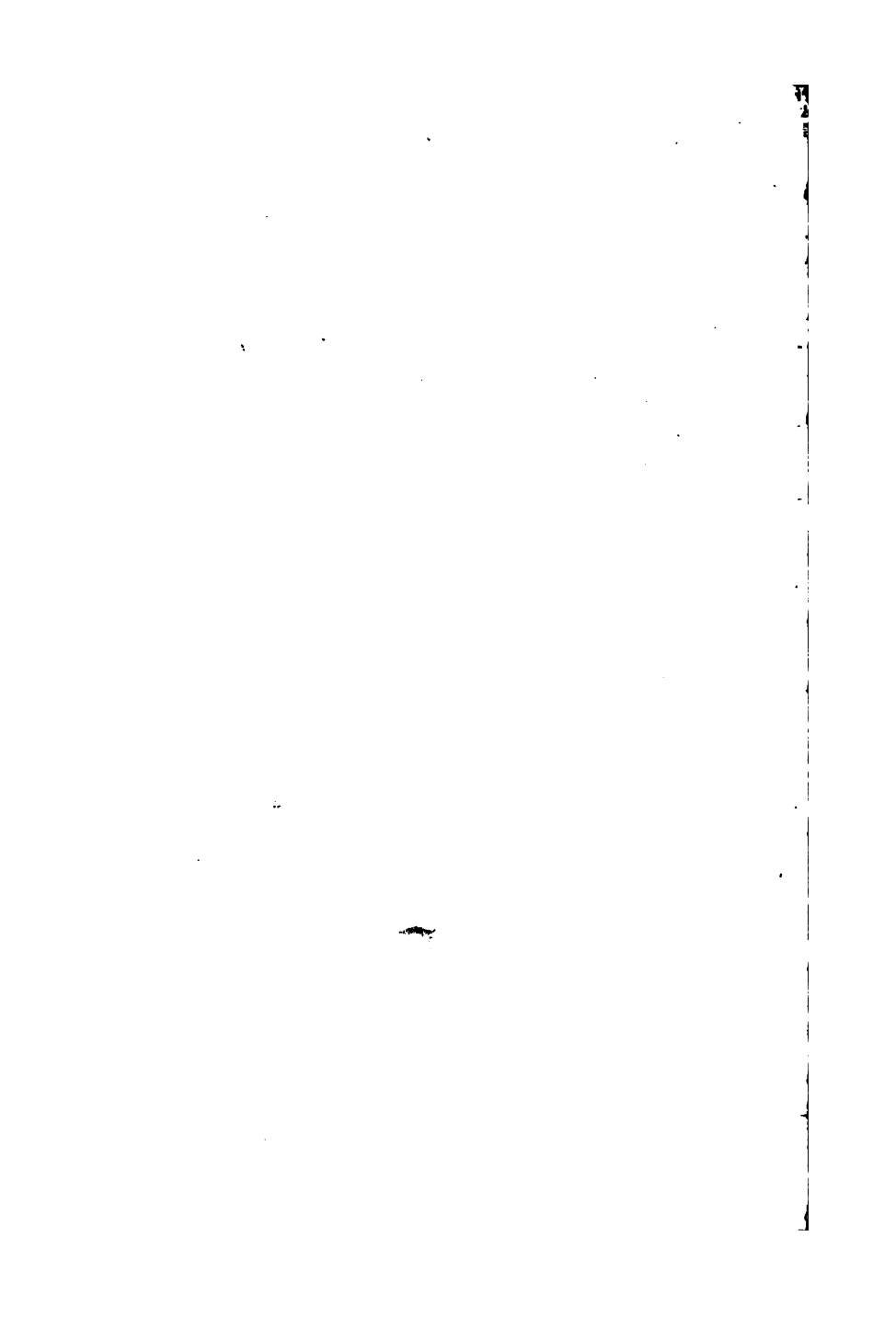
“Therefore, leaving the principles of the doctrine of Christ, let us go on unto perfection, not laying again the foundation of repentance from dead works.” Has this foundation been made ? Has this commencement been made ? Are we obliged to stop at the first step ? Must we receive a negative to the first interrogative ? How lamentable must the case be if such is the case ! The knowledge of these first principles you possess ; the

experience of this knowledge is the point in question. Have you repented? If you have not repented, the necessity of compliance is urgent.

The close of my own personal ministerial career is rapidly approaching. The opportunities of intercourse with you, with which I have been favoured, have been numerous; the events that have transpired during that time have been most numerous—most trying. I believe that no period of my own personal history embraces such a large diversity of events. The greater proportion of these events has been pleasant—agreeable; the other portion has been of a different description: the providence of God—inscrutable and eternally just—is so interwoven with the last of these events, that it would be an act of injustice to doubt the propriety of these events. I do not know that I have ever lived in a state of closer intimacy with any society than I have with this. I have practised no disguise; I have never attempted to take any advantage or inflict an injury: it has been my desire to do you all possible good, and no harm. I have loved you sincerely, disinterestedly, constantly; and I love you still. The events that have transpired have not only been providential, but ministerial. The most severe of all imaginable tests is the position of power. It has been universally admitted, that the most severe test a man can be placed in, is the use of his power. I challenge all to prove that I have made any use of power unjust, or with a view to hurt any. I rejoice that, whatever may have transpired, the spiritual fabric is entire, that the walls are not rent and spoiled. I have

only one wish, but it is of an ultimate nature ; it is, that the expression I have just employed may be realised,—realised in that region of pure delight—in that state of consummate peace, the abode of blessedness ! And how delightful, infinitely delightful, it will be, if in the realms of bliss, we are enabled to say at last, “ We are all here. We acted in some respects different, but we were one in heart, one in affection ; and through the infinite mercy of God, and through the atonement of Christ, we are all here ! ” The affection has not been all on one side. The favours you have shown to me have been quite equal to those which I have shown to you : the one has promoted—has sustained the other. I must acknowledge that I have been extremely desirous to promote your spiritual—your eternal welfare. It has been to me a source of pleasure to discuss, as far as my attainment of knowledge goes, to discuss all subjects ; to explain all doctrines ; to enforce all principles ; to press all obligations. I have endeavoured to make my communications so plain, as to place them within the grasp of all. My most intense anxiety has been your eternal interests. I must now thank you most sincerely, and most cordially, for all the expressions of your goodwill,—for all the expressions of your kindness, whether in language or in conduct ; for I have seen no difference. The consignment of them to oblivion would be an act of ingratitude on my part ; an act of which, I think, you would deem me incapable. The impressions produced during three years I have been labouring among you, cannot, will not, be effaced. I trust that you will have all wisdom

imparted ; all grace communicated ; all prosperity vouchsafed. I trust that no members will be lost, but more added, until the little leaven shall leaven the whole lump. In all human probability, I shall never again address you in this sanctuary ; but I trust that we shall at last meet again, to part no more, in the regions of everlasting bliss !



PROTESTANTISM FOR 1850.

A SERMON

ON THE

RECENT PAPAL MOVEMENT,

PREACHED IN

BELGRAVE CHAPEL, LEEDS,

ON SUNDAY EVENING, NOV. 10, 1850.

BY THE

REV. G. W. CONDER.

LEEDS:

JOHN HEATON, 7, BRIGGATE;

**LONDON: SIMPKIN, MARSHALL, & CO., ARTHUR HALL & CO.,
BENJAMIN L. GREEN.**

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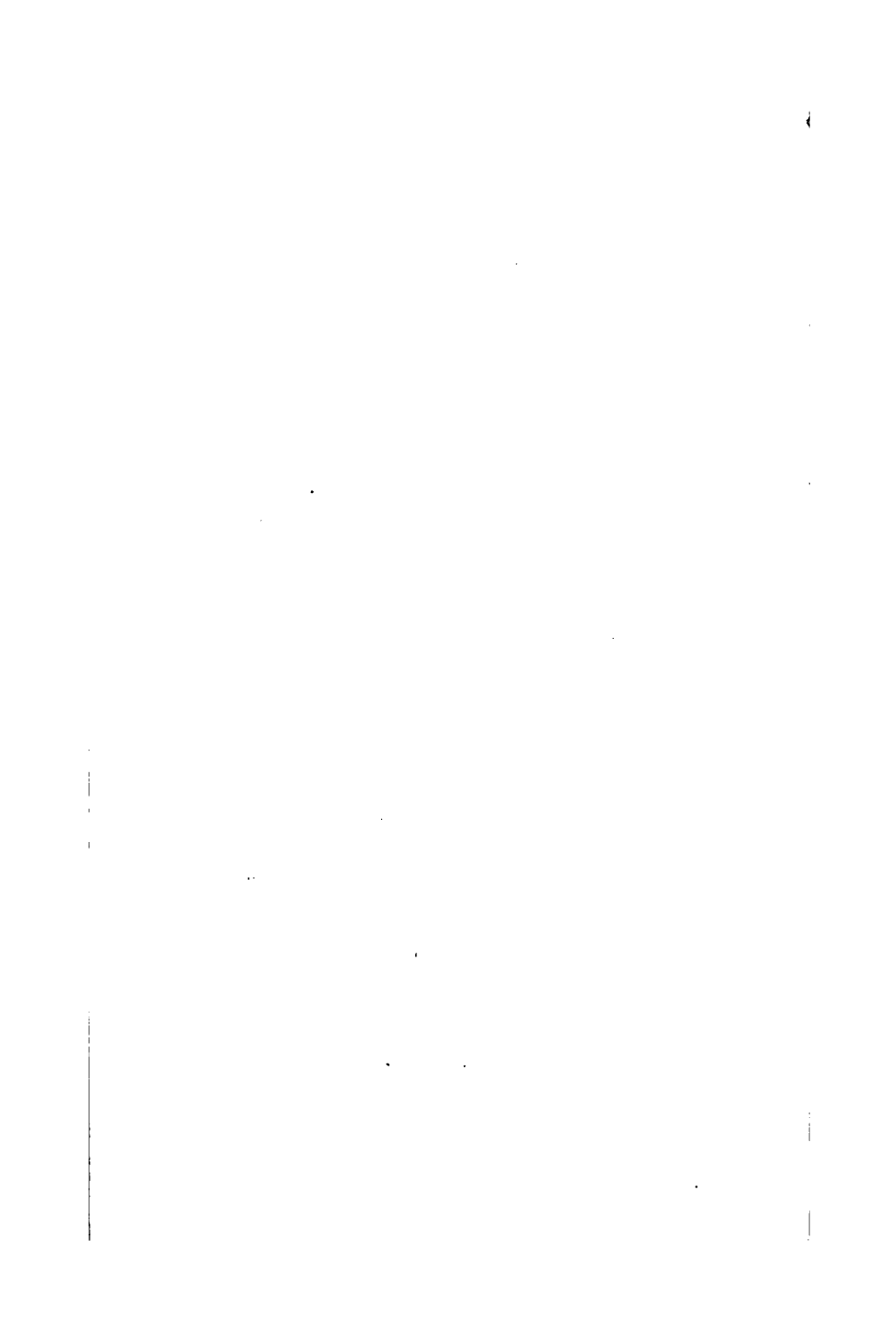


NOTICE.

I received requests to print this Sermon from many friends who heard it delivered, which I declined to comply with, because so many sermons, similar in sentiment and on the same subject, were already announced or published. Since, however, I have seen that two sermons by clergymen of the town have been published, representing two sections of the christian community at large, I have felt it due to the section whose opinions I may feebly represent, that their voice should also be more publicly heard in this matter, and have, therefore, altered my determination about publishing.

Leeds, Dec. 9, 1850.

G. W. CONDER.



PROTESTANTISM FOR 1850.

"My kingdom is not of this world."—John xviii. 36.

"The weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strong holds."—2 Cor. x. 4.

In looking over the ever perturbed surface of English society within the past week or two, one has discerned a very unusual agitation. Its heaving is higher and more troubled. Its many voices, with their various tones, are mingled into one harmonious sound. Its waves seem nearly all setting in one direction, indicating the presence of some stormy wind from some one quarter of the social heaven.

The watchmen of the press have sounded a note of alarm, which has been caught up by others in high places—episcopal thrones and the like—and in a very brief space the theme is in everybody's mouth, and an undefined, vague, but all the more alarming fear, is in many hearts. You catch some sounds of indignation, some of ridicule, some of revenge and retaliation, some of patriotic and loyal devotion, some few—alas! that they are so few—of quiet faith in God and his truth. But, underneath all, the acute ear may catch the low rumbling swell of alarm and fear.

As in many such cases, the source of it all is, apparently, and, perhaps, *really*, a very simple thing, if we take care not to magnify it into undue importance. The head of a religious community already existing among us, in all parts of the British empire,—a community recognized by the Government in some places by grants of public money, in another est

blished by law,—the head of this community, who happens to be at the same time a petty sovereign, has thought fit to have a more complete organization, and to send us over a Cardinal Archbishop, with power to appoint some inferior officers, and to distribute them, as may be most convenient, over the surface of England, with such designations as may give them a little worldly importance with the vulgar, and also mark out the region of their sway.

That, I say, is the ostensible source of the fear; that is the *form* which this apparition has assumed. Whether there be real cause of alarm in it, a really terrible substance underneath the form, I do not yet determine. It is pretty evident that there must be the suspicion of this; for in the matter, as I have put it before you, I can discern nothing so very remarkable. We have had the Roman Catholic Church for years working peaceably in our midst, side by side with Episcopalianism and Dissent. We know what Archbishops are, and Romish Archbishops. They have been living unmolested just across the Irish Channel for centuries. We are not threatened with such a terrific host of them now, that what has caused us so little uneasiness in the past has suddenly become a very formidable thing. In the *outward appearance* of this thing, I cannot see any cause for such dread, if we will only manfully step up to it, and touch and survey it without blinding fear.

When, however, we try to part the folds of this form, and ascertain what is really beneath it, I think we may, perhaps, find some more just ground of alarm. But what this is, has been very variously pronounced. Some say that the ecclesiastical cloak hides a secular intention, and that it is not England's church merely, but through it England's throne whose subversion is intended; and that through England's power thus secured to Rome, the tiara may yet glisten in the eyes of the world, and the Papal phoenix rise from her smouldering ashes to a new period of youthful and vigorous sway, with tenfold increase of magnificence in the western quarter of the world. Certainly, this is no *short-sighted* view. But that so definite a purpose exists any where but in the heated imagination of these prophets, I find it hard to believe. And if we did believe

it, surely the emotion with which it should be greeted, is not that of dread, but of contempt. We should laugh at beholding to what a tottering height of impudence, egregious folly will sometimes climb. Surely such an apparition should not have driven sensible men to their rusty armoury, with the cry, "Rally round the throne!"

What must happen ere such a thing can be accomplished? The vast majority of the *intelligent* people of England must be first converted to the Catholic faith. Our merchants, and manufacturers, and literary men, and newspaper editors, must be first persuaded to go to the confessional, and receive that absolution from a priest which many of them disdain now to ask of God. The intelligence of the nineteenth century must bow down to some incarnation of the follies of the twelfth and many succeeding ages. The index of human progress, which has marked its growth out of the absurdities of Romanism, until that system is compelled to go for a bare subsistence to the morasses and bogs of ignorance, and the arid plains of effeminacy and feebleness, is to be put back again; and the fruits of centuries of steady growth are to decay, that corruption may once more attain its horrid maturity. And the God of the Bible will see and permit it all, and a new chapter of human history shall be written, which will upset all the conclusions drawn from the past, and its heading will be, "The Law of Retrogression!" And think you that if the age should again demand them, martyrs would not again be born, and such a sea of blood flow between Rome and the throne of her ambition, as should damp and even quench for ever its unholy fire? Such is my firm belief, *if* matters should come to such a pass; and even that shapes itself before me as an impossibility.

The most rational interpretation of this movement, as it appears to me, is that which ascribes it to a conviction on the part of the Pope, that England is ready and ripe for some advance towards Rome, and that he may expect his church to take a better position than hitherto amongst us, if he only provide a suitably imposing external. That it would be too much, to expect men to leave lucrative and dignified pos-

unless he have some equivalent to offer them;—and that wealthy and noble laymen will have a much smoother path, short though it be now, from the English to the Romish fold, if they can take their place, not merely in one of the insignificant sects, but in a proud, visible organization, presenting little outward difference to that from which they secede. This is a sufficient account of the matter for me, and I seek not to be more than satisfied.

There is a low, muttered enquiry which we have heard many times in this agitation, which has more meaning and deeper earnestness in it than nine-nenths of the noisy jargon that you hear on every hand. It is this: "Do you not think that England is ripe for some such movement? That there is a large number ready to embrace such a religion as Popery? Is there not a prevailing carnalism which presents many susceptibilities to Romish attractions?" There is too much earnestness, and thought, and calm anxiety in this, for us to treat it lightly, or answer it hurriedly and dogmatically.

Everywhere in society, one hears that Romanism is increasing among us. And if you enquire deeply into the foundation for such rumours, you will find, I think, two sources. First, the increase of Romish places of worship in our land, and, next, the secessions of which we hear from time to time, chiefly from the English to the Romish church.

The question is, are these to be taken as the signs of any wide-spread feeling in the community in favour of Romish peculiarities? I am disposed to think not, and that only our dread of Popery has magnified them into such. I do not think that the multiplication of Romanist places of worship is at all greater, in proportion, than that of the other religious bodies—our own, for example. In addition to this, you must also take into the account the increase of population, and the continual influx into our large towns of Irish emigrants, chiefly Romanists. In this fact I see nothing indicative of what is hinted in this question.

With regard to the second matter, undoubtedly there has been a real increase, and, in certain quarters, an alarming increase, in the nature of the secessions that have taken place.

Men of rank, and learning, and position, have left the church of their fathers for what they deem a more consistent and scriptural communion; and a large party within that church from which chiefly these secessions have taken place, is supposed to be but a few steps removed from Romanism, and in great danger of being precipitated into it, should any thing extremely distasteful to them occur in the church to which at present they seem to belong.

Here, then, if anywhere, seems to lie the danger. Not that they represent the body of English people or English churchmen at large. But that there should be within a so-called Protestant community the germs and elements of all that marks the Romish church. Not so much in the advances of Rome towards us, but in that tendency towards Rome in the midst of us, is the real cause of fear. And we who stand without the pale of that church, for conscientious reasons, should, perhaps, place amongst those tendencies a great many other things besides those which are acknowledged to be Romanistic by the Evangelical section of that church.

Whilst, then, I do not participate in the alarm which has arisen, and have no sympathy either with those who are for calling on Government to interpose, or with those who would retaliate what they deem an insulting interference; on the other hand, I do believe that it is a time which calls for the utterance of the voice of Protestantism again,—and that the Protestantism of 1850 must be a more sweeping Protest than that of some years past.

It is to this thought that I wish especially to direct your attention this evening. What is the true Protestantism for these times? And what is the true course for it to pursue? If in answering these questions, I seem to be saying hard things, or finding fault with churches, I ask you to acquit me of any sectarian intention, or bigoted feeling. Fidelity to truth will often bring us into collision with institutions; but it is possible to love the men at the same time.

First of all, let us give a glance at the average Protestantism that we have already, and see if in it there be any thing

wanting, or whether it affords a hope that it will be strong enough, as it is, to meet the attacks and do the work of these times. This may be ascertained by looking at the forms it assumes, the language it employs, and the spirit and principles of which these are the indication. It is itself a relative thing. It is Christianity in the *protest*-ant form and attitude. It is in special antagonism to something else which it deems it needful specifically to oppose. It is a real and necessary part of the Church's work at all times, though a subordinate one. Its main action is to be the positive—preaching the truth. But now and then it will be needful for it to take the negative mode, and assume the posture of opposition to error, by portraying and condemning it. And this is Protestantism.

The thing which is generally recognised as the embodiment of this Protestantism, in the present day, is the English church. And from it more than any other body, doubtless, the *antagonistic voice* of the church is heard, if the *antagonistic position* be not so completely assumed. We will take it as our standard in these remarks.

Against what, then, does it chiefly object? Will it not be true to reply: Against details, and not against principles; against particular forms and practices, and not against the root from which they spring? It has no objection to a temporal Head of the church; but it has an objection to a Pope as Head of the church. It does not condemn the appointment of Priests; but objects to the mode of their appointment, and the functions they are to perform. It does not object to rites and ceremonies which have no scriptural origin; but to what those rites and ceremonies shall be. It says that the kingdom of God *may* be a visible, secular thing, *i.e.*, may be joined with, aided, and protected by secular power and honour,—even by jails, and policemen, and laws of laymen; but its quarrel is with the form which this kingdom shall assume, and the character of its connexion with secular power. It protests against details, and not against principles. It will not have images, and real presence, and extreme unction, and purgatory, and Cardinals, and a Pope, and confessionals; but it will keep holy orders, and priestly absolution, and baptismal regeneration, and

a sovereign Head, and a hierarchy, with exclusive right to the christian service. In form and practice, then, it is in opposition; in principle, it is at one with what it opposes. This I now proceed to shew.

The real essence of Popery,—the germ out of which all its other specialities spring, is this, that it interposes something between man and God: an earthly service and rule, in addition to the simple appliance of the preaching of the truth, which is the immediate action of God upon man. Viewing God's relation to the church by the light of the first of our two texts—the assertion of our Lord that *His kingdom is not of this world*, the essential error of Popery seems to be the putting a series of institutions and men upon the earth as the ministers of this Divine rule, by whom and through whom God exerts his authority, and who exercise, therefore, a delegated power. The church, according to it, is not merely a collection of believers, having its few simple rules, such as are necessary to every society; but it is a centre and source of Divine authority over all who believe, with power to condemn and punish all who will not bow to its decisions.

Or if we glance for a moment at our other text, "*The weapons of our warfare are not carnal*"—which seems to indicate that the church is engaged as God's army, in the opposition of evil in the world—the error of Romanism seems to be a direct contravention of this inspired truth. For its appliances, and the claims which its officers prefer, are purely and essentially earthly things. According to it, this God's-battle is not to be fought with the simple weapon of the Truth, wielded by the simplest hands—sincere and earnest believers in the truth; but the men must have an authority derived from an earthly head, and the truth must be sealed by the church, and there must be many external attractions hung about it, and the whole thing must be *carnalized*, if God's work is to be done.

To this simple and sole source, I believe you may trace every feature of the system, viz., the interposition of something else between man and God, than the Bible and its earnest ex-

pounders. By the destruction of the once existing carnal dispensation, and the introduction of the new, not only without any similar institutions, but even with many express statements that the age for them had gone bye, and that now men were to look to heaven, and draw their religion thence by the simple aid of the truth, God has virtually said, "The sole medium between me and the world now, is the Truth, and the voice of men in proclaiming the Truth. The Bible is its own witness, and needs but to be proclaimed. Jesus Christ and Him crucified,—His life and His death, are the religious powers." There (as I have frequently shewn you of late) is Temple, Law, Priest, Authority, Sacrifice. And had the Church simply confided in that, I believe that Christianity had now possessed far wider sway.

Now, mark the insidious, carnalizing process. God handed down to men in the first christian ages—what? A fact; and its interpretation. He chose certain men, illumined them to perceive the meaning of the fact, confirmed their mission, and attested their utterances, and then left the world with the truth so attested, and with no successors to those authorized teachers, that is to say, no more miraculously endowed expounders of the message. Henceforth men were to preach their truth so given to us. *But—their* message was susceptible, as every human sentence must be, of various interpretations. Men were divided about it. Each one wanted to make men believe that *his* was *the* truth. Not content with saying, "Look at the source whence I derive it, and see," he wanted some external proof. Miracles were gone. He must therefore fall back upon some substitute. And so, in process of time, sprang up that heresy of a professed, derived authority from the Apostles. You will easily see how necessary it was to fix this on one man in one Church, and so have but one direct line of this authority. Because if there were two men, there might be two interpretations, opposite ones; and two Churches contending for opposite faiths, both authorized, and so mutually destructive. There, then, you have the first subtle, carnal element thrown about the truth—humanly derived authority. Out of that, as a positive necessity, sprang a hierarchy, with its various grades.

Every member must have some physical contact with that human fount of light and power. As his sway came to extend over a large surface, it was impossible he could have this contact immediately and personally with all the believers. So that he must have a select circle to whom he should communicate the authority, Archbishops; they another and wider one, Bishops; they another and still wider, Priests; and through these the whole people might receive this transmitted authority. That is the simple philosophy of the hierarchy. All this, you see, from such a little thing,—the want of some external authority in connexion with the truth. Having claimed this, it became necessary to support and enforce it. Hence excommunications, and persecutions, and absolutions, and penances, and fasts, and the whole carnal appliances by which Rome makes her rule to be felt.

This process, once begun, was sure to grow. This door opened, what things might not come through it? If one human thing had been thrown around the truth, why not others? Moreover, against such a claim, unless there were something to shew for it, men were sure to revolt. If you preach the truth to a man, and say, "It is God's truth, see for yourself at the source whence I gain it," you at once place him in contact with God. If he reject, he is not rejecting your truth, but God's. But when *you* claim dominion over his faith, you rouse his intuitive consciousness of accountability to God alone. Something more, then, was needful, and also easy. First, make the truth, and the religion to which it tended, acceptable to men, that they might not wish to revolt, and might "fancy music in the rattling of their chains." And next, in case of failure so, get hold of earthly, carnal power—the State's dungeons and swords; exclude them from civil rights and enjoyments; and, *also*, shake in their face the keys of the kingdom of heaven; and tell them of a purgatory, over the fierceness of whose fires you have control; consummate your power by wielding also the authority over heaven and hell; and so convert the world.

Now, brethren, if this be a true account of Popery, its essence and its origin, and the process of its development,

see, in a word, the position in which it places *us*, in relation to all existing church claims. It embraces a wide range of things. If a man come to me with anything else than the Bible, and what he can make me believe from that,—if he come to me with any Apostles' Creed, or Nicene Creed, or Augsburg Confession, or Westminster-divines' Catechism, or Methodist Catechism, or Thirty-nine Articles, or Congregational Declaration of Principles, and say, "That is the truth: believe that or you cannot be saved: God expects you to believe that,"—I reply, "Brother! it is human, it is carnal, it is man's word and not God's, and I will not believe you. Shew me the coincidence of your creed with my Bible and then condemn; or, rather, not condemn, but leave me to my conscience and my God." It may be very well for you to say to the world, that is what I or we believe as the interpretation of the word. But the moment you present your creed to a man in place of God's word, you are interposing the human between God and man, and *that* is Popery.

So if a man come to me, and say, "I have a church's authority to preach to you, and demand your faith and your submission, your attendance at my church, and your compliance with its forms,"—I say to him, "Brother! shew me your divine credentials, direct and unimpeded by human interventions, and I will listen to you. But, even then, if you would interpose yourself, or any of your practices, betwixt God and me,—your baptisms, your confirmations, or the like, I must decline your ministrations, and deny your mission, for God hath made *me* a priest unto Him through Christ, and by Him hath given *me* 'boldness of access unto the throne.'"

Let me, now, direct you to a few words about what I deem to be the failing of Protestantism in the past, and its true course at the present juncture.

It seems to me not to have gone nearly far enough in its opposition. Indeed, it could not, without condemning itself, and hence the source of its weakness. Itself has relied upon temporal power and authority, has allied itself with the powers and potentates of this world, has availed itself of the earthly

splendour and pomp, and has, in some degree, claimed to wield the delegated sceptre of heaven. It has looked too exclusively at one aspect of the doctrinal error of Popery. This is seen in its favourite motto, "Justification by faith in Christ alone." Indeed, it has not lived up to its own principle. For many of its own professed adherents contend for the efficacy of sacraments and rites, and the validity of holy orders to acceptable service. It *preaches* justification by faith alone, but it does not wholly practise it. For if any rite additional to faith be *essential*, then it is not "faith *alone*." Moreover, it has looked too exclusively at justification—man's acceptance with God. Now, the great and fundamental error of the Romish church is, *not* the interposition of mediators between a man and God's pardon of him through faith in Christ, but a wider thing—the interposition of a great human system between the man and God's direct action upon him by the Truth. It has looked at the Gospel simply as a way of pardon, and not at its wider bearing as an œconomy—as an appliance for the conversion of the world. And so it has frittered away its action in attacks upon the detail,—in cutting at the branches and leaving the root intact. It has been laboriously disproving the Apostolic authority of the Pope, the real presence in the sacraments, the existence of a purgatory, the infallibility of the church, the rightness of image worship, and the invocation of saints, instead of bending its whole strength against the source of all these things—the interposition of any thing or being between God and man: whilst all the while it has been practically denying the purely spiritual character of Christ's kingdom, and of all the appliances by which it is to be established in the world.

Here, then, my brethren, do I see the real cause of fear at this crisis. Not in the strength and aggressive movements of Popery, but in the defects of our Protestantism. Not that we may have to fight this battle hand to hand again, but that a large part of our army is trying to do it with the arms of the foe, with carnal weapons. Not that this Church, which has ever been a tyranny, and the ally and friend of tyrants,—which proudly tramples wherever it reigns,—which has been the

blight and bane of every land in which it has reigned for ages past, as France, and Spain, and Portugal, and even Italy herself, do mournfully attest,—which chains our bibles, rails off the altar of our God, puts our consciences and souls into human hands, dazzles us with earthly splendour and so blinds us to that of heaven, and brings again the folds of Jewish darkness over the unveiled, opened shrine;—not that this church, always greedy of filthy lucre, and lusting after the dominion of this world, is about to rear herself, in visible magnificence, on Protestant soil—consecrated to Protestantism by the blood of hundreds of faithful Martyrs, and the struggles of as noble a hero band as earth's history can boast;—and by the very side, too, of that other church which is considered, by many, to be the strong-hold of God's truth in the world. Not in that fact alone. Had we all faith in God's Truth, and were we all prepared to do battle with the spiritual weapons alone, I should say, "Rome comes to court defeat." But in the fact, that the tendencies have been at work in ourselves all the while, and that the current Protestantism has so many affinities with its foe,—in that, I do see cause, not, indeed, to dread the failure of the truth in its onward progress to the subjugation of the world, but to fear that the conflict may be a very prolonged one, and may have to be fought by a very small band. If *hell* were to rise against Christ's church, I should calmly say, "*God is in the midst of her; she shall not be moved.*" No power of earth, therefore, can shake my faith in the triumph of truth. But the faithful struggle for it may be fierce and long, may greatly check our peaceful progress in the work of God's vineyard, and may perhaps entirely sever us from many we have counted friends.

Now, finally, let me lead you to the enquiry, "What does it behove us to do at the present crisis?" Regarding the recent movement as indicative of a hope entertained by Rome in relation to England, and a determination to prosecute, with increased vigour, her object among us; and knowing how insidiously she works, and with what consummate art she adapts her operations to the weakness of our nature; and also

how readily a corrupt religion is welcomed by a corrupt and carnal mind, we ought not to treat too lightly her present effort. Our faith in her failure must be accompanied and expressed by a hopeful and determined action. And the question is, What ought we do? And are we ready to do it?

There is no lack of suggested measures with which to meet what is variously termed the insolence, the impudence, the arrogance, the lawlessness, of this Papal procedure. Raise the "No Popery" cry, says one party—the cry which, in past years, has spent itself in a passionate vengeance, or in puerile demonstrations,—a cry which has for its meaning a blind hatred, and is, in the vast majority of cases, an unintelligent and bigoted opposition to a rival sect. Get up processions, burn effigies, call to mind past days of torture and massacre, paint in the eyes of the multitudes the picture of Smithfield, and the Inquisition, and St. Bartholomew; and so inflame their rage and hate.

From all this, my brethren, we are bound to stand aloof. On many grounds we have no faith in such a remedy. First and foremost, are the words of our second text—"*The weapons of our warfare are not carnal;*" and these are weapons of the most carnal kind. They are the weapons of human passion. In all such action there is no real appreciation of the evil,—no accurate measurement of its extent,—no enquiry into its nature. They are born of mingled dread and hate. Such effusions of popular zeal are seldom the result of intelligent christian feeling, and real love for the truth. The mode of exciting it is usually a resort to the dark horrible pages of history, and to scenes of terror. These excite the fear and inflame the rage of men. But there is no truly Protestant feeling in them. It turns our thoughts from the system to the men. It makes us careless about the error, and bigoted against the sect. It is carnal.

Nor is it by strong and vehement denunciation that our cause is to be advanced. This, too, is carnal. Audiences, not composed of the masses, are often treated much in the same way, and are taken into the chamber of horrors of a

past century, and there armed, not with arguments and spiritual defences, but with hatred, and fear, and rage—fleshy things.

Moreover, on the ground of expediency, as well as fitness, I deprecate such a course. It is as useless as it is absurd. Popular fury *soon* spends itself, and generally spends itself in *noise*. It is in the nature of such emotions, so awakened, to die soon. They cannot continue long from their very intensity. And how can they cope with a noiseless, hidden, steady, patient, persevering, energy of action, which retires and hides itself from the storm, and then quietly begins its work again to-morrow, secure against any recurrence of the disturbance for many a day? Again, in denunciation and depreciation; who can vie with Rome? And she does it with a dignity, with an assumption of heavenly authority, that makes it a more powerful thing than yours. No! Against her subtle errors, and subtle action, we must bring something more than earthly fire—we must use heavenly light.

Another, and no insignificant party says, Fly to the law, appeal to it, call out its power; ward off the aggression by civil statutes, or punish it by civil penalty; ransack the parchments, and see if we have anything left which can be put in force; try to construe the deed into a civil and secular offence, and so, still punishing, escape the charge of intolerance and religious bigotry.

And is not this, too, carnal? Is not this calling in earthly power to aid heavenly truth? What are your statutes, unless backed by fine, imprisonment, banishment, or sword? A mere name! And suppose your statesmen should draw a sacred line around your British shores, and say, No Romanist shall be permitted to preach his perilous doctrines within these bounds, think you that you would still have no Popery to contend with in your midst? Aye! perhaps all the worse to meet, because of its concealed and invisible operation. Oh, when will the church learn that parchments and swords cannot touch truth; cannot even help it by repelling error! Mingle water and fire. Make laws against the sunlight. Send an army to annihilate electricity. Establish by law the principle of gravita-

tion. You would attempt no absurder thing then, than when you seek, by the power of states, to aid or to protect God's truth! To all who ask us, then, to join them in prelatical protests, and clerical appeals and addresses to the Throne and the Premier, we must make the reply—"Our weapons are not carnal."

Turning, then, from these false modes of action, as we deem them, to what seem to us to be right ones, I think we may find three things which will need but little argument to convince you of their suitability and imperative necessity.

We have not merely a *form* of error to oppose, but a spirit and a principle out of which the form has sprung. First, then, we must seek for that special truth which is opposed to it. And having found it, next, let us preach it, assiduously and constantly. And, lastly, let us have faith in *it*, and in it alone.

What, then, is *the* truth for these times? Of course, there is one truth that must be our paramount theme at all times—"Jesus Christ and him crucified," the all-sufficient propitiation. But the truth in Jesus contains more than this, which we must also be careful not to overlook. Is it, then, enough that we keep to our old Protestant motto, "Justification by faith alone?" I think not. This, as I have shewn, is only a part of what we have to do. We must find some other truth, which shall touch the deeper source of the mischief. Some one great principle we must find, if we can, that shall oppose, not one or a few manifestations of the evil in Romanism, but which shall go to the root of all the evil it contains. I am in no doubt myself as to what that truth is. I conceive it to be this,—"*My kingdom is not of this world.*" With this truth, embraced and interpreted in its fullest, widest, most spiritual sense, we must effect a new Reformation. And we must begin at home. Within the very bosom of Protestantism must this almost new protest be heard. No secular alliances of the truth with earthly authority of any kind. No secular aids to the truth. We Nonconformists must take up the old cry, "The Bible, and the Bible alone, is the Religion of Protestants," and we must

put a new freshness and force into it. We must not come to men, and say, This interpretation is to be received because Baxter says so, and this because Howe says so, and this because Luther, and Calvin, and Wesley say so, or because this or that living Doctor says so. All this is a human authority added to the truth, and is so much weakening of its power. It is the Bible and something else, not the Bible alone. Each age must be its own interpreter, and each man. We must own no authority external to the Truth; for to do this is the essence and root of Popery—it is to make the kingdom of Christ of this world.

Then, further, we must carry the same principle into all our structures and services. In these we must seek nothing more than what shall be appropriate exponents of our spirit—of the living religion that is in us, and must discard all carnal religious influences,—everything whose use is not to aid in the *expression* merely, but in the *creation* of religion.

Again, in our church-organization, we must exclude every element of human authority, and rigidly resist every temptation to receive aid from the powers of the world. So much for ourselves. Perhaps you will say to me, but all this we profess already. Be it so. Let us practise it, and carry it out fully and unmistakeably, and we shall be the living witnesses for God.

Then, still further, wherever in the pale of Protestantism we find a violation of this fundamental truth, we must, in spite of all opposing considerations, direct our efforts. I have already spoken of a source of the evil we oppose, in the midst of us, reckoned as the stronghold of Protestantism. Now, however it may expose us to the charge of uncharitableness and sectarianism, I believe the time has come for us more strenuously to seek its destruction. I refer to the alliance of Protestantism with the State of this land. Until that church shall see and acknowledge its mistake, and shall take an independent position, and, refusing the aid and protection of Governments, shall rely simply upon the truth that is in it, I despair of its doing *any* thing to resist the progress of Romanism. What has been occurring in its midst of late, is a pretty

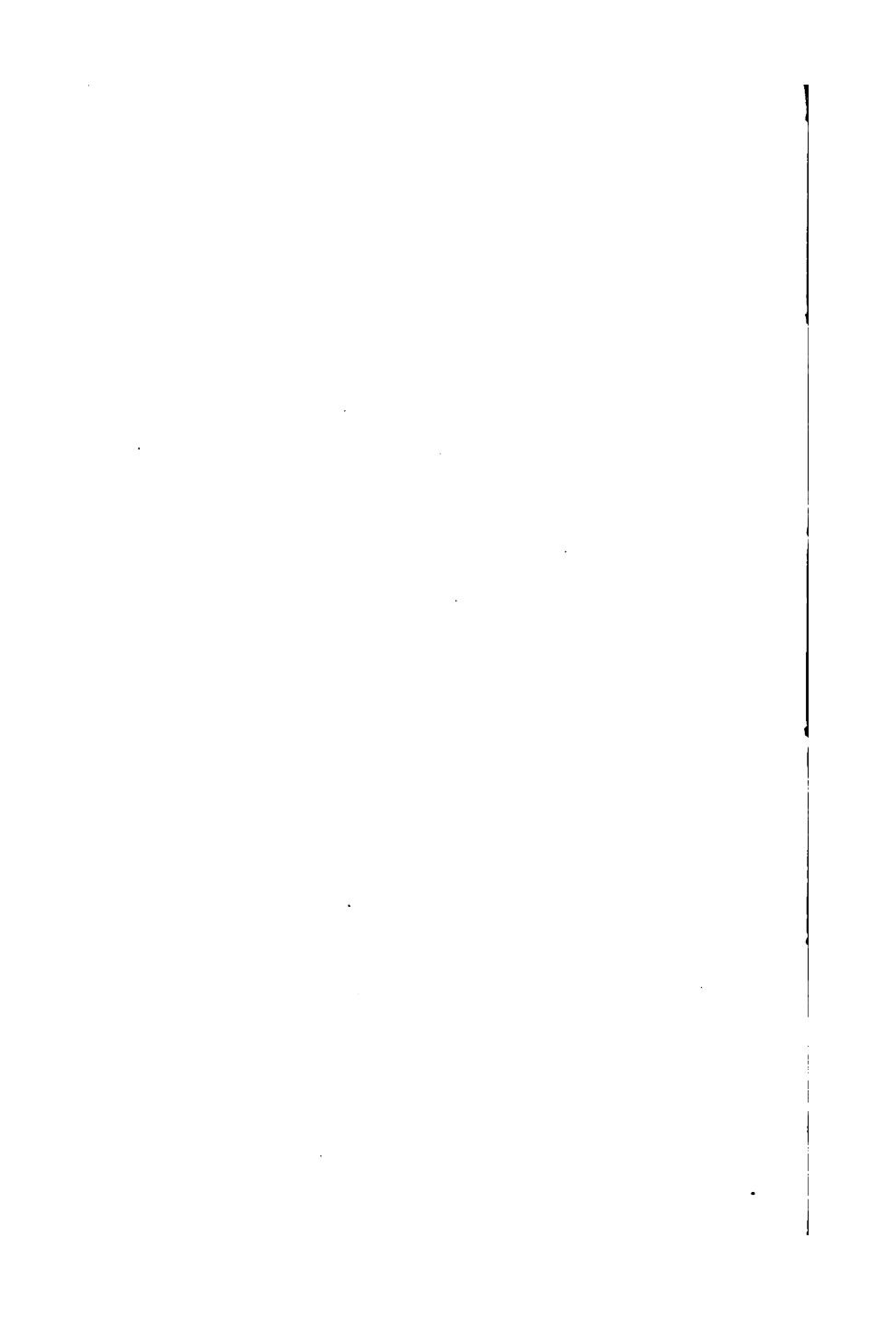
clear indication of something wrong. Twin movements, in opposite directions, have sprung up within her. The one being towards the corruptions of the Papal system, the other towards a more subtle and intellectual scepticism than has yet appeared. Does it surprise you that two such opposite things should arise in the bosom of the same church? It ought not. And if you will carefully look into it, it will not. It has put its faith in externals. It relies on its creeds and its councils. It appeals to statesmen to determine what its doctrine is. It seeks for something like an infallible interpreter. What are its articles and homilies but attempts to fasten a human interpretation upon the divine truth, and to put that between the bible and man? Accordingly, when men begin to enquire into the foundation of their authority, they are driven either to some consistent, however unfounded, doctrine of infallibility, or else they reject authority altogether, and with it also not merely what has been so authorized and enjoined, but a great deal more. It has engendered the sceptical spirit, and when once that spirit takes hold of a man it may carry him to the very verge of the dreary region of No-Faith.

Now, in view of these tendencies, I believe it is our duty to go to that church and say, "Brothers, for God's sake and the Truth's, have done with these appeals to councils, and law-courts, and episcopal synods, to determine what is truth. Cease seeking to establish the kingdom of God by the world's powers. For the end of all this is what you so much dread and detest—Popery!"

And, then, let us have quiet faith in the efficacy of this simple spiritual action. If the weapons, by whose use alone we feel that this cause is to be won, are not such as the eye can discern, and the senses take cognizance of, they are, nevertheless, "*mighty through God to the pulling down of strong holds.*" If their action seem less direct, and their results less tangible, let us believe that they are more certain and real. I much fear that we are all of us greatly wanting in this entire faith in the power of God's truth. Popery itself, in all its forms, has resulted from the want of this very confidence.

And nearly every plea that we have heard, from every quarter, for some special action of a more palpable kind than that we advocate at this juncture, seems to us to be underlaid by this absence of faith. Is it not this which has made many Non-conformists even, to seek to torture this act into a political rather than an ecclesiastical thing? Is it not this which has made them willing for the while to forget their nonconformity, and become the advocates of that very thing against which their existence as a separate sect is a living protest? And even granting what is so urgently contended for, that there is a secular end aimed at by the ecclesiastical deed, does that furnish us with any excuse for violating our own cherished principle, that Governments, as such, have no business either to persecute or patronize a religion? Grant that the Pope has his eye upon our Throne and revenues, with what agency does he seek to possess them? With an Archbishop, eight Bishops, and a staff of clergymen? How will they gain their end? By preaching and labouring as religious men in our midst. Then, what does common sense, as well as scripture, teach us as to the mode in which to overthrow these subtle schemes? Surely by counter-preaching. By such teaching as shall undermine their whole system. Not by rancorous attack; for that will give them an immense advantage over us, by exciting sympathy for them. Not by statutes of prohibition; for that will throw about them all the prestige of persecution and martyrdom in its modern form. But by the constant inculcation of what we believe to be God's truth, in opposition to their human corruptions of it, or positive contradictions of it. I say it with sorrow, but it is a deep conviction with me, that their faith in the power of truth is but a name, and their attachment to their own avowed principle a delusion, who are racking their brains for all sorts of tortuous ingenuities, and taking infinite pains to find excuses, by which to justify their desertion of a simple spiritual course at this time, for that which, if it be adopted, I fear they will live much to regret. In those who acknowledge the need and right of the State's help for religion, it is simply consistent to fly to Parliament for deliverance from their present fears. In those whose reli-

ance is on authorities external to the word, and on traditions, and on a hierarchical system, this fear of Rome is simply natural and to be expected. But for us, who repudiate both, *thus* to manifest our fear, or even to feel it, is surely an inconsistency and a wrong. At all events, as an individual, I have no hope that, let Government do what it may, let Episcopacy say and do its utmost, any real and effectual opposition will be given to this movement, by any but those who adopt fully, and preach faithfully, the twin principles of our texts—“*My kingdom is not of this world,*” and “*The weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strong holds.*”



WHAT IS POPERY?

A SERMON

ADDRESSED

TO A COUNTRY CONGREGATION.

BY

THE REV. JAMES CONNELL, M.A.

CURATE OF HORNE, SURREY.

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A SERMON.

GAL. i. 9.

There are some that trouble you, and would pervert the Gospel of Christ.

ST. PAUL spoke these words of those false Christians who attempted to corrupt the simplicity of the Gospel in his days, by teaching Jewish rites and ceremonies in addition to the pure faith and worship which they had received from Christ. And so, brethren, it has unfortunately been the case in all ages of the Church, that Satan, the great deceiver, has stired up men to corrupt the truth as it is in Jesus, and to teach another Gospel than the one which is contained in the word of God. At the present time we seem in danger of similar corruptions, against which it is most necessary that we should be warned, and each in his several station do everything in our power to preserve the true faith once delivered to the saints. You are all aware at this moment, that an attack has been made by the Church of Rome upon the Protestant religion, which was reformed by our forefathers; for which they were content to suffer and to die, and which we their children have received from them, and have long enjoyed. This attempt has been long going on secretly, and without any decided opposition from Protestants in this country, because all religious sects are tolerated, provided they keep within

the law, and do nothing contrary to our constitution in Church and State. But now this attack has been changed into an open and undisguised assault upon all that *we hold dear as Christians*, our civil and religious liberties. The Pope or Bishop of Rome, has issued a Bull or Decree, by which he, a foreigner, takes upon him to distribute Protestant England into Roman Catholic dioceses, without the slightest regard to the wishes of the English nation, or to the order of the Church of England which already exists. And why has he done so? It is because he thinks the time has come when he may throw off the mask, and openly assume the right of governing the Church in England as he does in some other countries. The Pope seems to suppose that owing to the many divisions among ourselves, and the increase of the Roman Catholic religion, England is ripe for returning under that yoke of bondage from which we were delivered at the Reformation. But I rejoice to think how deceived he has been, if he supposed that such an attack upon our faith would not be repelled with indignation. He little knew how much attachment there really is to our religion, and our Protestant Constitution in Church and State—and although there are, unfortunately, many divisions among us, and now carried to a greater height than ever, yet we are all united against the common enemy, and will not suffer a foreign Priest to interfere with us, or to send his myrmidons among us to undermine our faith. Already the whole country has heaved with intense excitement on this occasion, and has uttered an almost unanimous protest against Papal usurpation, and the errors of the Roman Catholic religion, from one end to the other—Meetings have taken place in every county, city, and town, and in many country parishes and villages, composed of persons of every different opinion and sect, High Church and Low Church, churchmen and dissenters of every denomination,

and resolutions have been adopted or petitions and addresses to the Queen, the Parliament, and the Bishops, expressive of a fixed determination to preserve our faith, as it is in God's word, without any addition or diminution from man.

We, my brethren, as far as in our power, have taken our part in this good cause. A petition to the Queen has been signed by many among us, in which we express to her Majesty, our loyalty and attachment to her as our Monarch, and protest against this usurpation of her rights as the Head of our national Church, and praying her Majesty to take such measures as may be necessary in this crisis, to preserve our constitution and our religion inviolate. Now, as some of you who have signed this petition, and others who are interested in it, but are prevented by age or sex from doing so, may be desirous of knowing more particularly what are the reasons that such a measure is desirable, I shall proceed on the present occasion, to point out why it is that as Christians and Protestants we should give the most determined opposition to every attempt to revive the Roman Catholic religion in this country. But let us remember, that it is not against the Pope himself or his followers that our hostility should be directed, but against the doctrines and practices which they believe and teach. It is quite consistent to feel love and charity, as we are bound to do, to *persons*, and yet to condemn and oppose in every way their erroneous *opinions*. Scripture itself tells us to "contend earnestly for the faith once delivered to the saints."¹ and if we do not do so, it would prove that we have no religion or faith ourselves, no love and devotion to the Saviour in whom we believe, no regard for our souls or the souls of others who would be in danger of perishing if they believed errors contrary to the

¹ Jude 3.

word of God. I shall, therefore endeavour, on the present occasion, to inform you as simply and clearly as I can what Popery is, and then you will easily see how much we are bound to oppose it.

1. *Popery is the word of man instead of the word of God.*—According to the Roman Catholic religion the truth does not consist in the Scriptures alone, but in the decrees of the Pope, and the voice of the Church, which is as infallible as Scripture itself. Hence Roman Catholics are not permitted to read the word of God in private, and judge for themselves, as every one has a right to do, of the truth of any doctrine; but they must receive as gospel whatever their Church chooses to pronounce to be the Christian faith; so that instead of the pure unadulterated word of God being the rule of faith as among Protestants, many additions and alterations are made from time to time. Hence the truth is corrupted, it does not flow in a pure stream from the fountain of living waters in God's word, but it is polluted by the gross inventions of man. The Roman Catholic Priests treat the word of God, just as the Scribes and Pharisees did in the time of Christ. They "teach for doctrine the commandments of men, and make the word of God vain through their traditions." They "take away the key of knowledge, and neither enter in themselves, nor suffer them that are entering in to do so." They prohibit the indiscriminate circulation of the Scriptures in the language of the people, and only permit them to read such passages, as the Church authorizes. Hence how different is the state of Roman Catholic and Protestant countries! In our country, blessed as she is with the light of truth, the word of God is openly read and preached in our churches, and almost every cottage contains a Bible. The children are taught from the Scriptures, which are able to make them wise unto salvation, through faith that is in Jesus. I do not mean to say that all read

their Bibles, or act up to them, I would that were true; but all have the opportunity of doing so, and if they do not, it is their own fault, and will be their own condemnation. But if you were to go into a Roman Catholic country, such as Rome, Spain, or Italy, you might go through the length and breadth of the land without finding a single copy of the Bible in the language of the people. In Rome itself, the seat of the Pope, a gentleman lately went into all the booksellers' shops, and could find only one copy of the Scriptures in the Italian language, and the price of that was four pounds! This one fact speaks volumes. Now what would be the case among us, if the Roman Catholic religion were to spread universally and get the upper hand? The first thing the Pope would do would be to order every Bible in the country to be delivered up, or at all events people would not be suffered to read their Bibles, without express permission from their priests; and how would you like, brethren, to be deprived of your Bibles, of the word of God, which teaches you heavenly wisdom, and gives you light in the darkness, and strengthens you against temptation, and teaches you your duty to God and man, and comforts you in your affliction? And what is the reason that the Pope is so hostile to the Bible? because he knows that it condemns himself, because he is there called "*Anti-Christ*,"² and "the man of sin,"³ and the Roman Catholic church is held up to our warning as the great Babylon, the mother of harlots and abominations, "the woman drunk with the blood of the saints;"⁴ because the word of God condemns all his corrupt doctrines and idolatrous practices—because his authority cannot be proved out of it, but is contrary to it. In short, because the word of God is *light*, the light of heaven, therefore the Popish religion cannot stand before it,—because its doctrines

² 1 John ii. 18.

³ 1 Thess. ii. 3.

⁴ Revel. xvii. 6.

and deeds are evil—therefore it takes the light, and attempts to shut it out.

2. *Popery is idolatry.* For idolatry means the worship of other gods but the one true and living God of heaven and earth, or bowing to graven images, which God has expressly forbidden in the second commandment. Now, this is just what the Roman Catholic religion teaches. It tells the people that they may pray to the Virgin Mary, and invoke the saints in heaven to intercede for them with God. How contrary is this to Scripture! How idolatrous and blasphemous is such a practice! The word of God tells us that there is no other Saviour and Intercessor, save Jesus Christ, who shed his precious blood for us, and ever liveth at the right hand of God to make intercession for us. Therefore it is idolatry, and robbing our blessed Lord of that honour and glory, to which He alone is entitled, as our Maker and Saviour, to pray to any of his creatures instead of himself. The worship of the Virgin Mary, the mother of Jesus, is most contrary to truth and Scripture; there is not the smallest ground for it in the Bible; on the contrary, we are expressly warned against paying her any undue honour. For you will recollect, in the marriage feast at Cana of Galilee, when Mary attempted to interfere with our Lord when he was about to perform his first miracle, turning water into wine, he said to her, "Woman, what have I to do with thee? mine hour is not yet come."⁵ If, therefore, she had no authority over Him as God on earth, still less has she any in heaven, where He sitteth upon his throne, and ruleth over all. Such worship of the Virgin is to make her a goddess, and must be most insulting to God; and, I have no doubt, would be most shocking to Mary herself, if she knew it. She would say to those who attempted it, as Peter did to Cornelius, when he fell at his feet to

⁵ John ii. 4.

worship him—"Rise up, I also am a man."⁶ Or as the angel said, on a similar occasion, to St. John, "See thou do it not, I am thy fellow servant, worship God."⁷ It is the same with the invocation of saints, or addressing our prayers to departed spirits, as if they could hear us, or help us. There is not a single instance in Scripture of prayer being made to any one but God. He is the only hearer and answerer of prayers, and all our prayers must be presented in the name of Christ, and in no other, "for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved."⁸ Not content with thus worshipping the saints, Roman Catholic Christians make to themselves graven images of every kind and of every material, gold and silver, and stone and wood; some representing our Saviour on the cross, others the Virgin, and others saints; these are to be found in all their churches—and worshippers are continually saying their prayers before them, or presenting offerings of various kinds, and burning candles before them in order to propitiate their favour—Protestants can hardly believe that persons, pretending to the name of Christians, should be guilty of such idolatrous practices. But it only shows what human nature is, without the light of God's truth to teach them, they soon fell away from the knowledge of the true God, and like the heathen, "make to themselves images like to corruptible men."⁹ It is only a knowledge of the Scriptures that can turn men from these vanities to serve the living and true God; and if the word of God were to be taken away from us, as it is in Roman Catholic countries, we should just do the same, and provoke God's wrath against us. Let us then be thankful that we are delivered from this idolatry, and let us shun the smallest approach to it, and remember that God is a spirit, and that He re-

⁶ Acts x. 26.

⁸ Acts iv. 12.

⁷ Rev. xix. 10.

⁹ Rom. i. 23.

quires those who worship Him to do so "in spirit and in truth."¹

3. *Popery is Priestcraft.* It consists of inventions and corruptions that have been made by designing men, for the sake of keeping up their authority over peoples' consciences, and in order to extract more from them. Hence they pretend to work miracles like the Apostles, and have invented all kinds of legends, fables, and other lying wonders, which they require their deluded followers to believe, on the authority of the Church. I may mention a few instances of these impostures. One legend they tell, is that the Virgin Mary has risen from the dead, and was taken up to heaven, where she is crowned with glory, as Queen of Heaven. This is a mere fable, without the slightest foundation for it, either in Scripture or history. Another pretended legend is, that the wood of the true cross on which our Saviour was crucified, was found by an empress of Rome, about 300 years after the death of Christ, and being cut into different pieces, is possessed of miraculous virtues. They also pretend to exhibit the napkin with which our Lord wiped the bloody sweat from his body; and the coat without seam, for which the soldiers cast lots.² In some churches abroad they pretend to show the very nails with which our Lord was fastened to the cross, and some of the thorns with which he was crowned, in mockery, by the soldiers! But it would be impossible, nor would it be very edifying, to mention all the fables that abound in the Church of Rome, and which have been substituted for the truth of God's word. The object of them all is to delude men's minds, to increase the power of the priests and the wealth of the Church. Some people are so deluded by this priestcraft, that they will make long pilgrimages to the tombs of departed saints, under

¹ John iv. 24.

² This was exhibited at Treves, in France, in the year 1844, and thousands of pilgrims flocked from all parts to worship it.

the idea that by so doing they will procure their intercession, or atone for their sins. Not content with this mode of filling her coffers, the Church of Rome has invented another monstrous fable, which is universally believed by Roman Catholic Christians, viz., that there is a place called Purgatory, in which men's souls are kept for some time after they leave the body, in order that they may be purified by fire and fitted for heaven. The only way of getting out of this place is by paying for masses, or prayers for their souls. The more money is left for this purpose, and the more prayers are offered by the priests for the dead, the sooner does the soul get out of the torments of purgatory. You can easily see what an effect such a notion has, and how it increases the power and wealth of the Church; for if a man really believes it, he will, of course, leave all the money he can to purchase the prayers that are necessary to release his soul from torment. But the worst feature in this doctrine is, that it encourages men to continue in sin during life, and to put off their repentance altogether, under the vain hope that they will pay off their sins and shorten their punishment hereafter, by leaving a sum of money for that purpose, when they die. Now nothing can be more contrary to Scripture than such a doctrine; for *there* we are expressly told that in the other world there are only two abodes for the departed, one called hell, the place of torment, and the other heaven, the seat of the blessed—that whosoever is cast into the one, or admitted into the other, can no more leave it—that nothing can change his condition. “A great gulf is fixed” between the place of torment and the place of bliss, and no one is permitted to pass from the one to the other.* The torments of the one are for ever, the happiness of the other is equally eternal, and everlasting. If, then, we would repent at all, it must be now, while we are

* Luke xvi. 26.

alive—prayer can only avail us now—but hereafter no repentance is of use, no prayers, either of ourselves or others, can save. It is not for the dead that we are to pray, for their doom is fixed and unalterable, but for the living, for them there is hope,—for them there is an opportunity of repentance, of making their peace with God,—of being saved, if they will only not neglect it.

4. *Popery is immoral.* Its tendency is to produce general licentiousness and corruption of morals; this is proved by the state of Roman Catholic countries, such as Rome, Spain, and Italy—the state of morals there is frightful—society is completely corrupted by it—the marriage vow is broken without the slightest shame. In our country such a sin as adultery is universally condemned, and those who are guilty of it are shunned by all right-thinking persons. Now one great cause of this immorality in Roman Catholic countries, is the confessional. The people are taught that the only way they can be pardoned is by confessing their sins to the priest, who gives them absolution—and, therefore, they are obliged to submit to a most minute cross-examination; during which they must confess all their most secret sins and thoughts, (which are only known to God,) to a man, a sinner, like themselves. Now conceive what must be the effect of such a practice on the mind of the priest himself and his penitents, those who confess to him. How should you like your wives, daughters, and sisters, to submit to such an examination of all their inward thoughts, which ought only to be revealed to God and their own consciences? What right has any human being, any sinful man, to examine into our secret thoughts? such a practice, instead of making people better, can only make them worse. It has often the effect of putting evil into those minds that were previously pure. It takes away all delicacy, modesty, and shame, from women, which are the best guardians of virtue; and it gives

man an opportunity of sin and vice which human nature is unable to resist. No practice could have been better devised, by Satan himself, for the corruption of manners, and the ruin of souls, than that of the confessional or, as it is called, auricular confession.³ It is also contrary to God's word—there we are taught to “acknowledge our faults to Him, as it is against Him only we have sinned, and done evil in his sight.”⁴ I will confess my sins unto the Lord, says David, and thou forgavest the iniquity of my sin.⁵ We are, like the holy Daniel, to pray unto the Lord our God, and make our confession to Him.⁶ And so we are exhorted by our Church, not to “cloke our offences before the face of Almighty God our heavenly Father, but confess them with an humble, lowly, penitent, and obedient heart.” Thus, you see, brethren, it is before God that we are to examine ourselves, and confess to Him, for it is He who knows our sins, and who is offended by them: and it is He only who can forgive them.

Lastly. *Popery is cruel*.—It not merely domineers over the soul, but the body. Its spirit is decidedly intolerant and persecuting. It will not suffer any one to doubt its truths, or rebel against its authority. Its doctrine is that it is lawful and right at times to persecute heretics, those Christians who do not believe its doctrines, and separate themselves from it. It teaches that there is no salvation out of the Church of Rome; that all other Christians are lost; and, therefore, that it is entitled to punish, and put to death, those whom it conceives to be in error. Hence, when in power, it acts up to this belief, and does not hesitate to shed the blood of those who oppose its authority. Hence it is that the Church of Rome has so often “made war with the saints and servants of God”—and has been “drunken with the blood of the saints and martyrs of Jesus.” Hence

³ So called because whispered in the ear of the priest.

⁴ Psalm xli. 3, 4.

⁵ Psalm xxxii. 5.

⁶ Dan. ix. 4.

it sent its armies and hunted out the poor Waldenses and Albigenes, in the mountains and valleys of Italy and Switzerland. Hence 60,000 Protestants perished in France in the bloody massacre of St. Bartholomew. Hence the Duke of Alva, one of the generals of the king of Spain, boasted of having put 30,000 persons to death in the Netherlands, by the hand of the common executioner. During the space of a few years the Inquisition destroyed 150,000 Christians by various tortures. Hence so many of our own countrymen suffered at the stake during the persecution in the reign of Queen Mary. These are a few specimens, and but a few, which history has recorded; but the total amount will never be known, "till that great day when the earth shall disclose her blood, and shall no more cover her slain."⁷ But, perhaps, it may be said, these horrors were perpetrated long ago, and there is no fear of their being revived in our day—these days of light, liberty, and civilisation. You little know what Popery is, brethren, if you think so. Give Popery the power, and we shall soon find that it is still unchanged—and how can it be otherwise? The doctrine of the Church of Rome is, that she is infallible—that her Pope cannot err; and so far from lamenting these massacres, they glory in them, because they were done under pretended zeal for God's glory, and the salvation of souls. Their doctrine is, that the Church has a right to destroy men's bodies for the good of their souls, and as a warning to others, and that it is just as right to put a heretic to death, that is, one who differs from them in religious opinions, as a thief or a murderer. Is that the way that the religion of the meek and lowly Jesus is to be propagated? Is the belief in the cross to be enforced by the power of the sword? Are men to be made Christians by violence, by fire and

⁷ Isaiah xxvi. 21.

axe, by the stake and the scaffold? Is this the commission that our Lord gave his Apostles, when he commanded them to go and teach all nations? Is this what he meant, when he said, "Love one another, by this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another?"⁸ Did He not, on one occasion, rebuke the intemperate zeal of his Apostles, who wished that fire might come down from heaven and destroy his enemies?—"Ye know not what manner of spirit ye are of, for the Son of man is not come to destroy men's lives, but to save them."⁹—*Whose* spirit then is it that stirs men up to commit such excesses under the pretence of piety and religion? Is it too much to say, that it is not from above, but from beneath; not of heaven, but of hell; that it is the inspiration of Satan, the great destroyer and deceiver, "who is a liar and a murderer from the beginning," and not the Spirit of God, which breathes only *love, peace, gentleness, meekness*?¹

Enough surely then, brethren, has now been said to inform you what Popery really is, and to show you how much bound we are by every motive of love to God, fidelity to Christ, and charity to man, to resist its progress. Remember, this is to be done, not by violence or persecution, that would only be to follow the example of Popery itself, but by the word of God, that weapon which the Church of Rome cannot resist; by doing everything in our power to disseminate the truth, by studying the Scriptures ourselves, and teaching them to our children. This we are to do as private Christians. But of course we are also at liberty to take such measures as the law permits, to defend ourselves against such an intolerant and domineering power as Popery, so dangerous to our liberties, to our civil

⁸ John xiii. 34, 35.

⁹ Luke ix. 55, 56.

¹ Gal. v. 22, 23.

and religious freedom, and even to our lives. Therefore it is that we have petitioned the Queen and Parliament to take such steps as may be necessary to repel the attack upon our Constitution as well as our religion, that has recently been made by the Pope of Rome.

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BAPTISMAL GRACE:

A SERMON,

PREACHED IN THE

PARISH CHURCH OF COGGESHALL,

ON

WHITSUNDAY, 1850.

BY W. J. DAMPIER, M.A.,

VICAR.

LONDON:

JOSEPH MASTERS, ALDERSGATE STREET,
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TO ALL IN THIS PARISH UPON WHOM THE NAME OF CHRIST HAS BEEN CALLED, AND WHO WOULD STAND FAST IN THE FAITH "WHEN MEN WILL NOT ENDURE SOUND DOCTRINE," THE FOLLOWING SERMON, PRINTED IN THE HOPE THAT IT MAY HELP, WITH GOD'S BLESSING, TO CONFIRM THEM IN ONE OF THE MAIN ARTICLES OF THE CHRISTIAN FAITH, AND STRENGTHEN THE THINGS WHICH REMAIN, IS

INSCRIBED BY
THEIR AFFECTIONATE PASTOR.

Coggeshall, Feast of S. Barnabas.

"I acknowledge one Baptism for the remission of sins."—
Nicene Creed.

"*The Bishop.* Will you be ready with all faithful diligence to banish and drive away all erroneous and strange doctrines contrary to God's Word; and to use both public and private monitions and exhortations, as well to the sick as to the whole, within your cures, as need shall require and occasion shall be given?"

"*Answer.* I will, the LORD being my helper."

Service for the ordering of Priests.



A SERMON.

I COR. XI. 13.

“BY ONE SPIRIT WE ARE ALL BAPTIZED INTO ONE BODY.”

How came it to pass, brethren, that Whit-Sunday should ever have become *the great day* of the whole year for the reception of Baptism? It is a matter of fact that it has always been the chief day of all for Holy Baptism; and there is a very good reason why it should. The day of Pentecost, or as we call it, Whit-Sunday, was the day on which the HOLY SPIRIT, GOD the HOLY GHOST, the Comforter, descended upon the Church in the most wonderful manner, and in the fullest measure. And it is in Baptism that a great spiritual work is done for us, sins remitted, grace given, adoption sealed, guidance promised, heaven opened to us. The Comforter descends to give a healing power to the waters of Baptism, as the angel to the pool of Bethesda; and then by one Spirit we are all baptized into one body. This, then, is why Whit-Sunday is so fit a season for Holy Baptism, because Baptism is the entrance into the spiritual kingdom of CHRIST, and the time of great spiritual gifts.

Now let us consider for a moment not any one particular gift of the Spirit; but *the great gift of the HOLY SPIRIT* to the Church, in His manifold character and operations.

1. As the Spirit of Truth,—to enlighten us;

2. As the Spirit of Holiness,—to sanctify us ;
3. As the Spirit of Love,—to comfort us.

When we say that the HOLY GHOST descended upon the day of Pentecost, we do not mean that He never descended before, but never in the same way, in the same measure, or for exactly the same purposes.

He was ever the Spirit of Truth, and from the time that man was formed upon the earth, every spark of enlightenment was from Him.

He was ever the Spirit of Holiness, and from the beginning He was the inspirer of every holy thought and every righteous work in every child of Adam.

And He was ever the Spirit of Love, suggesting every labour of love ; and every particle of that comfort which has supported the weary, and refreshed the penitent, and lifted up the desponding, and carried forward the saint, every particle of it from the first has been the gift of the HOLY GHOST, the Spirit of Love.

This has been the case from the first : but He never came as He did when the risen SAVIOUR ascended to the FATHER to send down the Comforter. He could not bear witness of JESUS CHRIST before the time ; he enlightened partially, but after the Ascension He testified of JESUS that He was the true light ; He sanctified in part, but after the Ascension He came down to abide with the Church, and with every faithful member of it, to enable him to perfect holiness in the fear of GOD ; He comforted in a degree, but after the Ascension He was revealed as the ever present and effectual Comforter, by Whose blessed presence in the heart there should be a fulness of unspeakable joy to every humble and earnest soul.

After the Ascension of the King of Glory, the Comforter descended to abide here, bringing those rich gifts which the eternal SON received for men to be shed abundantly upon them for their enlightenment and sanctification, for the edification of the whole body of CHRIST, and most especially union with CHRIST, the proper Pentecostal, as it is the Baptismal gift.

Our LORD JESUS CHRIST, whilst yet upon earth, spake of the gift of the HOLY GHOST the Comforter, and said that when He, *the Spirit of Truth*, should come, He should lead the disciples into *all truth*. This doubtless was a promise which the Church has inherited, and by virtue of which she has received and maintained, in the face of a corrupt and sinful world, the pure truth of the Gospel—the truth as it is in JESUS. The HOLY GHOST, Who came down in great power on the day of Pentecost, led the disciples into truth, and enlightened their minds; but chiefly it would seem in calling back to their memories what they had heard before. Not so much revealing to them new truths, as bringing all things to their remembrance whatsoever JESUS had said unto them. The same blessed Spirit of Truth therefore guided those holy men, who committed to writing the history of our LORD and SAVIOUR and of what He said and did, of the labours and successes of the Apostles and first ministers of CHRIST, and the letters we possess in the New Testament of some of those gifted saints to churches or individuals under their care. In other words, the Bible is the work of the Spirit of Truth speaking by the mouth of the Prophets and Apostles: the Old Testament dictated by Him from

Heaven, the New Testament dictated by Him on earth after the Ascension, when He was abiding with the Church for her comfort and guidance: the work of the ever present Spirit of Truth. Therefore every word of Holy Scripture is to be received as His word, and every doctrine proved out of Holy Scripture is the doctrine of CHRIST, and has the witness and authority of the HOLY SPIRIT, and thus it is that the summary of Christian Faith contained in the Creeds of the Church, which are gathered out of Holy Scripture, is in every point of it the doctrine of CHRIST, and is stamped with the witness and authority of the HOLY SPIRIT.

The Spirit of Truth has taught us in the words of the text a connected doctrine with relation to Holy Baptism, which none may safely venture to gainsay,—that “by one Spirit we are all baptized into one Body.” And this doctrine is made up of several separate truths elsewhere taught by the same Spirit of Truth: as these, That the Church of CHRIST is one body; not many bodies, but one body, of which all Christian people are members.

Again, that the one way of admission into that Body is by the Sacrament of Baptism which our LORD JESUS CHRIST ordained for that purpose.

And again, that He Who gives life and efficacy to that appointed means—Who in and by Baptism operates upon the soul of the baptized, uniting each one to the Head, and making him a living member of the Body, a member of CHRIST, the child of God, and an inheritor of the kingdom of heaven,—that He is the HOLY SPIRIT, GOD the HOLY GHOST, the Sanctifier of the elect, the Comforter ever abiding with the

Church. And these three truths respecting the end designed, the means, and the agent working by the means, together make up that one proposition, that one truth affirmed in the text—that “by one SPIRIT we are all baptized into one Body.”

Now it is true, brethren, that the operations of that HOLY GHOST, whose outpouring upon the day of Pentecost we are this day commemorating, were manifold and marvellous: “diversities of gifts, differences of administrations, diversities of operations.” So much so that they are neither to be traced nor told in such manner as to convey any notion of their greatness and extent. There is no good thought and no good work in all the world, whether in Christians or heathens, whether in men, women, or children, whether in religion or politics, whether in science or the commonest arts of life, but it is really the effect of the operation of the HOLY GHOST upon the face of this world, upon which He broods to bring good out of evil, and order out of confusion, and glory to GOD out of the elements of sin and misery. Many, very many of those in whom some good thing is found, are entirely unconscious of the source from which it flows; they see not the hand of the Giver, nor love, nor even know His name. Yet the fact remains the same, that the gift is from above; and we do not fear to affirm that when a wicked man, an habitual sinner, has, as he has sometimes, a good thought, or does, as he does sometimes, a good action, that good thought and that good action is the work of the Spirit: if, for example, it come into the heart of such an one to kneel down and say his prayers; or to leave his sins, or to show

some act of mercy to the poor. It is not the work of the man's own spirit, for that is only evil continually; it is not the work of chance, for there is no chance with GOD: it is the work of Him Who is in the world, *invisible*, penetrating all things, quickening all things, sanctifying, wherever, even for a day or an hour, or a minute, or for the second of a passing thought, He is allowed to enter and to work, in good men, conscious, or in evil men, unconscious, of His presence and power; save, indeed, when through stubbornness in sin these have succeeded in quenching or driving away the HOLY SPIRIT: and then when the HOLY SPIRIT has quite forsaken a man, there is no more a good thought, no more a good action—nothing beyond the mere appearance of them. It is some comfort to such as do not despise or wilfully reject the help of the Spirit, to know that He is thus near to all men, waiting, as it were, about them for leave and room to do His heavenly work.

This kind of presence and operation, however, is very different from what it is in those to whom He comes without impediment, and in whom He abides. To them He comes in a singular manner, and with special and great gifts. In truth He abides with us as a perpetual source of comfort, an unfailing treasury of spiritual gifts; and these gifts of remission of sins, comfort, faith, sanctification, charity, hope, and whatever else He came to bestow, these gifts are ever welling up and flowing over upon every soul brought near to Him, bringing with it the capacity to receive the peculiar gifts, whatever they may be, which are proper for them at the time.

Now to illustrate my meaning, and to take a case right to be taken at such a time as this, and especially on such a day as this, the Spirit, it is manifest from the words of the text as from other places, is given in Holy Baptism, for it is asserted to be by the Spirit that we are all baptized into one body. A spiritual work is then done. We see only the outward things, but we believe the spiritual work, and this belief in the spiritual work is itself an *act of faith*; a work is then done upon the soul of the baptized very different from that which is done in a heathen or a sinful man, when the Spirit forces into him a good thought, or impels him to a good action. In the one case the Spirit of GOD is a stranger, not known, not welcomed, yet acting in a limited way and without the religious co-operation or sanction of the person. He is about the man but not in him; He touches him, without abiding in his heart: whereas in the other case He comes down to take possession of the body and soul, and to abide in them and rule them, if He be not rejected, and if it may be, to sanctify them wholly. The spirit of the baptized is, as it were, laid out to receive the Spirit of GOD, that the Christian being joined to the LORD, may be one Spirit. He works the work for which He came, takes off the guilt of sin, renews the image of GOD in which man was first made, innocent, joins the cleansed soul to CHRIST JESUS, and makes it one with Him, lays heaven open before it as its proper rest and home, introduces it to the company of the faithful, offers the privileges of GOD's house, all the helps of the Spirit, and promises a complete victory, if watchfulness is used, and temptations are resisted, and sin is not suf-

ferred to get the mastery over us. These are amongst the gifts of the Spirit in Holy Baptism, when "by one Spirit we are all baptized into one body." And therefore it is and because of these gifts, that Christians are said to be in Baptism made members of CHRIST, children of GOD, and inheritors of the kingdom of heaven : in one word, regenerate, or, in the language of an ancient father (S. Ambrose) *taken into His kingdom by the adoption of Holy Regeneration*. This does not mean of course, as I have often told you, that wicked people will be saved because they have been baptized ; for theirs may be the heavier condemnation—wicked Christians are worse than wicked heathens ; nor does it mean that all who have received gifts from above use them as they ought to do : on the contrary, many throw them away and live and die in sin ; for all that, they once received them, and (the worse for them) they cast them away. Nor does it mean that in baptism the *whole work of sanctification is done at once*, for that is not done till with the understanding and affections CHRIST is accepted as our portion for ever, and the will is conformed to the will of GOD. But it does mean that the Spirit *has been* at work upon the soul, whether men can understand it or not ; that a spiritual change *has been made* ; that the baptized child comes from the font, no longer a child of wrath but *the child of grace*—restored to GOD's favour through JESUS CHRIST ; that spiritual capacities and spiritual rights are bestowed by the Spirit ; and, above all, in the case of little children ; because first of all, that the sin which they were born with as the children of fallen and sinful parents is then and there pardoned and put

away by the blood of JESUS CHRIST, in which the soul is washed and cleansed; this is matter of faith, not of sight or understanding, and be ye well assured, brethren, that this remission of sin in Holy Baptism* is the doctrine of CHRIST, and has stamped on it the witness and authority of the Spirit of Truth. The passages of Holy Scripture, which declare this truth are many, but this one may suffice—"Arise and be baptized and wash away thy sins, calling on the name of the LORD." Acts xxii. 16; see also Acts ii. 38; S. Mark xvi. 16.

It is also the doctrine of the Church, and ever has been, because it is the doctrine of the Bible. Every Sunday of your lives you declare your belief in "one Baptism for the remission of sins." And indeed if no spiritual benefits accompanied the reception of Holy Baptism, there could scarcely be anything more false and profane than the whole language of the Baptismal Service. If your children receive nothing at their baptism, how could we baptize them as we do, and tell you in the Services what we do tell you, without sin? Where would be your joy as Christian parents; and where your best encouragement and hope in the education of your children? If no good is done for them, what a solemn mockery you would think it, that so many prayers and so much Scripture, and such plain statements and such earnest exhortations should be used to no purpose; but only, as you must in that case think, to have their names written in the perishing registers of the parish church. Nay, brethren, a real

* "Baptisma autem si non est, nec erit remissio peccatorum, sed in suis peccatis quisque morietur." Archelai et Manetis Disputatio. Routh. Rec. Sacræ. vol. v. p. 103.

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have no effect whatever upon it. It might, indeed, encourage the ignorant to doubt it, and the disaffected to reject it, but it could not alter the doctrine itself in the least; it would be no more than the idle winds blowing against these sacred walls.

While, however, I tell you of the stability of these truths, for they are eternal truths, and exhort you to hold fast the faith as you have been taught, and especially the foundation truth of remission of sin in Baptism, and to take your children back into your arms with an undoubting persuasion that they belong to CHRIST, I cannot but urge you to earnest prayer and unceasing watchfulness, lest through your neglect and your sin any of them should fall away into perdition. Desire for them that they may be kept day by day and hour by hour under the guidance of that good Spirit by whom they were baptized into the one Body of the Christian Church. Provide that they may learn, and in their turn hold fast the faith once delivered to the saints. Teach them to seek in earnest prayer the seven-fold gifts of the Spirit: 1. The spirit of God's holy fear; 2. The spirit of godliness; 3. The spirit of knowledge; 4. The spirit of ghostly strength; 5. The spirit of counsel; 6. The spirit of understanding; 7. The spirit of wisdom. Endeavour that they may pass their youth in purity, their manhood and womanhood in holy living, and their latter days in peaceful expectation of the inheritance which their SAVIOUR promised from the first to His disciples, to every one who should love Him and keep His commandments; for as is the heavenly such are they that are heavenly.

Finally, take this caution and teach your children the same; take, I say, this caution, so well suited to this particular season. "Quench not the Spirit." Be careful, and teach them to be careful, to watch His leadings. As I have told you, again and again, His will is your sanctification, and He strives with you to save you. Give heed to His suggestions. Listen to His voice. He has many ways of speaking to you, and you must be ready to say, "*Speak, LORD, for Thy servant heareth.*" Every motion within you that tends to take you away from sin you may be sure is His. Follow it at once, or it may be gone for ever. But every suggestion whispered to your spirit to delay, or to resist, is from the Tempter of souls. You may always know the difference by seeing which way the suggestion leads you, whether to GOD and holiness, or away from Him. And be sure not to fancy that you are under the guidance of the HOLY SPIRIT and have Him dwelling in you, unless you find in greater or less measure the fruits of the Spirit in your daily life and conversation, for the manifestation of the Spirit is given to every man to profit withal; and the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, patience, faith, meekness, temperance. These are the graces for which all the members of the Body of CHRIST should be conspicuous: and, if you will, they shall surely be wrought in each one of you by that HOLY SPIRIT by whom you were baptized into that one Body.

A SERMON,

PREACHED FOR THE

TITHE REDEMPTION TRUST,

AT THE

SAVOY CHAPEL, STRAND,

JULY 30, 1850.

BY

THE REV. JAMES DAVIES, A.M.,

RECTOR OF ABBENHALL.

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A SERMON.

PSALM XXXVII. 11.

“THE MEEK SHALL INHERIT THE EARTH.”

SOME persons perversely infer, that the promises of the Old Testament are altogether temporal, and those of the New altogether eternal. Godliness, however, is profitable both for time and eternity. The meek inherit the earth;—that is, obtain the temporal promises under the Christian as well as under the Jewish dispensation. The text is written word for word the same, both in the Old Testament and in the New. “The meek shall inherit the earth,” is one of the ancient promises, and also one of CHRIST’S beatitudes. It is recorded both by the Psalmist and the Evangelist.

I trust I do not lay undue weight upon this exact coincidence, in both Testaments, when I infer that the promise is meant to run through each dispensation in literal fulfilment. I do avow, that the whole earthly property of Christendom will one day be given to the meek of this present dispensation, as fully and literally as Canaan was given to the faithful in the former dispensation.

I verily believe we evade the force of Holy Scripture by future and figurative, instead of present and literal interpretations of its promises.

The promise of the kingdom of heaven to the poor in spirit, amounts to the same thing as the promise of an earthly inheritance to the meek. It does not point to a final, so much as to a present kingdom—a heavenly kingdom, with kings, princes, powers, principalities, possessions, laws, and subjects;—not in figure, but in substance;—not future, but present;—not in heaven, but on earth;—not in the Church triumphant, but militant.

As yet, alas! in our national Church we see nothing of this. All, all is rendered to Cæsar, both the things which are his, and the things which are God's. Instead of making friends of the mammon of unrighteousness, by the laver of regeneration, we make enemies of our holy possessions, which even now stand up in judgment against us, and condemn us. For we have suffered them to be baptized by, and to become members of, the world.

Still, I must show that the promise is not void: first, *indirectly* and *figuratively*; and next, *directly* and *literally*.

The meek DO inherit the earth, in the only way they *can* now inherit it,—*indirectly*; that is, by the rule of paradox, or contraries (no uncommon rule in Scripture), by which the effect is the very reverse of the cause.

They do inherit the earth, by a ready and willing surrender of every thing belonging to earth. They suffer wrong more cheerfully than they vindicate their right. They make no claim of merit, or even of justice. They are void of all pretensions whatever.

They bear injuries without resentment, and therefore are not subject to immoderate anger, or violent passion; and consequently masters, I may say possessors, or proprietors, of themselves.

This is the secret of the meek possessing the earth. They have its fulness, by abandonment.

The holy Church and the world are universally and mutually a paradox, or rule of contraries, to each other. It is, however, to deeper thought more a rule of obvious and general analogy, than of contrariety. Many great principles are composed of opposites. The essence of liberty is restraint; the beauty of exact order is freedom; unity is formed out of variety; and melody out of sounds discordant. "The whole Scripture," (observes a thoughtful writer*) "consists of two propositions: each, when singly considered, is contradictory to the other: but both, properly combined, form the harmony of truth." "He that exalteth himself shall be abased;" "He that humbleth himself shall be exalted;" "The first shall be last, the last first;" are instances of such seeming contradictory, but really harmonizing, truth. The meek illustrate it, "they give up and possess the earth." It is also well expressed by the Apostle, "as unknown, and yet well known; as dying, and behold they live; as chastened, and not killed; as sorrowful, yet always rejoicing; as poor, yet making many rich; as having nothing, yet possessing all things."

But the special blessing of meekness is illustrated by comparison with the special blessing annexed to the fifth commandment, and is an instance how the blessings of the Gospel and the commands of the

* Miller's Bampton Lecture.

law,—that is, how the Old Testament and the New harmonize together.

To this particular command of honouring father and mother, and to this particular grace of meekness, is annexed the same promise, inasmuch as it is in each case temporal. Therefore, I infer, that the disposition which obeys the command and receives the blessing is similar. And what does the command imply, but submission to governors, the ordering oneself lowly and reverently to all superiors, without nice questioning of personal rights? These, and such like tempers, mark both the filial and the meek disposition. Their days are long in the land, because they claim no personal sovereignty or perpetuity. They invest it in parents, or in kings, in principalities and powers, not in themselves. The meek Christian invests his *all* in the Church; lays it at the Apostles' feet; holds all things in common or communion. There they find their *all* again, fathers, mothers, sisters, brothers, houses, lands, and possessions. They inherit earth, because they arrogate no portion of it, as fixed and funded property in their own persons, but in the Body of CHRIST. There they have all, because they give up all.

Hence we see an especial affinity between this beatitude and another commandment, the tenth. It only goes beyond it, just as the Gospel goes beyond the law; that is, the beatitude gives the command its accomplishment. The meek are so far from coveting what is another's, that they do not even claim their own; and by the rule of analogical contrast, they not only possess a neighbour's property, but the whole earth.

The prophet Haggai also illustrates the character of

the meek by the very opposite. Because, just what the hard, grasping, selfish, and unscrupulous man *is*, the meek man is *not*; what the one *has*, the other has *not*. Each character appears equally paradoxical. "Consider your ways," says the prophet to the worldly: "Ye sow much, and bring in little; ye eat, and have not enough; ye drink, but ye are not satisfied with drink; ye clothe you, but there is none warm; and he that earneth wages, earneth wages to put it in a bag of holes." Holy Scripture here is only a transcript of common experience. The ambitious, the covetous, the selfish, are always in want. Give ambition all the honour,—avarice all the wealth,—selfishness all the gratifications of earth,—pour the whole world into their respective treasuries, and they will say, "give, give," and never have enough. Why? Because you pour into a broken cistern. You try to fill a bag with holes. The mind, which is not meek, is that cistern and that bag. It is insatiable. The conqueror of one world grieves for another world to conquer. The meek, on the contrary, eat and are satisfied, because the heart or mind is sound and entire. It contains and retains the least portion with thankfulness. It possesses much, because it covets nothing. The Psalmist expresses the beatitude to the very letter,—"The meek-spirited possess the earth." And we may assume, as I observed at first, some pregnant and permanent meaning in texts thus re-echoing each other. We may, therefore, infer that the blessing, attached to meekness, pervades all dispensations. We see that temporal blessings are promised to the same characters, in the New Testament as well as the Old.

Such are the meek: they inherit the earth by a

paradox, or by a rule of contraries, which to the world is an irreconcilable contradiction, but which is harmonized by the Church into a plain and well received truth.

But I must further show how they possess the earth, by a figure, in the way of a pure taste, or holy imagination. And here I would guard myself against what may be called "*ingenuity*," and keep strictly within the rule of accuracy, both as to analogical or imaginative illustration.

I confess, however, I *do* wish, just at present, to discard all *literal* idea of earthly property, and to free it, as much as I can, from the vulgar notion of direct ownership. I safely and boldly assert, that there are other ways of possessing the earth, besides that of being proprietors by law or by lease. There is a possession of the earth by the eye as well as by right. One of our moral writers* observes, "that a man of taste will enjoy the landscape, far more than the owner of it." He will appropriate to himself the wild order, the unstudied arrangement, the bold groupings of mountain, vale, and rock,—the exquisite lights and shadows on the surface of the earth, without possessing a single acre.

Thus far the man of *rural* taste possesses the earth. But the man of holy taste, with the keenest perception of natural, sees also supernatural beauties in the earth, which he makes his own. All things become new. Nature is "*not unclothed, but clothed upon*." She becomes baptized into a new creature. Else men, of mere picturesque discernment, become pantheists, see GOD every where vaguely, but no

* Addison.

where fixedly. But meek men of holy taste, not content with seeing nature, as a general type, combine her forms into sylvan temples and cathedrals,—nor yet content with this, take of her most precious stores, such as wood, stone, gold, silver,—and out of them raise, not an ideal, but an actual temple—a temple made with hands, yet a special type of *that* which is made without hands. Thus they see more than GOD in nature: they see the blessed Trinity in churches.

But what a possession of earth they must have to do this! Its particular productions is the material substance, and its whole wide sweep, and space, with its skies and seas, in all their individual features and their diversified combinations, are the only true models for the form and fashion of the building. No man can build a church on any other. He must have a possession of the earth by his eye. He will be but a copyist, a mere artist, if his original outline be not taken from the massy mountain, the rifted rock, or the overarching boughs, and his details from the light and elegant stems, the rich and varied foliage, the delicate fibres, the dark recesses and sunny glades of earth.

Undoubtedly, the architect should be well versed in all the schools of ancient and modern design. Men should be his helpers, but nature (that is, earth, with her clouds and colours, lands and waters) must be his master. If he borrows his primary design, and his last finishing touch from man, you will see in his building an artificial, petty preciseness, instead of a bold, real, and natural order. The outline will lack that fine, noble negligence; and the filling up, that fine, delicate touch, peculiar to nature and to truth.

There will be a complete *finish*, instead of an incomplete *finishing*. For an incompleteness is a character of nature; and therefore should be of a temple made with hands; an incompleteness, which gives the idea of "*going on*," not of "*falling short*;" which is not likely to be lost in confusion, but to find its fulness in perfection. If nature be not the original and final model, the work will not be like God's work in the creation, but a work of rule and compass; possibly of much accurate measurement, but of no undefined and undefinable mystery—the mystery suited to a meek mind, which loves to contemplate and adore a vastness and infinity, through which it understands its own littleness, nay nothingness.

But as yet, all is material form. By holy consecration, virtue is infused into it. It is indeed a temple made with hands, but one, in which God specially dwells; so specially, that the glory of our meanest churches is far greater than that of the first or even the second temple. It is a holy place, with font for washing, and altar for offering, oblations and sacrifices; and table for feeding; and all appliances for the Holy Communion of saints and penitents: the holy place, for making confession and pronouncing absolution; for receiving the world's wealth, and scattering it abroad among the poor; the ark, where every meek and dove-like spirit, like Noah's frightened bird, can find rest from the sole of its foot to the crown of its head.

Thus, through the voice of worshippers here, all the earth, all the works of God, all mountains and hills, all green things, wells, seas, and floods,—these walls and beams of wood and stone, bless Him and magnify Him for ever. Thus the humble and meek

not only possess, but use the earth to the praise and glory of GOD,—FATHER, SON, and HOLY GHOST.

I come now directly to my subject. Hitherto I have touched it indirectly. It is bad scriptural husbandry to confine interpretations to the literal meaning; but it is wicked fraud or robbery to hide or explain it away. I must not fail, therefore, to insist upon the literal as well as the figurative meaning of the text, and declare that the meek are the rightful inheritors of the earth, not only by a holy imagination, but by actual possession.

GOD gave the earth to man to subdue and to possess at the creation; and it actually was the possession of man through his *innocence*. Through his sin he lost both his heavenly and earthly inheritance. But through redemption the earth was to be the property of the *redeemed*, as it had been before the fall, the property of the *innocent*. If we compare the two Testaments, we shall find, that the full possession of the whole earth, by the Christian Church, is typified and shadowed out in the Jewish Church. The division of Canaan among the tribes, is a shadow of the division of the earth among the members of CHRIST. At first, the title ran generally thus—“*The earth is the LORD’s.*” Now it runs specifically thus—“*The earth is CHRIST’s;*” and if it belongs to the Head, it must belong to the Body also.

Again, the sacrifices, offerings, and oblations of the Jews, in all their particular forms of dedication to GOD, first;—and of receiving back again what they offered for their own use, all imperfectly express the meaning of our eucharistic services. This is the full substance, those the faint shadows. Our Holy Communion is a Communion in the widest sense—a Com-

munion not only of religious grace, but of earthly goods. It is a sacrifice of property as well as praise—an offering and an oblation of alms, as well as hearts.

There were different kinds of offerings. Some were mere shadows, as I have just observed, of better things amongst ourselves, but some were perpetual, and to abide literally. Of these are the Tenths or Tithes. A particular word, in the original, "*Terumoth*," is used to express these above sixty times; a word different from those cognate terms, which are invariably used to signify temporary and shadowy offerings. This I learn and affirm on the authority of that accurate, learned, unanswered, because unanswerable, interpreter of Scripture, 'Mede.'

These tenths or tithes of the land were amongst the perpetual, inalienable offerings to the Church; therefore they are the literal, and abiding, and actual property of the Christian no less than of the Jewish Church. They were not figurative, and to be fulfilled, but to remain unchanged. That portion of the earth has its ancient landmark now to be seen in Scripture. It denotes the portion unchangeably set apart for the fabric, the priests, and the poor, of the Church.

Still, though a perpetual unchangeable decree, it was also a shadow of the Church, possessing not a tenth, but the whole earth. If there had been meekness of desire, we should have desired, and the heaven would have been given us for an inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for our possession. If there had been meekness of faith, not only mountains, but the whole earth would have been removed, and that not into the sea, but into the Church. The Gentiles, by this time, would have come, and bowed down before her, offering gifts of gold, frankincense

and myrrh. For I believe she must reign on earth, and possess the earth, till she has put all enemies under her feet ; till the kingdoms of this world become the kingdoms of CHRIST. She must be the dominant power of the earth. She must have a Supremacy as well as a Primacy in earthly dominion. This is her birthright and inheritance as a *Body*.

But meekness, must be the marked feature, the inwrought character of each individual member. Here we have the secret of our woe and our want. Faith, particularly that character of it, which consists in meekness, has failed ; and by an ambition to gain all, all has been lost. Carnal weapons have been used, and have not only failed in their immediate object, but have brought the whole doctrine of Church ascendancy, and property, into discredit. The bare name of "*Tithes*" is startling. It gives the idea, and well it may, of grasping, grudging, greedy gain. The world believes the Church has no proper endowment of her own, and must be maintained by the patronage and the pity of the State. So inwoven is this notion into our national constitution and laws and acts of Parliament, that it is exceedingly difficult even to conceive the true position of all national Churches, even from the time of Constantine to this present time ; which true position is unalterably and absolutely this, namely, that the moment that any state or nation becomes Christian, it throws itself up into the maternal arms of the Church, and thenceforwards the Church becomes the protector and endower of the State, not the State the patron and endower of the Church. The law is to be her defence against wrong and robbery from without, not the rule and guide of her actions and movements from within. Kings and

Queens are no longer to be her oppressors, but her nursing Fathers and Mothers.

The world, however, acts upon its own creed. It goes on the notion, that the earth is not the LORD's but man's, and that therefore, earthly property cannot belong to CHRIST's flock but to Mammon's. To this, Churchmen so called, have, with miserable treachery consented. Popes, Prelates, Princes, and Patrons, have attempted this earthly dominion by a multitude of men and of money, by force of fraud and arms, by alternate violence and cunning; but they have all signally and deservedly failed. Their cisterns have run out, and their bags have been full of holes. The more they have gotten, the less the Church has possessed. Her way of wealth is the way of the meek. She makes many rich, by becoming poor; she accumulates by distributing, and possesses all things by retaining nothing.

Alas! when we turn our eyes to that portion of the Church, which is in our own land, we can trace our poverty and our penury from causes too evident. If we have not robbed our neighbour, we have robbed God, both of His tithes and offerings; if we have not been usurping, we have been compromising; if we have not brought unlawful gain into the Church, we have suffered her divine property to go out of it. We have by an unjust commutation removed the ancient landmark, and by a law of yesterday have set aside a law of perpetuity.

But we do attempt to make a gain of holy things. The open sale of cures of souls, with shameless effrontery publicly advertised, is surely very like selling souls. Yet custom so blinds us, that we cannot discern the sin of simony, even in its grossest form.

Then again, so far from fulfilling, we do not come up to the shadows of the old law in eucharistic sacrifices, oblations, and offerings. All these point to the altar and all its devout associations, as the centre, and towards which our alms deeds should look, and at which the holy flame of our charity to the poor, should be kindled. But we are now drawn by the popular eloquence of pulpits and platforms. They savour less of self-denying sacrifice than the sacred altar, and therefore our offertory gives way to means, which minister more to self than to sacrifice—which indulge more ostentation—more self-applause, and self-gratification.

A false sacrilegious, and sentimental philanthropy has overborne the honest, sterling principle of self-denying love. The love of self, not of CHRIST, is the constraining motive. What is the consequence? Are the poor maintained by this philanthropy? Alas! the Church property has been bartered away, and the poor, whose property, in part it was, are fed by the cold, hard, but comparatively merciful provision of the law. The law of the land, not the love of the Church, maintains the poor. Our law is strained into charity, and our charity is cramped into law. Awful perversion! strange anomalous mixture, which spoils two principles, each excellent in its own sphere, and in its own pure exercise.

The Church as a body has now nothing to give the poor. We say we have *commuted*, but in fact we have sold her tenths, and have, according to the prophet's denunciation, robbed God. His judgments upon us are an exact retribution. We are, as a body, the very opposites of the meek. We have money and means for all worldly purposes—for mechanical inventions

and improvements—for splendour—commerce and war. Money is more plentiful than opportunities of investment. We are full and have everything of earth about us. GOD gives us all things, but this one thing, viz., “*richly to enjoy.*” We have luxury without plenty—society without hospitality—acquaintance without friendship—satiety without content. Complaining is not only in our streets, but in our palaces. From the head to the foot, there is no part at rest. As the meek have nothing, and possess all things; so those who are the reverse, have all things, and possess nothing.

Here, then, we are met to promote a Redemption of the Church’s earthly inheritance. Earthly, however, as it is, yet is it of divine institution, and the term “*temporalities*” is an inadequate expression of it. Our aim is to restore the tithes, which have been totally taken away. And though, when restored, they will be commuted, yet we do not recognise the act of commutation. We hold the unchangeable principle of tithes most sacredly. It is the act of the State, not ours, which changes them. It is indeed little we do—but it is something to restore lost and embezzled property. It is a step on the side of right against wrong, and that one step may lead to another. Who shall say, that the just act of restoration may not in time, rescind the unjust act of commutation. Anything is better than acquiescence in injustice. The least movement against it is progressive. “*Vires acquirit eundo.*” We know not where we shall stop. The beginning may be small, but it leads into a height, and depth, and breadth, of vast dimensions. It is a centralizing point, and has radiations, and ramifications, and tendencies; of which till lately, I was not at all, and am

now too little, aware. Fresh horizons are at this moment opening before me. We are trying to move a mountain, and must expect to meet with much prejudice even from the well disposed—and suspicions and scorn from others. The *strict claim* of property leads us to insist upon the *strict use* of property. While we vindicate the *right*, we tell every man he has not one farthing that he can call his own. We seem to be quite contradictory, for we begin with “*restoration*,” and then instantly advocate “*dispersion*.” Our avarice is to scatter abroad amongst the poor. It is a cause whose hand seems to be against every man, and every man’s hand against it. Like death, it knocks at the door of the mansion and the cottage. It offends, because it remonstrates both against lazy luxury and lazy beggary. It rouses rich and poor to self-denying exertion, and tells every man of sound mind and body—high as well as low, that if he does not work, neither should he eat,—tells him that he is a drone, a burden, and a clog upon the body, of which he is a member. For mutuality is the law of that body—which law is, that every member who receives *from*, must contribute *to* the body. It is a cause which inculcates strict economy in *spending*, that there may be large means in “*giving*.” It points significantly not only at ostentatious splendour, but at all those ingenious contrivances of easy comfort, in which selfishness hides itself—even from itself, so snugly, and so slyly. It brings the Church with rather an inquisitorial inspection into every house, palace, parsonage, and cottage.

For the law of tithes, is a law of love, which goes beyond its own immediate sphere. It runs on into voluntary offerings—and in order that these may be

in due proportion—it would raise up every respectable class in society to a higher scale of thinking, and lower them down to a simpler scale of living.

Still it is a cause, which would be far from throwing houses or households into a slatternly, slovenly, careless confusion. It upholds the dignity of order, tidiness, and cleanliness in all families—and the distinctions of rank and ancientness in some. But it strictly enforces upon all, a more exact pattern, not of petty primness, but of noble primitiveness. It protests against that compliance with the folly and fashion of the day—which runs into such silly refinements, that it creates, instead of satisfying wants, and makes all classes, except the lowest, uncomfortable, through the very multiplicity of comforts. These are the luxuries under the disguise and plea of necessities which deceive even the very elect, and enervate and enthral them. They are the most insidious forms of worldliness. As with our private and domestic, so also with our public and ecclesiastical institutions, redemption or restoration is the sole object; redemption without innovation or destruction.

It is a cause which surveys our noble Cathedrals and Abbeys, with a melancholy reverence. It would not touch one stone with a rude hand, but it would restore them to the primitive pattern. The Cathedral and the Abbey—between which we are now standing just midway—still tower with solemn superiority over every wonder of this wonderful metropolis. They look down upon, and seem (alas! only seem) to brood over with maternal care and caution, every mansion and mart, every scene of pleasure, business, or distress—every crowd, and every solitude of its mighty and manifold heart. But what are they in reality but

monuments of departed glory? Can we enter them without an instant feeling of something—nay the real thing—the life and soul—being gone? But, so let them stand rather than raze them to the ground. Even as they are, grand but lifeless forms, they are at least lessons to the nation. They do show that the Church should be both the possessor and the distributor of earthly property.

We are attempting now (this is one of the radiations of our central subject) to infuse new life into these skeletons of dry bones or stones; and to extract out of them, gifts and helps and healings for every malady, guidance for every work—and sympathy with every social and solitary, every glad and every sad feeling and affection of mankind. We are attempting to make them instinct with all the mighty power and all the minute skill of holy love.

Then would they contain a sacred band of Bishops and Priests, contemplative men, who could give themselves up, without distraction of secular matters, to the ministry of the word and prayer—men, who, by the powerful habit of high and holy thought, are qualified to discern—and maintain and infuse into society, the first grand principles of the Church and the Scriptures.

Then also would there be another band of men, for minuter details—“*Deacons.*” Not Deacons by name only, but real Deacons, who would make the diaconate order not a stepping stone but a station. They would be men fit for the noble and double office, sacred and secular.—Men proper to stand between the Clergy and Laity, and make each understand the other; and thus acting as kind and conciliating interpreters, be a link of love between the two. For now there is no link,

no love, no understanding between us! Moreover, they would equally be interpreters between the rich and the poor, and bind them together in links of social and affectionate unity, as well as of holy communion. For here again, there is neither link nor love. The two classes, though members of the one Church, are as wide asunder as the poles.

We need intermediate and mediating men. Such men are the true scriptural Deacons. They should, to fit the age, be men of ancient blood as well as ancient faith—men high born as well as new born—men of good breeding as well as pure living—men of usefulness, as well as devotedness—men with gifts of nature, as well as grace—men not slothful or ignorant in business, and also fervent in spirit. Such men, without abandoning secular posts—such men, whether as statesmen, senators, magistrates, or merchants, should issue out of our Cathedral closes and precincts, by tens and twenties and hundreds.

And other men as Sub-deacons, and holy women too as Deaconesses, and other men as pure laymen, and other women, as domestic women—each of these, should in their degree be brothers of mercy, and sisters of Charity, under the one only vow of baptism, and enrolled in no other order than the order of the Catholic Church. They should own their mission and their membership, not in public and unauthorised assemblies, not in detached and independent societies, not in committees under chairmen, but in communion with the Bishop and the whole Church, and thus chartered, they should penetrate the streets, and lanes, and alleys, and courts of our Cathedral and Christian cities, and leaven with their purifying influence, the dens and dungeons of the poor, who are festering in

countless masses in their own accumulating corruption.

How is it that there is no balm in our Gilead, and no Physician there? How is it that our want is universally acknowledged, and our supplies are invariably mere make-shifts? How is it that we have Scripture readers, schoolmasters, and commissioners, *out of the Church*, not in it? How is it, that there is so much good intention wasted, and tending to heresy and schism, for lack of order and discipline?

It would be a truism to say, it arises from disregard of GOD'S pure Word. But I may well affirm it comes from a disregard of two special parts of that Word,—that which exhibits the original pattern of the Jewish Church, in the books of Moses—and that which exhibits the original pattern of the Christian Church, in the first six chapters of the Acts of the Apostles. We abolish, instead of fulfil the shadows of the Jewish Church; and have done away with that, which was not a shadow but a permanent substance, the tithe. Hence the Church has lost her property, and her power of supply.

Again: is it not partly because we do not follow the pattern of the infant Christian Church? And hence we have lost her primitive purity and simplicity, and have exchanged the grandeur, and dignity, and munificence of her poverty, for the littleness of aggrandizement, and the meanness of wealth.

The very first bishop elected by men, and by the laying on of hands, was chosen by prayer and by casting of lots. Why have we swerved from that mode of fixing upon one out of several, and that one marked, not by human suffrage, but by providential

lot? In this day of rationalism, the method might be thought superstitious. It is however a broad scriptural fact.

Again: how is it that instead of deacons of the Church, we have unordained officers of the State, to serve tables, and take charge of the poor. Here again is another Scripture pattern, from which we have departed. And any attempt at the redemption of these surrendered rights of Scripture and the Church seems hopeless; so inveterate has the abuse become through long, undisturbed custom.

In conclusion; our meekness, at all events, must take the form of self-abasement. I cannot be surprised at our cause appearing strange to others, because I have so newly and so slightly considered its importance myself. I stand here only at the call of sudden necessity, and I must publicly confess, my consent was decided by lot. I wished to make my occupying this place as providential as possible.

With respect to man, then, let meekness and patience have their perfect work. Let them modify and qualify all our proceedings. But with respect to God, and in the abstract principle, let us view the matter of tithes and offerings (for they are His, not ours) in their most sacred character. They will bear down upon us, in their solemn force, at our last account. When we have done with other questions, questions such as these, concerning tithes and offerings, will be put to us,—“Have you, with them, preached the Gospel, fed the hungry, clothed the naked, visited the sick, gone into prisons, hospitals, asylums, crowded streets and lanes of the city, and solitary huts of the poor—to relieve—whom? the poor

members of CHRIST'S Body? nay, more than the members, the very Head, CHRIST Himself." "Inasmuch as ye do any thing to the poor, ye do it to Him; inasmuch as ye do it not to them, ye do it not to Him."

I cannot end with a more awful, a more stirring thought. Therefore now to GOD the FATHER, &c.



Holy Baptism ;

THE GRAFTING INTO OUR RISEN LORD.

AN EASTER SERMON FOR 1850 ;

WITH ESPECIAL REFERENCE TO THE PROPOSAL FOR THE RE-ASSERTION
OF THE DOCTRINE OF "THE REMISSION OF ORIGINAL
SIN TO INFANTS IN BAPTISM."



BY WILLIAM DODSWORTH, M.A.,

PERPETUAL CURATE OF CHRIST CHURCH, S. PANCRAS.

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A SERMON.

S. LUKE XXIV. 5, 6.

"WHY SEEK YE THE LIVING AMONG THE DEAD? HE IS NOT HERE, BUT IS RISEN."

Most justly were these words of gentle reproach addressed to those faithful women, who on the great Resurrection morning, brought sweet spices, which they had prepared to anoint the Body of our LORD. Their errand indeed, was one of faithful and dutiful affection. They came to expend their care on the Body of that LORD and Master to whom they had so often ministered in life; that LORD, whom when others forsook they followed even to death. It was for no want of fidelity then that they deserved this reproach, but for want of that quickness of apprehension, that simple and implicit faith, which seems to have been the exclusive portion of that Mary, the sister of Martha and Lazarus, who sat at Jesus' feet and heard His word. She alone (for I am disposed to reject the interpretation which would identify her with the Magdalene,) she alone it would seem of all the disciples had penetrated into the meaning of those sayings of our LORD, which seemed so incomprehensible to others, "that He should be killed and should be raised again the third day." She therefore brought her precious ointment "*aforehand* to anoint His Body to the

burying." The other women, addressed in the text, less discerning, but not less devoted or loving, accompanied Him to the Cross, and saw Him die: and when Joseph took down His Body and laid it in his own new sepulchre, these women "which came with Him from Galilee, followed after, and beheld the sepulchre, and how His Body was laid. And they returned and "prepared spices and ointments, and rested the Sabbath day according to the commandment." And "upon the first day of the week, very early in the morning, they came unto the sepulchre, bringing the spices which they had prepared, and certain others with them, and they found the stone rolled away from the sepulchre. And they entered in and found not the Body of the LORD JESUS. And it came to pass, as they were much perplexed thereabout, behold two men stood by them in shining garments. And as they were afraid and bowed down their faces to the earth, they said unto them, Why seek ye the living among the dead? He is not here, but is risen. Remember how He spake unto you when He was yet in Galilee, saying, the Son of Man must be delivered into the hands of sinful men, and be crucified, and the third day rise again."

It was the great difficulty with our LORD's disciples, in which these women participated, to comprehend, or even to receive as a fact, that Messiah should die and live again. The simple notion of death was of course familiar enough to them; so was the notion of a resurrection. It was the belief, as

we are told, of the Pharisees. But how MESSIAH could die, Who as they thought was to "abide with them for ever," and what need there could be of a resurrection for Him, Who as they thought would never die, this was their perplexity, and even when our LORD was dead, and when one half of His prediction was thus fulfilled; still they were slow of heart to believe the rest, and even as yet understood not the saying that He should rise again. All these considerations give point to the reproachful inquiry of the angels, "Why seek ye the living among the dead?" Their thoughts were on the dead CHRIST, on CHRIST Who had yielded up His earthly life. They had not yet apprehended the mystery of CHRIST living out of death, the First Begotten from the dead, born into a life of resurrection, a life above and beyond death, a life, new-created, spiritual, transformed, imperishable, divine.

But not *alone* did our LORD rise from the dead; or if alone, in that He was the *first*, it was as "the first fruits,"—the earnest of a ripening harvest. He rose that He might raise others in Him, and with Him. By that nature which He had assumed in the Virgin's womb in which He lived and died, and in which He rose again, He still retained His hold upon the seed of Abraham, the faithful, the true Israel. And by virtue of that union He *has raised* up them that are in Him. By virtue of that union all that was His is made ours. It was our nature that was nailed to the Cross; our nature that lay in the tomb; our nature which rose from the dead;

our nature that now sitteth at the right hand of God. And from thence He who wears it pours down upon those whom He makes His members, that HOLY SPIRIT, and thus by a new and holy birth conveys to them His life,—His nature. He gives them “power to become sons of God,” He raises them from death to life, He raises them from earth to heaven, He makes them “to sit in Him in heavenly places.” So it is written in the Epistle of this day; “If ye be risen with CHRIST, seek those things which are above, where CHRIST sitteth at the right hand of God.” And so again in the Second Lesson, “know ye not that so many of us as were baptized into JESUS CHRIST were baptized into His death? Therefore we are buried with Him by baptism into death, that like as CHRIST was raised up from the dead by the glory of the FATHER, even so we also should walk in newness of life. For if we have been planted together in the likeness of His death, we shall be also in the likeness of His resurrection,” that is, not as a future consequence merely, in the actual resurrection of our fleshly bodies, but as a present result. *Now* are we planted “in the likeness of His resurrection, knowing that our old man is crucified,” &c.

The doctrine then taught us in these and in many other passages of Scripture is that *there is given to the Christian a present entrance into the resurrection life of CHRIST*,—that by virtue of that mystical union which unites the head and the members, Christians are one with Him. As S. John says, “As He is so

are we in this world," and herein doubtless is fulfilled what our LORD so frequently spake, "If a man keep My saying he shall never see death," and again "I am the Resurrection and the Life; he that believeth in Me, though he were dead, yet shall he live, and whosoever liveth and believeth in Me shall never die." And to the same purport is that remarkable passage of S. Paul in the Epistle of the day, when he says "Ye are dead and your life is hid with CHRIST in GOD." Surely the interpretation which is sometimes given to these words as applying them merely to religious affections and devotion, spiritual mindedness, as it is sometimes called, is altogether inadequate, not to say a harsh and violent wresting of the words. What is meant is something more real than this. It is, that the principle of our spiritual life is divine,—is an ineffable presence of God through our union to our risen LORD. He has taken our nature up to God, by which God descends to us, so that in a mysterious and ineffable manner, but yet most really and truly, we are in God and God in us; so that our principle of existence is no longer an earthly principle, but a heavenly. And so, though as men we die, as Christians we shall never die. Although the body will be laid in the grave, and the spirit will return to Him Who gave it, yet will the Christian live,—live in the highest and truest sense, even while soul and body are thus apart, by virtue of that ineffable union to Him "Who in that He died, He died unto sin once, but in that He liveth, He now liveth unto God."

Such then, my brethren, is the great principle of the Christian life. And often as you have heard it from this place, I have endeavoured to set it forth once more for reasons which I will now state. First, in order to impress your minds with the great truth, that Christian conduct, Christian actions, Christian mode of living, presuppose it, and assume it. All our duties, and all our blessings should be enforced and set forth in connection with it and as growing out of it. To expect, as some seem to do, the fruits of the Christian life to grow upon the dead stock of our fallen nature is "to seek the living among the dead." To speak of Christianity chiefly as furnishing men with higher motives and larger measures of God's Spirit—to speak of Christian righteousness, as if those new *influences* given to us under the Gospel were the sole and sufficient cause of it, is to overlook its highest and most essential character. It is quite true indeed, that the Gospel does supply such motives, the love of God in CHRIST is a motive which ought to influence us mightily to all holy conversation, and will do so if it has the renewed heart and mind of the Christian to work upon. But to make the Gospel a mere system of motives, however high and powerful, is only aiming to find the living among the dead. It is to make no essential difference between the Heathen, or the Jew, and the Christian. Both the Heathen and the Jews are susceptible of the highest motives if they were set before them, and apprehended by them. They have a nature capable of being wrought upon by

external motives, but they are not, before Christian Baptism, capable of the Christian life. Why? because they have not the new nature which CHRIST only can give. They have not been baptized into the death and burial of CHRIST, and so are not planted in the likeness of His resurrection. The risen life of CHRIST is not within them, and it is by that life that Christians ought ever to live.

And so then, my brethren, we must be careful to measure our responsibilities by the measure of our blessings. Doubtless we are all too apt to make allowances for our short-comings,—to plead our weakness and infirmities, and the strength, it may be, of the temptations which beset us. And we find some ready to palliate their offences by appealing to the lower standard of virtue under the Old Testament Dispensation. Unholy Christians have thought to find some countenance in Jewish sins. This may be consistent in those, who recognise no higher life in a Christian than in a Jew, and think of the Gospel only as bringing us under the influence of more powerful external motives, or as only bringing us under a larger gift of GOD'S HOLY SPIRIT, different only in measure, but the same in kind; and so have never apprehended that truth of truths that Christians are endowed with a new nature, powerful to obey GOD, and to live according to His will. But the Christian must learn that he can do all things through CHRIST which strengtheneth him. It is not merely that truths are preached to us which ought to make a great impression upon our minds ;

or that motives are held out to us which ought to produce a powerful influence over us. Great truths and high motives will not give us a new nature. "But if any man be in CHRIST he is a new creature." By this we must aim to live, as by this we shall be judged on the great day. We must aim to live as those who bear CHRIST within us, and realize, with fear and trembling, the higher responsibility which that awful Presence lays upon us. It is not we that live, but CHRIST that liveth in us.

But further. Another reason why I bring this subject before you to-day is to show that the consequence and fruit of our LORD's resurrection has been to fill His sacred ordinances with His life and power, for the sake of perpetuating and nourishing this hidden life which He has imparted to us. As this life, which we have been speaking of, is His gift, so are the means of imparting and sustaining it His gift also. Both derive their vitality from the same source. But, alas! my brethren, there are those amongst us, I fear I must now say admitted and recognised amongst us, and entitled to speak as with authority from the Church in this land, who can see nothing in sacraments and sacramental ordinances, but outward forms and ceremonies. They consider baptism, for instance, of like efficacy, and of no greater efficacy than Jewish circumcision; and Holy Communion, as a mere equivalent for the Jewish Passover. And when others lay, what seems to them, an undue stress upon such ordinances, they are ready to cry in the words of

the text, "Why seek ye the living among the dead?" Why go to these dead forms, the earthly elements, and not to a living CHRIST in heaven? And thus far we must admit that if their notion of these ordinances were correct, the observing of them would be indeed to seek the living among the dead. Nay more, our holy sacraments would be absolutely unlawful observances. Then they could not escape the condemnation of the Apostle, "Wherefore if ye be dead with CHRIST from the rudiments of the world, why as though living in the world are ye subject to ordinances?" The only wonder is, how Christians, with such views of the sacraments and other ordinances, can bring themselves to observe them at all. If they are no better or higher than Jewish rites, why do they not fall under the Apostle's sweeping repudiation of the rudiments of the world? How can the inward life of the Christian be sustained by such beggarly elements? If water be no more than water, how can it wash the soul from sin? If bread and wine be no more than bread and wine, how can they feed the spiritual life? Oh no, my brethren, be assured that if these were no more than what they seem to be to the eye of sense, they never would have been, they never *could* have been enjoined on the Christian Church. Then would they have been opposed to the whole genius of Christianity, which does not deal in forms, but in realities; not in types and figures, but in the substance of the things typified. So that we may boldly say, if Christian ordinances were dead forms

it would be unlawful to observe them. If Holy Baptism does not convey regeneration, it is an unchristian thing. There is no consistent medium between the true Catholic view of the sacraments and other rites of the Church, and the view entertained by that Sect which repudiates them altogether. Either they are channels of grace, or they are dead forms unfitted to our Christian liberty. Either Baptism is more than circumcision, and the Holy Eucharist more than a Jewish Passover, or else they must come equally under the Apostle's condemnation; and what he says of circumcision is true of Baptism. If we are baptized, CHRIST shall profit us nothing. Yes. Baptism would be absolutely unlawful. It may seem a strong thing to say, but I am sure it will be found true, that if there is no regeneration in Baptism, and no real presence in the Holy Eucharist, it would be a far less violation both of the letter and spirit of Holy Scripture to discard these Sacraments altogether, than it is to observe them. For really to observe them merely as signs is to bring us back to Judaism. It is virtually to deny the death and resurrection of CHRIST. It is to go back from our Living LORD to beggarly elements. For what constitutes the difference between Christian and Jewish ordinances? It is in one word, *the resurrection of CHRIST*. Hence they are different. Different not merely in the measure of their significancy; but different in kind—different in their very elemental principle. Our LORD raised from the dead has infused into Christian Sacraments His risen life and power.

He has made them instinct with the life which is in Him. By the Spirit which comes forth from Him He conveys to them an inward efficacy. It is by virtue of this that from the washing of water comes the efficacious cleansing of His Blood. And hence the Sacrament of His Body and Blood becomes to us the communication of that great and adorable Sacrifice once offered on the Cross. He gives us to eat and to drink His Body and Blood, not in any carnal sense as the Jews understood Him in the days of His flesh, but spiritually. This Holy Sacrament is the communication of His precious Body in a higher glorified spiritualized state, and thereby it sustains that spiritual life which He has imparted to us. And so His own words clearly indicate: "Does this offend you?" said He to the carnal-minded Jews who misunderstood His words of carnally eating His flesh. "What and if ye shall see the Son of Man ascend up where He was before? It is the Spirit that quickeneth, the flesh profiteth nothing, the words that I speak unto you are spirit and are life."

Truly then, my brethren, it is not as outward forms and ceremonies that we would value the sacraments and other ordinances of the Church. That indeed would be "to seek the living among the dead." Then indeed the harshest things that have been said on this subject would not be too harsh. Then those who have expressed a fear lest sacraments should be unduly exalted so as to hide *СНАХТ*;—and again, lest the Church should be put in the place of

CHRIST ;—nay, those who have called Baptismal Regeneration “a soul-destroying doctrine,” would be justified in their saying. I do not wonder at such fears in those who regard those ordinances as mere outward forms. I rather wonder how such Christians should be persuaded to observe them at all. I wonder they can stay in a Body which observes them,—so utterly inconsistent do dead forms appear to be with the life and power of Christian faith. But if these blessed ordinances are filled, as in truth they are, with CHRIST Himself—if He is present in them—if the Church has in herself no being, no life, no reality, except CHRIST Himself, Whose body she is, then how can we substitute the Church for Him? How can we divert our affections from CHRIST to those ordinances which are no more than expressions of Him, and communications from Him,—of His love, of His grace, of His life? As well might one speak of the danger of having our affections drawn away from our friend by the smile of his countenance, or other expressions of his favour towards us. Nay, to make the parallel complete, we might as well speak of being made to forget a friend by reason of his own presence. Take away CHRIST and what is the Church but a body without life, a mere empty, worthless thing?

And here, my brethren, you may see the vital nature of that conflict which is now agitating the Church on the subject of Holy Baptism. And here especially you may see the total inadequacy of the remedy which has been proposed,—I deeply lament

to say proposed by some who ought to know better, namely,—that as “the remission of original sin to infants in Baptism” has been denied, it would be sufficient if we could get that doctrine adequately asserted. What is this but an evasion of the real matter in dispute? We want to know—we want to be taught on the Church’s authority, not merely that original sin is remitted, but that the risen life of **CHRIST** is imparted to the baptized infant. We want to know whether the words of our Catechism are really true, or merely speak of a fiction: whether our children speak the real truth or not when each one says, “Wherein (i. e. in Baptism) I was made a member of **CHRIST**, the child of **GOD**, and an inheritor of the kingdom of heaven.” This is what is *distinctive* in Christianity, arising from that central truth of our Faith, which we this day commemorate. A pious Jew had sin remitted. A conscientious heathen, for aught we know, may, with **GOD**’s grace, have the same. But to be a Christian, is to be *in* **CHRIST**. And this it is which **GOD**’s grace in Holy Baptism does for us. It grafts us into **CHRIST**. It plants us into Him. It is the beginning of our new life. All depends upon it. As for instance, *education of the young*,—whether we are to educe the powers and faculties of a new life, or wait for them till imparted we know not when or how;—*the inculcation of a holy life on the adult*,—whether we are addressing Christians as having the grace and strength of **CHRIST** in them to enable them to live to Him, or whether they have yet to get it as they may;—*confirmation*,—whether those

who come to it have in Him any grace to be confirmed;—*the Holy Eucharist*,—whether they have a spiritual life to be sustained by the spiritual receiving of our LORD's own Body and Blood, or whether the Sacrament is a mere figure, or teaching emblem. What can I say more? I will speak in the words of an apostle, words which should specially touch us this day—“*If the dead rise not, then is not CHRIST raised. And if CHRIST be not raised, your faith is vain, ye are yet in your sins,*”—words which, applicable as they are to our future literal resurrection, unquestionably include our present mystical resurrection in CHRIST, which we may therefore truly thus apply; If the dead rise not in the Holy Font, by a spiritual resurrection, then is CHRIST not raised.

Yes, my brethren, the more we search into this subject, the more we shall see its vital, essential nature. The more we shall see that the very life of the Christian Church, with all its immeasurable blessings, rests upon the truth of those words in their plain, literal sense: “Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit he cannot enter into the kingdom of God.” Once let this doctrine be denied, or open to be believed or not believed as men please, and a mortal blow is struck at the very heart of the Church—a blow, which if not averted, will destroy ITS LIFE.

A
S E R M O N

PREACHED AT

BLACKHEATH PARK CHURCH,

ON NOV. 5, 1850.

BY THE

REV. JOSEPH FENN,

MINISTER OF THE CHURCH.



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PSALM lxxviii. 11.

“They forgot His works, and His wonders that He shewed them.”

WE meet to-day, dear Brethren, under the authority of a statute of the realm, passed in the third year of King James I.* to celebrate the mercy of God in delivering our nation, in a wonderful manner, from what is well known as the Gunpowder Plot. Since the passing of that act, the service has been enlarged so as to embrace and to commemorate the landing of the Prince of Orange, afterwards our King William III. at Torbay, on November 5, 1688, just 83 years after.

That a nation has not only the power, but is in duty bound, to celebrate great national deliverances by special services to be annually celebrated, is clear from the Word of God. You will anticipate me in my reference to the book of Esther, and to her decree, ordaining that the Jews “should keep two days in the year as days wherein they rested from their enemies, and which were turned unto them from sorrow to joy, and from mourning unto a good day, and that they should make them days of feasting,

* See the Act, Appendix, No. 1.

and joy, and of sending portions one to another, and gifts to the poor.'* By whom the Book was written, and from what documents it was compiled, do not clearly appear, although some intimation is given in Chapter x. 2. But the Holy Ghost has been graciously pleased to give us this Book; and God has thus sanctioned by His approval this act of the Jewish nation, and has presented us with an example which we are to imitate with proper discernment and wisdom. In this Book we commune with Him, just as we commune with Him in every other part of the inspired Volume.

Seeing then that we have divine authority for the institution of such a day of thankful joy, and seeing that we have a statute enjoining upon us the due celebration of it, it may naturally be asked, Why has not this day been kept in our District before, and why is a change made in this matter at the present time?

It is reasonable that I should give an answer to these questions. It is not that it has escaped my observation. Indeed, as some of you know, it has been on former occasions distinctly brought to my notice by some members of my congregation, between whom and myself a correspondence took place. I acted from a principle which I have laid down, and by which I have regulated my conduct since my ordination,—a principle, the soundness of

* Esther ix. 20.

which I have seen no reason to question. This principle is to conduct the services of this church, or, ecclesiastically speaking, this chapel, in accordance with the usages prevailing with reference to similar churches at the time of my ordination.

The very principle of our English law is that usages may alter; even prescriptive rights may be lost by neglect. Therefore the question with me was, not what were the original usages of our Church, ascertained by rubrics or otherwise, but what were its existing usages. And I deemed it at least as unjustifiable to restore any lost usages, as to neglect any existing ones. To this consideration I was led by a passage in Hooker, in which he more than intimates that our Reformers left some things to fall into desuetude. His language is, "Sith there are divers ways of abrogating things established, they saw it best to cut off presently such things as might in that sort be extinguished without danger, leaving the rest to be abolished by disusage through tract of time." * The fact of this service originating by statute, does not seem to me to take it from the force of that power which "tract of time" hath, and must have, upon all things human.

It is to me rather more difficult to answer the question, Why alter your conduct now? My answer is, that there is, if I mistake not, a strong desire among us that this service should be revived, and farther a conviction in my own mind, that present

* Hooker, book iv. chap. xiv. sect. 3.

events demand its revival. Upon this let me enlarge, as bearing on the subject which calls us together.

You are all aware that our Reformation from Popery was a national act. Before the Reformation, Popery was not simply the religion of individuals, but of the nation. Every religious act was under the final jurisdiction of the Pope; and as religion is more or less mixed up with every national act, the power of the Pope was more or less intermingled with all our national proceedings. And in the cases, and to the extent, in which he was allowed to interfere, his decree was final; there was no appeal from the Pope to the Crown.

Even so late as the reign of Henry VII. it was deemed necessary to apply to the Pope for the confirmation of his title to the Crown.* And in the following reign, the Pope excommunicated our Sovereign, gave the kingdom to any invader, commanded the nobility to take arms against him,—freed his subjects from all oaths of allegiance,—declared it lawful for any one to seize them, (continuing such allegiance,) to make slaves of their persons,—and to convert their effects to his own use.†

These facts are necessary to be borne in mind, in order to shew the nature of the change which the Reformation made, and the necessity of the safeguards which were introduced; all of which were prompted by, and directed against, the efforts made by the

* Hume, chap. xxiv.

† Hume, chap. xxxi.

Romanists, and supported by the Pope and by foreign princes against the new constitution.

Religion did not cease to be interwoven with our constitution, because Popery had been cast off. We were still professedly a religious people, though the religion had changed. The great principle introduced into our constitution, civil and religious, was this, "that no manner of obedience or subjection within her Majesty's realms and dominions is due unto any foreign power, but that the Queen's power within her realms of England, Scotland, and Ireland, and all other her dominions and countries, is the highest power under God to whom all men, as well inhabitants, as born within the same, do, by God's law, owe most loyalty and obedience, afore and above all other power and potentates in the earth";* and "that no foreign Prince, Person, Prelate, State, or Potentate, hath or ought to have any Jurisdiction, Power, Superiority, Pre-eminence, or Authority, Ecclesiastical or Spiritual, within her Majesty's Realms, Dominions, and Countries."†

This is the principle of our social and political system since the Reformation. To this principle members of the Church of Rome cannot agree. Their principle is that the Pope is the vicegerent of Christ: and this is not a mere empty title, nor is the authority which it implies confined to ecclesiastical matters. The language of the Romish Canonists is clear and precise. "The Pope can change kingdoms, take away from

* 1st Canon. † 36th Canon.

one, and bestow upon another, if necessary for the salvation of souls."* Their line of argument is as follows: "The civil power is subject to the spiritual power, when both are parts of the same Christian commonwealth, and may therefore direct in temporal matters, and dispose of things temporal for spiritual good. For every superior may direct his inferior." † And then comes the question of a Prince or King who is a heretic. And the decision on this point is as follows: "To suffer an heretical Prince, who endeavours to draw men to his sect, is to expose religion to the most manifest danger." † For mark the reason, which affects even a tolerant heretical prince, viz. "Such as the ruler is, such will be the people, and experience proves it." ‡ And then follows the example, which is taken from our Elizabeth and the Reformation perfected in her reign.

This, then, is not a mere abstract doctrine, which may be allowed to canonists, and can do no harm. It is a right claimed by the Pope; and which, at convenient times, he has endeavoured to exercise. On May 5th, 1570, Pope Pius V. issued his bull against our Elizabeth, in which he says: "Peter's successor, the Bishop of Rome, Him alone God made prince over all people, and all kingdoms; to pluck up, and to destroy, scatter,

* Bellarmin de Summo Pontif. lib.v. chap. vi. sect. vii.

† Ib. chap. vii. sect. 2. According to the Romish doctrine, all professing Christians in all parts of the world are either faithful or heretical subjects of the same christian commonwealth.

‡ Ibid. chap. vii. sect. xiv.

consume, plant, and build." He then describes Elizabeth as the pretended Queen of England, deprives her of her kingdom, absolves her subjects from all allegiance, forbids them to obey her, and curses all who do.* Even so late as July 16th, 1809, Pope Pius VII., in a bull against Napoleon, says: "By the law of Christ, the sovereignty of kings is subjected to our throne."† The same claim is put in for the final adjudication of the property of all private Christians: "The Pope, as Pope, has the power to dispose of the temporal things of all Christians, in order to some spiritual good."‡

You see, then, that the popish principle, the very foundation of the whole popish system, is in direct opposition to the principles of our political and social system. It is not to be wondered at, that at the time of the Reformation, there should be the severest possible struggle between the adherents of these two antagonistic systems. The Pope determined to exert his authority; and to enable him to do this, he used every means in his power, not only in the time of Elizabeth, but also in subsequent periods of our history: and God wonderfully appeared for us, and frustrated all his attempts. There was a large body of English subjects attached to the popish interests and to the Romish Church in the land. Many at-

* Hume, ch. xl.; and Meek, on the Errors of the Church of Rome, p. 87.

† Meek, p. 90.

‡ Bellarm. de Sum. Pontf., l. v., ch. vi., s. i.

tempts were made to assassinate the Queen, and to excite rebellion in the country. Many were the laws necessary to secure the safety of the Queen, and the internal tranquillity of the realm. The Papists were enemies to the constitution ; they were obliged to be so treated. Not only were there laws to punish them on conviction, but laws to prevent their acquiring or using the ordinary influence allowed to other subjects.

For many years, therefore, the Romanists were not deemed capable of so amalgamating with the general body of the subjects of the realm, as to render it safe to place them in any offices of trust, or to allow them any political privileges. It was scarcely toleration, that was at first afforded them ; they were discountenanced ; not because of their religion, but because of the incompatibility of their principles with the principles of our Protestant constitution.

Seeing that the spiritual power with which, as simply directing man in the worship of GOD, the state did not wish to intermeddle, claimed the final jurisdiction in things temporal, which I have described, it was impossible to allow those who maintained their subjection to such a power to have any, the slightest, influence in the country. It was difficult to tolerate even their presence. The more conscientious they were, the more dangerous they became ; because they, in their conscience, believed themselves bound, under pain of eternal damnation, to uphold a foreign power which claimed the last appeal in the highest temporal matters, as soon it was judged

that the exercise of that power was necessary for spiritual good.

The effect of these laws, in the lapse of two centuries and more, was to keep the nation quiet : and after the death of certain individuals, who made some claim to the throne of these realms, the laws enacted for our safety had the appearance of harshness. The power of the Pope was either regarded as purely spiritual, with no possible bearing upon things temporal and political ; or, if this ultimate bearing was hinted at, the hint was rejected with disdain, or with ridicule ; the country being proud in its own strength, and scorning the very semblance of fear of such a power as that of the Pope of Rome, the petty prince of the Papal States. Statute after statute was repealed ; concession after concession was made. The social and political fabric seemed, in the opinion of many, to be strengthened and adorned by these acts of grace. Hence it seemed ungenerous to continue to brand in our religious services, those whom we were admitting to brotherhood and respect in our political and civil regulations. The service for this day was confined to our cathedrals and college-chapels and a few important parish churches.

It is at this period of our history, that a new and hitherto unheard of measure is, without the Queen's concurrence, without any, the least, notification to her Majesty's ministers,* introduced into this kingdom by the Pope. This is, the division of our country into

* See Appendix No. 2.

territorial episcopates, with regular jurisdiction, under an archiepiscopal see of Westminster, over which he has appointed Dr. Wiseman, giving him also the rank of Cardinal, or Cardinal Priest of the Romish Church.*

Hitherto the Romish Church has been superintended by bishops of imaginary dioceses in heathen lands, who have been invested with the rank or title of vicars-apostolic; their office being to minister to the members of their own communion, neither having, nor so much as claiming to have, any jurisdiction over any part of the country; but living here as missionary bishops to attend to the spiritual concerns of the members of the Church of Rome.

In what light this new measure is looked upon by the Romish Bishops is plain enough from the Pastoral Letter of Dr. Wiseman,† which has been read in all the Roman Catholic chapels in the land. In that letter occur these words: “By a brief dated the same day, his Holiness was further pleased to appoint us, though most unworthy, to the archiepiscopal see of Westminster, established by the above-mentioned letters apostolic, giving us at the same time the administration of the episcopal see of Southwark. So that, at present, and till such time as the Holy See shall think fit otherwise to provide, we govern, and shall continue to govern, the counties of Middlesex, Hertford, and Essex, as ordinary thereof, and those of Surrey, Sussex, Kent, Berkshire, and Hampshire, with the islands annexed, as administrator, with ordinary jurisdiction.” At the same time indications are afforded

* See Appendix, No. 3. † Ib. No. 4.

us of the expectations and wishes of the Roman Catholics themselves in some meetings which have been held in the north of England, at which meetings the health of the Queen has been refused to be drunk because the health of the Pope had not been first proposed.* So that we may now say that the Pope is presented to us, in our country, as a rival to our Queen in an authority which, in accordance with the constitution of our land, she alone exercises, of appointing bishops, and of creating sees; and also as a rival to our Queen, as the object of princely homage, and as the fountain of honour.

Surely then, at such a time, it is the duty of all who love their country, their constitution, and above all, their religion, openly to profess the same; and to stand forward in opposition to the principles which are again propagating with no common zeal and diligence; and which are in direct hostility to our laws and liberties, and, I may add, in their ultimate tendency, to our very lives.

It is at such a time, then, that I have felt it a duty to meet you, dear brethren, on this day, in conformity with the act of our legislature, which has been just read to you, to join in praising God for delivering us from one of those many conspiracies which, in former days, our Roman Catholic fellow subjects, under a sense of duty to their religion and their Pope, formed for the overturning of our Protestant faith and constitution.

* See Tablet.

as they behold the silver links of that chain, which has connected their country with the see of Peter in its vicarial goverment, changed into burnished gold ; not stronger nor more closely knit, but more beautifully wrought, and more brightly arrayed."

Beloved brethren, we are, thank God, a Protestant nation at present ; we have our Bibles ; we have our services in our own language ; we have our ministers dwelling among us to conduct our services, to preach the gospel, to direct us to Christ ; but claiming no power over our faith and conscience. They are helpers of our joy. We have our Queen, governing by wholesome laws ; we have justice administered in our land ; we have a flow of charity among us unknown in any other country. All these blessings flow from the Reformation. We are Protestants, Bible Christians, therefore we have them. Let us lose our reformed faith, and with it go all our privileges.

What then is our duty ?

First. Thanksgiving to God for all his past mercies, so signally, so providentially bestowed ; — mercies, which have secured for us, and perpetuated among us, our religion, laws, and liberties. Let us accompany our praises by a renewed dedication of ourselves and households to his service.

Let us next study the history of past times, and know the truth of past events, and not suffer any one single fact to be snatched from us by our enemies, or escape our grateful recollection.

Let us circulate definite and correct information in a calm and quiet manner, keepng ever to plain, well-ascertained facts . There is a small work on the subject of the Gunpowder Plot by the Rev. T. Lathbury, from which I have compiled my short account of it, and which work I recommend to your perusal. The documents and evidence are there given or referred to.

Let us circulate the blessed truths of the Gospel among the ignorant and demoralized parts of our neighbourhood, and shew them that there is such a thing as the Christian brotherhood, and that they may share in all its privileges.

Let us improve our Christian privileges, study our Bibles, and make them the rule of our faith and conduct. Let us reverence our Sabbaths, and promote to our utmost their due observance. Let us cultivate the duties of private and family devotion, and of public worship. Let us heed our Lord's admonition, "Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father, which is in heaven." Let us remember the evidence which the Holy Spirit demands from us that we are born of God. "Whosoever believeth that Jesus is the Christ, is born of God : and every one that loveth him that be- gat, loveth him also that is begotten of him."* "We know that we have passed from death unto life because we love the brethren. He that loveth not his brother abideth in death."†

Let us withstand openly, honestly, and with indo-

* 1 John v. 1.

† 1 John iii. 14.

mitable energy all attempts made to undermine our religion, and to introduce so fatal a system as Popery ; fatal to our civil liberties, and to the constitution which secures them, and fatal to our soul's salvation. Let us act in unison with all becoming feelings of kindness and of respect even for the prejudices of those who differ from us, but with unwavering determination not to admit their principles, nor to allow them any sway or influence in our land.

Let us rally round the throne, and tell our gracious Queen that she is the legal Sovereign whom God has appointed over us to govern according to the laws of our land : and that the Pope neither hath, nor, God helping us, ever shall have, civil or ecclesiastical rule here.

Above all, let us cleave closer and closer to Christ our Saviour ; communing with Him in that glory and dominion whereto He has attained, and which He is now exercising,—a glory and dominion which, in due time, will be more and more manifest, till the chorus shall be heard from pole to pole, and from east to west, “ Hallelujah ! for the LORD GOD Omnipotent reigneth ! ”

APPENDIX.

I.

ACT 3, JAMES I., CHAPTER I.

Forasmuch as Almighty God hath in all ages showed his power and mercy in the miraculous and gracious deliverance of his Church, and in the protection of religious Kings and States, And that no Nacion of the Earth hath bene blessed with greater benefitts then this Kingdome now enjoyeth, having the true and free profession of the Gospell under our mooste gracious Sovereigne Lorde Kinge James, the most Great learned and Religious Kinge that ever Raigned therein, enriched with a most hopefull and plentifull progenie proceeding out of his Royall loynes promysing continuance of this happines and profession to all Posteritie; the which many malignant and devilishe Papists Jesuits and Semynarie Priests muche envying and fearing Conspired most horriblie, when the King's most excellent Majestie, the Queene, the Prince, and all the Lordes spirituall and temporall and Comons should have bene assembled in the upper House of Parliamente, upon *the fifth day of November in the yeere of our Lord 1605* suddenly to have blown up the saide House, with Gunpowder: AN INVENCION SOE INHUMANE BARBAROUS AND CRUEL, AS THE LIKE WAS NEVER BEFORE HEARD OF, and was (as some of the principall Conspirators thereof confesse) purposely devised and concluded to be done in the saide House, that where sundrie necessarie and religious lawes for preservation of the Church and State were made, which they falsely and slanderously terme cruell lawes enacted against them and their Religion, both place and persons should

be all destroyed and blown upp at once, which would have turned to the utter ruine of this whole Kingdome had it not pleased Almighty God, by inspiring the King's most Excellent Majesty with a Divine Spiritt to interpret some darke phrases of a letter shewed to his Majesty above and beyond all ordinary Construccion, thereby miraculously discovering this hidden Treason not many howres before the appointed tyme, for the execucion thereof: Therefore the King's most Excellent Majestie the lords spiritual and temporal, and all his Majestie's faithfull and lovinge Subjects **DOE MOST JUSTLY ACKNOWLEDGE THIS GREATE AND INFINITE BLESSING TO HAVE PROCEEDED MERELY FROM GOD HIS GREAT MERCY, AND TO HIS MOST HOLY NAME DOE ASCRIBE ALL THE HONOUR GLORY AND PRAISE.** And to the end this unfained thankfullness may never be forgotten, but be had in a perpetual Remembrance, and that all ages to come may yeeld praises to his Divine Majestie for the same and have in memory this joyful Day of deliverance :

Be it therefore Enacted by the King's most Excellent Majestie the lordes spirituall and temporall and the Comons in the present Parliament assembled and by the Authority of the same, That all and singular Ministers in every Cathedrall and Parishe Church or other usuall Place for Comon Prayer within this Realme of England, and the Dominions of the same shall alwaies upon the fifth day of November say Morninge Prayer and GIVE UNTO ALMIGHTIE GOD THANKES FOR THIS MOST HAPPY DELIVERANCE. *And that all and every person and persons inhabiting within this Realme of England and the Dominions of the same, shall alwaies upon that day diligently and faithfully resort to the Parishe Church, or Chappell accustomed, or to some usuall Church or Chappell where the said Morning Prayer Preaching or other Service of God shall be used, and then and there abide orderly and soberly during the tyme of the saide Prayers Preaching or other Service of God there to be used and ministered.**

And because all and everie Person may be put in mynde of this duety and be the better prepared to the saide Holy Service, Be it enacted by Authority aforesaid, That everie minister shall give warning to his Parishioners publikely in the Church at Morning Prayer the Sunday before everie such fiftē day of November, for the due observacion of the saide day. And that after Morning Prayer or preaching upon the saide fiftē day of November they read publikely distinctly and playnlie this present Act.

* This portion now printed in italics was repealed by 9 and 10 Vic. c. 59, s. 1, "An Act to relieve Her Majesty's subjects from certain penalties and disabilities in regard to religious opinions."

II.

LETTER FROM THE HOME OFFICE.

Downing-street, Oct. 28th, 1850.

SIR,

I AM directed by Lord John Russell to inform you in answer to your question, whether the list of Roman Catholic Bishops contained in the newspapers is correct, that he has no other means of judging than yourself—namely by the Bull of the Pope, in the newspapers; to the second question whether the creation of the above Popish bishoprics, or the appointments thereto, have received the sanction and authority of her Majesty's ministers, I am directed to answer that they have not received such sanction and approbation. I am directed further to state that Lord Minto, when at Rome, was not consulted on this measure, and never gave any countenance to it.

I have the honor to be, sir,

Your obedient servant,

E. N. GREN.

LETTER FROM LORD JOHN RUSSELL TO THE RIGHT
REVEREND THE LORD BISHOP OF DURHAM.

MY DEAR LORD,

I agree with you in considering "the late aggression of the Pope upon our Protestantism" as "insolent und insidious," and I therefore feel as indignant as you can do upon the subject.

I not only promoted to the utmost of my power the claims of the Roman Catholics to all civil rights, but I thought it right, and even desirable, that the ecclesiastical system of the Roman Catholics should be the means of giving instruction to the numerous Irish immigrants in London and elsewhere, who without such help would have been left in heathen ignorance.

This might have been done, however, without any such innovation as that which we have now seen.

It is impossible to confound the recent measures of the Pope with the division of Scotland into dioceses by the Episcopal Church, or the arrangement of districts in England by the Wesleyan Conference.

There is an assumption of power in all the documents which have come from Rome—a pretension to supremacy over the realm of England,

and a claim to sole and undivided sway, which is inconsistent with the Queen's supremacy, with the rights of our bishops and clergy, and with the spiritual independence of the nation, as asserted even in Roman Catholic times.

I confess, however, that my alarm is not equal to my indignation.

Even if it shall appear that the ministers and servants of the Pope in this country have not transgressed the law, I feel persuaded that we are strong enough to repel any outward attacks. The liberty of Protestantism has been enjoyed too long in England to allow of any successful attempt to impose a foreign yoke upon our minds and consciences. No foreign prince or potentate will be permitted to fasten his fetters upon a nation which has so long and so nobly vindicated its right to freedom of opinion, civil, political, and religious.

Upon this subject, then, I will only say that the present state of the law shall be carefully examined, and the propriety of adopting any proceedings with reference to the recent assumptions of power deliberately considered.

There is a danger, however, which alarms me much more than any aggression of a foreign sovereign.

Clergymen of our own Church, who have subscribed the Thirty-nine Articles, and acknowledged in explicit terms the Queen's supremacy, have been the most forward in leading their flocks, "step by step, to the very verge of the precipice." The honour paid to saints, the claim of infallibility for the Church, the superstitious use of the sign of the cross, the muttering of the Liturgy so as to disguise the language in which it is written, the recommendation of auricular confession, and the administration of penance and absolution—all these things are pointed out by clergymen of the Church of England as worthy of adoption, and are now openly reprehended by the Bishop of London in his charge to the clergy of his diocese.

What, then, is the danger to be apprehended from a foreign prince of no great power, compared to the danger within the gates from the unworthy sons of the Church of England herself?

I have little hope that the propounders and framers of these innovations will desist from their insidious course. But I rely with confidence on the people of England, and I will not bate a jot of heart or hope so long as the glorious principles and the immortal martyrs of the Reformation shall be held in reverence by the great mass of a nation which looks with contempt on the mummeries of superstition, and with scorn at the laborious endeavours which are now making to confine the intellect and enslave the soul.

I remain, with great respect, &c.,

J. RUSSELL.

Downing-street, Nov. 4.

III.

THE APOSTOLIC LETTER OF POPE PIUS IX. FOR
RE-ESTABLISHING THE ROMAN CATHOLIC
HIERARCHY IN ENGLAND.

THE power of governing the universal church entrusted by our Lord Jesus Christ to the Roman Pontiff, in the person of St. Peter, Prince of the Apostles, has maintained for centuries in the apostolic see the admirable solicitude with which it watches over the welfare of the catholic religion in all the earth, and provides with zeal for its progress. Thus has been accomplished the design of its divine founder, who, by establishing a chief, has, in his profound wisdom, ensured the safety of the church unto the uttermost time. The effect of this solicitude has been felt in most nations, and amongst these is the noble kingdom of England. History proves that, since the first ages of the church, the Christian religion was carried into Great Britain, where it flourished until towards the middle of the fifth century, after the invasion of the Angles and Saxons in that island, government, as well as religion, fell into the most deplorable state. At once our most holy predecessor Gregory the Great sent the monk, Augustine, and his followers; then he created a great number of bishops, joined to them a multitude of monks and priests, brought the Anglo-Saxons to religion, and succeeded by his influence in re-establishing and extending the catholic faith in all that country, which then began to assume the name of England. But to recal more recent facts, nothing seems more evident to us in the history of the Anglican schism of the sixteenth century, than the solicitude with which the Roman pontiffs, our predecessors, succoured and supported, by all the means in their power, the catholic religion, then exposed in that kingdom to the greatest dangers, and reduced to the last extremities. It is with this object, apart from other means, that so many efforts have been made by the sovereign pontiffs, either by their orders, or with their approbation, to keep in England men ready and devoted to the support of Catholicism; and in order that young Catholics, endowed by nature, might be enabled to come on to the continent, there to receive an education, and be formed with care in the study of ecclesiastical science, especially in order that, being in sacred orders, they may, on their return to their country, be able to support their countrymen by the ministry of their word,

and by the sacraments, and they may defend and propagate the true faith.

But the zeal of our predecessors will perhaps be more clearly admitted as regards what they have done to give the Catholics of England pastors clothed in an episcopal character, at a time when a furious and implacable tempest had deprived them of the presence of bishops and their pastoral care. First, the apostolic letter of Gregory XV., commencing with these words, "Ecclesia Romana," and dated the 23rd of March, 1623, shows that the sovereign pontiff, as soon as possible, deputed to the government of English and Scotch Catholic bishops, William Bishop, consecrated bishop of Chalcis, with ample faculties and powers. After the death of Bishop, Urban VIII. renewed this mission in his apostolic letter dated February 4, 1625, addressed to Richard Smith, and conferring on him the bishopric of Chalcis, and all the powers previously resting on Bishop. It seemed subsequently, at the commencement of the reign of James II., that more favourable days were about to dawn upon the Catholic religion. Innocent XI. profited at once by the circumstance, and in 1685, he deputed John Leyburn, bishop of Adrumede, as vicar apostolic for all the kingdom of England. Subsequently, by another apostolic letter, dated the 30th of January, 1688, and commencing as follows, "Super cathedram," he joined with Leyburn three other vicars apostolic, bishops *in partibus*; so that all England, by the care of the apostolic nuncio in this country, Ferdinand, archbishop of Amosia, was divided by that pontiff into four districts; that of London, the west, the centre, and the north, which at first were governed by apostolic vicars furnished with proper faculties and powers. In the accomplishment of so grave a charge, they received rules and succour either by the decisions of Benoit XIV., in his constitution of May 30, 1753, which commences with the words, "Apostolicum ministerium," or by those of other pontiffs, our predecessors, and our congregation for the propagation of the faith. This division of all England into four apostolic vicarages lasted till the time of Gregory XVI., who in his apostolic letter, "Muneris apostolici," dated July 3, 1840, considering the increase of the catholic religion in England, and making a new ecclesiastical division of the country, doubled the number of vicarages, and confided the spiritual government of England to the vicars apostolic in London, of the west, the east, the centre, of Lancaster, York, and the north. The little we have just said proves clearly that our predecessors applied themselves strongly to use all the means their authority gave them to console the church of England for its immense disgraces, and to work for its resurrection. Having before our eyes, therefore, the good example of our predecessors, and desirous, by imitating them, of fulfilling the duties of the supreme apostolate; pressed, besides, to follow the movements of our heart for that portion of the Lord's vineyard, we proposed to our

selves, from the commencement of our pontificate, to pursue a work that was so well begun, and to apply ourselves in the most serious manner to favour every day the development of the church in the kingdom. For this reason, considering as a whole the state of Catholicism in England, reflecting on the considerable number of Catholics, which keeps still increasing, remarking that every day the obstacles are falling off which stood in the way of the extension of the Catholic religion, we have thought that the time was come when the form of ecclesiastical government should be resumed in England, such as it exists, freely exists, in other nations, where no particular cause necessitates the ministry of vicars apostolic. We have thought that by the progress of time and things, it was no longer necessary to have the English catholics governed by vicars apostolic, but on the contrary, that the changes which had already been made necessitated the ordinary episcopal form of government.

We have been confirmed in these thoughts by the desires expressed to us by the vicars apostolic in England, as well as by numbers of the clergy and laity distinguished by virtue and rank, and by the wishes of the great majority of English Catholics. In maturing this design, we have not failed to implore the aid of the almighty and most gracious God, and that he would grant us grace in this weighty affair, to resolve upon that which should be most suitable to augment the prosperity of the church. We have further besought the assistance of the blessed Virgin Mary, mother of God, and of the Saints, whose virtues have made England illustrious, that they would deign to obtain by their intercession with God, the happy success of this enterprise. We have since commended the whole business to the grave and serious consideration of our venerable brothers, the Cardinals of the holy Roman Church, forming our congregation for propagating the faith. Their sentiments having been found completely conformable to our own, we have resolved to sanction them, and carry them into execution. It is for this reason, after having weighed the whole matter most scrupulously, that of our own proper motion, in our certain knowledge, and in the plenitude of our apostolic power, we have resolved, and do hereby decree, the re-establishment in the kingdom of England, and according to the common laws of the church, of a hierarchy of bishops deriving their titles from their own sees, which we constitute by the present letter in the various apostolic districts. To commence with the district of London, it will form two sees—to wit, that of Westminster, which we hereby elevate to the metropolitan or archiepiscopal dignity, and that of Southwark, which we assign to it as suffragan, together with those which we proceed to indicate. The diocese of Westminster will include that portion of the aforesaid district which extends to the banks of the Thames, and comprehends the counties of Middlesex, Essex, and Hertfordshire; that of Southwark, on the south of the Thames, will

include the counties of Beds, Southampton, Surrey, Sussex, and Kent, with the isles of Wight, Jersey, Guernsey, and others adjacent. In the northern district, there will be but one episcopal see, which will take its name from the town of Hagglesdown, and have for its circumscription that of the existing diocet. The district of York will also form a diocese, whose capital will be the town of Beverly. In the district of Lancashire, there will be two bishops, of whom one, the bishop of Liverpool, will have for his diocese the isle of Mona, the districts of Lonsdale, Amounderness, and West Derby; and the other, the bishop of Salford, will extend his jurisdiction over Salford, Blackburn, and Leyland. The county of Chester, though belonging to this district, will be united to another diocese. In the district of Wales two episcopal sees will be established, that of Salop, and that of Merioneth and Newport united. The diocese of Salop will contain the counties of Anglesea, Carnarvon, Denbigh, Flint, Merioneth, and Montgomery, to which we join the county of Chester, detached from the district of Lancaster, and that of Salop from the centre. To the diocese of the bishop of Merioneth and Newport, are assigned the counties of Brecknock, Glamorgan, Carmarthen, Pembroke, and Radnor, also the English counties of Hereford and Monmouth. In the western district, we create two sees, Clifton and Plymouth: the first comprehending the counties of Gloucester, Somerset, and Wilts; the second, those of Devon, Dorset, and Cornwall. The central district, from which we have detached the county of Salop, will have two episcopal sees, Nottingham and Birmingham; to the first, we assign the counties of Notts, Derby, Leicester, Lincoln, and Rutland; to the second, the counties of Stafford, Bucks, Oxford, and Warwick. In the eastern district, there will be one see, which will take its name from the town of Northampton, and retain the present circumscription of the district, except the counties of Lincoln and Rutland, which we have assigned to the diocese of Nottingham.

Thus, in the very flourishing kingdom of England, there will be one single ecclesiastical province, with one archbishop and twelve suffragans, whose zeal and pastoral labours will, we hope, by the grace of God, bring new and daily increase to the power of Catholicism. For this reason, we reserve to ourselves and successors the right to divide this province into several, and to increase the number of its bishoprics, as new ones may be required, and in general to settle their boundaries as it may appear meet before the Lord.

Meanwhile, we enjoin the archbishop and bishops to furnish, at stated seasons, reports of the state of their churches to our congregation of the propaganda, and not to omit informing us on all points concerning the spiritual good of their flocks. We shall continue to avail ourselves of the aid of the congregation of the propaganda, in all that concerns the affairs of the church of England. But in the sacred government of the clergy and people, and all which concerns the

pastoral office, the archbishop and bishops of England will enjoy all the rights and faculties which bishops and archbishops can use, according to the disposition of the sacred canons and the apostolic constitutions, and they will likewise be equally bound by all the obligations to which other bishops and archbishops are held by the common discipline of the catholic church.

Their rights and duties will not be in any case impaired by anything that is at present in vigour, whether originating in the former form of the English church, or in the subsequent missions instituted in virtue of special constitutions, privileges, or customs, now that the same state of things no longer exists. And in order that no doubt may remain, we suppress, in the plenitude of our apostolic power, and entirely abrogate, all the obligatory and juridical force of the said special constitutions, privileges, and customs, however ancient their date. The archbishops and bishops of England will thus have the integral power to regulate all that belongs to the execution of the common law, or which are left to the authority of bishops by the general discipline of the church. As for us, most assuredly they shall never have to complain that we do not sustain them by our apostolical authority, and we shall always be happy to second their demands in all which appears calculated to promote the glory of God and the good of souls. In decreeing this restoration of the ordinary hierarchy of bishops in England, and the enjoyment of the common law of the church, we have had principally in view the prosperity and increase of the catholic religion in the kingdom of England; but we have also desired to gratify the desires of so many of our reverend brethren governing in England, under the style of vicars apostolic, and also of a great number of our dear children of the catholic clergy and people. Many of their ancestors presented the same prayer to our predecessors, who had begun to send vicars apostolic to England, where no catholic bishop could exercise the common ecclesiastical law in his own church, and who afterwards multiplied the number of vicars apostolic, and of districts, not because religion was submitted in this country to one exceptional rule, but rather because they would prepare the foundation for the future rebuilding of the ordinary hierarchy.

This is why we, to whom it has been given, by the grace of God, to accomplish this great work, declare here that it is not in any manner in our thoughts or intentions that the bishops of England, provided with the name and rights of ordinary bishops, should be destitute of any advantages, of whatever nature they may be, which they formerly enjoyed under the title of vicars apostolic. It would be contrary to reason, to allow any act of ours, performed at the earnest prayer of the English catholics, and for the benefit of religion, to turn to their damage. Rather we cherish the firm hope, that our dear children in Christ, whose alms and largesses have never been

wanting to sustain in England religion and the prelates who govern there as vicars, will exercise a still larger liberality to the bishops, who are now attached by permanent bonds to the English church, in order that they may not be deprived of temporal aid, which they will require, to ornament their temples, and adorn the divine service, to support the clergy and the poor, and for other ecclesiastical services. Finally, lifting the eyes to the almighty and gracious God, from whom comes our help, we supplicate him with all instance, obsecration, and action of grace, to confirm, by divine grace, all that we have decreed for the good of the church, and to give of his grace to those whose it is to execute these decrees, that they may feed the flock of God committed to their care, and that their zeal may be applied to spread the glory of his name. And in order to obtain the most abundant succour of celestial grace, we finally invoke, as intercessors with God, the holy mother of God, the blessed apostles, St. Peter and St. Paul, with the blessed patrons of England, and especially St. Gregory the Great, in order that the solicitude we have displayed, notwithstanding the insufficiency of our merit, to restore the episcopal sees of England, which he founded in his days with so much advantage to the church, may likewise redound to the good of the catholic church. We decree that this apostolic letter shall never be taxed with subreptice or obreptice, nor be protested for default either of intention or any defect whatever, but always be valid and firm, and hold good to all intents and purposes, notwithstanding the general apostolic edicts which have emanated from synodal, provincial, or universal councils, the special sanctions, as well as the rights of former sees in England. missions apostolic, vicarages constituted in the progress of time, notwithstanding in one word, all things contrary whatsoever. We likewise decree, that all which may be done to the contrary by any one, whoever he may be, knowing or ignorant, in the name of any authority whatever, shall be without force. We decree that copies of this letter, signed by a notary public, and sealed with the seal of an ecclesiastic, shall be everywhere received as the expression of our will.

Given at St. Peter's, at Rome, under the seal of the fisherman, the 24th of September, 1850, and in the fifth year of our pontificate.

A. CARDINAL LAMBEUSCHINI.

IV.

DR. WISEMAN'S ADDRESS.

PASTORAL.

Nicholas, by the Divine Mercy, of the Holy Roman Church by the Title of St. Prudentiana, Cardinal Priest, Archbishop of Westminster, and Administrator Apostolic of the Diocese of Southwark.

To our dearly beloved in Christ, the Clergy Secular and Regular, and the Faithful of the said Archdiocese and Diocese.

Health and Benediction in the Lord :

IF this day we greet you under a new title, it is not, dearly beloved, with an altered affection. If in words we seem to divide those who till now have formed, under our rule, a single flock, our heart is as undivided as ever in your regard. For now truly do we feel closely bound to you by new and stronger ties of charity ; now do we embrace you, in our Lord Christ Jesus, with more tender emotions of paternal love ; now doth our soul yearn, and our mouth is open to you ; * though words must fail to express what we feel on being once again permitted to address you. For if our parting was in sorrow, and we durst not hope that we should again face to face behold you, our beloved flock ; so much the greater is now our consolation and our joy, when we find ourselves, not so much permitted, as commissioned, to return to you, by the Supreme Ruler of the Church of Christ.

But how can we for one moment indulge in selfish feelings when, through that loving Father's generous and wise counsels, the greatest of blessings has just been bestowed upon our country, by the restoration of its true Catholic hierarchical government, in communion with the See of Peter.

For on the twenty-ninth day of last month, on the Feast of the Archangel St. Michael, Prince of the heavenly host, his Holiness Pope Pius IX. was graciously pleased to issue his Letters Apostolic, under the Fisherman's Ring, conceived in terms of great weight and dignity, wherein he substituted, for the eight Apostolic Vicariates heretofore existing, one Archiepiscopal or Metropolitan and twelve Episcopal Sees : repealing at the same time, and annulling, all dispositions and enactments made for England by the Holy See with reference to its late form of ecclesiastical government.

* 1 Cor. vi. 2.

And by a Brief dated the same day, his Holiness was further pleased to appoint us, though most unworthy, to the Archiepiscopal See of Westminster, established by the above-mentioned Letters Apostolic, giving us at the same time the administration of the Episcopal See of Southwark. So that at present, and till such time as the Holy See shall think fit otherwise to provide, we govern and shall continue to govern, the counties of Middlesex, Hertford, and Essex, as Ordinary thereof, and those of Surrey, Sussex, Kent, Berkshire, and Hampshire, with the islands annexed, as Administrator with Ordinary jurisdiction.

Further we have to announce to you, dearly beloved in Christ, that, as if still further to add solemnity and honour before the Church to this noble act of Apostolic authority, and to give an additional mark of paternal benevolence towards the Catholics of England, his Holiness was pleased to raise us, in the private Consistory of Monday, the 30th of September, to the rank of Cardinal Priest of the Holy Roman Church. And on the Thursday next ensuing, being the third day of this month of October, in public Consistory, he delivered to us the insignia of this dignity, the Cardinalitial Hat; assigning us afterwards for our title in the private Consistory which we attended, the Church of St. Pudenciana, in which St. Peter is groundedly believed to have enjoyed the hospitality of the noble and partly British family of the Senator Pudens.

In that same Consistory we were enabled ourselves to ask for the Archiepiscopal Pallium, for our new See of Westminster; and this day we have been invested, by the hands of the Supreme Pastor and Pontiff himself, with this badge of Metropolitan jurisdiction.

The great work, then, is complete; what you have long desired and prayed for is granted. Your beloved country has received a place among the fair Churches which, normally constituted, form the splendid aggregate of Catholic Communion; Catholic England has been restored to its orbit in the ecclesiastical firmament, from which its light had long vanished, and begins now anew its course of regularly adjusted action round the centre of unity, the source of jurisdiction, of light and of vigour. How wonderfully all this has been brought about, how clearly the hand of God has been shown in every step, we have not now leisure to relate; but we may hope soon to recount to you by word of mouth. In the meantime we will content ourselves with assuring you, that, if the concordant voice of those venerable and most eminent Counsellors to whom the Holy See commits the regulation of ecclesiastical affairs in missionary countries, of the overruling of every variety of interests and designs, to the rendering of this measure almost necessary, if the earnest prayers of our holy Pontiff and his most sacred oblation of the Divine Sacrifice, added to his own deep and earnest reflection, can form to the Catholic heart an earnest of heavenly direction, an assurance that the Spirit of truth,

who guides the Church, has here inspired its Supreme Head, we, cannot desire stronger or more consoling evidence that this most important measure is from God, has His sanction and blessing, and will consequently prosper.

Then truly is this day to us a day of joy and exaltation of spirit the crowning day of long hopes, and the opening day of bright prospects. How must the saints of our country, whether Roman or British, Saxon or Norman, look down from their seats of bliss with beaming glance upon this new evidence of the Faith and Church which led them to glory, sympathising with those who have faithfully adhered to them through centuries of ill repute, for the truth's sake, and now reap the fruit of their patience and long-suffering. And all those blessed martyrs of these later ages, who have fought the battles of the Faith under such discouragement, who mourned, more than over their own fetters or their own pain, over the desolate ways of their own Sion and the departure of England's religious glory; oh! how must they bless God, who hath again visited His people, how take part in our joy, as they see the lamp of the temple again enkindled and re-brightening, as they behold the silver links of that chain which has connected their country with the See of Peter in its Vicarial Government changed into burnished gold; not stronger nor more closely knit, but more beautifully wrought and more brightly arrayed.

And in nothing will it be fairer or brighter than in this, that the glow of more fervent love will be upon it. Whatever our sincere attachment and unflinching devotion to the Holy See till now, there is a new ingredient cast into these feelings; a warmer gratitude, a tenderer affection, a profounder admiration, a boundless and endless sense of obligation, for so new, so great, so sublime a gift, will be added to past sentiments of loyalty and fidelity to the supreme See of Peter. Our venerable Pontiff has shown himself a true Shepherd, a true Father; and we cannot but express our gratitude to him in our most fervent language, in the language of prayer. For when we raise our voices, as is meet, in loud and fervent thanksgiving to the Almighty for the precious gifts bestowed upon our portion of Christ's vineyard, we will also implore every choice blessing on him who has been so signally the Divine instrument in procuring it. We will pray that his rule over the Church may be prolonged to many years, for its welfare; that health and strength may be preserved to him for the discharge of his arduous duties; that light and grace may be granted to him proportioned to the sublimity of his office; and that consolations, temporal and spiritual, may be poured out upon him abundantly, in compensation for past sorrows and past ingratitude. And of these consolations may one of the most sweet to his paternal heart be the propagation of holy religion in our country, the advancement of his spiritual children there in true

piety and devotion, and our ever increasing affection and attachment to the See of St. Peter.

In order, therefore, that our thanksgiving may be made with all becoming solemnity, we hereby enjoin as follows:—

1. This our Pastoral Letter shall be publicly read in all the churches and chapels of the Archdiocese of Westminster and the Diocese of Southwark, on the Sunday after its being received.

2. On the following Sunday there shall be in every such church or chapel a solemn benediction of the blessed Sacrament, at which shall be sung the *Te Deum*, with the usual versicles and prayers, with the prayer also *Fidelium Deus Pastor et Rector*, for the Pope.

3. The Collect *Pro Gratiarum Actione*, or Thanksgiving, and that for the Pope, shall be recited in the Mass of that day and for two days following.

4. Where Benediction is never given, the *Te Deum*, with its prayers, shall be recited or sung after Mass, and the Collects above named shall be added as enjoined.

And at the same time earnestly entreating for ourselves also a place in your fervent prayers, we lovingly implore for you and bestow on you the blessing of Almighty God, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. Amen.

Given out of the Flaminian Gate of Rome, this seventh day of October, in the year of our Lord MDCCL.

(Signed) NICHOLAS,

Cardinal Archbishop of Westminster.

By command of his Eminence, FRANCIS SEARLE, *Secretary.*

LONDON :

PRINTED BY G. J. PALMER, SAVOY, STRAND.

TWO SERMONS,

PREACHED ON THE

TWENTY-THIRD AND TWENTY-FIFTH SUNDAYS
AFTER TRINITY, 1850.

WITH NOTES,
REFERRING TO THE PRESENT CRISIS.

BY THE

REV. OSMOND FISHER, M. A.,

(FELLOW OF JESUS COLLEGE, CAMBRIDGE),

CURATE OF ALL SAINTS, DORCHESTER.



LONDON:

FRANCIS AND JOHN RIVINGTON,
St. PAUL'S CHURCHYARD AND WATERLOO PLACE.

DORCHESTER:

W. BARCLAY, CORNHILL.

1850.

TO THE
PARISHIONERS OF ALL SAINTS, DORCHESTER,—
THESE PAGES ARE INSCRIBED
WITH SENTIMENTS OF WARM ATTACHMENT,
AND A
GRATEFUL SENSE OF THE CONFIDENCE
WITH WHICH THEY HAVE EVER BEEN READY TO RECEIVE
THE WRITER'S PLANS
FOR THEIR MUTUAL BENEFIT.

S E R M O N I.

MATT. xxii. 21.

“Render unto Cæsar the things which are Cæsar’s, and unto God the things that are God’s.”

THE gospel of this morning’s service* gives us one among many instances of the wisdom with which our blessed Lord spake; so turning the wiles of his enemies against themselves, that what was intended by them for his confusion, resulted in their own rebuke. The condition of a conquered people, under which the Israelites were at that time subservient to the Roman empire, was a source of continual humiliation to that proud spirited nation. Whether it was lawful, therefore, to acknowledge their bondage by paying tribute to the Emperor of Rome, was a question to which most of the Jews might be expected to return a negative answer. They might be compelled by force to do it, but they would not acknowledge any moral obligation. The Pharisees therefore, wishing to betray our Saviour into some admission for which they might deliver him up to the Romans as a rebel to the civil power, (the charge on which they procured him to be crucified at last) supposed that they could not fail to obtain from him the expression of a treasonable view upon this question—‘whether it was lawful in the sight of God to give tribute to Cæsar or no.’ They pretended to suppose that Jesus’ virtuous and truthful disposi-

* Twenty-third Sunday after Trinity.

tion would prevent his concealing his real opinion, and that from him at least they should obtain a bold and unbiassed judgment upon this much vexed question. “ But Jesus perceived their wickedness, and said, why tempt ye me ye hypocrites? show me the tribute-money. And they brought unto him a penny. And he saith unto them, whose is this image and superscription? they say unto him Cæsar’s. Then saith he unto them, Render therefore unto Cæsar the things which are Cæsar’s, and unto God the things that are God’s.”

No words which fell from his lips are devoid of instruction to us. In these, which the malice of the Pharisees drew forth, we find the grand and fundamental principles by which the obedience that we owe to the State and to the Christian Church must be ever regulated. “ Render unto Cæsar the things which are Cæsar’s, and unto God the things that are God’s.” There are rights and privileges which are due to Cæsar—to the temporal power of the state; there are others which are due to God, with which Cæsar must intermeddle not. His words distinctly assume that there is this division in the duties of men. That we owe allegiance to Cæsar as the power ordained by God to be over us in the things of Cæsar, but that he has reserved to himself some things, which he has not committed to Cæsar. In these we must render obedience to God himself; either directly, or to such power distinct from the temporal power, as he has seen fit in his abundant wisdom to commit them to.

In order to enter upon the subject which my text brings before us in such a manner as shall be most plain and applicable to our own case, I will at once refer you to the doctrine of our Church, as expressed in the Thirty-seventh Article of religion.

“The Queen’s Majesty hath the chief power in this realm
 “of England and other her dominions; unto whom the chief
 “government of all estates of this realm, whether they be
 “ecclesiastical or civil, in all causes doth appertain: and is
 “not nor ought to be subject to any foreign jurisdiction.
 “Where we attribute to the Queen’s majesty the chief govern-
 “ment, by which titles we understand the minds of some slan-
 “derous folks to be offended, we give not to our princes the
 “ministering either of God’s word or of the Sacraments,
 “the which thing the injunctions also lately set forth by Eli-
 “zabeth our Queen do most plainly testify; but that only pre-
 “rogative which we see to have been given always to all
 “godly princes in holy Scriptures by God himself; that is,
 “that they should rule all states and degrees committed to
 “their charge by God, whether they be ecclesiastical or
 “temporal, and restrain with the civil sword the stubborn
 “and evil doers.”

There appear to be three principal heads in this article. First—that the Queen has the chief power in these realms to the exclusion of every foreign power. Secondly—that the Queen is supreme over all estates of men and over all causes, whether ecclesiastical or civil. Yet thirdly, there are certain functions, here expressed by the ministering of God’s word and sacraments, which are beyond her power and authority. We will speak of the two last of these divisions first.

The Queen is supreme over all estates of men and in all causes ecclesiastical as well as civil, within these her dominions.

To submit to this authority, is to render unto Cæsar the things that are Cæsar’s.

We must necessarily understand the Royal authority in

this land, as the same is defined and limited by the laws and constitutions of the realm. It is not in this country a sole and arbitrary power, lodged entirely in one hand, but a power guarded and hedged about by many limitations. This is the Cæsar to which *we* are to render the things of Cæsar. —(Note A).

It would be wholly unnecessary, I should conceive, for me to make any remarks upon the obedience due to the supreme authority of the State in matters of a temporal kind. We know that the supreme authority of which our blessed Lord spake, when he bid his disciples render obedience to Cæsar, was an alien and even a heathen power. And it was of the same heathen power that St. Paul spake when he said “the powers that be are ordained of God;” and when he bid the Christians to “render tribute to whom tribute was due, and custom to whom custom;” and when he said “that rulers were ordained of God,” and therefore, “bore not the sword in vain,” but were, by God’s ordinance, the ministers unto them for good. How much more then is it our religious duty to render a cheerful obedience to our rulers, who are equally ordained of God for that end, and, knowing whose ministers they are, cannot but be expected to have nothing so much at heart as to preserve those whom God has given them in charge, in wealth, (that is, well being, not riches) peace, and godliness. “Submit yourselves,” saith the apostle Peter, “to every ordinance of man for the Lord’s sake, whether it be to the King as supreme, or unto governors as unto them that are sent by him for the punishment of evil doers, and for the praise of them that do well, for so is the will of God.” There can be no difficulty

then about understanding and obeying the supreme power of the Queen in all matters and over all persons in temporal causes.

But when we come to speak of the supreme authority of the Crown in causes spiritual in this realm, we enter upon a more difficult part of our subject. For here certain functions are disclaimed as not being included in this supremacy; and the difficulty is in fixing the true boundary between those powers, which of right belong to the Queen's majesty, and those which are disclaimed by her. In other words, the difficulty lies in deciding *what are the things of God in such sense that they are not the things of Cæsar.*

The Article says: "We give not to our princes the ministering either of God's word or of the sacraments; but that only prerogative which we see to have been given always to all godly princes in holy Scriptures by God himself; that is, that they should rule all estates and degrees committed to their charge by God, whether they be ecclesiastical or temporal." The ministering of God's word and sacraments is thus expressly excepted from the power of the state. These functions belong to the ministry of the Church, and cannot be usurped without sin by *any* power. But the supreme temporal head—the Queen—*has* authority over these ministers; and it belongs to her prerogative to be careful that they perform their duties faithfully and diligently for the well-being of her people;—for although they have functions and enjoy powers which no authority of the state can either give or take away, they are the while a part of those estates and degrees committed to her charge by God for her to rule.

The ministering of God's word and sacraments was given by Jesus Christ, who is the head over all things, to his

Church: and in it he gave it to his twelve apostles. "Go ye into all the world," he said, "and preach the Gospel to every creature:"—here he gave to them the authority to minister the word. "Baptizing them:"—here he gave them authority to administer one of the sacraments. And when he said to the twelve at the last supper, "this do;" that is, bless and break the bread, "in remembrance of me," he gave them authority to administer the other. When after his ascension he breathed on them and said, "Receive ye the Holy Ghost: whosoever sins ye remit they are remitted unto them; and whosoever sins ye retain they are retained," he gave them the power of the keys. These are the powers of "ministering God's word and sacraments," which Jesus Christ committed to his Church, and not to any royal power: and which we therefore cannot, even if we would, give to our princes. These powers are the spiritual sword, which belongs to the Church, not the civil sword, which is the state's. God having "given some apostles, some pastors and teachers, for the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ." These powers are the "weapons of our warfare," which are "not carnal," but yet "mighty through God to the pulling down of strongholds;" and are given for the salvation of souls. May God give us, who are ministers, grace to use them diligently and faithfully! Yet there is a certain supreme authority in matters relating to the Church which we do give to our princes. These are such as we see to have been given always to all godly princes in holy Scriptures by God himself. Thus they may make laws touching morals and religion. As we find David did when he made regulations respecting the temple services and the orders of the priests. And as we

read that Josiah commanded Hilkiah the high priest to cleanse the temple of the Lord of the vessels which were made for Baal. And according to this right, our Queen in Council orders public fasts and thanksgivings on the occasion of national events, (as we have lately had several examples), or directs the use of prayers in the public service on occasional emergencies. But she doth not in these matters take upon her the ministering of God's word : for the chief of the apostolic order among us, that is the Archbishop of Canterbury, is always directed to prepare these Offices. Again, it is the prerogative of princes to summon councils of the Church, (Note B), which, as our article says, " may not be gathered together without the commandment of princes : " and what these councils, thus gathered together, decide, it belongs to our princes to ratify and confirm, that their conclusions may receive the force of law or not, according to the Sovereign's will. But that will cannot coerce the deliberations of such councils, to compel them to decide this way or that, as to what is the doctrine of Christ ; or on any matter of a purely spiritual kind only, relating to the doctrine of Christ and the salvation of souls.

I have thought it good, my brethren, to take the opportunity of the occurrence of my text in the gospel of to-day, to set before you the principles of the relations of the supreme temporal power to the spiritual, because these are times when it is absolutely necessary that every intelligent Churchman should have some fixed and just ideas upon the subject. It is with reluctance that we devote the half-hour's address from the pulpit—an opportunity always precious both to pastor and flock—to any subject not distinctly and immediately concerning God's scheme of salvation, or the sanctification

of our daily life, that we may learn to walk holily and without blame in his sight. But just at present it is of great importance that you should direct some part of your attention to these subjects ; because questions of the gravest kind, relating to the position and faith of the Church in this land, are now under agitation. Her foundations are discovered and examined on every side ; and it will need the steady devotion of her sons, staying upon the support of the Everlasting arm, to carry her safely through the conflict that is even now begun. That the gates of hell shall never finally prevail against her, we are assured by the voice of prophecy ; but whether she shall continue to be to your children the same ready and certain guide that she has been to you —always at hand to direct them in the way of life ; whether her voice shall continue to be heard in every consecrated temple in the land, “ preaching the word of God with boldness,” “ teaching those things which concern the Lord Jesus Christ with all confidence, no man forbidding ;” or whether she shall sink to the condition of one among many sects, coming before the people with no outward authority, having nothing to recommend her to the unthinking multitude beyond such spiritual graces and beauties as carnal man is most blind to see :—which of these shall be the future condition of our beloved Church depends upon the course which you, yes, *you*, my brethren, take at this crisis. If God should please, for her divisions and her sins, to humble her from her present position, it will be well for *her*. Shorn of all outward place and dignity, she will become pure, spiritual, and unworldly. But woe to the English nation in that day ! woe to the English nation when her teachers shall be removed into a corner, and her eyes shall not see her

teachers; when the ears of her people shall hear no voice behind them, saying, this is the way—walk ye in it! May God avert so great a calamity!

But it rests, under God, with you, the Laity of the Church, to determine this question. There are enemies enough without, who will not fail to take our Zion; who are already encamped against it, and crying, “Down with it; down with it, even to the ground.” They will not fail to take our Zion, unless we, who are the inhabitants thereof, come manfully to the defence. Let us “seriously lay to heart the great dangers we are in by our unhappy divisions!” Let us pray for the peace of the Church, and when the opportunity offers, let us stand forth in her defence.—(Note C.)

You will remember that we made the Thirty-seventh Article our guide in discussing the subjects the text suggests. We divided the body of that article into three heads, the two last of which we have referred to first. It remains that we should, before concluding, say something on the first head. It is this: the Queen’s majesty hath the chief power in these realms, to the exclusion of every foreign power. There is no doubt that this is aimed against the Bishop of Rome, who further on is said to have “no jurisdiction in this realm of England.” At one time that prelate had so stretched his power beyond all bounds, that he was held in this country and throughout all the west, as the sole head of the Church on earth. Nay, he assumed powers even beyond the province of the Church, reaching to the exaltation and dethroning of kings. Without going into the motives of actions, for God knows how to bring good out of evil—without entering upon the unworthy and carnal motives which actuated the eighth Henry, at the reformation this happy result was

fully obtained—that the entire yoke of the Papal domination was shaken off. Such part of it as was of an ecclesiastical nature was reassumed by the National Church, and such part as belonged to the temporal power was taken by the reigning Sovereign. So the pope's power in this realm thenceforth legally ceased. Such adherents to the Roman faith and communion as have been found in this country since the reign of Elizabeth, have been governed, in spiritual matters, by missionary bishops, holding unreal and fictitious titles. The Pope has claimed no rights in England's soil. The last few days, however, have seen a monstrous re-assumption of his pretended supremacy. He has, by a papal bull, constituted England a Roman province. He has parcelled out this country into Dioceses, and sent bishops to preside over them; and we, in the county of Dorset, have been given by the Pope of Rome into the charge of his Bishop of Plymouth. It remains to see whether England will permit the assumption of these powers by a foreign, and we must add, *heretical* bishop. I believe an opportunity will not be long wanting to us, in this place, to enter our protest against them.*

In conclusion, we must always remember that our own personal holiness is the only true safety for our Church, as it is for ourselves. God will not accept our services on any other condition. He has revealed himself to us as a jealous God, "visiting the iniquities of the fathers upon the children." The rebukes which we suffer are a punishment permitted to overtake us because of our sins; and until we turn to him in true repentance and amendment of life, we have no right to expect him to heal the sores of our land. He saith to us as

* Steps were being taken to procure a County meeting to be held.

to the Church of Sardis of old—"Be watchful, and strengthen the things which remain that are ready to die, for I have not found thy works perfect before God. Remember, therefore, how thou hast seen and heard, and hold fast and repent. If, therefore, thou shalt not watch, I will come on thee as a thief, and thou shalt not know what hour I will come upon thee." "Oh pray for the peace of Jerusalem; they shall prosper that love thee!"

SERMON II.

MATT. xxiv. 23, 24.

“Then if any man shall say unto you, Lo, here is Christ, or there; believe it not. For there shall arise false Christs, and false prophets, and shall shew great signs and wonders; insomuch that, if it were possible, they shall deceive the very elect.”

THE prophecy, of which a part has been read in the gospel,* and which is, perhaps, the fullest and most striking prophecy which our blessed Lord delivered, undoubtedly refers to a double fulfilment. The first fulfilment took place at the destruction of the city of Jerusalem, when it was utterly destroyed by Vespasian's army, and the other is yet to be expected at the consummation of all things, when our Lord himself shall come in glory and majesty to judge the world in righteousness.

It was no wonder, when the Jews beheld their beloved city encompassed with armies, and were driven to the utmost verge of despair, that they should be on the look-out for the great deliverer, whom they expected to release them out of all their troubles, and to lead them forth victorious over their enemies. For they believed not that Christ was already come; and that he to whom they had done whatsoever they listed was he. And, as we generally find in the course of events, when any great deliverer is expected, that some one rises up pretending to that office; so at this time many false

* Gospel for the Sixth Sunday after Epiphany proper this year for the Twenty-fifth after Trinity.

Christs actually arose, and, by lying signs and wonders, deceived the people to their greater destruction. The dreadful event of the utter eradication of the place of the Jews from among nations, was accordingly ushered in by pretenders to deliverance, who thus took their minds off from the only true source of safety, namely, to investigate and embrace the Gospel of Jesus of Nazareth—the true and only Christ, who, though they had rejected him, yet in the event, fully demonstrate himself to be mighty to save, inasmuch as, among those who trusted in him, not even a hair of their heads perished.

It has been always understood in the Church that this prophecy relates also to the day of judgment. This is the reason why the scripture containing it has been read as the gospel for this day; for now we are drawing near once more to the season of Advent, when we turn our thoughts to that great subject. It is certain, therefore, that we shall find that events will occur, as that day draws on, answerable to these predictions of our Lord. Prophecy must not be always understood literally: for if it were so, it never could have the double fulfilment which so frequently belongs to it; consequently there is no necessity for our understanding the words of the text exactly as they sound; but we may take the predictions of the appearance of false Christs as applying to all forms of error which may arise in the last days. In the *first* fulfilment of these words, the expression was literally true; for many persons actually came, saying, —“I am Christ;” I am the Messiah predicted by the prophets. But in the last days, as the second fulfilment of the prophecy draws near, and Christ is expected to Judgment, we can hardly conceive that any impostor should be so bold as to pretend that he is himself the judge of the whole earth.

We may then, I think, understand our Lord by this mention of false Christs, to predict the prevalence of much error and falsehood before the final destruction of the present state of things, when he will "judge the quick and the dead." Of these errors and false doctrines he bids his disciples beware, and adds the solemn warning—"behold, I have told you before." It therefore behoves us to enquire whether the prophecy of the text concerns ourselves at all, or whether it refers only to times gone by, or to come hereafter, but not to the *present* time.

Now I think it may be fairly shown to concern *ourselves*, and to relate to the present time, for these reasons: this prophecy concurs, in its general aim as respects the prevalence of religious error at some future period, with many others which are to be found in the New Testament. For instance, St. Paul writes thus to the Thessolonians: "Let no man deceive you by any means: for that day shall not come, except there come a falling away first, and that man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition; who opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God, or that is worshipped; so that he as God sitteth in the temple of God, shewing himself that he is God." Here we have the testimony of St. Paul to the same point; and you will perceive that the time of the prevalence of the *great* error here foretold, is not limited to the times immediately preceding the judgment-day; for he goes on to say that, "the mystery of iniquity doth already work: only he who now letteth will let, until he be taken out of the way; and then shall that Wicked be *revealed*." As if he would say, this wicked principle is already working like evil leaven in the Church; only there is a counterbalancing power at present existing which

letteth, or hindereth, its full development. When this power is removed, then shall that evil principle be fully developed, until "the Lord consume it with the breath of his mouth, and destroy it with the brightness of his coming." This, then, points to a principle of error which was already existing in St. Paul's time, should greatly increase at some future period, (believed by the Fathers to be that of the destruction of the Roman Empire), and is not to pass entirely away until the Lord destroys it with the brightness of his coming at the last day. There can be no doubt, therefore, that that evil principle, be it what it may, is even now at work. And it behoves us to take heed that we be not entangled thereby. From this passage, therefore, we have abundant reason to be assured that Christ's warning, "that we be not deceived by false teachers," concerns us.

Next I would refer you to St. John, premising that the "last time" in Scripture language means the times of the gospel; that is, the interval between the first coming of Christ into the world, and the last day. St. John then says: "Little children, it is the last time; and as ye have heard that Antichrist should come, even now are there many Antichrists, whereby we know it is the last time." This apostle then characterises the last time, that is the Christian times in which we live, as a period in which the power of Antichrist should be constantly present; a still further reason for affirming that the warning of my text reaches to all times, from the completion of the redemption scheme to the consummation of all things, and therefore concerns ourselves.

Still further, even if we should consider that this prediction concerning the prevalence of forms of error and false doctrine in the world refers more especially to a period which

shall immediately precede the second coming of our Lord, (and there can be no doubt, I think, that a more *extensive* prevalence of error is to be expected as that day approaches), how know we that we may not be already living in those days? The signs of the coming of our Lord are not to be so plain that all men shall perceive them: on the other hand, it shall be in those days as it was in the days of Noe, and in the days of Lot. The more ripe the world is for judgment, the less it perceives its true condition, and the approach of its inevitable punishment;—so inevitable, that our Lord compares it in the Gospel to the collection of the eagles about the carcase. It is no sign that the day of the Lord is distant, because men eat and drink, and marry wives, and are given in marriage. Rather there do appear to be even now warnings, to those who look closely into such things, that the signs of Christ's second coming, foretold in prophecy, are beginning to develop themselves.

On all hands, therefore, there seems to be reason for us to take to ourselves the warnings of the Gospel: "If any man shall say unto you, Lo, here is Christ, or there; believe it not. For there shall arise false Christs, and false prophets, and shall shew great signs and wonders; insomuch that, if it were possible, they shall deceive the very elect."

We may remark by the way that there is in these words a very express affirmation of our being answerable for what we believe. It is sometimes speciously affirmed, that no one is answerable for his belief. If so, what does our Lord mean by saying, "take heed that no man deceive you?" This is a simple excuse made by some people, when they are found fault with for erroneous views, which they have probably adopted because they are conveniently suitable to

their tastes and wishes ; but it is wholly averse to the doctrines of Scripture, which represents us as being in the highest degree answerable for our belief. Let us, then, look well into our own belief, and search the Scriptures to see if these things be so ; and having satisfied ourselves that we are standing on safe ground, let us be very careful how we give heed to them who teach any other doctrine than what we have learned. Rather let us mark them which cause divisions and offences contrary to the doctrine which we have learned, and avoid them.

There are seasons in which these warnings are especially needful, and this appears to be one of them. Already are there many Antichrists ; by which I mean, there are many forms of religion, whose advocates are making attempts to seduce us and draw away disciples after them, and to destroy the purity of the faith as it is in Jesus. It is not my wish to specify these several forms of religion. But I would state, as a general principle, that mankind is prone to run into two extremes : the one of which lays the chief stress upon the feelings, and inner workings of the soul, with little regard to external ordinances and authority ; the other looks to external ordinances and authority as the most important parts of religion, and leans much for spiritual support upon ritual solemnities. Now the truth is not with either of these sections of mankind *exclusively* ; and we of the Church of England, as we believe, have retained all such decent forms and solemnities, and all such external ordinances as are needful [as the preface to the Prayer Book very well expresses it] “to stir up the dull mind of man to the remembrance of his duty to God ;” and to convey to the members of the Church the graces of the Sacraments, and the other

Spiritual privileges of Church membership, in integrity and fulness. While at the same time we teach every man that the salvation of his soul is a matter between himself and his God—that no man may make agreement to God for him ; and that the ordinances of the Church and the Sacraments are, indeed, channels of grace ; but not in themselves at all beneficial in their mere performance, except in so far as they affect his own proper inward soul and course of life.

When either of these extreme classes of opinion and temper of mind prevail, to the exclusion of the due influence of the other, then religious error is produced : in the first case tending towards dissent, and finally to what is termed rationalism ; in the second, to superstition and the condition of mind favourable to the reception of Roman views. Perhaps it may be safely asserted, that the first class of opinions, which lays the chief stress on the feelings and inner workings of the soul, with too little regard to the external ordinances of religion and submission to Church authority, prevailed very generally in this country about fifteen years ago, when a reaction took place in the opposite direction, the result of which has been to infuse generally a much fuller appreciation of the true system of the Church into the general mind of the country—a result, for which I think we have very much cause to be thankful. Nevertheless, some have been carried away by their admiration of outward observances, and by a yearning after that extreme development of the theory of submission to Church authority, which is to be found in the reception of the Roman doctrine of the Pope's infallibility, and which finds a morbid satisfaction in believing the traditional requirements of that Church, the greater the more they are opposed to reason and the plain words of scripture.

These men have been persons of blameless lives ; some of them of great acquirements, and of extremely devout and sensitive minds ; for it is among such that the character favourable to these views, is generally to be found. Among the worldly and thoughtless, it can scarcely exist. A few of them, (before they overstepped, in their own hearts, the boundary line which our Church has drawn between herself and Rome,) were burning and shining lights, cities set on a hill, which could not be hid ; and the result has been, that their desertion from the Church of their Fathers, has been known and resounded throughout the world. There is, I think, little reason to doubt that the Pope has concluded, from these much-to-be lamented secessions from our Church, (Note D), added to the partial success of the immense efforts at proselytism which his emissaries have been making, especially in the midland and manufacturing counties, that the present is a favourable opportunity for making a grand attempt, once more to bring us under his jurisdiction, and to foist upon us again those false and erroneous articles of belief which the Church of England cast off, (let us hope, for ever) at the Reformation of religion. Accordingly he speaks, in his late Bull, of reflecting “ on the considerable number of Catholics in England, which keeps still increasing.” You are all aware of the steps he has taken : you have read of them with sorrow and indignation ; and you have once before heard me speak of them from this place. He has made England, for all ecclesiastical purposes, a Roman province, with an Archbishop, whose seat is at Westminster, and twelve other Bishops, deriving their titles from towns and cities of this country. This he has done, as he says, “ of his own mere motion, and in the plenitude of his apostolic power.”

I said a fortnight ago, that we should probably have an opportunity of entering our protest against this assumption of power in this country by a foreign and heretical Bishop. But I have little doubt in my own mind, that that protest will take the form of a petition or address to the legislature of the country ;*—*a most proper form*—for it is a plain and undoubted invasion of the rights of the Crown, that any foreign prelate, prince, or potentate, should assume jurisdiction in this realm of England.

There is, however, another point of view in which we ought to look at this matter, and that one which I, as the minister of this parish, feel it my especial duty to set before you. I mean the invasion of the rights and liberties of the *Church of England* by this act of the Bishop of a foreign city. Hereby he utterly ignores the existence of a Church in this country at all: he intrudes a schismatical Bishop of his own into the diocese of every English Bishop, and places every baptized Christian under the Spiritual government of one of his new Bishops. I propose, therefore, to address a protest to the true Bishop of this diocese—him whom we have so lately had among us,† and to whom we of this parish owe many a debt of kindness. I propose to address to him the following protest :—

To the Right Reverend Father in God, Edward, by divine permission, Bishop of Salisbury.

We, the undersigned, the minister, churchwardens, and parishioners of the All Saints, Dorchester, in your Diocese, desire to approach your Lordship with assurances of firm attachment to your Lordship's person and office.

* The form adopted was an address to the Crown.

† The Bishop of the diocese had lately preached in the parish Church.

We believe that that branch of Christ's holy Catholic Church in which your Lordship bears spiritual rule; and into which we have been by God's providence baptized, is the true branch of the Church in this Land, in which we doubt not the pure Word of God to be preached, and the Sacraments to be administered according to Christ's ordinance in all those things that of necessity are requisite to the same.

We, therefore, beg to assure your Lordship that we regard with indignation the recent act of the Bishop of Rome, by which he has presumed to intrude a schismatical Bishop into your Lordship's Diocese, as well as into those of the other Bishops of this Land, your Lordship's right reverend Brethren: the more so, because we are assured that this has been done for the purpose of more widely disseminating among the people of England the doctrines of a Church, which we believe to have erred, not only in living and manner of ceremonies, but also in matters of faith.

This address will lie in the vestry for signature after the service, both now and in the afternoon; and it is my earnest request to every true hearted member of the Church of England, (for it concerns no other,) to affix his signature to it. Let every Churchman who can write, come forward and protest against this invasion of the rights and liberties of the Church of England.—(Note E.)

In conclusion, I would say to you, "be not high-minded, but fear." I cannot help thinking that out of all the feeling and opposition which has been shewn in this country on the present occasion, much of it has been far from satisfactory

in its character. In a religious point of view, the question is a very serious and solemn one, and, unless God interpose, fraught with very much danger to our faith. A scoffing and mocking spirit is not the one which the Roman Church has to fear, for it is not one which God will bless, but on the other hand, is calculated to cause him rather to "send us strong delusion that we should believe a lie." What we ought to do is, to bless God that our lot is fallen in a fair land, where we have a goodly heritage, even the pure word of God, taught in a Church founded on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ being the head corner-stone: and to pray God that he will forgive us our thanklessness for so great benefits, and cause us to repent of the bitterness and divisions which have marred the working of that Church, lest he cast us off in his displeasure, and remove our candlestick from its place.

[NOTE A.]

WE are now in a somewhat different position as regards the supreme temporal power from that in which the Church stood, both in the early days of Christendom, and also when those acts of convocation were passed and statutes made subsequently to the reformation, which recognised the Sovereign of these realms as the supreme Governor of the Church. For then the Sovereign exercised those functions, which so solemn a station conferred upon him, both as an individual responsible to God for the manner of his performance of them, as well as a member of the Church itself, having an *undivided* interest in its welfare. I say undivided interest, because then there was not any man a member of the commonwealth who was not also of the Church of England. (Hooker viii. 1. s. 2.) At the present day the case is materially altered. For this great prerogative of the Crown, though nominally retained by the Sovereign, is virtually and to all intents and purposes, exercised by the Prime Minister, which removes from the Sovereign that personal responsibility to the Divine head, under which the royal supremacy was wont to be exercised. Nor has the Church that safeguard which might be supposed to arise from a similar responsibility in the Premier: for having received his office as the exponent of some particular school of State policy, he accepts it simply as such, and is contented to exercise it accordingly.

The Church has also practically lost the safeguard which she formerly enjoyed, from the Sovereign being necessarily a member of her own Communion; for although the Crown

must still be so, yet the Minister need not: and is but the chosen leader of a majority of the House of Commons—an assembly composed of all sects and all parties. Bound therefore as we are, both by the laws of God and man, to pay all due obedience to the supreme temporal power, and thus to “render unto Cæsar the things that are Cæsar’s,” we shall not be serving the cause of Religion, Truth, and the interests of our Church, by esteeming of the Cæsar, that is, the supreme power of the State, under which we live as being different from what in fact it is.

[NOTE B.]

THIS is the statement of the Twenty-first Article of the Church of England.

The early Councils of the Church were gathered together by the Roman Emperors, after they had embraced the Christian faith. The four first great General Councils, by the acts of which we profess ourselves bound, were gathered; the first at Nice, in Bithynia, by the Emperor Constantine, A. D. 325; the second at Constantinople, by the Emperor Theodosius, A. D. 381; the third at Ephesus, by Theodosius the Younger, A. D. 431; the fourth at Chalcedon, by the Emperors Valentinianus and Marcianus, A. D. 451.

The reformation of Religion in England being a return to the doctrine and discipline of the primitive times, the Clergy assembled in Convocation in their act of submission, A. D.

1530, made use of the following terms, "The King's humble and obedient subjects, the clergy of this realm of England, have not only acknowledged according to the truth, that the convocation of the same clergy is, always hath been, and ought to be assembled by the king's writ, &c." The reigning monarch also obtained from them the further submission, that after they are assembled they cannot frame any Canons without license from the Sovereign, nor execute them without the royal assent.

"Convocation however, notwithstanding these restrictions, did good service to the Church, by promoting to the utmost of its powers the great work of ecclesiastical reformation, commenced at that period; but which would probably have been put on a better basis as to discipline," (Vide Service for Ash-Wednesday,) "had its Synodal functions been less fettered in their action.

In the reigns of Edward the sixth and Queen Elizabeth, Convocation was in active operation. The services of our Church were then *purified from Romish corruption*. The *Articles* were framed and sanctioned, and the first part of the *Catechism* was put forth for the instruction of youth in the elementary doctrines of our holy faith. Indeed, the reformed Book of Common Prayer, is a monument of the wisdom and piety of the Ecclesiastical Synod of that day, for which we have abundant reason to thank God.

From the reign of James the First to the Restoration, no business of much consequence appears to have been transacted in Convocation, with the exception of the promulgation of the Canons, and the addition of the concluding part of the *Catechism*. When the Church had to re-adjust herself after the confusion and troubles of the Commonwealth,

Convocation again rose to importance. A careful revision of the book of Common-Prayer was undertaken, to remove the scruples of the Puritans, and to supply what was defective in it. And after much discussion in Parliament on the subject, in which some amendments were proposed by the Commons, the Lords very properly resolved to adopt the Book as revised by Convocation. This was ultimately agreed to by both Houses; and the Common Prayer-Book, having the sanction of Church and State, was strictly enjoined to be used in Public worship by the Act of Uniformity, A. D. 1662.”

* * * * * *

“It was in the reign of Charles the second that Archbishop Sheldon managed to induce Convocation to surrender the privilege which, undesirable as it was in itself, subsequently proved to have been Convocation’s most effectual claim to the regard of Government; viz., the privilege of taxing the clergy: for after this surrender, Convocation discharged its duties, jealously watched by the State, till its synodal functions were wholly suppressed, A.D., 1717, as much for political reasons as on account of theological differences. In fact, an *Ecclesiastical synod* was troublesome to the thorough-going supporters of Erastianism.”*

The immediate cause of its suppression was as follows: Hoadly, Bishop of Bangor, was in great favour at the court of George the First—one of the most licentious courts that this country has seen. This prelate was a notorious latitudinarian, and something more. He maintained that it was needless to believe any particular creed, or to be united to any particular Church; but that sincerity of belief was

* WRIGHT on the Synodal functions of the Church, p. 12. Rivingtons', 1849.

sufficient for salvation, though it were in an-erroneous creed. The Lower house of Convocation prepared a representation against him, to be presented to the Upper house, stating, "that with much grief of heart they had observed, that the Right Reverend the Lord Bishop of Bangor hath given great and grievous offence by certain doctrines and positions by him lately published." And they proceeded to set forth the tendency of these opinions in the form of Articles. Before, however, this matter could be brought before the Upper house, to prevent his trial taking place, the Convocation was prorogued by a special order from the king, and *has never been allowed to transact business since*. Hoadly was afterwards promoted by the Government to the sees of *Hereford*, *Salisbury*, and *Winchester*.

There can be no doubt but that a religious society of any kind, much more a national Church, without any regular and lawful mode of deciding such questions as in the course of time are sure to arise, is a great anomaly. Perhaps the Church of England is the only one which labours under this grievous disability; and it is the firm conviction of many of her most earnest members, both Clergy and Laity, that this disability ought in all justice to be removed. It does not necessarily follow that Convocation, *as at present constituted*, would be the best form of a synod for our Church; but there are many reasons for thinking that it would be most feasible to permit it to meet for deliberation, and to concert measures for its own reform.

On this subject the Bishop of London, in his late charge, speaks as follows: "In stating my apprehensions of the consequences which might be expected to follow from any attempt to obtain a synodical revision of the Book of Com-

mon Prayer,* or an explanation of any of the Articles, I would not be understood to express an opinion unfavourable to the removal of those restrictions, which hinder the Church from deliberating, in her collective capacity, upon questions of doctrine or discipline. In theory, and by her legal constitution, she possesses that right; but she is restrained from exercising it. That restraint is no sufficient ground for renouncing her communion;† but it may well be thought a fit subject of complaint, and its removal may be sought by all legitimate methods. It may be doubted whether the actual constitution of Convocation is the best that could be devised; it may be questioned whether the Church should not be represented by a body, consisting of lay † as well as clerical members; but even as Convocation at present exists, some questions might safely be entrusted to its consideration, nor should it be forgotten that the Crown can at any moment interfere to stop its proceedings, if they should transgress the rules of equity or of charity.”

* “The act of uniformity is quite stringent enough to quiet the nervous apprehensions of some persons, who think that the meeting of Convocation would lead to endless alterations in the Prayer book.” Wright, note at p. 54.

† It has undoubtedly had much to do with some of the late most melancholy desertions from our ranks. The horror of an Act-of-Parliament Church is not confined to non-conformists; and some over-sensitive minds cannot distinguish between a Church being silenced by the State, and a Church having its faith dictated to it by that power.

‡ At his last visitation, the Bishop of Chichester said—(not in his charge, but still publicly)—that it was the opinion of the whole bench of Bishops that if a synod of the Church, assembled in Convocation or otherwise, there should be a considerable infusion of the lay element in its constitution.—(See a letter in the *Guardian* of Oct. 2, 1850.)

It has occurred to the writer that perhaps those in each parish who have passed the office of Churchwarden, might be the best electors of Diocesan representatives. This would give more electors to large parishes than to small ones: indeed, except where the parishes are very large, very nearly in proportion to the size of the parish. The Communicant test, though in itself most desirable, appears to have many objections: we ought to avoid, with dread, every unspiritual inducement to approach that holy Sacrament.

Our own Bishop (of Salisbury) in his charge, delivered in 1842, expressed himself strongly on this point. "It is impossible not to feel that it is unsatisfactory that the Church should not have any recognized mode of deliberating on subjects of whatever interest, of adapting her system to new exigencies, or of recording her decisions on the most important matters. This has been the case for above a century," (not however a period long enough, in the life of a Church, to constitute an indestructible precedent, as some seem to imagine); "and we may well rather be thankful that no greater evils have resulted from it, than be surprised that some things have grown obsolete, which yet there is no authority to alter; that anomalies have sprung up which it will be difficult to remove, and that various functions of high importance, which ought to be discharged by the Church on its own authority, and in its own sacred character, are carried on with more or less irregularity, but most imperfectly at best, by self-constituted societies,* which have been almost compelled to undertake offices, from which the Church in her proper character is debarred."

Similar sentiments will be found in his Lordship's charge for 1845. †

I said that the Church of England presented an anomaly among Churches in being alone without a synod of any kind. If an instance be sought of a Protestant Episcopal Church working with great efficiency under a general synod, we have only to look at our brethren on the other side of the

* *E. g.*: The Society for the Propagation of the Gospel, the Church Missionary society, the additional Curates' Fund society, the Pastoral aid society, the National society, the Church Building society, &c.

† Both quoted by Wright, p. 34.

Atlantic. In America the church is free, and governs her own affairs by a general synod called the Convention. The number of churchmen in the United States is between two and three millions. There are thirty-two Bishops, and about two thousand Clergy. In each Diocese there is a Diocesan Convention, which meets once a year, at which four clergymen and as many laymen are annually elected to represent their diocese at the general convention. The latter meets once in three years: its session at Cincinnati for the present year is just concluded. The general convention is composed of two houses, of which the upper house consists of bishops only; and the senior by consecration presides. It sits with closed doors. The lower house, if full, would comprise 140 clerical and as many lay delegates; but they do not all usually attend. Among the latter are found many distinguished statesmen and lawyers. The celebrated Henry Clay, having been late in life baptized, is one of the delegates from the diocese of Kentucky. On all questions, when required by the clerical and lay representation from any diocese, each order has one vote, and the majority of suffrages by dioceses is conclusive in each order, provided such majority comprehend a majority of the Dioceses represented in that order. The effect of this last provision is, that the clergy are protected from any possible aggression on the part of the laity, while the laity are relieved from any suspicious fear of priestcraft, or undue predominance on the part of the clergy.*

Of course no one supposes that the revival of the synodal functions of our Church would not be attended with great dangers and difficulties. But she is in such a state of danger and difficulty without it, that it is a serious question

* See a letter from Rev. H. Caswall, in the *Guardian* of October 9, 1850.

whether, with all its disadvantages, it is not the most promising remedy which could be applied. Party spirit could not run much higher than it does now. But if representatives of discordant opinions were brought together to discuss their differences face to face, there would at least be some hope of less *suspicion*. This is one of the most grievous elements of party strife. It is one of the direst enemies to sweet Charity, which "hopeth all things and believeth all things." Each man, who knows that his neighbour does not think with him on any given point, cannot be persuaded that he does not run to the very extremest opinions in the other direction. Either he is no better than a Romanist or a Dissenter. But surely an assembly of Christian clergymen and gentlemen would be found to discuss questions of religion with sufficient temper and moderation, to enable each other to see in how many more points they were of one mind than of different.

Moreover it is not by any means likely that persons the most ultra of any particular party would be chosen as representatives, but rather the reverse. And undoubtedly the most moderate and sober-minded men would exercise the chief influence in such a body. This would guard it from becoming a scene of violent religious controversy, an evil which very many dread, and which appears to them conclusive against the meeting of any synod. In America the same differences of opinion exist as here; indeed, Mr. Caswall says that our divisions are imported, and exactly echoed there. Yet Convention sits, and determines the questions which come before it, and the Church prospers and increases, and souls are gathered in and saved. Two other reasons which have been urged against the revival of synodal

action, appear to be, that in bad times a synod would do harm, perhaps tamper with the faith; and that in good times the Church has worked well without it. It is the firm belief of many that bad times for the Church are when she is tutored and managed by the State—good times, when she is allowed to manage herself. In the first case, the healthy action of a synod would mitigate the evil to a great extent: in the second, who will be so perverse as to say, that she would not work *better* and with *more* vigour with a well-constituted, directing, and governing body? Why must the Church of England alone, of all the mighty institutions of this land,—(and if we are permitted to have faith in any guiding from above, she should be the mightiest and the wisest)—why should she alone be thought unfit to be trusted with a legitimate assembly? Why are all her earnest members to be put aside as children unfit to be trusted to themselves, and incapable of knowing what is for their own advantage? It is because the world at large cannot understand her aims, her hopes, her hinderances, and anxieties. Their language towards her continues as of old:—“What will this babler say?” Or should she in any irregular manner succeed in making her voice heard, they cry, “these men are full of new wine.”

[NOTE C.]

I THINK there is no right-thinking Church of England man but must perceive the dangers to which his Church is now exposed. Late events have shown how completely, under

present circumstances, she is in the power of the State. Whether he approves or not of the manner in which the State has exercised this power, is *wholly another question*. He may think Dr. Hampden one of the fittest men that could have been found to fill the see of Hereford : or he may entirely concur in the judgment of the Committee of Privy Council on the Gorham case. He may entirely approve of the result of both these exercises of the Supremacy in matters Spiritual, as many good men undoubtedly do. Yet, unless he be blind, he cannot fail to see that, as things stand at present, the Church is entirely in the hands of the temporal power, both as to the appointment of her Bishops, and as to the final decision of questions of doctrine, (which last is a branch of the ministering of God's word, which we do *not* give to our princes). Let a man be ever so unfit to be a Bishop, the Prime minister can force him upon the Church. Let a doctrine be ever so much opposed to the plain words of the Prayer book, he who teaches so may be effectually upheld in his teaching by the Judicial Committee.

Would that all attached Churchmen, of all parties, could see the tendency of this state of things ! What touches one class of views to-day may touch another to-morrow : none are safe. Influences most alien to the Church exist and increase in Parliament, and unless we have some relief—nay, we may call it justice,—our Church must greatly suffer. It is *justice* we want. The Roman Catholics and the Dissenters have had political power given them : Jews, perhaps, will have the same soon. Yet the Church of England is as much under the power of Parliament now as when that Body consisted of none but her own members.

If we would see these things altered, we must endeavour to

obtain a change in the laws affecting the Church. This cannot be done without strength in Parliament. No ministry can be expected to give up, of their own accord, a power which is at present their's. Churchmen of all shades of opinion ought to see this, and would see it, if party spirit did not blind their eyes. They ought to combine to obtain justice for their Church. They ought to ask and to learn the opinions of their Representatives on these subjects.

There are those who oppose any attempt to influence the legislature upon this point, as if it were a trusting on an arm of flesh in a religious cause. They say it is not the way to obtain the Divine blessing. Surely this is unreasonableness. Are not the body of true-hearted English Churchmen a class with whom we can work in all faith and reliance upon that blessing? We wish to gain no mob popularity, but simply the aid of the great body of the attached members of the Church—of our communicants. Every alteration in the laws of this country must proceed from the People: it is the nature of the constitution under which we live. Such a change as that which we ask for might be obtained, without gaining the *majority* of the people to our cause. An appreciable *minority*, so long as it was large enough to make itself *felt*, would carry the point, and it will never be carried without it.

So far am I from thinking that the course here indicated is one which is opposed to our duties as faithful Christians, that I think we ought to *pray* for its success; and as nothing so much prevents its success as suspicions, jealousies, and divisions, I would earnestly recommend, especially in family worship, the use of the "Prayer for unity," to be found in the service appointed for the Queen's accession.

[NOTE D.]

I WOULD not by any means be understood to attribute the recent policy of Rome to the secessions from our Church, as the chief and primary cause : much less would I subscribe to the rancour of hatred with which the ultra-ritualists have been held up to popular execration at so many recent meetings. But, having said this, I may be allowed to express a somewhat free opinion as to the position of that section of the Church. There can be no question, I think, but that the ceremonial adopted by these clergy, and the doctrines with which it is always found united, have a decided tendency towards Rome. It may be true that no laws of the Church of England can touch their mode of performing the Divine services ; nevertheless, it is not in accordance with the spirit of the English Church ; and still less with the genius of the English people. The Church has power to ordain rites and ceremonies, and accordingly has continually adapted them to the character of the people among which her mission has been cast ; and, as long as this has been done without the concession of truth, it has been done wisely. Our own branch of the Church has, we fully believe, acted thus, and compiled a Liturgy suited to our National character, but yet without the concession or suppression of any saving truth ; and we may, *a priori*, doubt the wisdom of attempting to introduce a style of worship, even if it be in itself pure, which is never likely to enlist the sympathies of the nation.

It has become evident that there is among a certain section of our communion, an extreme tenderness towards the Roman Church. Her faults, however grave, are scarcely

allowed to be alluded to, her peculiar institutions and mannerisms are admired, and as far as possible, imitated; and the gulph fixed between her and us narrowed to its smallest dimensions. Now a great deal of this is attributable to an earnest and most laudable desire to see the breach in Christendom closed, which is made by our position as protesting against the errors and assumptions of Rome. And no wish can be more righteous than this—no result more to be prayed for, than that God “would heal the schisms of the Churches:” but never must we sacrifice even to this end one tittle of the truth as it is in Jesus. And that Rome has no intention of abandoning one iota of her errors or pretensions, if not before sufficiently clear, must at least be so now.

Other causes, even in themselves laudable, may contribute to produce that peculiar tenderness to which I have alluded; but whatever they be, this at least is certain, that the existence of a very influential school of these opinions is an important feature in the present position of our Church.

I am far from supposing that all the holders of these opinions are likely to secede from us to Rome, but it is from among them that secessions have taken place, and probably will continue occasionally to do so: and they must excuse plain people if they are disposed to suspect the existence of some disloyalty to the Church of England among their ranks.

After what has been said in a former note, I trust I shall not be misunderstood when I say, that the school I have just described will ever be unpopular. We ought never to hope to see the Church *popular* in the usual sense of the word. It would be a sure sign of her betraying her trust if she were

to become so: "Woe unto you when all men speak well of you." But I repeat, there is a large class of persons in this country, a few in every parish, who are the hope and stay of the Church of England, the frequenters of its Prayers and of its Communion, and the supporters of its schools and charities. The opinion of these, I do say, we may and ought to consult; and with them this school is, and always must be, unpopular. Its disciples are naturally enough thought to be favourers of Romish doctrines and ceremonies—unfairly we will suppose, yet they make it a part of their policy to permit themselves to remain under the imputation. They can never gain that degree of influence in the country, which will be necessary to put the Church in a new and satisfactory position with regard to the civil power: whether that be to be obtained by the revival of its synodal functions, as I have endeavoured to argue in a former note, or by any other means.

But the greatest misfortune is this, that the whole of what may be called the 'movement' party in the Church is confounded with this small section: for small it is *numerically*. This may be partly due to the misrepresentations of those who do not wish to see any greater liberty given to the Church than it has at present; and partly it may be due to the fears of those, who can see no difference between the *distinctive* doctrines of the Church (those which distinguish her from the sects), and Rome, and who have accordingly never ceased to decry all such doctrines, as popish figments and soul destroying heresies. There is no doubt also, that these two sections of Churchmen have often worked together when they have had the same objects in view, as they usually have had whenever the question involved no points relating

to our position with respect to Rome ; but I assure my readers that I have the means of knowing, that there is not any agreement upon these particular points. If we must use names to make the meaning clear, I intend to assert, that the Church-of-England party does not sympathise with the Romanizers. Two years ago, an attempt was made to combine Churchmen, for the furtherance of objects by many considered necessary for her efficiency and defence, namely : 1—Church extension, including a large increase of the Episcopate : 2—Additional securities for the appointment of Bishops well qualified for their office : 3—The revival of a Church legislature in some shape. These were objects that could not be supposed to be desired by one party more than by another. There was not one which any Churchman could reasonably oppose on the ground of party views : and accordingly the proposers of this scheme, (men of no Romanizing tendency), offered their plan to all alike, without distinction of opinions. They invited all to join in one common scheme of self-protection. Unfortunately they were not met in the same spirit of confidence. The movement fell into the hands of those parties solely, who are called high Churchmen, *including* the Romanizing party ; and by that means, viz., through the refusal of assistance from the Evangelical members of the Church, it became associated in the eyes of the people, with Romish tendencies. Very lately, however, the originators of these plans have seen the impossibility of their working with persons, with whom they have always entirely disagreed on most important points ; and they are again endeavouring, amidst suspicions and misconstructions, to set up the banner of the Church of England for all her children, of whatever party, to rally round, who

wish to see her once more set free from unnecessary restraints and allowed to work, in her own way, for the salvation of the millions of this great country.

[NOTE E.]

This Address was signed by 256 persons, or nearly half the entire population of the parish.

The Bishop has replied as follows.

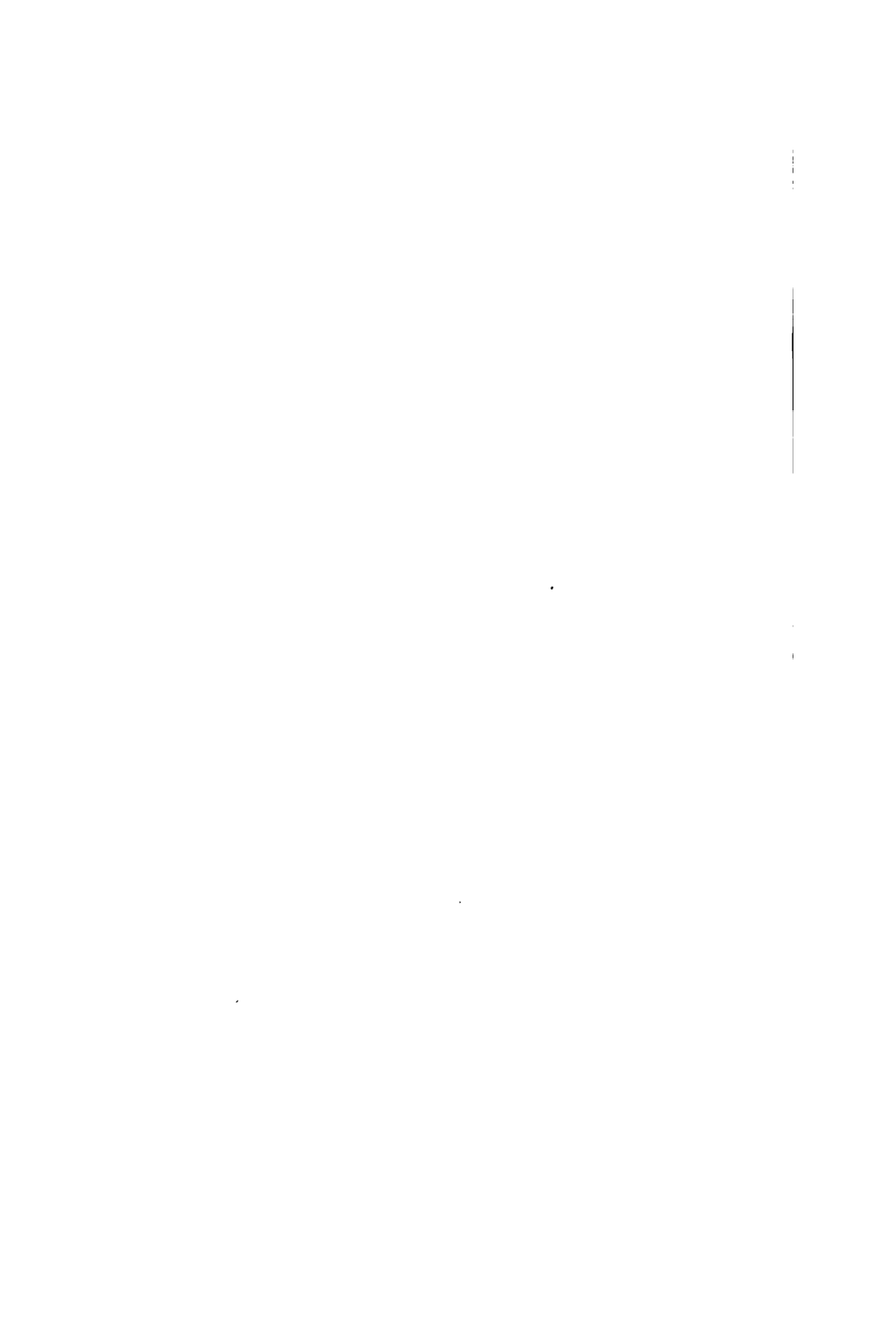
Salisbury, December 2, 1850.

My dear Sir,

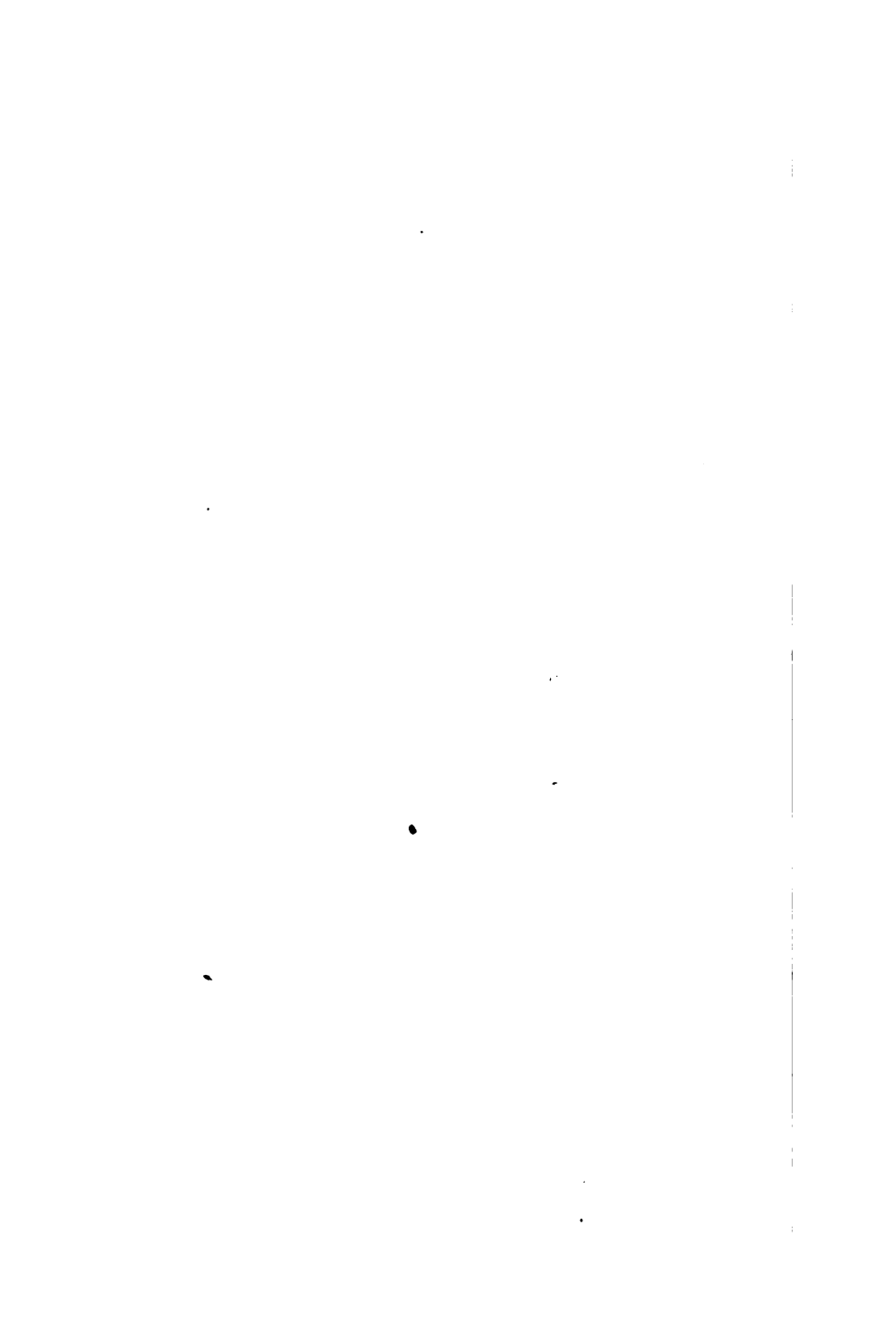
Owing to my absence from home, I have but very lately received the address you have forwarded to me from yourself and your parishioners.

I beg to thank you for it; and to assure you of the satisfaction I feel in the confidence that the great body, both of the clergy and laity of our Church, are firmly resolved to maintain its principles, both of doctrine and government, as established at the Reformation.

I remain,
 my dear Sir,
 your's faithfully,
 (Signed) E. SARUM.







CHRIST'S HEADSHIP OF THE CHURCH,
AND THE
DIVINE COMMISSION OF THE ENGLISH EPISCOPATE
VINDICATED AGAINST
Crastianism and Popery.

A

PAROCHIAL SERMON

For the Times.

BY

C. H. GAYE, M.A.

RECTOR OF ST. MATTHEW'S, IPSWICH,
AND FORMERLY MINISTER OF ARCHBISHOP TENISON'S CHAPEL,
ST. JAMES'S, WESTMINSTER.

LONDON:

FRANCIS & JOHN RIVINGTON,
ST. PAUL'S CHURCH YARD, AND WATERLOO PLACE;
& SHALDERS, IPSWICH.

1850.



A

S E R M O N,

&c.

COLOSSIANS i. 18.

“He is the Head of the Body, the Church.”

MY BRETHREN,

OF whom speaketh the Apostle this? Whom does he thus emphatically proclaim to be the Head of the Church? Nay, you are not “*careful* to answer me in this matter.” You are at no loss for the one only full and true answer. You hesitate not to say, The Head of the Church is no other than the Lord Jesus Christ. “One is your Master, even Christ” (the words are His Own); and “our Master is in heaven.” And such is the import of my text. The Son of God having heretofore humbled Himself so far as to be made Flesh, and, in the Flesh, to suffer shame and agony unspeakable, for the pardon and salvation of His adopted brethren after the Flesh, is now, in that same Flesh (the same, howbeit glorified), at the right hand of the Father; and thence He rules over the Church by His Holy Spirit—King of a Mediatorial Kingdom.

King and Lord, indeed, had He been, from all eternity. For, says the Apostle, in the verse next before my text, “He is the Image of the Invisible God, the first-born of every creature; for by Him

were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers : all things were created by Him and for Him ; and He is before all things, and by Him all things consist." But, besides all this—having descended upon the earth, and ascended again, in human form, into heaven, after triumphing, in man's behalf, and as man, over sin, and death, and the devil—" He is," proceeds the Apostle, " the Head of the Body, the Church ; who is the beginning, the first-born from the dead ; that in all things He might have the pre-eminence." Truly, " in Him only all fulness dwells," as in other respects, so in this ; in Him alone is that title realized,—the title of, "The Head of the Church."

Nevertheless, we do sometimes hear that august title applied to certain others. There are even here on earth two several personages to whom it is also applied. And, my brethren, I now invite you to consider the import of the title, in either case, as so applied.

I. In the first place, then, it is, as you are aware, familiarly applied, in some sort, to our gracious Sovereign. The Queen is, in more senses than one, the " Head of the Church." As such, we Members of the Church of England are bound to acknowledge her. But now, in *what* sense or senses is it, that Her Majesty is so styled and acknowledged amongst us ? Assuredly in no sense like *that*, in which the title is applied by St. Paul in my text ; *e.g.*, whatever the Queen's Supremacy or Headship involve, it relates only to that particular branch of the Church which is established in this kingdom. And, as to its *nature*, it is *temporal* only, and immediately concerns only the *temporalities* of the Church. " Supreme" though she be, " in all causes, ecclesiastical as well as civil," it can only be so far as those causes are of a temporal character and concernment. As regards worldly

rank, she is the Head, or highest member of our Church. Moreover, she can, as she does, invest our bishops with secular rights and dignities; and she can maintain them in the enjoyment of what she so invests them withal: but, as regards that spiritual grace and power, which are the essence both of Episcopate and Priesthood, these are neither hers to give, nor hers to take away. These are derived, through appointed channels, from that Head and Master who is in heaven.

It is part of the Queen's prerogative, to *recommend* the individual for the Dean and Chapter to elect. This is part of Her Majesty's *personal prerogative*, howbeit an arrogant and disloyal Minister *might* presume to step between Her Majesty and her solemn responsibilities, in this behalf, to the Church and its Divine Head, and however such a Minister *might* dare to abuse his official influence to personal or party purposes, concerning the things of the world. And again, although it be the Sovereign who *recommends*, and gives *permission* to elect, yet it is by the Dean and Chapter that the Bishop is actually elected; and, as to the act, which constitutes him Bishop, and imparts to him Episcopal grace and power—the act of consecration—*that* is performed by Bishops alone.

Again, it is the Queen's prerogative, as chief magistrate of the realm, to compel the Church's Ministers to the performance of those conditions on which they were admitted to their secular emoluments, whatever they be; and it may be her prerogative to enforce, by civil penalties, the preaching of none but the true faith as professed by the Church of England; but it were surely an abuse of her supremacy—a presumptuous and profane abuse (from which may God always preserve her!)—that she should claim, whether personally or by delegation, authoritatively to define what the true faith is, unless

it were in the way of appeal to some duly constituted spiritual court.

And accordingly, at a late unhappy trial before the Judicial Committee of Her Majesty's Privy Council, the Judges had the humility and forbearance to disclaim (at least, in words) both the intention and the power to determine, either what was, or what was not, the real doctrine of the Church on the particular point at issue. Were it otherwise, dissenters would indeed have more reason than enough for taunting us, as even now they are wont to do, with the Royal Supremacy.

True doctrine has been embodied by the Divine Head of the Church Universal in His Revealed Word; and the true Interpreter of that Word is no other than the common voice of the Church from the beginning (for He is Himself ever present with His Church, always even unto the end of the world); and to us members of the Church of England, that voice is sufficiently audible and distinct, if we will but open our ears to hear, in the Creeds, and Collects, and other formularies of the Book of Common Prayer. It is by thus restricting the Royal Supremacy to things temporal, including the temporalities of spiritual things, that we can alone, in this behalf, "Render unto Cæsar the things that be Cæsar's, and to God the things which are God's."

II. But, my brethren, I said there was a second earthly claimant to the Headship of the Church,—another than Queen Victoria; and his claim is one of a far higher kind: higher, in the same proportion as it is also less reasonable and real and just. Roman Catholics claim for the Pope, or Bishop of Rome, and he claims for himself, the Headship—not of his own national Church alone,—not only of that particular branch of the Church which is planted within his own secular dominions,—but of the whole Catholic or Universal Christian Church, in one and all of its

manifold branches, throughout the world: he claims to be Christ's Vicar-general, — Christ's Universal Representative and Plenipotentiary to all parts of Christendom. He pretends to be, and it is pretended for him by his adherents, that he is, as it were, Christ Himself upon earth. Those Seven Hills on which his see is planted, are, in his own eyes, and in the eyes of his spiritual subjects, even as the Mount of God. His Bulls are as mandates of Him who sitteth on the Throne of Heaven. He is every where, say they, supreme, in matters both of discipline and doctrine. Not only is he vastly superior in dignity and power to all other Bishops; not only do all other Bishops owe him implicit obedience; not only is he the Bishop of Bishops; but, failing such obedience, and apart from the Roman see, any Bishop whatsoever is no Bishop at all. Though, equally with the Pope himself, of Apostolical descent, and though ministering the Word and Sacraments after the Apostolical model,—he can be no true Bishop, say they, if ministering independently of the Pope's jurisdiction. Cut off from the see of Rome, whether by act of its own, or by Papal decree, any branch of the Church of Christ, however otherwise sound in doctrine and pure in practice, is simply a *dead* branch, cut off and withered, and prepared for the burning; it is but as a congregation of heathen men and publicans, as regards its standing before God in Christ Jesus; it is, in short, say they, no Church at all; it has no part or lot whatever in the one ark of salvation; its members are, no single one of them, in the way of being saved through Christ. In fact, what we say of Christ—yea, and what St. Paul says of Christ, and what Christ says again and again of Himself, though under other figures of speech—*that* do our Roman Catholic brethren (and God forbid we should refuse to call them brethren still) say of the Pope of Rome: "He is the Head of the Body, the Church;" and, as

being the Head, no single member can have life without him, or apart from him.

Lifeless, accordingly, in Papal eyes, is our own good Church of England. Having reformed itself, some 300 years ago—*i. e.*, having then ceased to hold certain doctrines, which were comparatively new even to Rome itself;—having foregone certain observances, which (howbeit innocent or even edifying at first, and in themselves) had been grossly abused to superstitious or other evil account, and from which such abuse appeared, in the judgment of our Reformers, to be almost inseparable;—having renounced its allegiance to the Roman see—or, in other words, having repudiated the dogma of the Pope's Universal Episcopate or Headship;—our Church was then formally pronounced excommunicate; and the ban of Papal excommunication has lain on it all along from that day to this. No professing member of the Church of England is recognised at Rome as a Christian; no member of the Church of England is there deemed admissible to Christian privileges, nor in the pale of salvation, until he have made a formal renunciation of his Mother Church, and, in the guise of a penitent, avouched his faith in the Pope as Bishop of all Christendom, and as "Head of the Church." Meanwhile, as for the Bishops and Pastors of our Church here at home, they are regarded by the Pope and his adherents as Bishops and Pastors only in name, and their ministrations as a mere profane counterfeit and an empty mockery;—and this, I believe, not for any lack amongst us of Apostolical order (for the due succession of our Bishops is acknowledged by candid Roman controversialists);—not because we have let slip any primitive Article of Faith: for, by God's grace, we hold fast the three Catholic Creeds among our formularies, and, as I have already said, the *peculiar* tenets of Rome (which we call corrupt, or presumptuous, or fond opinions) were comparative

novelties at the time of the Reformation;— but simply, I believe, or mainly, because we repudiate the Pope's jurisdiction;—because we claim for our Bishops an entire independence, in things temporal and spiritual, of every foreign Prince or Potentate, including the princely Bishop of Rome.

This I apprehend to be the main, if not the only influential reason, why the Romanist denies the Church of England to be any Church at all, and to be endowed with any means of grace. Yes, my brethren, this is the reason why, from the Reformation downwards, the Pope has striven to maintain, in this realm of England, as best he could, both Priests and Bishops of his own communion. This is, in the main, his reason for issuing that Bull of his, which, within a few days past, has so much startled the Protestantism of England. According to a phrase of the day, he simply ignores the Church of England; he looks upon it as a mere nonentity; he regards our own Bishops as so many ciphers in Christendom; and so he parcels out our land into dioceses, and fills them all with Bishops of his own appointment.

It is not indeed now for the first time since the Reformation that Romish Bishops have been amongst us. He who has now returned from Rome as Cardinal Archbishop of Westminster, was already a Bishop before he went; only he was heretofore Bishop, nominally, of a foreign see. It has not been deemed safe or prudent, until now, that Romish Bishops should bear English titles. In Ireland, indeed, they have, for some time past, gone yet a step further, having there actually usurped the titles of our own Irish Episcopate. Indeed, our Government appears to have accorded to the Romish Archbishop of Dublin the precedence of all the Bishops of the Established Church in Ireland; and it has also accorded the like precedence over one and all of our Australian Bishops, to the Romish Archbishop of Sydney.

Emboldened, probably, in part by these and the like concessions, the Pope has at length ventured to place his own Suffragans in England upon a more open and intelligible footing. He has relieved them of their foreign disguise. By assigning them English designations, he has now, more openly than heretofore, challenged the spiritual jurisdiction of England for his own. *Essentially*, indeed, he has done *nothing new*. That he should have had Bishops here *before*,—under whatever outlandish appellations,—was a virtual impeachment of our own Episcopate, and an assertion of his own supposed prerogative as *head* of the Catholic Church. Papal arrogance is implied, as well in the invasion of our *parishes*, as in the invasion of our *dioceses*. A Romish *Priest* is no less an intruder amongst us, than a Romish *Bishop*; and they are, both of them alike, indices of the self-importance and exclusiveness of Rome. All that can be said of that particular act of Papal aggression, now but a few days old, is, that it is a more *signal assertion* of a principle, which has itself been *covertly* asserted all along, and which is of the very essence of the Papal system. And that principle—that false principle—that unwarrantable theory—is, that the Bishop of Rome is (what, in my text, St. Paul says of Christ Himself) “the Head of the Body, the Church,”—the Church Universal.

False and unwarrantable indeed do I believe that theory to be. Time would not serve me now to argue the point. To do so, would indeed be, not so much to allege arguments *against* the notion, as to point out the feebleness and the fancifulness of the arguments (so called) which have been alleged in its support. And both fanciful and feeble, I am quite sure, you would consider them to be. You may see them all stated, and abundantly refuted, in the acute and learned work of Isaac Barrow. Suffice it now to say, that no genuine traces of the notion

are to be met with in the history of the primitive or early Church. To make out even a colourable pretext for it from antiquity, recourse must needs be had to a certain other new-fangled theory; and a very slippery theory it is—the theory of development,—a theory which is to logic very much what an *ex post facto* law is to equity. Alas! that it should have proved a pit-fall to one of the noblest intellects, and, I will say, the holiest minds, nurtured for many a day in this Apostolic Church of England.

I have characterized the Papal claim to sovereignty over the Universal Church, as *arrogant*. And so it must needs be called, in itself. Every unfounded, or inadequately founded claim, of course, involves arrogance, by the mere force of language; yet it does not, *of necessity*, leave the individual who urges it, absolutely chargeable with the moral *guilt* of arrogance. In the name, no less of right reason, than of Christian charity, I would in this, as well as other instances, deprecate the off-hand imputation of mere self-seeking, or other base or evil motive, to one, whose conduct chances to be offensive both to our convictions and our peace of mind. As the English Churchman's ground is firm and sure, so can he well afford to be charitable. It were scarcely too much to say, that "charity never faileth" the controversialist, who is perfectly well assured of his ground. In thus magnifying his office then, however unduly, we may suppose the Pope to have been bracing himself to the discharge of what he felt to be a painful, but withal an imperative, duty—a duty which he owed to the Church itself—to the Church's Divine Head, and, in particular, to the people of England, who were, *in his eyes*, "as sheep having no shepherd." He saw that the harvest was plenteous, but that, according to his own reckoning, the labourers were few (consisting only of a few stragglers from Rome); and so he has deemed it his bounden

duty, as the Lord's Vicar upon earth, to "send forth labourers into his harvest,"—to send them forth more formally and ostensibly, if not, as yet, more abundantly. Perhaps even he may reproach himself with not having performed this duty *before*, at whatever risk.

Nevertheless, the good intentions of the author and abettors of the act, must not blind us to the arrogance of the act itself. To withhold our solemn protest against so palpable an impeachment of the claims of our own Church, might argue insensibility to the honour of her who bare us in the Lord. It may be our duty to join in such a protest formally and publicly. If such be our conviction, let our protest be charitably expressed. Oh! far be it from you and me, my brethren, to take part in any mere "railing accusations" against even Rome and its Bishop. With all her apparent superstitions and her unauthorized additions to the Faith, the Church of Rome still holds the same primitive Creeds with ourselves. However schismatical in her intrusions *here*, she is still a living branch of the Church Catholic *at home—living*, howbeit in some respects corrupt.

Notwithstanding her superstitions, errors, and corruptions, some of the saintliest of men have lived and died in her communion;—yes, and not a few of the excellent of the earth are of her communion *now*. "Burning and shining lights," though shining, it may be, in a dark place, may they lighten her in the way of purity and holiness and truth! We do well to protest against her persecutions of former days, and her intolerance still;—but, it were far from well, if our protest were itself conceived in an intolerant and persecuting spirit. Better were it to be the victims of persecution, than ourselves to persecute,—better ten thousand-fold. Rather might the tongue cleave to the roof of my mouth, than that I

should wittingly utter one single word to countenance the infliction of pains or penalties, or even civil disabilities, for conscience-sake! If we must needs reclaim, not only in self-defence, but in duty to our Mother Church, against those who impugn her character, and invade her rightful province,—if we must in duty protest and reclaim, see we that we “put away” the while “all bitterness, and wrath, and clamour, and evil-speaking, with all malice,” remembering, that “the wrath of man worketh not the righteousness of God.” In our dread of Rome, let us not forget those principles of religious liberty which we have been wont to reckon among the distinguishing marks of Protestantism. Better be unjustly suspected of Romanizing, as it is called, one’s self, than be induced, through fear of that suspicion, or other motive, to *exaggerate* Romish errors and corruptions, or to say one word against them beyond what one knows and feels to be the very truth. There are those, I believe, who would invoke the civil power, or arm the law of the land anew against this Papal aggression. For my own part, brethren, I care not to see the Church avail herself thus of carnal weapons. The civil power has too often proved to be but as the “staff of a bruised reed” in the Church’s hand; and, if it have not pierced it, has eluded its grasp in time of need.

Vindicate we our Mother Church by other means. Protest we, if we will, whether privately or in public, by word of mouth. So our words be temperate, and charitable, and true, they cannot well be too strong and emphatic against an act, which (even if dictated by a single-minded and zealous concern for our country’s spiritual welfare) goes, all the more for its conscientiousness, implicitly to unchurch our own beloved and honoured Mother Church of England. But, protest we, above all, by our *act and deed*. Let our resentment against this attack on our spiritual

parentage, and our repudiation of its motive principle, be testified, if in *other* ways, yet *more* than in any other, by our redoubled earnestness in our Christian calling, and our quickened attention to the voice of her through whom we have been called. Let such of us as are privileged to minister about sacred things, strive to rebut this Papal disparagement of our commission,—and approve ourselves as ministers indeed,—by waiting upon our ministry, and doing the proper work of Evangelists more and more.

Let us render, with more alacrity than ever, all canonical obedience to him, who, in the Providence of God, and according to the Apostolical order of the Church of England, is in this diocese set over both ministers and people. Let the laity also testify (as most significantly and trustworthily they may) their faith in the abiding authority, and the living power, and the sanctifying grace belonging to our Church, by attending more devotedly and devoutly upon her sacred ordinances. Nor let them be tempted by the fascinations of music, or painting, or scenic art, nor led by a vain curiosity, or a prurient waywardness of mind, to attend, though it be only for once, any Romish (or indeed any other dissenting) place of worship. Such undutifulness were doubly blameworthy,—yea, and doubly dangerous,—at a time when the Church of their fathers is the object of open systematic assault. In going that once, they might go once too often for their peace and safety. That single act might bring its own retribution, by alienating their affections, or disturbing their faith, for the rest of their days; and such retribution were of itself assuredly not a light one.

This is no time for dallying with schism, in the way, whether of reading, or hearing, or sight-seeing. When the wolf is abroad, it is no time for either sheep or lambs to stray from the fold. Cleave we,

my brethren, to our parish church, were it only in order to show, by token of such our conformity to the parochial system, that we do indeed respect the Church herself, of whom that system is the express appointment.

Finally, let us try and repress amongst ourselves, as far as may be, all mutual suspicion and distrust. If one seem to go too far in *this* direction, and another not far enough in *that*, let each be willing to believe, in the absence of something like substantial proof to the contrary, that the other's apparent shortcomings or excesses are compatible with all good fidelity in him who evinces them, however they may seem fitted to perplex and startle those who have been accustomed, or whose turn of mind may dispose them, to look through a different medium, or from a somewhat different point of view.

Be ours the charity which "*thinketh no evil, rejoiceth not in iniquity, but rejoiceth in the truth; beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things.*" Let us do what we severally can towards healing the "unhappy divisions" which have been so widened and aggravated amongst us of late. As far as we can, without sinful compromise, let us follow after the things which make for peace. If, for truth's sake, we are constrained to say what is disliked by others, or to gainsay what others profess, let it indeed be as "speaking the truth in love."

And who knows but that it may be thus in the Providence of God, to have employed this aggression from without for the very purpose of knitting the fellow-members of our distracted Church the more closely one to another? Who knows but that Rome herself may thus stand rebuked before our Church's example of unity, and peace, and love, combined with truthfulness and fidelity? Who knows but that this hostile movement of hers, thus rightly met on our parts, may prove a means, in God's hands,

of her own turning from the error of her way, so far as it is erroneous? Who knows but that this act of schism on the part of her who affects to be the *Centre of Unity*, may thus be overruled to bring about the unity indeed, and therewith the greater purity and holiness of (what is in name) the One Holy Catholic Church? And "How good and joyful a thing it is, brethren, to dwell together in unity!" May this *our* joy, in God's good time, be full, for His dear Son's sake, Jesus Christ our Lord!

THE END.

TESTIMONY AGAINST ROMANISM:

A

S E R M O N,

ON JEREMIAH 5. 30, 31,

PREACHED AT THE

PARISH CHURCH OF KINGSWINFORD, AT WORDSLEY,

ON SUNDAY, DEC. 1, 1850.

BY THE

REV. CHARLES GIRDLESTONE, M.A.

RECTOR OF KINGSWINFORD, STAFFORDSHIRE.

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THE author of this sermon has often taken occasion to protest, both in private and in public, against the Romanizing school within the church of England, ever since the year 1832, notable for the first appearance of the Tracts for the Times. But for the favour shown to the Tractarian system, by some of those to whom the church justly looked for its suppression, we should have heard nothing of the late apostasies to Rome. And but for these apostasies, and for the favour shown to Popery by some of those to whom the State trusted for its discouragement, we should have heard nothing of this new Cardinal and Bull. Such infatuations may well serve to teach us the vanity of our boasted reason, and ought to lead us to seek for help from heaven, and to put our trust in a power and wisdom other than that of man. And perhaps our rulers could by no means so surely forward the great objects, for which this country is now uttering the most unequivocal expression of desire, as by setting apart a day of prayer for deliverance from on High; and by restoring to our Litany, for permanent use, the petition which it once contained, next after the words "privy conspiracy"¹,

"From the tyranny of the bishop of Rome, and all his detestable enormities,

Good Lord, deliver us."

*Kingswinford Rectory, Dudley,
Dec. 2, 1850.*

¹ An account of the suppression of this clause in our Litany may be seen in Reeves' Introduction to the Common Prayer, ed. 1840, pages 8 and 49.



O ALMIGHTY God, whose ministers stand pledged to banish and drive away, with faithful diligence, all erroneous and strange doctrines contrary to thy word, give unto thy servants grace, that they may ever speak the truth in love; and that, whilst they contend for it earnestly, they may at the same time maintain and set forward, as much as in them lieth, quietness, peace, and love, among all Christian people, and especially amongst those who are committed to their charge, through Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.*

JEREMIAH 5. 30, 31.

“ A wonderful and horrible thing is committed in the land; The prophets prophesy falsely, and the priests bear rule by their means; and my people love to have it so: and what will ye do in the end thereof? ”

UNDER the Law of old the Prophets and the Priests were two distinct orders of men. The Prophets had the office of revealing and interpreting and proclaiming the will of the Most High. The Priests were set apart to minister unto the Lord in holy things, and especially in the sacrifices, which were types of the Messiah. Under the Gospel Christ-Jesus is both our Prophet and our Priest; and his ministers have no warrant in his word for pretending to be either priests or prophets, in any such sense as that in which these terms are appropriate to Him. They are commissioned indeed to teach and preach, but only as it is written in his word; that blessed word of the Gospel which is provided for the use of all his people, for the edifying of his whole church. And the only sacrifice they have to offer is that of their own souls and bodies, to be devoted to his service; a sacrifice due also from every Christian, and in virtue of which offering we are all alike called, in a figure, “priests unto God.” (Rev. 1. 6.)

In the corrupt and degenerate form of Christianity, which has prevailed so largely in the western portion of

Testimony against Romanism.

Christ's church, the ministers of religion set up for being prophets and priests, both in one. They profess to be prophets, having power to teach saving truth other than that which is written in God's word; and they pretend to be priests, having a commission to offer sacrifice, and able to offer or withhold at their will such sacrifices, as serve to secure to the people the benefit of the sacrifice of the death of Christ. And these their pretensions are all brought to bear upon one object, *the exalting and glorifying of their order*. These their false doctrines and unwarrantable practices all conspire to establish the priesthood in power; in power spiritual, and thereby also in power temporal. So that in this antichristian system, of which Rome is the centre and the head, instead of Christ being exalted by his ministers, it is the ministers who are exalted by themselves; and the words of Jehovah in the text are once more remarkably fulfilled: "The prophets prophesy falsely, and the priests bear rule by their means."

And observe now the strong language in which such a state of things is here reprobated. "Shall I not visit for these things? saith the Lord:" thus run the words of the verse before the text: "shall not my soul be avenged on such a nation as this? A wonderful and horrible thing is committed in the land; the prophets prophesy falsely, and the priests bear rule by their means; and my people love to have it so: and what will ye do in the end thereof?" "A wonderful and horrible thing." This, I say, is strong language. It is such language as we do not often meet with in Scripture. And in the margin the same words of the original are more literally translated thus: "Astonishment and filthiness." The oppressions, the extortions, the uncleannesses, the idolatries, with which the Jewish church stands charged in this chapter, might well account for no common vehemence of reproof. But these gross sins, offensive as they ever are unto the Most High, become doubly so, when they have been fostered by false doctrine set forth instead of truth, and so set forth by his ministers, for the purpose of exalting

themselves, as lords over the consciences, the persons, and the possessions of his people. This is indeed "a wonderful and horrible thing." After all the horrors recited in this chapter, the strong expressions of "astonishment and filthiness" are reserved for this shameless abuse of ministerial authority; for the sin of a clergy, who by dint of a false theology establish a firm spiritual despotism, and not for their sin only, but also for the sin of those who are well pleased with their usurpation. For this, observe, is the consummation of these horrors: "and my people love to have it so." And under the Gospel, as under the Law, the people who consent to such perversion of the truth, in common with the priests who practise it, must be branded with this mark of reprobation, "Astonishment and filthiness."

"A wonderful and horrible thing is committed in the land;" is committed in the land of promise, that land of which the people were then in possession; the land which was enlightened by "the oracles of God," (Rom. 3. 2.) and which was hallowed by his presence, his blessing, and his rule. So much the greater was the sin of his people of old. And so much the worse is the same sin committed now by Christians, who enjoy the like advantages, only more every way. And here let us note further, that a nation has to answer for sin committed in it, if permitted by it, if allowed, harboured, indulged, patronized, promoted. And let us look to it, lest by countenancing Romish superstitions we fall under the condemnation of the text, as upholding a system which outrages most grossly the honour of Almighty God. We deny not that there may be, or that there have been, men of devout minds amongst the worshippers of the Virgin Mary. There have been men of devout minds amongst all kinds of idolaters. And those idolaters who worship God as well as idols may be sanctified and saved by the truth which they believe, notwithstanding the falsehood which they hold with it. But their idolatry is so much the more derogatory to the glory of the Most High, in proportion as they have any the least knowledge of his grace and

goodness. And the nation which wilfully encourages any such vile superstition becomes a party to the dishonour done to God, and needs to be reminded of his warning words: "They that despise me shall be lightly esteemed." (1 Sam. 2. 30.)

I propose now to show you how Romanism, or Popery, in its various modes, for it is any thing but uniform, does outrage to the glory of God in Christ; and more especially in this respect suggested by the text, namely, that *its false doctrines tend to uphold its usurped authority*. For this purpose we must briefly review some of the chief of its abominations.

1. It WITHHOLDS THE SCRIPTURES from the people, or straitly limits their circulation. And "*the priests bear rule*" by these means. For thus they keep in their own hands the key of knowledge, of that knowledge which is above all price, and which above all other knowledge is power, even "the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth." (Rom. 1. 16.)

2. Next, it sets up TRADITION on a par with Scripture, as an independent source and warrant of truth in divine things. And since the custody of this legendary lore is claimed exclusively by the priesthood, by these means also "*the priests bear rule*."

3. The true light being thus removed out of its place, and a false light prominently set up, it becomes easy to make to pass for reality any fiction however extravagant, provided it be adapted to the corrupt taste of man's fallen nature. Accordingly, under favour of this dimness, the church of Rome palms upon its members the supremacy of S. Peter as the prince of the Apostles, and the SUPREMACY OF THE POPE as the successor of S. Peter. And it contrives to get it generally believed, that thus its bishop, the bishop of Rome, is the representative of Christ upon earth, having his authority to act instead of Him, and invested by Him with INFALLIBILITY. And by these means also "*the priests bear rule*." For they are all regarded as armed with the Pope's authority, and he with Christ's, as Christ is with God's.

4. Their SACRAMENTAL SYSTEM is another chief engine of delusion, and stepping-stone to power. First, they teach, that sacraments have effect in virtue of the commission of the priest, irrespectively of faith in the partakers. And then they maintain, that in the Lord's Supper the bread and wine become the actual material flesh and blood of Christ, and are made to be so by the will and words of the priest; of whom they thereupon profanely signify, that he in so doing is making God. And by these means "*the priests bear rule.*" For thus they become in the misguided apprehension of the people something more than human, if not more than super-human, even greater than divine.

5. The CONFSSIONAL, upheld by representing confession as indispensable in preparation for partaking of the mass, makes them privy to the secrets of all hearts, places at their mercy the fair fame of all persons, brings under their familiar inspection things which it is a shame to pry into, and subjects to their control the most hidden springs of human action. And since it is their principle, that neither act nor word nor thought of sin can be entitled to absolution, unless specially confessed, it is easy to conceive how largely "*the priests bear rule*" by these means. Oh, "wonderful and horrible" consistency of the papal system! Well may they, who claim the power of turning bread and wine into the glorified body of Jesus Christ, assume also authority to search the hearts and the reins, and to impart forgiveness of sins!

6. Closely connected with the popish system of confession and absolution are their doctrines of PENANCE and INDULGENCE. They to whom confession must be made, they who have power to absolve, these naturally claim to dictate the terms of absolution. They can prescribe and exact penances. They can ordain and bestow indulgences. And, oh, "wonderful and horrible," they can sell them! Most wonderful that men should ever be so foolish as to buy them! Most horrible that priests or bishops, legates, cardinals, or popes, should be so wicked as to sell them! But no wonder, if there be

such wickedness, if there be such foolishness, no wonder that by means like these "*the priests bear rule.*" For thus they accumulate wealth. Thus they amass influence. Thus they lord it over the conscience. Thus they set up their sovereignty in the soul.

7. Next, the justifying MERIT OF MAN'S GOOD WORKS, in contradiction to God's word, that we are accounted righteous for the sake of Christ, simply if we believe, this false doctrine, so welcome to man's pride of heart, is also made to help largely in building up the fabric of priestly domination. For if the merit of the saints may suffice for themselves, they may next be supposed to have some to spare for their neighbours. The stock of merit thus arising is held by the church for the common benefit. But in this system the church means the priesthood, whose prerogative it is to apportion the benefit of such merits according to their will. And by these means, therefore, "*the priests bear rule.*" He that can bestow places, pensions, sinecures, which last but for this transitory life, is sure to have no lack of humble servants. How much more secure of ascendancy are they, who are deemed able to transfer to the account of perishing sinners, for another world, the benefit of the merits of others, towards balancing the deficiency of their own!

8. In like manner do "*the priests bear rule*" by means of the false doctrine of PURGATORY, a branch of the pernicious fiction last specified. For by the masses which they celebrate, and by the stock of good works which they dispense, they are deemed able to shorten the term of that supposed suffering, at once penal and purifying, of which purgatory is the imaginary scene.

I have now set before you many "wonderful and horrible" devices of this mother of abominations; (see Rev. 17. 5;) and many others I might detail; and might show you of them all how they tend to throw gain, and influence, and power, into the hands of the priesthood. But time will only allow me to advert briefly to a few more of the most flagrant.

9. One is the enforced CELIBACY OF THE PRIESTS ;

which, connected with the groundless notion that the single state is more pure in God's sight than the married, tends to glorify the clergy as a holy caste, to the disparagement of the laity as comparatively unclean; whilst it helps to sever them from the rest of the community, and unites them in a close and baneful league amongst themselves. And by these means also "*the priests bear rule.*"

10. Another is their pompous style of worship, and the extent to which they substitute sensual services for such as are at once intelligent and spiritual; suppressing the genuine emotions of prayer and praise under a heap of RITES AND CEREMONIES, which require much study and make much show. And, to complete this part of their system, and as if to outrage at once the most obvious dictates of true piety and of common sense, they must needs have their public worship conducted in a foreign and DEAD LANGUAGE, one which the priests alone are likely to understand. So that by these means also "*the priests bear rule.*"

11, 12. But the worst, if worse be possible, is yet to come. It is their enormous and shameless practice of IDOLATRY; that sin which in both its kinds is the most offensive unto God, and the most unquestionable mark of an APOSTATE CHURCH. If it be only in the plenitude of their arrogance that some of them profess ability to make the true God, they have formally, expressly, and uniformly introduced THE WORSHIP OF many that are NO GODS; and of these they fashion IMAGES and BOW DOWN to them, with an homage absolutely forbidden by Jehovah. The favourite object of this their idolatry is Mary the mother of our Lord; of whom their legends are most extravagantly false, to whom their language is most offensively fulsome and profane, and to whom they usually apply for mediation, in preference to her ever-blessed Son. Other countless saints, as well as angels, and their images, come in for their respective shares of this "wonderful and horrible" adoration. And "*the priests bear rule*" by these means. For the priesthood are they who canonize the saints, and who consecrate the

images, and who direct at their will the devotions of the people, sometimes to one idol, and sometimes to another, as best may serve to build up the fabric of their power on such base and wicked superstitions. False, utterly false, is that prophecy, which allows of other gods than one. False, utterly false, are those prophets, who say that any kind of image worship is allowable. And most "wonderful and horrible" it is, that the very sins which of all others are first forbidden in the commandments of God, and which it was one chief object of the Law to root out, ere the ground could be prepared for the seed of the Gospel, that these should be adopted, cherished, and recommended as edifying practices, in the holy land of the kingdom of Christ!

"And my people love to have it so." "My people." Yes, those whom God has chosen in Christ to be called by his name, to be made acquainted with his Gospel, and to enjoy, if they would but use them faithfully, the inestimable advantages of admission to his church. Throughout Christendom, even in the most benighted realms of popery, and in its darkest ages, there is an obvious sense in which all Christians may be called God's people; even as the Israelites were called so of old, when wallowing in the mire of their idolatries, or when pining in the bonds of their captivity. "And my people love to have it so." This has long been the diseased taste, the insane preference of by far the greater portion of professing Christians in the world. "A wonderful and horrible thing" to think of. And yet there is something more strange and more offensive in the thought, that in a nation which has emerged from these horrors, in a portion of the Christian community which has been reformed, there should be any apt to hanker for these rejected superstitions. That in realms brought out of darkness into light, by the signal help of God's gracious providence, overruling for his good ends man's evil dispositions, and in a church based upon the acknowledgment of God's pure word as the test of all truth in religion, that herein should be found men, and men of good education, so

ignorant as to believe the fictions of Rome, so weak as to be convinced by the sophistry of Rome, so treacherous as to teach Romanist tenets from Protestant pulpits, and so infatuated as to plunge alive into all these deadly abominations of Romish falsehood, profaneness, and idolatry; this in a Christian land, in a Reformed church, and done by men who have been nurtured in the privileges which belong to God's people, of a truth this is indeed "astonishment and filthiness."

And this also is committed in our land; in a land honoured as the bulwark of the Reformation; in a nation signally exempted from the horrors of that universal war, which within the lifetime of the existing generation wasted the other chief nations of the world; in a kingdom raised to the highest pinnacle of wealth and power and glory; as if the Most High had vouchsafed to show Himself well pleased with that national acknowledgment of divine truth, and that national protest against Romish falsehood, which Great Britain, amidst all its transgressions and shortcomings, had, up to the period of its triumphs, most signally presented to the Christian world.

"And what will ye do in the end thereof?" If ye persevere, what will become of you? As to the Israelites, the Lord had in some sort supplied an answer to the question, by saying in a former part of this chapter: "Like as ye have forsaken me, and served strange gods in your land, so shall ye serve strangers in a land that is not yours." (Ver. 19.) As to ourselves, let us give heed to our ways, and whereinsoever we have done wrong let us seek to retrace our steps; lest, if we be found guilty of forsaking God, by aiding and abetting those who practise in his name the abominations He abhors, we expose ourselves to be forsaken by Him. Whether we ourselves commit such treason against the sovereignty of Christ, or like to have it committed by others, or in any wise sanction the commission of it, where we might consistently with his will prevent it, we may justly expect, that according to the greatness of the grace we thus abuse will be our retribution, and we shall be made to

feel, in the depth of our national disgraces, how poor we are with all our riches, how defenceless with all our armaments; should it but once seem good to the Lord of hosts to give us up into the hand of our enemies.

But perhaps you will ask, Why dwell upon the enormities of Romanism, in preaching to a church of England congregation? Why denounce the sorceries of Rome to a people rendered proof against all its arts by unrestrained access to the word of God? And I must admit, that whilst we have been reviewing all these horrors, I have felt how naturally you might say, like Hazeal to Elisha, "Is thy servant a dog that he should do this great thing?" (2 Kings 8. 13.) But "let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall." (1 Cor. 10. 12.) Let the apostacy, of which some amongst us have already been guilty, make us watchful, and distrustful of our reason and our strength, and dispose us to rely with more deep humility, and more implicit confidence, on the word and on the help of God. It may seem a trifle, that a few scores amongst many millions have left the catholic church of England for the apostate church of Rome. But it is no trifle, it is a fact at once "wonderful and horrible," that there are hundreds and thousands amongst us, and not a few of them eminent in rank or learning, who have been wrought upon by the leaven of Romanism, so as to cherish a taste for its pomps and ceremonies, for its models of church building and its forms of church furniture, for its fashions of church vestures and its modes of church music; for Romish legends and traditions, for Romish fasts and festivals, for the fond superstitions of Rome, if not yet for its more gross idolatries, and for the spiritual dominion of a home clergy, if not yet for the supremacy of an alien Pope.

What then will ye be doing now, before "the end thereof" arrives? What is it my duty to exhort you to be doing, in the present posture of popery, at once assaulting us openly, and undermining us by stealth? "Search the Scriptures." (John 5. 39.) This is the first great duty of the present day. "Search the Scriptures,"

I say, diligently, reverently, devoutly; and by their infallible testimony "prove all things," in order to "hold fast that which is good." (1 Thess. 5. 21.) Is it written? Has God clearly spoken in his word? If so, the matter is past doubt. If not, it is an open question. It may be well to have some such open questions decided for us by church authority. But such decisions of our church must not be imposed by us on others as essential to salvation. All that God has revealed, this let us believe. All that God has commanded, this let us do, and delight in doing; all that God has forbidden, this let us renounce and utterly abhor. By these rules let us fashion our own hearts and lives; by these let us frame our terms of communion with each other; by these, all these, and nothing but these.

Secondly, value church privileges, as of divine appointment; but value them only in their due proportion, and at their proper worth. The truth of God's word is the light. His church is set to hold it up on high, that it may give light unto the world. Christ's ministers hold a twofold place in his church, they are at once servants and rulers. Exaggerated views of their authority, based upon those usurping principles of Rome which put man into the throne of Christ, have had much to do in producing the late lamentable cases of Anglican apostasy. The ministers and members of the church are all frail and fallible men. The body, made up of members such as these, if it have the pure word of God preached faithfully, and his sacraments duly administered, becomes meet for the use of Christ its Head, a spouse which is graciously owned as his by the holy, heavenly Bridegroom. But when it is guilty of the enormities set forth by the prophet, in the text and the chapter before us, the spouse is divorced as an adulteress, the dead body is severed from the ever-living Head; and in such cases, God has been often pleased to show, where the church remains unreformed, that He can and will make his light to shine even without the candlestick.

Thirdly, cease not to thank God for having prospered in this land the blessed work of church reformation; and cease not to pray, that He will continue to preserve us from the arts and arms, the sophistry and the violence, the idolatry and the usurped authority, of that Romish priesthood, which, pretending to wield the sceptre of Christ, would fain deluge the earth, as they have done heretofore, with the blood of his saints. And whilst you shrink from any sympathy with a system so awfully antichristian, let your affections rather yearn for a more intimate communion, in prayer, and praise, and holy living, with all those of your brother Christians in the land, whose position as divided from our church is partly our fault as well as partly theirs, who acknowledge the same volume for Holy Scripture, who pray in the same tongue with us, who honour one and the same holy Father which is in heaven, and acknowledge the same only spiritual mother, so entitled in God's word, "Jerusalem which is above;" (Gal. 4. 26;) who worship the same God and Him only, through the same Mediator and no other, and who trust for salvation in the same Saviour's blood, and in that all-sufficient Sacrifice alone.

Lastly, watch against the popish inclinations of the human heart. These are the true cause of the wide prevalence of popery; these fully account for its boasted triumphs. It would be as easy to show that each article of Romanism is adapted to the naturally corrupt taste of the people, as that they all tend to exalt the priesthood. And besides the leaning towards Rome which we denounce within our church, as treason in men passing for its members, there is a traitor to be no less watchfully resisted within every man's own bosom. Let us therefore be upon our guard, and look to it, that in the secret emotions of our hearts we exalt Christ instead of glorifying man, trust in Him and not in ourselves, and study sincerely to do that which is his will, instead of indulging our own. The loud swelling words of the Roman pontiff would be mere empty sound, but for the Romanists and the Roman-

izers abounding in our land. So likewise the poison pervading the whole Romish system need cause us no alarm, were it not found to be very pleasant to the diseased appetites lurking in ourselves. Let us then apply with faith to Him, whose blood can make clean our consciences, whose Spirit can make holy our lives. With our reason enlightened by his truth, with our affections quickened by the glad tidings of his love, and with our hands stretched forth for union "with all them that love our Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity," (Eph. 6. 24,) let us uniformly look to Him as the Bishop of our souls, our Prophet, our Priest, our King, our sole infallible Teacher, our only Mediator and Advocate, our all-sufficient Sacrifice and Saviour, our uncreated Lord and God.

Heavenly Father, to whose goodness we owe the deliverance of this church and nation from the deadly errors and sore bondage of the papal superstition and dominion, make us duly thankful for these benefits. Preserve us, we beseech Thee, as Thou hast done signally aforesaid, from the open violence, and from the secret plots, of antichristian Rome. And as Thou hast planted us in the full light of thy Gospel, do Thou continue unto us thy marvellous loving-kindness, by rooting thy truth firmly in our hearts, and making it to bear good fruit in our lives, to the praise of the glory of thy grace, through Jesus Christ, our Lord. Amen.

THE END.

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THE HOLY COMMUNION.

A SERMON

PREACHED

IN THE CHURCH OF ST. ANDREW, HOLBORN,
ON SUNDAY, MARCH 8, 1850.

BY THE

REV. GEORGE CAMPBELL GORDON, M.A.

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TO THE PARISHIONERS
OF
ST. ANDREW, HOLBORN, IN THE CITY OF LONDON,
This Sermon,
PREACHED IN THE ORDINARY COURSE OF PAROCHIAL DUTY,
BEFORE THE ADMINISTRATION OF THE HOLY COMMUNION,
AND PUBLISHED
AT THE REQUEST OF MEMBERS OF THE CHURCH,
IS
WITH MANY PRAYERS FOR THEIR SPIRITUAL WELFARE,
AFFECTIONATELY DEDICATED,
BY THEIR FAITHFUL SERVANT,
G. C. GORDON.

There are in this loud stunning tide,
Of human care and crime,
With whom the melodies abide
Of th' everlasting chime;
Who carry music in their heart
Through dusky lane and wrangling mart,
Plying their dally task with busier feet,
Because their secret souls a holy strain repeat.

KEBLE.

A SERMON.

“DO THIS IN REMEMBRANCE OF ME.”

St. Luke, xxii., 19.

To remember our Saviour Jesus,—to embrace Him by faith in our inmost heart, is the very life and strength of our souls. His saints and people, in all ages of the Christian Church, have found grace and blessing by commemorating the dying love of their Lord and Master in the holy Sacrament of His Body and Blood, which he instituted the night he was betrayed, and said, “Do this in remembrance of me.”

The subject before us calls for our consideration of the duty and privilege of fulfilling our Lord’s injunction—and for this purpose let us devote our attention, on the present occasion, to the necessity of means of grace in general, and of

this Sacrament in particular ; after which we shall examine some of the objections and unreasonable apprehensions which deter persons from a participation in this ordinance, and further consider how our own necessities, and the love of Christ, alike constrain us to seek grace and strength in this holy Sacrament.

There is ever a disposition and tendency in the heart of man in his fallen state to attach greater importance to the things of this present life, which are seen and temporal, than to those connected with a future life, which are unseen and eternal.

The affairs of this world,—the duties of our calling,—the common events of domestic life,—and the opinions of our fellow-creatures, are all apt to be overrated and magnified into undue importance ; whilst the authority of God, the concerns of our future state, and the awful realities of the general judgment, are apt to be lightly esteemed, as though they were matters dimly seen, far distant, and of little real importance.

Our Lord and Saviour knew well the moral

weakness and natural wickedness of that lost world he came to save. He knew that the things of this present state of existence are ever wont to fill men's thoughts, and that spiritual and eternal things are too readily neglected; and therefore did not think it enough to come down to earth and teach men morals and wisdom, or die as a sacrifice for sin, and then return to heaven, heeding mankind no more. The Lord was fully aware of what man is, and of the means best fitted to lift him from his fallen state, and prepare him for heavenly rest with God; and, consequently, He appointed means, and instituted ordinances, to teach the truths of that redemption which he purchased for us; and to keep alive in men's minds the remembrance of his atoning sacrifice. Thus he founded his Holy Church, and left a living ministry to teach his word and administer his sacraments to successive generations; and not only so, but the ascended Saviour sent the Holy Ghost, that blessed Spirit, one with, and proceeding from the Father and the Son, to make the word of God taught and preached by his ministers, and the sacraments administered by them,

effectual to the soul's health, and to the preservation of soul and body unto everlasting life.

Hence the importance of every ordinance or means of grace, which tends to arrest fallen man in his downward career, and lift his soul to communion and peace with God, directing his erring mind to estimate, in their true importance, the overwhelming interests and awful realities of eternity.

Our Saviour, therefore, knowing the value of means of grace and ordinances of religion to mankind, has given us, besides other aids to salvation, the holy Sacrament of the Lord's Supper, as our church teaches, "To the end we should always remember the exceeding great love of our Master and only Saviour, Jesus Christ, thus dying for us, and the innumerable benefits which by his precious blood-shedding he hath obtained to us; he hath instituted and ordained holy mysteries, as pledges of his love, and for a continual remembrance of his death, to our great and endless comfort."

When our Lord instituted the holy sacrament

of His Body and Blood, and said to his disciples, "Do this in remembrance of me," it was not merely from a desire to live in their recollection, as a departed friend lives in the memory of those who lament his loss,—it was not merely that they should remember there had been on earth one so merciful as Jesus of Nazareth,—it was for higher purposes that our Lord desired them to celebrate this holy Sacrament in remembrance of Himself. That death which he was about to accomplish at Jerusalem, and which they were to show forth and commemorate in the Holy Supper, was the foundation of all their hopes of remission of sin, and of reconciliation to God; therefore it was necessary that they should remember the Lord Jesus, not only as a loving merciful friend, the perfect pattern of all goodness, but also that they should remember Him as their surety who died that they might live, and should rely on his blood-shedding and death, as the one only sacrifice, oblation, and satisfaction for the sins of the whole world; and, further, it was his merciful purpose to make this holy Sacrament a channel of his grace, to impart to the penitent sinner's

soul a cleansing power, and increased union and communion with Himself, the ever-living, the live-giving, life-sustaining Lord.

For such high purposes our Saviour Jesus instituted the sacrament of the Lord's Supper the night before he suffered.

That memorable night, on which the Saviour of the world was betrayed, the disciples saw Him, the source of all blessing to ruined men, raise his eyes to heaven, and bless and consecrate, for the endless good of his people, the simple elements of bread and wine, and institute the holy sacrament of the Lord's Supper, to keep alive the remembrance of Himself, and convey to his faithful followers, through all ages, a full participation in the benefits of his most precious death and passion.

The simple elements or outward parts of this Sacrament are not in any sense changed—though we may not, and cannot separate these elements of bread and wine, when they are set apart and hallowed with solemn benediction, and used as the symbols of Christ's Body and Blood, from the inward or hidden part of this Sacrament. The Sacrament must be received as a whole; either

worthily, and become a channel of blessing, or unworthily, and be profaned.

In receiving this holy Sacrament, the faithful, who come with loving and lowly hearts, do receive the thing signified by these outward symbols. They receive all the benefits of Christ's death and passion; and they receive a mystical, but a real and spiritual union with Christ—a union available to their souls' health, and to the preservation of soul and body unto everlasting life. Even as our Church service says,—“The benefit is great, if with a true penitent heart and lively faith we receive that holy Sacrament; for then we spiritually eat the flesh of Christ and drink his blood; then we dwell in Christ, and Christ in us; we are one with Christ, and Christ with us.”

Here we perceive the great privilege and blessedness of this Sacrament. Like other means of grace which bring us near to Christ, and Christ to us; this ordinance or holy mystery of the Lord's appointment, when received aright, is fitted, in a very special manner, to strengthen faith and love, to keep alive heavenward breathings and holy desires in the penitent believer's

soul, and to be the means of conveying, by the quickening power of the Holy Spirit, increase of purity, increase of spiritual peace and joy, and increase indeed of every grace and every blessing which may be drawn from the inexhaustible fullness, treasured up in the Son of God, for the good of man. Here, then, you may be nourished with the living bread, which came down from heaven, and be made strong in the life which is immortal, in fulfilling the Lord's command, "Do this in remembrance of me."

There is nothing dark or doubtful in the command, which requires us, redeemed by Christ's blood, to partake of this holy Sacrament. It is plain and binding; and is to continue in force while the world lasts. As St. Paul wrote to the Corinthians, "As oft as ye eat this bread and drink this cup, ye do shew forth the Lord's death until he come;" that is, until the Lord Jesus come in his glorious majesty as Judge of the quick and dead.

The command is addressed to those who are already the disciples and servants of Christ.

It is not a Sacrament intended to awaken or begin spiritual life in men dead in trespasses and sins ; but it was instituted for the purpose of continuing and strengthening spiritual and eternal life in the souls of those who are already children of God, members of Christ, and inheritors of the kingdom of heaven.

It is a Sacrament for Christians,—for those who are baptized, and are living according to the vows of baptism,—for those who do truly repent them of their sins, and believe in the merits of their Saviour's death, and in the mediatorial and quickening power of Him, their ascended Lord ; —for those living in charity with their neighbours, and who intend to lead a new life, following the commandments of their God and Saviour.

Listen, then, to your Lord's command when He calls you to his service, and to his ordinances in the Church on earth, that it may be well with thee beyond the grave, in the Church triumphant in heaven.

Excuses of unfitness and unworthiness are constantly made by those who neglect this Holy

Sacrament. Unfit! a degree of fitness or preparedness is indeed necessary. We are told that Moses prepared an ark, lined with pure gold, to receive the two tables of stone, on which the ten commandments were written; and well may we suppose that our polluted hearts do require the cleansing and sanctifying power of God's everlasting Spirit, before we come to the celebration of this holy ordinance, to receive by faith, and embrace within our inmost heart, Christ, the King of Glory,—to receive him by his Spirit's quickening presence into our very souls, in such wise that we are made one with Christ, and He with us.

Again, others say, "We are unworthy." If, by this expression, it is meant that some sinful course of life is loved more than God, and, at all hazards to the soul's safety, such sinful course is to be pursued rather than the way of God's commands; then certainly the man is unworthy in the worst sense—unworthy, as being a lover of sin, more than a lover of God. Unworthiness, such as this, however, does not excuse a man, it only condemns him.

But if he who says, "I am unworthy," is sincerely anxious to obey the command of his Saviour Christ, and is distressed that he should disobey it, yet fearful that he is unfit, unprepared, or unworthy, and full of dread lest this holy Sacrament should prove a vehicle of vengeance to injure, rather than a channel of grace to bless ; then such feelings of apprehension are not sufficient reason for keeping back from this Sacrament of the Lord's Supper.

The awful denunciations of God's judgment against the unworthy receivers of this Sacrament, in whatever manner explained, can only apply to men bent on wicked and dissolute courses, who profanely and recklessly endeavour to participate in, or intermeddle with, a holy ordinance appointed solely for spiritual-minded persons.

The manner in which the Lord's Supper is administered, in this our branch of Christ's Holy Catholic Church, renders it utterly impossible that any communicant can profane this ordinance to that extent, and in the same manner, in which the Corinthian Church abused it ; and there can be no profanation in that heart, or unworthy recep-

tion of this Sacrament, where there is an honest and sincere desire to obey the command of Christ, and receive the salvation which He alone has power to confer.

The humble penitent, anxious to fulfil the dying command of his merciful Redeemer, has everything to hope, and nothing to fear.

It is no sign of unfitness when we are unworthy in our own eyes, like that Publican who would not so much as uplift his eyes to heaven, but smote upon his breast, and said, "God be merciful to me a sinner."

In one sense even the greatest saints and best of men are unworthy. As sinners in the sight of God all are unworthy; and the man who comes best prepared to the Lord's Table, will be that man whose soul bows with the meekest penitence and humility before God, in the conviction of his own unworthiness. The best prepared of all amongst us will be the one who can respond with deepest sincerity to the language of our Church service, and say, "We do not presume to come to this Thy Table, O merciful Lord, trusting in our own righteousness, but in Thy manifold and

great mercies. We are not worthy so much as to gather up the crumbs under Thy Table."

The Gospel, with all its ordinances, and its power to bless, is free to you, and to all.

The fountain of grace, opened to us by the Gospel, remains ever free to you, and to all—all are invited, and all need it alike. Thus, when the rock in Horeb was smitten, and the gushing waters ran in dry places like a river, the fainting Israelite had no other qualification, when he drank of that stream, save his sense of need; he was ready to die, and must either drink or perish! And what preparedness can any of you have to come to the waters of life, and drink of them fully and freely, except your sense of need? All you want is to be convinced by God's Spirit that you are sinners, and in need of a Saviour. The fountain of salvation is within your reach, and what can you do but come as those who are athirst, and like the distressed Israelites at the waters in the desert, either drink or perish. Encouraged, then, by the gracious invitation of our Saviour Christ, "I will give unto him that

is athirst the fountain of life freely," come, with a lowly broken heart, which mourns for sin; come, with earnest desire to obey your Lord, and, while yet, it may be, even afar off, God will meet you and bless you.

As diseased and sick, come, and seek your Lord in his own ordinance; for He is the great and good Physician, able to heal soul and body. As poor in spirit, and conscious of your need of every divine aid, and spiritual blessing, come to your Saviour Christ; for in Him there is fulness for all your wants. He is rich in all blessing, and in all power to bless. As hungering for spiritual food, come to this Holy Communion; for Christ, the bread of life, is here! "Come, feed on Him in thy heart by faith with thanksgiving."

"Whoso eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, hath eternal life; and I will raise him up at the last day." Come, then, to your Lord's Table. "The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not the communion of the blood of Christ? The bread which we break, is it not the communion of the body of Christ?" Come, not troubling yourselves how, or in what manner,

Christ will make this holy Sacrament available to your eternal preservation. The symbols of our Lord's body and blood, in this sacrament, are given and received as sure pledges of Christ's love and faithfulness to every worthy partaker. Come, as he directs, and in the spirit of that service which your Church has provided for you, and the promise shall be yours. You shall be raised at the last day, and shall be preserved, in body and soul, unto everlasting life.

Come, then, and you shall receive Christ's very presence into your souls. Come, and you shall receive union, not with a dead man, but with the living Lord and Saviour Jesus. A mystery, indeed! yet neither incredible nor impossible,—a mystery, awful and sacred, yet a mystery to be enjoyed,—Christ in us! Christ in us, guiding us by his word, consoling us by his promises, purifying us by his Spirit;—Christ in us, the resurrection and the life, the hope of glory, and the pledge of immortality.

Observe further, how the condescension and love of Christ our Saviour constrain us to remember

Him. "Do this in remembrance of me," said Jesus. Amazing condescension! The Lord of Life and Glory desired our remembrance. His delight has been from everlasting with the children of men. Love for our race brought Him from the glories of heaven to the sorrows of earth. And now, although our Saviour Jesus be exalted above all thrones and dominions, and His name be above every name,—although he filleth heaven with his light and glory,—although angels adore Him, and saints above, redeemed by his blood, tune their golden harps to songs of sweetest sound, and cast their crowns before Him; yet all this majesty and kingly state, and all the songs, hosannas, and worship of the blessed, do not make Him unmindful of us his brethren on earth. He delights in every approach we make to Him, and in all our service done to Him. He sees when we draw near to Him in sincerity and in truth, and then He, who has already drawn nigh to us in ten thousand ways, draws nearer and nearer to bless us, and to do us good. He thinks of us, and pities us; yea, He loves us, and wants to enshrine His name in our hearts, and His image

in our souls. How then can we act, as if forgetful of this Saviour and His love? He wants us to love Him, and walk in His holy and happy ways, and be mindful of Him continually ; for He knows it is our very life and strength to remember Him ; and can there be a Christian man who will refuse the Lord's touching invitation, when He says, " Do this in remembrance of me ? "

And now, in conclusion, we have before us a great duty, and a blessed privilege—a duty which brings Christ and His dying love to our remembrance—a privilege which makes us one with Christ, and Christ with us.

Our Lord has said, " If ye love me, keep my commandments." How then can we be Christians, and neglect this command? Or, can we be Christians, if we lightly esteem an ordinance and means of grace, through which such heavenly blessing is conveyed to the soul? To be unmindful of Him, is to forget the author and finisher of our faith ; to be unmindful of Him, is to abandon all good hope of remission of sin and of eternal life ; to be unmindful of Him, is to forsake the source

of all comfort and joy, and that only Saviour in whose strength we hope for victory over the world,—that Lord in whose hands are the issues of life and of death, of time and of eternity. And shall He, by whom and for whom all worlds were made—He, from whom we have our being—He, who loved us and washed us in His blood,—shall He, who has crowns of immortality and deathless glory to bestow,—shall He deign to say, “Do this,” and can it be there is one man within earth’s limits who has heard of Jesus and His love, and will not obey this affecting command, which the Lord left with His Church the night before he suffered? Can it be that there is a living man within these walls so insensible, so indifferent to his present and eternal good, as to put aside the dying command of this blessed Lord and only Saviour, whose untold sufferings have purchased such inestimable blessings for mankind? Oh! if there be, it would seem almost enough to make the unbreathing things around us, the very stones and beams of this magnificent structure, dedicated to God’s glory, to cry out in condemnation of such ingratitude and neglect.

Strive to live worthy your high vocation and calling; and remember there is an inseparable connection between our present character, and our future destiny. Devotedness to God's service cannot possibly unfit us for the duties of this life. On the contrary, this service elevates all our duties and our joys, knits all we are, and all we do, to God, and to Eternity!

Now is the time for diligence, toil and warfare. Our spirits shall enjoy perfect rest, when we join the radiant throng around the throne of God; and yet higher blessedness in the kingdom of the resurrection, when we see the vision of undying glory, and are preserved in body, as well as in soul, unto everlasting life.

In the mean time, while we are in this mortal life, and have our salvation to secure, let us continue to seek grace and blessing in this holy Sacrament; and, so long as we have hearts capable of gratitude, let us commemorate that death, which brought life to us; and fulfil the last, and dying command of our blessed Lord and Redeemer—"Do this in remembrance of me."

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Union and Victory.

A SERMON

Delivered on SUNDAY EVENING, the 24th of November, 1850,

Being the last Sunday after Trinity,

In Trinity Church, Exeter,

BY

THE REV. ARCHER GURNEY,

ASSISTANT CURATE OF HOLY TRINITY, & BODLEYAN LECTURER.

EXETER :

HENRY JOHN WALLIS, HIGH STREET.

LONDON : MASTERS, ALDERSGATE STREET & NEW BOND STREET.

M.DCCC.L.



UNWILLINGLY, but almost under a sense of duty, I send this second Sermon to the press, connected with the one theme which at present occupies the minds of men. At a moment when certain of my brethren were, as I fancied, assailed, I considered it my duty to protest against anything approaching to the nature of a persecution. The Meeting which I dreaded, however, has taken place, and has passed, upon the whole, most happily; and we now enjoy every prospect of an union of all against the Foe. Under these circumstances, I seem bound not to allow that strong expression of my fears, (fears which happily have not been realised,) *to stand alone on record*; and therefore I venture to submit to the general public this discourse also, in which I have striven to do justice to the Citizens of Exeter. I will now only add, that the Foe is wily, that Jesuits are about in all directions, and that their endeavour is, and has been for the last ten days, to set the Clergy and Laity of our dear Church at war with one another. Let us, then, be "valiant" and be "*wary*."



SERMON.

St. Paul's Epistle to Philemon, part of verse 9.

"For love's sake, I rather beseech thee."

BLESSED, my brethren, is the voice of love and concord; and joyful, indeed, am I, at the passing away of the tempest cloud which so lately alarmed us, to be able to say,—my fears were vain; no persecution has been resorted to; our God has brought us through. If in the excitement of the hour, and in the presence of undoubted *real dangers*, some few, and yet very few, harsh or unkind words have been spoken, still have we all occasion to thank God for the general moderation and christian temper which has distinguished our late city gathering.

That some old charges should have been revived, —this I regret indeed, but can scarcely wonder at; though I do wish that, at an hour when our Bishop had so strongly come forward against usurping Rome; when he himself, in a spirit of such christian love, and yet with so much simple dignity, had adverted to any possible indiscretions of his

own in past times ; I say it would have been well also if nothing derogatory to *him* had been spoken on such an occasion, under such especial circumstances. For, my dear brethren, whatever we may think of certain acts of his in church government, one thing is certain, that, for twenty years, he has been the only man to fight the battle of Protestantism in the house of lords ; and he has declared himself ready and resolved to fight it still. May God be with him in that endeavour ! And that is a prayer which I am sure every one of you will echo from your hearts.

I also regret that even passing allusions should have been made to certain churches in this city ; because, on special inquiry, I have been informed, that the innovations once complained of have been for the most part, if not entirely, done away with during the last two years, by the respective clergy, in order to meet the wishes of their parishioners : further, because I know, as you know, that Rome rejoices in everything that can be construed into a division amongst ourselves. On the other hand, I am quite willing, I am bound to admit, that, with the late monstrous secessions to Rome before our eyes, the fears of Protestants might very naturally be awakened, and that they would be certain to receive expression ; and perhaps, *upon the whole*, this could scarcely have been done in a better, or less hostile spirit. With the exception of a passing allusion from one speaker, our Exeter clergy were not attacked or denounced the other day ;

and, as a christian and a churchman, I beg to thank those who took part in that day's proceedings, for their prudence and christian forbearance.

Of course, every word uttered on such an occasion must not be too closely canvassed. One single attack on the Prayer-Book (an attack which, you may remember, I dreaded), was hazarded very late in the day, but it was not well received; and the speaker himself seemed,—shall I say,—rather ashamed of what he had suffered himself to utter in the excitement of the moment.

One rather extraordinary attack was made, I suppose also only in the heat and fluency of oratory, on one of the very oldest doctrines of the Christian Church, a doctrine not only received by members of our Church of England, but even by presbyterians, nay, and I believe, by wesleyans and baptists also, and by almost all respectable bodies of dissenters: I mean that of “the laying on of hands,” or ordination, which was branded under the ill-understood term of “apostolic succession.”

The matter is simply this, my brethren, that every true minister of the Gospel, besides the inward call of the Spirit, must be solemnly set apart for his office by Ordination, or “the laying on of hands,” of those, namely, who are *qualified* to convey the ministerial office. So far, there is literally no difference in opinion betwixt our Church and the Presbyterian Kirk of Scotland, or the Wesleyan body; all agree that no man

should *call himself*, that “the laying on of hands” is an essential to the rightful exercise of the ministry.

If so, who are those who should “lay on hands?” Plainly those who have *themselves* been *called* in the like manner, and are thus qualified to call others. Once admit this, and you *must* look to our blessed Lord for the origin of this ministerial commission, for short of Him it is impossible to stop; He alone had power to endow certain individuals with the ministerial office, and commission them to lay hands on others, and so convey their office on even until His coming again.

There can be no doubt, I say, that “the laying on of the hands of the presbytery,” is essential to the ministerial office, because Holy Scripture plainly so declares; nor could any ever become presbyters without having first had “hands laid on them;” so that you *must* trace the ministerial succession of orders back from generation to generation, even to the Apostles, and through them, of course, to Christ our Lord. The only question is, whether presbyters alone can ordain without a Bishop? We, of the Church of England, say no, and prove it, as we believe, from Scripture, from the examples of Titus and Timothy, the practice of the Apostles, and the universal faith and government of the whole Christian Church for more than fifteen hundred years from the resurrection of our Lord.

But you see how *idle* it is to raise a clamour

against the so-called doctrine of "Apostolic Succession," since there is literally no alternative betwixt believing that "the laying on of hands" is not needful at all, as the Quakers hold; in which case every man may get up in the Church and call himself a presbyter, and administer the Sacraments without being outwardly called by any one: I say there is no alternative betwixt fancying this, (plainly as it is condemned by Scripture,) or admitting that there must be a ministerial outward call through "the laying on of hands," and that of those who have themselves had hands duly laid on them, which must therefore be traced back to the Apostles, and through the Apostles to our Lord.

But, I repeat, we must not canvass hasty expressions of this kind too severely. I do not wish to reason or to censure on the present occasion, but rather to express my joy that the enemies of our Zion, if any such there *were indeed*, amongst the organizers of this meeting, have been so utterly defeated in their supposed design. But even they, our *enemies*, are men, and, let us hope, have not wholly ceased to be Christians; and may be, therefore, accessible to the voice of kindness and of love. The Organ which I felt it my duty to denounce last week, which I need not name to you, has spoken, on this occasion, with comparative mildness and good temper. Sorry I am, indeed, that old, well nigh forgotten stories, should be needlessly raked up against our Bishop; and revering as I do the man assailed,—not as a *perfect* character, (*who is*

perfect?) but certainly as one of the greatest men of his era, I mourn over every attempt to excite the feelings of my fellow christians against him. The charge that, at a time when half England suddenly changed its opinion respecting roman catholic emancipation, the Bishop also should have spoken less strongly, less violently, against it than he had done; for it is a fact, that he did still, in the House of Lords, both speak and vote against that measure; this charge, I think, should scarcely be *now* renewed, when he, perhaps the most earnest and brilliant orator of his age, he who carries more weight than any of his contemporaries amongst his peers, has just announced his firm determination, with God's help, to do what he has done again and again, when no other man had the needful courage, namely, stand up against the encroachments of Popery and the Papacy in the first chamber of the legislature.

But, setting this aside, even from that quarter usually most virulent, though there may be much to offend and something to provoke, we do not see much at least of real spite or bitterness; and I rejoice, indeed, that so it is. I am happy, also, as a christian minister, to bear my testimony to this infinitely more important fact, that EXETER has NOT disgraced itself, on this occasion, by tumult or by a spirit of fierce hatred and enmity; that *personalities* have been comparatively rare; that all classes have shewn a hearty desire to co-operate against Popery; and, I may add, that our highest church-

men have come forward to denounce "all the distinctive doctrines and practices" of the idolatrous Church of Rome.

And therefore, my brethren, I address you with far different feelings from those which occupied my mind a week ago: *then*, I thought that I saw the most imminent danger of deadly internal strife and dissension. God be praised, that storm-cloud has drifted far away, and a new dawn is shining; the dawn, let me humbly trust, of a *new era* of mutual love and concord.

Yes, my brethren, I sincerely agree with you,— we *must* have no *coquetting* with Rome; no refusal, on the score of a mistaken charity, to protest against her heresy and her idolatry: we must know our friends from our foes. But, on the other hand, let us not suspect a brother needlessly, and, for the sake of trifles: let us not expect to find others always angels in patience or in temper, knowing, alas! what we are ourselves. Rather, in these smaller things, let us bear and forbear, that we may present a united front to the one treacherous foe. Let us beware of using party appellations; and, above all, let us not think others to be *Papists* merely because they say their prayers more often than we do, or exhibit more outward signs of reverence.

We may feel more within, that is true. If we do, let us thank God, and seek to help our brethren.

After what I had said on a former occasion, I could not but thus express my joy and gratitude,

that God should have brought us through the dangers I then feared. I have heard with pleasure, I may add, from speakers *even of my own parish and congregation*, expressions of the strongest attachment to the Creeds, Articles, and Prayer-Book of the Church of England; and I, for my part, am free to acknowledge that a fear of Romanising, which should even carry a speaker into an ill-considered expression, is scarcely to be condemned too severely at a moment such as this, when Rome is putting forth such monstrous claims, and when men cannot but remember the apostacy of those who were once the avowed champions of our own Church. I beg, however, to repeat the expression of my strong conviction that we have not a single man of this traitorous stamp in our immediate neighbourhood. God be praised for it! And my hope at least is, that there are but very few left in the whole length and breadth of our Church of England.

And now, dismissing this subject, let me beseech you, brethren, on behalf of something far better than *any* outward triumphs, on behalf of your and my MASTER, to "receive one another in love:" yea, even as Philemon, no doubt, received Onesimus. Called with the same hope of our calling, having "one Lord, one faith, one baptism," and one communion of prayer and praise, why should we not, "for love's sake," "receive one another"?

What I have dwelt on in my afternoon discourse this day, in our Parish Service, I now repeat: on

this the last Sunday after Trinity, the annual round of services appointed by our Church is completed, and next Sunday, with Advent, we shall recommence the Church's year. This, therefore, is a very solemn occasion, on which we may well look backward and forward, with mingled hopes and fears.

Privileges *may* have been ours in the course of the last twelve months, which we have ill employed. What we have felt one hour may have glided from us the next, so that we seem to be *seeking* still.

Is it so with *many* of us, dear brethren? Has the love of JESUS not yet possession of our hearts? Ah! what to us and to our souls, compared to that great theme, were "the wreck of empires and the fall of worlds." As a simple hymn says, referring to the responsibility entailed by the possession of privileges,—

Highest blessings Heaven bestows!
 We convert those gifts to woes:
 For their very beings blight
 Those who sin *against the Light!*

And again:—

Holy Advent-hours are near;
 Christmas then shall close the year:
 Howsoever Grace may fall,
Wanting Faith, we want for all!

Do *we* want true faith, my brethren? that faith which gazes on the Cross of CHRIST, and

hopes, yea, and receives conviction through the Holy Spirit, that *its sins were there?* that *they* nailed the Saviour to the Tree? Oh, that *this* Faith were truly ours, for then what more could we desire?

The healing shadow of the Cross, my brethren, is it "about our bed and about our path"? Does the love of the Saviour sway our hearts? When we are alone with our God (this is a good test,) can we rest *then* beneath the Cross, and weep for Him who hangs thereon?

And again, are we *bearing* the Cross *ourselves?* *Are* we? We must, if we would be saved. In self-denial, in brotherly emulation to good works, in earnest endeavour to subdue sin within ourselves, in prayer and praise, in honest, manful, Christian service.

Who, who amongst us comes not short in *all* these? Who will not own himself a sinner? Is it not probable that they who love their Lord most dearly will most bitterly accuse themselves of His betrayal? that some, who have not yet lost (oh, may they never lose!) one of God's best gifts—*a tender conscience*, will be most ready to exclaim, "Father, I am unworthy to be called" Thy daughter, or, "Thy son!"

Some there *may be* amongst us, who, even within the last Christian year, since last Advent, have been called to a fuller and clearer knowledge of God's love and grace; some,—perhaps many,—who have made their first Communion. Oh, that

these may possess the gift of a tender conscience, (some of them surely do,) and that no insidious foe may ever rob them of it!

They have been welcomed by a Saviour's love; they have received with holy awe and fearful tenderness the sacred symbols of His presence; and, weak as they are, faithless as they are prone to call themselves, their Saviour's everlasting arms are around them, and, if they kneel in love, they shall never be forsaken.

And others may be amongst us, prodigal, but repentant, spirits, who have *come back* to their Father's home. It may be, that within the last year a new world has been opening itself to them. If one straying sinner has been recalled by *my* weak voice, I bless the God who has deigned to accept such an utterly unworthy instrument, and entreat, O how earnestly! that penitent's prayers, and those of all who worship here with me.

With the next sabbath, brethren, we enter on a new christian year. May God be with us throughout its course! May many, very many, of us come on that sabbath to receive the sacred tokens of our Saviour's presence, in the Holy Communion of His Body and Blood. May that Grace, which we all need, be then freely granted, that so we may advance from strength to strength, till we come to stand before the face of His Majesty in Zion.

Pardon me, brethren, for adding a few more verses from a hymn for this day:

The Church's yearly course is run :

And *we*,—and *we*!

O! is our heavenward course begun?

Or have we nought but shadows won?

LORD, gracious be!

How many a sacred hope was ours!

And yet,—and yet,—

Our best desires were fading flowers;

They passed, those quickly fleeting hours,

And left—Regret.

THOU know'st us weak, THOU know'st us frail,

LORD, hear, we pray!

Thy Cross we plead where most we fail,

So *hope* to pass behind the veil,

And share Thy Day!

May we, then, be all of one mind, brethren; may we “receive one another for love's sake”! If any brother have wronged us by the adoption of externals we object to, or the dwelling on doctrines we do not thoroughly approve, let us put that to the account,—not of any mere earthly friend or teacher,—(though one who has benefitted our souls, however slightly, *may* have some little claim upon our kindness;) but let us put it to the account of our ONE SAVIOUR, of Christ who died for that brother also upon the Tree. Yet, brethren, I *may* say, with the great Apostle, “If ye count me at all a partner,”—then strive, I beseech you, to banish all needless strife and enmity, all jealousy and angry suspicion, from your hearts,

yes, and, as far as may be, from your city; that neither a foreign Church, nor any spiritual adversary, may be enabled to triumph in our discomfiture. For surely “it is good that brethren should dwell together in unity;” and in this, our own dear Church of England, we may all find rest to our souls. So then, brethren,—“*for love’s sake, I beseech you.*”

And now, to God, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, Three Persons in one Godhead, be ascribed all honour, power, majesty, dominion, and glory, henceforth, and for ever. Amen.

THE peace of God, which passeth all understanding, keep your hearts and minds in the knowledge and love of God, and of His Son Jesus Christ our Lord: and the blessing of God Almighty, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, be amongst you, and remain with you always. Amen.

ADDITIONAL NOTE.

Since the above was sent to press, I have heard of a fresh attempt to disturb our peace, in the organization of a society for the *reformation of our Church and Prayer-Book*. There can be no doubt whatever that the Jesuits are at the bottom of this most nefarious project, though they may succeed, for a little while, in making *better men* do their work for them. May God open the eyes of all Churchmen, of all Protestants, to this pressing danger! Disclosures of the most alarming character are at hand. An attempt has been made, by undoubted Jesuit emissaries, within the last few days, to induce the churchwardens and other laymen of Exeter to sign a protest against their clergy as secret Papists. *Is it possible that Protestants will play into these mens' hands?* But God will confound their malice, and bring their designs to nought. We say, with Martin Luther :

“ A Castle strong is God the LORD,
A Shield that ne'er shall fail us ! ”

ARCHER GURNEY.

Exeter, Wednesday, Nov. 27, 1850.

THE OLD PATHS;
OR PRINCIPLES OF THE ENGLISH
REFORMATION.

A SERMON,

Preached in the Parish Church of St. Margaret,

LEICESTER,

ON THE TWENTY-FIRST SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY.

BY

CHARLES GUTCH, M. A.

FELLOW OF SIDNEY SUSSEX COLLEGE, CAMBRIDGE;
AND CURATE.

Speaking the Truth in Love.

LONDON:
JOSEPH MASTERS, ALDERSGATE STREET;
LEICESTER: J. S. CROSSLEY.
1850.



Thus saith the LORD unto this people, Thus have they loved to wander, they have not refrained their feet, therefore the LORD doth not accept them; He will now remember their iniquity, and visit their sins.

O LORD, though our iniquities testify against us, do Thou it for Thy Name's sake: for our backslidings are many; we have sinned against Thee.

O the Hope of Israel, the SAVIOUR thereof in time of trouble, why shouldest Thou be as a stranger in the land, and as a way-faring man that turneth aside to tarry for a night?

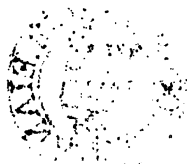
Why shouldest Thou be as a man astonied, as a mighty man that cannot save? yet Thou, O LORD, art in the midst of us, and we are called by Thy name; leave us not.

Hast Thou utterly rejected Judah? hath Thy soul loathed Zion? why hast Thou smitten us, and there is no healing for us? we looked for peace, and there is no good; and for the time of healing, and behold trouble!

We acknowledge, O LORD, our wickedness, and the iniquity of our fathers: for we have sinned against Thee.

Do not abhor us, for Thy Name's sake, do not disgrace the throne of Thy glory: remember, break not Thy covenant with us.

Are there any among the vanities of the Gentiles that can cause rain? or can the heavens give showers? art not Thou He, O LORD our GOD? therefore we will wait upon Thee: for Thou hast made all these things.



A SERMON.

JEREMIAH vi. 16.

*Thus saith the LORD, Stand ye in the ways, and see,
and ask for the Old Paths, where is the good way,
and walk therein, and ye shall find rest for your souls.*

WHEN the Church of England, three hundred years ago, awoke at the Divine Touch from Her long slumber in prison, and girded Herself for the great work whereunto GOD had called Her in the world,—viz., the purification of Her own Sanctuary in the first place; in order that, secondly, She might hand on the torch of Catholic Truth to the real “Church of the Future,” and in time be a Light to lighten the Gentiles, and proclaim the Gospel even unto the ends of the Earth;—She aimed at a reformation after a model of the first and purest days of the Christian Faith. Or, to speak more exactly, and with a more distinct recognition of the superintending Providence which watched over Her throughout that terrible convulsion, Her efforts to reform Herself were directed aright; sons were raised up for Her need, mighty in the Scriptures, and well acquainted with the writings of antiquity; and the result of their labours was a Reformation in Truth: one, I mean, not according to the fancies of men, but the Word of GOD: one, which was based not on the opinions of individual reformers, but on the

judgment of the Universal Church before it was divided.

She stood in the ways, and saw, and asked for the Old Paths, where was the good way:—by God's great mercy it was pointed out to her: She walked therein, and Her children found rest unto their souls.

Now, humanly speaking, it might have been far otherwise. No earthly reason can be assigned why the course of the Reformation in England, from the very first, took an upward and not a downward direction, as it did in those European countries where the yoke of the oppressor was broken at the time of our own deliverance. Germany was the very cradle of the Continental innovations. Switzerland, but especially Geneva, saw them shaped into a system under the fostering care of Calvin. In Sweden the Prince and his Nobles treated the Church much in the same way as Henry and his courtiers did here:—they laid violent and sacrilegious hands on her property, and then began their so-called reformation. But in none of these countries did the Church of CHRIST survive in a purified state. Communities of Christians there were in them, who had renounced the domination of the Pope; but only to submit to as bad, if not a worse bondage—worse, because voluntarily submitted to, and most arbitrarily imposed upon the conscience, under the name of religious liberty, by other masters of Earth. In the countries referred to men changed the name of Romanist or Papist for that of Lutheran, Calvinist, Zuinglian, and the like. They denied the Papal Infallibility only to believe in that of the Reformers, or their own. And how has it fared with them since? What is their state now? In Germany a proud Rationalism has eaten out the heart's core of whatever good there was in Luther's system. Reason has overthrown Faith. The great doctrines of the Incarnation,

the Atonement, the Inspiration of the Scriptures and Sacramental grace are everywhere preached against and denied. Three years ago, at a Meeting of the Pastors of four hundred congregations from all parts of Germany, for the purpose of drawing up a Confession of Faith which should supersede the old, worn out one of the Church—at this Meeting of the Clergy of the country, the Apostles' Creed was held up to scorn and reproach: and but *one* individual had the courage, or the Faith to maintain the Cardinal doctrine of Christianity, the Incarnation of the SON of GOD. So much for miserable Germany in her reformation and its results. In Geneva, where Calvin ruled with an iron hand for more than twenty years, his system of arbitrary decrees of Reprobation and Election has yielded to a more consistent form of unbelief. The Professors of Theology in Geneva are now Socinians. Their iron-hearted predecessor maintained that the All-merciful ONE had decreed from all eternity that millions of Souls should perish, and that they had been created solely for that End. He refused to accept the scheme of Salvation devised by GOD, Who sent His SON to die for the sins of the whole world, and willeth not that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance, and believe and be saved:—in a word, he taught that GOD is *not* LOVE;—and his Successors have likewise most consistently denied the chiefest instance of His Love—the meritorious Sufferings, and the efficacious Atonement of the SAVIOUR of men. In Sweden, where Lutheranism was established, the state of things is much the same as in Germany, but with this additional feature of degradation—that the State or the Crown is Supreme: the Establishment is not free: it is but the creature of an earthly master, a department of his Government: and like all other earthly things its end is at hand; like all false things, it will “perish and come to a fearful end.”

But not so the Church of this land. Hers has been no downward career. Her lamp is not growing dim: nor can we believe will it ever be put out in obscure darkness. Her wise and dutiful children, when the Voice plainly and imperatively bade them go forth from the tottering fabric of Romish corruption, separated not, as Lot from Abraham, in strife; founded not each his own city of confusion; nor did they unite and seek to build a new Church on the ruins of the old, but simply to reform the old one. "With all teachableness and much meek wisdom they turned themselves to the purest, youngest days of CHRIST'S Virgin Church, and in Her doctrine and discipline, in Her solemn and decent ceremonial took care to fashion everything according to the pattern GOD showed them in the primitive Church." They none of them, I mean Her own Sons (not the foreigners who unhappily for a time were allowed to interfere) had theories of their own to try, no untempered mortar of human invention to spread upon the sacred walls. No one of them did enough to have it considered as his own work. It was not finished in one, or two, or in ten generations. It is not finished now. Each century since the Reformation has seen its true principles of reforming and edifying the Church, on the model of the Ancient one, more and more carried out. One by one, in successive Convocations, have truths been rescued, doctrines confirmed, usages revived, points of order established, deficiencies supplied, abuses rectified, ambiguities diminished, innovations swept away; and this not by the Commandment of Princes or the Will of the People, but by the Church Herself—acting in Her corporate capacity, through Her own representatives, sitting for free deliberation in her own Parliament, the two Houses of Convocation. At every critical period of her existence She by GOD'S guidance has behaved

Herself most wisely, and with a moderation and charity, unexampled, towards her bitterest, most deadly foes. For in this, as in other respects, She listened to the Voice of the text. While She stood in the Ways, and saw, at one time, the licentious extravagances of Puritan division, at another, the cruel enforcement of Romish conformity, She first asked for the Old Paths, where was the good Way—not of indifference to Truth, but of toleration of error—and She walked therein; once more exhibiting to the world a pattern of that forbearance towards men's bodies, that tenderness for their conscientious belief, that respect for their prejudices, that meekness in the midst of strife, that long-suffering under trial, that love for all, in the unfailing exercise of which the first Christians won the admiration even of their enemies, and found rest unto their souls.

And when we come down to our own times, or rather examine what has been done for the Church during the last twenty years, and hence draw an augury for a bright and glorious future, we shall see that the true principles of the Reformation in England have still influenced the hearts, and moulded the work, and shaped the course of all who have been permitted by Divine Providence in any sort to renovate the Sanctuary, to repair its breaches, to strengthen its bulwarks, or only to hew wood and draw water for its use.

Twenty years ago there was a mighty famine in this land; "not a famine of bread, nor a thirst for water, but of hearing the Word of the LORD." In saying this no aspersion is cast on the many holy and earnest men who were then working in the Church's way, or in their own way, for GOD's Glory and Her good. But it cannot be denied that they were the exceptions. A century of inaction and indifference in the Church at large was coming to a close.—Nay, worse than this—To speak only of ourselves, as our subject requires—

“Worldliness, carelessness, formality, avarice, were, in its early period, eating out the very heart of the establishment; convocation, because it spoke the truth, was silenced, a Hoadly and a Clayton were promoted for heresy; a Blackburn was running his career of licentiousness, unchecked, infidelity was rampant; a defender of the Church allowed—‘It seems now to be generally taken for granted that the Christian religion has been discovered to be an imposture!’ We find that the highest teaching of the Church was confined to dissertations on the authenticity and credibility of the Holy Scriptures:—to proofs that the Apostles were in all likelihood sincere, and our Blessed LORD probably not an impostor: an Arian court, a cringing Episcopate, a drinking and sporting clergy:—all the higher mysteries of the Faith, the Atonement, the In-dwelling of the HOLY GHOST, the Power of the Keys, expunged from sermons and from treatises: earnestness ridiculed as the badge of a schismatic: one Bishop only who made any pretensions to sanctity and ecclesiastical learning. A re-action followed. But the Church fought hard for many weary years against earnestness, and cast it out of Her bosom: yes, and She fought hard against Truth too; and Her favourite teacher said that the being born again ‘meant nothing’—nothing, that is, to us, and in our circumstances. And when earnestness forced its way into Her pale, it, in its turn, attacked the Catholic Faith. Calvinism spread further and further, lifted its head higher, and ruled with a stronger hand. All that was orthodox was lifeless; all that had energy was unsound.’”*

The words of the prophet were fulfilled: “They shall wander from sea to sea, and from the North even to the East, they shall run to and fro to seek the Word of the LORD, and shall not find it.”—Amos, viii., 12.

* Neale’s Few Words of Hope.

And why found they it not? Because they sought not in "the Old Paths, where is the Good Way." Wesley and Whitfield were men of an indomitable will and immense self-reliance, but unhappily for the Church and their vast body of followers, they had small respect for Antiquity in doctrine or practice. They, or at least their followers, set at nought the customs, the doctrines, the order, the very existence of the Church; and the bitter results of their private judgment we are bewailing in our present most unhappy divisions. They shone for a time with the dazzling splendour of wandering stars, in a night of deepening gloom, and lit up many a dark corner, and irradiated many a despairing heart with the Truths and consolations of the Gospel. Let us rejoice with the Apostle that CHRIST was preached so zealously, though it might sometimes be through strife and envy, as well as for love of souls. Let us mourn that these great men failed where they did—in deference to authority;—for if in spite of their schismatical spirit and their partial views of truth, they yet were in a great degree the very Salt which saved the nation from absolute corruption, what must we imagine they would have been had they never divided the Church, but taught her doctrines and obeyed her commands?*

And after they had gone to their rest others were raised up within the Church, of pious and earnest lives, and therefore in striking contrast to the general worldliness and lukewarm propriety of their age. Instead of a heathen morality or dry Essays on the evidences of religion, they appealed to men's hearts, and preached home to them those great truths of Revelation—"the Corruption of our nature, and our natural helplessness and need of a Redeemer." Many of you, Brethren, know this for a truth:—in Leicester the names of a Robinson or a Vaughan cannot easily

* Note A.

be forgotten. But the truth must be spoken—other doctrines of great importance were lost sight of.—This is not said in disparagement of those good men. God forbid. They did what they could. But nothing was more natural than that realising as they did the peculiar wants of the times, and knowing by their own experience that the prevailing system of teaching was quite useless for the conversion of sinners, still less for the perfecting of Saints—it would have been most extraordinary had they not dwelt even with undue force on particular doctrines, and so given them a prominence, which threw all others into the shade. They preached CHRIST and Him Crucified (and blessed be GOD for their preaching) but they *forgot comparatively His Church*. Possessed with a deep abhorrence of Popery, whose strength was then supposed to lie in antiquity, and too much identifying with her system that pure and Apostolic form of Church government which existed long before her corruptions began, (and is in truth most opposed to them,) the vision into the past of such men as Venn and Cecil was bounded by the horizon of the sixteenth century, the Era of the Reformation. Then it was that the Church of England freed Herself from the yoke, and renounced the errors of the Papacy; then it was that She translated the pure Word of GOD into the common tongue, and recognised its supreme Authority as the Rule of Faith;—“so that whatsoever is not read therein, nor may be proved thereby is not to be required of any man that it should be believed as an Article of Faith, or be thought requisite or necessary to salvation.” Is it surprising that men of a deep Scriptural piety, an intimate knowledge of the Word of GOD, an ardent attachment to the Reformed Church, should have not only venerated the martyred Reformers, as I trust we all do, but accepted their private opinions even as conclusive, and considered them

as Fathers in the Faith, to the neglect of those greater Saints, whom Rome claimed most falsely as her own, the Chrysostoms, Gregories, Ambroses, and Augustines, to whom the Reformers themselves appealed as authorities, and were indebted for so much of their knowledge in matters ecclesiastical and spiritual?

If they slighted Antiquity and Church Authority,—without a due regard to which the doctrine of private judgment is a delusion and a snare—it was in an age when the Church had ceased to command, and Her ancient landmarks had been well nigh blotted out. If in their zeal for the doctrine of conversion they forgot that of Regeneration in Baptism, and taught not that the Grace then given might through neglect be entirely lost, but was intended to be preserved, and stirred up, and manifested by a patient continuance in well-doing and a holy life—they “had not so learned CHRIST;” the age was one of unusual wickedness: “children were corrupters;” and sensible experiences were commonly reckoned among the highest marks of the Divine favour. If they dropped the Daily Service of the Sanctuary, and unconsciously elevated Preaching above Prayer and Sacraments—theirs was an unbelieving age; “the Grace of CHRIST was considered as little more than an outward help, coming in aid of man’s natural powers,” not as the infusion of the Powers of a New Life into the Soul; and men of deeper principles than theirs actually attempted the Daily Service, but gave it up again, complaining that the Spirit of the day was too strong against them.

In a word, if they forgot to walk in some of the Old Paths, or scarcely knew where to look for them, let us not hastily condemn. They were burning and shining lights in their generation, and many perhaps of yourselves rejoiced in their light: they lived in a cold, a formal, aye, and an

infidel age, "when earnestness was ridiculed as the badge of a schismatic," and a man could scarcely say his private prayers, certainly could not hope to join in family prayer without being laughed at: they by God's Providence prepared the way for ourselves, by instructing the generation which has instructed us; and were they once more on earth living in the full blaze of knowledge and privileges they never dreamt of, who can for a moment doubt that their saintly lives, their self-denying labours, Christian heroism, and deeds of matchless love would immeasurably exceed and put to shame our highest endeavours, as our opportunities of doing good to man, and serving God far,—far outnumber theirs.

If we leave them and come down to the next generation immediately preceding our own, we shall find abundant proof that something was wanting in their teaching to identify it with the full doctrines of the Church: failing to impart which to their successors their system tended rapidly to decay.

An apologist thus pleads for them:—

"While they maintained in larger numbers than at any former period the genuine principles of the Gospel, it may admit of doubt whether the tone of personal piety had not suffered a decline as compared with former years. The successors of Venn and Cecil and Newton and Scott and Milner, while in the main holding their doctrines and adopting their views of truth, failed possibly in exhibiting that holy unction and deep spirituality of mind which characterised those eminent servants of God, and fitted them to become champions for the Truth. Their pulpit discourses partook of the same decline, more suited, in many cases, to catch the popular ear than to reach the conscience and affect the heart. Secular duties multiplied. Public institutions rising on every side required attention. Large parishes demanded

ceaseless superintendence. This tide of active duties was necessarily unfavourable to prayer, devotion, separation from the world, private meditation, a close walk with GOD.*

And then this apologist goes on to say that "these men with large parishes to guide could not be expected to leave the work entrusted to them by GOD, in order to delve into the recesses of ancient Theology."

Thus far a Successor and ardent admirer of these men, who, you see, is obliged to admit that twenty years ago his brethren in the ministry, the representatives of what are called Evangelical principles—"were secular in life, and debased in spirituality,—that they preached merely popular Sermons, and neglected prayer and devotion,—and were on principle ignorant of Theology."†

My Christian Brethren, I myself could never have published to the world one of these things: had I even realised this their lamentable declension from the true spirit and practice of the Gospel, in the very first generation after such leaders as Venn and Cecil, it is not for such an one as I am to be the accuser of the Brethren: nor, yourselves being judges, has the teaching of *this* place ever been personal. The words are those of one who would fain make the best of an untenable position, and vindicate his own and others' consistency.

You yourselves might draw a darker picture. You can, perhaps, bear personal testimony to such wretched facts as these following:—"The Divine Commission of the Priesthood and the Gift of the HOLY GHOST received by Imposition of the Bishop's hands, and the uninterrupted succession of those Bishops from the Apostles—these doctrines were scarcely ever, if at all, put forward as a real mark of the Church, and urged as Her

* Daniel Wilson's Appeal, p. 6, 7. † Scott's Answer to Wilson, p. 8.

great claim upon the obedience and love of the people. The true doctrine of Baptism was never unfolded: the Church's meaning of Regeneration was explained away: so little sense had men that Baptism was a Sacrament, that we even now constantly hear the Holy Communion spoken of as *the* Sacrament, as though Holy Baptism were none at all. The very services in the Prayer Book were altered and mangled to suit their views, by those who at their Ordination, the most solemn moment of their lives, had given their unfeigned "assent and consent" to it. The Daily* Service was all but extinct: the observance of Saints' Days and the holy season of Lent was almost confined to a few old people: even the Wednesday and Friday Service was becoming every year rarer: the Athanasian Creed was habitually disused: long extempore prayers and unauthorised hymns appeared in too many places: the marriage service was curtailed to half its length: one sentence of the exhortation to the Holy Communion was all that was ever heard: the sole standard of acceptableness being, who could most nearly adapt the Services and teaching of the Church to the taste of Dissenters. 'Time was,' we are told by a leading Dissenter, alluding to this very period, 'when Evangelical Clergymen recognised, or were thought to recognise, Presbyterian, Independent, or other Ministers as Ministers of CHRIST;—to admit that the Episcopal was not the exclusive and only Church;—to reject the notion of a Priesthood under the Christian Dispensation, except as applying literally to CHRIST, and figuratively to the entire Body of the faithful;—and to deny that Regeneration by the HOLY GHOST—mark these words of an honest, straight-forward Non-conformist—could in any sense be considered as effected through Baptism.' "†

* Note B.—† Plain Words to Plain People about present Dissensions in the Church, pp. 11, 12.

Thus had men, the guides of people, left the "Old Paths, where is the Good Way:" thus had they "committed two Evils; they had forsaken" the Church's system, that "Fountain of living water, and hewed them out cisterns, broken cisterns, that could hold no water." And the prophetic word was again fulfilled: "A wonderful and horrible thing is committed in the land:" "like people, like priest:" "the prophets prophesy falsely; and the priests bear rule by their means; and My people love to have it so:" "for they healed the hurt of the Daughter of My people slightly, saying, Peace, Peace; when there was no peace:" for "there is no peace, saith my GOD, to the wicked,"

And thus was there "a mighty famine" in the land; and the children, having gone into a far country away from the true object of their affections, the system of the Church, "began to be in want," and they "filled their bellies" not with Angels' food, but with the dry "husks" of Calvinistic teaching,—the unreal, unnatural, *unsacramental*, and, therefore, the *unspiritual*, system of modern Evangelicalism.

And then men "came to themselves." There was a reaction—a revival—and surely such a revival as has never been vouchsafed to any Branch of the Church. "The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh." "Suddenly, almost at the same moment, in different minds, here and there, it seems to have suggested itself to many earnest men to betake themselves to their Ancient Mother." "A voice seemed to sweep throughout the length and breadth of England—a mighty Voice, stirring up the secret depths of men's hearts, recalling ancient truths, suggesting half-forgotten duties, telling of unknown and neglected privileges, inspiring confidence, promising the strength of Heaven."

“Awake, awake, put on thy strength, O Zion, put on thy beautiful garments, O Jerusalem, the Holy City: for henceforth there shall no more come to thee the uncircumcised and the unclean. Shake thyself from the dust; arise, and sit down, O Jerusalem; loose thyself from the bands of thy neck, O Captive Daughter of Zion.”

“Like all other great Reformations whether for good or evil, its course has been from below upwards.” The Bishops of the Church, for the most part, have been silent, or actually impeded it. Like all other great Reformations it has not listened to the Voice, nor stereotyped the opinions, of one man, but has gone back to antiquity, and bowed to the Judgment of the Church Universal.

“Like all other great Reformations it has gone on silently and steadily, not a great victory and then a pause, and then another victory and then another pause; it has sprung up, how, we cannot tell; it has come not ‘with observation.’ Persons seemed to have imbibed truths which they had never heard. Year after year the movement has continued in an accelerated ratio in spite of all opposition. Year after year the stream has spread not in breadth only, but in depth. Like the prophetic river,* the waters were to the ancles. Years passed, the waters were to the knees. Years again passed, the waters were to the loins. And how then can we doubt that the time shall be, when they will become a river, ‘that cannot be forded, waters risen, waters to swim in, a river that cannot be passed over.’”†

Why this rapid growth, this confidence for the future? *Because it is the Work of GOD.* If it had not been of GOD, man would long ago have overthrown it.

What have been the chief characteristics or principles of this movement in which you, brethren, find yourselves involved, hardly know-

* Ezekiel. xlvii. † Neale's *Few Words of Hope.*

ing how or why. To speak in the most general terms one might say: "The object of the movement was to rouse the Church to self-knowledge, to force our Holy Mother, so to speak, to a consciousness and to an open avowal of Her gifts, and Heavenly Calling, and Heavenly privileges, which she had allowed to sleep; and in order that She might completely fulfil the great ends for which She had been instituted, by Her Divine Head, to act up to Her real, however forgotten, character. And the means to this end were the revival of such truths as these:—the Doctrine of the Apostolical Succession,* as pledging CHRIST's Presence in His Church; and from hence, as far as the individual soul was concerned, the certainty of receiving in this Church the True Sacraments of Salvation,—True Sacraments being those which are "duly administered" by "lawful ministers"—such sacraments being not "bare signs" of things absent, but the "means whereby we receive" in the one "a death unto sin, and a New Birth unto righteousness," and in the other "the BODY and BLOOD of CHRIST, which are verily and indeed taken, and received by the faithful in the LORD's Supper;"—and that the Church had "Authority in Controversies of Faith," had the Power to "decree," to "teach," to "excommunicate," (I quote the very words of the Articles), and did not give every individual Preacher, much less every individual Christian, permission to take down his Bible and make out from it his own scheme of doctrine, or system of Church Government, or Interpretation of Scripture, but in the case of all Her authorised Ministers required them "*first* to take care that they taught nothing in their Sermons to be held by the people as a matter of religion but what was agreeable to the Doctrinet of the Old and New Testament, and which the Catholic Fathers and Ancient Bishops had col-

* Note C.

† Note D.

lected from that same Doctrine"—(Canon 1571); and in the case of all others, that "whosoever would be saved, before all things it is necessary that he hold the Catholic Faith, and that if any man do not keep this Faith whole and undefiled, without doubt he shall perish everlastingly."*

Such are the truths which have been gradually recalled to men's minds during the last twenty years. They are the Truths of the Ancient Church of England;—the Truths which the Reformation secured to ourselves, while all other bodies of Christians neglected or missed them altogether;—the Truths which are embodied in our Book of Common Prayer, where any that is of a docile, humble, reverential spirit, may seek for them, and seeking shall most surely find.—In short they are some of the Old Paths;—and many of you know that with them is the Good Way: you have walked therein, and have found rest unto your souls.

But if so, it is objected, how is it that they are so unpopular? Surely men would not hold up to scorn and ridicule, and speak so uncharitably of, the Truth?—But God's Word assures us that the world will only believe a lie, and not receive the Truth. CHRIST, the Incarnate Truth, was to a wicked and adulterous generation a Deceiver. When the people crucified Him, they knew not what they did. So it is now. There never was a great spiritual work in the world without exciting its most bitter opposition. When the evil spirit is going to be cast out, then is he most fierce and raging: then does he tare his poor victim, throw him on the ground, about to leave him half dead, wallowing and foaming.

Never were the plain Scriptural doctrines of the Church placed before the simple multitude, but Satan abused their minds with counterfeits, with false doctrines, misrepresentation, and used

* Plain Words to Plain People.

every artifice to prevent their acceptance. So now. The Kings of the Earth stand up, and the rulers take counsel together: The people are moved and make much ado; and we in this hitherto quiet place are wondering, perhaps, at the roaring of the waves and the madness of the people.—For to a calm and patient observer of the Signs of the Times it is too evident against what Rock the worldliness, and covetousness, and luxury, and indifference, and sectarianism, and cold scepticism, and blank infidelity of the age are really dashing themselves:—Not against the Protestant sects in England; not against Romanism in England; but against the CHURCH. The Spirit of the Age finds itself opposed,—not by Rome, *i.e.*, as She is, (it is her boast that she can adapt herself and her system to any age or society)—not by Geneva, (no human system, still less a heartless Socinianism, can be at variance with the world), but by the Spirit of the Church of England, which is no other than the Spirit of the Ancient Church,—the SPIRIT of CHRIST. The world is now maddened—not by the Roman claim to Infallibility, but by the Church's assertion of Authority;—not at the sight of novelties of Rome, but at the mention of the Old Paths;—not by Romish corruptions, but by Evangelical Truth, and Apostolical order;—not against forced auricular confession, but any priestly controul, or interference whatsoever;—not against the mystery of iniquity, whatever that be, and it will shortly be revealed, but against the Mysteries of Sacraments, and other effectual Means of Grace.

And hence we are led to believe that the poor Church of England would not now be so shamefully handled by the world, Her Voice suppressed, Her Rights withheld, Her Liberty denied, were She in spirit less at variance with the World than She is.

She would then be placed at least on a level

with the Sects around Her, and have a fair field granted to carry out Her own System, as dissent already has done, and Rome is now permitted to do.

She would then be permitted in Her own peculiar way, to cope with, and by Her own inherent strength to defeat, the latest aggression of (alas! the truth must be spoken) Her most unscrupulous, Her bitterest, deadliest foe. For, I would observe, this late Act of the Pope in sending a Schismatical Archbishop into this country is an insult and aggression not so much on the Crown, as on the Church of England. The Supremacy* of the Crown, or to speak more correctly of the House of Commons and its leader, is not impugned in this matter. That Supremacy was virtually given up five years ago, when Parliament, in spite of warning and past experience, repealed every Act which might now have been in force against Romish encroachments. It is the Church who never repealed Her Canons against Popery five years ago, nor gave secret permission since for the intrusion of such "treacherous wolves" into her pastures—it is the Church whose very existence is ignored,—it is yourselves, Brethren, as Christians, who are now deemed no better than Heathens or Infidels by Rome,—Churchmen and the Church are they who ought to be indignant and alarmed at this proceeding.—And it is the Church which can only repel—consistently and effectually repel such an invasion of Her rights, such an attack upon Her very life, as the only true Spiritual Mother of all Christians in this Realm.

How She should repel it, how you and I ought to act as Her loyal and true hearted sons, I hope by God's blessing, to point out on Sunday next.

In the mean time I will only say our course of

* Note E.

Action must be consistent with the Principles of the Reformation. We must once more "Stand in the Ways and see, and ask for the Old Paths, where is the good way," and if we walk therein, not as Englishmen or Citizens merely, but as Churchmen, exclusively, we shall most assuredly seek the peace of Jerusalem and find rest for our souls.



NOTES.

A.

LET not this great man be visited with a wider condemnation than he deserves. In the year 1739, whence Wesleyanism dates its birth, Wesley formed the first of the United Societies. These Societies were intended to remain in Communion with the Church; but, as Southey remarks, a more important measure was the foundation of the first Methodist Preaching-house in the same year: yet "this, like the other steps, which led inevitably to a separation from the Church, was taken without any such design, or any perception of its consequences."—*Life of Wesley*, vol. i. p. 202.

He was for long doubtful of the propriety of appointing lay preachers in his Societies. "To touch this point was at one time to touch the apple of his eye." Lay administration of the Sacraments he would never permit. "I verily believe it is a sin," said he, "which consequently I dare not tolerate." But finding it very convenient to have some persons on another footing, he took advantage of the accidental visit to London of one Erasmus, a Greek Bishop, to procure Orders for some of his preachers. It is even said, that he wished to be ordained Bishop himself by this foreigner. But all these acts, schismatical as they are, or, at least, tending to schism, fade away before his own deliberate assumption of the Episcopal function, in pretending to ordain, in the year 1734, one Dr. Coke, already a Presbyter as well as himself, to the Episcopate, in America, a proceeding which involved the strangely inconsistent principles that Episcopacy was necessary, as an Order superior to the Presbyterate, and yet that a single Presbyter may elevate a brother to the Episcopate. He afterwards arrogated to himself the same authority for Scotland as for America, although with much less excuse, for in Scotland there was an Episcopate with an Apostolical Succession.

But all this notwithstanding, Wesley was a most zealous admirer of the Church of England, he ever warned his followers against separation from Her, he died in communion with Her, and prayed for Her almost with his last breath.

Let the Wesleyans of the present day mark well the following sentiments, and reconcile them with the principles now "developed," after the Romish fashion, from them. "I fear when the Methodists leave the Church, GOD will leave them."—*Minutes of Conference, 1770.*

"How should an assistant be qualified for his charge? By walking closely with GOD,—and by loving the Church of England, and resolving not to separate from it."—*Ibid.*

"They—i.e. the Preachers—no more take upon themselves to be Priests than to be kings. They take not upon them to administer the Sacraments, an honour peculiar to the Priests of GOD."—*Appeal to Men of Reason.*

When some lay itinerant Preachers in the Conference at Leeds, in 1755, expressed a desire to administer the Sacraments of Baptism and the LORD'S Supper—Wesley wrote as follows:—"Oh! labour, watch, and pray with all your might, that no such breach, no such wide chasm be made in her (the Church's) side! Wherefore should the pickthank heathen have cause to say, Where is now their GOD? For I query much, if, upon dissenting from the Established Church, the divisions and subdivisions of the Methodists among themselves, would not exceed those of the Anabaptists in Germany dissenting from Luther: and then what an horrible scene of confusion will here be open both to the world and believers?"

When the manifest danger of separation forced itself upon Wesley, it was thus resisted by him. "Are we not unawares, by little and little, tending to a separation from the Church? O remove every tendency thereto with all diligence! *Let all our Preachers go to Church. Let all our people go constantly. Receive the Sacrament at every opportunity.* Warn all against * * * despising the prayers of the Church; against calling our society a *Church*, or the *Church*; against calling our Preachers *Ministers*, our houses *Meeting-houses*, CALL THEM PLAIN PREACHING HOUSES."

Extract from Rev. J. Wesley's last Journal.—1787, Jan. 2nd, Page 26th.—"I went over to Deptford; but it seemed I was got into a den of lions. Most of the leading men of the Society were mad for separating from the Church. I endeavoured to reason with them, but in vain, they had neither sense nor even good manners left.—At length, after meeting the whole Society, I told them, if you are resolved you may have your service in Church hours; but remember, from that time you will see my face no more. This struck deep, and from that hour I have heard no more of separating from the Church."

"When his parched lips were wetted, he devoutly re-

peated his usual thanksgiving after meat:—‘We thank Thee, O LORD, for these and all Thy mercies, Bless the Church and King; and grant us truth and peace, through JESUS CHRIST our Lord, for ever and ever.’—*Jackson’s Centenary.*

Is there no “Theory of Development” for Wesleyanism?

B.

This matter of the daily service was not a mere theory with our forefathers,—even one hundred and ten years ago. It is a matter upon record, (See Paterson’s *Pietas Londinensis*) that in London alone, in the year 1714, seventy-five Churches and Chapels the Sacrifice of Prayer and Praise was offered daily; in forty-four of these twice a day; in five, three times a day; in five, four times a day. In sixty more there was daily service on Wednesdays and Fridays, and Holydays. In fourteen Churches and Chapels there was a weekly Communion; in seven, Holy Communion was administered on other occasions, as Holidays, &c. besides.

C.

“One thing, however, I may observe upon this head—the authority, I mean, of the Church in settling the sense of Scripture on controverted subjects—which is, that you may think it very cumbrous, and one which requires more learning and leisure than falls to the lot of the majority of persons, and hence you may be disposed to be prejudiced against it. Certainly it does contrast strongly with the fatal facility of that other rule, which dispenses with CHRIST’s presence in His Church in its diffused capacity, makes every man his own Pope, and every woman and child their own infallible interpreters of Christian Truth. But it is not in its length, or in the time which it demands, so much as in the temper of mind which it involves, that the Church’s demand of submitting private judgment to be controlled by her teaching, is so distasteful to the mere carnal mind. Not only is such unlimited private judgment calculated to cut all questions very short, but it is very pleasant and seductive. It is a comfortable thing enough to feel that we want no helps further than our own heads—no guides with demands more stringent than our own wishes and tastes: whereas the Church’s principles of authority to which I have alluded, requires obedience and a teachable mind, a gentle temper, and a submissive and quiet spirit. But do not be frightened at being told

that in searching into antiquity you will only find Fathers against Fathers, and Councils against Councils; it is not in their disagreement, but in their agreement, that we have recourse to the ancient Church: the road for all practical ends is neither long nor tedious; it is short and well beaten. This appeal to antiquity is already made for your use; it is to those creeds and formularies which have been in use in the Church from the very first. You have not to find the path, but to follow it; you have only to keep what you have already received, and in what you have been, from your youth up, instructed. The Prayer Book interprets Scripture: and in following the teaching of the Prayer Book, you 'stand in the old paths;' for the warrant by which we know that the Prayer Book is right, is, that we have in it that one Voice which in all ages has met and confuted every successive form of false doctrine, whenever and wherever it arose."—*Plain Words to Plain People*, p. 17.

D

"It is evident unto all men diligently reading the *Holy Scriptures* and ancient Authors, that from the *Apostles' time* there have been these Orders of Ministers in CHRIST'S Church—Bishops, Priests, and Deacons—and, therefore, to the intent that these Orders may be *continued*, and reverently used and esteemed, in the United Church of England and Ireland, no man shall be accounted and taken to be a lawful Bishop, Priest, or Deacon in the United Church of England and Ireland, or suffered to execute any of the said functions except he be called, tried, examined, and admitted thereunto, according to the *form hereafter following*, or *hath had formerly Episcopal Consecration or Ordination*."—*Preface to Ordinal; Book of Common Prayer*.

The Church's testimony to the Divine Origin of Episcopacy is given in these solemn words:—"ALMIGHTY GOD, the Giver of all Good Gifts, who of Thy Divine Providence hast appointed divers Orders in Thy Church; Give Thy Grace, we humbly beseech Thee, to all those who are to be called to any office and administration in the same; and so replenish them with the truth of Thy doctrine, and endure them with innocency of life, that they may faithfully serve before Thee, to the Glory of Thy great Name, and the benefit of Thy Holy Church; through JESUS CHRIST our LORD. Amen."—*Collect for Ember Week*.

"There are others who have neither desire nor esteem for Episcopacy, but condemn it as an Anti-Christian innovation, and a rag of Popery. I conceive this to be most

gross schism materially. It is ten times more schismatical to desert, nay, to take away (so much as lies in them) the whole order of Bishops, than to subtract obedience from one lawful Bishop. All that can be said to mitigate this fault is, that they do it ignorantly, as they have been mis-taught and misinformed. And I hope that many of them are free from obstinacy, and hold the truth implicitly in the preparation of their minds, being ready to receive it when God shall reveal it to them. How far this may excuse (not the crime but) their persons from formal schism, either *à toto* or *à tanto*, I determine not, but leave them to stand or fall to their own master."—*Archbishop Bromhall's Vindication of the Church of England.*

Let no one ignorantly affirm that this doctrine of Apostolic Succession is a Roman one, and its upholders favourers of Popery. It is a *Church* doctrine which we hold in common with Rome; and on its truth the very being of a Church depends. It is also our greatest bulwark against Romanism. "The Romanists account the promises to St. Peter to be confined to their single see; the Anglo-Catholics, with the Primitive Church, inherited by the Bishops universally; Rome has in her corrupt days ever assayed to intrench on the independent authority of Bishops as of Churches; she would have them derive their authority mediately through her existing Bishop, not, together with her Bishop, from the One Bishop. The doctrine of Apostolic Succession involves our independence from the undue authority of Rome. Whatever priority of dignity there may be, the Bishop of the smallest city is as much the representative of the Chief Bishop as the Patriarch of the greatest."

E.

The Papal Act is an invasion of the Regalities of the English Crown, for "one of the *Laws and Customs of this Land*,—one of the fundamental principles of the Constitution,—is, that the Crown is, under God, the "*sole fountain of honour*;" and that no title, derived from *towns or cities in this land*, and designed to be *current therein*, can be conferred by any but the Crown. And Ecclesiastical titles, as far as they are *territorial*, are derived from the Crown.

"The place and honour of a Bishop (to cite the words of Hooker) are received from the Crown alone;" and to confer an Episcopal title, derived from an English title, is to invade the rights of the Crown. If the Pope can make one of his Ecclesiastics Archbishop of Westminster, he can make one of his nephews Prince of Wales.

“The Pope may consecrate a Bishop; but to call him Archbishop of Wistminster is to offer an indignity to the Crown, and an outrage to the Constitution, in the face of Europe and the world. And to expect the Crown and People of England to acknowledge this title, is to expect them to stultify and betray themselves. Some, indeed, have said, Let not this recent Act of the Papacy take effect, unless the Government permits it. But I maintain, that no English Government *can permit* the Bishop of Rome to confer these titles. And with due submission be it said, not even the *Sovereign* could enable him to do so. For the *power of conferring titles* is one of the Regalities annexed to the English Crown. The *Sovereign exercises* that power, but cannot *give it way*. The Regalities of the Crown are held by the reigning Sovereign, not as their Owner, but as Trustee, not only for the present generation, but for posterity; that is, for all future Sovereigns and subjects; and, by consequence, the Sovereign *cannot alienate* those Regalities; and is also, by solemn promise and oath, pledged to maintain them.”—*Wordsworth's Occasional Sermons*, No. ix. pp. 22, 23.

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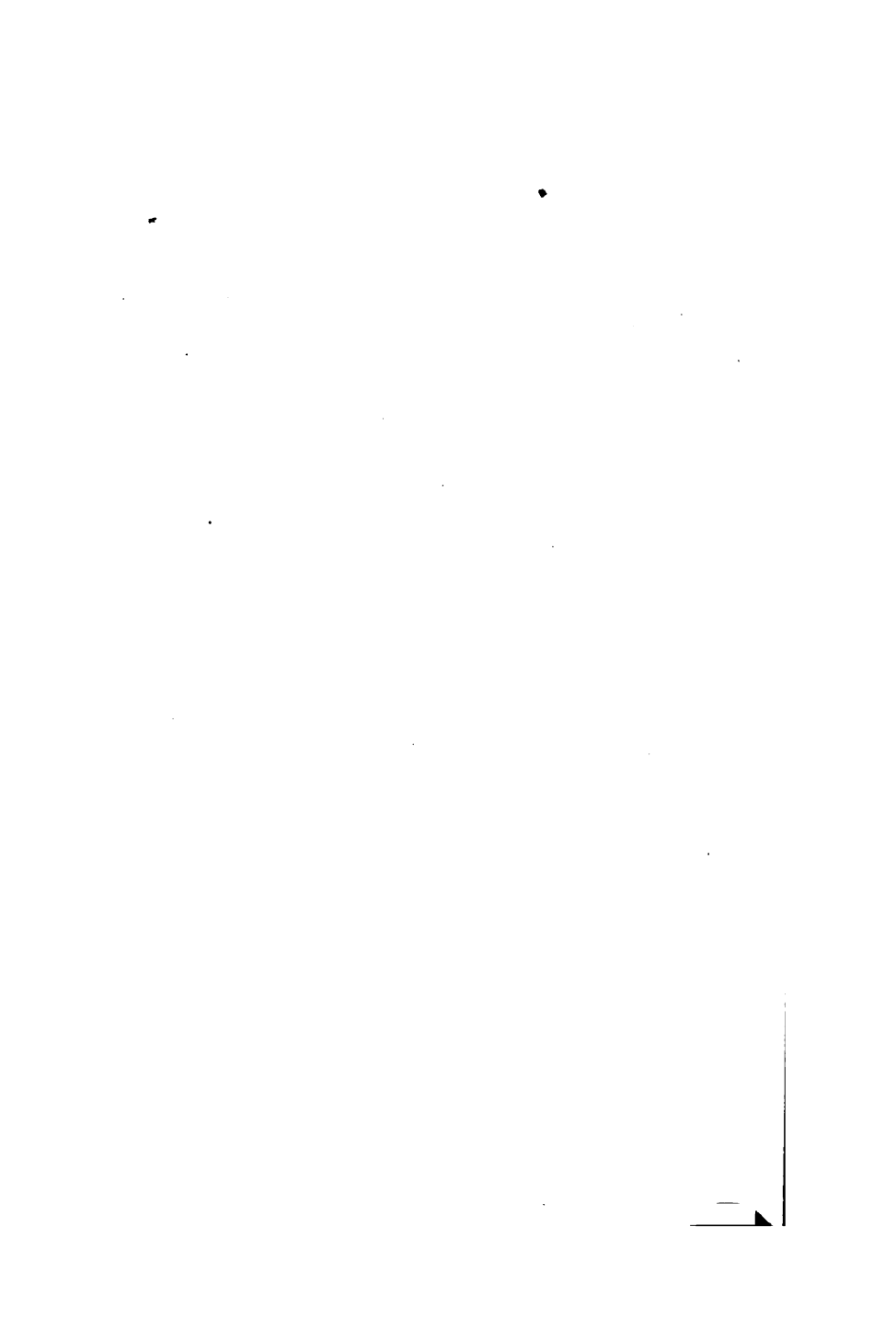
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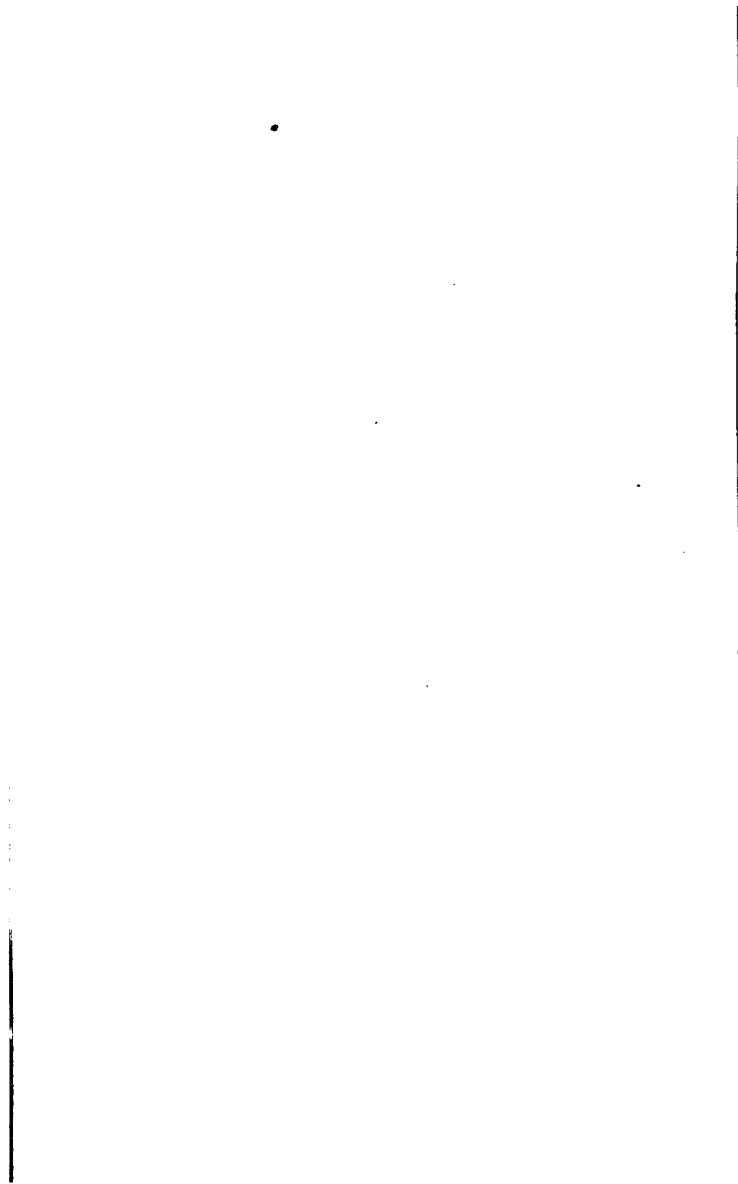
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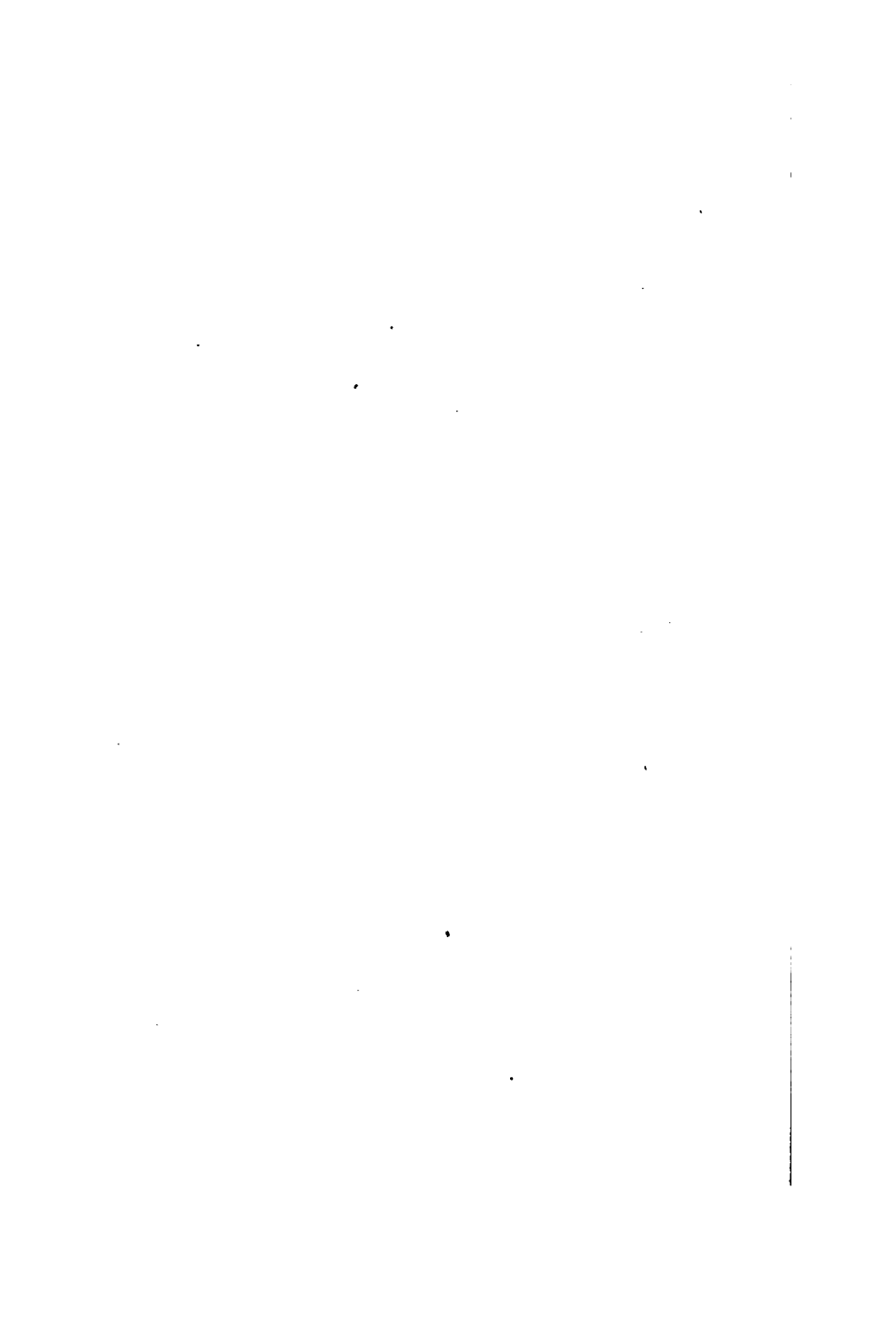
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