

A
CHARGE
DELIVERED TO THE CLERGY
OF THE
DIOCESE OF KILLALOE,
AT THE
PRIMARY VISITATION,
THURSDAY AUGUST THE THIRD, 1820.

BY RICHARD MANT, D. D.
BISHOP OF KILLALOE AND KILFENORA.

DUBLIN:
RICHARD MILLIKEN, GRAFTON-STREET,
BOOKSELLER TO THE UNIVERSITY;

MESSRS. F. C. AND J. RIVINGTON, LONDON; AND J. PARKER,
OXFORD.

1820.

D. GRAISBERRY,
PRINTER TO THE UNIVERSITY.

TO THE RIGHT WORSHIPFUL
AND REVEREND
JOHN PARKER, L. L. D. VICAR GENERAL,

TO THE VERY REVEREND
JOHN BAYLY, M. A., DEAN,
AND TO THE VERY REVEREND AND REVEREND

THE CLERGY
OF THE DIOCESE OF KILLALOE,
THE FOLLOWING CHARGE,
WHICH HAS RECEIVED A TESTIMONY OF THEIR
APPROVAL IN THEIR UNANIMOUS REQUEST
FOR ITS PUBLICATION,

IS INSCRIBED BY THEIR VERY FAITHFUL
SERVANT AND BROTHER,

RD. KILLALOE AND KILFENORA.

CLARISFORD-HOUSE,
AUGUST 19, 1820.

TO THE RIGHT WORSHIPFUL

AND REVEREND

JOHN PARKER, LL.D. VICAR GENERAL,

TO THE VERY REVEREND

JOHN BARRY, M.A., DEAN,

AND TO THE VERY REVEREND AND REVEREND

THE CLERGY

OF THE DIOCESE OF KILDALE,

THE FOLLOWING CHARGE,

WHICH HAS RECEIVED A TESTIMONY OF THEIR

APPROVAL IN THEIR UNANIMOUS REQUEST

FOR ITS PUBLICATION,

IS INSCRIBED BY THEIR VERY FAITHFUL

SERVANT AND BROTHER,

RO. KILDALE AND KILKENNY.

CLAREMONT HOUSE,

AUGUST 19, 1880.

A

CHARGE,

&c. &c.

MY REVEREND BRETHREN,

HIS Majesty having been graciously pleased, on the recommendation of his confidential advisers, to intrust me with the charge of this extensive diocese, I have gladly embraced the earliest opportunity in my power for meeting you collectively, and laying before you an expression of my cordial regard and good-will. It would have been satisfactory indeed, could I have been present at the late visitation of our venerable Metropolitan : but circumstances, not under my own control, having then precluded my attendance, I have called you together again at this time, according to the custom of the country, that we may have the mutual benefit of forming a personal knowledge of each other, as a preliminary to that good understanding and brotherly

B

intercourse, which I trust will in future subsist between us. What assistance in the discharge of your pastoral duties I may be capable of rendering to any of you, I beg you to be assured that I am sincere in offering, and shall be always ready, as my office requires of me, faithfully to bestow. On the other hand I am persuaded, that I shall not ineffectually solicit from you that cheerful acquiescence in my wishes, and that zealous cooperation and support in the legitimate exercise of my function, without which it will be impossible for me to execute my office, in a manner satisfactory to myself, or conducive to the important purposes, which it is intended to promote.

Indeed when I reflect upon the awfulness of that office, upon the responsibility attached to it in the sight of God and of his Church, upon the impediments which obstruct the due discharge of it at every time and in every place, and particularly upon the difficulties which more signally beset us in this country and at this period ; it is with a higher degree of anxiety and alarm than of delight or self-complacency, that I contemplate the state of life, in which it has recently pleased God to place me. But I know who hath said, and I believe that the comfort of the assurance is applicable to all those who devoutly beseech his aid, " My grace is sufficient for thee : for my strength is made perfect in weakness." * Relying

* 2 Cor. xii. 9.

then not upon my own ability but upon his, and humbly imploring the all-sufficiency of his grace, I have engaged in this ministration, to which I trust I have been called according to the will of Him, "whose I am and whom I serve."* Pardon me for thus adverting to my own condition and feelings: the reflexion will not, I hope, have appeared impertinent: but I proceed to the more immediate subject of this address.

I was observing, my reverend brethren, on the cooperation and support, which I promise myself from the clergy of the diocese, in the execution of the office intrusted to me. Such cooperation, you will instantly perceive, must in my case be peculiarly necessary. A stranger till very lately in this part of the British empire, I have in consequence much to learn at my outset, and must in many particulars depend on you to instruct me. Those topicks, upon which early information appeared to me most desirable with a view to my official duties, are comprised in the questions, which I caused to be circulated amongst you, and to which I requested your answers to be delivered on the present occasion. I expect that I shall have reason to be thankful for much valuable information, such as is not to be procured from any publick documents, from any at least, with which

B 2

* Acts xxvii. 23.

I happen to be acquainted : and I hope that the questions will not have been productive to any of you of any material inconvenience.

You may have observed, that no inquiries were made with respect to the condition of your churches or glebe-houses. The reports of the rural deans on those subjects, in answer to the questions recently circulated by the Metropolitan, were so copious and minute, and contained in general such complete statements, that I considered it unnecessary to trouble the incumbents with fresh questions. I remark with great pleasure, that the buildings of each description are reported for the most part as in a state of good repair, and respectively fit for the comfortable residence of the clergyman, or for the due celebration of divine worship. Wherever the church or glebe-house is not in a state of good and substantial repair, I do most earnestly intreat that they, to whom the duty belongs, take immediate steps for correcting the evil : and with respect to parishes, where a building of either description may be wanted, I take this opportunity of saying, that I shall be particularly gratified by being instrumental to the supply of it.

It is indeed a consolatory and an encouraging circumstance, amongst others of a different character which mark the ecclesiastical condition of this country, that great facility has been afforded by publick provisions within the few years last past,

towards the participation of your parishioners in publick worship, and their reception of pastoral instruction and the other benefits derivable from a regularly resident ministry. About twenty years ago this diocese contained no more than thirty-five churches, and three glebe houses: at this time it contains forty-five churches complete, with three others in the course of building, and thirty-five glebe-houses: or, speaking of the united dioceses, the number of churches within that period has been augmented from thirty-eight to fifty-two, and of glebe-houses from four to thirty-eight. There is indeed no small occasion for further additions in both respects; and such, I trust, God willing, may in time be effected. However we have great reason to be thankful for the actual increase to divine Providence; and, under Providence, both to those who contrived such means of improvement in the ecclesiastical state of the country; and to those, who by their superintendence, or by their active exertions, have contributed to carry the means into execution. To several of you, my reverend brethren, the thanks of the community are due for your diligence in this "work and labour of love:" nor less to your late respected diocesan, who was most sincere and indefatigable in his endeavours, to multiply the places of religious worship within his charge, and to provide for the establishment and continuance of his clergy amongst their respective flocks.

Allow me however to call your attention to the consideration, that the existence of churches, and the permanent residence of the clergy in their parishes, are only so far valuable, as they tend to the promotion of the glory of God in Christ Jesus our Lord, and to the spiritual edification of his people. They are valuable only as means, tending to a most excellent end : at which indeed without them we have a very faint prospect of arriving ; but at which unless by the use of them we do arrive, the things themselves are of small price.

Thus, with respect to our churches, it is a self-evident proposition, that they are of little utility or value, unless the religious services, for which they are intended, be rightly and duly performed in them according to the provisions of our incomparable liturgy.

This proposition, I say, is self-evident. There are two or three suggestions, however, in illustration and application of it, to which I am desirous of drawing your attention, as intimating probable occasions for improvement. Whether they be applicable to this or that particular parish, must depend upon the circumstances of the parish itself : but the general principles, on which the suggestions rest, are, I apprehend, beyond the reach of reasonable contradiction.

It is, for example, plainly the intention of the Church, agreeably both to the letter and to the spirit of the divine law, which regulates her pro-

ceedings, that not only an hour or two in one division of the Lord's day, but, generally speaking, the whole of the day in both of its great divisions, should be set apart and consecrated to rest and religious exercises. And accordingly it is her purpose, that her congregations should publicly join in the service, which she has provided for them, both in the early and in the latter part of that day. From the reports before me it appears, that in most churches of the diocese only a single Sunday service is performed. I do not speak of this omission as an object of indiscriminate censure : because I am fully aware, that local circumstances may be such as to justify the omission, by rendering both a morning and an evening service impracticable. But I speak of it for the purpose of suggesting the reflexion, that by the omission of the second service our publick provisions for divine worship are thus far rendered nugatory, whilst the sacred character of the day is thereby exposed to profanation : that we ought not therefore hastily to acquiesce in the notion of the impracticability of the two services : and that, where practicable, we ought to perform them.

But whatever be the cases, to which this suggestion may be judged inapplicable, it is a truth of universal application, that, whenever divine service is performed, it ought to be performed by all, who are concerned in it, with seriousness, attention, and devotion : and that without such quali-

fications, on the part both of the minister and of the people, the purposes of it cannot be duly answered with regard either to God or to ourselves. The conduct of those, who compose our congregations, is frequently very different from that, which the professed object of our assembling requires. For instance, irregularity and lateness of attendance on the service, and indifference and inattention during the progress of it, are evils very apt to be prevalent amongst us: evils, which, wherever they do prevail, it is our duty, as ministers of the Church, to correct, as far as possible, and to abolish.

But I have been the rather induced to beg your attention to this topick, because my experience of the behaviour of congregations in this part of the empire, brief indeed and limited in itself, but not without confirmation from the testimony of others whose experience is more comprehensive than my own, has led me to fear, that the regard, shewn by the people to the publick worship of the Church, is, in one very important and striking particular, by no means such, as the Church herself, in conformity with the dictates of reason and religion, unequivocally requires. My meaning is, that the lay members of our communion appear not to participate, as they ought and as they are enjoined to do, in their publick devotional exercises, such as the general confession, the Lord's prayer, the litany,

the psalms, the creeds, the petition for mercy and grace after each commandment, in short, those parts of the service, which are appointed to be said jointly by the minister and the people, or are distributed alternately between them. The portions, assigned to the people or congregation at large, appear to be delegated by them with almost universal consent to the parish clerk; an officer, by the way, whom the Liturgy recognises only once throughout the whole of its contents, and then not in connexion with any act of religious devotion: * whilst the people themselves, to whom this their scriptural and protestant privilege is carefully secured by the rubrick, betray as little interest in the performance, and as little acquaintance with their duty relating to it, as if they were in the same abject condition of spiritual darkness and bondage with their less favoured brethren of the Romish communion, and “publick prayer” were still “had in the church in a tongue not understood of the people.” † I do most sincerely hope, that this is far from an accurate representation of things in many churches of this diocese: but if it be an accurate, or if it approach to an accurate representation of the state of things in any congregation, such a state, I am sure you will agree with me, imperiously demands correction. In such a state, neither is the glory

* See the Form of Solemnization of Matrimony; Rubric concerning the giving of the ring.

† Art. xxiv.

of God set forth, nor the salvation of men set forward. And I am persuaded, my reverend brethren, that if in any of your congregations such a state of things do exist, your attention being thus awakened to the subject, you will exert your best endeavours to amend it, both by “publick and private monitions and exhortations ;” * by encouraging the use of Prayer Books amongst those who are capable of using them ; by pointing out the provisions of the rubrick in its particular relation to the people ; and by explaining the reasonableness and utility, and inforcing the observance, of those provisions : that so with the divine blessing you may remove ignorance, indifference, and irreverence from your congregations ; and substitute a more decent and devout behaviour in the publick worship of God. †

* The ordering of Priests.

† The following are specimens of those provisions, to which allusion is made in the foregoing paragraph. In the Exhortation, at the commencement of the service, the Minister “prays and beseeches, *as many as are here present, to accompany him with a pure heart, and humble voice, unto the throne of the heavenly grace, saying after him.*” Then follows, as the Rubrick describes it, “a general Confession *to be said of the whole Congregation* after the Minister, all kneeling.” After the Absolution, which is “to be pronounced by the Priest alone,” the Rubrick directs, “*The people shall answer here, and at the end of all other prayers, Amen.*” It follows, “Then the Minister shall kneel, and say the Lord’s Prayer with an audible voice ; *the people also kneeling, and repeating it with him, both here, and wheresoever else it is used in di-*

Let me observe however, that there is no more effectual mode of securing a proper attention to the service of the Church, than by training up her youthful members in the way of proper attention to it, and instilling into their tender minds the principles of the Christian religion, as set forth in her invaluable Liturgy. The performance of this duty indeed the Church makes imperative upon her Ministers, by imposing on them the weekly engagement of "instructing and examining the children" of their parishes in the Church Catechism.* This duty, which from the recent returns I perceive to be faithfully and diligently practised in some cases, appears in other cases to be negligently executed, if it be not omitted altogether.

vine service." In the short petitions and the doxology, which ensue, the Minister is directed to begin, and the "Answer" is as clearly intended for the people: the same remark applies to the Psalms, when they are "said" and not "sung." The suffrages after the Creed, and the Litany, are plainly constructed on the same principle. The Creeds are directed to be "sung or said by the Minister and *the people*, standing." On the rehearsal of the Ten Commandments by the priest, in the Communion service, it is ordered that "*the people* still kneeling *shall* after every Commandment *ask* God mercy for their transgression, &c." In all these rubrics, and more if necessary might be added, the people, or congregation at large, are contemplated by the Church as sharing vocally, as well as mentally, in the devotions of the Minister. The Clerk, as stated above, is not recognized; and certainly was never intended by the Church to supersede the Congregation in general.

* First Rubrick after the Catechism.

For an omission or neglect of this duty, unless it be really impracticable, I confess that I cannot see a satisfactory reason. If there existed sufficient causes in the nature of the thing itself, or in the religious condition of the country, for instituting the practice, those causes may well operate with at least undiminished force for upholding it, circumstanced as we at present are. Would we wish our members to proceed generally in a course of religious duty, when they are old? we must train them up during childhood in the way wherein they should go. The principles of religion will thus be most firmly rooted in their minds: the habits of it will thus be most effectually and permanently incorporated with their practice. Would we wish them to be secured against the temptations to religious error, by which in this country they are more particularly liable to be assailed? we must not omit any opportunity of inculcating on their understandings the most convincing reasons for adhering to that pure profession of faith and to those scriptural forms of worship, which distinguish our protestant establishment. Thus instructed, they may resist the seductions of error; and remain rational, conscientious, and consistent members of our communion. But, unless we do so instruct them, we have no security for their continuing with us: nor, if they nominally continue, have we any security for their deriving benefit to themselves from their continuance, or for

their being any thing but a disgrace to their profession.

I am evidently supposing here, that the duty of catechising is performed in the manner, in which alone it can be effectually performed : namely, not by merely teaching the Catechism to our children by rote, but, as the Church provides, by “diligently instructing them and examining them in it.” The duty of the Minister therefore is, not only to put the questions to the children, and to receive their answers, in the prescribed form of words ; but it is to render them assistance towards understanding it, and to be satisfied that they do understand it. It is thus that the children will become by God’s blessing acquainted with the “things, which a christian ought to know and believe to his soul’s health :” it is thus that the foundation may be laid, in order to their being “virtuously brought up to lead a godly and a christian life :” it is thus that they may be led to perceive, what is the nature and what are the obligations of their “profession, as represented unto them by their baptism ;” and may have due encouragement to the “continual mortifying of all their evil and corrupt affections,” and to their “daily proceeding in all virtue and godliness of living.*

* Publick Baptism of Infants.

I shall however insist no more upon this department of ministerial duty, than by saying, that, where it has been practised in this diocese, I trust it will be maintained; and that, where it has been omitted or neglected, I trust it will be put into effective operation, or carried on with greater assiduity: especially I hope, that exertions will have been made upon occasion of the approaching confirmation, to instruct your children in their Christian duties, as comprised in the Church Catechism; and to prepare them for partaking rationally and devoutly in the rite, that so it may be “ministered,” as the Church expresses herself, “to the more edifying of such as shall receive it.”*

And here, having just had occasion to notice the sacrament of baptism, before I pass on I would advert to the administration of it, as connected with our present subject, and leading to the consideration of another of the uses, for which our sacred edifices are designed.†

It is the unquestionable intention, as it is the express injunction of the Church, that baptism should be generally administered in the presence of her assembled members. The title of “the Ministration of publick baptism of infants” bears

* Preface to the Order of Confirmation.

† What is said in this, and the following paragraphs, on the administration of baptism, was not in the original charge; but has been inserted in consequence of information since acquired.

upon it, that it is "to be used in the Church." At the time prescribed for its ministration, "the Godfathers and Godmothers, and the people with the children, must be ready at the Font," as the Rubrick orders.* And, according to the same Rubrick, "the Priest coming to the Font, and standing there, shall say" what is thereupon appointed. And by the Rubrick, prefixed to "the ministration of private baptism of children in houses," it is ordered, that "the Curates of every parish shall warn the people, that without great cause and necessity they procure not their children to be baptized at home in their houses;" nor, as it is afterwards expressed, except "in times of extremity," "in case of extreme danger," and unless "need shall compel them so to do."

A disposition sometimes prevails among the members of our congregations, in this portion of the empire I understand that it prevails to a very great extent, to procure the baptism of their children at home, in accommodation to their own personal ease, or humour, or convenience. And if baptism be nothing more than a civil ceremony;

* Very few, if indeed any, of the Churches of the Diocese, which I have visited, contain a Font: the inference is obvious. Attention being drawn to the subject, I trust that the defect will be immediately supplied. The Font should be placed as near as conveniently may be to the entrance of the Church: space being left around it for the accommodation of the Minister and the Sureties during the ministration of baptism.

of no other use, than, as some persons may vainly imagine, to be made subservient to the worldly interests of the baptized; let it be regarded and treated accordingly. But is it indeed no more than this? Is it not rather a most holy religious office? And if so, where can it be so properly administered, as in places peculiarly dedicated to the offices of religion? Is it not the end of the ordinance to admit the baptized person into the Church of Christ, and to initiate him into the privileges of it? And if so, where with such propriety as in the presence of a congregation, solemnly and conspicuously assembled for the publick worship of God, and in evidence of their communion with the Church, of which they appear as a portion, and may be fitly considered the representative? Is it not the purport of the office, to receive from the baptized, in his own person or in that of his sureties, a profession of Christian faith and obedience, and to confer upon him the promise of the Christian blessings? Where then with such propriety, as in the presence of a regular assembly of Christians, who, having been previously participators in the same ceremony, do now both witness the dedication of the newly-baptized to God, and his reception "into the body of Christ's Church;" and are at the same time put in remembrance of their own profession made to God in their baptism, and of the duties which they then faithfully promised that they would perform,

and of the covenanted blessings to which they were thereby intitled? In one word, as a well-known and useful ritualist sums up the argument, "the ordinance is certainly publick: publick in the nature and end of it: and therefore such ought the celebration of it to be." *

I have made these remarks as calculated to remind you, not only how unexceptionable, but how worthy of all honour and observance, are the provisions of the Church with respect to the administration of baptism. By her general rule she requires children to be brought to the baptismal font, that there in the presence of the congregation "they may be baptized with water and the Holy Ghost, and be received into Christ's holy Church, and be made lively members of the same:" and there she directs, and there only she authorises, her ministers to baptize according to the publick form. Anxious at the same time that the sacrament should not be withheld from those, who from weakness may be unfit to be brought into the congregation; "in times of extremity," as she expresses herself, "in cases of extreme danger," where there is "great cause and necessity," where "need compels;" expressions, apparently pointing, as indeed they are commonly interpreted to point, to cases where there is danger

c

* Wheatly on the Book of Common Prayer.

of death ; she has provided a brief and compendious service, whereby that which is essential to the sacrament may be administered at home, and whereby alone her ministers are authorised to administer it in private houses. Still, " if the child which is after this sort baptized do afterward live," she pronounces " it expedient that it be brought into the Church," there to be publicly recognised by the Minister for a Christian, and to be formally received into the congregation of Christ's flock. Other baptism, than publicly at the font in ordinary cases ; or privately in houses in cases of great need and extremity, but even in such cases, if the event permit, to be followed by a publick consecration of the child to Christ ; the Church allows not : for any other she makes no provision. With those forms of administering it, which she has provided, we, as her ministers, should esteem ourselves bound, as we have pledged ourselves, to comply, " for conscience sake : " at the same time we should admonish our people, as the Church likewise directs us, to be guided by the same provisions, and by no means to reject, despise, or evade them : and that, not only on account of the authority, which prescribes them, though indeed the authority of our rulers might be of itself a sufficient motive to obedience ; but also for as much as our authorised forms are founded upon general principles of reason, and upon the nature and end of this ordinance of Christ.

But there is another topick, to which I wish to draw your attention, in connexion with my previous remarks.

Participation in the Holy Sacrament of the Lord's Supper is that peculiar act of devotion, which distinguishes us as Christians from the professors of all other religions: and it is bound upon our observance by many considerations both of duty and of benefit; of duty to God, and of benefit to ourselves. It is a solemnity therefore, in which the minister ought to afford his congregation frequent opportunities of participating; and in which the congregation ought to avail themselves of every opportunity to participate.

In several churches of this diocese, I observe from the reports before me, that monthly communions are practised. I feel it my duty to express my approbation of this practice, and my earnest hope that the times of administration will on no account be diminished. In others I perceive it to be administered only four times in the course of the year. Of the local considerations, which may occasion this infrequency, I am, in some instances at least, ignorant; of their sufficiency therefore I cannot be a judge. But I would recommend it as a question, worthy of the serious consideration of the clergy of those parishes, whether the circumstances be in reality sufficiently strong to impose upon them the necessity of so rare a celebration of this most holy rite of our re-

ligion ; and, if not, whether they are justified in so rare a celebration of it.

Permit me to offer to your thoughts two leading reasons for administering it, if possible, more frequently : the one derived from a particular provision of the Church ; the other, from a regard to the character of the holy sacrament itself. In a rubrick at the end of the communion service the Church enjoins, that " every parishioner shall communicate at the least three times in the year." But, where the communion is only four times administered, it is hardly possible, considering the regard which must be had to the internal arrangements of a family, that every parishioner should communicate as often as the Church enjoins. In compliance therefore with the spirit of this injunction of the Church a more frequent administration of the communion should seem necessary. But looking to the character of the holy sacrament itself, and considering the reasons for which our blessed Lord ordained it, and " the benefits whereof we are partakers thereby," we shall probably be impressed with higher and stronger motives for engaging us in a more frequent administration of it. I shall not however enlarge upon this question, but shall be content with having placed it before the minds of those, whom it may more immediately concern, relying upon their sense of pastoral duty, to decide and to act as their peculiar situation shall require ; and adding withal

no more than the solemn caution of a late excellent prelate, one of the most truly apostolical characters that ever presided over a division of the Church of Christ: "God forbid," said he, remarking on the rubrick which I have just cited, as requiring every parishioner to communicate at the least three times in the year, "God forbid, that any good Christian should make this an excuse for receiving no oftener, if he has an opportunity! and woe be to that pastor, who will not give the well-disposed part of his flock more frequent opportunities of testifying their love to Jesus Christ; of increasing their graces, and securing their pardon and salvation!" *

But I remarked, that, as the minister ought to afford his congregation frequent opportunities of participating, so the congregation ought to avail themselves of every opportunity to participate.

Due regard being had to the scanty amount of the protestant population in this diocese, the number of communicants, in some places and at some seasons of the year, does not fall short of my expectations: indeed the proportionate number appears to be in favour of this country, when compared with that in the sister member of our united Church. In some parishes however the number is certainly of very small amount: and there are others, in which I observe that the

* Bishop Wilson's Introduction to the Lord's Supper.

amount, respectable as it is on certain solemn festivals, dwindles into a much lower proportion on the other days when the communion is administered. Now whether the number of communicants be small at all times, or whether it be small on occasion of the ordinary administration, the fact may be taken as an argument, that a due value is not set by the people upon the sacrament, of which they thus intirely or occasionally decline to partake. For my own part I have no hesitation in avowing, that to partake in that holy sacrament, whenever we have the opportunity, is in my estimation one of our most solemn Christian duties and one of the highest of our Christian privileges : I need hardly add, that it is one of the invaluable privileges which specially belong to the laity of our Church, as members of a protestant communion. In speaking therefore of the uses, for which our sacred edifices are designed, I could not omit insisting upon this, which interests us so deeply, whether in our general character as members of the Holy Catholick Church, or particularly as members of that pure and apostolical part of it, established by God's blessing in this kingdom. Regarding the matter in this light, you, my reverend brethren, will, I am persuaded, concur with me as to the duty, not only of affording to our people all convenient opportunities of communicating, but also of exerting all our influence, both for augmenting the number

of our communicants, and for maintaining them in a constant and uniform practice of communicating.

Instruction upon this, as well as upon every other branch of Christian faith or practice, may, as you are well aware, be imparted in a variety of ways. The season of confirmation for instance affords a good opportunity for inculcating the duty upon the young. But of one way in particular I would remind you, because it is one which I apprehend to have fallen much into disuse amongst us, notwithstanding the Church has expressly provided it for the purpose, and authoritatively prescribes to us the use of it. I allude to the second exhortation, provided to be read "when the Minister giveth warning for the celebration of the holy communion;" concerning which the Church directs in the rubrick prefixed to it, that "in case he shall see the people negligent to come to the holy communion, instead of the former, he shall use this exhortation." No man, I am sure, can read this exhortation, without being impressed with a deep sense of its excellence: it is indeed most admirably calculated to make those, who hear it, "by God's grace return to a better mind." But the peculiar ground, on which I would establish the use of it, is, that the Church, who has provided it for the purpose, explicitly requires us to use it; and what the Church requires, we have solemnly pledged ourselves to perform.

I have thus submitted to your consideration, my reverend brethren, a few suggestions with respect to the uses, to which our parish churches are intended to be applied ; and to which if they are not applied, they lose their value and their importance. Without buildings consecrated to the publick worship of Almighty God, a country professing Christianity will be in a state little better than a state of heathenism : but upon the duties performed in those buildings, and not upon the mere buildings themselves, the religious character of the congregations assembling in them must eventually depend. These duties are intimately connected with the engagements of the parochial clergy : and therefore they have appeared to me well qualified to fall under our consideration on the present occasion.

After all however that can be said upon these and other matters relating to the publick services of religion, in their reference to the congregations usually assembled in our churches, there is another view of the subject, second only, if indeed it be second, to the former, whether in its intrinsick importance, or in the interest with which it requires us to consider it. However frequent and regular we may be in celebrating the publick worship of Almighty God ; however attentive may be the congregations which unite with us in that wor-

ship ; and however earnest all those of competent age may be in discharging every call of Christian duty : these congregations form but an inconsiderable numerical proportion of the persons for whom we are accountable, as ministers of the gospel within our respective cures, to the extent of our power and opportunities. The fact is notorious, and we cannot, if we would, shut our eyes to the existence of it, that a large majority of the population of this diocese, in different proportions I understand in different parts, but still that a very large majority of our collective population, is in a state of alienation from our branch of the Catholick and Apostolical Church of Christ, and in the communion and under the authority of the Church of Rome.

Upon this our actual condition I do not suppose that any conscientious and intelligent Minister of our Church can look without very painful reflections, accompanied by an anxious desire to exert all the influence, which properly belongs to him, so far as it can prudently and usefully be exerted, in extending the knowledge of pure religion, and contracting the sphere of operation of that corrupt system of Christian faith and practice, by which he perceives the people committed to his charge to be peculiarly beset and entangled.

You will not, I am sure, my reverend brethren, regard it as an idle or gratuitous assumption, that

the removal of the errors of the Romish Church from the minds of our parishoners, and the substitution of that reformed code of Christian truth, which we of the united Church of England and Ireland profess, is a task, which, as far as we have power and opportunity, it is our duty to perform. It is our duty indeed abstractedly as Ministers of the gospel of Christ, from which the members of that Church have been "removed," that they may be made professors of "another gospel."* But it is more especially our duty by virtue of that solemn pledge, by which we bind ourselves to our own Church on our admission to her "higher ministries."

Of those, who are admitted to the order of priesthood, the Church demands by the mouth of 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?" to which each candidate expressly answers, "I will, the Lord being my helper." Of the person, who is to be consecrated Bishop, she requires the same engagement in answer to the same inquiry, accompanied however by an additional and very important particular: for the Archbishop in the order of consecration is directed to inquire, "Are you ready, with all faithful diligence, to banish and drive away all erroneous and strange doctrine contrary to God's word; and both privately and

* Gal. i. 6.

openly to call upon and encourage others to the same?" The answer corresponds substantially with the former, "I am ready, the Lord being my helper."

By these engagements then we are all and each of us pledged, my reverend brethren; you, to be "ready, with all faithful diligence, to banish and drive away all erroneous and strange doctrines, contrary to God's word;" I, to give proof of the same readiness and faithful diligence as yourselves, and withal "both privately and openly to call upon and encourage you to the same."

This promise, we may observe, is most full and comprehensive: "all erroneous and strange doctrines, contrary to God's word," we are solemnly pledged to be "ready, with all faithful diligence, to banish and drive away." And amongst doctrines of this character no one of us, I suppose, will scruple to admit, that those, which peculiarly distinguish the Church of Rome, come within the scope of our plighted vigilance and activity.

But in truth there can be hardly room for questioning the position, that they were the doctrines of the Church of Rome, against which, signally and especially, it was the intention of our reformed Church to direct by this engagement the watchful and persevering efforts of her ministers. In her 19th Article, which commences the series of those wherein she speaks of Chris-

tians as members of a religious society, she charges the Church of Rome by name with that particular offence, against which in the offices of ordination and consecration she engages the zeal and activity of her own ministers: "As the Church of Jerusalem, Alexandria, and Antioch, have erred; so also the Church of Rome hath erred, not only in their living and manner of ceremonies, but also in matters of faith." And in several of the succeeding articles the charge is substantiated, by a specification of those "errors in matters of faith," of those "erroneous and strange doctrines, contrary to God's word," which, as in her articles she requires her ministers expressly to renounce them, so in her offices of ordination and consecration she engages them to "banish and drive away."

If a citation of particulars be necessary, I may refer you to her strictures on "the Romish doctrine concerning purgatory, pardons, worshipping and adoration as well of images as of reliques, and also invocation of saints;" on the Romish practice of "having publick prayers in the Church and ministering the sacraments in a tongue not understood of the people;" on the "five commonly called sacraments" of the Church of Rome, as distinguished from the two which our Church acknowledges to be ordained of Christ our Lord in the gospel; on the custom of "gazing upon and carrying about" the sacraments, as distinguished

from the “due use” of them ; on the doctrine of transubstantiation, and the “reserving, carrying about, lifting up, and worshipping” of the “sacrament of the Lord’s Supper ;” on the “denial of the cup to the lay people ;” and on the “sacrifices of masses :” each of which she respectively condemns, as “a fond thing vainly invented, and grounded upon no warranty of scripture, but rather repugnant to the word of God ;” as “a thing plainly repugnant to the word of God ;” as “not ordained of Christ ;” as incapable of being “proved by holy writ, and repugnant to the plain words of scripture ;” as contrary to “Christ’s ordinance and commandment ;” as “blasphemous fables and dangerous deceits.”* Other particulars might be adduced in proof of the solicitude, with which our reformed Church in her Articles directs the attention of her ministers to the peculiar errors of the Church of Rome. But these must be amply sufficient for my purpose : which is to shew by a comparison of the several provisions, which she has made on the one hand for the soundness of the faith of her ministers, and on the other for the efficiency of their teaching, that in engaging us to be “ready, with all faithful diligence, to banish and drive away all erroneous and strange doctrines contrary to God’s word,” she especially intended to engage us to “banish and

* See Articles xxii, xxiii, xxv, xxviii, xxx, xxxi.

drive away" those doctrines, wherein "the Church of Rome hath erred." And that therefore, whatever may be the duty of our brethren in those congregations of the Church, where "the erroneous, strange, and unscriptural doctrines" of the Romish communion are in comparison little known, and not practically felt; upon us, amongst whose people those doctrines are in full force and prevalence, the duty of endeavouring to eradicate them is plain and imperative. We are bound by our own voluntary and solemn stipulation, upon the faith of which the Church received us into her ministry, to be "ready, with all faithful diligence, to banish and to drive them away:" or, to express myself to the like effect, but with somewhat more fulness of language, according to the authoritative admonition and injunction of the Church herself, we are to "consider with ourselves the end of our ministry towards the children of God, towards the spouse of Christ; and see that we never cease our labour, our care and diligence, until we have done all that lieth in us, according to our bounden duty, to bring all such as are or shall be committed to our charge, unto that agreement in the faith and knowledge of God, and to that ripeness and perfectness of age in Christ, that there be no place left among us, either for error in religion, or for viciousness in life."*

* Ordering of Priests.

The duty then of endeavouring to extend the knowledge of pure religion, and to contract the sphere of operation of that corrupt system of Christian faith, by which we in this diocese are surrounded, may be considered as beyond a reasonable question. As to the manner of performing this duty, much difference of opinion may probably prevail amongst men, equally persuaded of the obligation which lies upon them ; equally impressed with a sense of its importance ; and equally anxious to discharge it. Indeed I know not a more delicate or arduous situation, generally speaking, in which a conscientious minister of the United Church of England and Ireland can be placed, than that of the clergy of this portion of the empire : none, in which he has more urgent occasion for “ zeal according to knowledge,”* for “ sobriety” united with “ vigilance,†” for activity tempered by moderation ; none in which he has more occasion to combine the “ wisdom of the serpent” with the “ harmlessness of the dove.‡” For my own part I scruple not to confess my sincere perception of the difficulty ; and to request of you, my reverend brethren, not only your professional cooperation in the discharge of the duties which demand our joint exertions, but the benefit likewise of that counsel, which your local opportunities and your more extensive experience may

* Rom. x. 2.

† 2 Pet. v. 8.

‡ Matt. x. 16.

enable you to supply. In the mean time as I feel conscious, that the relation, lately established between us, intitles you all, but especially the younger and less practised members of your body, to a communication of my sentiments as to the best manner of discharging the very momentous duty before us, I shall proceed, though at the risk of trespassing somewhat inconveniently upon your patience ; and shall invite your continued attention to such further suggestions, as appear to my own mind, with all due deference however to opinions founded upon better means of information, most capable of being rendered practically useful in the promotion of true Christian knowledge.

In an early part of this address I alluded to the increased facilities, which had of late years been provided for the residence of the parochial clergy : and I observed that their value was to be estimated in proportion as they served for means towards the attainment of a most excellent end. A consideration of the end, for which the Christian pastor is fixed as much as possible in the midst of the dwellings of his parishioners, will shew the bearing of that observation upon the present article of our inquiry.

The publick duty of the Church, in its stated recurrence of morning and evening service and of instruction from the pulpit, might perhaps in

many cases be almost as well performed by a non-resident as by a resident clergyman. But that person has a very meagre and a very imperfect conception of the pastoral charge, who is satisfied with the performance of his publick duty in the church. The vow made by us at our ordination, to which I have already had frequent cause to advert, as requiring us to be “ready, with all faithful diligence, to banish and drive away all erroneous and strange doctrines, contrary to God’s word,” pledges us likewise, to be “ready with all faithful diligence, to use both publick and private monitions and exhortations, as well to the sick as to the whole, within our cures, as need shall require, and occasion shall be given.” A duty then, a very serious and a very important duty belongs to us, in the private no less than in the publick discharge of our sacred ministry: a duty, for which we should be prepared, whenever the necessities of our people require, and our opportunities enable us to practise it. Let me add, for it is, I apprehend, a reflexion by no means irrelevant to our present subject, that this duty of private, as well as publick, monition and exhortation is bound upon us, in immediate connexion with the promise, to which your minds have been already drawn, that we will be “ready to banish and drive away all erroneous and strange doctrines, contrary to God’s word.” Now the use of publick monitions and exhortations for the

attainment of this end is not allowed us. The victims of the errors of the Romish Church will not resort to us for instruction from the pulpit. It is a question therefore peculiarly worthy of our most serious thoughts, whether "need do require," and whether "occasion be given" us, to minister to their spiritual disease by private comfort and counsel: thus "seeking for Christ's sheep that are dispersed abroad," as the charge to us at our ordination admonished us to be our duty; and thereby imitating the conduct of the Chief Shepherd, whom the prophet Ezekiel most beautifully and affectingly describes, as "seeking that which was lost, and bringing again that which was driven away, and binding up that which was broken, and strengthening that which was sick." *

That "need doth require" us to have recourse to private instruction for the purpose now under consideration, is, I think, an incontrovertible proposition. The spiritual condition of a very large proportion of those within our cures notoriously demands a remedy: but by means of publick monition and exhortation it is equally notorious that a remedy cannot be applied. The case therefore must be submitted to the trial of private counsel, or it must be at once given up in despair.

The point therefore remaining for investigation and decision is, whether "occasion be given" us

* Ezek. xxxiv. 16.

of ministring privately to the spiritual wants of our deluded people.

I am not blind, my reverend brethren, to the difficulties of the case. I am not insensible of the numerous and great obstacles to be expected, from ignorance, from superstition, from inveterate prejudices, from early predilections and long confirmed habits ; above all perhaps from the subtlety and authority of those who are engaged in the ministry of that corrupt Church, whose errors we are anxious to correct. I am aware therefore, that opportunities of improvement may be not of obvious occurrence ; and that in all probability occasion must be sought, or it will not be found. Still I am not prepared to believe, that the exercise of our "faithful diligence" in this respect would be altogether ineffectual. The Minister of the Established Church is in many instances at least possessed of means, which qualify him to improve the temporal condition, to diminish the distresses, and to augment the enjoyments, of his poorer parishioners, and thus to acquire their confidence and conciliate their affection. His relative situation in life renders him an object of respect in their estimation. His general information, the result of an ingenuous and enlarged education, is calculated to impress them with a sense of his superior intelligence. And his religious proficiency, consequent upon those scriptural and auxiliary studies, which he has promised to pursue,

cannot but enable him to shew to their conviction the comparative merits of the different religious systems, which are professed by himself and by them. Such advantages cannot, as far as I am capable of judging, be brought zealously and vigorously, but prudently withal and temperately, into action, without being blessed with some measure of success. Surely the door of the cabin would not be obstinately closed against the visits of such a minister : nor could the heart of the inhabitant resist the persuasions of disinterested benevolence, of meek condescension, and of learning honestly put forth for the cause of pure religion, capable of unravelling the wiles of an insidious sophistry, and furnished with materials of conviction from the armory of Christian truth.

It is true indeed, for believe me I have not the faintest desire to give a specious and delusive view of our condition, or to diminish its actual difficulties in the estimation either of myself or of you ; it is true, I say, that we have impediments, physical as well as moral, to encounter. The number of parishes, often united into one cure, and the extent and populousness of many of our parishes and unions, seem to call for a degree of personal exertion in the pastor, greater than he may always have it in his power to undergo. Still the apprehension of our inability to do all that we may desire is not a sufficient reason for declining to do any thing that we can. If the more remote dis-

tricts of our charge exceed the scope of our personal activity, those which are contiguous to our own residences, or which lie at only a small distance from us, may easily fall within it: besides, that which is beyond the compass of our constant may be an object of our occasional attention. Briefly, and in a word, what is intended to be advanced on this head is, that, as we most manifestly are not engaged to the performance of that which is beyond our power, so we cannot reasonably plead such inability as an exemption from that with which our powers are commensurate. "The harvest truly is plenteous, but the labourers are few." Do we therefore our faithful diligence to gather in all that we ourselves are able: and "pray we" at the same time "the Lord of the harvest, that he will send forth" other "labourers into his harvest."*

I proceed to another mode of correcting error and diffusing a knowledge of true religion; namely, that of making extensive provision for the education of the lower orders of the community.

Great difficulties obviously present themselves on the very threshold of this division of our subject: difficulties, partly of the same nature and proceeding from the same sources, as those to which I lately adverted; partly arising from inci-

* Matt. ix. 37, 38.

dental causes, such as the largeness of the supplies requisite for meeting an expenditure upon a scale sufficiently ample for the purpose, and the scantiness of the means possessed by many of the clergy towards furnishing the requisite supplies. With respect to these difficulties I would here observe in general terms, that education is so powerful an engine in its operation on the human mind, whether individually or collectively, that no vague apprehension, nor even an actual perception, at the outset, of the difficulties attending its establishment, ought to deter us from making the attempt, or withdraw us hastily from the prosecution of plans of improvement, which we have been once enabled to begin. It may have pleased an all-wise and gracious Providence, to suffer impediments to be thrown in the way of our progress for the very purpose of quickening our zeal and invigorating our exertions: hereafter it may please him to reward our activity and perseverance in behalf of his true religion, by “causing rivers to spring up for us in the wilderness,” * by “exalting the valleys and making the mountains low:” † if we be faithful in our ministry, it may please him to “open” to our instructions “the hearts” ‡ of his now deluded people, and to render us the blessed instruments of “bringing into the way of truth” many of those who “have erred and are deceived;” of

* Is. xliii, 20.

† Is. xl. 4.

‡ Acts xvi. 14.

“strengthening such as do stand, and of comforting and helping the weak-hearted, and of raising up them that fall.” All this is surely not inconsistent with the attributes, or the promises, or the avowed dealings of Almighty God : it may therefore be made a ground of reasonable hope, and may serve to stimulate and keep up our exertions, acting as a counterpoise to those difficulties which we may either rationally anticipate or actually feel, in our endeavours to disseminate the knowledge and practice of genuine Christianity.

I cannot in such an address, as the present, enter upon a detailed examination of many practical questions connected with the education of the poor. But as education is notoriously encouraged by different patrons on very different principles, and directed to very different ends ; it may be not unbecoming in me on the present occasion to lay before you, my reverend brethren, dispassionately and respectfully, but at the same time as the fixed result of serious and deliberate inquiry, a few cautionary reflexions, with a view to a right understanding of the principles, on which the education of the poor should be conducted, and of the end, to which it should be applied.

The education of the poor then ought in my judgment to be regarded by us as the instrument, not of political, or civil, or merely moral improvement, but of religious improvement : our great

and ultimate object in the furtherance of their education should be to establish our poorer brethren in the knowledge, profession, and practice of the Christian religion pure and undefiled. The more steadily we proceed upon this principle, and the more successfully we labour for the attainment of this object, the greater will likewise be the other advantages which our efforts will comprise. Such advantages are either necessarily involved in this great and ultimate object, or may be easily rendered incidental to it. If we improve our scholars in a practical knowledge of genuine Christianity, we *must* inevitably make them better members of society and of the state, in all their various relations : at the same time that we so improve them, we *may* also initiate them in useful branches of human knowledge. But it does not appear to me, that to make the poor decent, orderly, and correct in their civil and social relations, abstractedly considered ; still less does it appear to me, that to make them good writers or good arithmeticians ; is the proper rule and scope of our exertions in their education. Our business is, not indeed to neglect these advantages, all of them more or less important, and some of which, as I have already said, must, and others may and probably will, follow ; but our business mainly and above all other things is, to make them good Christians. To this consideration every other, which can be named, is secondary and subordinate.

Now, professionally speaking, my reverend brethren, we bear a two-fold character : we are ministers of the gospel, and we are ministers of the pure and apostolical branch of the Church of Christ established in this kingdom ; or, to speak perhaps more correctly, we are ministers of the gospel agreeably to the sense of our national Church. That religion we believe to be sound religion, that we believe to be genuine Christianity, which is embodied in the liturgy and articles of our Church. To that form of our holy faith we have solemnly declared our willing and spontaneous consent, inasmuch as it is altogether and in its several parts “ agreeable to the word of God :” and conformably to this we have obliged ourselves in our holy function, to “ give our faithful diligence, always so to minister the doctrine and sacraments, and the discipline of Christ, as the Lord hath commanded, and as this Church and realm hath received the same, according to the commandments of God ; so that we may teach the people committed to our cure and charge with all diligence to keep and observe the same.”* It is not then religion, according to any confused and indeterminate notion of it ; it is not Christianity, according to the system of this or that individual or sect ; but it is the religion of Christ, in its several departments of

* The ordering of Priests.

“ doctrine, sacraments, and discipline,” and that, not only “ as the Lord hath commanded,” but “ as this Church and realm hath received the same, according to the commandments of God ;” which we are commissioned to “ teach the people committed to our cure and charge ;” to bind it upon their belief, and to interweave it into their practice. And accordingly it is the religion of Christ, thus distributed and understood, which we are required by our professional obligations to take for our guiding principle and our ultimate object, in promoting the education of the poor.

This subject, my reverend brethren, I conceive to be of paramount importance, more especially under the actual circumstances of our Church and kingdom. Allow me then, I pray you, to dwell on it a little longer, and to endeavour to set it further before you in a somewhat different light. It has been already observed, that we are pledged by our ordination vow, to be “ ready, with all faithful diligence, to banish and drive away all erroneous and strange doctrines, contrary to God’s word :” and it has been also observed, that the promise, though in all probability intended to have a special bearing, is conceived in the fullest and most comprehensive terms. This obligation indeed is universal : it pledges us to endeavour the removal of “ *all* erroneous, strange, and unscriptural doctrines.” Can it then behove us, in our zeal for the expulsion of some such

doctrines, to be instrumental in the introduction of others, of the same unhallowed and pernicious character? Can it behove us, in our endeavours for abolishing the Romish superstitions, to be instrumental in opening a door to the extravagances of the enthusiast, or the disorders of the schismatick, or to the comfortless creed of those who call themselves Christians, whilst they deny the very essentials of Christianity? I do not enlarge upon the danger, though that indeed may well deserve your notice, of laying open our poorer brethren to the assaults of infidelity and contempt of all religion, if we detach them from their present system, without inculcating on their minds other certain and settled principles of belief. But looking more particularly to different forms and professions of Christianity itself, would it be agreeable to our solemn engagement, my reverend brethren, if we were to rescue our deluded people from their blind teachers of the Romish Church, only to place them under the guidance of other teachers, equally blind perhaps, and unauthorised withal to bear the ministerial office, presumptuous, self-commissioned? Would it be well, if in delivering them from the arrogant domination of the Church of Rome we were to lead them to believe, that it is no part of Christian duty to pay a reasonable "obedience and submission to those who have the" spiritual "rule over them,"* and

* Heb xiii. 17.

to “endeavour to keep the unity of the spirit in the bond of peace?”* Would it be well, if, whilst we open their eyes to the proper character of those rites or institutions, by the Romanist improperly called sacraments, we were to suffer them to be drawn aside by the conceit, that there are no sacraments at all? Would it be well, if, whilst we remove the veil of mystery which superstition has thrown over the holy communion of the Lord’s Supper, we were to permit them to be deluded by the imagination, that that pledge and memorial of our Saviour’s love may be innocently disesteemed, and safely repudiated? Would it be well, if we were to allow their dangerous persuasion concerning the efficacy of the sacrifice of the mass, and the repeated offering of Christ, to be superseded by the persuasion equally dangerous and false, that Christ was never offered as an atonement, propitiation, and satisfaction for the sins of the world? Finally, would it be well, if, at the same time that they renounce the adoration of images and the invocation of saints, we were to suffer them to be misled from the Christian verity, to “deny the Lord who bought them,”† and to withhold the tribute of their worship from “the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ?”‡ There are doctrines, we well know, prevalent amongst others who profess and call themselves Christians,

* Eph. iv. 3.

† 2. Pet. ii. 1.

‡ Tit. ii. 13.

and who are most earnest in promoting the instruction of the poor, no less "erroneous, strange, and contrary to God's word," than those which characterise the Church of Rome: doctrines, subversive of all authority and subordination in the Church; subversive of a Christian ministry and of the Christian sacraments; annulling the value of the Redeemer's sacrifice, and disenthroning the Son of God. Doctrines, such as these, it would be our duty to banish and drive away, if they were prevalent amongst us. It must be equally our duty to prevent them from becoming prevalent. It behoves us therefore, my reverend brethren, to beware, lest, in our well intentioned efforts to improve the condition of the poor, we be inadvertently engaged in the support of projects, which, if they do not cause them to "make shipwreck of the faith"* altogether, may entangle them in dangerous delusions; and at the same time expose to hazard the true profession of the gospel in this kingdom, identified as it is with the security and welfare of the National Church.

To all this it will probably be objected, that, if we attempt to instruct upon principles such as these, we shall find no scholars to receive our instructions. Efforts will probably be made to impede us. And yet I cannot hastily believe, that, if schools were generally established amongst

* 1 Tim. i. 19.

us according to that most beautiful and efficacious method of instruction pursued in the national schools of England ; furnished with a sufficient number of children to exemplify in some degree the excellence of the system ; supplied with suitable encouragement for proficiency in learning, for cleanliness, punctuality, attention, industry, and general good conduct ; so modified as not to give a violent shock to the prejudices of the people, but secured at the same time by wholesome provisions from the treachery of a latitudinarian creed and the disorders of ecclesiastical misrule or anarchy ; conducted in a spirit of meekness, patience, indulgence, and conciliation ; and withal recommended to the good will of the poor by the personal intervention and kind offices of their more opulent neighbours as well as of the parochial clergy : I cannot hastily believe, I say, under circumstances such as these, that our endeavours for religious improvement, though they might be occasionally and partially impeded, would be totally and ultimately frustrated ; or that, though they might for a time be deprived of their full effect, they would fail of producing a considerable portion even of immediate good. I cannot hastily believe, but that prejudice would gradually recede before the perception of real and substantial benefits : and that the influence of an arbitrary, an irrational, and an interested control

would sink in competition with the mild persuasions of pure and genuine benevolence, speaking in the language of Christian charity, of reason, and common sense. Let it however be allowed, that the result might possibly be incommensurate, with our desires I will not say, but with our reasonable expectations. Still the concession, that it might be so, should not be sufficient for inducing us to forbear or to deviate from the course, which our conscience, informed by the best exercise of our understanding, testifies to be right. After all the care which we can bestow in planting and in watering, it is God who giveth or withholdeth the increase.* In that dispensation, whatever it be, it is our part cheerfully to acquiesce. Nevertheless we ought not, from a timid distrust of our success, to relinquish those exertions, which we honestly believe to be in the line of our duty : nor ought we, from a motive of worldly policy, to compromise or endanger those principles, of the soundness of which we are deliberately convinced, and which we are pledged to be faithful in upholding.

The education then of the poor, thus secured and guarded against the abuses to which it is liable in the hands of indiscreet friends or actual enemies of our national Church, is an instrument of religious improvement, which I would recommend, my reverend brethren, to your most zealous and active patronage. As one other instrument, not

inferior in importance to either of the former, and intimately connected with them, I would no less strongly recommend to you a diligent but judicious distribution of the Holy Bible; accompanied by the Book of Common Prayer, and such other smaller works, as are calculated to assist the unlearned reader in understanding the sacred volume, and in acquiring a comprehensive and correct view of the great truths of Christianity.

I mention the Holy Bible first, and by distinction; because, as our Church distinctly avows in direct opposition to the tenets of the Romish Church concerning a Christian's rule of faith and of practice, "Holy Scripture containeth all things necessary to salvation: 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 the faith, or be thought requisite or necessary to salvation."*

I mention the Book of Common Prayer, as a companion to the Bible; because it contains a most useful abstract and summary of those divine truths, which are dispersed with little order or regularity over the Bible, but which are here methodically blended together, so as to form a compendious code of religious instruction, as well as a manual of devotional exercises; and because it is thereby made the most convenient, the most unexceptionable, and the most perfect vehicle of that sound

* Art. vi.

Christian knowledge, which, according to the remarks submitted to you under the last division, it is our special duty to inculcate.

I mention at the same time other smaller works, as subsidiary towards the great object of promoting the religious improvement of our people, because such works are very convenient for exhibiting general views of scriptural information, whether historical, doctrinal, or preceptive ; at the same time that there are many particular articles both of faith and of practice, contained in the sacred volume, which they may be usefully employed in drawing forth and developing ; many obstructions to the right apprehension of the scriptures, which we may thereby diminish or remove ; many erroneous opinions, derived from an improper view of them, which we may expose and correct ; many important questions, on which we may collect and combine the scattered evidence, and thus present it in its full dimensions and with accumulated weight to the understanding of the reader.

There are persons, whose opinion it appears to be, that no other proceeding is requisite, in order to the propagation of the Christian faith amongst those, who are previously unacquainted with it altogether, or who know it only in a debased and corrupted form, than a boundless circulation of the Holy Scriptures. But so far as I find from the word of God itself, that sacred Book was ne-

ver used by Divine appointment ; so far as I find, it was not intended to be used ; to the exclusion of ministerial instruction. And indeed when I reflect upon a variety of circumstances belonging to those invaluable writings ; when for instance I reflect upon the different ages, characters, situations, and numerous peculiarities of their respective authors ; on the conditions of the several persons, to whom they were originally addressed, or for whom they were more immediately written ; the remote and varying periods of their composition ; the languages in which they were composed ; the many natural phænomena, the manners, and the civil and religious institutions of the countries, to which they relate ; the occasions, which severally called for them ; the nature of their subjects ; the modes of their execution ; in a word, all the numerous and diversified particulars, which must be familiar to the minds of those, who are bound by their professional engagement to be “ diligent in reading the holy scriptures, and in such studies as help to the knowledge of the same : ” * when I reflect upon these things, my reverend brethren, I cannot but see great reason to be persuaded, that the Bible must abound in difficulties, which, as they are calculated to be an impediment in the way of the unlearned reader, so give occasion for us to be diligent in applying all the

* The ordering of Priests.

means that we can furnish, in order to their explanation and removal. To the question of Philip concerning a particular passage in the holy volume, "Understandest thou what thou readest?" the answer of the Ethiopian Eunuch may be returned with reference to a large portion of its contents, "How can I, except some man should guide me?"*

It is true, that many parts of the holy scriptures are so plain, that he who runs may read: it may be likewise true, that this is the character of their doctrine on some of the points, connected with the corruptions of the Romish Church; such for instance is the case with the worshipping and adoration of images and of reliques, the invocation of saints, the denial of the cup to the laity, the worshipping of the consecrated bread. And yet it is by no means an indisputable truth, that the bare language of the sacred text would at all times suffice to banish preconceived error from the mind of the disciple of the Church of Rome. "Transubstantiation," as our twentieth article affirms, "or the change of the substance of bread and wine, in the supper of the Lord, cannot be proved by holy writ, but is repugnant to the plain words of scripture." This affirmation I believe to be in strict accordance with the fact: nevertheless I would not un-

* Acts viii. 30, 31.

dertake to say, that the Romanist, who should read in the sacred history the declaration of our blessed Lord, when he instituted the sacrament, "This is my body," "This is my blood,"* would be forthwith persuaded, without a guide to the understanding of the text, to renounce his belief in the change of the natural substances, and to adopt the opinion of our reformed Church in favour of the real, but not the corporal, presence of Christ in the sacrament. The doctrine however of Christ's presence in the sacrament, as it ought to be understood, in contradistinction to the sense in which by the Romanists it actually was understood, was, as you well know, my reverend brethren, the principal hinge on which our reformation turned : and it probably now also continues to be the leading doctrine, which requires more than any other to be rightly understood, in order to deliver the modern Romish professor from the delusions which most easily beset him.

But further : at the same time that we are endeavouring to deliver these our misguided brethren from their besetting delusions, let us steadily bear in mind, that this is not the whole of our engagement, and ought not to constitute our sole and exclusive object. It is notorious, that at the period of the reformation many false doctrines were maintained, and many unchristian practices were instituted, by certain among those, who, tak-

* Matt. xxvi. 26, 28.

ing, as they professed, the holy scriptures for their only guide, set themselves in the most decided opposition to the Church of Rome. It is, I think, equally notorious, that in the present day there are not wanting persons, zealous in their appeal to the scriptures and in their opposition to the Romish errors, who are no less zealous in the propagation of doctrines, at variance with the Christian truth, and in the encouragement of practices, incompatible with Christian peace and unity. As the Church of England, whilst she condemned the Romish corruptions, saw good reason to guard, in several of her articles, against the more modern inventions of zealous but ignorant reformers ; so is it our business, as ministers of the Church in the present day, to strive that we may maintain our holy faith in its integrity ; and, whilst we take the sacred volume for our ground in resisting the false doctrines of the Romanist, to give heed that the same precious deposit be not perverted to evil purposes, and made the occasion of disseminating any other " false doctrine, heresy, or schism." In order to this, our distribution of the holy scriptures should be accompanied by the exercise of our office in that department of it, which specially belongs to us as ministers of the gospel ; namely, the interpretation of the word of God. And as we should exercise it by our personal diligence, both in public and in private, so shall we often be enabled

to exercise it most usefully and effectually by means of written expositions of the doctrines and duties of Christianity. All this, I trust you will agree with me, my reverend brethren, is not to discourage an ample circulation of the Holy Bible: still less is it to depreciate that sacred volume, which we reverentially regard, and studiously allege, as the sole fountain and well-head of all religious knowledge. Although I would not lavish it with indiscriminate and unprofitable profusion, I would most gladly distribute it, wherever there exists a reasonable hope of its being received with due estimation, and made the occasion of religious improvement. At the same time I would further testify my profound veneration for it, by endeavouring to protect it from those abuses, to which it has been unhappily exposed amongst the “unlearned and unstable;”^{*} and to render it, with the good blessing of its heavenly Author, as efficacious as possible, in converting men from darkness unto the pure light of the gospel, and in maintaining them in the true knowledge and service of Almighty God through Christ Jesus our Lord.

There are various particulars of a practical nature, upon this as upon the former topick, which require serious consideration, but which could not be conveniently discussed in an address like the present.

^{*} 2 Pet. iii. 16.

It is rather my business to propose for your adoption general principles of improvement: the mode of applying them is a subject for minute investigation, which must be left to more favourable opportunities. If you approve of the general principles recommended to you, it will remain for you, my reverend brethren, to see how they can be best applied with a view to the spiritual benefit of the people committed to your charge. Herein each individual must be left to judge and act for himself: or rather perhaps each would have the prospect of acting most satisfactorily to his own mind and conscience, most beneficially for his people, and most effectually for the service of the Church of God and therein for the promotion of God's glory; if we could all unite in a common judgment as to the detail of the means fittest to be adopted for so desirable an end, and in a common system of co-operation for carrying those means into execution. It is, I think, greatly to be lamented, that opportunities of mutual communication amongst the clergy, as a professional body, very rarely occur. Much advantage in the discharge of their important office would in all probability accrue from the cultivation of a general good understanding amongst them upon a variety of topics; from a comparison of their sentiments with each other, and from a consequent harmony of plans and proceedings. Much advantage might also accrue from uniting our brethren of the laity with us, in endeavours

to promote the religious improvement of the lower orders of the community. Local associations of this kind have been for some years instituted to a large extent, and with very satisfactory success, in England, in connexion with the venerable Society for promoting Christian knowledge. A similar practice has been more recently adopted in this part of the empire, in connexion with the kindred Association incorporated for discountenancing vice and promoting the knowledge of the Christian Religion; and I have very sincere gratification in learning from the last report, that “the success of the plan, though but a short time tried, and not yet universally carried into effect, has been most important and beneficial.” Committces have been formed in no less than eleven dioceses, amongst which are the Archdioceses of the Primate and of our Metropolitan, under the immediate sanction and direction of the several Diocesans. And if I were to take it upon myself to recommend any specifick measure to your approbation and adoption, it would be the formation of such a Committee in this diocese. An institution of this sort would in all probability have the good effects, under the Divine blessing, of quickening and keeping alive attention to some of the most important topicks which can occupy us, whether as members or ministers of Christ and his Church. It would lead to a frequent and friendly intercourse amongst our-

selves and many well disposed laity of our body. It would conduce to an uniformity of sentiment, and a consistency and regularity of operations ; and it would also contribute substantial assistance towards rendering our operations successful. At the same time it would unite us with our brethren generally through the country in a systematick course of activity for the general good. The stricter is the union amongst the promoters of religious improvement, the more prosperous will be their exertions in its cause. Meanwhile for myself I desire to say, that if upon any points of professional duty, especially if upon the very important topicks, which have been now submitted to your attention, communication with me, either on the part of any of you individually, or of any number of you collectively, shall be thought conducive to the spiritual improvement of your people, you are intitled to, and you may command, my best counsel and my most ready cooperation.

And now, my reverend brethren, craving your indulgence for the length of this address, for which I can offer no other apology than my sense of the great importance of its subjects ; and expressing at the same time my gratitude for your patient attention ; I have only to recommend the foregoing suggestions to your deliberation under the blessing of Almighty God. May He “ pre-

vent us in all our doings with his most gracious favour, and further us with his continual help: that in all our works begun, continued, and ended in Him, we may glorify his holy name; and finally by his mercy obtain everlasting life, through Jesus Christ our Lord."

THE END.