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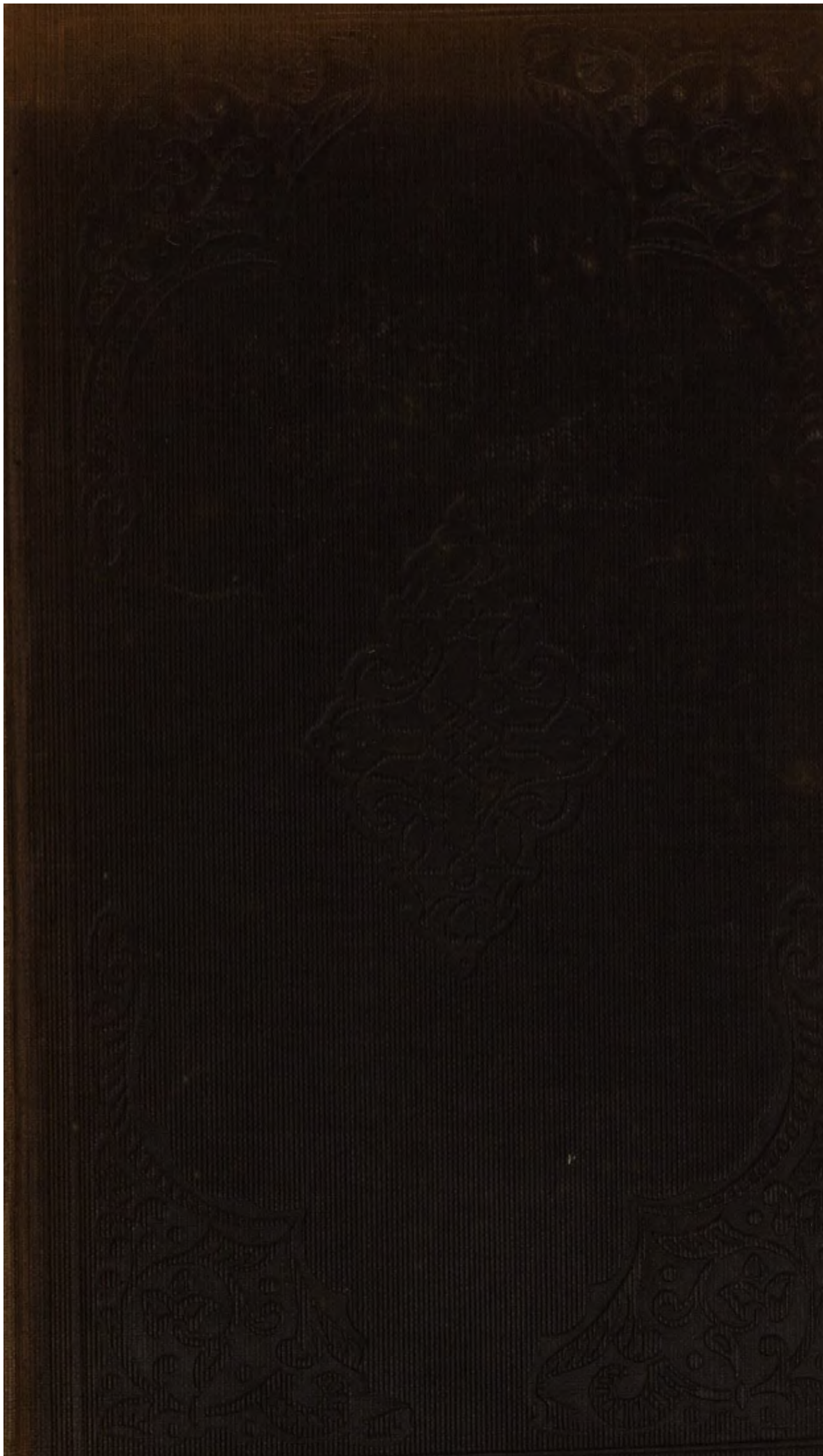
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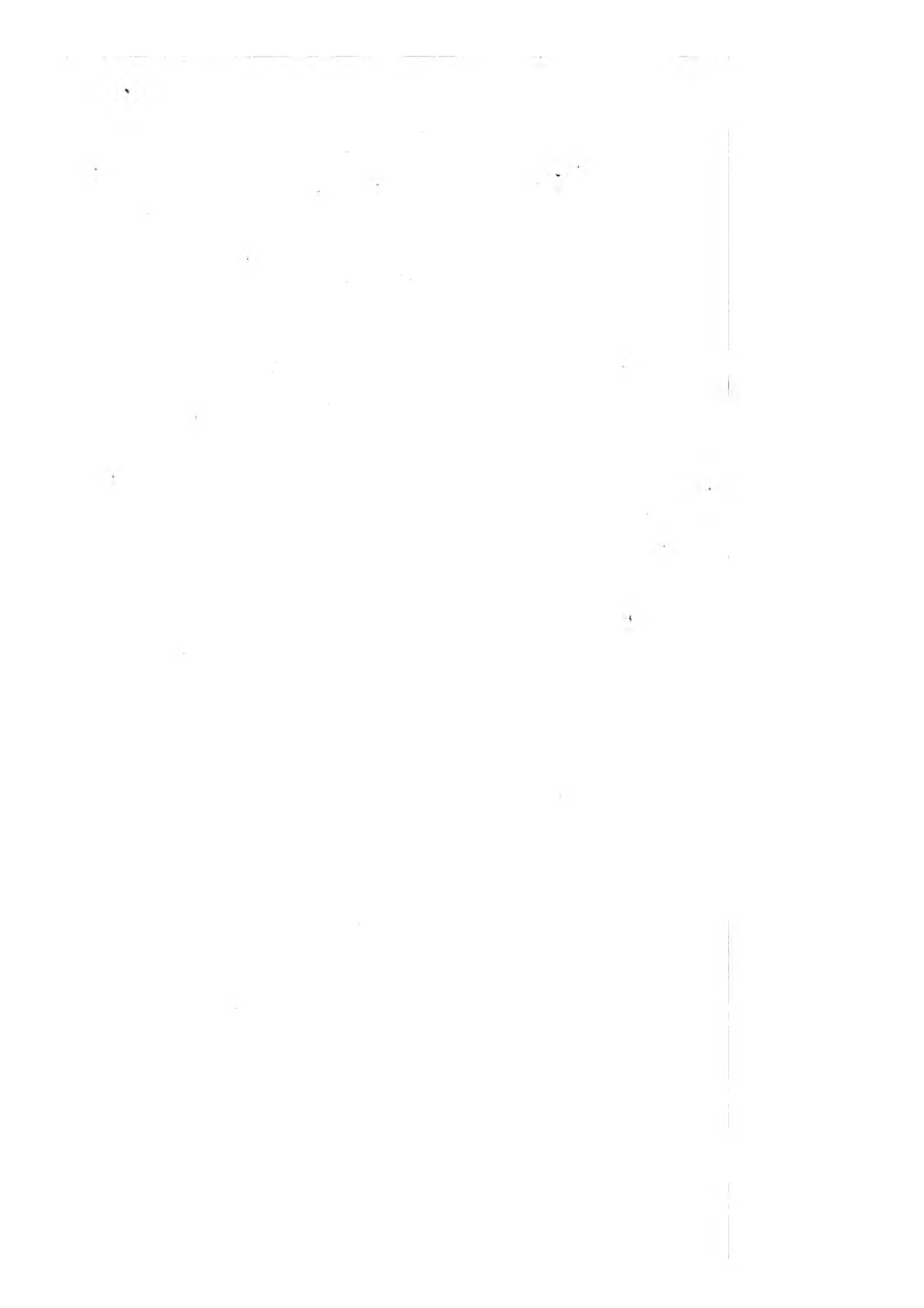
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2 vols Cat^a -

1850-53





PLAIN SERMONS

ON

THE DOCTRINE AND OFFICES

OF THE

Church of England,

PREACHED IN THE

PARISH CHURCH OF FORDHAM, CAMBRIDGESHIRE

DURING THE YEAR 1852.



BY THE

REV. BENJAMIN WILSON, M.A.

CURATE.

“The Ancient Fathers are our leaders, not our Lords. They are not the truth of God itself, but only witnesses of the truth.”

BP. JEWEL, DEF. APOL. p. 55.

VOL. II.

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1853.

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TO THE CONGREGATIONS

AMONG WHOM, FROM TIME TO TIME,

THE WRITER HAS BEEN CALLED TO MINISTER,

THESE SERMONS

ARE INSCRIBED,

IN LASTING REMEMBRANCE,

AND WITH THE EARNEST PRAYER,

THAT TO HAVE MET AS FRIENDS TOGETHER,

SO LONG AND SO OFTEN,

In the House of God,

MAY, BY GOD'S GRACE,

TURN TO OUR GROWTH IN HOLINESS AND FAITH,

NOT TO OUR CONFUSION.

ERRATA.

In page 7, line 1, word 6, read *it* instead of “them.”

In page 20, line 19, word 10, dele “of.”

PREFACE.

IF the title page to the following Sermons can win the reader to look carefully into them, I shall not be without hope that I have done *something*. As to my fitness for such a service, the reader will judge for himself; since, however, a book will not pass without a preface, it may not be amiss to tell him by what steps I was led into this work, and with what helps I have performed it.

I had long grieved in silence over the deep downfall of *some* among us from the great Gospel truth—the true doctrine of the incarnation—the very essence of our faith: hence creep in upon unwary souls all God-denying errors; for nearly all who believe untruly, partly deny the two natures in Christ in one person.

Whatever be the points which are *not* essential to the *being* of a Church, none will be hardy enough to maintain that a disbelief in her Founder and her Head, can share in her life or her hopes. Of the many books which have been so ably written on this great point, there is not one, perhaps, within the reach and understanding of those who most need their help.

My aim, therefore, has been to strip the matter of scholastic and polemical words, that it may stand revealed "in the beauty of holiness," with which holy writ has clothed it. While the *cause* of their first delivery remains—may the following Sermons, under God, be blessed more and more.

In ancient times, the Church brought all her powers against the error which threatened to rob her children of their faith in God the Son, made man for our salvation. Even during the Apostolic age, there were many who refused to confess "Jesus Christ come in the flesh," as we learn from the writings of St. John.

In the next generation this error was still found in the Church. How was it met? by an appeal

to that faith which came down in an unbroken line from the Apostles themselves. What Christ revealed to them, they preached ; what they preached, would only be known by the testimony of those Churches which they themselves founded. By such a course, in the earliest ages were the gainsayers of Christ's Incarnation put to silence. It is clear so far, how well the Church fulfilled the work which her Lord had given her to do. She followed up the Apostolic anathema or curse pronounced by St. John against those who " abode not in the doctrine of Christ."

Still more remarkable to the same purpose are the examples of the following age. There too we find the main outwork of the Church of Christ, the truth of Christ's Incarnation, defended by each Bishop taking part in a synodical decision on those cardinal points of the faith, who was understood as avouching besides his own opinion, the faith also which his Church had inherited from her first founder. A very little thought will show how greatly this adds to the support, furnished by such meetings, to orthodox and saving

truth. A meeting of learned divines agreeing in their views of Scripture, would no doubt carry great authority. A Council of Bishops in the third century was such a meeting. By the co-operation of those distant Bishops, the true faith was finally and effectually confirmed, and the verity of our Lord's divine nature passed on as a precious treasure to other councils and other times.

To keep and teach this faith "once delivered to the Saints," to the best of my power, is the object which I have at heart.

The helps which I needed were not always at hand; want of books denied me an opportunity in some instances of consulting the original work to which I am indebted, and want of space precludes reference to the precise editions and pages from which I have occasionally borrowed. The chief authorities to whom I am indebted are the following:

Wilson's Method of Explaining the New Testament.

Mortlock's Sermons on the Trinity.

Whitby on the New Testament.

Whitby's Tract, De Vera Christi Deitate.

Burgess's Tracts on the Divinity of Christ.
 Caswall on the Seen and Unseen.
 Waterland's Works.
 Pearson on the Creed.
 Bishop Van Mildert.
 Bishop Bull's Works.
 Bishop Beveridge's Works.
 Bingham's Works.
 Hooker, ed. Keble.
 Cave's Lives of the Primitive Fathers.
 Rev. W. Wilson, D.D., late of Queen's College,
 Oxford.

Notwithstanding these among many hundreds of high authorities, and the living witness borne by the Church throughout the world, and sealed by the blood of her martyrs; views even now prevail which are called *rationalistic*, which by dint of mere human reason try to account for the awful truths and mysteries of our most holy faith; to such the union of God and man, in the person of Jesus Christ, is a "stumbling-block." To men who are led away by philosophy and vain deceit, the Trinity, and even the atonement and the incarnation of the *Son of God*, are no article of belief, but rather an object of scorn; yet, even

these men must own that if we are mistaken in this matter, it is a mistake which the Christian world, by plain force of Scripture, has, in a manner, inevitably been led into.

He must be a very weak man who can imagine that the doctrine of the Trinity could ever have come in, or could have subsisted half a century, were it not for the plain and irresistible reasons for it appearing in *Holy Scripture* : how the matter now stands let Christendom declare ¹.

If we run up from our own day fifteen hundred years higher, we find the body of the bishops and the clergy, from all parts, bearing witness to the divinity of our Lord ; sixty years higher we still see them agreeing on this point ; a hundred years further up in the middle of the second century, and all the way as we pass to it, we meet, at every step, plain marks of this belief in the Deity of Christ overspreading His Church, at a time when *miracles* had not ceased. In short, up to the very Apostolic age, we trace the bright course of this

¹ See Mortlock on the Trinity, p. 252, and his Extract from Waterland's Works, vol. ii. 166. 168.

one faith : hence we see how overwhelming is the force of Scripture evidence of Christ's divinity upon the minds of men of all ages, the most learned and the best.

Let us seek for a portion of their spirit that we may abide in their faith ; and when we hear, as we too often have heard, and must be prepared to hear, of ingenious men scoffing at the most *high Godhead* of our Lord and Saviour, let us pray for them, and fear for ourselves.

The gratifying reviews and learned criticisms with which my Four Sermons on the great central doctrine of the Church have already been received, have encouraged me to republish them, in a second volume of Plain Sermons on the " Doctrine and Offices," as a sequel to a former volume on the " Sacraments and Services of our Church."

The assurance upon high authority from many quarters that they are " very sound in doctrine," is their best recommendation. The length and learning of the review with which the " Scottish Ecclesiastical Journal " has honoured them, demands my gratitude : it bears most critically on

page 43 of this volume. The Nestorians came at length to avow two *distinct* persons in Christ, and to hold only a unity of will and affection ¹. If all Christians admit that it was *one* and the *same person* who was crucified, and ascended into Heaven, they may say God was crucified. Men speak of Christ sometimes as if He were man *only*; sometimes as if He were God *only*: not unlike Nestorius, who divided (would that one were spared such words) Christ into two persons, —the Son of God, and the Son of man, and assigned to each person distinct attributes. This heresy the Synod of Ephesus condemned.

The words *τεκοῦσα Θεὸν θεοτόκος*, applied to the blessed Virgin, were rendered “*Dei genetrix* ;” and Leo I., Bishop of Rome, says, “We anathematize Nestorius, who believed the Virgin Mary to be the bringer forth (‘*genetricem*’), not of God, but only man. Ephraim, of Theopolis, translating these words of Leo into Greek, used the word *μήτηρ*, hence *Μήτηρ Θεοῦ* ².” From this

¹ See Berriman’s *Sermons, on the Trinity*, p. 278. London. 1725.

² See *Definitions of Faith, Canons, &c.*, by the Rev. W. A. Hammond, M.A.

it appears, as Bishop Beveridge observes, that the Greeks called the blessed Virgin Θεοτόκος : the Latins afterwards wrote “Genetrix Dei;” and the Greeks Μητέρα Θεοῦ, hence eventually “*the Mother of God.*” Beveridge, Pearson, and our Divines generally, however, seem to discountenance these last words³. The higher nature could not be said to suffer, nor the lower nature to be present on earth and in heaven at the same time; but the Person could do both. “What is human is applied to God, and what is Divine to man⁴.” From this we may infer how it was that the Church insisted that the blessed Mary was the *Mother of God*. The Catholic Faith is, it seems, from the Creed, this,—Jesus was God in the womb and in the manger, on the cross and in the tomb. It was this which men confessed, when they bowed down at the words, “And was made man⁵.” This, then, is the soul and centre of our Holy Religion. To contend for this and retain it is the great object of the Church.

³ Hammond, p. 66.

⁴ See the Bp. of Brechin on the Nicene Creed, p. 209. Oxford. 1852.

⁵ P. 211.

Our very learned and far-famed opponent, Dr. John Henry Newman, once the bright, but little valued, ornament of our Church, publicly declares that the Establishment (meaning our branch of the Catholic Church) denies that "Mary is the Mother of God⁶." However this may be, my experience of nearly twenty years as Curate among scarcely any but Dissenters, forbids me to think, with the profound Divine who *reviewed* the "Discourses," that "the doctrine of the *Incarnation* may be taught *efficaciously in all the sects, &c.*, excepting the Unitarian bodies." Such a conclusion seems to one incomparably less learned than the Scottish reviewer, as fatal to the Church of England as to that of Rome. At first, indeed, ere time has defaced the divine impress of the Church from her undutiful children, pure doctrine may *linger* among them, even in schism or heresy; but the roll of *time* will sweep from them "the faith once delivered to the saints." Where, when, how, and by whom was ever sound doctrine ever preserved *out* of the Church? Two

⁶ Discourses on University Education, p. 156. Dublin: J. Duffy. 1852.

strong authorities, very independently of each other, harmonize on this point. "In Protestant Germany faith gradually died out. . . . Denmark, Norway, Sweden, Holland, were infected as deeply. Switzerland became mostly Socinian." Even in France, no sooner had the Church lost her sway, than out of thirty millions, only two millions are said to have retained the faith ⁷.

The second authority, which will not be suspected of much sympathy with the former, is extracted from the "Guardian."

A correspondent of the "*Record*" makes a communication from Geneva, which the editor "knows that the writer is afflicted in making," that—

"In the 'city of Calvin,' in this city of Geneva, once so brilliantly adorned with the 'light of truth,' and whose faithfulness and strength had caused it to be surnamed 'Protestant Rome,' and The Throne of the Bible, is now exhibiting alarming signs, or rather frightful evidences of its fall; the perfidious and lamentable work of him, whom

⁷ See Sermons, Rev. E. B. Pusey, D.D. Second Edition. Preface.

the Lord Jesus calls ‘a liar and a murderer from the beginning,’ and who, when he speaketh, or maketh a lie, speaketh of his own, or acts according to his own works of darkness. . . . But while the labourers slept, the enemy came and sowed tares in the beautiful field of the Bible. From the middle of the last century, unbelief, first furtively, and then more boldly, insinuated its ‘various doctrines’ among the revelations of Heaven; and through it, this same Lord Jesus, whom all the families of Geneva had acknowledged, and, for the most part, worshipped, as the Son of God, God manifest in the flesh, and the eternal and perfect Saviour of his Church, is become nothing more, in the eyes of masters, parents, governors, and preachers of the Word, but a superior and remarkable Being, no doubt, yet, after all, no longer ‘Emmanuel,’ and especially, no longer, ‘The Lord our Righteousness.’

“It is owing to this, that in the new school-book and analysis of one of the best scholars of the new college, we read the following instruction, given to four or five hundred youths in that in-

stitution, from the lips of the Protestant chaplain officially appointed to it, and that this minister, (as he is called,) affixed his signature to it, certifying that it was a faithful and good report. It is as follows :—

““One can therefore understand that the account given of the creation of the world, as narrated by Moses, is only an allegory suited to the popular traditions or superstitions of that period. Thus, for example, it would be, one feels, quite absurd to admit that the serpent ever spoke, as well as that the eating of an apple, or such kind of fruit, brought the punishment of God to man, even to the suffering of death.

““It would not, therefore, be reasonable to take this narration literally. Again, it would be gross superstition to suppose that the being which the Bible calls the Devil, or Satan, is any thing more than those evil thoughts, which proceed from the heart, and are called sin.’”

The fifth is an exception to the general course of plain Sermons, and is partly explained in its Appendix. The desolation of the Island Churches,

also, the puritanical irreverence which pervades this ancient home of the Catholic faith, has been perpetuated by the presumption, that all who can be induced to go to church, are members of her communion ; by the loss of the daily service, want of Church Schools, ignorance or utter contempt of the Apostolical Succession ; but, above every thing, the deeply-rooted and avowed feeling that the fleece is dearer to the shepherd than the sheep, who have been wandering about since the Great Rebellion. The allusion to Curates, and their qualifications, has been deemed severe by some clergymen ; but I beg their Reverences to remember, that less than a hundred years ago, it was not uncommon to advertise the sale of slaves in England ; and even twenty years ago, many things were done, and many things left undone, with reference to clerical duties, which would shock us now ; still, our righteous indignation for the past may be somewhat abated by glancing at the two *very last* numbers of the “ Ecclesiastical Gazette,” containing the following advertisements :—No. 1. “Wanted a Curate, of Protestant or Evangelical principles. . . . Stipend must not

be an object," &c. No. 2. "Wanted for the united parishes of . . . a Second Curate. Stipend, 50*l.*" Now, without venturing a comment on the *quality* of the article required, one who has been a Curate for nearly twenty years, in a diocese of eighty livings, till now in the patronage of the Bishop, may say that 50*l.* a year are an ample provision for a *trained* priest, under the vows of *poverty* and *celibacy*, inadequate, however, to the support of a family, and the demands of a parish. But neither training nor celibacy without money can earn for a man the endearing name of "*Brother*," on the following terms:—No. 3. "A Rector, in one of the Eastern Counties, wishes to find a Brother, who will undertake his duty in a population of less than 900, for the advantage" of what?—Of airing the rectory, possibly paying the rates, and boarding the servants, at the expense of the Curate, "Sentiments Evangelical," &c. &c. After these three advertisements, from the two last numbers of the "Ecclesiastical Gazette," we may infer that a "pious man, to whom stipend is no object," is yet in great request by the superior Clergy: such is *still* the

estimate of *pious, Protestant, Evangelical* principles; and therefore I need not retract what I have recorded. Poverty is not in *itself* an injury to the Church; for the improvement of the Churches closely associated with the Cathedral is chiefly due to poor men: one only regrets that the law of the land, rather than the law of the Church, has insured two regular services in each of these Churches. But now, alas! what some few animals do physically, many persons now-a-days attempt to do spiritually, *i. e.* to comprehend and inwardly digest enough of religion on Sunday to supply them for a whole week. One who has had the honour to stand among the very first who erected and managed National Schools, cannot more effectually express his estimation of their blessing to the Church, than by pointing to Schools, for which he has obtained and spent within the last three years, just double the total amount of his Church income, for the last five years, in a parish rich in Church property. Fewer Churches and fewer Church Schools were built during the whole of the last century, than are now erected to the service of God in every suc-

cessive year; so that things are not now so bad as they were a quarter of a century ago, when there appeared, the remonstrance of *one* of the *superior* and *prosperous* Clergy, against that notorious nepotism, which was then monopolizing the provision which the Church had left for doing her work, while zealous Dissenters were pre-occupying her ancient strongholds:—

“To me, whatever some may think, it is painful to find fault; and especially where the rulers of the Church are concerned. But when such a man as Hooker can lead the way, I shall not complain, though unjustly charged with want of due respect. Truth, with me, is of more importance than either the good or bad opinion of men. The truth, therefore, must be spoken; and I think I shall not be accused either of violating or exceeding it, when I say, that *that* first thing which is looked for from the hands of a Bishop—the care of the Clergy—that in *doing good* they may have whatever comfort and encouragement their countenance, authority, and place may yield—is not afforded in this country, to the most efficient, holy, useful, and laborious Clergy

of the Church. Well known is it every where, and almost to every person, with what disdain they have been treated for near a century. And though their character, principles, and usefulness, are now better known, and even sometimes acknowledged, yet how many Bishops are there that dare show them their full countenance, or encourage them in their painful course by bestowing upon them any of that patronage which their authority and place may yield? Are there not numbers, almost in every diocese, some of them men of the first-rate talents, and who have been labouring in the most diligent and conscientious way for twenty, thirty, and even forty years, perhaps only on a small curacy, or lectureship, which has hardly kept them from starving; none of which have been promoted to a single benefice, while all the best preferment is conferred, two or three deep, on raw, young, and inexperienced persons, whose only merit is, that they have been some way related to, or are the sons and favourites of gentlemen and lords, and very often no way connected with the diocese. To the credit of those worthy men it is that however

they have been maligned and despised by the world, and neglected and disdained by their superiors, they are almost to a man sincerely attached to the present government, and to the Church to which they belong. Had not this been the case, many of them, from their talents, piety, and usefulness, might have made their way in other quarters, if so disposed ; and they would have met with all kinds of favourable and friendly help : but they prefer their principles to preferment of this description ; and had rather die in poverty and want, than forsake the Church they love, and are appointed to serve ⁸.”

This neighbourhood owes its notions of Holy Orders chiefly, or entirely, to Mr. B. Noel's *Essay on the Union of Church and State*, which suggested to my mind the propriety of preaching on the Ordination Service, (which has become to many a dead letter and an empty form,) a plain Sermon, which I publish in reply to a very kind, learned,

⁸ Rev. John Acaster, Vicar of St. Helen's, York ; and Domestic Chaplain to the Right Hon. the Earl of Mexborough.—THE CHURCH IN DANGER FROM HERSELF. London. 1829.

and condescending correspondence of my best and oldest friend at Oxford.

Out of the thousands to whom I have from time to time ministered, I scarcely ever met a layman in these parts who *practically* believed in the uninterrupted succession : indeed it is called a popish doctrine, which “gives Papists advantage over us :” yet time will prove that, unless England can receive this historical fact, and teach her children from infancy that her clergy derive their office and their authority through the apostolical line from Christ, and not from man, Roman Catholics and puritans will divide the land. That civil legislation is losing its influence over the Church is scarcely a subject of regret, since in the House of Commons are strongly represented, by a band of zealous dissenters and their teachers, interests more hostile to our Episcopate than the imaginary interference of Jews, which at the worst could only undeceive us, and teach us not to depend upon the Commons for the discipline of the Church.

If the revival of Convocation could, without danger to the happy union of Church and State,

regain for the former something of her holy independence, we might take fresh courage; but nothing can be more painful to a true Churchman, than that feebleness of the Church unsupported by the State, which the *utter* disregard of the manifesto of her Bishops has recently evinced. To meet this growing evil, the early training of our parish priests seems the best remedy. Ours is the only profession for which one is eligible who does not serve his time; yet beforehand a man should not only count the cost, but learn the excellence of Holy Orders, their office, their obligations, their requirements, and deeply examine his conscience.

Let a Roman Catholic “produce any one solid argument to demonstrate such a succession of pastors in the Church of Rome,” (says Bishop Bull,) “and I will undertake by the very same argument to prove a like succession in our Church.” Indeed, the Anglican Church admits to her bosom and her offices the priests of Rome on their conversion to her doctrines, and sympathizes with them even in Italy, as it appears by a letter of last March from some of the London

dignitaries, forwarded through the Abbate Casiana de Col, to certain real or imaginary ecclesiastics of Lombardy, and couched in elegant Latin terms of congratulations, of which the third clause with reference to our *common* orders runs thus: "Omnes denique Ecclesiam ritè constitutam tres sacrorum Ministrorum ordines semper retinuisse, Episcopos nempe, Presbyteros et Diaconos, eosque tres gradus, ex ipsis Apostolis oriundos, successionibus numquam intercedentibus, pro Dei optimi singulari benevolentia, perpetuo fuisse fidelibus traditos et continuatos⁹." Here, then, our dignified ecclesiastics recognize the orders of foreign Roman Catholic priests.

In the absence of that spiritual discipline which alone can grapple with wealth, the overflowings of Episcopal displeasure, under the present system, are all concentrated upon that class of men who bent the mind of England to the Reformation, and who at this eventful crisis have more influence with the people than the Bishops imagine.

⁹ See the Ecclesiastical Gazette, Dec. 1852.

From some cause or other, there is no office of our Church, perhaps, so unpopular as the order of *Confirmation*. The proportion even of avowed Church people who are confirmed is small; of these the number of communicants, even under the most devoted ministry, seldom exceeds one out of twenty. Those whom the Church nominally *retains* are probably not one-fourth of the original number of candidates.

While daily preparing for this rite, about fifty young persons in a parish of one thousand eight hundred, which at the preceding confirmation scarcely afforded half a dozen candidates, the senior churchwarden triumphantly handed me printed objections addressed to the "Curate of Fordham," the chief of which are answered in my sermon on Confirmation, and are: First, "That your Episcopal Confirmation is unscriptural, popish," &c. &c. "*That a primitive preacher could confirm the young quite as well as Bishop Sumner.*" Secondly, "That your Episcopal Confirmation is highly pernicious," &c. The majority who see on their favourite preacher as black a

coat and as white a tie, and on his letters as plain a "Rev." as any which can distinguish the orthodox curate, anticipate this doctrine. Now what can the most amiable prince prelate, amid the deep recesses of his palace, or serenely reposing in a close carriage, know or feel of the conflict which a hundred copies of these papers, in a hundred hostile hands, must involve a humble though faithful servant of the Church? He hears not the taunt uttered against himself and the Church: "How the Bishop can muster sufficient daring and hardihood to venture such an heretical declaration," &c. . . . "This I will venture to assert, that the rankest socialism exhibits nothing more profane." To go on were to render a preface unworthy of the following Sermons, which, by the Divine help, the reader will find perfectly free from party strife, and, I trust, calm as the spirit which pervades the offices on which they treat.

Matrimony in the Church of England only differs from matrimony in the Church of Rome in

name. The former calls it a religious rite ; the latter a Sacrament¹. Both Churches confirm the civil contract.

Since God has set forth His Son made of a woman, marriage holds a higher place than it held under the Jewish law. A return to the true depth and meaning and solemn observance of this holy service can scarcely be hoped for, until the ancient discipline of the Church can be revived : it is awfully abused : for that celibacy which precedes it is not in the many—chastity.

Some of our clergy are forbidden to marry by a law which is stronger than that of the Church or of the law of the land—*Necessity* enforced by Poverty. How many laborious curates unconnected with patrons must either pass through the fiery trial of ripe manhood in celibacy ; or involve in adversity the wife of their bosom, and dear children for whom they cannot provide ? The statutes of our universities also continue to enforce the Law of Celibacy upon the fellows of colleges, whether clergy or laymen.

The indiscriminate intercourse of the young of

¹ See Short's History of the Church, § 280, p. 238.

both sexes in the employment of farmers, who afford them no good example, and deny them all religious education in agricultural districts, is fatal to chastity, and fertile in all those early sins which grow with the young labourers' growth, and ripen into crimes and curses—poverty and woe.

The series of Sermons on the Burial Service is expressive of their own meaning and design; each Sermon has been preached on the death of a parishioner. They afford that one subject which absorbs the solemn interest of *all*, however they may vary in religious opinions; they call off the mind from unhallowed strife and party conflict, so that when aided, as they have been, by the sad occasions on which they were preached, under the influence of Him who was dead and buried for us, we bury our angry passions in the common grave to which we are all going down.

The man who in his last hours scoffed at the notion that he who ministered to him had received the Holy Ghost at his ordination, was suddenly called to his account. Another there was

who braved a fearful storm which raged without, rather than uncover his head within the chancel of that church which I believe he never re-entered, till he was carried into it a corpse. A third is buried near that grave at which, a little before his death, he evinced sad irreverence for the funeral service. Thoughts of these rise painfully to the memory, even while charity is hoping "against hope."

The remarks which I have borrowed, chiefly from the Rev. F. E. Paget, will show how religious customs among us have survived their *original meaning*, especially when the history of the *passing Bell* is associated with the following extract: "The *soul Bells* of the different churches tolled," &c. for the Duke of Wellington's funeral². Those who are most deeply devoted to the Book of Common Prayer, cannot but shrink from the fearful task which the State imposes on them of reading the funeral service over even blasphemers, who denied the Godhead of the Lord of life. Should one of the 4000 who have petitioned

² See Camb. Chron. Nov. 20, 1852.

against this necessity be cast into prison rather than bury a Socinian or an Unitarian, may we indulge the hope that our Protestant senators and noblemen, who have so nobly and zealously, at home and abroad, advocated the cause of the captive Madiai, will intercede with the government for their Protestant countryman at home, who loves his Bible too wisely and too well to treat in his death, as one of the blessed who have died in Christ, the man who living and dying denied the Redeemer.

There are two injunctions (Eliz. 49) directing "That there may be a modest and distinct song used through all parts of the common prayers in the Church³," in every parish where persons could be found. The Church clearly contemplated chanting even, I think, in country parishes: this appears from the name of "hymn" given to the *Te Deum* and *Benedictus*; of "canticle" to the *Benedicite*; of "song" to the *MAGNIFICAT* and *Nunc dimittis*; and of "anthem" to the *Venite*

³ See a *Rationale, &c.*, by Thomas Bisse, D.D.

Exultemus. If one may judge from experience of late years, there is nothing which can regain so surely for the Church of England the ground which she has lost as the daily services chanted by the children, even in rural parishes. The science of music as a qualification for Holy Orders would, when brought to bear upon each parish, win more souls really to the Church than popular preaching. In the Great Rebellion this was well known to those who plundered our churches; for they drove out of the choirs all singers set before the altar, leaving nothing but silence and ruin. In conclusion, should any of my preliminary statements incur the charge of presumption and severity, the reader will spare me, if he will only compare the most unwelcome truth which I have ventured with the extracts referred to in the letter in behalf of the National Society of last December. If in the Sermons *themselves* there be any thing contrary to the Church of England, I trust the Bishops will suppress it. If, on the other hand, I have, under the Divine guidance and help, faithfully succeeded in the laborious task which my Title-page announces, I cannot but indulge the

pleasing hope, that they will bring home the true teaching of the Church to many who have neither the will nor the power to read and examine large books on the subject for themselves.

Fordham, Cambridgeshire,
Lent, 1853.

CONTENTS.

SERMON I.

JOHN x. 30.

	PAGE
“ I and my Father are one ”	1

SERMON II.

1 TIM. iii. 16.

“ God was manifest in the flesh ”	23
---	----

SERMON III.

1 COR. xv. 47.

“ The first man is of the earth, earthy : the second man is of the Lord from Heaven ”	46
--	----

SERMON IV.

JOHN xx. 28.

“ My Lord and my God ”	75
----------------------------------	----

SERMON V.

MATT. iii. 15.

“ And Jesus answering, said unto him, Suffer it to be so now : for thus it becometh us to fulfil all righteousness ”	107
---	-----

SERMON VI.

JOHN xx. 22, 23.

PAGE

“ He breathed on them, and saith unto them, Receive ye the Holy Ghost : whose soever sins ye remit, they are remitted unto them ; and whose soever sins ye retain, they are retained ” 155

SERMON VII.

ACTS viii. 17.

“ Then laid they their hands on them, and they received the Holy Ghost ” 185

SERMON VIII.

MATT. xix. 6.

“ What therefore God hath joined together, let not man put asunder ” 212

SERMON IX.

JOHN xi. 25, 26.

“ 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 ” 240

SERMON X.

JOB xix. 25—27.

“ I know that my Redeemer liveth, and that he shall stand at the latter day upon the earth : and though after my skin worms destroy this body, yet in my flesh shall I see God : whom I shall see for myself, and mine eyes shall behold, and not another ” 260

SERMON XI.

1 TIM. vi. 7.

	PAGE
“ We brought nothing into this world, and it is certain we can carry nothing out ”	284

SERMON XII.

JOB i. 21.

“ The Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away ; blessed be the name of the Lord ”	305
---	-----

SERMON XIII.

REV. xiv. 13.

“ I heard a voice from heaven saying unto me, Write, Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord from henceforth : Yea, saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their labours ” .	329
--	-----

SERMON XIV.

PSALM xcv. 1.

“ O come, let us sing unto the Lord ”	353
---	-----

SERMON XV.

LUKE ii. 13, 14.

“ And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God, and saying, Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men ” .	374
--	-----



SERMON I.

JOHN X. 30.

“I and my Father are one.”

WE cannot understand the works of God's hands, and therefore cannot fathom the depths of His word. “Such knowledge is too wonderful for me, I cannot attain unto it,” says the Psalmist. The grain cast into the earth, may in the course of time, become a part of the very hand that sowed it. An acorn grows into an oak. From an egg comes forth a dove; yet we know not *how*. In what manner the soul is kept within the body, or touched by it, or joined to it: or how the soul and the body form one man, we know not. It is not therefore strange, that God, who is in Heaven, hid from our view,

should be past finding out. That he is one, and that he is three: that God the Son and God the Father, and the Holy Spirit coming down from both, are all *three in one* Godhead, the Bible tells us; but the *mode* of this Divine being we understand not—God knows, and His Spirit has worded a truth, which we are to believe with deep humility—we “walk by faith, not by sight.” If we cannot understand *earthly* things, how can we be wiser in *heavenly* things; none but the ever blessed Spirit can impart to us the saving knowledge of the everlasting Son,—our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. “To him be glory, both now and for ever, Amen.”¹

Man being of a fallen nature, could only escape death by regaining the grace which he had at first, when he partook of God, who giveth life and blessing through the Son in the Spirit. The Son partook, then, of flesh and blood, that is, he became man, being, by nature, begotten of that which is

¹ 2 Peter iii. 18.

by nature life, that is of God ; and being the only begotten word of the Father, he joined himself to our flesh, that he might restore it to his own life, and make it through himself partaker of God the Father ; for our Saviour stands between God and man ; between the living and the dead, being as God, joined to God the Father, but with men again as man, and having in himself the Father, and being in the Father himself, he took our nature, reforming it into his own life. But he also is in us, wherefore also we have become “partakers of the Divine nature,” and are called sons, having in this way the Father himself in us, through the Son. St. Paul says, since “ye are Sons, God hath sent the Spirit of his son into your hearts, crying Abba Father.” This is the greatness of God’s gift in our baptism. Having marred the divine image in us, we are created anew in Christ Jesus, and enabled, by his grace, to grow up in Him, to live in Him, to die in Him, to be found in Him, and enjoy an endless life in Him, who is our life for ever.

The title of *Son* is chosen in the book of God, and is used in the gospel to teach us the relation of Christ to God ; and as every son of Adam fully shares in *Adam's* proper nature, so this word *Son* leads us to think of Christ as the Holy one sharing fully in his *Father's* nature, and in his being. That as the son of man is *man*, so the Son of God is *God*; hence "his glory, the glory as of the only-begotten Son of the Father."¹ Our Saviour bade *his disciples* pray "Our Father." For *Himself*, as the ever-living and ETERNAL SON, He says, "MY Father." He says, "my Father honoureth me, of whom ye say, that He is your God."² In this view He is "the only-begotten of the Father;"³ and in this divine sense without a fellow in his relation. His use of the title, "my Father," proves that the words "Son of God" were a real sign of a true sonship, sharing in the eternal Godhead, as the style of the *son of man* speaks of his *human nature*. So the "Son of God" repre-

¹ John i. 14. ² Ib. viii. 54. ³ Ib. i. 14.

sents the *Divine*. Christ speaks of God as his “Father,” by this title alone, forty-four times in St. Matthew’s and St. John’s Gospels—also in Luke ii. 40.

In the text, Christ speaks of his oneness with the Father in a divine nature, power, and being : so far was he from denying that he made Himself God, that he pointed to the works which he did by the power of the Father living in Him—the Deity. From the 25th to the 31st verse, Christ so discoursed to the Jews that they still thought He made out that He was God. He called God, in such a holy sense, “his Father,” that he was Father to him alone, and so that He and his Father were one, therefore his hearers said that He made Himself God : He never disowns this meaning of his words — nay, he proves his Deity thus, (verses 37, 38) : “If I do not the works of my Father, believe me not ; (when I thus say he is my Father) but if I do them, though ye believe not me, believe the works : that ye may know and believe, that I am in the Father, and the Father in me,” as if He

should have said, "my works can only be done by the same power which my Father hath; I am, therefore, the Son of God." But more of this in its proper place.

I. Thus, at the outset, by the teaching of our Lord himself, we see "that the Father is ever in the Son, and the Son is in the Father;"¹ and the unity, or oneness, of the Godhead is unbroken—"I and my Father are one." The depth of divine love for fallen man may best be known by this most high and holy sonship in the bosom of the Father, "who spared not his only-begotten Son, that whosoever believeth on Him should not perish," for in this high and holy sense, "He that spared not His *own* Son, how shall he not with Him freely give us all things."² Before our Saviour's time for suffering had come, his rule and practice was to act with caution. St. John, in writing the evidence which Christ gave of himself, would not add to this Divine testimony to make it plainer to suit his more open avowal of

¹ John xiv. 10. 11.

² Rom. viii. 32.

the truth. He saw in them the full doctrine of Christ's Divinity ; *we* see clearly enough our Saviour's real meaning, and all which St. John would have us to understand by it. On very many occasions, however, he clearly taught that he came down from Heaven. When he said, "*Verily, verily, I say unto you, before Abraham was I am,*"¹ he was understood to teach herein that he was without beginning of days. He more than once pointed the disciples to his *return to Heaven*. "I came forth *from the Father*, and am come into the world, again I leave the world and go *to the Father*."² "What and if ye shall *see* the Son of man ascend up where He *was before*?" He could only be *seen* to go up as *man*; and therefore calls Himself the "Son of man," though truly it was as the *Son of God* that He was *before* in Heaven. As he now united *both natures*, he could properly speak of himself by either title, as it might be best suited to his discourse, and the mind of his disciples, who

¹ John viii. 58.

² Ib. xvi. 28, & vi. 62.

now understood him. "By this we believe," said they, "that thou camest forth from God." In the answer of the Apostles to this evidence of our Lord, we have two distinct acknowledgements of the Saviour's divine character; one of his true knowledge of all things, "now are we sure that thou knowest all things," and another of his existence before time began, "now we believe that thou *camest forth* from God." Our Lord denies not their meaning of his own words.¹ It was touching his claim of divine nature, that before Caiaphas, and their own court, the Pharisees in vain sought legal evidence against him, (for they were at no loss for witnesses of his taking the title of Christ,) for want of proof by witnesses, the court of the Jews would draw from *Himself* an acknowledgement of his own divinity. In the account of his trial when all the Sanhedrim were gathered together, not noticed by St John, because fully given in the 26th chapter by St. Matthew, you will see that

¹ John xvi. 28.

it was not until the High Priest had said "I adjure thee by the LIVING GOD, that thou tell us whether thou be the Christ, the Son of God,"¹ that He plainly owned his title to divinity. And now "knowing that his hour was come that he should depart out of this world, unto the Father, "he witnessed a good confession,"² for which he had been making ready the way, and which he thought worthy to be sealed with his blood. He answered "thou hast said ;"³ or as St. Mark more plainly gives our Lord's meaning, "I am."⁴ Further, he bids them look forward to open evidence of his divinity, when they should "see Him sitting on the right hand of power, and coming in the clouds of Heaven," sitting as it were upon the water-flood, and throned in the sky. Then did the Council pronounce him guilty of death. To them these words, needing no further proof, but carrying their sin and death with them, clearly said that the Son of God was God.

¹ Matt. xxvi. ² 1 Tim. vi. 13. ³ Matt. xxvi. 64.

⁴ Mark xiv. 62.

We have now seen the account of Christ's own testimony of his divinity ; he has besides this, taught us to pray to Him—Christ claims equal honour with the Father. He promised to hear and answer Christians' prayers. His words to the Father are of like force, “and now, O Father, glorify thou me with thine own self, with the glory which *I had with thee before the world was.*”¹ These very words are a plain testimony both *to the meaning* and to the truth of St. John's opening doctrine, that our Lord Jesus “was in the beginning with God, and was God.”² So that “the Father loved him before the foundation of the world.”³ Thus I have showed, that Christ himself teaches that he is “the Son of God,” in a sense which cannot belong to man, or angel, or creature of any rank ; but only belongs to the true and perfect nature of God. The Lord of eternity.

II. I am next to bring forward the testimony of the unbelieving Jews ; Who said Christ was guilty of blasphemy, and

¹ John xvii. ² John i. 1. ³ Ib. xvii. 24.

sentenced him to death, because he styled himself the Son of God, in his own sense, *i. e.* because being a man, he made himself God. Whence it is clear—

1. That in the sense of the Jews, to own himself the Son of God, and to make himself God, was the same thing.

2. Hence, also, it is certain that the Jews of that age did not think the Messiah was to be God, but only a man who could not really claim for himself divinity: they never condemned him as a blasphemer, because he said He was the Christ; but only because he said he was the *Son of God*—thus making himself equal with God. Our blessed Lord was tried before a Jewish court, and therefore under the Mosaic law, by the rule of evidence laid down in Numb. xxxv. and Deut. xvii. 6.

The Jews accused him, indeed, first of making himself a king, but Pilate knew that “for envy” they had made this charge, and they were at length forced to fall back upon the *real grounds* of their charge against him. “We have a law, and *by our*

law he ought to die, because he made himself the *Son of God*." In a word, Jesus Christ was condemned to death by the Jewish law for acknowledging himself the *Son of God*: the phrase Son of God allows, and merely allows, of several other meanings; but in the eye of the law, none but that which was understood by the Jews, and not denied by Christ, could bring down upon him the sentence of death. The notions of the Jewish Sanhedrim are most fully made known to us by St. John, when speaking of another body of the Jews: they believed that He being a man made himself God; and being, at this time, blind to the divinity with which he was clothed, they thought him guilty of death. The words of his divine prayer will scarcely allow us to believe, that the Jewish court were guilty of the *wilful* murder of their Lord and God—"Father, forgive them, they know not what they do."

They knew that He *claimed* divinity: they believed not the *truth* of this claim. St. Peter, too, in his speech to his countrymen,

says, "Ye denied the Holy one and the just . . . and killed the Prince of life, whom God hath raised from the dead . . . and now, brethren, I know that through *ignorance* ye did it, as did also your rulers;"¹ through ignorance of the DIVINE NATURE which placed him above the law, by which he was tried—

1. Before one of the assemblies of the Jews, Jesus called God his Father, and hence they believed him to claim divinity, and sought to put him to death.²

2. To another body of the Jewish people he said, "before Abraham was *I am*;"³ they thought his claims so high above his simple humanity that they tried to destroy him.

3. Before a third body of the Jews he called himself the "*Son of God*—as one with the Father;"⁴ and understanding his real meaning, they took up stones to destroy him.

¹ Acts iii. 14, 17.

² John v.

³ Ib. viii.

⁴ Ib. x.

4. Soon after, when he said, “the Father is in me, and I in him;” the same people again went about to stone him.

5. A fifth passage there is, which also shows that the Jews *really* believed our Saviour to have claimed divinity. “Is not this Jesus,” they cried out, “whose father and mother we know; how is it then, that he saith, ‘I came down from Heaven?’”

6. On a sixth occasion; the reality of their belief of his blasphemy—that is, of what *they thought* blasphemy—is also recorded by the Evangelists, who have mentioned that certain scribes said *within themselves*, “Who is this that speaketh blasphemy?”¹

7. On the seventh occasion: when he had declared himself the Son of God before that body of the Jews, called the Sanhedrim—the president, or judge—the High-Priest rent his clothes.² This act was that of a judge, and sealed the sentence against our Lord. Now a calm view of the six cases going before, will clearly shew us, beyond

¹ Luke v. 17. & Matt. ix. 3.

² Ib. xxvi. 65.

doubt, the sincerity of the Sanhedrim in the seventh.

Now after all we do not look to the Jews of his time to be the best judges of the Saviour's doctrines; but we are sure, that they knew best the *meaning* of his words in their own tongue, spoken to them in the first instance.

St. John understood the words of Christ as the Jews did. This single testimony of St. John to the meaning of our Lord's words, which was understood by the Jews, would fully prove the divinity of Christ to be one of the great doctrines of our religion.

III. But the divinity of Christ is proved to be a doctrine of the New Testament, not by the evidence of one body of the Jews, but by a mass of evidence from Jewish Christians.

To learn the real meaning of every doubtful passage of Holy Writ, and to impart that meaning to others, it is a great point to know how it was understood by persons who lived in or near the age when it was written. The Jews, whether believers or unbelievers, were the best judges of what our Lord *did* say.

The New Testament teaches the divinity of Christ, but my present aim is to prove it by Jewish evidence. The Apostles by the decree of the Council at Jerusalem, had left Christians at liberty in some measure to observe, or not to observe the law of Moses, as they thought good ; still they believed the deity of the Saviour, even when driven from Jerusalem, and the scene of his miracles, they believed *Christ, God*.

The first fifteen Bishops of Jerusalem were all of the Circumcision, (Jews,) and their rule over the Church was early and pure. The Church of Jerusalem took in the great body of Hebrew Christians. This Mother Church of Christendom, both before the destruction of Jerusalem by Adrian, and after, could not have disbelieved in the divinity of Christ. To the siege of Jerusalem, in the time of Adrian, fifteen Bishops, one after the other, ruled over this Church, all were Hebrew, and all looked upon Christ as God.

Again, we are told that the Bishops of Jerusalem and Ælia, for more than 300

years over the Primitive Church in the Holy Land, under both its names of Jerusalem and Ælia, believed the doctrine of the Holy Trinity.

Now what is meant by the true or orthodox knowledge of Christ in the Bishops of Jerusalem, we learn from the History of Paul of Samosata, Bishop of Antioch, who was deposed for denying the divinity of Christ. He was driven from his bishopric.

Hymenæus, the 37th Bishop of Jerusalem, took an active part in getting rid of this heretic Paul. In the letter to him, Hymenæus and the other Bishops, declare the divinity of Christ to be the faith delivered down from the Apostles, and preserved in the Church to their day, and pronounce him who denies the divinity of Christ to be an alien from the faith of the Church.¹ If, then, the Scriptures be true, and the early

¹ See "Reliquiæ Sacræ," vol. ii. p. 465, 489, of the Venerable Dr. Routh, (now in his 95th year, with whom the writer passed some time last year.)

Fathers good judges of Scripture, we all must worship Christ as God.

The portion of believers in Christ, which was saved from the *whole* of Israel, after their banishment from Jerusalem by Adrian, greatly advanced the Christian faith, because they nearly all believed *Christ to be God*, about the year of Christ 133. Even at the end of the first century, Ignatius, writing to Jewish Christians, says, "come ye together as unto one temple of God, as to one altar, as to one Jesus Christ, who proceeded from one Father; and exists as one, and is returned to one." There is every reason to believe that early in the second century, the Jewish Christians believed in the divinity of Christ.

The great mass of Christians in the second and third centuries, believed in the divinity of Christ, and their opinion of the New Testament is not to be despised; the sense in which any ancient book was understood by its readers, only a short time after it was written, must always be of great value. In the beginning of the fourth

century, the great body of the Christian people, together with the writers, the rulers of the Church worshipped Christ as God. The mind of the early Christians, can only be made known to us by writers who followed them. The chain which runs from the Council of Nice, must reach up to the very first Christians in the Church of Jerusalem,¹ A. D. 33.

Thus, then, I have studied to show how *first*, by the testimony of Christ Himself; *secondly*, by the evidence of unbelieving Jews; *thirdly*, by the faith of Jewish Christians, we are taught to believe that Jesus Christ, the Eternal Son was, and is, and will be ever truly God, as the Father is God, the divine word, or Deity, who spake the world and all things into being; whose Holy Spirit, now, I trust will lead us to that of God and Christ, to know whom is everlasting life. He came in the flesh, as at this time, that He might die for our sins; He was, therefore, *God* and Man. As *God*, He was

¹ See 4th Sermon.

one with the Father ; as *man*, He went in and out among his brethren, according to the flesh. If, then, to know God and Jesus Christ is “eternal life,” *not* to know them, or wilfully to neglect this saving knowledge of himself, is to *lose* eternal life, or, as the Athanasian Creed says, “to perish everlastingly.”

Yet He emptied himself of his glory, and what He had not been He became, that in Him we might become what we had ceased to be. At this time, about 1800 years ago, He came to be “God with us,” that we might be with God, that we might be with Him and He with us ; thus He summed up in one all which can make us happy in time and eternity. Only keep looking to Him—seek to have your hearts cleansed “through His most precious blood.” The pure in heart shall see Him “who is the way, the truth, and the LIFE.” Let us love and obey Him, for of such He saith, “My Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him.”¹ At this season, “He became poor

¹ John xiv. 23.

that we might be rich ;” for us, men, “ a child was born,”—the Lord of hosts ;—the everlasting God, who was before time, and by whom are all things, and all times, was born in time ! He, who made man, became man—He was born of the mother whom He had made : He rested on the hands which He had formed.

Year by year He sets himself before us as a little child, and bids us be like Him in humility and love, and saith, “ learn of me, for I am meek and lowly in heart.” But even such thoughts as these were wasted unless they give birth to good deeds. Our lowliness must be deep, on which is built love, which reaches to Heaven. For as the Saviour was born an outcast, in cold and poverty, for our sakes, so He says, “ love ye one another, as I have loved you :” not in word but in deed. Think, then, what it would be to meet Him as our Lord and judge, and not as our Saviour and our God ; our oneness of mind and soul ought to be like the sameness of the holy Trinity. If, indeed, we are in the bonds of true life,

bound up with one another, and with God, “forbearing one another in love ;” we shall be trying “to keep the unity of the spirit in the bond of peace.” For what is the nature of our Saviour’s prayer ? this, “That they all may be one ; as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be in us.” Now this bond of love, and this power of oneness of mind and heart can only live and reign where “there is one body and one spirit, even as ye are called in one hope of your calling : one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all.”¹ But men cannot come to this unity of faith, unless Christians impart that good gift which they have received ; we have this day a blessed means of casting into the treasury of our Lord some part of what He has given us, for the ²spreading among our countrymen, in foreign parts, this faith—which may bind them beyond the seas to us, and to our common Lord, in time and in eternity.

¹ Ephes. iv. 2, 6. ² The Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts, for which a collection was made immediately after this Sermon.

SERMON II.

1 TIMOTHY III. 16.

“ God was manifest in the flesh.”

WHATEVER be the true reading of this passage in the Greek text, it is clear, that that divine person was manifest, or made known in the flesh, who, by St. John in the beginning of his Gospel, is called “ GOD;” and in this sense we are going on to further evidence of the deity of our Lord Jesus Christ, “ GOD WITH US,” whose Spirit alone can guide and keep us in the way of truth.

Having dwelt upon the evidence of Him who is the truth, the eternal Son himself, we gathered from the whole conduct of the

unbelieving Jews, especially at his trial, and their meaning of his words, that to *their* view He did teach that He was *truly God*. He knew their thoughts, and allowed that, so far as his meaning went, they were right; He also suffered because He acknowledged that He was “truly the Son of God,” in the fulness of the divine nature; as *God*, then, he came down to man at this season, as *God* in all ages to be worshipped. The Jews also, who believed that He could not lie, being gathered into his church, especially at Jerusalem, thus understand Him, and worship Him as GOD, even while they still fondly cling to the forms of their old religion—GOD, therefore, he assuredly is. So He preached, and so *we* believe. But we now pass on to—

I. The literal testimony of the Apostles. The Apostle and Evangelist, St. John, opens his gospel thus: “In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. All things were made by Him, and without Him was not any thing made that was made. And the word

was made flesh, and dwelt among us ; and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only-begotten of the Father." To the Jews who had long and often heard of this divine being, under the title of the WORD of the Lord, this fine opening passage must have had an easy meaning. That the WORD here, is a real person and far above every human being, we know further from St. John's own clear, cloudless, sight of Heaven itself, "and I saw Heaven opened, and behold a white horse, and he that sat on him was called Faithful and True, and in righteousness he doth judge and make war. His eyes were as a flame of fire, and on his head were many crowns ; and he had a name written, that no man knew but he himself. And he was clothed in a vesture dipped in blood ! and his name is called The Word of God."¹ And if we trace this most High and Holy being through the Book of Revelation, we find him to be the KING OF KINGS, AND LORD OF LORDS—

¹ Rev. xix. 11, 13.

the beginning and the ending, which is, and which was, and which is to come. In these several passages this term "WORD" is used without explanation, as of common meaning made known to the Jews by the public reading of that Scripture in their synagogues—The WORD who "spake, and it was done; who commanded, and it stood fast." Jesus Christ, then, was that Word, *speaking* the world into life, and is as truly God, as the Father is God. This knowledge of the divinity of Christ, will, I trust, lead us to Him "whom to know, is everlasting life." This evidence of the Apostle whom Jesus loved, strengthened by all those scriptures which speak of a glory which this WORD had with the Father, before the foundation of the world, represents him as one begotten before the whole creation—before all things; so that they all were both at first created, and are still kept in order by him;¹ and that he in the beginning, framed the heavens and the earth—

¹ Col. i. 15, 16, 17.

even those heavens and that earth, that shall decay and perish. To be in the beginning, in the Hebrew tongue, is to have being before the world was—before time—and therefore from eternity; so Proverbs, viii. 23, “I was set up from everlasting, or ever the earth was;” again, Micah v. 2, “whose goings forth have been from of old, from everlasting.” And so this may mean here. Being with the Father before the world, He proceeded from Him alone. When our Lord was transfigured on the holy mount, he took Peter and James and John with him, as we find from three Evangelists; and the Apostle Peter who was one of these who beheld his glory, lays great weight upon this being done in the presence of witnesses. “For” (saith he) “we have not followed cunningly devised fables, when we made known unto you, the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but were eye-witnesses of his majesty.” “For he received from God the Father, honour and glory, when there came such a voice to Him from the excellent glory.” “And this voice which came

from Heaven, we heard when we were with him in the mount."¹ That all things both in Heaven and earth, were made by the Son of God, or this WORD, we see from many passages; that God "made all things by Jesus Christ,"² "that he created all things in heaven and in earth, visible and invisible,"³ that "by him, God made the world,"⁴ that "He in the beginning, laid the foundations of the earth, and the heavens were the work of his hands."⁵ And 1st chap. of St. John shows that "He was in the world, and the world was made by Him," even the world into which He came, and which, doubtless, was the world which "knew him not," owned him neither as its MAKER or REDEEMER. In St. John v. 21, we read, "as the Father raiseth the dead and quickeneth them, even so the Son quickeneth whom he will." This work can only be done by God, who saith I am, and there is none besides me; I kill, and make alive,⁶ a work for the

¹ 2 Peter i. 16, 17, 18. ² Eph. iii. 9. ³ Col. i. 16.

⁴ Heb. xiii. ⁵ Ib. i. 10, 11. ⁶ Deut. xxxii. 39.

mighty power of God,¹ and for the strength of his power.² Hence it is plain, that *Christ who will not only raise our mortal bodies, but also make them like his own glorious body, by that power by which he is able to subdue all things to Himself,³ must be God—the fulness of the DEITY imparted to him from the Father.⁴ The Father has committed all judgment to the Son, so that He has power to raise all from the dead, and perfect knowledge to recal their every action, and all their secret thoughts and work into judgment, and bring to light the hidden things of darkness,⁵ and to judge every man according to his works.⁶ He is, therefore, the EVER-PRESENT, who knows all things, even the *searcher of hearts.*⁷ That all men honour the Son as they honour the Father; but to the Father belongs divine worship, therefore Christ is to be worshipped as the Highest—HE himself says,⁸ “ all things*

¹ Matt. xxii. 29, & Acts xxvi. 8. ² Eph. i. 19.

³ Phil. iii. 21. ⁴ John xxi. 22.

⁵ 1 Cor. iv. 5. ⁶ 11 Ib. v. 10. ⁷ 23d verse.

⁸ John xvi. 15.

which the Father hath, are mine," of these things, he promised to give to his faithful followers. The evidences which the Apostles gave of their doctrine and belief in the divinity of Christ, in the 2nd chap. of the Acts, are so strong, and so plain, that they could not be mistaken by those to whom they were spoken.

Whether the Holy Ghost fell upon the hundred-and-twenty mentioned in the 1st chap. of Acts, or as some think only on the twelve Apostles, we know that St. Peter standing up with the eleven, lift up his voice, and shewed them how Christ's divinity had been proved by miracles, and wonders, and signs, which God had done in the midst of the Jews ; he also shewed plainly from their Scriptures, and their own treatment of Christ, that He was the Lord advanced in glorious majesty to God's right hand.¹ So that from the whole speech delivered to those who understood it well, and acted upon it, we learn that Christ's

¹ Acts ii. 14, 40.

human nature is raised to the right hand of the throne, in that fulness of power on which He is seated over all things in Heaven and earth, the Judge of all men, the Prince of life, having life in himself, and power to raise all men from the dead. While we are thus looking up to God our Saviour, we should think deeply and in holy fear about the judgment day, and our Lord's second coming in great glory. "I saw a great white throne, and him that sat on it, from whose presence the earth and the Heaven fled away, and there was no place found for them. And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God; and the books were opened; and another book was opened, which is the book of life, and the dead were judged out of those things, which were written in these books, according to their works,"¹ says the Apostle St. John. "Let us, then, live by faith," and daily try to realize something of this vision, since "no man knoweth who the Son is,

¹ Rev. xx. 11, 12.

but the Father ; and who the Father is, but the Son, and He to whom the Son will reveal him."¹ It is not flesh and blood, but our Father who is in Heaven, that can make known to us the divinity of Christ. His Spirit, indeed, will lead us into the way of truth, when we pray to God the Father, through the merits of his dear Son, to keep, guide, guard, and bless us. That as, according to Christ's Holy Sacrament, we are baptized in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, so we pray to the Holy, Blessed and Glorious Trinity, three persons in one Godhead, to have mercy upon us. We can only truly be Christians when we come near to God the Father, through God the Son, by God the Holy Ghost—believing that these three in one, are engaged in the salvation of our souls ; God, the Father, freely having given us his Son to die for us ; the Son as freely having purchased us with his own blood ; God, the Holy Ghost, coming down from the Father and the Son,

¹ Luke x. 22.

and pouring heavenly light into the soul: all this we can only understand by faith and not by sight. Remember St. Thomas, the Apostle, who owned the true deity of Christ, when he said, “my Lord and my God;” “blessed are they who have not seen and yet have believed.” But we are now entering upon—

II. The New Testament for more *general* evidence of our Lord’s deity.

“Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and Him only shalt thou serve.”¹ From these words, compared with other like Scripture, it appears that we owe Christ the worship and service due to God alone, so that all men worship the Son even as they worship the Father;”² “and when He brought his first-begotten into the world, He said, ‘let all the angels of God worship him;’”³ so let all Christians “serve the LORD CHRIST.”⁴

The very first Christians *did* so worship

¹ Matt. iv. 10.

² John v. 22.

³ Heb. i. 6.

⁴ Col. iii. 24.

him—the first martyr, St. Stephen, died calling upon Christ, and saying, “Lord Jesus, receive my spirit.”¹ Like this is the prayer of St. John, Rev. xxii. 20, “Come, Lord Jesus, come quickly.”

St. John the Baptist, one who was filled with the Holy Ghost from his mother’s womb, makes ready the way of the Lord Jesus, who came after him, saying of him, “He cometh from above;” “He that cometh from above is above all,”² who before the heavens and the earth were framed *was* God from everlasting.

1. John the Baptist had his knowledge of Jesus, as the Son of God, by a voice from Heaven at his baptism, and by the very teaching of the Holy Ghost, as it were, before his eyes.

2. Nathanael knew Jesus in this character, as well as that of the Messiah, two days after the voice from Heaven; he would hear the record that John bare of him.

3. Peter, one of the chosen twelve,

¹ Acts vii. 59. ² John iii.

who had his belief from *Heaven*, says for himself and the rest of the Apostles, "We believe and are sure that thou art Christ, the Son of the living God."¹ St. Mark relates the answer of St. Peter thus, "thou art the Christ of God." We must own, however, that even the Apostles, at this stage of the Christian religion, and, indeed, all the time *before* the coming down of the Holy Ghost, believed not so fully that the Son of God was truly God in the sense of the Christian Church, as they *afterwards* believed, in the *first, best* days of the Church.

4. Martha was an early scholar of our Lord, and believed in his doctrine which she learnt from Himself.

5. We have seen that the Sanhedrim and many who heard him, knew well his own doctrine.

6. The Centurion seems to have been an Officer in the Roman army, who was present at our Lord's trial, and awed by

¹ John vi. 69.

the wonders of his death, he saw in these wonders an evidence of his divine power, and even a heathen as he was, called our Lord, *the Son of God*, *i. e.* some divine being, as he had understood the Saviour to have avowed himself.

7. Even the unclean spirits hailed him “thou Son of God most High.”¹ They believed and trembled.² We have already seen that divine titles³ shew him to be God. Indeed we find in him the nature of God by the same tests by which the Father is proved to be God, and hence in the same sense. The Son, as the Father, is eternal, “without beginning of days,” so “without end of life;”⁴ “the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever;”⁵ in time past, present and to come.

He is ALL-POWERFUL in his “mighty working, whereby he is able even to subdue all things unto himself.”⁶ The outward

¹ Matt. viii. 29 ² James ii. 19. ³ See Sermon I.

⁴ Heb. vii. 3. ⁵ Ib. xiii. 8. ⁶ Phil. iii. 21.

things of the world prove his eternal power and Godhead.¹

He knows all things, even the secrets of the heart; “in Him are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge.”²

His goodness like the Father’s goodness is over all his works. We may say to him “thou Lord in the beginning, hast laid the foundation of the earth, and the heavens are the work of thy hands.”³ Indeed the whole of this chapter, speaking in the very person of the Father to the Eternal Son as God, is evidence of his deity beyond a shadow of doubt.

“*Flesh and blood* hath not revealed” this great truth unto the world, but the Father which is in Heaven.

After his return to his Father’s glory, St. John says of Him, “This is the confidence that we have in Him, that if we ask anything according to his will he heareth us, and if we know that he hear us,

¹ Rom. i. 20.

² Col. ii. 3.

³ Heb. i. 10.

whatsoever we ask, we know that we have the petitions that we desired of him.”¹

That the Baptist saw in Christ that Divine person whom the Jewish writers had been accustomed to call the WORD of JEHOVAH, and the ANGEL OF THE COVENANT, is clear from many parts of his testimony ! He says, “I am the voice of one crying in the wilderness, make straight the way of the Lord, as said the Prophet Esaias.”² Again, “ye yourselves bear me witness that I said, I am not the Christ, but that I am sent before him.”³ In these passages, John, by taking up the words of the Old Testament which foretold of none less than the Lord God, proves that He of whom Moses and the prophets did write, is the Son of God, for whom he (the Baptist) is making ready the way. To go a step further, St. John the Evangelist makes the love of God the cause of man’s salvation, and St. Paul, the love of Christ—“God gave his only-begotten Son” (says St. John). Paul writes

¹ 1 John v. 14, 15. ² St. John i. 23. ³ Ib. iii. 28.

“the Son of God loved me, and gave himself for me,” and “Christ loved the Church and gave himself for it.”¹ Here we have the unity of divine mercy in God and Christ—the union of the Father and the Son in the redemption of the world. It is indeed against the Bible, as understood and believed by the Church of Christ for twelve hundred years, to withhold from Him her Divine Lord His titles of Deity given to Him by Holy Writ, as our JUDGE, and our God, who is to appear in His glory at the last day. Whether in every instance the doctrine gave rise to the writing of the Apostles, or the writing of the Apostles gave rise to the doctrine, the divinity of our blessed Lord as “GOD MANIFEST in the flesh,” is plainly taught. Faith needs not such proofs as Reason claims: since God has given us enough of his mind and word for our guidance and our good; let not our faith be asking for signs, but let it *act* upon what is written. Take only the Greek,

¹ Ephes. v. 25.

which may be turned into English plainly; as follows :—

2 Thess. i. 12. “The Grace of our God and Lord Jesus Christ.”

2 Peter i. 1. “Our God and Saviour Jesus Christ.”

Titus ii. 13. “Our great God and Saviour, Jesus Christ.”

“Our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ,”¹ “the great God and Saviour of us,” or “our great God and Saviour,” can only mean *one* person, in English or Greek, and clearly *the* person who was “GOD MANIFEST IN THE FLESH.” The Apostles line upon line, here a little and there a little, bore witness to the teaching of our Lord himself; before the day of Pentecost they had heard and learnt the words of their Divine Master, and when he was taken from them, they learnt more clearly his will and doctrine, by the teaching of the Holy Ghost whom he sent to lead them into all truth. Still, the root of our faith is chiefly in the

¹ 2 Peter i. 11.

truth of our Lord's own words to the Apostles, which are plain on the very face of the Gospels. "All things that the Father hath, are mine, therefore said I that he shall take of mine, and shew it unto you."¹ These, and the words which follow, shew the one great work of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, in holy harmony—the salvation of man through God the Son manifest in the flesh.

On the eve of his sufferings our Lord assures his Apostles that his place should be supplied by "another Comforter," to "abide with them for ever," to teach them all things, to bring all things to their remembrance, whatsoever Jesus had said unto them. This Spirit was to come unto them from the Father. In this promise he clearly proves that He, jointly with the Father, does what is done by the Holy Spirit. St. Paul seems to say the same thing, in applying to Christ that prophecy of the Psalmist:² now the greater be the proofs of the Deity of the Spirit, the greater the evidence of our Lord's

¹ John xvi. 15.

² Acts ii. 34, Psalm cx.

divinity, since He claims this glory, when He says, that the Comforter, whom he was to send, should glorify him. Such glory could be due to God alone : *therefore*, CHRIST is God. By joining His own name with the Father and the Holy Ghost in the form of baptism He has left a deathless testimony of his equality with them in the Godhead— which from age to age has baffled every gainsayer of His divinity.

The belief in one God is older than the worship of many Gods. Idolatry does not appear to have become general till about the call of Abraham, if, indeed, at so early a date. The father of Abraham and the father of Nahor “served other gods.”¹ In after time, “God appeared” in the person of our Lord Jesus Christ. He it was, even the second person of the Holy Trinity, who, from time to time, made himself known, perhaps, in human form to Abraham, and to Adam, and to Jacob, and to Moses ; when, therefore, Abraham called upon Jehovah

¹ Josh. xxiv. 2.

“in the name of the Lord,” who had appeared unto him, he prayed in the name of the Son of God, who, in these later days, took our nature upon him, and made us partakers of his own. But if we hold the worship of saints on this ground, we are guilty of idolatry, because we then worship them as Gods. We worship, indeed, the Son as we do the Father, and in the humanity,¹ as well as in the divinity—because in worshipping him we worship his person, which takes in both, and because in Him two natures are joined together, not only in one person, but in one Divine person, who is truly God as well as man.

We can never worship any saint, not even the blessed mother of our Lord, for the same reason; for she, and the highest saint, still retain their own proper human nature. Christ is *not* a human person; nor is He the union of *two persons* in *one nature*; but He is the union of *two* for ever distinct natures in *one* person, and that one person which

¹ See an orthodox letter by a “Liverpool Layman,” on Dr. M’Neil’s Speech, in the *Liverpool Courier*, Jan. 21, 1852.

is the majesty of the DIVINE NATURE—God loses nothing—gains nothing, but remains unchanged in His ETERNAL DIVINITY. *The human nature is raised to the dignity of the divine person, not the divine nature lowered to the fallen state of the human person.* This is the Christian, or Catholic doctrine. Christ is *one person*, in which are *two natures*—the *human* and the *divine*! which led the fathers of the Church to call the Virgin Mary “the Mother of *God*.” Not that He was born in his divinity, nor that He died in his divine nature! for in that He was before all worlds; but in his human nature; and, therefore, what He became, did, or suffered in that nature, it was as truly He, therefore as truly God, who became, did, or suffered in that nature; it was as truly He, therefore as truly God, who became, did, or suffered it, as it would have been had He become, did, or suffered it in his divine nature.¹

In a word, the Apostles generally, and others even before they were styled Chris-

¹ Pearson, Art iii. p. 173, 2d Edit. 1812.

tians, “called on the name of the Lord Jesus,” and paid Him such homage as we owe to *God alone*—thus, by their acts, proving their belief that “in Him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily.”¹

It has been so far my aim to bring forward Scriptural proofs of this truth; *first*, from the words of our divine master Himself, and *secondly*, from the evidence of the writers of the New Testament, founded upon the word of Him in whom they believed.

To sum up the evidence for the deity of Christ: *first*, our Lord’s own words, “I and my Father are one;” *secondly*, the meaning put upon these words by the unbelieving Jews; *thirdly*, by the evidence of the believing Jews; *fourthly*, the literal testimony of the Apostles, such as the answer of St. Thomas to Christ, “my Lord and my God;” *fifthly*, of the New Testament generally, for instance, St. Paul’s account of the Israelites, “Whose are the fathers, and of whom as concerning the flesh Christ came, who is over all, GOD blessed for ever. Amen.”²

¹ Col. ii. 9.

² Rom. ix. 5.

SERMON III.

1 COR. XV. 47.

“The first man is of the earth, earthy : the second man is the Lord from Heaven.”

NOTHING can point out to us more clearly the divine nature of Christ, than the great difference which the Apostle makes between the first and second Adam. These are the two beings who are the two great fountains of our earthly and heavenly life. The second not only regains all which the first had lost ; but also opens fresh sources of holiness, blessing, and joy, he brings back the heavenly tide of a deathless life, and clothes his people with his own pure robe, and feeds them with unearthly food. In Him the Christian enjoys a new being, “*old things are passed away,*” through him we “*put off the old man with his deeds,*”

and “ put on the *new* man,” “ the first-born of every creature.” In the text, St. Paul carries on the contrast between the first and second Adam :—

The first man is of the earth, earthy.

The first Adam was the Son of God. Luke iii 38.

Son of God, in a peculiar sense, had no earthly father.

Of the earth. 1 Cor. xv. 47.

A mere living being.

The father of our natural life.

Adam was great, as being the son of God.

The parent of all men.

The first Adam died, and passed away.

Brought sin and death into the world.

Lost Paradise on earth.

The second man is the Lord from Heaven.

The second Adam was the Son of God. Luke i. 35. John i. 34.

Son of God, in a peculiar sense, had no earthly father.

From Heaven. John vi. 38.

A living spirit. 1 Cor. xv. 45.

The father of our spiritual life.

The second Adam was greater, being the only-begotten Son of God.

The maker of all men.

The everlasting Father is living in his saints.

Through death opened the gate of life.

Regained the Paradise of Heaven.

By the first came darkness.

Must change into the likeness of the second Adam, changeable.

The first Adam was a *living soul*.

The first Adam was a mere man.

The first Adam commenced his existence at the creation, and had a beginning.

The first Adam died, his race, therefore, will continue subject to death till the general resurrection.

The first Adam forfeited his life through sin, and brought death and woe upon all his children. Luke vi. 13.

The second is "light of light."

He will not and cannot change into the first Adam's likeness, unchangeable.

The second Adam a life-giving spirit.

The second, not only man, but God.

The second, *as man*, commenced his existence in this world; but as God existed from all eternity.

Phil. ii. 6.

The second Adam died, and raised himself from the dead, and will raise all men from the dead at the last day. 1 Cor. xv. 22, John v 21, 26.

The second Adam knew no sin; but died to make an atonement for the sins of mankind; and by one offering hath perfected for ever those who are sanctified.

Heb. x. 14.

The Holy Scriptures and the Church teach us to believe in the Eternal Son as the very and Eternal God, who, without ceasing to be God, was made man for us ; so that two whole and perfect natures, that is to say, the Godhead and the manhood, were joined together in one person, never to be divided, whereof is one Christ, very God and very man. They that looked upon Him, looked upon God ; they whom He touched, were touched by God.

The most deadly gainsayers of the catholic faith have set themselves up chiefly against this truth, which is the very cornerstone of the Gospel. To such, FAITH answers, that this only could be the salvation of man, God born in our flesh, even the second Adam.

The laws of the unseen world, and the holiness of the divine mind, pass man's understanding. The fall of man from God was through an abuse of the powers which he had. The first springs of right and wrong, life and death are beyond our knowledge. God and man had been parted by sin.

There was but one who could harmonize in his own person, the laws of mercy and holiness, between the nature of God and man. The first sin parted the first Adam from his Father and his God ; hence death came down to us. The very nature which was to heal us and save us, must be *ours* : “ forasmuch then, as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, He also himself likewise took part of the same ;”¹ because we are men, therefore, for us men and for our salvation, He was made man. So closely indeed, are we knit to our Lord, that Peter boldly says that we are made “ partakers of the divine nature.”² None, however, but He who in the beginning said, “ Let us make man in our own image,” could restore to man again, this image of God which was marred and lost. That which as *God* He could not suffer, he became man that he might bear—“ He hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows.”³ He restored our nature in himself to its first bright purity. The second Adam was made of a pure virgin,

¹ Heb. ii. 14. ² 2 Peter i. 4. ³ Isaiah liii. 4.

by the working of the spirit, our nature was so taken into his divine person, that it was made holy and sinless in Him, as the flesh of Adam when first from his maker's hand, and filled with his Maker's spirit ; but the second Adam not only restored in himself, the blessings of the first, but endowed the nature of man with new gifts from on high. " The first man is of the earth, earthy ; the second man is the Lord from Heaven." Such as man made himself by the fall, such are we who are born from him. Such is our first birth into the world, " that which is born of the flesh is flesh." As the sin of Adam is born with us, before we have done good or evil, so the *new* birth in Christ Jesus is bestowed without any personal merit in us, who are born of the Spirit. We are but passive beings till He breathes into us the breath of a holy life ; as is our first so our second birth—we are taken out from the *first* Adam and planted into the likeness of the second by holy baptism : here is the free sovereign grace of God, through Christ. Oh ! that we could look

upon our children, as children of God and heirs of Heaven, born in the likeness of the second Adam. The faithful of earlier days took home their little ones from the font, with holy awe and love, to rear them for God, and looked upon them as dear holy ones, who were, in due time, to grow up “to the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ.”

To unveil this mystery so far as we may, we must see that there are two things wherein man stands indebted unto God; *first*, he owes Him obedience; *secondly*, satisfaction to his justice, for his breach of the divine law. The first is the chief debt; the other arising out of the breach of that law, whereby man was bound to the payment of the former; but man, in Adam, being broken and undone, became unable to pay either of these debts, and, therefore, unless there be some person found out that is willing to undertake, and able to perform the office of suretiship in paying both these debts for him, he can hope nothing better, than to be cast into prison, and not to come

out thence till he had paid the uttermost farthing, which himself can never do. The *first* debt man can never pay, because he became a sinner ; the second, arising out of the first, he can never pay, because fallen, poor, and disabled, he has no means to meet the all-holy and unchanging justice of God. And as man himself cannot, so neither can any person, who is in any way less than God, pay these debts for him. First, none but one that is equal to God, can close the breach of the pure law, which Adam had broken ; man cannot of himself keep the whole law of love, for man ; because every one in any way under God has all which he has from God, and is, therefore, bound to do his best to please and obey Him. At the best, man can only do that which was his duty, and is an unprofitable servant.¹ The debt to God is vastly greater than man's means of payment, so that we must have one to undertake for us, who is bound to pay nothing for himself. And such an one

¹ Luke xvii. 10.

as this there can no where be found, unless he be God. And so if Christ be our Jesus and Saviour, he must needs be our God. It was *man* who was bound by his Father's holy law in Paradise—*man* must keep this law. But as God is the LAWGIVER he is not under this law, which was made for man : He was, then, *God* and *man* in *one person*—the second Adam stood where the first fell. In the garden of Eden the first Adam brought sin and death into the world ; in the garden of Gethsemane the second Adam shed drops of blood, and on Calvary died that we might live. So that He that is *God*, is *man* as well as God, and He that is *man* is *God* as well as man. In a garden, too, was Jesus buried ; here into the dark prison-house of the grave, from which we all shrink, the second Adam, our Lord, has gone before us ; even here are rays of light and love ; since He, our Lord, has robbed death of its sting, and the grave of its victory. In this bad world truly we bear the image of the first man, Adam, which is of the earth, but in the world to

come shall we bear the likeness of the second Adam, Christ, who is the Lord from Heaven. Oh! bright birth-day from the womb of the grave! Oh! glad rising to the everlasting paradise of light and life! Here is the power of the second Adam, which quickens us by his spirit, which makes our sinful bodies like his glorious body. It was the ALL-HOLY, ETERNAL, ALL-WISE, ALL-POWERFUL SON OF GOD—the *second Adam*—who came from Heaven, at this season to save us. He was man indeed, but He was more than man; and He did what man does, but then those deeds of His were the deeds of God—let us, then, beware how we speak of God—men seldom bow at that name, which is above every name; we want among us a holy fear which could not sit at prayer to Him, but we also have a want of faith; for it is an act of faith to bow the head at the name of Jesus, to kneel before Him, to pray our prayers, to come, whenever we can, to God's house, to come to his holy sacrament, &c. These are all acts of faith, because they are all

such as we should perform, if we saw Him and heard Him who is present, though with our bodily eyes we see and hear him not. We shall have to stand before Him face to face ; we are not merely to be rewarded and punished, but we are to be judged by Him, and that suddenly, and at our first meeting— one by one we shall have to endure his searching eye ; when our world of shadows has passed away, our Maker will appear—the second Adam. He will look on us while we look on Him ; “ hereafter ye shall see the Son of man sitting on the right hand of power, and coming in the clouds of Heaven.”¹ Again, “ behold, He cometh with clouds, and every eye shall see him, and they also which pierced him, and all kindreds of the earth shall wail because of him.”² If we be Christians indeed, “ when He shall appear, we shall be like him ; for we shall see Him as he is.”³ And again, when the Son of man shall come in his glory, and all his holy Angels with him,

¹ Matt. xxvi. 64. ² Rev. i. 7. ³ 1 John iii. 2.

then shall He sit upon the throne of his glory. Such is our first meeting before that God, to whom we can scarcely bend our bodies now—we must, however, realize the awful second-coming of the Second Adam, and the great sight which awaits us,—when we kneel down in our still chamber, let us think to ourselves,—thus shall I one day kneel before his very footstool in this flesh and blood of mine; and He will be seated over against me in glory, but in flesh and blood also, though *divine*. I come with the thought of that awful hour before me, I come to confess my sin to him now, that he may, ere I meet him at his second coming, pardon it. I say “O Lord, Holy God,—Holy and strong—Holy and Eternal, in the hour of death, and in the day of judgment, deliver us, O Lord.” To be in His presence hereafter, we must seek it now—a thick dark veil there is between this world and the next. Still with an eye of faith in the hour of prayer, we seem to catch a glimpse of Him whom we shall one day meet face to face. In the sacramental

services does our Lord, born in the flesh, make himself known to us in a greater or less degree, imparting his divine nature to us, and enabling us to bear his presence, and realize his mercy. I have spoken of having come to God generally; but it is much more solemn to come to him in the holy communion; men feel it so, and therefore never come to him thus; they rob themselves of the highest blessings under heaven; they are like men in such dread of his glorious coming, that they *dare not look out* for it; men should fear, and yet should come. In deep awe, and humbling hope, and holy love we must come to the Lord's table—such is the way we are to wait for and pray for the bright coming of our “Lord the King in his beauty.” God is judge of the world, and yet is in the highest Heaven: He is judging the world, He is in us, and helping us forth to meet himself. God the Son is without us—God the Spirit is within us, that Spirit is vouchsafed to us here, and is even now drawing up Christians' thoughts and wills to Heaven, and

will be their strength to lift up their eye to look on their judge when He looks on them at the last day. But after all, love and obedience are the main points, they help our faith. Believe and do, pray to God for light: thus faith soars aloft, thus too love listens for the notes of heaven: obedience sits at Jesus' feet—thus we who were one with sinful *Adam*, may be made one with our *Lord* and our *God*. Our Heavenly Father hath called us into oneness with his dear Son, and through his Son, with Himself; being brought into this state by baptism, we must try to live up to this high calling, and ask earnestly for the aid of the Holy Spirit to guide us; “for unto whomsoever much is given, of him shall be much required.”¹ We must daily strive to be made like Him—to change more and more into his likeness; for He will not change to ours. While everything which is made alters, he is “Jesus Christ, the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever;”² because he is the

¹ Luke xii. 48.

² Heb. xiii. 8.

MAKER—GOD. Everything of time undergoes change; He only is without “beginning of time, or end of days;” He, therefore, cannot change. What is there, indeed, which does not change, unless the Holy, blessed, and glorious Father, and Son, and Holy Ghost. All else had a beginning; all else will have an end. The more closely we are joined to Him, the more heartily we do his will—the less changeable do we become; for the world changeth and “passeth away, and the lust thereof; but he that doeth the will of God abideth for ever.”¹ But we shall, of all creatures, be the most miserable, if, while Christ, our divine Lord and master, is unchangeable and unchanged, we go on changing not into his likeness, but into the sinful likeness of the world. That in you which shall never die is changing day by day, and hour by hour; it is either being moulded to God’s will, or darkened and defaced, just as you yield to, or strive against, the working of his Word

¹ 1 John ii. 17.

and Spirit; we are all either taking the stamp of good or bad. To our bodily eyes it is the Church; to the eye of faith, it is God Himself that is changing us into the likeness of our Lord and our God, His dear Son. Love not the world, or you will become like it. The world passeth and perisheth, he who loves it will be made like it; but he who loves the Lord, will be made like him, and will partake of his deathless and unchanging nature; so that those who have been baptized into Christ, and who lead the rest of their lives according to this beginning, living in his fear and love, and doing his will, have "put off the old man," and "have put on the new man." They are new creatures, for we read, "If any man be in Christ he is a new creature;"¹ their very bodies are temples of the Holy Ghost here, and shall be like to the glorious body of Christ hereafter! here they carry about with them the image of the first man, Adam, which is of the earth, earthy; there they shall live in the likeness of the second man,

¹ 2 Cor. v. 17.

Christ, "who is the Lord from Heaven."

The wonderful might and deity of the second Adam is seen in the miracles which He worked while he sojourned in this world, but chiefly in his raising the dead to life by his quickening Spirit. As "the light of life," He came forth alive again from the darkness of the grave, "that they which live should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto Him which died for them and rose again."¹ Thus it is that "God was in Christ reconciling the world unto himself,"² and proving the power and Godhead of his Son, the second Adam, our Lord from Heaven.

Christ, as the Son of God, had power to lay down his life, and power to take it again, being all-mighty in himself, and "far above all principality and power, and might and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come;"³ the Lord of life, "God *of* God, Light *of* Light," the only-begotten of the Father, full of grace and

¹ 2 Cor. v. 15. ² Ib. v. 19. ³ Eph. i. 21.

truth. The holy temple of the everlasting God, He stood upon the earth filled with the indwelling Spirit of the Father and of the Son, as the Jewish temple was the dwelling-house and temple of God.

He says, "destroy this temple, and I will build it up in three days." When, elsewhere, they require a sign, He sends back their thoughts to the sign of Jonas, the prophet.¹ And here, also, He seems in fact to do the same thing, when He says, that by raising of the temple of his body after they had destroyed it, by his resurrection from the dead, He would prove to them that He was that *prophet* which was to come, as if He had said, ye will destroy this temple, and I will build it up in three days ; hence it is that He seems to call his body a *temple*, and elsewhere to declare He was the *greater than the temple*,² because the divinity dwelt always and inseparably in it, as the Jews believed the divinity did in the temple, built by Solomon. That God came down

¹ Matt. xii. 39, 40.

² Ib. xii. 6.

into the temple and dwelt in it, was the general belief. In the second temple were wanting the Divine Glory, and the Holy Spirit: now Christ came down from the temple of Heaven, into this temple made with hands; He was full of light and truth—He had the Spirit without measure, and was “anointed with the oil of gladness above his fellows,” and so, in these respects, was greater than the *temple*. The temple which ye have profaned I have cleansed; even the temple of my body, which you will destroy, I will raise up; and that He did give the disciples to understand him in this sense, is evident from this, that *after his resurrection* they believed the words which Jesus had said.

They would remember that Christ had said in John x. 15, 17, “I lay down my life for the sheep,” “I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again,” *i. e.* He had power to raise it from death. That life which he had in himself to raise himself and all his saints, that Almighty power by which he brought the dead to

life,¹ as being “the resurrection and the life,” was most clearly proved by his victory over the grave. Heaven and earth in awful harmony declared his divine nature. That God the Son will raise the dead by his own power, is clear from St. John’s Gospel, the Epistles to the Romans, Philippians, Revelations, and other Scriptures. So it is to be owned, that the Father raised Christ from the dead, nor yet is it to be denied that Christ raised himself, being quickened by that spirit which is also the spirit of the Father; so was He also the spirit of Christ, and dwelt in Him, just as we say “proceeding from the Father and the Son.” Christ raised Himself by the spirit of the Father dwelling in him. Our Lord manifested his glory upon other occasions, *i. e.* his power of working miracles, which is styled his glory,² and this was done to confirm the faith of the *Apostles* who were newly come to him, and therefore it is added *they believed on Him.*

¹ John xi. ² Ib. xvii. 22. & 2 Cor. iii. 18.

Still, we must never forget that the Jewish temple might be destroyed, or cease to be the abode of the divine presence; but Christ of his own body says, "destroy this temple, and I will raise it in three days:" leading us to understand by these words, such an unity between the Godhead and the manhood, that there could be no real parting of the one from the other; even when his body was dead, the divine nature was one with it; it was one with his soul in Paradise, soul and body were truly one with the ETERNAL WORD, *one* at that time, and never to be *two*; for although he be God and man, "yet he is not two, but one Christ." Such are the terms in which we are driven to speak of our blessed Lord and Saviour by the gainsayers of this truth, and by our own poverty of words and of mind: we meekly beseech His leave to speak on such a theme, yet deep holy silence were best had it not been that men who deny the Lord who bought them with his blood, are among us, and recalling to life the Antichrist of other days. Still, great is

our Lord and great is his power, Jesus the Son of God and Son of man. He has given us to share his own spiritual nature; from him we draw the life of our souls. May His grace and loving pity save us from that fatal error which would rob Him of his glory, and us of our faith and hope, and love and endless joy. And while you think of this miracle of our Lord's return to life from the grave, believe also "if the spirit of Him, who raised up Jesus from the dead, dwell in you, He that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies by his indwelling Spirit."¹ The forbidden fruit wrought in the first Adam death. Now the miracle of mercy is the seed of eternal life—the food which the second Adam gives in the Lord's supper, to "preserve our body and soul unto everlasting life."

The Christian's life is "hid with Christ in God," and our highest services in his house of prayer are a foretaste of glory; something unspeakably higher and purer is

¹ Rom. viii. 2.

laid up for all to whom our Lord is closely united, as the vine is joined to the branches. "When Christ, who is our life, shall appear, then shall we also appear with Him in glory." He is the well of life, from which overflows to us our health and strength. "The hour cometh and now is, in which the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God, and they that hear shall live." He is our life; "he that believeth on me," says our Lord, "though he were dead, yet shall he live." His gospel brings us life and love, and health and joy! hear, then, and believe and obey the word of Christ, His word is the word of life—to Him let us go, for He is the WORD, and has the words of eternal life.

Adam is in us the first cause of that nature which is subject to death; Christ is the first cause of our life from this death. The person of Adam is not in us, but his nature, and all its ills brought down into us all from our first natural parent: Christ having Adam's nature as we have, but without sin, from his own person imparts his divine nature to all who belong to him; as,

therefore, we are really partakers of the body of sin and death from Adam, so unless we be truly partakers of Christ and of his Spirit, all our hopes of eternal life are but a dream. That which quickeneth us is the spirit of the second Adam, and his flesh that wherewith he quickeneth.

That which in Him made our nature like his own was the union of the Deity with our nature. "Through the Eternal Spirit he offered himself to God without spot," and thus took away sin, and imparted life to our nature, and raised it out of the grave and lifted it unto glory. The spirit of Him, who is both God and man, can alone enable us to rise with our risen Lord ; for which cause the words of Adam may be fitly the words of Christ concerning his church, "flesh of my flesh, and bone of my bones." To all things He is life, and to men light, as the *Son of God* ; to the Church both life and light eternal, by being made the *Son of man* for us, and by being in us a Saviour.¹ But he who "hath not the Son of God hath not

¹ Selections from Keble's Hooker, 2d edit. p. 140.

life ;”¹ and again, “ I am the vine, ye are the branches ; he that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit ;”² but the branch cut off from the vine withereth. We are, therefore, adopted sons of God to eternal life, by sharing in the divine nature of the only-begotten Son of God, whose life is the cause and well-spring of ours.

When God created Adam He created us, and as many as have come from the stock of Adam have, in themselves, the root out of which they spring. The sons of God we neither are all nor any one of us, otherwise than only by grace and favour. The sons of God have God’s own natural Son as a second Adam from Heaven, whose race they are by spiritual and heavenly birth.³ God loves his Son, and loves all who are sprung from him. But ye have not so learnt Christ as to believe that He is man only, or God only, but truly God and man, so that the very glorified body of Christ “ retained in it

¹ 1 John v. 12. ² John xv. 5, 6. ³ Keble’s Hooker, 2d edit. p. 138.

the scars and marks of former mortality.”¹ Our Lord is the heir of all things—the head to whom all power both in Heaven and in earth is given, who has a name and a title above the height and worth of any who are simply man, yet true of Christ, even in that he is man, but man with whom Deity is joined. And as Christ took manhood, that by it he might be capable of death, so because manhood is the object of his love and his pity, he who, without our nature, could not on earth suffer for the sins of the world, doth now also plead for sinners and being touched with a feeling of their infirmities, rules mercifully over all men. It is not for man to understand, or to tell of the *manner* in which this miracle of God’s love was brought about. The strength of our faith is tried by those things which are above and beyond our knowledge. Let the plain words of the gospel which tell of the Saviour born in our flesh, while they guide our faith, fix on our minds a true, just, and

¹ Keble’s Hooker, p. 127. John xx.

grateful sense of the work of grace, and the wonders of God's love. The person of our most holy Redeemer in his human nature, is our pattern, the example of that to which he vouchsafes to renew us, and after which we ought in a way of duty to labour and pray. And as it is a point of faith to believe that the Holy Ghost formed the human nature of Christ of the Virgin Mary, so we believe that the raising up of the new man in the Christian, is by the power of the Spirit dwelling within him, and renewing his soul and his mind. As in the renewal of bodily life, when the health of this life is restored, the power of life returns, so is the spiritual recovery of man, that has fallen; the will and the power are brought back to him, and he is then told to "work out his salvation, with fear and trembling."

It was the mark of a true disciple of Jesus, at the very opening of the Gospel, to hold the right doctrine as taught by God's Spirit of Christ's divinity. "Beloved, believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are of God; because many false

prophets are gone out into the world. Hereby know ye the spirit of God : every spirit that confesseth that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is of God. And every spirit that confesseth not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is not of God : and this is that spirit of Antichrist, whereof ye have heard that it should come ; and even now already is it in the world.”¹ And when Christianity became more general, the same mark still stamped each member of the Church.

By this spirit we know that the second Adam is the Lord from Heaven. Infancy, childhood, youth, ripening age, he took on him. If we believe in him truly, He will ever be with us ; for he says “ lo ! I am with you always, even unto the end of the world.” In childhood, in youth, in manhood, in old age He *is* with us. In good times and bad times He never leaves us, nor forsakes us—As *man*, He can feel for us— as *God*, He forgives us.

We have now glanced through the testimony of the Eternal Son Himself, and

¹ 1 John iv. 1, 3.

the evidence of the unbelieving and of the believing Jews, proving our Lord's divinity. We have also seen how the Apostles literally bore witness to this great doctrine. Passing on to the general testimony of the New Testament to confirm our faith, next we marked the difference between the first and the second Adam, and noticed his miracles, particularly that of his resurrection from the dead, and learned in what sense He is the SON OF GOD.

Let us beg of Him to give us an understanding heart, and to bless our thoughts of this wonder of wonders, the loving mercy of God in Jesus Christ. We want an honest mind—a meek spirit—a dutiful and loving heart. So may He the “LORD FROM HEAVEN” vouchsafe as time goes on, to take up his abode in us, and by the spirit of truth make Himself known unto us. And when death comes upon us, may we be enabled meekly to yield up our souls, in firm faith, and in calm hope and holy love, to God the Father, God the Son, God the Holy Ghost—the Glorious three—the Everlasting One.

SERMON IV.

JOHN XX. 28.

“ My Lord and my God.”

WE have already learnt from Christ's own words and his gospel, that we are to worship Him as *God*. We cannot, therefore, believe Christ at all, unless we own with the Apostle, whom He loved, “ this is the true God and eternal life.”¹ His holy word teaches us, “ that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, and every tongue confess that He is *Lord*.”² So that you see we cannot be wrong, when we “ honour Him even as we honour the Father.” We are bound to confess with St. Peter, “ we believe and are sure that thou art the Christ, the Son of the

¹ 1 John v. 20. ² Phil. ii. 9.

living God;”¹ or with St. Paul, to acknowledge “Christ over all, God blessed for ever;” or with St. Thomas, each of us should pray to Him, saying, “my Lord and my God.”

It was while the Apostles and the two disciples who had returned from Emmaus were speaking together of the appearing of our Lord Jesus Christ he came and stood in the midst; “they were affrighted and supposed that they had seen a spirit, and he said unto them, why are ye troubled, and why do thoughts arise in your hearts? behold my hands and my feet, that it is I myself; handle me and see; for a spirit hath not flesh and bones, as ye see me have.”² He assured them that he was the very same LORD, with whom they had gone in and out so often and so long, that he was no mere bodiless spirit, but the same man Jesus Christ.

From this we learn that the same body which He took of the Blessed Virgin, in which he “increased in wisdom and stature,”

¹ John vi. 69.

² Luke xxiv. 39.

which was also nailed upon the cross, was likewise raised from the dead. In this human form "Christ being raised from the dead, dieth no more." His manhood was thenceforward under the power of "the spirit of life." In this form he went up into Heaven, hence our whole nature, in body, soul, and spirit, is risen with Him who is "THE RESURRECTION AND THE LIFE." We share in this glorified manhood of the second Adam; bone of his bone, flesh of his flesh;¹ and "being joined to the *Lord*, we are one spirit."² Let us, then, so live, that our thoughts, and works, and words, even here below, may chime with the sweet harmony of His will. Be this, our life,—our toil,—our prayer.

As the word *JEHOVAH* was spoken by the prophets of Christ; so the title of *LORD* in the usual sense of this word, was given unto Him by his Apostles. God promised by Joel, that "whosoever shall call on the name of the *LORD* Jehovah shall be deliver-

¹ Eph. v. 30. ² Heb. vi. 4, 6.

ed ;”¹ and St. Paul has assured us that Christ is the LORD, by proving from thence that if “we confess with our mouth the Lord Jesus, we shall be saved.”²

Of John the Baptist it is written in the prophet Malachi, “I will send my messenger, and He shall prepare the way before me ;”³ in declaring himself to be the forerunner of the Lord and of Christ, he declares the LORD and Christ to be the same. In the second passage the Baptist alludes to the prophecy of Malachi. That John was the promised messenger we know from Christ’s own application of the prophecy to him, “this is he of whom it is written, behold, I send thy messenger to prepare thy way before thee.”⁴ And whom does it appear from the prophecy, that John was to precede, THE LORD, THE ANGEL OF THE COVENANT who was to come “suddenly to his temple,” and from whence, but from Heaven? The Baptist might, therefore, well say of Him, whose way he was to prepare, that

¹ Joel ii. 32. ² Rom. x. 9, 11. ³ Matt. ix. 10.

⁴ lb. xi. 10.

He was "from Heaven and above all."

While we ought to rest our faith *chiefly* on the New Testament, every passage or word in the Old Testament, relating to Christ, must be brought to bear upon this great, eternal doctrine of Christ's deity. If the evidence of the Old Testament had not been of great value in everything relating to Christ, our Saviour would not have said, "Search the Scriptures, for they are they which testify of me;" for this was said before the New Testament was written, and could only apply to the Old.

This evidence is brought home to us by all which we know of St. Thomas. Christ answers, "because thou hast seen me," (*i. e.* hast seen me *risen from the dead*, the great proof that I am the Son of God with power) "thou hast believed;" believed me to be "LORD and GOD." Thus Christ accepts the confession of St. Thomas, and his worship. That Christ, then, is God, is clear to every fair mind, since St. Thomas is not rebuked by Him, as was St. John by the angel.¹

¹ Rev. xxii. 9.

The ancient Church, accordingly, and learned fathers always held, taught, and believed, that far from blaming him, Christ thought well of Thomas for this confession ; a full proof that it was in no ways anything which could lessen the honour of the Father. They say, justly, that as St. Thomas knew but one nature of God, he could intend no other meaning. He could *only* mean the living and true God, and not a creature, as the fancy of some would have it, turning the truth of God into a lie. St. Thomas acknowledged our Saviour as fully and as truly to be his God, as his Lord and Saviour. St. Thomas had learnt from the law *there was one God alone*, he could not own Christ as *another* God. Our Lord plainly shews that St. Thomas had made no mistake in owning his divinity as co-equal with the *Father*.

But we are to recall what we know of St. Thomas, to learn the value of his evidence. Thomas, the Apostle,¹ called in Greek,

¹ Matt. x. 3.

Didymus,¹ was, it is thought, a Galilean, as well as the other Apostles. He was made an Apostle, A. D. 31,² and continued to follow our Saviour during the three years of His preaching. When Christ was setting out for Judea to raise Lazarus from the dead, the Apostles said, "Master, the Jews of late sought to stone thee, and goest thou thither again?"³ Our Lord being still steadfastly fixed on the journey, Thomas said to the rest, "let us also go that we may die with Him;" meaning that the hatred and malice of the Jews would doom them in their master's suffering. We see, then, notwithstanding all which has been said against St. Thomas, that even at this time he loved his master, as became an Apostle, and was ready to die for him. Did he doubt for a time, so did all the disciples. Their hopes were buried with their master, and the news that He was risen again was, to them, but as a dream, or tale. When he appeared to them,⁴ "He upbraided them

¹ John xx. 24. ² Luke vi. 13, 15. ³ John xi. 8.

⁴ Mark xvi. 14.

with their unbelief and hardness of heart ;” among these was not St. Thomas, who only heard from his fellow Apostles, that they had seen the Lord : his doubts and darkness lasted longer than theirs ; he was the latest to *believe*—he was the latest to *see with his own eyes*, Christ.

None of them believed, till they saw Christ, except, perhaps, St. John, and though they, for the present, escaped, it was at the word of St. Thomas that they hazarded their lives with their Lord. At the same time we must fear, from the account of St. John itself, and our Lord’s speech to St. Thomas, that he was more to blame than the rest ;¹ he stood out against the ten Apostles, Mary Magdalen, and the other holy women.² He seems to have required some *bodily* insight into an *unseen* state ; for, when Christ said he was going to his Father, and by a way which they all knew, St. Thomas says to Him, “ Lord, we know not whither thou goest, and how can we know the way ?”³ as if he had said, “ we do not see Heaven, and

¹ Luke xxiv. 39, 40. ² John xx. 25. ³ Ib. xiv. 51.

God, and things beyond earth, how, *therefore*, can we know this way?" He craved after something to touch and see; accordingly, when eight days after His appearance to the rest, our Lord appears again, He allows Thomas his wish to satisfy him that He was alive; but reminded him of the weakness of his faith. "Reach hither thy finger, and behold my hands: and reach hither thy hand, and thrust it into my side: and be not faithless, but believing; and Thomas answered, 'My Lord and my God.' Jesus saith unto him, Thomas, because thou hast seen me, thou hast believed: blessed are they that have not seen, and yet have believed."¹ St. Thomas had seen our Lord's miracles, been with Him in his journeys, and had heard his divine words, as no man had ever spoken, and yet doubted; but our Lord having once loved him, loved him unto the end, and received his late acknowledgement, "*My Lord and my God.*"

But after all, we are not so much con-

¹ John xx. 27, 29.

cerned with the temper and mind of this Apostle, as with his answer and Christ's words upon it.

From the earliest dawn of our opening mind, to the evening of old age, the God of this world is blinding us with things which are seen, and veiling from our spiritual view, the light of the Gospel. "*To see,*" in the world's creed, is "*to believe ;*" not so the law of our faith. "The evidence of things not seen.

It was doubtless a great honour to see the Saviour. In a little time He was taken to His Father, and his chosen few could see him no longer. St. Paul says, "Though we have known Christ after the flesh, yet henceforth know we him no more."¹ The answer of St. Thomas and our Lord's remark upon it, bring to us a broad truth which has lived and will live in every age and place where the Bible is read and understood, as the Apostles and their followers understood and taught it.

¹ 2 Cor. v. 16.

From the earliest accounts of the Church following upon the acts of the Apostles, we find, *first*, that Ignatius, about A. D. 107, in one of his letters, desired Christians to live in uniformity of faith and form, "there is one Lord," says he, "Jesus Christ," than whom nothing is better. Wherefore come ye all together as unto one temple of God ; as to one altar ; as to one Jesus Christ, *who proceeded from one Father, and exists in one, and is returned to one*. Indeed from the very early evidence of Christ's divinity, as one Lord and one God, we might conclude, even if the New Testament had been lost or corrupted, that in the first instance it taught the doctrine of the divinity of Christ ; we may be certain, that in whatever darkness the other things taught by Christ and his Apostles might be supposed to be shrouded, the doctrine of the divinity was thought to be very clearly and plainly taught. In the writings of the very earliest of the Fathers, even scholars of the Apostles, the divinity of Christ is taught. *All the brethren kneeling down, St. Ignatius prayed to the Son of God*

in behalf of the Churches. The religion of Ignatius was the religion of the Church of Smyrna, which adored the Son of God.

The Church, then, of Smyrna believed in the divinity of Christ. The letters to this Church were to keep her in this faith, and to teach her to follow her bishops and pastors, but especially her Bishop Polycarp who believed in Christ as God. Ignatius in his letter to the Smyrneans says, "I glorify God, even Jesus Christ, who has thus filled you with wisdom." The faith of the Church of Smyrna and of Polycarp their Bishop, must have been the faith of Ignatius: he confirmed the churches of the several cities through which he passed in this faith. Polycarp's dying praises to the three persons in one Godhead, are "I praise thee, I bless thee, I glorify thee with the eternal and heavenly Jesus Christ thy beloved Son, with whom to thee and the Holy Ghost, be glory, both now and to all succeeding ages."

Secondly. Irenæus, the scholar of Polycarp, the scholar of St. John, shews that

the faith of all these holy men was one and the same in the Deity of Christ. "When," (says he, writing to his friend,) "I was yet a child, I saw you in splendour in lower Asia, in the royal palace with Polycarp, and endeavouring to gain his favour: so that I can tell you both the place where the blessed Polycarp sat and taught, and his going out and coming in, and his manner of life, and the form of his person, and the discourse which he held to the people, and that he used to speak of his conversation with John, and with the rest who had seen the Lord, and to relate their sayings, and what he had heard from them concerning the Lord; and that Polycarp having received his information from eye-witnesses of the WORD of LIFE, then reported all things relating to His miracles and doctrines agreeable to the Scriptures."¹ "Polycarp," (says Irenæus) "who not only had been instructed by the Apostles, and conversed with many who had seen Christ, but had been also

¹ Iren. Epist. ad Florinium.

appointed by the Apostles Bishop in Asia, in the Church of Smyrna; whom we have seen in the early part of our life, (for he lived very long, and quitted life in a very old age, having suffered martyrdom with glory and every high renown) having always taught the doctrines which he had learnt from the Apostles, and which the Church hands down, and which alone are true.”¹

“The Church throughout the world diligently keeps this faith, and believes these articles as if it had the same soul and the same heart;” as often as Irenæus speaks of the WORD, he speaks of His *divinity*, and from him we learn, that Polycarp held this faith.

First of all, we know that the earliest Christians were taught by St. Paul to sing hymns to their God and Saviour,² and it is but natural to expect that some of these very hymns would be used in the Christian Churches during the first two-hundred years, at least, after their first introduction. Had

¹ Iren. L. iii. c. 3. ² Col, ii. 17.

any of these parts of the religious service of the first Christians, in which the learned and unlearned joined, come down to our time, they would be highly valuable, as far as they shew the religion of their age. The ancient hymn in our liturgy, "*Te Deum,*" is not so near the age of the Apostles, as to settle our own mind ; it has, however, been fully proved, that the divinity of Christ was sung in the Christian hymns of the first century. All the psalms and hymns, written by faithful brethren from the earliest times, celebrate and ascribe divinity to Christ, as the WORD OF GOD. Such were the hymns which were rejected by the unbelievers of this doctrine ; because that about A. D. 260, these hymns contained the divinity of Christ. It was not unreasonable to collect the religious opinions of Christians in general, in the second and third centuries, from the services in which they joined. In these the divinity of Christ was so plain, that men who denied it, were turned out of the Church.

When we find the divinity of Christ

taught by writers, and believed by the common people, from the time of Justin Martyr down to the Council of Nice, we may be sure that this was the common faith of Christians from the foundation of the first Christian Church, at Jerusalem, A.D. 33, to the time of Justin's conversion, A.D. 133. The earliest Christians had the books of the New Testament, and for their use they were written, and their meaning of those books is clear from their worship and religion. The meaning is like its author, unchanged; therefore it teaches us to worship Christ as God, and to believe, with St. Thomas, that He is our LORD and our God.

Having thus noted many proofs of the divine adoration paid to Christ as God, during the first three hundred years, we will, in few words, review the worship of this period.

And first, see how Christ, as the Son of God, and the second person of the ever-blessed Trinity, was adored in all ages as God. For the first age of all, the Scripture is all that we can desire. St. Stephen, the

first who died for the true faith, breathed out his last in a prayer to Christ—" Lord Jesus, receive my spirit ;" and " Lord, lay not this sin to their charge."¹ St. Paul baptized none but in the name of Christ, and in all his common forms of blessing he calls upon the name of our Lord Jesus, as God. In fact, the early Christians are those who called on the name of Christ ;² but lest the practice of saints on earth were not enough, we are allowed to hear, as it were, the notes and view the worship of the Church above.³

We have now seen the model of the worship of Christ as begun and settled in the practice of the Church in the very first age ; we shall next see evidence of the same in the beginning of the second age, a hundred years after Christ.

Christians, at the sacrifice of their lives, owned that they used to meet on a certain day, before it was light, and among other parts of their worship, sing an hymn to

¹ Acts vii. ² Acts ix. 14, 21—1 Cor. i. 2.—

² Tim. ii. 22. ³ Rev. v. 13.

Christ, as to their God. They worshipped Christ on the Lord's day. Not long after this lived Polycarp, who, in his devotions, joins God the Father and the *Son* together. At his death the Church of Smyrna says, she can never forsake the worship of Christ. Soon after, Justin Martyr proves that he and the Christians of his age worshipped Christ as God. St. Irenæus says, that by calling on the name of Jesus Christ, the Church worked miracles for the benefit of men. In some of the forms of prayer used at this time in the Church, there is one to Christ, as to the only-begotten God. A witness of this practice (Clemens Alexandrinus) says, "believe, O man, in him who suffered death, and yet is adored as the living God." About A. D. 196, we find hymns to God the Son, so that we see that Christians *did* give divine worship to Christ—as to the eternal, living, and true God, as to the eternal Son of the eternal Father, both being one Creator and one God.

We are now come to the third century, when we have first of all, ample writings of

the faithful against the first who dared to gainsay the Divinity of our Lord and Saviour, (Artemon.)

That the adoration of Christ was found in the services of the Church in the middle of the third century, is clear from the censure and curse of the Bishops upon one of their number, (Paulus Samosatensis, Bishop of Antioch,) because he forbid the use of such psalms, or hymns, as were used to be sung in the Church to the praise and glory of Jesus Christ. We have, in this age, many and various comments and writings on Scripture, proving the divinity of Christ to be the doctrine of the Church. As Christ is to be called upon, so is He to be adored : and as we offer to God the Father first of all prayers, so must we also to the Lord Jesus Christ ; for the holy Scripture teaches us that the same honour is to be given to both, that is, to God the Father, and the Son, when it says, that they may honour the Son as they honour the Father.

In this age, the martyrs, like St. Stephen, poured forth their dying prayers to the Son

of God—such as “O Lord Jesu Christ, my Saviour and my God, command that my Spirit may be received.” It were easy to add many other proofs of the worship of Christ during the three first centuries, but these are enough to shew the practice of the Church, before men began openly to deny the Lord who bought them with his blood, and refused to give Him the same honour which is due to the Father. The Christians of the first three ages in all their disputes with the heathens, always, with a great deal of honest plainness, freely owned that they worshipped Christ as their CREATOR and their GOD; not as a creature, but as the true and living God; equal to the Father. They never ceased to give divine worship to him as their God. In short either they believed Christ to be the living and true God, or else their words and deeds are past understanding.

The general testimony of the heathens in the second and third ages to the belief of Christians in the divinity of Christ is strong and clear. The Christians for many ages

were a sect cut off from the rest of the world by laws and customs of their own. In less than a hundred years after the foundation of their religion, they began to awe the world—lest however we be deceived by their friends, let us listen to their enemies. Well then, nearly all the heathen writers who have mentioned the Christians before the Council of Nice, A.D. 325, have mentioned them as worshippers of Christ: it was too, the *great body* of this people, whom these heathens had in view—the worship of Christ as God, was at once their religion and their crime.

It fully appears, that not only writers among the heathens, but the Roman world at large, during the first, the second, and third ages, were thoroughly convinced that worship was offered to Christ as God, by Christians.

In the beginning of the fourth century, the great body of the Christian people with the rulers of the Church, believed in the divinity of Christ. The chain which we see carried on from the Council of Nice,

must be continued up to the first foundation of the Christian Church at Jerusalem.

We have seen how the fathers avowed Christ to be God, and truly they are as clear in speaking of him as man. Ignatius says, "Mary did, therefore, truly conceive a body having God inhabiting it; and God the Word was truly born of the Virgin, clothed with a body of like passions with us. He was truly conceived in the womb, who formeth all men in the womb, and made himself a body of the blood of the Virgin only, without the help of man. He was carried in the womb the set time that we are, and was truly born as we are." And so Athanasius: "but on the other side, when once the Word was born of Mary, in the fulness of time, to take away sin (for so it pleased the Father to send the Son *made* of a woman, made under the law) then it is written, that taking flesh he became man, and in that suffered for us, as Peter said: for Christ (saith he) suffered for us in the flesh, that it might be evident, and all might believe that being God from eternity, and making holy all whom He came

unto, and disposing of all things according to the will of the Father, at the last he became man for us. And the Godhead, as the Apostle saith, dwelt in *flesh bodily*, which is all one, as if we should say, being God he took to himself a body, and using that as an instrument became man for us." And again; "for the body which our Saviour had of Mary, according to divine Scripture, was, by nature, a human and a true body. It was a true one, because it was the same as ours, for Mary was our sister. St. Augustine says, "let us acknowledge a two-fold nature in Christ, to wit, the divine, in which he was equal to the Father, and the human in which the Father is greater than he; but both together, Christ is not two, but one; for as the soul and body are one man, so is God and man one Christ." I shall come to a close with a passage from St. Chrysostom. "When thou hearest of Christ, do not think him God only, or man only, but both together. For I know that Christ was hungry, and I know that with five loaves He fed five thousand men, besides women and children;

I know Christ was thirsty, and I know Christ turned water into wine; I know Christ was carried in a ship, and I know Christ walked upon the waters; I know Christ died, and I know Christ raised the dead; I know Christ was set before Pilate, and I know Christ sits with the Father; I know Christ was worshipped by the angels, and I know Christ was stoned by the Jews. And truly some of these I ascribe to the human, the other to the Divine nature; for by reason of this is He said to be both together.”¹

But not only from single doctors of the Church we learn the divinity of our Lord, there are many ancient Councils which make this good; I shall only cite the fourth general Council gathered together at Chalcedon, both because it was a general Council of no less than 630 Bishops, and also because it was called on purpose to confirm this truth; and when it was assembled they agreed among other things, that Christ was begotten of the Father, as to his divinity, before all ages,

¹ Chrysostom *Δογμεις του τιμιου σταυρου* vol. vii. p. 503.

and that in the last days, for us and for our salvation, He was born according to his humanity of the Virgin Mary, and that He is made known as one and the same Jesus Christ, the Son, Lord, and only-begotten, in two natures.

The faith in every Church which is set forth to us in the Nicene Creed, may be traced backwards to the middle of the fourth age. It was by the arguments of the bishops of this age, that the unity of our Lord's divine nature came down as a precious deposit, to other councils, and to other times, till it reached ourselves. "For the right faith is, that we believe and confess, that our Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of God, is God and man." He is our LORD and our GOD, made flesh, yet who himself made man—made all things. We believe, that the pure all-holy Spirit—the everlasting Son did, less than 2000 years ago, at the will of his Father, suffer himself to be born of the Virgin Mary, thereby joining himself for ever to our nature—in all things like us, save sin: but as time went on, proved Himself, not to be only man but

God—thus taking the manhood into God—God became man, at the same time not ceasing to be God—miracle of mercy which faith alone can realize! For “no man can say that Jesus is the Lord but by the Holy Ghost.”¹ He who was pure spirit became flesh.

Four points are clearly summed up in the creeds of the Church, which are the rule of her faith even at the present day. *First*, our Lord’s divinity. *Secondly*, his human nature. *Thirdly*, his glory thus made known both as God and man. *Lastly*, the merciful end which he brought about. It was to close up every avenue to mistake on these points, that our Church most carefully guarded her faith by creeds. Now of all the creeds that were ever made, the Nicene Creed, Athanasius’s Creed, and the creed which is called the Apostles’ Creed, are of the highest esteem and are the rule of the faith of Christ’s Holy Catholic Church throughout the world at this day.

¹ 1 Cor. xii. 3.

And first the Nicene Creed, which was made in the year of our Lord 325, to settle the true faith in the divinity of Christ, against Arius the Heretic. For this purpose the Bishops and Ministers of the Church of Christ from all places of the Christian world met together at Nice, a City of Bithynia, to the number of 318. Thus the faith of the Gospel and the truth as it is in Jesus regained its ancient throne.

The same was acknowledged by a Council in England, A. D. 673.¹ In a word this Creed was the faith of all Christian Churches in the world, and ever since that time, the Greek Churches in the East as well as the Latin ones in the West, used still to read this Creed at the Communion or Lord's Supper; so that ours is not the first, nor the only Church that hath commanded it to be read at that time.

And what I have spoken of this Nicene Creed may be applied also to both the others, there being nothing in either of them but

¹ Concil. Anglican apud Bede Hist. Angl. I. iv. c. 17.

what is, though not in so many words, in this. So that they who receive this cannot deny them ; we need therefore say but little of the Creed of St. Athanasius, the famous Bishop of Alexandria who stood up so manfully for the divinity of Christ. Whether Athanasius be the author of this Creed or no, there is nothing in it but what may be proved from Scripture, reason, and the Fathers of the Holy Church in all ages—even as early as An. Dom. 850, there was a command that the Clergy should learn the Athanasian Creed, (the beginning whereof is “ Whosoever will be saved, ”) and understand the sense of it, and so be able to say it in common words.¹

The next, which every Christian child should know, is the *Apostles' Creed*. Whether this be the sum of the teaching of the Apostles, or the very words, as many learned and pious fathers vouch, it has ever been held the rule of our faith in the Saviour as our LORD and our GOD. “ For ” (says St.

¹ Beveridge, Art viii. 3d edit. p. 261.

Ambrose) "the holy faith is conserved in the Creed of the twelve Apostles, who like wise workmen, met ; being together, by their council, they forged a key. For I may call the creed itself a certain key, whereby the darkness of the devil is opened, and the light of Christ comes in."

This Catholic symbol is said to be made up of the twelve sentences of so many Apostles, so that they with their own sword are able to beat all the enemies of our most holy faith. St. Hierome says that "this is not written in paper or ink, but in the fleshly tables of the heart." In a sermon, said to be written by St. Austin, there is set down even the particular article which each Apostle supplied. Peter said, I believe in God the Father Almighty ; John said, The Maker of heaven and earth ; James said, I believe in Jesus Christ his only begotten Son our Lord ; Andrew said, Who was conceived by the Holy Ghost, born of the Virgin Mary ; Philip said, He suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, dead, and buried ; Thomas'

¹ This Sermon was preached on St. Thomas's Day.

said, He descended into hell and rose again the third day from the dead ; Bartholomew said, He ascended into Heaven and sitteth at the right hand of God the Father Almighty ; Matthew said, From thence He will come to judge both the quick and dead ; James, the son of Alphæus, I believe also in the Holy Ghost, the Holy Catholic Church ; Simon Zelotes, The Communion of Saints, the remission of sins ; Judas, the brother of James, The resurrection of the flesh ; Matthias added, The life everlasting." And thus, we see, how commonly this creed was called the Apostles' creed, so that, from what has just gone before, we most surely learn that the three Creeds ought thoroughly to be received and believed. They are now, and ever have been, the rule of faith of Christ's Church. These embody the clear doctrine of the Divinity of our Lord.

The divinity of Christ *therefore* ever has been and still is fully believed by the Holy Church throughout the world. Thus from time to time we have gone step by step into the evidence of Christ's divinity, which is proved to us.

I. *First*, by the direct testimony of Christ Himself; *secondly*, by the evidence of the unbelieving; and *thirdly*, of the believing Jews; we dwelt on the duties which this faith has taught us.

II. *Fourthly*, we have seen the literal evidence of the Apostles; and *fifthly*, of the New Testament generally to the Godhead of our Lord; *sixthly*, that Christians must walk by faith, and not by sight. We must obey God.

III. *Seventhly*, the difference between the first and the second Adam was clearly marked. *Eighthly*, the second man the Lord from Heaven, we learnt is perfect God and perfect man—one person in two natures. *Ninthly*, we noticed His miracles, especially His own resurrection from the dead, as proofs of His Deity—we were reminded of our high calling and holy duties.

IV. *Tenthly*, we heard the standing witness which the Church has always borne and still bears to the Deity of Christ, and also, *eleventhly*, the evidence of her enemies as well as her friends. *Twelfthly*, the evidence of general history.

In conclusion, let us pray for grace and guidance to perform the duties which grow out of this doctrine, and the works which are the fruit of this faith.

In deep humility, then, let us yield to the overwhelming force of this mighty truth, for which martyrs have suffered, and which has ever been believed by the wisest, the greatest, and the best : God is touched, not by our lifting up ourselves, but by our lowliness and child-like love ; He comes down to us when our prayers, through Christ, go up to Him. If He finds us walking daily in His steps, by that light which He has *already* given us, His Spirit will lead us into all truth. If we learn to will what He wills and to work His works, then shall we be settled in the faith. “ If any man will do his will, he shall know of the doctrine, whether it be of God ¹. ”

¹ John vii. 17.

S E R M O N V *.

MATT. III. 15.

“ And Jesus answering, said unto him, Suffer it to be so now ; for thus it becometh us to fulfil all righteousness.”

To realize these words of the Second Lesson for this morning, which we have just heard, let us in thought pass up the stream of time, and pause with the blessed Jesus and his relative the Baptist on the banks of Jordan, where, perhaps, for the first time, our Lord and his forerunner had seen each other ; for, while our Redeemer abode among men, he who went before him was dwelling in the wilderness : indeed, the Baptist declares, “ I knew him not ; but he that sent me to baptize with water, the same said unto me, Upon whom thou shalt see the

* Preached at the Visitation of the Archdeacon of Sudbury, May 5, 1852.

Spirit descending, and remaining on him, the same is he which baptizeth with the Holy Ghost¹." The Holy Baptist felt that He who now offered Himself for this rite was the High and Holy One, "whose shoe latchet he was not worthy to unloose²," and therefore "forbade him." Like the zealous St. Peter, he could not fathom the depths of our Saviour's humility, and the mysteries of that love, "which passeth knowledge." It was in mercy, therefore, that our Lord not only urged His command, but also vouchsafed a reason for compliance which satisfied the mind and the religious feelings of John Baptist. Hence, then, the text naturally admits of three heads:—

1. The Baptism itself involved in the command, "Suffer it to be so now."

2. The reason, "For thus it becometh us to fulfil all righteousness."

3. The remarks which the two former considerations seem fairly to suggest.

First, the command, "Suffer it to be so now."

To form even a faint idea of the humility

¹ John i. 33.

² John i. 27.

and love which it evinced, we must contemplate our Lord coming down among His fellow-men, and an unholy throng ; we must behold Him in the mixt multitude, who were crowding to the edge of the water that they might confess their sins, and be renewed unto repentance. To understand the nature of that life, which thence, through God's free grace, passed into all Christians as members of the Lord's body, we should remember, that in the beginning, God taking dust from the ground, and having formed man of it, breathed into him the breath of life ; even the Spirit of Him who is "the resurrection and the life." But when the Holy Spirit was grieved by sin, and withdrawn from the human race, the Saviour freely restored this highest gift of God. He brings us back to ancient holiness, and forms us anew after His own image ; so that, with those that truly believe in Christ, we may say boldly, that there is not a mere *guiding* light from the Spirit, but that the Spirit itself "*dwelleth in them ;*" whence also we are called *temples* of God, although, I believe, the holiest of the holy

prophets was never at any time so called. To every faithful Christian, Christ our Lord says, "I and the Father will come and will make our abode with him." This He does by "the Spirit which he has given us;" and thus it was Christ's will that God the Holy Ghost should first dwell in His own sinless human nature, and so, in a degree, ever dwell in man, restoring to him, through Himself, what he had lost through his fall. Nay, more solemnly and miraculously near is the Almighty to the faithful Christian, who is "born again of water and of the Spirit," than He was to Adam in Paradise, the patriarchs, prophets, or His own disciples, when He was with them on earth, or even the Baptist, to whom at the time the words of the text were spoken He was so outwardly near. When, therefore, He says, "Verily, verily, I say unto you, Among them that are born of woman, there hath not risen a greater than John the Baptist: notwithstanding he that is least in the kingdom of God is greater than he³," we may infer, that he is so who has just

³ Matt. xi. 11.

been baptized into his kingdom, before actual sin, and thus, through the blood of Christ, made a "partaker of the Divine nature." This doctrine is so clearly taught by the Deity and incarnation of our Lord, that I would only refer for the literal and unquestionable declaration of it, to the Prayer Book and to the Catholic Church in all ages, and more particularly to our Catechism and Baptismal Service, so plainly expressive of this Scriptural truth.

Only suffer me, Reverend Brethren, most strictly in connexion with my subject, and the Second Lesson for this morning, simply to give you the very words of the mild Prelate, who is the present Archbishop of Canterbury, in his Apostolical Preaching of 1815, page 146: "If the effect, I say, of Baptism is less than this, what becomes of the distinction made by John, 'I indeed baptize with water; but he who comes after me shall baptize with the Holy Ghost?' What becomes of the example of Christ Himself? After His Baptism, the descent of the Holy Spirit, in a visible form, was surely intended to confirm His followers in

a belief that their Baptism would confer upon them a similar gift ; and besides the washing away of their sins, and the remission of the penalty entailed upon the posterity of Adam, would bestow upon them a power enabling them to fulfil the covenant laws of their religion.”

It is the belief of the Church, that our Lord's Baptism sets forth to us, and brings in that new birth of the soul which is “ of water and the Spirit ;” the coming of that “ kingdom of God which is within us,” and is “ with power.” Whatever may be the sad difference of opinion which prevails with reference to the *measure* or the *mode* of this inward and Spiritual or Baptismal grace, our duty is clear, imperative, and defined. The Master, whose we are, and whom we serve, commands us to baptize all nations in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, and gives us His promise to be with us even unto the end of the world.

We have been taught from our infancy to believe Baptism “ generally necessary to salvation,” and in more advanced years we may have found out that, *historically* speak-

ing, the doctrine of Baptism seems to have undergone little or no change for 1800 years.

Through all the outward changes of the Church, it appears, like its Divine Author, the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever. Yet sad has been the neglect of this Holy Sacrament.

Varied experience, in seven different parishes in this diocese, has mournfully convinced me, that ungodly sponsors have not only been a scandal and a stumbling-block at the very entrance of our Church, but have actually kept hundreds out of our communion, and caused thousands to die unbaptized. Of the many candidates whom, from time to time, it has been my duty to prepare for confirmation, a very great number, after daily instruction, have, in the presence of witnesses, been publicly baptized just in time for the Bishop. These young persons, however, are but few, compared to those whom the necessity of sponsors has alienated : and no wonder ; since the very dregs of humanity, the openly unchaste, the refuse of the refuse of our

people, obtrude themselves into the presence of the officiating clergyman, to declare before God and the congregation, that they will do that for *others* which they never did for *themselves*, and which, in fact, they have no intention of *doing at all*. Is it not better, I submit with great deference to you, my Reverend Brethren, so far as the law permits, to reject notoriously bad characters, availing ourselves of every opportunity of administering Baptism? Retaining its essence, let us celebrate this Sacrament as best we may, and leave the event to God, until we can train up a generation who may supply *real* godfathers and godmothers. To some of these little ones who are now learning in our schools, and, we trust, growing in grace and the knowledge of our Saviour Jesus Christ, the Prayer Book may prove a safe and faithful guide, as to our fathers once it was,

“When withering blasts of error swept the sky,
And love’s last flower seem’d fain to droop and die.”

Secondly, the reason, “Thus it becometh us to fulfil all righteousness.”

Our Lord came to be baptized, to show that He would not dishonour the established religion by neglecting Baptism, which came in later than the time of Moses, and also to confirm the mission of John the Baptist, his forerunner. Both our Lord's Circumcision and Baptism evinced His reverence for that religion which He came to fulfil. "Born under the law," "he kept the law⁴:" His Apostles followed His example. Every Christian was to remain in the state in which he was called, yet in full and certain trust in the atonement which Christ in His own person had offered for sin. It is plain, too, that St. Paul and St. Barnabas, both having been called in Circumcision, continued in it, "giving none offence either to the Greek or the Jew." Such Jews as had been called in Circumcision followed the practice of St. Paul; their children, however, not born in Circumcision, and received into a Church already formed, submitted to the customs already existing in that Church: thus, for

⁴ Gal. iv. 4.

instance, the substituting of the first day for the seventh, and the title of the "Lord's Day," gradually grew into the law of the Church. In like manner, doubtless, after the descent of the Holy Ghost, who, according to our Lord's promise, brought to the minds of the Apostles much of the will of their Lord, the infant Church increased in wisdom, and stature, and customs, and strength : and this, not only under the Apostles, but under their successors ; so that the man who asserts the lawfulness of breaking the *Lord's Day*, or similar institutions of the Apostles and the early Church, on the pretence, either that the duty of keeping them wholly has vanished with the shadows of the ceremonial law, or because they are not *in so many words* commanded in the Gospel, takes out a licence for himself which the New Testament has not granted. Scripture truly tells us *what* to believe, what to pray for, what to hold fast even unto death ; but does not precisely tell us *how* we are to perform every act of faith, repentance, and love ; for if so, "not even the world itself," I suppose, "could contain the books that

should be written ⁵." Marriage, and religious burial of the dead, are Christian customs; yet the exact *manner* and *words* of these rites we can only learn from the Church, since Holy Writ does not tell us *how* we are to perform them. The Bible may be said to give the spirit which quickens the body, the Church. Every thing in nature and in grace speaks of the unseen and the seen, the soul and the body. The first man ruined both soul and body; the second man, the Lord from heaven, Himself soul and body, redeemed the body as well as the soul of man. But after all, if there *could* be such a thing as mere spiritual worship, at best it could be but the worship of *half* a human being. If our people are not taught to worship with their bodies as well as their spirits, they will not really worship at all. The nature of the heathen, as well as that of the Jewish and Christian worship, will, I submit, convince every thoughtful mind, that we cannot gaze upon the unseen, and serve God with any

⁵ John xxi. 25.

less than our *bodies* and our spirits which are His. As our bodies are truly parts of ourselves, so the homage of our *body* before the throne of God is part of our devotion. Suppose a man injured our *body*, and then said in excuse he did not touch the *soul*, should we accept his defence? A man who says he respects *religion*, and yet insults its forms in which it has lived for centuries, is not unlike a man who says he respects us, and yet wounds our bodies.

The Jewish rites and ceremonies were to pass away; the type was to be lost in the antitype; and already, during the ministry of the Baptist, the Christian day was beginning to break, and the shadows were fleeing away⁶. It was now four hundred years since Malachi closed the Canon of the Old Testament, yet still the sinking light of prophecy was lingering with the servants of God while they waited for the day-spring from on high.

The lesser lights were one by one fading away before the bright rising of "the Sun

⁶ Cant. ii. 17.

of Righteousness ; yet, with the birth of our Saviour, the spirit of prophecy awoke, at the dawn of Christianity, from the slumber of centuries. Even before John Baptist had entered upon his ministry, Zacharias and Simeon were foretelling the coming of Christ. At the point of sun-rising, you know, the skirt of the eastern sky is fringed with faint streaks of light, which deepen by degrees into the radiance of morning, until at length they are bathed in that vast flood of brightness which is ready to burst into the world. John the Baptist was the last star of morning, when the light of the world was rising : he says, accordingly, “ He must increase, but I must decrease ⁷.” No sooner was the voice of the Saviour heard among men, than the voice in the wilderness was gradually dying away. Yet this mighty change was, step by step, from the Jewish system to that of the Baptist, and from this, through many years and stages, into the Christian Church. Things, indifferent in themselves, become important to

⁷ John iii. 30.

us, when we are used to them. The outward form in which our religion has been clothed for ages, must ever be dear to our memories and our hearts. Places hallowed to God's honour, clergy set apart for His service, the Lord's Day, Litanies, Sacraments, and Creeds, in our solemn mode of worship, must ever have a firm hold on the real members of our Church. Our fathers seemed so sensible of this, that even individuals erected noble temples, to which we have succeeded, fit for the solemn services of the Majesty of heaven. In our metropolis, or, indeed, any of our large towns, as we pass on from the ancient to the modern parts, the sacred buildings are fewer, and less costly, while the dwelling-houses vastly increase in number and grandeur.

However true it may be, that He who inhabiteth eternity, through which the rich wave of purest pleasure is ever sweeping,—He whom the heaven of heaven cannot contain, receives no glory from temples made with hands, still He bends from His high throne, and is present in the midst of His people, who adore Him, and honour Him

with the best which they have, in costly churches, which rise out of their charity, devotion, and faith. That we cannot lay out too little upon our bodies, nor too much to the glory of our Maker, is the feeling of a holy and pious mind. The odour of the costly ointment poured upon our Lord still fills the whole house, His Church, with its fragrance, and breathes to our memories the name of her who bestowed it. The widow's two mites, cast into the treasury of the temple, are recorded by God.

Our ancient churches, sublime in their vastness and strength, their proportions and height are prophetic of the heavenly mansions, and speak of the munificence of their founders. Indeed, not only so, but we may observe that pious reverence and awe have forsaken the desecrated and neglected churches which are not *yet* restored. The abuse or want of such buildings has induced zealous men to prefer a religion which breaks away from us, and builds places of worship for itself. We have freely *received*, and we should as freely give. Our churches and ministers have not increased with our

population ; indeed, there are four meeting houses and four dissenting ministers in some of our parishes to one church and one clergyman. On Good Friday last, the Bishop of Cape Town, in his Sermon, stated that the *Wesleyans* had *four* times as much money at their command, and even the *Independents* *twice* as much as he had in his diocese.

Building and endowing churches had well nigh gone out of fashion twenty years ago. Funds were scarce, simply because the spirit of charity which formerly supplied them had waxed cold.

Having long had Kings for the nursing fathers, and Queens for the nursing mothers of our Church, she may have leaned too much on their guidance and support, and pierced herself through with many sorrows. Had this nation been filled with our churches, and our Church been filled with real Christians, the incense of daily prayer from the sacrifice of our united devotions would have reached the skies, and brought down God's blessing to close our breaches, to heal our wounds, to encircle us in the

sleepless guardianship of His power and His love. In this event, any aggression from without could only drive us nearer to the shelter of the Almighty—the Rock of our strength, the Tower of safety: in vain might the storm and the tempest beat against our house.

As things *are*, in the deep recesses of the sanctuary we are secure from the stunning din and loud roar of strife and controversy. Here we may make every day like Sunday, and Sunday, in a degree, like the cloudless sabbath of eternity. Even men who are neither friendly to the Church nor Christianity itself, on the long run, are tolerably fair; *their* shrewd inquiry is not, whether the Church is right or wrong, but how far the Church of *paper* is identified with the Church of *practice* and of *facts*; whether our material buildings are in harmony with our public devotions. Earnest sincerity, and self-denial, which alone can make our theory and working coincide, are proof against ridicule or censure. Men may dislike daily services, but they will not long dislike ministers who solemnly and regularly perform

them. Already they are winning upon thoughtful minds. A generation of stern men is arising who will not be laughed out of their duty ; whatever may be the religious school to which they may be supposed to belong they will attract, *make themselves felt*. The *many* will understand the eloquence of good works. The *more discriminating* will examine whether the priest, who lives in his duties, is not on the whole, right or wrong, the best representative of the religion of the Prayer Book.

However this may be, that the daily services are growing into fashion cannot be denied ; within the last ten years they have multiplied and gained ground. The list of churches, in London and elsewhere, in each of which there were many services every day last Lent and Easter week, and in which there was almost daily communion, marks a wonderful era in our Church history. In *large* parishes frequent services, especially in a *debased* neighbourhood, are a living witness not to be refuted. To one, however, who has watched their progress for sixteen years, they appear to die with

the clergyman who commenced them. The centre of union, the daily sacrifice of praise and prayer, to-day adorned in the beauty of holiness, to-morrow may be stripped of its attraction. The holy services and sacred song may be silenced by the successor of the man who spent his fortune, his talents, and his *life* upon his schools and his Church; hence, either for good or for evil, one incumbent *may*, without any great loss of popularity, undo what his predecessor had done. Sad is the relapse;—the people cannot understand us; but far worse than this, is that religious recrimination which squanders away our Saviour's legacy of peace, and is the bane of our spiritual success;—founded upon a rock indeed must that Church be which can survive the storms which we ourselves have raised among ourselves. Difference of opinion, like the ancient Babel of tongues, is the effect and poison of the forbidden fruit. The apple of discord has *skilfully* been flung in among us by a cunning hand, but it is inscribed by an enemy; we will reject it, and hail fair heavenly Love with her beautiful hand-

maiden Learning, whose voice is not heard in the street, and who holds out the olive branch of peace. The tide of strife will roll back, and our ark will rest on the mountain of God.

If it be true that three centuries ago the higher classes were less informed than the artizan of the present time, it is perhaps equally true that the middle classes of our own time are not inferior in general knowledge to the higher ranks of the last half century. They will judge of us. We must teach them. Their opinion will influence legislation, not legislation their opinion. (See note A.) The eyes of Christendom are upon us. At no period, I think, since the Reformation has real learning been so much the weapon of contending interests. Intellectual powers have been awakened, and are gaining absolute ascendancy over thousands.

If knowledge is *power*, what mighty force must that power have which can command, direct, control the voluntary submission of the human mind. This is what we have to meet. (See note B.) History has not only been summoned as a witness, but, contrary

to our *habits, cross-examined*. Its testimony will, under God, assuage our animosities and restrain our passions. (See note C.)

St. Paul, St. Peter, St. James, and St. John had such diversities of gifts, and dispositions, that they seemed to differ from each other; yet they had the same spirit. Coming down to uninspired times, we see that Archbishop Leighton, who was esteemed a Calvinist, lived on friendly terms with Bishop Burnet, who widely differed from him on this point. Archbishop Wake, of our own Church, carried on a most friendly correspondence with the learned Dr. Dupin of the Roman Catholic Church. (See note D.) Time would fail to tell of many, yet we may notice a few living instances. The other day the present Bishop of Norwich closed what appears a friendly controversy on miracles with his Roman Catholic contemporary, the very learned divine whom we have lost. That profound theologian, the Regius Professor of Hebrew in Oxford, has recorded the most honourable testimony to our present Archbishop, from whom he widely differs. (See note E.) The Bishop of Worcester,

a few days since, applauded the dissenters of his diocese, and in return received from them loud plaudits. (See note F.) The late Roman Catholic Archbishop Murray of Dublin is lamented by the most powerful men in England, and was not deemed by our ex-premier, the author of the celebrated Durham Letter, unworthy of a place in the Privy Council of our Sovereign, which the same Archbishop declined; "and he, the ex-premier, very much regretted that it was not accepted by a prelate whose character he esteemed and whose memory he revered." (See note G.) At the Limerick meeting for the National Exhibition of Industry at Cork, the Clergy and Laity of the Roman Catholic Church were harmoniously combined with our own; because they differed in religion and politics, it was said, that was no reason why Christian charity should not prevail among them for their country's good. When, however, we cannot be of one mind in matters *within* the Church, which are obviously not common to us and those without, (see note H,) separation is better than conflict. To avoid strife, Abraham parted from Lot, Jacob from

Esau, and even St. Paul from St. Barnabas ⁸. The most happy expression of agreement within our Church is perhaps the memorial signed by nearly four thousand of the Clergy of all shades of theological opinion respecting the state of the law of Burial. When we bite and devour one another, we not only rend ourselves, but the body of Christ; we are committing suicide of Body and Soul. What then remains, but to master ourselves, so that when argument fails holy living may conquer? Thus we come to—

Thirdly,—the remarks which the two former considerations suggest. To live better than gainsayers is to put them down; the ground, however, which is already occupied by others cannot easily be regained (see note I); but what, though our day be darkly pregnant with solemn events, and though the Church at home and abroad is going through a trial, which will shake her temporal foundation,—all is not lost if we be but united and faithful to ourselves. Suffer me then, without borrowing from

⁸ Acts xv.

imagination, to contrast the dark shades of the past with the bright side of our picture.

About sixteen years ago I entered upon my ministry in this church, which was then in union with that of a neighbouring parish. The last time I took the duty here, these two parishes were under the sole care of one clergyman. Glebe houses, with their resident incumbents were by no means general. National schools were an experiment. The parochial system of that day, and not the individuals who lived under it, will be the subject of remarks which are not intended to reflect upon the abuses of a bygone day, but to remind us of our improvement since 1836, when the successful candidate for the sole charge of two, or even three, large parishes, with still larger endowments, especially in the Isle of Ely, was supposed to be a "pious clergyman, to whom stipend was no object," and upon whose horse (it was rather irreverently said by the oldest inhabitants) more depended than upon *himself*. The incumbent, however, was never absent upon grand pecuniary occasions, and was believed by the common people to be

“ a man who got as *much* as he could for doing as *little* as the law allowed.” Many of the churches in this diocese were nearly forsaken and falling into decay. (See note K.) In one there was a fire-engine, with all its appendages, in full view. In another, there was no font, until on the dawn of a better day it was rescued from its grave of nettles and rubbish, and replaced within the church. (See note L.) In a third, which had for ages been closely associated with the antiquities of the cathedral, and richly endowed, the poor isolated service of a clergyman who had duty elsewhere seemed so widely dissociated from the design of the noble temple itself, that nothing could keep him in countenance but the hideous marks, and scars of violence and outrage, which remained upon the sacred walls, as indecent as the Great Rebellion had left them. (See note M.) Hard by this magnificent church there was a Calvinistic chapel, into which poured from our villages a tide of people, which left us without a congregation. If a flock without a shepherd be sad, a shepherd without a flock is still more melancholy. Such an

unreal position is worse than a ministry among savages. In a fourth church a determined refusal to transact money matters on the Communion table incurred the charge of superstition. (See note N.) These, my Reverend Brethren, out of many, are a few of the darker shades of the back ground, which I have ventured to *touch*, in order to *bring out the more clearly* the brightness of the *present*, when this church and parish, as well as nearly every other in this diocese, has now the undivided service of at least one clergyman; and this poor building in which we are assembled is to be rebuilt, enlarged, and rendered worthy of the noble and the rich who visit this place. (See note O.) Schools are now already in existence, or rising up in most of our parishes. The churches to which I have painfully alluded are resuming their congregations and their influence. Family after family have been baptized. The Second Sacrament is something more than a name. The labours of us Clergy are no longer measured by the mere requirements of the law. The moral waste begins to smile. This generation of priests

is redeeming the time. So that "the wilderness and the solitary place shall be glad for them ; and the desert shall rejoice, and blossom as the rose⁹." To crown the scene, there reigns in deep repose and solemn grandeur, the fine old church of Ely, which from its earliest foundation as an abbey has outlived the sweeping changes of a thousand years, to remind us of the princess who gave her dowry to God, and to teach us obedience to our Bishop ; in a word, to awaken the holiest memories of the past. Though low to the rest of the world, to *us* Ely is a city set on a hill, catching our gaze from all points of the diocese, and while the cathedral is glowing in its beautiful robe of far western fire which at sunset lights up all the fens, we shall read in these sunbeams of evening the bright, though late influence which will fall on her churches below and around. (See note P.) This church is resuming her splendours, repairing her waste places, and putting on once more her costly ornaments, restoring her sculpture, which man but not time had destroyed, and is not

⁹ Isa. xxxv. 1.

unworthy of her Dean, or even the Spirit of Ethelreda ; for the choir is said to be one of the finest specimens of architectural beauty in the kingdom, if not indeed unrivalled as a work of art : may the beauty of holiness pervade it, so that real living piety may be enshrined in the sanctuary, and provide a nursery for the young,—a resting place for the old,—the seat of learning (see note Q),—the centre of religion ; a witness of the truth as it is in Jesus, that to her it may be said, “ So shall the king greatly desire thy beauty ; for he is thy Lord, and worship him ¹.” Thus all glorious within, and adorned without, she cannot be so unnatural as to look down upon her own offspring, the daughters of her early love, and allow them to continue mutilated, disfigured, defaced, and branded with the mark of pollution and sacrilege. May we not hope to live to see this foul stain and reproach of the latter half of the nineteenth century wiped away, by those who have the power ? All which God has enabled us already to do for his glory is only a pledge and earnest

¹ Ps. xlvii.

of the advancement of true religion in this diocese.

In our retrospect of the National Church, through a period of twenty-three years, there is much to humble us and much to make us glad.

It was when Mr. Newman scarcely believed in Baptismal Regeneration, and Mr. Pusey was writing in defence of German Theology, and treating Episcopacy as a matter of expediency, when Mr. Hampden was popularly explaining away the grace of Sacraments, that the mighty statesman (so suddenly cut off in the midst of his career) carried the momentous bill of emancipation, which reversed the policy of three hundred years.

In 1833 the Church was deprived of ten Bishoprics (see note R) mainly by that very statesman, under whom now, as the head of the Government, is proposed Church extension at home, and equality and free Synodical action in the Colonies. At no period, perhaps, were the temporalities of the Church involved in such reforms as our great statesmen are contemplating, and when we pray

for the high Court of Parliament at this time assembled, let us trust that our rulers who merged the Bishoprics may now restore an equivalent to our humbled Church, even though the Episcopate be *not* extended according to the plan now *under consideration of Parliament*. (See note S.)

The establishment of the Roman hierarchy, and the manner in which it has been met in this country, involve, I think, destinies over which physical force, or rough words, will have no salutary control. The gorgeous pageant, the procession, and the chant, the spectacle of unpaid poor men with mighty pretensions, toiling night and day, with all things against them, will be compared to the position, policy, working, and wealth of our own beloved Church.

The Maynooth Grant is the watchword of an agitation, which we may fear cannot remove it without a rebellion. The Hampden, the Gorham, the Whiston cases, the royal commission of inquiry into the universities, the Gawthorn correspondence, the unreserved theological discussions in Parliament, more especially with reference to our

Prelates and their Clergy, have opened a field for inquiry too fruitful in national results here to consider. The call which is waxing louder and louder for Synods at home and abroad will not soon be silenced. These absorbing questions will doubtless, to thoughtful minds, be subjects of humble prayer, so that God may give unto us the valley of repentance for a door of hope.

The daily peal of the Church bell is heard in our land, the silent influence of fact and example is winning many from the error of their ways. There is a holy emulation to do good ; nor are we ashamed to accord to dissenters the praises which they merit. They occupy stations which had been unblest by the care of our Church.

So long ago back as the year 1711, the Commons of England declared that the want of churches greatly contributed to the increase of schism and irreligion. To remedy this evil, which has come down to ourselves, magnificent churches are daily springing up out of the munificence of individuals, exhibiting the beauty of holiness, with their chancels, their altars, their stalls and screens,

their naves with open seats for rich and poor alike ; their rich moulded fonts and windows tinged with every hue. The most ancient Churches are recovering their primeval conformity to the actual requirements of our present Prayer Book, and mark the Church history of our day. But, after all, the poorer Clergy have the hearts of the people and can bend them to their will ; nearly every religious movement comes from below : poor clergymen ushered in the Reformation, they can hold fast or abandon this blessing. They will not be found asleep in the sides of the vessel when she heaves on the wave between Geneva and Rome.

In conclusion, bear with me while I offer a word to the churchwardens (see note T) and laymembers of our Church. There are, at this moment, about five thousand two hundred curates, or one-third of all the Clergy of the established Church, each of whom is absolutely at the mercy of his Bishop. He may have recovered the wandering flock ; he may have baptized thousands from two years old and upwards ; for these he may have founded schools and supported them ; he

may have rebuked the unruly, strengthened the weak-hearted, visited the fatherless and the widow in their affliction ; he may have performed a service for every day in the year since his ordination twenty years ago ; he may have spent his all, himself, upon the Church, and then, without the form of a hearing, be cast upon the world to beg his bread, and sink down in that despair of this world which brings him down to his grave, and leaves his family helpless and hopeless behind him. (See note U.) While it is your strict duty to be at church, and see that these and all of us carry out the services *of the Book of Prayer in their integrity* (see note V), these, the inferior Clergy, are the men, especially in large and neglected parishes, who have the first claim on your protection in the discharge of their duty, under the weight of their *undivided* responsibility. (See note W.)

Friends, — Neighbours, — Englishmen, — *continue* to be faithful to your trust. And now, my Reverend Brethren, if, as the representative of another (see note X), I have presumed too far upon your patience or

your time ; if I have obtruded myself upon your province, forgive me this wrong, and set it down to my ignorance of the *nature* and *extent* of my task, from which I could not well shrink ; my statements have been submitted with unaffected and profound deference to those from whom I would cheerfully learn, and to whom I stand subject to correction. (See note Y.)

May we all, both lay (see note Z) and clerical, as the Church of Christ, so “ fulfil all righteousness,” that we may all agree in the truth of His Holy Word, and live in unity and godly love, through Jesus Christ our Lord !

NOTES.

NOTE A.—Page 126.

The people are represented by the Commons of England, whose decisions eventually govern the destinies of the Nation. The popular tide of religious opinion in the course of 300 years, has not only swept away nearly all penal enactments against Roman Catholics and Dissenters, but may be said, indirectly, to have regulated the laws: how much then depends upon the teaching of the Clergy, and its influence over the people!

“ Yet it was in the first instance the action of statesmen, orators, and philanthropists in the legislature, which formed and set in motion the feeling of the people. Intellectually, then, the persons composing the legislature, or wielding the sovereign power are, as a general rule, superior to those whom they govern.”—*Gladstone on the Church*, 4th ed. p. 289.

NOTE B.—p. 126

The voluntary submission of the human mind to the Church of Rome, and her absolute control over the will of all her children, can only, perhaps, be met by the power of our example and our disinterested devotion. “ Being as the air invulnerable, the Romish

Church mocks the restraints of human laws." "The sword of the State may sever the links asunder, but they will reunite."—See *Times Newspaper*, Feb. 11th 1851. "I may proceed to suggest that the State ought not to use coercion for the propagation of religious truth, or for the suppression of erroneous opinions, this exceeds man's force and power."—*Gladstone on the Church*, p. 310.

NOTE C.—p. 127.

History is cross-examined, so that there are men who read both sides of a question, without prejudging either: for instance, *Maitland's Essays on the Reformation*, and *Fox's Martyrology*, are to be seen on the same shelf, and are read by one and the same man.

NOTE D.—p. 127.

After an exchange of courtesies the correspondence was opened between these two divines, to effect a union between the Church of Rome and the Church of England. The Archbishop and Dr. Dupin seem to have written in a friendly spirit.—See *Mosheim, Maclain's Appendix. III.* vol. vi.

NOTE E.—p. 127.

"The condition both of life and doctrine in the beginning of and middle of the last century, are briefly described by one, of whom it is enough here to say, that he has spent a long life in the earnest endeavour to promote piety, and the love of the Redeemer."—*Dr. Pusey's Sermons*, Preface, 2nd Ed. 1848. p. 7, in allusion to *Sumner's Apostolical Preaching*, ch. v. p. 21, or as it is in the Ed. 1815. p. 90. The various Editions of

the Archbishop's work involve an alleged change of sentiment, which, however, if real, was prior to the Gorham question.

NOTE F.—p. 128.

At the tercentenary commemoration of the founding of King Edward's schools at Birmingham, the Bishop of Worcester was anxious to give proofs of his liberality and toleration which he felt towards them who differed from him in religious views. Mr. James, the oldest minister of any religion at Birmingham, in return praised the Bishop and praised the School, because it proscribed no creed.—See *Guardian Newspaper*, Apr. 21, 1852.

NOTE G.—p. 128.

The very Protestant noble ex-premier, who scorned that religion which “confined the intellect and enslaved the soul,” acknowledged, that during his late administration, the late Roman Catholic Archbishop Murray was offered a seat in the Privy Council of the Queen, and that he (the Protestant Premier) very much regretted that it was not accepted. So great was my Lord's friendship for individual priests of “the mummeries and superstitions,” which he scorned, that he is careful to address a Romish Archbishop as “My Lord,” “Your Grace” twice in a few words.

The late Protestant Viceroy of Ireland writes to a Romish Archbishop; “As I entertain a profound veneration for the character of the Pope, and implicitly rely upon his upright judgment, it is with pleasure that I now ask *Your Grace* to submit these statutes (of the Godless College) to the consideration of his Holiness.”

This deep veneration for individuals, expressed by those who insulted their creed, proves at least how well men *can* speak of those whose religious sentiments they despise.

NOTE H.—p. 128.

The Church of England can afford to receive within her pale, difference of opinion which requires charitable forbearance and mutual sympathy: yet party spirit and selfwilled novelty deny that toleration to others, which they demand for themselves.

Submission to the Authority of the Church, and *real love for all whom she does not condemn*, would silence our hard words of each other, and prevent such scenes as have been just enacted by men who are alien to the Church, and have no beneficial interest in her true *welfare*.—What may be called the Synod in parliament, now sitting, can scarcely be less objectionable than a Catholic Council of the reformed Christian Church, asserting in her own rights synodical self-government.

That Churchmen and Dissenters cannot co-operate on the same grounds, has been abundantly proved by mutual recriminations on the same platform.

It has been asked, would not the three orders of the Christian Ministry, including that other important order the Laity, be likely to come to a better understanding, by recurring to the original and divine constitution of the Church? How the most distinguished foreigner out of our communion, can share in the deliberations of the Church seems strange. Even private individuals assume absolute religious domination over their neighbours. We are all apt, from various causes, to overrate our own importance and peculiar opinion: like the Lilliputians,

who really thought they composed the whole world, and of *course* the church : every man who reigns amid his own small realm, and owes his own daily or weekly orthodox and infallible opinion to his own particular and only Christian daily or weekly newspaper, is an intellectual king : from whom to differ, even mildly, is to be a TRAITOR—a PAPIST—a DISSENTER, or, if possible, something worse than either. In fact, every thinking Clergyman sees in such a parish-prince, a village Pope !

NOTE I.—p. 129.

The strongholds preoccupied by the Puritans of Oliver Cromwell, bid defiance to any approach of Church principles, or Catholic Truth in East Anglia ; still, however, there is a wild unoccupied region along the dark recesses of the Bedford Level, and through other dreary Fenland Districts, celebrated in the early history of the English Church, alike unoccupied by Churchman or Dissenter. Indeed, the thick darkness which pervades these Islanders' minds is blacker than the very Fens.

With reference to a recent murder at Outwell, it has been stated, without any attempt at contradiction, that the whole of the family (one of whom murdered the "land-keeper" Day), upon their examination at the inquest, exhibited such ignorance as seldom or never has been heard of. None of them have attended any place of worship for a considerable time ; and one boy, ten years of age, did not know there was a God.—See *Cambridge Chronicle*, April 17th, 1852. The contrast here, between the dark present and the long-distant past, must tinge a pious mind with melancholy.—A stunted, dwarfed, cheap substitute for a church will

hardly redeem the last half century, or bear comparison with a neighbouring conventicle.

NOTE K.—p. 131.

The diocese of Ely, sixteen years ago, was of such unenviable notoriety, that it is unnecessary here to depict the awful scenes of desecration and sacrilege which are yet scarcely defaced from our memory : our beautiful churches were fearfully debased and degraded.

NOTE L.—p. 131.

If God may be glorified as well by the body as by the soul and spirit, and if our outward and Holy things be in any way expressive of the unseen worship of the heart, the desecration of the Baptismal Font, the unhallowed uses of the Lord's Table, and the avowed, nay, boasted contempt of all Holy places and things, which some of our churches have witnessed, may easily account for the omission of *Baptism*, and the utter neglect of the *Holy Communion*.

NOTE M.—p. 131.

The traces of the Great Rebellion are still to be seen in our churches, and the harpy touch of the puritans is impressed upon every thing which is sacred. No spot, perhaps, has retained so vividly the marks and the spirit of the puritans as the Isle of Ely. When one of the greatest architects of our age (Pugin) entered the mutilated Mary Chapel of Ely, he is reported to have exclaimed in mental agony, " Good Heaven, what has England been guilty of to deserve this ! "

Ely and its cathedral, even in the time of Elizabeth, seem to have been fated.

“Richard Cox,” with other commissioners, appointed to visit the University of Oxford in 1549 and 1558, “destroyed, burnt, and sold, for the vilest purposes, all the illuminated books, papers, &c. &c. under the idea of their tendency to Popery.”—See Supplement to 1st edit. of *Bentham’s History and Antiquities, &c. &c.* p. 104. “It is greatly to be lamented that this good man’s religious zeal should have stained his character.” He engaged to hold a public disputation with the Popish Bishops, before a great assembly of both Houses of Parliament, about 1558-9, and not long after, on the deprivation of Bishop Thirlby for refusing the oath of Supremacy, Dr. Cox, was nominated to the See of Ely. From his death, 1581, this see was kept vacant above eighteen years by Queen Elizabeth, who received the whole of the profits.” See *Bentham’s History*, p. 195. “*Reasons for making a Bishop of Elye*,” from the Harleian MSS. No. 6850, are not more disinterested than any which could be urged in our own day.

It was to his next successor, Bishop Heton, who was appointed A.D. 1600, that Queen Elizabeth wrote the celebrated letter :—

“PROUD PRELATE,

“I who made you what you are can unmake you, and if you do not forthwith fulfil your engagement, by G— I will immediately unfrock you.

“Yours as you demean yourself,

“ELIZABETH.”

Notes to Supplement, p. 106.

In the year 1644, Oliver Cromwell ordered "the Clergy Vicar to leave off fooling," and drove the congregation from the cathedral.—*Supplement to the History*, p. 89. At no period, perhaps, since the Reformation has the religious polity of Ely awakened holier hopes than at the present. The restoration of the interior of the cathedral is prophetic of something more, and its outward beauty springing out of individual munificence is expressive of that charity which is "not dead, but sleepeth."

NOTE N.—p. 132.

A churchwarden, at what is called a *Vestry Meeting*, in the chancel of the church, in the presence of many rate-payers, almost under the shadow of a cathedral, charged the chairman with Romanizing, because he resisted the practice of transacting the parochial business on the Communion Table within the rails. Public business and unholy words carried on in our churches have reduced the sanctuary to a state of degradation unworthy of a conventicle.

NOTE O.—p. 132.

It was not until I was entering this church that I heard of its "contemplated" improvement and proposed enlargement; and since the sermon has been in the press, the Rector of Newmarket has kindly and judiciously substituted for "the noble and the great who visit this place," "The place and its connexions."

Racing places have a very peculiar claim on those who periodically frequent them.

NOTE P.—p. 133.

From the hill of Coveney, and from the isle west of Ely, one may see the summer hues of evening blend together and mantle round the cathedral, glowing and burning into a robe of fire amid a shortlived “cloudless depth of light,” which streams out from the windows and lantern of the great church, and which, as night comes on, fades along the sky—flashes out its latest strength and dies away, sinking into the black grave of the fens, and faintly colouring them with lingering beams.

NOTE Q.—p. 134.

There were persons of the noblest families, and matrons of high rank, that came and put themselves under the direction of Etheldreda, or brought their children to be educated and devoted to religion in her monastery. Her eldest sister and two other princesses became members in this society during the life of Etheldreda, and all of them succeeded her in their order.—*Bentham's Conventual Church of Ely*, p. 57.

NOTE R.—p. 135.

On the 27th February, Lord Derby delivered that famous speech which defaced from the minds of true Churchmen the extinction of the Irish Bishoprics. The event of the *Colonial Bishops' Bill*.—The Bishop of London's *Receding Bill of Suggestion*, and the discussions on Episcopal Privileges have not yet realized our highest hopes. The favourable treatment of the much vexed management clauses inspires fresh confidence.

NOTE S.—p. 136.

That this Bill should be entertained, with its proposed aggression on Deans, while the Colonial Bishops' Bill is so coolly received, is a proof, perhaps, that the English nation has decidedly refused to continue identical with the Church. To appoint new Bishops merely by letters patent, is to yield up the ancient rights of the Church, and to make her a servant of the State.

After our separation from America, the action of the Church there became free, and though while united to us she had not one Bishop, she has now thirty-three Bishops and regular convocations, in which the laity take part. "If the Church of England were unfettered," says Sir W. P. Wood, "she would exert and display that beneficence which she had already exhibited:" he "trusted that the time was not far distant when the Church of England in the Colonies would no longer be left in the melancholy position in which it is now placed."—See *Sir W. P. Wood's speech on the Colonial Bishops' Bill*, May 20th, 1852. "From the remotest parts of the world appeals were made to the Pope of Rome," says Sir R. H. Inglis, and adds, after his admiration of the "Central Authority" at home among Dissenters, that he "saw no reason that the ultimate and extreme appeal should not be made to the Mother Church at home."

But the analogy scarcely holds good, for the "Central Authority," of Roman Catholics at Rome, or of Dissenters in England, rests in some *spiritual* person or persons with spiritual functions. Convocation, though suspended in its operation, seems to be a constitutional body, to which the Commons of England, of its own will,

in the reign of William III. referred the decision of matters ecclesiastical. — See a recent report of the *Yorkshire Church Union*.

NOTE T.—p. 138.

Probably every Archdeacon periodically informs the Churchwardens of the importance of their office, and generally congratulates them on their faithful performance of their duty. There are others, of high rank, who have of late volunteered certain instructions to Churchwardens who have, though Dissenters, in this place handed over the document to the Clergyman. Churchwardens are not often reminded, that they have sworn as *Churchmen*, that they will present to the Archdeacon the names of all who are notoriously leading immoral lives, and that a Churchwarden must be a *Churchman*. The violation of an oath even for a century cannot consecrate perjury, would that the godly discipline were restored! so that the oath of Churchwardens might be kept, for the absence of the discipline, with the presence of the oath, has emboldened men to esteem such oaths *mere forms*.

NOTE U.—p. 139.

The praiseworthy efforts which charitable societies are now making to meet the destitution of Clergymens' widows and children, confirm the truth of this statement, without recording heart-rending instances of aged and laborious Clergymen going down to the grave in sorrow for their bereaved ones, whom they can no longer aid or protect.

NOTE V.—p. 139.

At a time when we are assailed by the Nonconformists on the one side, and by Romanists on the other, there can be no greater injury inflicted upon the Church than the admission of Churchwardens who neither represent her interests, nor believe her creeds.

NOTE W.—p. 139.

Hard-working Curates, in redeeming the neglected past, and atoning for the guilt of half a century, in their own persons bear the punishment due to the Church, and are thrown into a torrent which but few can stem, nay, sometimes sacrifice their health, their means, and their life to dreary toils, uncheered by one kind word of thanks or praise. Notwithstanding all which has been so ably written by learned Churchmen and clever Dissenters, of “the office of the Clergyman as an office of influence and honour, and that of the Dissenter as an office of proscription and weakness” (See *Gladstone on the Church*, 4th edit. p. 241), in the diocese of Ely the Dissenter is the man of the people’s choice, whose religion is fully identified with their own, and who occupies, in some places, the strongest position in their hearts. The Curates of the established Church are of all men the most painfully amenable to the law of the land, from which they have little or no redress. The dissenting teacher in this neighbourhood, who is “freely chosen, is likely to be esteemed and valued by those who, in respecting him, justify their own choice.”—See *Union of Church and State*, by B. W. Noel, M.A. 3d edit. p. 287.

NOTE X.—p. 139.

The Preacher represented his Vicar by the consent of the Archdeacon.

NOTE Y.—p. 140.

The object of the Preacher throughout has been to state facts and submit propositions, rather than to obtrude his own sentiments upon any from whom he may be so unhappy as to differ.

NOTE Z.—p. 140.

There is nothing more common in popular addresses of the day, than to call all who are *not* Clergymen "*the Laity*," and to include them in the Church without reference to their principles. Originally, all Canons, whether of doctrine or discipline, were framed by a Council of Bishops, who had exclusively the power of defining. In the General Council, however, that met at Constantinople A.D. 381, the names of the presbyters are found among those of the Bishops, subscribing the decrees; and even prior to the establishment of the Church by the State, the laity had weight in Church matters. The lay members of the early Church were allowed: 1st, to elect, or at least confirm, the election of their Bishop. 2ndly, The Deacons were nominated to the Bishop by the people. 3rdly, The Presbyters depended upon the laity for support. 4thly, The people seem to have been present in Synod, and at least to have evinced a great interest in its deliberations.

In England, even judicial powers are exercised by the laity represented by the Crown. The Archbishop

himself would, it appears, be bound by the decision of a court of laics even acting under his own authority. While the State continued to recognize none but Churchmen, there was at least an outward unity, if not a unity, of "Godly love."

SERMON VI.

JOHN XX. 22, 23.

- “ He breathed on them, and saith unto them,
Receive ye the Holy Ghost :
“ Whose soever sins ye remit, they are re-
mitted unto them ; and whose soever sins ye
retain, they are retained.”*

BEFORE we can fully understand the meaning of holy orders, we must recal to our mind the great truths, that Jesus Christ came into the world to save souls from sin, and from death eternal, and to impart to them all those lights and helps which they needed. For this end His Father gave Him all power. As man, He was sent by the Father to preach the Gospel, to give light to them that sit in darkness, to forgive sins

upon earth, and in short to do every thing for the good of souls, insomuch, that He Himself says to His Apostles, “ All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth¹.” Now the sacred helps which our Lord knew to be needful for the salvation of souls, were equally needful for all mankind, and in all ages after Him to the end of the world ; therefore the means of grace through which those heavenly helps should come to all mankind throughout all time were necessary to man’s salvation. But since our Blessed Lord was not to remain in His own person, so as to be seen and heard on earth, to apply these helps to the souls of men Himself, He therefore chose twelve disciples, whom He called Apostles, to whom He imparted these high and holy powers necessary for bringing mankind generally to salvation. These were the powers which He Himself had received from His Father, and which He enabled the Apostles to exercise and impart to others, their followers in the ministry. Thus He sent them to preach the Gospel, to teach all nations and

¹ Matt. xxvii. 18.

to baptize, before His ascension². He also commanded them to do what He had just done when at the last supper—to consecrate and administer the blessed sacrament of His body and blood³,—to forgive sins when, after His resurrection, “He breathed on them and said, Receive ye the Holy Ghost: whose sins ye remit, they are remitted unto them⁴.” And so of all the other sacred powers of the priesthood or Church which He intrusted to His Apostles: He thereby made them for ever priests and pastors of His people, giving them authority as fellow-workers with Him, and stewards of His mysteries, standing in His stead, to impart the same powers to others after them; and, as I said, to carry on to the end of the world the great work He had begun for the salvation of souls. How much then, and how deeply are we bound to acknowledge the goodness, to praise and adore the name, of the Most High God, in that we were born and bred in a Church wherein the Apostolical line has through all ages been

² Matt. x. 18. Mark xvi.

³ Luke xxii. 19.

⁴ John xx. 22.

preserved entire, there having been a constant succession in it, of men who were properly successors of the Apostles, by virtue of the Apostolical imposition of hands which, being begun by the Apostles, has been continued from one to another, ever since their time down to ours; by which means the same spirit which was breathed by our Lord into His Apostles is, together with their office, transmitted to their lawful successors, the pastors and governors of the Church at this time; and acts, moves, and assists at the administration of the several parts of the Apostolical office in our days, as much as ever! From whence it follows, that the means of grace which we now enjoy are themselves as powerful and effectual as they were in the days of the Apostles⁵.

To realize this great historical truth we must carefully keep in mind, that the powers and authority of the priesthood are the work and the gift of God, and are only imparted to those whom He calls to that high office. We must also believe, that none can have

⁵ See Beveridge, Sermon on Christ's presence with His ministers.

or employ these powers, unless he receive them from God by the means which He has given us for this end ; for neither doth any man “ take this honour upon himself, but he that is called by God, as was Aaron ⁶.” “ And how can they preach except they be sent⁷ ?” “ For he that entereth not in by the door into the sheepfold, but climbeth up another way, the same is a thief and a robber,” says Jesus Christ Himself ⁸. So that you see all who thrust themselves into the pastoral office of themselves, and take upon them to preach and to teach, and venture to administer either of the two sacraments, without the true and proper power from Jesus Christ to do so, are only blind leaders of the blind, who, together with those who follow them, may, to say the least, fall into the pit of error. When our Lord imparted these wonderful powers to His servants, He did it not in words which were plain and in a way which was seen. He began the great work by outward words and actions which showed, that as from

⁶ Heb. v. 4.

⁷ Rom. x. 15.

⁸ John xi. 8.

Him, the fount of life and light and power, grace flowed to His Apostles, so through them it should flow down to the end of time. Those who have the rule over us in the Church, owe their weight and power not to the use and act and deed of the Apostles only, but, from the very first, whatever spiritual authority they claim is founded in the person and office of the Messiah, our Blessed Lord Jesus Christ; who being sent by our Heavenly Father to be the great Apostle⁹, Bishop, and Pastor¹ of His Church, and anointed to that office immediately after His baptism by John, with power and the HOLY GHOST², descending upon them in a bodily shape³, did afterwards before His ascension into Heaven send and empower His Holy Apostles, in like manner as His Father had before sent Him⁴, to execute the same Apostolical, Episcopal, and Pastoral office, for the ordering and governing of His Church until His coming again; and so the same office is to

⁹ Heb. iii. 1.

¹ 1 Pet. ii. 25.

² Acts x. 37, 38.

³ Luke iii. 22.

⁴ John xx. 21.

continue in them and their successors “unto the end of the world⁵.” This I take to be so clear, from these and other like texts of Scripture, that if they shall be diligently compared together, both between themselves, and with the following practice of the Churches of Christ, as well in the Apostles’ times and in the purest and primitive times nearest thereunto, there will be left little cause why any man should doubt thereof⁶. The Apostles then did but impart that very power which they themselves had from our Blessed Lord to others who joined them in their holy office. The fulness of these pastoral powers, such as they had received from Christ, they imparted to some as the chief shepherds or pastors of the Church, who are called *Bishops*, ordained by the Holy Ghost to rule and govern the Church. Accordingly St. Paul says, “Take heed to yourselves, and to the whole flock, in which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers (Bishops), to feed the Church of God, which He hath purchased with His

⁵ Matt. xxviii. 18—20.

⁶ See Bishop Sanderson’s *Divine Right of Episcopacy*.

blood⁷.” To others they only gave part of these priestly powers, such as authority to administer the holy sacraments. Others they ordained to preach and baptize, and assist the priests in the services of the sanctuary; and these are called *deacons*, or servants, from this branch of their office. Others served as sub-deacons. Besides these, there are also the four minor orders, which are still retained in the Latin Church, employed about lower services in the Church⁸. These, however, may leave their offices and return to the world.

We believe it is the Bishop's part only to ordain. We retain but three orders, because we do not read that the Apostles had any more, yet that orders below a deacon were anciently in the Church there can be no doubt. All these from the highest to the lowest are called orders, because they are all so many different steps or

⁷ Acts xx. 28.

⁸ See Bingham, Book III., in which he denies that the five inferior orders, viz., sub-deacons, acolythists, exorcists, readers, and door-keepers, are all Apostolical.

degrees, laid down in a regular order, by which the sacred gifts of the priesthood are gradually bestowed on him who enters into the service of the Church as a clergyman. For it is well first to begin at the lowest, and so go up step by step to a more ample share in the high and holy work of his heavenly Master, so that having made full proof of his ministry by his good behaviour and hearty endeavours for Christ and his people, he may rise, not by the will or wish of the world, which is at enmity against God, but by the aid of those who rule under the King whose kingdom is not of this world, and whom they are to represent⁹.

The Bishops hold the first rank in the Church; that they are the chief and the highest pastors of the flock in which Christ has made them overseers, is a matter of our faith, which is founded on the following passages of Scripture. 1st. It is clear that the Apostles were raised by Jesus Christ to

⁹ A Bishop, says Bingham, should arise gradually, and not come to the throne *per saltum*. He was not to leap into his Bishopric. See the Antiquities, Book II., Chap. x.

a much higher rank and dignity than the other disciples; for “ He called to Him His disciples, and He chose twelve of them, whom He also named Apostles¹⁰. He kept them near Him, and made them share in His labours and His cares. He instructed them in particular in all things He had heard from His Father as His own personal friends¹¹. To them and them only after His resurrection He said, “ As my Father hath sent me, I also send you; whose sins ye remit, they are remitted; and whose sins ye retain, they are retained¹.” To them in particular He said, “ Go ye into all the world, and preach the Gospel to every creature².” The power of remitting or forgiving sin is originally in God, and in God alone. And Christ our Saviour, by means of the union of the Godhead and manhood into one person, by virtue whereof “ the Son of Man hath power to forgive sins upon earth,” Christ, in whom this power is solely invested, having ordained for Himself a body His Church, would work by bodily things, and

¹⁰ Luke vi. 13.

¹¹ John xv. 15.

¹ John xx. 20.

² Matt. xvi. 15.

having taken the nature of a man upon Himself, would honour the nature He had so taken for these causes; that which was His and His alone, He vouchsafed to impart to those whom He ordained, so that they became workers together with Him. This power, then, comes from God to man, and onwards from man to man. The remission of sins is from God only, so it is by the death and blood-shedding of Christ alone; but there are special means of grace through which this reaches the soul—such as Baptism—the Lord’s Supper—the Word itself which comes in power. Further, there is a power in prayer, and that in the priest’s prayer: “Is any sick among you? let him call for the elders of the church; and let them pray for him and if he have committed sins, they shall be forgiven him ³”—all these means of grace, are acts for the remission of sins: and in all and every of these is the minister required, and they cannot be performed without him. But from the 23rd verse of 20th

³ See James v. 14, 15; also see “Visitation of the Sick.”

chapter of St. John, we learn that there is somewhat here imparted to them that was not before granted. This is thought to be the power of the keys promised in Matt. xvi. 19, which here in this place and in these words is fulfilled: "And I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth shall be bound in heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven:" that which we call the act or benefit of Absolution, in which, as in the rest, there is, in the due time and place of it, an use for the remission of sins⁴.

Not that man can take away sin from the sight of God; he cannot redeem his brother: he must let that alone for ever. The forgiveness of sins is the work of God; and nothing but His grace can wipe away the stain of sin from the soul: indeed, all the tears which man can shed could not of themselves wash away one word or deed of sin from the book of the Almighty; yet, clothed with the authority of Christ, and strengthened by His power, His ministers

⁴ See Bishop Andrews' Sermon on Absolution.

can in His name forgive sins. God hath reconciled us to Himself by Christ ; and hath given to us the ministry of reconciliation. “ For God, indeed, was in Christ, reconciling the world to Himself ; and He hath placed in us the word of reconciliation ; we are, therefore, ambassadors for Christ ⁵.” In these words the Apostle declares, that whereas God, through the merits of Jesus Christ, reconciled the world to Himself, He was pleased to appoint the Apostles, and their successors in office, to be the ministers of this reconciliation. We are made ambassadors of the KING OF KINGS ; and therefore intrusted with His means, through which sins are forgiven. The Prayer Book generally, and the Ordination Service in particular, are believed to retain, in some measure, the doctrine of confession to, and forgiveness by, the priest. “ For the Church of England,” says the present Bishop of Oxford, “ teaches that, under some circumstances, confessing sins to God’s minister is to be encouraged ; and that, by the

⁵ 2 Cor. v. 18—20.

appointment of God, a grace attends the due exercise of the priest's absolution ⁶."

The office and character of all persons who are admitted into holy orders extend over the whole world, for it is manifest, in the first place, that the Apostles were to teach, and baptize, and go through all other parts of their office, in all nations. There is but one Catholic Church, whereof all particular Churches are members; and, therefore, whatever is really done by the Church of England, Ireland, Scotland, or America, must be understood to concern the whole Catholic Church throughout the world. Thus by baptism men are not only made members of the particular Church where they happen to be baptized, but of the Catholic Church all over the world; and, therefore, whoever has been lawfully baptized in one branch, has a right to partake of the Lord's Supper in another branch of the Church. If it were not thus in holy orders, that they who have received them in one place retain them in others, the

⁶ See the Bishop of Oxford's Letter of Sept. 6, 1852, to the Churchwardens of St. Mary's, Reading.

Gospel of Christ and His sacraments could not be brought to any countries where they had not stood ever since the Apostles' times. To be a member of the Catholic Church in one country is, in fact, to be a member of it in another country ⁷.

The Apostles, and those on whom they laid their hands in holy orders, received the Holy Ghost with *power*. This Divine power placed in them, and imparted to their successors in the ministry, extended to every creature, and unto the WHOLE WORLD. When their number was lessened by the treachery of Judas, St. Peter, calling all the brethren, said, "The Scripture must needs be fulfilled, which the Holy Ghost spoke before, by the mouth of David, concerning Judas, who was numbered with us, and had obtained part of this ministry. For it is written, And his bishopric let another take. Wherefore of these men who have companied with us all the time that the Lord Jesus came in and went out among us, one of these must be

⁷ See Archbishop Potter on Church Government, Chap. v.

ordained to be with us a witness of His resurrection⁸.” Agreeably to all this, they appointed two, and praying, said, “Thou, Lord, who knowest the hearts of all men, show which of these two Thou hast chosen, that he may take part of this ministry and apostleship, from which Judas by transgression fell And they gave forth their lots; and the lot fell upon Matthias; and he was numbered with the eleven Apostles⁹.” All this shows plainly the superior order of the Apostles, and that St. Matthias, by being numbered among them, was raised to a higher dignity than what he had before while merely one of the disciples. Now the Bishops are the successors of the Apostles, and heirs to their priestly or apostolic powers which Christ imparted to the twelve; whereas the priests or presbyters are only the successors of the seventy disciples, and receive in their ordination at the hands of the Bishops these powers only in part.

Besides the eleven, we find not only St. Matthias, but afterwards St. Paul and

⁸ Acts i. 16—23.

⁹ Acts i. 24. 26.

St. Barnabas were admitted into the same high office, and expressly called Apostles as well as they ; indeed, in the ancient writings of the Church we find that St. James, Bishop of Jerusalem, St. Mark of Alexandria, St. Timothy of Ephesus, St. Titus of Crete, and St. Clemens of Rome, were all called Apostles. Those whom we now call Bishops, the primitives called Apostles ; and, therefore, the office into which Matthias was chosen is called (*ἐπισκοπή*), the office of a Bishop. Cyprian sometimes calls Bishops Apostles, and sometimes Apostles Bishops. The several offices of the Apostles are now as effectually performed as while the Apostles lived. “ And so it is this day ; all the efficacy that there is or can be in the administration of an ecclesiastical office, depends altogether upon the Spirit, without which the sacraments are but empty signs, and preaching but the beating of the air ¹.” St. Paul, speaking to the Bishops of the Church, says, “ Take heed to yourselves, and all the flock, over which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers

¹ See Bishop Beveridge.

(placed you Bishops), to feed the Church of God, which He hath purchased with His own blood².”

To the Bishop, then, spiritually, the supreme power of ruling, feeding, and tending as a shepherd his whole flock, is given by the Holy Ghost. The same Apostle, writing to Timothy, whom he had made Bishop of Ephesus, says, “Against an elder,” presbyter (or, as we now say, priest), “receive not an accusation, but before,” or, as it is in the margin of our large Bibles, *under*, “two or three witnesses³,” which shows at once clearly that St. Timothy had authority and rule over the presbyters in receiving accusation against them, and therefore judging, and even correcting them. Just in the same way, writing to Titus, he says, “For this cause left I thee in Crete, that thou shouldest set in order the things that are wanting, and shouldest ordain presbyters or priests in every city, as I also appointed thee⁴.” There we see the high authority that Titus had of making rules

² Acts xx. 28.

³ 1 Tim. v. 19.

⁴ Titus i. 5.

and regulations in the Church of Crete, and placing priests under him in the different cities of that island. The same truth is clear, from the constant practice of the Church of Christ.

From the earliest ages, whenever a Bishop was consecrated, a certain part of the country was marked out, beyond which his charge as a chief pastor did not extend; and the place of which he had the charge was called his diocese. Thus Titus was ordained by Paul to be Bishop of Crete; and Timothy he ordained to be Bishop of Ephesus. In these dioceses they had full pastoral power to do what they thought best for their people; whereas the priests were always under these Bishops and their laws, and had no authority to administer the Sacraments, but only as far as they were empowered by their Bishop to do so. Thus St. Ignatius, the martyr, disciple of the Apostles, and successor of St. Peter in the See of Antioch, says, "Reverence your Bishop as Christ Himself, like as the blessed Apostles have commanded us." And Tertullian writes thus: "The Bishop, indeed,

has the right to give Baptism, and next, the priests and deacons, but not without the authority of the Bishop ⁵.”

The laying on of hands by the Bishops with prayer draws down an increase of grace upon the soul, and imprints upon it in those who are ordained such a Divine stamp as cannot be destroyed. Hence it is that the Church of England deems that Apostolical orders can be received but once.

WE HOLD WITH THE CHURCH IN ALL AGES, THAT WHEN OUR LORD AFTER HIS RESURRECTION BREATHED ON HIS APOSTLES, AND SAID, “RECEIVE YE THE HOLY GHOST.—AS MY FATHER HATH SENT ME, SO SEND I YOU;” HE GAVE THEM THE POWER OF SENDING OTHERS WITH A DIVINE COMMISSION, WHO IN LIKE MANNER SHOULD HAVE THE POWER OF SENDING OTHERS, AND SO ON EVEN UNTO THE END; AND THAT OUR LORD PROMISED HIS CONTINUAL ASSISTANCE TO THESE SUCCESSORS OF THE APOSTLES IN THIS AND ALL OTHER RESPECTS, WHEN HE SAID, “LO, I AM WITH YOU” (THAT IS, PLAINLY, WITH YOU, AND THOSE WHO SHALL REPRESENT AND

⁵ Lib. de Bapt. c. 17.

SUCCEED YOU) "ALWAYS, EVEN UNTO THE END OF THE WORLD."

"Ministers of Christ, and stewards of the mysteries of God," will be judged by their own Master, and at last by Him alone. It is required that they be found faithful. Only look upon them as ministers, stewards, ambassadors for Christ, and you will "esteem them very highly for their work's sake." He says, "He that receiveth whomsoever I send, receiveth me; and he that receiveth me, receiveth Him that sent me⁶."

From this and other passages you may learn to look above and beyond the minister to Him that sent him, and to hearken to your pastor's voice and obey him, not merely for his learning or power of speech, or kindness or sweetness of temper or of voice, but for his work's sake: "Obey them that have the rule over you, and submit yourselves." Thus you will show that humble and lowly mind, which in the sight of God is of great price, and go far "to

⁶ John xiii. 20.

keep the unity of the spirit in the bond of peace⁷.”

There are those who will own no one, or allow of his rule over them; they choose whom they please: the question with them is not whether Christ has sent him, or whether he has sent himself, but whether he suits their fancy, and whether they would not change him for another,—“ *some Thunderer*⁸,” in whom they might delight, who makes the pulpit roar with something which they of themselves beforehand fondly cherish as the only saving truth of the Gospel. It is dull sitting in church to hear about the graces of God’s Spirit imparted to man in His sacraments, and other means which He has blessed. It is wearisome to hear so much about doing and suffering.

Yet we may not think lightly of men who are sent by Christ, as He was sent by the Father. From age to age they have come down to us, as the several links of that great chain which joins all the members of the body in one bond of brotherhood, one

⁷ Eph. iv. 2, 3.

⁸ See Fulford’s Third Sermon, vol. i.

family of Christ, carrying us up to the founder of our Church. When Christ breathed on the Apostles, and said, "Receive ye the Holy Ghost," He ordained them, and began in them that order of ministers, which has passed down unbroken to us. He promised to be with them, that is, with all His ministers in the Church, "even to the end of the world." The Church, therefore, in her ordination service, always makes use of these words of Christ; for she believes that these words of her Lord are still in force, and that the Holy Ghost is present with the Church; and though the evil be ever mingled with the good, and though clergymen may live unworthy of their high calling, yet the grace of God's gifts is not lost which passed into them at their ordination, "which be effectual because of Christ's institution and promise⁹." Still it must be a hard trial to our faith, and a fearful sin on their part, when ministers of religion lead unholy and careless lives; the

⁹ See Twenty-sixth Article.

tongues of men are let loose against the sacred office itself, and the enemies of God blaspheme, and all the clergy are too often judged by the failings of an erring brother. The world is very unsparing of men whose office leads them to rebuke the world. When, however, by God's help, we are found faithful, the hard words or thoughts of the world will not hurt us; for the great Head of the Church says to His Apostles, and in them to all their successors, "If the world hate you, know ye that it hated me before it hated you. If you had been of the world, the world would love its own; but because ye are not of the world, but I have chosen you out of the world, therefore the world hates you¹⁰."

The step itself into holy orders is more solemn than tongue can tell, and cannot be retraced. How earnest, then, should we be in our prayers to God for all who are called into His ministry, especially on those days set apart by the Church as fasts, and called

¹⁰ John xv. 18.

EMBER DAYS, just before the seasons for the ordination, by our Bishops, of priests and deacons to their sacred office¹.

These are times when every minister of God should be remembered before the Throne of Grace, when every bishop, priest, and deacon, needs the prayers of the people. Let us then pray for them that their teaching may be sound, their lives pure, and their faith fruitful. In the unsettled days which are coming upon us, more especially should we beseech the Lord, by His ever guiding Spirit, to lead His servants into the truth.

In the Ember days in Lent, we should follow our Saviour's pattern of prayer and fasting, and ask for His servants, the Clergy, that they may be made like Him in withdrawing for a time from the noise and glare of a sinful world. In Whitsun week let us think on our Saviour's words, that His dis-

¹ The following days in the year are called EMBER DAYS:—

The Wednesday, Friday, and Saturday after . . .	}	The First Sunday in Lent.
		The Feast of Pentecost.
		September 14th.
		December 13th.

would fast when He was taken from them, long for the Holy Spirit which is vouchsafed in His absence, and ask faithfully for the blessing of this "other Comforter," in these our troublous times. Again in the Ember days of Advent, we should be looking forwards hopefully to the coming of our Lord's birth-day—recal to our mind His forerunner, the lonely and self-denying Baptist, who was filled with the Holy Ghost from his mother's womb, and daily pray that the "ministers and stewards of His mysteries may, like him, prepare the way for Christ's Second Coming."

The example of Jesus Christ, before He ordained the Apostles, shows us, that in this choice, we ought to depend upon God, and pray for His direction and blessing. St. Paul also clearly teaches the duty of all Christians to pray for those set apart for the ministry. The early Christians fasted and prayed when any of their number was ordained.

At the ordination of a priest the Bishop says to him kneeling, "RECEIVE THE HOLY GHOST FOR THE OFFICE AND WORK OF

A PRIEST IN THE CHURCH OF GOD, NOW COMMITTED TO THEE BY THE IMPOSITION OF OUR HANDS ;” “WHOSE SINS THOU DOST FORGIVE, THEY ARE FORGIVEN ; AND WHOSE SINS THOU DOST RETAIN, THEY ARE RETAINED.” Surely all this is blasphemy, or it is deep, awful, spiritual Gospel truth. If it be, as we heartily believe, the truth as it is in Jesus, we should, from the early dawn of reason, boldly, in the face of the world, make it known to our people, that by God’s Spirit it may be written in their minds. If it be blasphemy, which we fearlessly deny, then the men to whom it appears such cannot very honestly uphold it nor murmur against us who build upon it, as upon the Apostles, Jesus Christ Himself being the chief corner stone. “ But truth it is : the selfsame truth as that which turned the madness of that upper chamber into a reality which has subdued the world ; only let our faith lay hold of it : for Christ is with us in spiritual presence as truly as He was with them².”

² Bishop of Oxford’s Ordination Sermon, p. 24. Rivingtons, 1848.

Yet this presence of Christ and His graces, flowing down from Him in regular descent from age to age, can scarcely be hoped for without a suitable frame of mind and of heart,—the prayer of faith, and real wish for the work of a priest—not of rest or ease or mere rank among gentlemen. It is not enough that holy orders be intrusted to earthen vessels, and prepared by Christ for men—but men must be prepared for orders. They must seek that preparation of the heart which is with God³.

The failings or falls of ordained men cannot do away with Christ's own institution. There was a Judas among his twelve Apostles, and even among their successors; and so long as men are men there will be some among the vast numbers of the clergy, who love the world and bring sad scandal upon the Church.

First of all a man who would be put into the ministry of God's Word and sacraments should pray humbly and earnestly for that

³ The Hon. B. W. Noel has skilfully availed himself of this point. See *Essay on the Union of Church and State*, p. 275. Third Edition.

Holy Spirit which has ever been with His Church. To ask in the spirit of a child of God is to receive. A man must either be very thoughtless and light, or very holy and full of faith, who can say, in the presence of God and God's people, "I trust I am inwardly moved by the Holy Ghost to take this office," &c.⁴ He must before his ordination be in a state of grace if he has this call: "for no man taketh that honour upon himself, but he that is called of God, as was Aaron⁵."

But, after all, how shall one know if he have this call? Chiefly by these plain tokens: 1st. That he has led a holy life up to this point. 2nd. That he has a strong and overmastering love for his Saviour's work. 3rd. That he feels that his temper of mind and habit of thought can yield to the rules of the Church—that he has a zeal for holy discipline. 4th. That he has a pure simple wish for the glory of God and the salvation of man, without regard to his own earthly wealth, or power, or honour. 5th. That he is a man of prayer and holy studies and equal to self-denial.

⁴ See the Ordering of Deacons.

⁵ Heb. v. 4.

These out of many I think are some of the tests by which the early Church would try her servants; and men of our own day who can stand them, will, by God's grace, be enabled to "make full proof of their ministry." So that when THE GREAT SHEPHERD shall appear and ask for His flock—His beautiful flock—His shepherds who cared for His sheep, will see in them a crown of rejoicing. When prayer shall yield to praise—when we shall no longer see darkly, but face to face see "the King in His beauty," and hear Him with our own ears, and know and love His voice—when all His Temples on earth have passed away—His Sacraments, no longer needed—His services in this world ended—our stewardship given up into His hands—when grace is changed for glory,—then may we as pastor and people together enter upon the praises of eternity, in the house not made with hands, in the bright presence of the Holy Trinity, where our sun shall never set, and where that peace which passes man's understanding shall flow on for ever.

S E R M O N VII.

ACTS VIII. 17.

“Then laid they their hands on them, and they received the Holy Ghost.”

THERE are so many things both in the seen and in the unseen world which we must take for granted, whether we fully understand them or not, that there is no state of mind so suitable for a learner as a meek and lowly temper, and a teachable spirit. This is the very temper of mind which the fifth commandment both enjoins and also encourages by the promise of long life and happiness. Those who “have no proud thoughts,” but who are poor in spirit and humble in heart, are like little children. They not only love, honour, and succour their natural father and mother, but they

love and honour their heavenly Father. They not only love, honour, and succour their earthly parents, but to the best of their power they love, honour, and even succour their Mother the Holy Church. They obey all whom God has placed over them. They revere and obey their spiritual fathers in Christ; they seek and find the blessing which the Father of heaven bestows through His servants the rulers of His Church, the Apostles or Bishops, His chief pastors, whom He has ordained and sent to lay their hands on His people, and to bless them in His name. Faithful children of the Church who are growing in the knowledge and love of their Saviour, that great Bishop of their souls, come thoughtfully and piously for that grace which He imparts through the man whom He has put in the place of an Apostle. Thus by their Bishop, under the great Head of the Church, they are strengthened, settled, built up, or confirmed, in "the Faith once delivered to the saints."

The prayers both of our natural and spiritual fathers are a special benefit to us.

Their blessing upon us is what we should ask earnestly every day ; without it we may not hope for length of days and happiness in this life, nor endless joy in that which is to come. To fall down and beg our parents' blessing, is, alas ! no longer a custom among us. Yet the devout blessing of the father, with his hand upon his child, betokens not only his own good will, but also the good will of our heavenly Father towards His children. Thus when Israel blessed Ephraim and Manasses, Joseph's sons, he placed his hands upon them and prayed¹. The prophets healed diseases by prayer and laying on of their hands upon the sick ; when, therefore, Eliseus ordered Naaman to wash himself seven times in Jordan for cure of his foul disease, he was offended at him. " Surely," thinks he, " the man will come out, and stand, and call upon the name of the Lord his God, and *put his hand* on the place, to the end he may so heal the leprosy²."

From the time of Moses until the coming of Christ, men were ordained to all divine

¹ Gen. xlviii. 15.

² 2 Kings v. 11.

offices and kingly power in the Jewish church and state by the laying on of hands ³.

And when little children were brought to our blessed Lord, that He might, agreeably to the ancient custom, put His hands upon them, He did so and blessed them. When He had gone up again into heaven, that which He had begun in His own person on earth was carried on by the Apostles, by whose prayer and laying on of hands, thousands became partakers of the wonderful gifts of God. The last promise of our Lord to His Church was, that they who believe in Him "shall lay hands on the sick, and they shall recover ⁴." The gift, however, of the Holy Ghost was not afterwards imparted to other men by any but the Apostles, at whose hands miracles of mercy and many cures were worked during the apostolic age ⁵.

Simon Magus clearly found out that this unearthly power was in none but them: "And when Simon saw that through laying on of the Apostles' hands the Holy Ghost

³ Numb. xxvii. 18.

⁴ Mark xvi. 18.

⁵ Acts xix. 6.

was given he offered them money, saying, Give me also this power, that on whomsoever I lay hands, he may receive the Holy Ghost ⁶.”

In the early Christian Church the rite of confirmation was most religiously enjoined as a holy and scriptural step after baptism. Its great end and aim is to carry out and perfect the graces of this holy sacrament. As baptism came into the place of circumcision; and as little children were circumcised when they were eight days old, and were thus made over to God, it would naturally follow that when a Jew or a Gentile believed in Christ, and was baptized, his little children would be baptized as well as he, since little children had been always received into the Jewish Church: besides, as soon as he himself thought Christian baptism necessary to salvation, he would have all his household thus brought into the Church; and all children who were born of Christian parents would be baptized into Christ's Church at so tender an age, that

⁶ Acts viii. 18, 19.

they could not act or answer for themselves : godfathers and godmothers, therefore, who were true members of the Church, able and willing to teach others, came forward with the children to be baptized, and witnessed for them what was done in their own name and on their behalf, and answered for them, and engaged to see that these their spiritual children should be brought up in God's love and fear : they were to watch over the tempers of these children, and, by God's help, lead them to keep and fulfil all the holy promises made for them in baptism. In the case of the death or neglect of the natural parents, the godparents were religiously to supply their place. From the very first there were doubtless many parents who had not such due care as they ought to have had in the godly bringing up of their children ; so that some knew not (as is the case among ourselves) whether they were baptized or not : many there would be who were never clearly taught what covenant or agreement was made between God and them in their baptism. Many, it is to be feared, swerved away from their Christian vows and

went off to the fellowship of the heathens, so that the sons of God became the sons of the evil one. It was to stop this sad falling away that the Church of God laid charge upon the godparents and the witnesses of young children, truly to teach them the ways of the Lord, and to put them in mind how God had called them out of the kingdom of darkness into His wonderful light. When the children of Christians were thus brought up, in the faith and religion of Christ, and were walking in the ways of godliness, they were brought to the church and placed before the Bishop, where and when, of their own free will, they publicly answered for themselves, declared their faith, and with their own voice engaged to do all which their godparents had promised for them, and to live and die in the faith. Then the Bishop and all the people fell down on their knees, and prayed to God that He would carry on the good work which He had begun ; and the Bishop, laying his hands upon them, commended them unto God. This, then, is ratifying, or making good in their own persons, and in their own names,

the promises which they made in baptism, and hence it is called *confirmation*.

Among the means through which God bestows His highest gifts is the ancient rite of confirmation at the hands of the Apostles or Bishops of the Church ; for their prayers and laying on of hands were believed to bring down not only blessings but even grace. When these our high and spiritual fathers are inwardly as holy, as outwardly they are religious, their blessing is the blessing of the twelve Apostles, their prayer is the prayer of the twelve, their laying on of hands is the laying on of the hands of the Apostles St. Peter or St. James or St. John.

Whatever our Lord said to the Apostles as such, all succeeding Apostles or Bishops are obliged by it as well as they : seeing always that there will be such Apostles in the Church, our Saviour says to the eleven, "Lo, I am with you to the end of the world⁷."

We hold not men's persons in admiration, but esteem them very highly for their office,

⁷ See Bishop Beveridge's 1st Sermon ; " Christ's Presence with His Ministers."

than which there is no higher and holier under Heaven.

The holy sacraments and services, rites and ordinances, of the Church draw all their life-giving grace and power from their Divine Lord, whose servants the highest as well as the lowest pastors are. “Brethren, remember them which have the rule over you, who have spoken unto you the words of God : whose faith follow, considering the end of their conversation^s.” Let us pray to the chief Shepherd and Bishop of our souls, that He would impart to His servants the Bishops such deepening concern for His people, that they may be enabled to follow the example of Him who laid down His life for the sheep ; that they may break the bread of life, and confirm the lambs of His flock with clean hands and holy thoughts, leaning on God alone, applying the goods of the Church to God’s glory and to the comfort of His poor. In this selfish age let our hearts’ prayer be, that those whom God has placed over us in His Church may live for Him,

^s Heb. xiii. 7.

and truly labour, not as hirelings, but for the good of souls ; that they may rightly weigh the sanctity of their calling : for by their hands we, the priests of the Most High, are ordained—you, His people, are confirmed and settled in the family of God.

Besides the eleven who were ordained and sent by Christ to preach and baptize, we find St. Matthias, St. Paul, and St. Barnabas admitted into the same office, and plainly called *Apostles* as well as they ; so is Epaphroditus, bishop of Philippi ; and in the ancient records of the Church, we shall find that James, Bishop of Jerusalem, Mark of Alexandria, Timothy of *Ephesus*, Titus of Crete, and Clemens of Rome, were all called Apostles : so that those whom we call Bishops, the primitives called Apostles ; and therefore the office to which Matthias was chosen is called the office of a BISHOP : “ *The several offices of the Apostles are now as effectually performed as while the Apostles lived*”⁹. The lines of the true Christian Church are drawn out to the ends of the

⁹ See Bishop Beveridge’s 1st Sermon ; “ Christ’s Presence with His Ministers.”

world, over all lands ; but when we trace them back, like the rays of the natural sun, they all centre in the Sun of Righteousness —Jesus Christ. Every where the Bishops are the links in the chain which binds each successive generation of Christians to this first age of our Church, the Apostles, nay further, to our Lord Himself.

This great matter of Catholic teaching must be brought home to the minds and souls of the millions within our Church who now deny it, before we may hope for Church principles, and true, living, and faithful members of this branch of the holy Catholic Church.

To all who can see in a Bishop no divine grace and spiritual gift coming down from the Apostles, confirmation at the very best is but a name, something in word but not in power. To such it does not realize its meaning, and comes short of its apostolical end and aim.

The true end and aim of confirmation is to keep us stedfast in the faith, so that we be grounded and settled, and be not soon

moved away from the hope of the Gospel¹. It is to bring down God's Spirit upon His children, strengthening faint and weak minds unto the end². For as Christ by His ministers baptizes infants with the Holy Ghost, so He also confirms by His servants the Bishops: it is God only "who shall confirm you unto the end, that ye may be blameless until the day of the Lord Jesus Christ³." The end at which confirmation aims is to build us up, and bring us into full and holy communion with the Church; that we be "no more children tossed to and fro by every wind of doctrine," but that, through Christ's mercy on His own means of grace, our souls may be washed in His most precious blood, and that the Holy Ghost may dwell in our hearts by faith. That we are enabled to perform the promises and vows made for us in our name in baptism, when we were too young to answer for ourselves, or to understand what was done for us, is clear from Holy Writ.

¹ Col. i. 23.

² 1 Pet. v. 10.

³ 1 Cor. i. 8.

The Acts of the Apostles show us the great mercy of every increase of God's grace and outpouring of His Holy Spirit, without which men cannot do any thing which is pleasing in His sight. Confirmation is to realize the true nature of baptism, and to carry us onwards by the guidance of the Holy Spirit, that we may lead the rest of our lives according to the good beginning at the font.

When certain of the Ephesians heard the preaching of St. Paul, "they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus. And when Paul had laid his hands upon them, the Holy Ghost came on them⁴." The end or design of the rite of confirmation is not only to complete and carry on the grace bestowed upon our souls in baptism, but it is held in our Churches to bring down in a more particular and special manner the Holy Ghost to dwell in our souls, to fortify and confirm our faith, and to enable us, by God's help thus given us, to resist and bear up against all the enemies of our Lord

⁴ Acts xix. 5, 6.

and of ourselves, His soldiers and servants. That some special and uncommon supply of God's grace and Holy Spirit at some *stated* period in the Christian life affords much comfort and strength, guidance and aid, none will deny. To seek and find this great blessing under the means of grace, which our Lord Himself has upheld in His Church for nearly eighteen hundred years, must be safer than our own mere fancy of some holy change in our hearts, of which there is seldom any greater proof than our own feelings, too often cast down or lifted up with our bodily health and natural spirits. We never can be so outwardly near to our Lord as were His own Apostles, who were daily with Him on earth; yet though they had been for three years in the school of Jesus Christ, in the full enjoyment of His presence, sharing in His labours, witnessing His wonderful works, listening to the gracious words of Him who spake as never yet man spake, sitting daily at His feet under His teaching, both in public and private in all the paths of His Gospel; yet we see with wonder how little

they knew or felt of His divine way and will. After all which their divine Master had said and done in their presence, they knew little, and practised still less, of the lessons He had given them; for even at the last supper, there was a strife amongst them which of them should be the greater⁵. So far were they from acting upon His lessons about suffering for His sake, that when He was taken in the garden they all forsook Him and fled⁶; and a little after St. Peter denied his suffering Lord, and swore he knew nothing of Him. These passages show how far they were from the kingdom which is not of this world, and how far they fell short of the spirit of the Gospel. The Holy Ghost had not yet come down upon them; but no sooner had the divine Spirit, on the day of Pentecost, fallen upon them, than they became new men, because this Spirit brought to their minds all which the Saviour had promised and taught them. This grace of the Holy Spirit gave them a knowledge and a power

⁵ Luke xxii. 24.

⁶ Matt. xxvi. 56.

from on high⁷, which confirmed them in all goodness, enabled them to meet all danger, to overcome all their spiritual enemies, and cheerfully to suffer all torment; in a word, “to rejoice that they were accounted worthy to suffer reproach for the name of Jesus⁸.” By all this we see, at least, that in the decrees of the Almighty, this gift of grace is in a special manner the work of the Holy Ghost.

Now since we are called to be saints, and in some sense or other to be even perfect, —“Be ye perfect, as your Father who is in heaven is perfect⁹;” we must seek earnestly for His grace, without which nothing is strong, and nothing is holy. The Apostles knew the mind of Christ imparted by His own Spirit. They laid their hands on others, and by their *prayer* and *laying on of hands*, imparted to them that good gift which they themselves had from the very fountain-head of pure light and life. The stream of grace flowed on, in, and through all whom they ordained, who walked in

⁷ Luke xxiv. 49.

⁸ Acts v. 41.

⁹ Matt. v. 48.

their steps, and knew and practised what the apostolic Church believed and did.

Confirmation appears to be nearly as old as the Christian Church itself; for writers about two hundred years after Christ's ascension speak of confirmation as a rite then well known; so that in the first and best ages of the Church, confirmation was held very high; and nearly ever since the first great confirmation of the Apostles by God's Spirit at Pentecost, confirmation has been looked upon as the means in Christ's Church to impart some portion of His divine Spirit to His followers, to confirm them in His service, to help them forward towards heaven, to enable all who come duly prepared by prayer, and godly sorrow for sins, and faith in their Redeemer, to do what was promised for them in baptism, which the covenant of grace requires them to perform.

This brings us naturally to the state of mind and heart, or the *preparation* which our young people should bring to confirmation: "The preparation of the heart of man is from the Lord¹."

¹ Prov. xvi. 1.

The young must daily try to learn and do the will of God, early let them look upon this outward world as a scene of trial, in which they are, through Christ strengthening them, to overcome their three great enemies, the world, the flesh, and the devil. They must believe in the Almighty, All-wise, All-holy, Three in One—God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Ghost. In short, they will be called to believe and to do all those things which their godfathers and godmothers undertook for them. Let them long and often study the confirmation service, and see what it means.

The daily increase of God's manifold gifts of grace for which the Bishop with us prays, can only be really enjoyed by those who live in a state of grace. They must know what they are doing. They must come with pure minds and chaste bodies. They must, beforehand, like our Lord, pray to their Father who is in secret; away from the world, like the Apostles, they should pray for the coming of the Holy Ghost, fully believing that our Father, who is in

heaven, will give His "Holy Spirit to them that ask Him²." To such, baptism is the sacrament of faith, and opens the door to the holy communion of the body and blood of Christ. When we were little children we could not come to Christ of ourselves; as helpless babes others brought us into His Church: "none of us liveth to himself; and no one dieth to himself³." We were made holy by the holiness of Christ, yet in a wonderful way He allows us to depend upon *others* as well as ourselves; our children gain much by the prayers and faith of their sureties, and by the apostolical blessing of the Bishop. But this reminds us of the very hard words against confirmation which we are doomed to hear; we shall pass over the common objection, that many young persons come to confirmation without thought, and go away without a blessing, and *therefore* confirmation is not to be endured. Any good thing may be abused; and to put such reasoning into force, would be simply to

² Luke xi. 13.

³ Rom. xiv. 7.

pull down all the houses of God in our land, to leave off prayer, to put away the Bible.

There are, however, three objections constantly urged against it, which we are bound to meet :—

First. That the confirmation of the New Testament went *together with* baptism, or *very soon* after it.

Secondly. That there was an outpouring of the Spirit, which might be seen or felt.

Thirdly. That our Bishops cannot, like the Apostles in the first age, give us the Holy Spirit.

First, then : we have already seen that none but persons of age to answer for themselves *could*, from the very nature of things, at the first be baptized. The Apostles were on the spot, confirmation therefore might, and *did* follow at once ; but afterwards, when the Bishops, who stood in the Apostles' room, had to come some way to confirm, some time must pass before they could confirm all who were baptized ; and as time went on, when the children of Christian parents were brought to be baptized, some

years must pass away before they could answer for themselves, so that they could not be confirmed until some time after their baptism.

The second objection, if it has any weight at all, would be as strong against prayer, or any other holy act which worked wonders in the first spread of the Gospel, when miracles were wrought by the Holy Spirit to turn the heathen to God. Although the *abundant outpouring* of God's Spirit, and His outward miracles appear to have ceased, the *means* through which God did miraculous things for the Church are still carried on with greater or less benefit to His Church, as we live nearer to, or further from, our great Head, the fountain of holiness and power.

To the third objection we may say, that the Bishop does not by any virtue of his own impart the Blessed Spirit to the confirmed, he prays that God would vouchsafe to grant His Holy Spirit, and we know that God doth hear and answer prayer. "If ye then being evil know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your

Heavenly Father give His Holy Spirit to them that ask Him ⁴?"

Furthermore, as I said before, the Church and we hold, that God works by *persons* and by *means*: by persons, such as the *Bishops*, in confirmation; by means, such as *Baptism*. For Jesus Himself baptizes and works by His ministers, and by them spreads His knowledge and imparts His grace to mankind; though Jesus Himself baptizes not, but His disciples ⁵. To the world, and indeed to those who cannot see in the Catholic Church the body of Christ, all these outward things with their inward gifts and graces, are but "foolishness;" but to the Christian, who lives by faith, they are the wisdom, and the power, and the goodness of God thus made known to man.

Our help is in the Lord—"our sufficiency is of God"—of ourselves we can do nothing.

We believe that the Spirit ever since the day of Pentecost has been guiding the Church into the truth; and hence it is that we look to the mind of the Church, to the

⁴ Luke xi. 13.

⁵ John iv. 1, 2.

voice of the Church, to her creeds, to her teaching, as the true way of doing God's will. Any single man, or small bodies of men, seem too highminded when he or they say they are living the Gospel; and that the whole body of the Church from the earliest times till now has erred from lack of the teaching of the Spirit. Let them pause; for whenever we are carried away by the mere fancies of ourselves or of others with regard to confirmation, and are ready to believe it the mere work of man against Gospel truth, should not each of us rather say in such a case, "May not I have misread or misunderstood the Bible? May not my misguided mind, or this heart at least, have misled me, since on this matter I do not agree with the Church?"

The evil one often looks like an angel of light, often quotes even Scripture against that very Church to which under God man owes that same Scripture; and while we are saddened by the many and self-willed religious evils which surround us, with their ever-changing views and opinions warring against each other, we have much to cheer

us in the fact, that there are millions who hold the chief and living truths of the Gospel. For in the Church of Christ even now, notwithstanding the angry strife and unholy words which part brother from brother, we are at this time holding the very same articles of faith which the Apostles and first disciples held and taught; between them and us there is an unbroken line of brethren and saints, of sacraments, services, and rites. God's Holy Spirit from first to last is the unerring and safe guide of the Church. We are too apt to make light of *doctrine* altogether; yet whenever men are suffered to fall away from the *old* faith, they become an easy prey to Satan, their religious views become clouded and confused, their daily life careless and unholy, they are tossed to and fro, and they become unstable as water and never excel.

In the rite of confirmation God Almighty does His part, He gives us His Holy Spirit and all those graces which enable us to become saints, if we work with them, working out our own salvation. Let us who *are* confirmed improve these blessings. Let all

the baptized who are *not* from this day prepare for the day of confirmation. Christ purchased with His own blood every good and perfect gift for us : the gift of the Holy Ghost who makes us holy in Holy Baptism, and imparts to us the divine nature ; in confirmation, seals and increases His former gifts ; in Holy Communion, He still further renews our strength, gives us good thoughts, and moves us to do good works. He by His Spirit goes before us, is with us, and follows us through the wilderness of this bad world, He goes before us in all our doings, and furthers us with His continual help and strength. He is that Rock which follows us.

Finally, keep in mind that we can be baptized and confirmed *only once* for all and for ever ; and remember that the Gospel and the Church teach us that the communion of the body and blood of Christ is, from time to time, to be verily and indeed taken and received *by the faithful*, by all who are baptized and confirmed, unless indeed we have received the grace of God in vain. “ Grieve not,” my brethren, “ the Holy Spirit of God, whereby

we are sealed unto the day of redemption ⁶.”
“ For this sacrament was ordained for the *continual* remembrance of the sacrifice of the death of Christ ⁷.” Indeed the early Christian Church made the Lord’s Supper part of their daily worship. If you have already been confirmed and are still far from God, it is because you have not obeyed your Saviour’s dying wish, “ Do this in remembrance of me.”

If doubt, or fear, or weakness trouble you, humbly come to Christ in His Holy Supper, and obey His voice, which says, “ Take, eat : this is my body ;” and in this He will be the strength of your heart and your portion for ever. He has begun a good work in you, and will bring it to a perfect end. Let those who are not yet confirmed learn their Catechism carefully, and enter into its meaning, and make up their minds, through God’s help, to receive their first communion the next Sunday after their confirmation. Thus will they be strengthened and re-

⁶ Eph. iv. 30.

⁷ See Catechism.

freshed in their souls. Thus may we all go on from strength to strength. The voice of Jesus will lull the storms of our Christian life, if we make not early shipwreck of our faith ; He will be with us amid the wild waves of this troublesome world, and land us in the fair haven where we would be.

S E R M O N VIII.

MATT. XIX. 6.

*“What therefore God hath joined together,
let not man put asunder.”*

WHEN the Lord God made man, and placed him in the newly-planted garden of Eden, before sin had entered the world, He said, “It is not good that the man should be alone.” And He took one of his ribs and made of it a woman. And Adam said, “This is now bone of my bones, and flesh of my flesh : she shall be called Woman, because she was taken out of man. Therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto his wife ; and they shall be one flesh¹.”

From the earliest times, we find that

¹ Gen. ii. 18—25.

almost every nation that acknowledged the true God, or indeed any god, has made marriage a religious rite.

Both Jews and heathens before, and nearly every sect who calls itself Christian since, the coming of our Saviour, as indeed most of the people who are still in the darkness of paganism, enforce and accompany the marriage union with rites, and require the ministers of the true or of some false religion to witness, confirm, and bless the religious contract.

It has, alas! been reserved for this age and nation to make what once was marriage, a mere civil agreement or earthly bargain ; yet woman was, even in her first estate, framed by nature to be man's helper and companion in sorrow and in joy, in sickness and in health, to bring forth and to bring up children for God. He, the Almighty, married the first pair in holy wedlock.

Perfect love is the best ground of wedlock ; man and woman were therefore joined by a link which nothing but death could strike from the chain which binds them to

each other. This bond, then, has always been more or less esteemed as a thing religious and holy. The very heathens thought and called it holy. The rites of matrimony and the holiness of wedded life were termed by the Hebrews, *Conjugal Sanctification*.

A wedding is as joyous as it is holy, and not to be celebrated in Lent, or on public fast-days. Women are given unto their husbands by others, to put them in mind of the weakness of their nature and sex, which always requires guardianship.

The ring has ever been a pledge of faith and fidelity; it is also a token of an endless union, which cannot be loosened or destroyed. In this sense the heathens themselves used the ring. "No woman was allowed to wear gold, saving only upon one finger, which her husband had fastened unto himself with that ring, which was usually given for assurance of future marriage." Christians use the ring as a pledge of mutual love and union of hearts, hands, interests, fears, and hopes. The ring was originally used for a signet or seal; and the act of delivering a ring to another, de-

noted that the wearer was considered by the giver as the confidant of his secrets, the partner of his counsels, and sometimes the sharer of his property. The giving of a ring was likewise the ordinary rite or pledge of investing any one with honour and power. Thus when Pharaoh set Joseph over the land of Egypt, he took off the ring from his own hand, and put it on Joseph's hand². The father of the prodigal son had a ring put on his hand³.

The ring appears to have been used not only by early Christians, but by Jews and Gentiles. The form is round, as being the fittest figure to unite things which were not joined together before, and to imply, that our mutual love shall never have an end; the place of it is on the fourth finger of the left hand, that being the finger least used, where it may be the least subject to be worn out. But the main end is, to be an outward and lasting token and remembrance of this covenant, which must never be forgotten; "and if in ordinary bargains

² Gen. xli. 42.

³ Luke xv. 22.

we have some lasting thing delivered as an earnest, or pledge, or memorial, much more is it useful here⁴." The word *worship* means *honour*. Thus, in the First Book of Samuel, "them that *honour* me I will *honour*," was, in the old translation, "them that worship me I will worship." Hence we say, *His worship*, and the *worshipful* magistrate, your *worship*, &c. &c.

When the bridegroom says, "With my body I thee worship, he only means that he will deny himself every sinful pleasure which may be unworthy of married life; that he will give the bride that holy homage of the body which is due to her as a wife. In promising to add by his person, honour and worship unto hers, he takes her clearly to be his wife, and honours her as such. That he intends her to be a mother over his family, and as his partner to share in all things which he has, as we see by the clause, "With all my worldly goods I thee endow." He honours her with his person, and his goods.

⁴ See Comber.

To end the public service of marriage with the blessed sacrament, is a custom of the pure early Church, and, in theory, the rule of the present Church of England.

“ I know,” says Tertullian, “ not which way I shall be able to show the happiness of that wedlock, the knot whereof the Church doth fasten, and the sacrament of the Church confirm⁵.” There can be nothing which strengthens this bond more firmly than the grace of the holy Eucharist.

In the first ages, marriages between the nearest relations were necessary in order to be “ fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth,” and to continue the image of the first man. The number of persons in the world then being small, from the very nature of things, the man and woman who were wedded to each other could not be but of the same family; in after times, however, when the children of Adam had increased, such marriages were strictly forbidden. Although the patriarchs continued

⁵ See Keble's Hooker, 2nd ed. p. 248.

to espouse their cousins and kinsfolk, they did so to keep themselves apart from the worshippers of false gods, and to keep up the true religion among themselves. Thus Abraham appears to have married his near relative Sarah, whom he called sister. He also sent his steward Eliezer to fetch a wife for his son Isaac from among the daughters of his nephew. Jacob also espoused the daughters of his uncle.

From what has been said it is easy to see why unmarried life or barrenness was a reproach, and how it was that Jephthah's daughter went to bewail her virginity⁶, since she was doomed to die unmarried and childless.

Even in those early days the husband gave a dowry to his wife, and before the contract the parties agreed on what portion the man should give his bride, and what presents to her father and brethren. Jacob served seven years for Leah, and seven more years for Rachel⁷.

The virgins were betrothed very early,

⁶ Judges xi. 37.

⁷ Gen. xxiv.

whence it is said, the “spouse,” or “guide of her youth⁸.” The betrothing was performed by a writing, or a piece of silver given to the bride. During the time of the espousal before marriage, any trespass against the fidelity which was due to the betrothed was treated as adultery. Thus the Holy Virgin after she was betrothed to Joseph might have been put away and punished, if the angel of the Lord had not satisfied the mind of Joseph. Between the espousal and the marriage there often passed a long interval.

In Scripture we read of the crown of the bridegroom. “Go forth, O ye daughters of Zion, and behold King Solomon with the crown wherewith his mother crowned him in the day of his espousals, and in the day of the gladness of his heart⁹.” We see by the Gospel that the bridegroom had a brideman, called by our Saviour “the friend of the bridegroom¹.” A number of young people kept him company during the days of the wedding to do him honour. The bride also had her bridesmaids. The

⁸ Prov. ii. 17.

⁹ Cant. iii. 11.

¹ John iii. 29.

days of rejoicing were commonly spent in the house of the woman's father, after which they attended the bride to her husband's home. The procession of the bride and her friends from the house of her father to that of the bridegroom was generally one of great pomp; for this the newly-married couple often chose the night. Hence in the parable of the ten virgins that went to meet the bride and bridegroom², it is said, the virgins were asleep, and at midnight, being awakened at the cry of the bridegroom's coming, the foolish virgins found that they had no oil in their lamps; which while they went to buy, the bridegroom and his attendants passed by.

From another parable, in which we read of a great king making a grand feast at the marriage of his son, we learn that all the guests who were honoured with an invitation, were expected to be dressed in a manner suitable to the grandeur of such an event, and as a token of just respect to the new-married couple. From the knowledge

² Matt. xxv.

of this custom, the following passage receives light and interest—When the King came in to see the guests, he discerned among them a man which had not on a wedding *garment*; he called him and said, Friend, how camest thou in hither in a dress unfit for such a feast? The man was speechless. The king called to his servants, and bade them bind him hand and foot, to drag him out of the room, and thrust him into outer darkness and midnight gloom ³.

Christ has brought marriage back again to its first most holy state, settling for ever that one man should be the husband of one wife only, and that she should be the wife of one man; and forbidding to put each other away by divorce ⁴, except in the case of adultery, not leaving the parties so separated the liberty of marrying again ⁵. Our Blessed Saviour Himself blessed and honoured marriage by his presence at the wedding of Cana ⁶; and St. Paul declares his high opinion of Christian marriage,

³ Matt. xxii.

⁴ Matt. v. 32.

⁵ Luke xvi. 18.

⁶ John ii. 1, 2.

when he says, “ Let every one of you so love his wife even as himself ; and the wife see that she reverence her husband.” “ So ought men to love their wives as their own bodies. He that loveth his wife loveth himself. For this cause shall a man leave his father and mother, and shall be joined unto his wife, and they two shall be one flesh. This is a great mystery : but I speak concerning Christ and the Church⁷.” The union of husband and wife represents the sacred and spiritual marriage of Christ with His Church. The same Apostle assures us that “ marriage is honourable in all, and the bed undefiled ; but whoremongers and adulterers God will judge⁸.” The New Testament has not laid down the form of words for the rite, but the Church has gathered up the meaning and scope of it in the marriage service, and has always given her blessing to the married couple⁹. Marriage, then, from all which we have seen, is a mutual agreement between one man and

⁷ Eph. v. 28—33.

⁸ Heb. xiii. 4.

⁹ See Calmet.—Dictionary. *Marriage*.

one woman, religiously to live together in holy love all the days of their life. We may look at it in three different points of view.

1. As a covenant made by human nature herself for increasing mankind, and giving the married party a mutual right to each other's bodies; for the wife hath not power over her own body, but the husband: and in like manner the husband hath not power of his own body, but the wife¹. God as well as nature is the author of this contract, and, as we have seen, at the beginning of the world created both the sexes, male and female, that both should be united for the increase and spread of mankind; thus Christ Himself says, "He who made man in the beginning, made them male and female, wherefore they are no more two but one flesh²."

2. But it is also a civil contract; for when mankind multiplied upon the face of the earth, they formed themselves into companies, so that many families were joined into one body for their mutual defence

¹ 1 Cor. vii. 4.

² Matt. xix. 4, 5.

and unmolested enjoyment of such property as each member of that body had of his own.

Than well-ordered matrimony, nothing brought more good to the state ; laws were made by each state for its members, and marriage settlements were framed for the sake of husbands and wives, children and parents. In this view marriage is a *civil contract*, made agreeably to the laws of the country where the parties dwell, with regard to their temporal concerns.

3. But it is more than all this, it is a part of the law of love and of the New Testament, first made in the time of man's innocence ; and, secondly, renewed and perfected in the days of our Lord on earth. The great end of the Christian religion is to lead men to heaven from earth ; and as marriage is the natural source from which mankind draw their being upon earth, it was necessary that such measures should be taken, with respect to marriage among Christians, as to make it tend to the great end of the Christian religion, the salvation of souls. The trials, griefs, and pains,

which are found in the marriage state, and the trouble in the flesh, which St. Paul says must be the lot of married people ³, arise from the wickedness of man's heart, and are too often the cause of the ruin of their souls. The fixed and unalterable bond of marriage which our Saviour strengthened, and restored to its first firmness and perfection among His followers, shows the necessity of bringing up our children not only as men or as good citizens, but as good Christians, so as one day to become citizens of heaven, and saints in the Church above.

The Saviour's restoration of the first laws of marriage lays an additional duty upon Christian parents of seeking special grace and aid from God, to enable them to live according to God's holy ordinance. Hence it is that marriage is a religious rite, and enforces not only the duties between man and wife, but their duties to their children, who are to be brought up in the fear and love of God. To marry is most likely to become parents ; and to become

³ 1 Cor. vii. 28.

parents is to add to the number of our race, who will live at last in everlasting happiness, or dwell with the spirits of darkness in endless pain and unspeakable woe. Marriage is not only the bond of union between man and woman, and the sign of the love which should reign among Christians in wedlock, but also of that wonderful union and oneness and undying love which there is betwixt Christ and His Church. That holy bond which joins husband and wife together as one, and by which they are no longer looked upon as two distinct persons, but as two joined together in one flesh, is the very essence and reality of marriage ; and “for this cause shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave to his wife, and they two shall be one flesh⁴ :” so no human power can put asunder those whom God has thus joined by His minister together while both parties are alive ; and even should they be legally and personally separated for just causes, such as unfaithfulness to each other, yet still they are

⁴ Matt. xix. 5.

married to one another, the bond of marriage though stained is yet in the sight of God unbroken. The words and the spirit of our marriage service teach us that what is done in marriage cannot be altered or undone. Death alone can rend the tie⁵. This appears, I think, from the very end of marriage and the law of God. Nay, more, even were we to take the lowest view of wedlock, bringing it down to a mere natural or civil contract; nature itself teaches, that the parents should both together bring up their offspring, and both in union continue towards them this relationship. That married people, too, may be a mutual help and comfort to one another in sorrow and in joy, so long as they both shall live, is plain.

Man differs from all other creatures when he first comes into the world: other animals need very little attention from the sire, the mother alone, for the most part, being enough in herself to nurture them till they can

⁵ Since this was preached, I find "that in all sentences of divorce *a thoro et mensá*, bond may be taken of the parties for not marrying again during each other's life." Can. 107.

do for themselves. Man, on the contrary, in his infancy, needs the whole attention of both father and mother : of the mother to tend and nurse, and of the father to provide all necessaries for mother and child. The same care is bestowed by both parents through many years upon the child before it can do any thing for its own living ; and no sooner does reason begin to dawn, than the child requires redoubled care of both parents to bring him up well, whether as a man, a citizen, or a Christian. Now if the marriage bond might be broken, and married people might become free, then a door would be open for the ruin and neglect of children, then unchaste conversation coupled with misery might follow. It is the deathless nature of wedlock between the living pair, which gives them that deep lasting interest in each other in what they are and have : their concerns are common, and their weal or woe bound up together. Hence it is they bear their crosses, and put up with tempers which may be unlovely, and study each other's will, and save each other pain, or anger, or grief. They are

joined together for better and for worse; they are wedded for life; and therefore they make the best of their state, and improve it and each other. If this bond might be severed by any hand but that of death, the very thought of such freedom must be at the bottom of all that is miserable in married life. Next, were marriage only a *civil* contract for the good of the state, the bond of union must remain unbroken; for were families broken up, and children cast on the world, as in this case they would be, disorder and a curse to all human society must follow such an abuse of God's own law of marriage.

But, in a *religious* point of view, the bond of marriage cannot be broken, for it is the symbol and the sign of the endless union which there is between Christ and His Church. He is the same yesterday, to day, and for ever; and whom He loves He loves unto the end; He will be never parted from His spouse the Church. "The husband," says St. Paul, "is the head of the wife, as Christ is the Head of the Church; therefore, as the Church is subject to Christ,

so let wives be to their husbands in all things. Husbands love your wives, as Christ also loved the Church⁶.”

That the married couple are no longer two but one flesh was declared at the beginning, by the Holy Ghost, in the words of Adam. Christ Himself again, when He came down to our lower world, urged the same grounds. And if indeed two by marriage are by God made one flesh, a man might be divided from himself, were it possible that marriage could be dissolved or undone.

God, in the early morning of man's being, before sin threw its gloom over Eden, made and married the first pair; and when our Saviour came to purchase for us a second paradise, and regain what we had lost, He quotes the second chapter of Genesis to prove the true nature of Christian marriage, renewing the same bond, which is to last as long as life, saying, “What therefore God hath joined together let no man put asunder⁷;” where He plainly proves that the bond of marriage is the work of God,

⁶ Eph. v. 23—25.

⁷ Matt. xix. 6.

and that no man can undo what He has done. And when it was urged against Him that Moses allowed a man to put away his wife, and marry another, He replied, that this was merely allowed to the Jews by the Almighty, because of the *hardness* of their hearts ; but assures them that from the beginning it was not so. Enough has been said now to show, I trust, that God never willed that marriage should be dissolved, or that one party whose husband or wife is alive, might hold another.

It is clear from Holy Writ, that a man may put away his wife for adultery ; but it is not so plain that even this, or any thing short of death, can break the marriage tie.

When Christ came into the world as the seed of the woman, He honoured her in the person of His mother ; still, even under the Gospel, the woman is made lower than the man ; the slavery, however, which she formerly endured at the hands of the man, appears to be done away with. St. Peter bids the husband give honour unto the wife, as the weaker, both “ being heirs together of

the grace of life⁸." As the woman was the first in the transgression, so through the birth of Christ from Mary there is a blessing upon all mankind, and first upon the woman; so that by the birth of Christ marriage has been brought back to its first and holy state, and even gifted with grace as the outward symbol of the heavenly union betwixt Christ and His spouse the Church.

Thus woman, in bearing our Lord, and bringing Him forth, has at length lightened the weight of woe which fell upon her for leading Adam into sin.

In the words of the curse, her husband had long ruled over her: the law of the patriarchs and Jews, which allowed one man to have many wives, and in certain cases forbade not divorce, proves, that as man was first tempted by the woman, so he ruled over her. Much sin might have been avoided if we had always called things by their real names, and looked upon them as they are. To leave out sentences of the

⁸ 1 Pet. iii. 7.

marriage service, is at once to show that we are ashamed of it, and not pure enough to bear it. Hence it is that we are not aware how high a place marriage holds in Holy Scripture, and in the Church; and hence in a degree I think it is that, among the poorer classes, a wedding is too often a mere matter of foolish talking and jesting, in and about the house of God.

On the other hand, there can be no greater happiness than to see the Church full of true believers and faithful worshippers, who understand what we are about, and can join us in such a holy and really solemn service.

St. Paul cannot even speak of marriage, it seems, without going off to speak of that which it figures, the spiritual union betwixt Christ and His Church; indeed the Church herself speaks of it truly in the service, as an ordinance in which grace is given; and, as I have stated, our own Prayer Book advises, that persons at marriage should receive the holy Sacrament of our Lord's body and blood. The couple who in the early days of the Church were unfit for the

holy communion, were by the Church deemed unfit for holy matrimony.

This is no light matter, brethren, humiliation, tears, self-denial, lowliness, and confession to God, is surely far more suitable for such than marriage. The world in general, and this place in particular, sees not this as God sees it. The Church and the Bible will not meet us in our notions of deadly sin before and up to marriage: the very air we breathe is impure; for to many among us chastity is, we fear, a stranger.

But, thanks be to God, there are still those who can enter into wedlock as into a holy state; the few serious weddings which I have witnessed in the course of nearly twenty years, are only enough to rejoice the heart for a moment amid the great abuse of this holy ordinance. Yet we know God instituted marriage in the time of man's innocency; Christ beautified the wedding of Cana in Galilee with his own presence. The great power which the Church claims is to bless the wedded pair.

As our Church service speaks solemnly against all the abuses of this holy ordinance,

which have been too common to our nation, so we trust, when seriously taken in hand before God, it will yet prove a greater blessing to mankind. The command which went forth in Paradise at the first, and which was explained, honoured, and brought back to its first and best meaning by our Lord, when religiously fulfilled, brings down His blessing upon our children and ourselves. A return to a true notion of the holiness of this bond would prove a great step towards that reform which we need, and which nearly all are trying in some way to bring about; nothing can give us such a high and holy idea of marriage, as a firm, living, and active belief, that the everlasting Son of God took upon Him to redeem man, and that for this end, He did not abhor the Virgin's womb.

From first to last pure religion must be the basis of your married life; once more I would remind you how the Church itself plainly shows you the feeling with which married persons should begin their married course of life. The Prayer Book tells us that "it is convenient that the new married

persons should receive the Communion at the time of their marriage, or at the first opportunity after their marriage. As by marriage the bridegroom and the bride are made one, so by holy communion in the blessed sacrament they are made one with Christ, and Christ with them, and so not only their bodies, but also their souls are joined together in bonds of love and grace ; then marriage is not merely the union of worldly hopes, and fears, and joys, and sorrows, but the very wedding of soul to soul, not only for this world, but for an endless and spiritual state. Such a marriage can fully realize the meaning of our Liturgy, by which it is called an “honourable estate,” signifying to us the mystical union betwixt Christ and His Church.

The married couple enter upon a sphere of duty which they must not lightly or thoughtlessly undertake ; not only as husband and wife, but as master and mistress of a household, and most likely as parents, they will have to regulate their mode of life, and order their family. If they are real Christians their house will be a sort of

Church, the father of it will be at the head of it, and rule it wisely and well ; many may be looking up to him, and may be guided by his wishes, his example, and tone of life. We are, indeed, wonderfully linked together, whether for good or for evil ; especially in wedded life, we are as man and wife joined together, by nature and by grace, in twofold bonds. There is no such being as a *private* Christian, we are of the family of the *first* Adam and of the *second* Adam ; we live not for ourselves alone, but for others ; we are bound up together in the strong ties which bind us to each other and to God. When God gives the offspring of marriage, our charge and our duties increase with our children : “ Children and the fruit of the womb are an heritage and gift that cometh of the Lord ;” they are a gift and a treasure ; they are a charge of which we must give account ; they are to be rendered back to Him who gave them. Among those of olden times, none seem so highly set up as a pattern of married life as Abraham, but chiefly as a master of a family he sets us a worthy example. “ I know him,” said

God, "that he will command his children and his household after him, and they shall keep the way of the Lord." The married man must, in good times and bad times, take up the words of Joshua, "As for me and my house, we will serve the Lord." Let every head of a family or household follow this firm purpose in the strength of their Lord, and daily offer up both morning and evening family prayer, and grace before and after meals, throughout the year. Let all your friends know from your custom, not by your words, that you keep the Lord's day holy, that you not only keep *the feast*, but that you keep the *feasts*, of the Christian year; many who at first think you *too formal*, will, at last, perhaps, follow your example, and bring their people to this practice, and through the head of the family acting as the priest and pastor who watches over his flock, they may bring many children to God. Thus you may carry out the spirit of a Christian family, and thus many families will join and mingle into one, as they go up to the house of God; family by family are thus added to the household of faith. From the very first

day of marriage begin family worship, and go on with it, pray earnestly and strive hourly for what you pray, so that God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Ghost, may bless, preserve, and keep you, in time and eternity. “Those whom God hath joined together let no man put asunder.” And may He of His great mercy grant you who are married, that ye may so live together in this life, that in the world to come ye may have life everlasting.

S E R M O N IX.

JOHN XI. 25, 26.

“ 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.”

HAPPY indeed beyond the lot of most men is that pastor's sphere of duty which enables him to say and to feel, that as yet his flock is not torn asunder by schism or dissent, but following with willing minds the teaching of the Church ! To such a congregation indeed their pastor may speak comfortably, and while he leads them along the green pastures of God's Word, and by the sweet streams of His grace, he can cheer them onwards and upwards in their heavenly course, saying, “ Fear not, little flock ; for it

is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom." For the sheep of the great Shepherd hear His voice, and know it well, and follow Him, and obey those whom He has sent: along the bright path of hope and faith the minister of God's Word and sacraments walks with His people in unity and love; if love and heaven there be on earth, and pure fellowship, these blessings dwell in that holy house of God, in which minister and people are bound together in the bundle of life, and are mutually joined together by sacraments of deathless union and communion with each other and their great Redeemer; here dwells the Son of peace, here breathes the Spirit of love, here abides our Father who is in heaven; for this is heaven. Here is our Saviour, our Lord and your Lord. At His most holy birth a host of angels from heaven's high choir sang good will to fallen man, and brought down that peace upon the Christian Church which the world cannot give, nor take away. His life and prayer were that we should be one as He and His Father

are one, and at His death he willed us peace, "Peace I leave with you; my peace I give unto you." This He bequeathed to His Church for ever—He Himself is peace, is love; and, lo! He is with us to the end of the world. His choicest gifts, His highest rewards He promises to those who follow peace with God and man. If we are heirs of Christ, let us rest and live in this peace of His.

"Blessed," says He, "are the peacemakers," or the peaceable: "for they shall be called the sons of God." The sons of God must be like their Father—they must be mild in heart, simple in word, joined in brotherhood in bonds which neither time nor death nor eternity can rend. When priest and people realize this blessing, they walk with God, and are not far from heaven. "If there be therefore any consolation in Christ, if any comfort of love, if any fellowship of the Spirit, if any bowels and mercies, fulfil ye my joy, that ye be like-minded, having the same love, being of one accord, of one mind; and," my brethren, "let this

mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus¹;" so that you may truly and indeed show your love for Jesus and for all whom Jesus loves, and enjoy that peace of God which passeth man's understanding. The holy family of Bethany loved each other, and the Saviour loved them: to them and to all such He was and is truly the resurrection and the life. If we would share in their mercies our homes must be holy—the house of God and the presence of our Lord must be very dear to our hearts. When thus we live together as a family or a Church, the voice of joy and gladness is heard in our dwelling, and in death we are not divided. A thick veil is drawn between us and our brother who is gone, but our communion is unbroken; for neither life nor death can separate us from Christ and His saints; whether they be still in the body or out of the body with Him, living or dying, nothing shall separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus. But, brethren, it is only in our holy duties, in their daily and hourly course throughout

¹ Phil. ii. 1—5.

the Christian year, within the pure bosom of the spouse of Christ His Church, that we are crucified and buried and risen again with Him, and hold communion with His Church in heaven and here below. As men indeed your bodies must all rise again ; and as baptized persons you have in you the seed of a glorious resurrection ; but that seed may be smothered by the cares of life, or by unrepented sins, or snatched away by the evil one, while you sleep away your light and your life ; for who can hope for that grace which he seeks not in watchfulness and prayer, in Christ's sacraments, and the guidance and schooling of His holy Church ? This is the way which God will bless, in which He is willing to lead ; yea, He Himself, the way, the truth, and the life, is ever with His Church, keeping her and guarding her and intrusting to her his great family, that they may love and obey her for her work's sake, and follow her as she follows her Lord ; not rending the pure seamless robe of Christ, but seeking to touch it and be clean, to bend beneath its overshadowing holiness and power. Let us live the life of

the righteous, that our last end may be like his ; for it is only of and to her own true children that the Church in the funeral service really speaks comfort and hope. We must really and practically believe in the communion of saints as well as the resurrection of the body, we must feel that we are of one spirit and of one body with those saints of old who are gone to their rest, ere we can be sure that we have any part or lot in our most catholic funeral service. This article of our Creed is to many a mere form of words without a spirit—men, if indeed they ever think or speak of saints, treat them as beings with whom we have nothing in common, yet the communion of saints with each other in glory with the saints of the Church on her trial below ; the communion of Christians now alive with those who have left us, or died before we were born ; the communion of all Christians with one another in doctrine and worship, in love and good works, and in praise—all this, I say, is the very essence of the funeral service. Without this the dead is to us neither brother nor sister. The resurrection of the

body is rather, I fear, an article of our Creed than any ground of our faith. Yet the children of the resurrection must not only have their souls washed by the Saviour's blood, but their bodies made clean by His body, so that the Spirit that raised up Jesus from the dead shall likewise quicken our mortal bodies. To understand and with the heart to believe these two articles, is to share in the funeral service. Such was the belief of the early Church under the Apostles, which spake of a sure and certain hope, when the "multitude of them that believed acted with one heart and one soul." They prayed for God's mercy, and they were heard and forgiven; and when one by death was taken and the other left, the departing soul could say to all around, "I go to my Father and your Father, to my God and your God." To such pious faithful Christians the place of the dead was but a rest from labour, where hope beamed on sorrow. The dark vale of mortality and prison of the grave was opened by our Lord Himself "for a door of hope." His voice is heard, and the dead shall live.

As at the grave of Lazarus, He said, "I am the resurrection and the life," so now the dreary abodes of death are cheered by the same words which, on the entrance of the grave-yard, fall solemnly on the mourner's ear. The funeral train in the good times of early grace and fresh first love were one with Christ, and because He lives they and their dead live also—to the true Christian mourner the departed is not dead but sleepeth. But when the power of faith began to languish, and when love was waxing cold, and time went on with all its sweeping changes for the worse, the Church still held fast the same words which can only have any real meaning over the *Christian* dead, and to the ears of *Christian* mourners.

From many passages of the Old Testament we may learn, that even the Church before the dawn of the Christian day was not without hope that the Lord God would "swallow up death in victory, and wipe away tears from all faces." Men saw through the long vista of years the promises of God afar off, until hope soared

above faith, and taught those who were waiting for the "consolation of Israel," that the dark mantle of earth would only shroud for a time the remains of their dead in the house of the grave; for even 700 years before the coming of Him who is the resurrection and the life, the evangelical prophet says, "O death, I will be thy plagues; O grave, I will be thy destruction²."

At length, in the fulness of time, God's eternal Son took our nature upon Him, and in it lived, died, and was buried: in that nature, too, he rose again from the dead: He ascended into heaven, and sitteth at the right hand of God the Father Almighty, from whence He shall come to judge the quick and the dead. Thus He opened heaven to all believers, and thus He made the grave the gate of life.

St. Paul leads us to believe that it was "by faith" that Joseph followed the example of his father, and "gave commandment concerning his bones," the same

² Hosea xiii. 14.

Apostle assures us that the patriarchs "all died in faith not having received the promises, but having seen them afar off, and were persuaded of them and embraced them, and confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on earth," we cannot but think, that from the earliest times, all true believers committed their dead to the grave in sure and certain hope. Indeed, in the second passage which greets the ears of the mourners on their way through the calm region of the dead, Job, who was on earth perhaps with Abraham, says, "I know that my Redeemer liveth, and that he shall stand at the latter day upon the earth: and though after my skin worms destroy this body, yet in my flesh shall I see God: whom I shall see for myself, and mine eyes shall behold, and not another."

The Jews showed great regard for the burial of their dead. Their burial places were on the mountain side, or in some quiet field, or shaded garden. After the corpse had been washed, it was embalmed in costly spices, and closely swathed in fine linen. So Joseph of Arimathea, and another Jewish

Senator, would embalm the sacred body of our Lord. So these masters in Israel devoutly honoured in His death, the Saviour whom in His life they scarcely dared to worship. “ They took the body, and wound it in linen clothes with the spices, as the manner of the Jews is to bury. Now in the place where he was crucified there was a garden ; and in the garden a new sepulchre, wherein was never man yet laid³.”

Through the grave, then, He has passed before us, and in His life and in His death *fulfilled the law and fulfilled all righteousness*. O then let us be buried with Him—dead to the world, dead to sin. He who was dead and is alive, abode for a time in the dark house of the grave. He passed through the valley of the shadow of death into the dreary house appointed for all living, which He stript of its horrors and robbed of its victory : when, therefore, we bury our dead out of our sight in the bosom of their mother earth, let us think in sorrow, not unblest with hope, of the place where Jesus lay, and

³ John xix. 40, 41.

of his holy keeping of those loved remains, until the never-dying spirit which so lately was clothed in this body will be glorified with the glory which our Lord had with the Father from the first, and both body and soul shall be reunited in one immortal, whole, glorified being. To us as Christians a funeral is full of solemn meaning—a prayer over the dead—a warning to the living—a real solemn, holy, and religious thing. For as natural reason will teach us to give some kind of respect unto the bodies of men, though dead in reference to the souls which formerly inhabited them; so and much more the followers of our Saviour, while they looked upon men's bodies as living temples of the Holy Ghost, and bought by Christ, to be made one day like unto His glorious body, they thought them no ways to be neglected after death, but carefully to be laid up in the wardrobe of the grave, with such respect as might become the honour of the dead and the comfort of the living⁴. When Martha mourned the dead

⁴ Bishop Pearson on the Creed, Art. iv.

brother whom she loved, "Jesus said unto her, I am the Resurrection and the Life: he that believeth in me though he were dead yet shall he live." To her His words of power and love came but with uncertain sound: they promised more than her fond heart had dared to hope, or her growing faith could yet realize. To us who have the fulfilment clear before us, these words not only tell of life, but immortality, of happiness beyond our understanding, and beyond the grave, of joys which the tongues of angels cannot fully speak, of glory which man's heart cannot conceive; they come pleasantly to the sorrowing soul, and awaken our hopes in Him who is not the God of the dead but of the living. They carry us to scenes of love and light; they place us as it were within the very hearing of our Saviour; they lead us to rest our cares, our fears, and our griefs upon Him who careth for us, and carries our sorrows; not that we hope our Lord will make our dead sister or brother or son sit down with us again in this world, or outwardly come again among us, but that the dead of our

love, shall sit down with Abraham in the happiness of the saints made perfect, and even with Christ, which is far better. Well, then, and to our sure comfort, does our Church breathe these words in the name of her Lord and her Life, at the very opening of the service for the dead who have died in Him. Yes, my brethren, the holy Church, as the spouse of her Divine Head, does all things wisely and well : as at our second and happier birth, she hallowed our infant bodies by the sacrament of water, in which our Lord, by her, baptized us with the Holy Ghost ; and as she has watched over us through the chief events of our short life, and still blesses us with her prayers, her offices, and holy ordinances from the cradle to the grave ; so in our last hour she would embrace us in her arms, and speak comfortably to the soul which is struggling to be free from the body of corruption. Her Lord sends her to pray over our dying bed, when our heart and flesh are fainting within us, and when we cannot pray for ourselves. She presents the departing Christian with the last memorials of the

Saviour's dying love—the food of the believer—which preserves both soul and body unto eternal life.

Finally, the Church of Christ in the calm beauty of holiness, and in the strength of her Lord, has words of holy hope for us when our lifeless bodies are carried to the house of God, and placed decently beside the quiet resting place blessed by the Bishop, and sacred to the dead. Her thanksgiving is chastened, her language of comfort is sober and scriptural over the earthen bed; there, there may we sleep in Christ, until the awful trumpet of the Judge and the voice of the archangel awaken us to the light of the cloudless morning of the resurrection!

We know 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 from the dead by the glory of God the Father, even so we should walk in newness of life."

The sum is clearly this:—we as true members of Christ's Holy Catholic Church, are

together the body of Christ, and the Spirit of God dwelleth in us. Our bodies are indeed dust, frail houses of clay, food for worms: yet not common dust, not mere unhallowed clay, but temples of the Holy Ghost, the flesh of those who have lived in Christ is not the same flesh as that which never clothed an undying spirit or lodged a soul within it. In our bodies and souls together we are members of Christ and of each other: if one member suffer, the other members suffer with it: therefore any dishonour to the dead Christian, or unholy behaviour in the church-yard, and refusal devoutly to join in the prayers over his grave, is unworthy of the communion of saints, and even insulting to Christ as our Head, under whom and by whom we are all knit together. The Church, who is the mother of all Christians, not only nurses them up from their infancy, and guides them to the rest which remaineth for the people of God, but sets apart for her children round the walls of the Lord's house "quiet resting places" and undisturbed abodes. But, my brethren, to realize our relation to the

dead in Christ, or in sure hope, in their history to read our own, we must enjoy that communion of saints which we profess in the Creed, but which forms no living and active part of our own religion. Each man is too much the centre of his own hopes and fears, he lives too much for himself; his wishes or desires too seldom stretch out unto good works beyond the narrow circle of his selfishness. How seldom does our love overflow to others! Yet we are from first to last children of one common parent, victims of one common grave, purchased one and all by the same Redeemer, and indwelt by the same Holy Spirit. In our dead brother we see part of ourselves, a dear member of our body, a member of the living God; and while we bend sorrowfully over him as he sinks into his narrow bed, the voice of Jesus rises to the memory and the heart, "Thy brother shall rise 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." Deep words of unearthly meaning. O for the

soul which has wings like a dove, and can flee away from the body, and be at rest with the Lord! To the saint to die is gain, is a new birth unto everlasting life, sight, light, freedom, home. "He that believeth in me," says the Lord of life, "though he were dead, yet shall he live."

He, the ETERNAL LIFE, came among us when we were dead, took us out of ourselves who were dead, and brought us into Himself who is the life, that we might live in Him and He in us. He is the life of every thing—when we turn from Him, like St. Peter on the wave, we sink, we faint, we perish, we die. To believe in Him, however, is to bear His cross, to rest upon Him for time and eternity, to believe all which He commands, and to *act* upon His word, to place ourselves in His hands, and bow to no will but His; to be *doers*, and not hearers only of His word; that when He our life shall appear once more on earth, we may meet Him with humble hope and holy joy, and live with Him in endless glory.

When the voice of the Son of Man awakes the dead, and when at His coming

the mountain-rocks are shaken, and all the brightness on this side of heaven is fading into gloom, and when the trembling world below re-echoes to the dread archangel's trumpet waxing louder and louder from one end of heaven to the other—may we by God's mercy have an inheritance incorruptible, undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for us⁵. Our time is short—the night is at hand—work while it is day; dwell often and devoutly on death and the resurrection. Be always near the Lord of life, lest you be dead while you live. With Mary, stoop low at Jesus' feet, that you be found among those blessed ones “whom Jesus loveth;” and remember, that “those whom He loveth He loveth unto the end⁶.”

Let us turn from all others and look into ourselves, and pass on in thought and in prayer from the grave of Lazarus to that which will soon open for ourselves. So that when our own turn shall come, we may sleep in Christ.

⁵ 1 Pet. i. 4.

⁶ John xiii. 1.

O brethren, live in Him from day to day, and to Him and for Him always, so that living and dying we may be found in Him, and may be His. Then, neither life nor death, nor time, nor hell, nor eternity, shall be able to pluck us out of His hand.

SERMON X.

JOB XIX. 25—27.

“ I know that my Redeemer liveth, and that he shall stand at the latter day upon the earth: and though after my skin worms destroy this body, yet in my flesh shall I see God: whom I shall see for myself, and mine eyes shall behold, and not another.”

It has been well said, even by one¹ who had no scriptural knowledge of God, that “ the life of the wise is a thinking on death.” It was also a heathen², who wisely said, “ Call no man happy before his death.”

Thoughtful men of old who walked by the mere light of nature, and but dimly viewed the unseen world, and its unseen Maker, learned to value things at what they

¹ Plato.

² Solon.

would be worth in death. To none, however, but the true worshippers of the living God, did death itself bring thoughts of a new life and of a risen body beyond time and the grave. The heathens fondly cherished and kept by them, in the funeral urn, the ashes of their friends, whose dead bodies they had burned. Round this treasured dust their fond thoughts hovered and dwelt upon it as the best and dearest thing which death could spare them.

Yet the law of our nature, "which changeth not," is, "earth to earth, ashes to ashes, dust to dust." Every thing within us and about us says to each child of Adam, "Dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return." Man's nature seeks a place in the ground from which he was taken, as a fitting house for his dead body. Nature shrank from the sight of the loathsome corpse. When the delight of the eye had lost its sweetness and its beauty, man covered it in the ground. Sin had found man out and slain him, and made him so unlovely in his death, that Humanity sought for a place to bury her dead out of her sight,

and found it in the bosom of our first mother earth. Death and burial are joined together. We read not of those who died and were *buried* before the flood—though stories there are of Adam's bones, which Noah took into the ark and buried after the flood, upon Mount Moriah or Calvary, where Abraham, at God's command, in a figure, slew his only son, and where the Saviour suffered on the cross³.

When Abraham beseeches the children of Heth to let him have a *burying place* to bury his dead out of his sight, he seems only to be anxious to do as the very first father of mankind had most likely done; for when he who first brought sin and therefore death into the world looked in grief upon his murdered son, nature, if no higher guide, would point him to his native earth, to hide from his tearful eyes his loved but now lifeless son.

The curse of labour was already on the

³ The story of Adam's burial is 1500 years old. See "The Living and the Dead," by Francis Paget, M.A., to whose book my remarks on the funeral service are not less indebted than to Comber.

ground, out of which the father was taken, and with toil in her bosom he would cover his dead. Henceforward, O Adam! the seed must be laid in the ground: "And that which thou sowest, thou sowest not that body which shall be." "But God giveth it a body as it hath pleased Him, and to every seed his own body⁴." Yet where or how the first dead man was buried we are not told. But Jacob's last wish so strong in death shows us, that the custom of burial was dear to the hearts of those who had died before him; he speaks to Joseph of his mother's grave thus tenderly: "And as for me, when I came from Padan, Rachel died by me in the land of Canaan in the way, when yet there was but a little way to come unto Ephrath: and I buried her there in the way of Ephrath; the same is Bethlehem⁵." To his sons, who were round his dying bed, he says, "I am to be gathered unto my people: bury me with my fathers, in the cave that is in the field of Ephron the Hittite. There they buried Abraham and Sarah his wife; there they buried

⁴ 1 Cor. xv. 37, 38.

⁵ Gen. xlviii. 7.

Isaac and Rebekah his wife ; and there I buried Leah⁶.” To the last hours of the patriarch the Apostle carries back our thoughts : “ By faith Jacob, when he was a dying, blessed both the sons of Joseph ; and worshipped, leaning on the top of his staff⁷.” “ And he blessed Joseph, and said, God, before whom my fathers Abraham and Isaac did walk, the God which fed me all my life long unto this day, the Angel which redeemed me from all evil, bless the lads⁸.” Now the aged patriarch charged his sons about his burial in the same strain of inspired blessing and instruction, in which he had uttered his prophecy. So that we may believe the grave to him was nothing new, but a well-known rest for the dead : he saw through it the light of life. And when he had breathed out his soul into the keeping of Him whom he loved, he was gathered unto his fathers and his people, where he has to wait for God’s Son from heaven, whom He raised from the dead, even Jesus, the Angel of the Covenant, who will at the last

⁶ Gen. xlix. 29—31.

⁷ Heb. xi. 21.

⁸ Gen. xlviii. 15, 16.

day raise his body to an endless life. Indeed we have already seen⁹ the warrant of St. Paul for believing that it “was by faith” that Joseph followed the example of his father, and “gave commandment concerning his bones.” The patriarchs “all died in faith, not having received the promises, but having seen them afar off, and were persuaded of them, and embraced them, and confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth¹.” Now, as they looked beyond the promises of time and the darkness of the grave, they would bury their dead in sure and certain hope of better things to come. So that already hope was rising on heavenly wings over the grave, and faith saw that death’s mantle of earth was to give place to the pure white robe of the redeemed body and soul in the everlasting abodes of saints, when the Lord God would “swallow up death in victory,” and wipe away all tears from all faces, and every trace of earth and sin; when the dead should hear his voice saying, “O my people, I will

⁹ See 1st Sermon on Funeral Service.

¹ Heb. xi. 13.

open your graves, and cause you to come up out of your graves. Thy dead men shall live, together with my dead body shall they arise. Awake and sing, ye that dwell in the dust; for thy dew is as the dew of herbs, and the earth shall cast out her dead." The earth shall no more cover her slain. "O ye dry bones, hear the word of the Lord. . . . Behold, I will cause breath to enter into you, and ye shall live. And I will lay sinews upon you, and will bring up flesh upon you, and cover you with skin, and put breath in you, and ye shall live; and ye shall know that I am the Lord." "I will ransom them from the power of the grave; I will redeem them from death²." These hopes seemed to dawn on the exiles from Eden, and lift up their hearts to another paradise. He who had closed the gates of Eden after them, had opened the golden gates of heaven to all believers. Hope travelled with the exiles in their banishment, and beamed upon their dreary pilgrimage, through clouds of sorrow. The

² See Isa. xxv. 8. Ezek. xxxvii. 4—6. Hosea xiii. 14.

very first believers of our race slept in death, beneath the waveless calm of silent and unruffled rest.

From the beginning there was one great wide-spread kingdom throughout the world, over which the Son of God was the sole but unseen King ; so that from the very promise of the Seed of the woman, the Saviour, who should bruise the serpent's head, there has always been one universal or Catholic Church, which began in Adam, and was carried on in his children's children, both before and after the flood, covering the face of the earth as the waters cover the sea : of this Church, or spiritual kingdom, more especially was the Son of God the sole, though unseen, Sovereign. The Church has always been built upon one and the same rock, and that rock is Christ, the same at creation's dawn, yesterday, to-day, and for ever—the promised Seed of the woman ; as many persons, families, and societies, therefore, as truly believed in that blessed seed, were the true members and parts of the Catholic Church.

When we read the Psalms, we read the very words in which, besides the Jewish saints, fifty generations of one communion have joined, and by which they have been spiritually and wonderfully brought together as members of the one Church, and children of the same holy family, and by which they have been blessed and supported in their own day, and cheered beneath the banner of their Lord and Leader, the Captain of their salvation.

Again, when we take up the form of words of the saints of the New Testament, and the Christian Church, we lay hold of a link of that chain which binds the past and the present together in bonds of the Catholic faith, and encircles us in a fortress beyond the reach of heretics. In a word, we are not made for ourselves alone, but for others : we are as branches of the one true vine ; and when we weep over the grave of the Christian, we weep for ourselves. The Lord is our Head, the Church our centre, Heaven our country, the saints our brothers and sisters, and God our

Father; for to the death of our Saviour the olden saints looked forward, as Christians look backwards to Christ's cross.

From faith to faith, step by step, the Church leads her sorrowing children onwards, reminding them of the words which holy Job had uttered, two thousand years before the birth of the Redeemer, in whom he had such a living faith, that he realized His presence, His judgment, and His glory. The Gospel itself could say no more; thus, briefly, "I know that my Redeemer liveth, and that He shall stand at the latter day upon the earth; and though after my skin worms destroy this body, yet in my flesh shall I see God: whom I shall see for myself; and mine eyes shall behold, and not another."

These words of cloudless faith come, as it were, from the confined corpse, who, though dead, yet amid the graves speaketh, —speaketh of light, life, and the resurrection. Poor Job, wearied and careworn, rebuked and grieved by his own familiar friends, from whom he sought comfort, but in vain, looks beyond them to the God of

all comfort, and to the presence of his Redeemer for pure peace, which the world cannot give, nor take away.

Through the long vista of so many years he saw and knew his Saviour, his own Redeemer, his living and eternal Judge. This world was fading from his view, and the bright world of endless joy was opening to his faith.

To those who live by faith, every thing speaks of the future; their thoughts lead them to rejoice in every day and hour that passes, as bringing them nearer to the appearing of their Lord, and the end of their pilgrimage. Job knew well the part the Saviour was to bear, and when and where "He shall stand at the latter day upon the earth." He says, "My Redeemer," feeling that He was his own; and firmly states his saving belief, that, though after his skin, *i. e.* when it is decayed, worms should destroy his body, yet he shall see his Redeemer face to face, and that, too, in the very same body in which he was suffering; and though the worms will feed on it in the grave, yet in it he will rise; that even

when that which was once a living man should be mixed up with the soil, its bed, and from which it could not be distinguished, that his dry bones should resume their marrow, and his *whole* man should live again together ; that in the same body in which the spirit once lived it should take up its abode again and for ever ; and that the body, with its own eye, shall behold Him, and not another's. With the very eyes with which he saw things while he was in the body before it died, he will look upon his Judge. These words are full of Christian meaning, and join the past to the present and the future. They breathe through the Gospel of four thousand years, and console ten thousand times ten thousand mourners for the countless Christian dead.

To those who believed in Jesus Christ "yesterday," that is, before and after the law, and to those who believe in Him "to-day," that is, the time of the New Testament, He is the same, even "Wisdom, Righteousness, Sanctification, and Redemption ;" He is, and was, and ever will be, the Lamb slain from the foundation of the

world ; because His death and passion was ever present in the view of God the Father, before whom “ a thousand years are but as one day.”

After the flood, all Noah's offspring were but one Church under him, and grounded upon Christ, however widely they swerved from God in the several countries allotted unto them, still they had their priests, their sacrifices, and some outward ordinance and worship of the one true God amongst them. So that the Catholic Church, coming down from the beginning to Abraham's time, embraced in her bosom not only the faithful children of Abraham, but all who really believed in Abraham's God, of which Catholic Church Adam seemed the first head under Christ, and Noah the second in his time. These, as the Fathers of mankind, could not be other than heads of their respective families, and the Church under which they lived ; and through them came down the Law and the Gospel, from the creation until the days of the prophet Malachi, that is, for about three thousand five hundred years. From this period to

the birth of the Messiah, prophecy, rather than Scripture *history*, is our guide.

The New Testament is but the reality of the Gospel, which had been preached four hundred and thirty years before the law³; and, in short, the more ample fulfilment and unfolding of the Old Testament, and the great change of the Catholic Church from shadows to better *things*.

From the hour in which our Saviour lived, died, was buried, rose, and ascended into heaven in our nature, a funeral became a religious service over man's body, as over the ruins of the temple of God, fallen, but not for ever, in the dust: "Your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost, which is in you, which ye have of God." Let no man, therefore, defile the temple of God. Her children are dear to the Church, who will not suffer their dead bodies to be left as a prey to the fowls or the beasts, to the heat of the day, or the frost of the night, nor their bones to be bleached in the open air. But more than this: we must ever look upon

³ Gal. iii. 8.

the dust of a Christian as a holy thing : yet, alas ! our church-yards are no longer the place of deep reverence and awe. The dead in Christ, and those who lay dead in their sins, sleep together equally unguarded from rudeness or insult. Our village church-yards are thoroughfares and play-grounds, rather than the calm and peaceful abodes of the Christian dead—they have well-nigh lost their silent story of the unseen world, and are trampled by wanton feet, and re-echo to unhallowed sounds and ill-timed mirth. Even amid the solemn prayers, the idle and the thoughtless ones, equally unmindful of the living and the dead, judgment, hell, heaven, or the grave, thrust themselves in among the mourners, and treat this service as if it were a play, or a mockery, or a farce. In our rural parishes it is a pastime or attraction for impiety, irreverence, and noise. The heavy fall of clods upon the coffin is less painful to the ear, than the shrill scream of children, and the foolish talking of gazers on. Happy for the dead whose eye and ear are closed against such scenes and sounds !

The Christian's heart is pained and sickened at the desecration of the burial service ; yet even the remains of our unknown brethren, which are now a prey to worms, are to be treated with reverence and respect, not only because those bodies were once the temples of the Holy Ghost, but also because by the mighty working of Him who is our life, they shall hereafter be made like unto His glorious body. Whether dead or living, how should we watch and guard those bodies which, as well as the soul, are the purchase of His most precious blood ! While we are in the world let us pray God to keep us from spiritual death, that while we, as it were, are living between heaven and earth, we may be found watching for our Lord. Thus, brethren, you will feel at the grave of your friend, that this world is not your home, your rest, your country, your life : “ For ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God.” Let us daily seek to be deeply buried with Christ, and safe from the hatred or praises of men, hidden in His keeping, and dead to the world, so that our ears hear not the voice of unholy joy ; and our eyes

see not the glare of unreal things. Thus may we die hourly to our sins, and be hidden from their penalty. Think with whom it is we as Christians are buried, and with whom and to whom we are to rise again. Even with our Blessed Lord. He Himself says, "I will that where I am, there also my servant be." The poor dead body—a very worm and no man—the carcass of the child of wrath, who in himself has done no good, is to be made like the body of Christ. What are all the kingdoms of the world and their glory, to the lowest place in those blessed mansions which He is preparing for those who love and obey Him? Let not then the brightness of His glory fade away from the eye of our faith. Let every stage of our journey which brings us nearer the grave, bring us nearer to God. Let all our hourly acts and every-day duties of life be steps to heaven; and at night when we lie down, our rest will be in God; each night will warn us of the night of death, and the bed of the grave, where there is neither work, nor device, nor repentance. Every day which passes, every tick of the clock,

every ray of the setting sun, every rising star of coming night, nay, every breath which we are suffered to breathe has a voice which speaks of hell, of heaven, of death, and after death the judgment.

The *passing* bell has long and often fallen heavily upon our ear, and given us notice of the soul which is *passing* or rather *has already passed* out of its earthen dwelling into the presence of its Maker and its God; but no sooner has its voice died away, than with it dies the still small voice of holy sadness within us. The world's loud din and selfish call keep down the rising prayer for others as well as for ourselves. We seldom realize to ourselves, that whether living or dying we are members of one another, and of the Lord.

Indeed we of this day and place never hear the *passing* bell tolled out at all *before* the soul has passed away. To us it is not a *passing* bell; for who, when he hears it, even thinks of praying for the *passing* soul, and pauses in the field or by the way, or wherever he may be, to realize the deep awfulness of the soul's departure from the

body which it wore! The Church called with a tongue of iron upon her children to pray for the *passing* soul; "When any," says she, "is passing out of this life, a bell shall be tolled, and the minister shall not slack to do his duty⁴." That the passing bell 200 years ago was tolled, or, as we say, here, "went out," *before* death, and while the dying person was at the worst, is plain⁵."

Hearing the passing bell, men prayed that the sick man, through Christ, might rest his soul with the blessed: we never hear this bell till the sick man is dead; for we think it shocking that he should hear his own death-knell. Thus our own warning is weakened, and the dying brother is unblest by our prayers.

Granting that the ear of the departing Christian were awake to his own passing bell; having lived to God, and having done his best to keep his baptismal vows, bearing his Saviour's cross, and daily dying to the world, the warning voice from the Church in which he had worshipped would not fill

⁴ Canon 67.

⁵ See Paget's "Living and the Dead," p. 25.

him with dismay. Still sad indeed is the note, and deeply awful the tone, which tells the soul it must quit its house of clay.

The most which we do is, when the bell tolls, to ask who is dead, and exchange perhaps some words of pity.

There was a time when the knell passed mournfully over house and field and lane and street, and brought the sad news to all at home or at their work abroad. It was the Church which spoke; and all her sons who heard her voice, knelt down in deep and holy prayer on behalf of the departing spirit. By tuneful management, and measure, and pious skill, the tongue of the passing bell spoke in well-known accents, and told to all who lived within its sound the age and sex of the dying one, so that by its well-tuned notes all the neighbours knew whether they were to pray for a brother or sister, or their father the priest. The Church never lost sight of her children; and while the Saviour is with her and them, none can hurt them.

The bell which sounded the departure of a soul, mournfully welcomes the dead body

to the Church's keeping for all time, until the trumpet of God shall call it once more unto life.

Trifling as such things seem to our feeble faith and imperfect love—to Christians of other days every toll of the church bell would mark a nearing step to eternity. It was time's farewell; the dread notice that a soul is on its way to God. How long and often have we heard the mournful sound! How few and forgotten are the lessons which it has left us! Let it for the future force us to think of our latter end; let each solemn knell remind us that what the dying or the dead are now, we soon must be. Thus the ties which bind us to this lower world will one by one be unfastened or loosened from our heart.

Finally, let us from time to time converse with the holy living and the holy dead. But above all let us seek to be made one with God's dear and only Son, who veiled the Godhead in our flesh, that our natural bodies may partake of His Divine nature, and be made like His glorious body. They have been sown in dishonour to be raised in

glory, sown in weakness to be raised in power, sown natural bodies to be raised spiritual bodies. In their very dust there lies the seed of life, kept and guarded by God. This is the thought which fills the church-yard with holy awe. We regard the dead bodies of Christians on account of the Spirit which once dwelt within them, and will again dwell within them, and that for ever. While we are still in the body we must not defile it; for it is the temple of the Holy Ghost. For woe be to us if the evil spirit find the dwelling-place, from which he has been cast out, "empty" or profaned, for then he will re-enter and dwell there⁶. Let us, while life remains, speak, act, think as they who are not merely flesh and blood, but the temples of God. Thus, indeed, shall each of us be able to say, "I know that my Redeemer liveth, and that He shall stand at the latter day upon the earth: and though after my skin worms destroy this body, yet in my flesh shall I see God: whom I shall see for myself, and mine

⁶ Matt. xii. 45.

eyes shall behold, and not another." He will, in the sacrament of His love and in His house, impart to us more and more of His own life, glory, Spirit, and of His nature; and, as we are hoping, at the last day to rise to life, let us die daily to our sins, and daily rise to holiness. He is calling even to you who are dead in trespasses and sins to hear His voice and live. Obey the call, and pray that faith may enable us to "endure as seeing one who is invisible," that hope may lift us out of the dust of death, and that love may place us by Him, whom not having seen we love, so that our sinful bodies being made clean by His most holy body, and our souls being washed in His most precious blood, we may dwell with the holy, blessed, and glorious Trinity for ever and ever. When we stand over the graves which are full of dead men's bones, we should feel as though we were on the threshold of the unseen world, and only sigh for that dwelling which is all glorious within, where Christ reigneth in purity and light. Let us endeavour to realize communion with saints of every time and place. When our

dead friend is taken from us and given to earth, the bond of grace which neither death nor eternity can sever, may still encircle us in a holy and undying brotherhood; and while our fond thoughts hover round his dark damp church-yard bed, let us seek for the fellowship of the Holy Ghost, union and communion with each other, in the mystical body of the eternal Son, who makes us to triumph over the world, the flesh, the devil, and death itself. Then, even among the tombs, we may say, "It is good for us to be here." Then will the words of the holy and afflicted patriarch arise to our hearts, and meet all our wants and soothe all our woes. Then may we realize the Saviour's blessing: "Blessed are they that mourn: for they shall be comforted;" and hereafter may God of His great mercy grant us to hear His well-beloved Son saying to us, "Come, ye blessed of my Father, receive the kingdom prepared for you from the beginning of the world⁷."

⁷ Matt. xxv. 34.

S E R M O N X I.

1 TIM. VI. 7.

*“ We brought nothing into this world, and
it is certain we can carry nothing out.”*

IN the way through the church-yard, in the church itself, and at the grave-side, the Order for the Burial of the Dead speaks in words which are the most properly suited to each of these three stages in the service. No sooner does the funeral train enter upon the holy ground of the church-yard, than it is met with words which “speak comfortably” to the sad minds of the kinsmen and mourners who follow the corpse of their friend. Words of grace and truth are heard amid the graves soothing sorrow; first, bending it to God’s most holy will, then

lifting it from the lowest depths of gloom to thankfulness. *In the Church* we are reminded of the shortness of life ; the nature of the dead body as it *is*, and the glory which awaits it *hereafter*. *At the grave*, all who are present are called upon to pray under a sense of God's presence ; and to join devoutly in each clause of the Lord's Prayer. Even over the corpse of our friend we are taught to say, "Thy will be done on earth, as it is in heaven ;" here, too, by the grave, we are encouraged not to sorrow as men without hope ; here the bereaved are comforted, and here we seek for the blessing of our Lord and of His Church.

Of the three parts of the funeral service into which it naturally divides itself, time forbids us to dwell fully on more than the first, which begins at the entrance of the church-yard, and ends on the threshold of the Church : of this we have already had two texts of Holy Writ before us, and now come to the third : "We brought nothing into this world, and it is certain we can carry nothing out." This is taken from St. Paul's first letter to St. Timothy, who had been

left at Ephesus to regulate the affairs of the Church in that city, and, together with a second passage from the words of Holy Job, forms what may be called the *last* sentence of the *first part* of the Burial of the Dead ; thus uniting the *past* and the *present* ; thus wedding the *Old Testament* and the *New* together, in a bond which man may not put asunder. The sad and holy strain of the worn and aged patriarch is set down and harmonized with the words of the Apostle who lived nearly two thousand years afterwards, under the New Testament : so that our Church in this day says or sings amid the Christian dead, the divine poem which has been quoted by almost every Hebrew writer, from the age of Moses to that of Malachi, and which has come down to us through nearly four thousand years, mingling in sweet unison with the Apostle's words to the first Bishop of Ephesus.

Thus, at the very outset of the funeral service, I think we are placed, so to speak, in the midst of the everlasting gospel of Christ. His great family who lived and died *before* His coming in our flesh, and the

younger members of it who have lived, or are living, or have died *since* He vouchsafed to become the Christian's brother, are brought together in deathless communion of the *elder* and the *younger* saints. The words of the patriarch pass in our review into the Church of Jerusalem, and thence into the Christian Church throughout the world, which is now opening to our faith and hope brighter blessings than the *Old Testament* had fully realized. We take it for granted, that the Church, from first to last, from the cradle to the grave, watches over, guides, guards, and cherishes all those who are, by her laws and the laws of our country, placed under her; she leads them step by step, day by day, into the fulness of the stature of a man of God.

We speak, and act, and sometimes even think as if *all* our people were true, faithful, and obedient children of their avowed mother, the Church: for instance, we look upon the sorrowing mourners, whoever or whatever they may be in their bereavement, as members of our Church, as *brethren* of the same family. To them the language of

the burial service is addressed as to those who are familiar to us ; at all times and under all circumstances, we treat them as the flock whom we have tended and taught, with whom we have watched and prayed, and with whom we have shared in the Lord's Supper ; they stand in the presence of one, who, as their pastor, is answerable as far as in him lies, for the spiritual welfare of their dead friend. It was the officiating minister, who, through a tedious sickness, and through trying hours, stood daily, perhaps, by the sick man's bed, winning him to godly sorrow for his sins, or pouring comfort into his ear. He was with him in the vale of death, and spoke to his faint heart, of life and light beyond sin and the grave : nay, more than this, when the Christian leads the rest of his life according to the beginning at baptism, he makes his profession of faith, and his humble confession of sins, and seeks for Christ's pardon to be made known to him by the absolution of the Church and the blessing of her priest¹. The very same

¹ "By his authority committed to me, I absolve thee from all thy sins, in the name of the Father, and of the

man who warned the dying to flee from the wrath to come, and to prepare to meet his God—the man, who, by the Saviour's authority, read to him, and prayed by him, and gave him the waters of life, is now heard over the dead, to whom in life he ministered, and of whose faith and salvation he had certain hope—God's servant who spiritually gave the dying man the bread of life, has good hope through Christ, that now, though he is dead, yet shall he live—yes, brethren, that he shall “live for ever,” his “body and soul being preserved unto everlasting life,” and that he shall be raised up in the last day to “life eternal.” The Head of the Church, who is touched with our sorrows, and who wept at the grave of Lazarus, sends His servant to cheer us, when, in the bitterness of our grief, we are Son, and of the Holy Ghost.”—*The Visitation of the Sick.*

The Bishop says to every one who receives the order of priesthood, “Whose sins thou dost forgive they are forgiven; and whose sins thou dost retain they are retained.”—*See the Ordering of Priests.*

Cranmer, Ridley, Latimer, and Hooker, are quoted as authority on this doctrine.

burying our dead out of our sight. Christ Himself, in His Holy Word, speaks at the grave of him whom He loves. To the *living* He brings lessons of faith, patience, and even thankfulness—to the *dead* the renewed promise of life.

First of all, we have our Lord's words of *love* fulfilled in *power* at the grave of Lazarus, which open the funeral service, and stand at the head of our first discourse on Christian burial. They are the precious promise and pledge of our renewed nature and life in our Redeemer; thus we are taught at once the necessity and the reward of faith. At the very next step we are listening to the words of Job in the second sentence of the service, under which words we considered burial in our last discourse, and which afford such an *evidence of things unseen*, that in these very words the Christian Church sees all which she can desire; so far, we have the lesson and example of faith.

And now the Church leads on the sorrowing company, and adds, as it were, another link to the golden chain of Heavenly Graces—PATIENCE. A third passage comes mourn-

fully, yet breathing patience to the heart :
 “ We brought nothing into this world,
 and it is certain we can carry nothing
 out.” In this same spirit of the gospel,
 it is said of man, “ As he came forth of
 his mother’s womb, naked shall he return,
 to go as he came, and shall take nothing of
 his labour, which he may carry away in his
 hand².” So David speaks of the richest
 and the greatest : “ He shall carry nothing
 away with him when he dieth, neither shall
 his pomp follow him³.” And yet, when
 the mighty are fallen, or again, when the
 greatest captain of our age, if not of the
 world, whose battles were victories, is *him-*
self, at last, beyond the usual limits of man’s
 years, overcome in the midst of peace by
 the KING OF TERRORS, we can hardly realize
 his death⁴; yet all the pomp of war can
 only follow him to his last long resting-
 place, and no further, for “ there is no
 man that hath power over the spirit to retain
 the spirit; neither hath he power in the day

² Eccles. v. 15.

³ Ps. xlix. 17.

⁴ This Sermon was preached the next Sunday after
 the Duke of Wellington’s death.

of death : and there is no discharge in that war⁵.” In our highest and best estate, if in this life only we had hope, we should be miserable. Being, however, what we are, these words are our comfort and our lesson. Why then should we set such store by things which are only lent us for awhile, and which we cannot grasp in death? The very thought will limit our wishes and desires, and let “patience have her perfect work ;” in patience, then, my brethren, “possess ye your souls ;” “ye have heard of the patience of Job⁶.” The trying of our faith at the burial of our friend, will, by God’s grace, work patience ; learn we then humbly to feel and say, in the words and after the example of our suffering Lord, “Not my will, but Thine be done ;” for when God’s hand is heavy upon us, and when we are bereaved of the friends whom we loved in life, and whom we are mourning, now since they are dead, we have much need of patience ; for when we dwell upon our loss, we may be tempted to repine at our lot, unless we are enabled by prayer,

⁵ Eccles. viii. 8.

⁶ James v. 11.

and calm thought, and deep faith in Jesus, to realize the happy exchange of the miseries of this sinful world, for the quiet and unbroken rest and joy of Paradise. If God was to strip us of all which our hearts hold dear, and leave us, poor and friendless, to the pity of Job's comforters, we must not murmur nor rebel. Though one is not, and another and another of our friends be taken away from us, at a time when we valued them the most, and could spare them least, the Lord Himself will be our Friend, and will never leave us, nor forsake us, while we are ready and willing to give up all whom we love most tenderly to Him. In this life He will raise up to us relations and friends who will see in us, if we are of the household of faith, their brothers, or sisters, or parents, or children. But even, should all things seem against us, and our life appear friendless and lonely, if we do but go to our God in prayer, and pour out our griefs to Him, we shall not be alone, for the Father will be with us : still, should He, for the trial of our patience, hide His face from us, and leave us alone in a hard-hearted

world, we may not rebel; for we brought no friends with us into this world, nor can we carry them out from hence; they were given us by God.

Our Saviour was forsaken and left alone to "bear our griefs and carry our sorrows." From the dismal garden of Gethsemane to the awful hill of Calvary, we may trace His footsteps in blood. What are our light afflictions, heavy as they seem to us, to the agony and bloody sweat, and mental sufferings of our Lord? The darkest day of our mourning is but a faint shadow of the Cross. Again, when we are called to give up all which God has allowed us to keep till our death, if we be rich in faith, we are heirs of Heaven, and have all things which can make us truly rich and happy.

At best, in the midst of life, and the happiest state of our being, we are but strangers and pilgrims upon earth: "We brought nothing into this world, and we can carry nothing out:" yet all things, past, present, and to come, are yours, if ye are Christ's, even death itself is yours, so that through Christ you may rise above its

power : “ All things are yours ; whether the world, or life, or death, or things present, or things to come ; all are yours ; and ye are Christ’s ; and Christ is God’s ⁷. ”

Through Christ, if ye love Him, ye shall be made conquerors over all these things, even over the great enemy, death himself ; not that we can escape from him, but that, through the merits of the great Captain of our salvation, we may meet him with holy courage. Christ is the strength of our heart in the hour of danger. He has broken the power of death, and drawn his sting, and banished his terrors. Every thing worth having belongs to the Christian—grace, and peace, and praise, which the world cannot give nor take away ; of which death cannot rob us. Even death, with all its agonies, is but the gate of life, by which we pass through the dungeon of the grave to the Palace of Paradise. When all present things shall have passed away for ever, the better things to come, with all their blessedness, will be yours. At our first birth we brought nothing

⁷ 1 Cor. iii. 21—23.

into this world with us ; at our second and spiritual birth, Heaven becomes our native land, God our Father, the saints our brothers and sisters. We carry with us through this life the graces of a meek spirit, and such pure holy virtues as we can take away with us : “ That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the spirit is spirit.” God’s people are strangers in this world of sin : their birth-place is heaven ; partakers of the “ divine nature,” as they are by God’s grace in baptism, they turn fondly to a better country than earth, and to the city whose builder and maker is God ; when once they have been received into Christ’s Holy Church, she looks upon them as her own, even till their lives’ end, unless, indeed, they openly rebel against her, and put themselves out of her keeping.

In the Order for the Burial of the Dead, the Church grants to all who have lived and died within her pale a place among the faithful : wide indeed must be the departure from her fold, which shuts out any baptized person from the blessing of Christian burial. She gives her erring children credit for all

which the most forgiving charity can hope, and in her treatment of them only follows St. Paul, who writes to whole Churches as “to the saints”—“the elect,” as to the “sanctified in Christ Jesus,” and the “beloved in God,” because he knew, for instance, that the Christians of Rome or Corinth were outwardly of the one true fold, and because he would not judge those who might have erred and strayed from it. So (say men) our holy mother the Church speaks comfort and hope to all her children who are brought to her for burial. In a word, she seems to trust that those who have *begun* well, have been stedfast unto the *end* ⁸.

Such trust was well founded when openly to be a Christian was to be like Christ, to take up His cross daily, and follow Him, through suffering and pain, even unto death. To worship Christ *then* was to give up all which men value most; while in *our* day wealth and rank are advanced by outward religion, and avowed belief in the teaching of our National Church. In the first ages

⁸ See 4th Lecture, by F. E. Paget, M.A.

of Christianity the Apostles and their successors would, most undoubtedly, treat the *baptized* as *Saints*, both in their lives and in their deaths. When nearly all the world was shrouded in darkness, or engaged in warfare against God, would those who live carelessly, and die without repentance or fear, have ventured to risk their all, unless in *deed*, as well as in name, they were ready to count all things but loss, for the excellence of the knowledge of Christ Jesus our Lord⁹? Among us, however, things are far otherwise. Still, wherever there is a faint shadow of hope, the Church meets her dead with a kind and holy welcome; yet every parish priest must fear that there are among his flock some who outwardly are members of the Church, but are at the same time walking unworthy of their calling, and giving the enemies of God cause to blaspheme. How very few do that which the Church herself declares “generally necessary to salvation!” And of those who are once or twice a year seen at the Holy Commu-

⁹ Phil. iii. 8.

nion of the body and blood of Christ, there are some who, by their unholy living, keep others from the table of the Lord. The disobedient or the timid make the unworthiness of communicants an excuse for their own absence and wilful neglect of this sacrament. Sacraments are offered in vain, sacraments are received unworthily ; neither the terrors of the Lord nor His warnings, nor the endearments of His love, can win the sinner from his evil ways : time goes on, and he is never seen within the house of God ; or, if now and then he is there, he goes away as he came ; fast and feast, and all the seasons of the Christian year roll on unheeded ; men's inward thought is, that their houses and lands shall continue for ever ; they are living without God in the world ; walking after their own lusts, rejoicing in all which they have, as if they brought it into the world with them, and could take it away with them when they die, yet, " we brought nothing into this world, and it is certain we can carry nothing out."

At length, a wife, or child, or brother or sister, husband or friend, is torn away from

them : they are stunned by the blow, their grief is deep and sullen, and their chief care or thought is merely for the cold corpse. This world is a blank to them, and the world beyond the grave is a strange country. He whom they mourn is dead, and here they are brought to God's house, in which, perhaps for months, or even years, they have not been seen till now. They have no heart for the service in which they are called to bear a part. The very stones of their long-neglected church cry out against them. They find themselves in the house of God, but far from the gate of heaven. The burthen of earthly things is too heavy and too great for the narrow road of life, it only presses them down to the grave. They carry it with them, and hug it as if they could carry it away with them at last. O that there were such a heart in them, that even now the stern reality of death would move them to repentance! They may, up to this, only have heard of death by the hearing of the ear, but now the eye has rested on the corpse. They may have felt the icy hand, which warned them of their own last end.

They have heard something like their own death-warrant; still, while there is life there is hope of amendment. “The *living*, the living” may yet turn to God; but the *dead* man has had his earthly trial: his eye cannot now be opened to see the things that should have been for his peace; his ear no longer hears the sound of warning: “The grave cannot praise Thee, O Lord, death cannot celebrate Thee: they that go down into the pit cannot hope for Thy truth.”

Sometimes, indeed, we, the clergy, are called to honour the dead, who in their life dishonoured their Church and their Lord—They *came* not at last, but were “*carried*” to church.

Over some the sun has gone down while it was yet day, and to whom the 39th Psalm by David, over Absalom, seems best suited. Over the aged and wayworn pilgrim the 90th Psalm may be more suitably read. The Christian, however, who hears these Psalms of Moses and David, will feel that their writers at best were only looking *through a glass darkly*.

The proper lesson for the service goes on

to speak of the resurrection of the body, and the doctrine upon which our faith is built. The fact of our Blessed Lord's own resurrection is the proof and ground of our own : "I lay down my life, that I may take it again. No man taketh it from me, but I lay it down of myself. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again." "For as in Adam all die, so in Christ shall all be made alive." "The hour is coming in which all that are in their graves shall hear His voice, and shall come forth ; they that have done good, to the resurrection of life ; and they that have done evil, to the resurrection of damnation."

You must rise unto life eternal, or to undying death. O ! what a sound will that be, which shall call half the world out of the sleep in which it is wrapped, and awe the other half amid its daily tasks, and wake the dead of every age and place, ere yet the Judge appears upon His great white throne, with all His angel host ! The ten wise ones, and the ten which are foolish, must all arise to meet their Lord who is coming in the night, "For the Lord Himself shall descend

from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God.”

And now the swelling sound rises higher and clearer, and louder and louder. The world is dumb. Silence reigns. “The sign of the Son of man”—the cross—gleams awfully in the heavens. Earth, heaven and hell answer to the summons. All, from the death of Abel to the last of Adam’s offspring, with the same body in which each of them died, are waiting for the Judge. The dust awakes and comes forth. Listen to His voice now, my brethren, His words of love and hope, that we may know His voice, and rejoice in it hereafter, that He may call us by our names, and that we may follow Him. What will the load of our cares, and the many things with which we are cumbered and troubled, do for us in the day of the Lord? “We brought nothing into this world, and it is certain we can carry nothing out” but love and praise; these we may take with us.

Be sure, we *must*, after death and judgment, live either in heaven or hell. O! then, choose the better part, which cannot

be taken away from you. Life is short. Death is near. "O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death?"

One there is who knows whereof we are made, and pities us—the Saviour who reigns over death, hell, and the grave. Only let us bow down our souls and bodies to the earth, in sorrow for our sins, and look upon the cross on which He bled for us, and we shall find, to our endless comfort, that "He is able to save to the uttermost all who come to God by Him;" and, if it be not our own faults, He is as willing as He is able; His mercies are as great and as many as our miseries. "To-day, if ye will hear His voice, harden not your hearts:" bewail the past; obey His will. If we be found among the faithful, and be faithful to the end, He will bear us heavenwards to meet Himself—the Lord coming in the air.

The dead, small and great, will stand before the Judge. Death eternal will stare many in the face. Through whom shall we be delivered from the body of this death? "I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord."

SERMON XII.

JOB I. 21.

“The Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away; blessed be the name of the Lord.”

THESE are the words of one who, amid the darkest day of his sorrow, looked beyond death and the grave for that peace and comfort which his faith in the promised Redeemer had realized. The dark waters of trouble had passed over him, and swept from him every thing on earth which was most dear to his heart. Wave after wave had dashed against him; yet, from the lowest depths of his grief, he cried unto the Lord, who was with him in these waters, so that they could not overwhelm him. He had been tried in the fire of affliction as silver is tried, and his faith beamed out but the more

brightly from the gloom which surrounded him ; for not in this life only had he hope. He not only bowed his soul and body to the will of God in his heaviest trials, but was even *thankful*. God's hand was heavy upon him, but he kissed the chastening rod. In one single day the delight of his eyes, and the joy and prop of his old age—his ten children—were slain, and he himself was left a beggar in the dust ; yet no murmur escapes his lips. He had enjoyed good at the hand of the Lord, and he was willing to bear with patience what men call evil. The Father who loved him, and whom he loved, had chastened him for his good. He felt, doubtless, that God doth not willingly afflict the children of men.

All things on this side of the grave were against him ; but the unseen world was opening to his faith, a bright, holy view, of more than he had lost. He had lost all things ; and yet all things were his, because by faith he was Christ's. He saw the Redeemer through the long vista of years ; already he could well-nigh realize the first hour with his Father in heaven, with all

his family and friends who had died in faith. He knew Him who was come to destroy the power of death. His flesh and his heart were failing him, but God was “the strength of his heart, and his portion for ever.” He could in faith see through four thousand years, and verify so long beforehand the words of the Apostle, “I know whom I have believed, and am persuaded that He is able to keep that which I have committed to Him against that day¹.” His faith is enough for a *Christian*, for it enabled him not only to “endure as seeing one who is invisible,” but it made him even *thankful*. “The Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away; *blessed* be the name of the Lord.” Here, indeed, we have something very much like the teaching of St. Paul, who says, “In every thing give thanks²,” even in afflictions, because, as the Apostle adds, this is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you. Thus we are taught, that whatever befalls us comes by the will of God, who in Jesus Christ always wills what is best for us; so

¹ 2 Tim. i. 12.

² 1 Thess. v. 8.

that, with holy Job here, we are to give thanks to Him in those which we think the saddest losses and trials. That holy man had a sadder loss than we have had ; and yet, seeing the hand of God in it, he heartily gives Him thanks.

Deep grief lays such hold on our minds, with the weight of our present loss, as to make us ungrateful for the mercies we had before : indeed, for the time, we forget every thing but our loss. But let us, with the blessed sufferer, think of the Giver of this gift, which is now taken away from us, be it a father or mother, or husband or wife, or son or daughter, or sister or brother, a partner or friend. God gave this gift to us at first, and up to this time we have enjoyed it by His great goodness. And do we now forget all the comfort we have had in it, or only think of it to mourn over it, now that it is gone ? Do we owe no thanks to God for the time which He has spared our friend to us ? When therefore we lose a brother or sister, or wife or friend, who was dear to us in life, we ought to rejoice that we had such a dear one, rather than mourn or

repine that we had lost him; for he was from the first only lent to us by God; and when he was taken, he was but called by the great Giver. God gave us what was His, and not ours; and in taking such an one away, He is but recalling His own, which was only lent for a time. When therefore we sorrow as men without hope for our dead, we seem to forget what God hath given us, what He hath done for us; and, by our selfish repining, we act as if we were the true masters and owners of those who are gone. Whereas, good men, having the use of these, look upon them as rightly belonging to God; and so they know and feel beforehand, that it is lawful for the Lord to take back His own again whenever He pleaseth, and by this means the loss of them is borne much more easily. And truly if we forget His goodness, the great Lord and kind Giver of all things may justly take another and another of His gifts from us, to check our foolishness and our mistake, and to prove to us that He is the real owner of all that we are and have. The best way to keep and to enjoy that which is still spared to us, is

to praise the Giver of all good for His mercy in giving and sparing us for a time the blessing which we may no longer enjoy. We cannot heartily praise Him, and bless His holy name, while our mind is darkly brooding over our own loss. It was by God's goodness that we ever enjoyed His gift; and now that it is gone, we give it up to Him, knowing that He will keep that safely which is His own; and though we cannot and would not recal our loved dead to this life, we may, through God's mercy, join them in the world to come.

I know the Lord gave me *freely* all that I once enjoyed; He might have taken it long ago. The Lord, whose own it was, *hath* now *taken* away this blessing from me, which is with the right owner. The friend whom I have lost for a time, is happier with Him than with me; I may not therefore complain: "It is the Lord: let Him do that which seemeth Him good." He has taken from me far less than He gave: "Blessed be the name of the Lord."

We have already for some time been dwelling on the FIRST PART of the funeral service,

at the entrance of the church, which is entirely Holy Writ, viz. the passages from—

First. John xi. 25, 26. Job xix. 25—27; which are to enliven our faith before we enter God's house :

Second. Tim. vi. 7; to give us patience :

Third. Job i. 21 ; to call forth our thankfulness.

We have merely glanced at the SECOND PART of the office performed *within* the church, which is also nothing but Scripture, and which brings before us the truth and the manner of the resurrection. We have also briefly passed over the THIRD PART *at the grave*, where we join in the prayers which are first general, as the lesser Litany and the Lord's Prayer, then suited to the solemn matter which has brought us together.

Let us now finally recal and gather up in our minds the great and awful truths on which we have been thinking, and review them in their natural order.

To follow a dear friend to the grave, is an office so sad, that the Church has called in the aids of religion to enable us to bear it the more easily.

The priest meets the mourners, clothed as he is in white, which is a joyful colour, and that in which the blessed angels are clothed. The gospel of peace is heard amid the abodes of the dead, “that we, through patience and comfort of the Scriptures, might have hope³.” The *first sentence* has long and often formed part of the burial service of the Western and Eastern Churches; from this Scripture we learn that the body of our brother or sister now dead, is alive, and his corpse, which we are now following, shall rise again as soon as our Lord shall call for it. Our risen Lord can raise our souls from spiritual, as well as our bodies from natural death, let us therefore take off our eyes and our thoughts from the bier, and look up to Him, who, though sin and death stand in the way, is both able and willing to bring us to the life that never shall have an end. Our friend who is dead in Christ is not to be accounted dead, because his soul lives, and his body shall be united to it again, and live together with it throughout eternity.

³ Rom. xv. 4.

It is wonderful that Job, who lived among the Gentiles so long before our Saviour's death and rising again, should see so clearly his own resurrection at the last day. And shall *we*, who know that Christ *has already risen*, show less faith than He had?

We may read the passage thus, "I know that my Redeemer liveth, and that I shall rise out of the earth at the last day, and shall be covered again with my skin, and shall see God in my flesh; yea, I myself shall behold Him, not with other, but with these same eyes⁴;" as if he had said, "I shall see Him with the same form, and figure, and face, so as to be known by my former friends." Dives, in the parable, is made to know Lazarus; and when the Blessed Jesus had risen from the dead, He was known to His disciples, and the saints that then arose were known by their proper features. So that Christians only lose the sight of the *faithful dead* for a season. The time will come when they and we both shall see God and our Saviour; yes, and shall know and see each other with these very eyes.

⁴ Ita Vulg. Lat. et ita ferè LXX.

If we have this faith, we cannot be much and long cast down. Indeed, each of us, through Him who has overcome death, can say, "THOUGH AFTER I have put off MY SKIN, and laid down this garment of flesh, worms shall feed on me ; yet, IN MY FLESH, even in the same body I now have, SHALL I SEE God my Saviour coming to judgment." "We brought nothing into this world, and it is certain we can carry nothing out." What we had was only useful to us while we were in the flesh. We may, then, cheerfully leave it all behind us. Our part on earth having been done, and our day ended, we are undressed for our bed—the grave. We can carry neither friends nor wealth away with us when we die. We were born naked : let us be willing to part with all when death comes ; and let us live waiting for it, and watching for the coming of our Lord.

"THE LORD GAVE, AND THE LORD HATH TAKEN AWAY ; BLESSED BE THE NAME OF THE LORD."

In our present loss, let us remember not only the blessings which are left us, but thank God for the gifts which we no longer

enjoy. Let each of us rather praise Him for the comfort which we had once, and say, "BLESSED BE THE NAME OF THE LORD" for this, as well as for all His dealings towards me.

In the *second part* of the service, the Psalms and Lessons used *in the church*, we are taught to look upon our dead with a sort of calm and holy joy; indeed, the wiser of the heathens were wont to bury their dead with rejoicings, and to lament over those that were newly born, since they were coming into a miserable world, which the dead was freed from. Loving looks, however, fond smiles, and glad words, welcome the *Christian* child into this world. The thankful mother "remembereth no more the anguish, for joy that a man is born into the world;" and the voice of joy and thanksgiving hails the second happier birth at the font; and if the rest of his life be according to this good beginning, at his death, the believers' winged hope and praise will brightly rise above their sorrow⁵.

⁵ See 1st vol. of these Sermons, 2nd edit. p. 244.

Among Christians, thanksgiving was offered by singing of psalms and hymns even from the first ages.

The Greek Rubric says, "When they come into the church, the body being set down in the lower end thereof, let them begin to sing, &c." The like use of singing psalms there is also in the Latin Church ⁶.

In the 29th Psalm we have a funeral elegy, mournful and sweet, on the fading of beauty, when death comes as it came upon the son of the Psalmist. David turned to God for his sole comfort, and only gave vent to his grief in prayers, and calm holy words. From him let us learn to place our hope only in God, who is ever the same; we are strangers on earth, only travelling through this world, and cannot be at home with our Father who is in heaven, until we pass out of the flesh ⁷.

⁶ See Comber's Companion to the Temple.—Burial of the Dead.

⁷ See Ps. xxxix. 12. Gen. xlvii. 9. 2 Cor. v. 6—8. Heb. xi. 13. 1 Pet. xi. 11. Also see the Sermon called the Saint's Confession, by Rev. H. Blunt, M.A.

The 90th Psalm, of which Moses is the author, shows us what should be our thoughts, when we have a funeral before our eyes; it also teaches us how we are, even in grief, "to pray, and not to faint." It is a sharp and awful rebuke to all, who, at a neighbour's funeral, spend the time of the service, either within or outside the church, in brutish folly or light talking. When we cannot feel for others, nor for ourselves, nor consider our latter end, with death before our eyes, we must, indeed, be far gone in wickedness.

My brethren, we should take a lesson from the grave, and, from this day forward, employ ourselves in works of piety and holiness, on which we may ask God's blessing. "Lord, PROSPER THOU THE WORK OF OUR HANDS, by bestowing Thy Spirit upon us, that we may work out our own salvation: O prosper Thy work to Thy glory and our endless joy."

The proper Lesson, taken from 1 Cor. xv., first proves the certainty of the resurrection; secondly, answers the questions which are asked about it; thirdly, shows

the use which is to be made of the whole. The 32nd verse is remarkable, and may be worded thus, “ If, after the manner of men cast to the lions, in my zeal for the truth, I have fought with beasts of human shape at Ephesus, I mean with Demetrius, and his brutish companions, what advantageth it me, if the dead rise not, to expose myself thus to be torn in pieces by them, who, like unreasonable creatures, answered my arguments only with rage and clamour? If I were not sure of another and a better life than this, I should be reckoned no wiser than a fool for casting away this life which I now have; were there not a world to come, to eat, and to drink, and to feast, without one holy thought or fear for tomorrow, would be the wiser course. But, for my own part, I am not moved, either by words or deeds, to give up the everlasting joys of Paradise for the fading flowers of this dying world.” From the 41st verse we may gather, that, though all saints will be placed in the same heaven, yet they will have a lesser or greater, a lower or higher degree in glory, according as they have

done or suffered more or less for the name of Christ. Finally, by the lesson we are taught to be steadfast in the faith and hope of heaven, and to show our deep piety always, by abounding in these great duties of charity and goodness, which is the work required of the Lord from you, and that to which He has promised so great and sure reward : “ YOUR LABOUR IS NOT IN VAIN IN THE LORD.” When the pains of the Christian are ended, his joys begin ; with saints and angels the Christian will live in endless happiness.

Having acknowledged our dead friend to have lived and died in the peace of the Church, and the communion of saints, by bringing his body into the place where his brethren worship God, we next pass on to the *third part* of the service, in which we join *at the grave*,—the bed of rest ; and while men are making ready the corpse, and putting it into it, our Church leads us to think not only of the departed, but of our own coming end. When the body is stript of all but its grave dress, it is wont to speak to us

silently, and strike us with holy fear of death : we feel that we are born of a woman who was liable to death herself, and therefore could bring forth none but dying children. How little a time is it since our friend came forth out of his mother's womb ! And now he is returning into the womb of our common mother earth ! How short a space is it since all rejoiced at his birth ! And, perhaps, many of those who stand weeping at his grave, look back to his first entrance into this world, and count up the few short days between his birth and his death. "MAN THAT IS BORN OF A WOMAN," and therefore born in sin, "HATH BUT A SHORT TIME TO LIVE;" his few and evil days are "FULL OF MISERY." This little space has many and great troubles ; miseries of the body, miseries of the mind, miseries which way soever we turn : we wept when we first entered this scene of sorrow, as if we had foreseen the evils we were to meet with. Since then our life is so troublesome, in pity to us, it is very short : "THE DAYS OF MAN ARE BUT AS GRASS, FOR HE FLOURISHETH AS

A FLOWER OF THE FIELD ⁸.” We are ever changing and going down step by step every day nearer to the grave, from whose open mouth we hear a lesson, and read our warning ¹.

“ IN THE MIDST OF LIFE WE ARE IN DEATH ;” as soon as we were born, we began to draw to our end ². Our brother is lately gone, and we are all going very shortly, nor does any of us know who shall be next, or how soon it may be his turn. Let us therefore beg mercy, while mercy may be found. We are not worthy to look up unto Thee : “ YET, O LORD GOD MOST HOLY, O LORD MOST MIGHTY, O HOLY AND MOST MERCIFUL SAVIOUR, DELIVER US NOT INTO THE BITTER PAINS OF ETERNAL DEATH.”

This seems a triple or threefold call upon the whole Trinity to favour and further this prayer, that we may be delivered from the second death ; this is the death we are to pray against, especially when we stand by

⁸ Ps. ciii. 15.

¹ See Comber's Companion to the Temple.—The Burial of the Dead. Part IV.

² Wisd. v. 15.

the grave, when our nature begins to shrink at the ghastly sight, and almost trembles to think to what it must soon come.

“SHUT NOT THY MERCIFUL EARS TO OUR PRAYER, BUT SPARE US, LORD MOST HOLY, O GOD MOST MIGHTY, O HOLY AND MERCIFUL SAVIOUR, THOU MOST WORTHY JUDGE ETERNAL, SUFFER US NOT, AT OUR LAST HOUR, FOR ANY PAINS OF DEATH TO FALL FROM THEE; we here pray that we may meet death and bear it quietly, we pray that our faith may be equal to our pains, so that our last struggle may not make us fall away from God.

“FORASMUCH AS IT HATH PLEASSED ALMIGHTY GOD OF HIS GREAT MERCY TO TAKE UNTO HIMSELF THE SOUL OF OUR DEAR BROTHER HERE DEPARTED, WE THEREFORE COMMIT HIS BODY TO THE GROUND, EARTH TO EARTH, ASHES TO ASHES, DUST TO DUST.” When the soul by which the body lives is once recalled by Him that first placed it therein, death follows. The soul is called to God, the body rests in the womb of the earth, until it comes forth once more into life at the last day. Though the jewel is no

longer in the casket, yet the body, the work of God, the object of His care, the house of the soul, the now fallen temple of the spirit, will not be suffered to perish for ever; wherefore we lay it decently in the narrow bed of the grave, and wait for its awakening on the morning of the resurrection; for man was made of dust at first, and to dust he will turn again as soon as the soul is gone; so that the putting the body into the ground, is no more than laying EARTH TO EARTH, and ASHES TO ASHES. Why then is dust and ashes proud³? We commit the souls of the dead to God, and their bodies to the grave, because WE HAVE A "SURE AND CERTAIN HOPE OF THE RESURRECTION TO ETERNAL LIFE." If we did not hope for this, and believe it, the care and cost bestowed on the dead were vain⁴; we have this hope THROUGH OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST, who did raise His own body from the grave, and made it glorious. We see in what manner He will work this change: He will take away all which is vile in our body, and make it like

³ Ecclus. x. 9.

⁴ Comber on the Solemn Interment.

His own body ; but this we cannot fully realize until we daily pray to be made like Him, and hourly strive to do His will, and, even while we are in our bodies, “ pass from death unto life.” In the midst of life we are in death, and in the midst of death we are in life. We are in the midst of a seen, and in the midst of an unseen world, our body, which is seen, lives on earth, our soul, which is unseen, lives with the Lord, who is our life, and lives therefore by faith in heaven. In the world which we see, our bodies are in the midst of death, which surrounds us whichever way we look. “ For all flesh is as grass, and all the glory of man as the flower of grass :” we are fading away, and falling into the ground, we are going down step by step, day by day, to the grave ; and that is only wise to be done, which at the last you shall wish you had done. Let each of you say to himself, “ Were I about to die, would I do this ?” While we are yet in the flesh, death reigns over our bodies, and, if Christ abide not with us, over our souls. We are still in a world of death, away from our Father’s house, and an endless life ;

whether we be only now striking into the narrow path, or whether God is bringing to our sight the end of our journey. Let us press heavenwards, morning by morning, evening by evening: let us think of that morning which has no evening, and through God's mercy try to escape the horrors of that night which has no morning. Evening by evening set before you that night "wherein no man can work." Place daily before your eyes your end, read it in the short-lived flower, hear it in the passing bell. Let this present advent⁵ tell you that our Lord's coming draweth nigh; and with this dying year, see the sure signs of the world's death, and the thickening tokens of thine own.

There are many voices within us, and about us, warning us of the coming hour of death. The very changes which befall our bodies and our minds have a speech and language which all men can understand: grey hairs and sinking strength, failing sight, hearing, speech, tell us that we are near our end, we are not what we were, our

⁵ This Sermon was preached in Advent.

glowing views of life, our thrilling hopes are gone. We, like the world, have lost our youth, and our time begins to wax old.

There is that in each of us, which reminds him how soon he himself shall be dust and ashes; there is that in the world, which speaks of judgment and the world to come. In the midst of life we are in death, we hang between both the seen and the unseen worlds, in death, in life, in two worlds, and are passing midway from the *seen* to the *unseen*. Would men but open their eyes, they might see death like a sword, which cuts down the body, hanging over them by a single hair; but they turn away from this frightful sight which chills their blood. They hide themselves as it were in the clefts of the earth, and dare not think, or look, or pass, beyond or above this lower world. We are between two worlds, or rather partly in one and partly in the other: to fleshly men this world is all in all, they have no heart or mind for any thing higher or better. The natural man makes the world his God, and his God the world. He knows nothing of the unseen world, and

cares nothing for it, because it is spiritually discerned, and because it is shut out from his view by the dark veil which lust has drawn over him; man cannot live the life of sense, and look upon the pure joys of the unseen life which is hid with God. His ear cannot hear the sweet song of God's love and man's bliss; for the tumult and roar of this outward world drown all the whispers of lingering grace. Yet in the midst of this death, and in the midst of this seen and unseen world, we have the earnest of heaven, the "first fruits of the Spirit," the promise of life. If we will only try to awake from the death of sin and struggle daily to rise to holiness, while we are yet on this side of the grave, we have hope in the source of life. Too long has the world been stealing step by step upon our soul; too long have we clung to this bad world; too long have we at best halted between two opinions, and between two worlds; even amid the ghostly sights and dismal sounds of death: still we may die to the world and live to God, and even in this state of things be in the midst of life. To penitent Chris-

tians, dead to every thing but to Him, we say, “Ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God.” Let us rise to Him who is unseen, and learn from Him to bless Him for what He has given us, and what He has taken from us. May He pour out His hidden life into our souls, and fill us with His praises in life and in death. “Blessed be the name of the Lord.”

S E R M O N XIII.

REV. XIV. 13.

“ *I heard a voice from heaven saying unto me, Write, Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord from henceforth: Yea, saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their labours.*”

THE Spirit of God declares that all holy persons dead, are blessed and happy even now. The Holy Ghost teaches us more here by the phrase *resting from their labours*, than a bare freedom from the evils of life. Being more than conquerors through Him who loved them, Christians, after their struggles and warfare against the world and the flesh, rest in glory and bliss. The *dead* rest from their labours, but *we* are in the midst of our toils; the *dead* can sin *no more*,

but *we* are in the midst of dangers, and still may sin. *Their* sentence is past, but *ours* is to come; *they* may, if they died in Christ, already be called *blessed*, so may not we in this sense, for even the heathens thought they were not truly blessed before their death. “WE GIVE THEE HEARTY THANKS, FOR THAT IT HATH PLEASD THEE TO DELIVER THIS OUR BROTHER OUT OF THE MISERIES OF THIS SINFUL WORLD.” Surely while we feel our own loss, we should thank God that He has snatched one of us out of the misery of sin, and saved him from the storms of this bad world. WE GIVE GOD HEARTY THANKS, because He has taken away our friend from the evil to come, and sheltered him with His mercy; for to die is gain to the good man, and a matter for our hymns of thanksgiving.

“ BESEECHING THEE, THAT IT MAY PLEASE THEE, OF THY GRACIOUS GOODNESS, SHORTLY TO ACCOMPLISH THE NUMBER OF THINE ELECT, AND TO HASTEN THY KINGDOM; THAT WE, WITH ALL THOSE THAT ARE DEPARTED IN THE TRUE FAITH OF THY HOLY NAME, MAY HAVE OUR PERFECT CONSUMMATION AND BLISS, BOTH

IN BODY AND SOUL, IN THY ETERNAL AND EVERLASTING GLORY, THROUGH JESUS CHRIST OUR LORD. AMEN." The act of praise going before these words reminds us of the Lord's Prayer, "Hallowed be Thy name;" and these latter words are like the prayer, "Thy kingdom come;" surely every thing within us and about us leads us to pray for hastening this blessed time, and to say, "Lord Jesus, come quickly¹." Neither the saints who have passed out of the flesh, nor we who are still in this world, have any perfect happiness as yet: we are imperfect in body and soul; for till the general resurrection the bliss of the departed is not full and final, "*that they without us should not be made perfect*²." So that they as well as we do wish and pray for the coming of this last day, and the coming of Christ's kingdom of glory; for not until all the Church below and the Church above are united in heaven, under their great Head in triumph, can the bliss of body and soul be perfect. The warfare of what is called the *Church militant*

¹ Rev. xxii. 20.

² Heb. xi. 40.

must be at an end, ere her joys are full and undying in the Church of just men made perfect, and in Christ's glorious kingdom. We are content to praise God for the happiness that the departed Christians have at present, and to wish that ourselves may share in this joy, but we forbear to go further³. This prayer seems to regard the whole company; whereas the *last* prayer or collect is said for the comfort of the kindred and friends of the dead. *First*. It speaks of the happy resurrection of the true believer; it forbids us to grieve without hope for our dead. *Secondly*. There is a prayer for ourselves. *Thirdly*. We are called upon to desire a part in the first resurrection, that we may be happy in death, rise joyfully from the grave, and hear the blessed sentence granting us eternal glory. And, *lastly*, we ask all this through our Lord Jesus Christ. When we can, upon just grounds, realize the belief that the Christian friend whom we have lost for a time, is "not dead but sleepeth;" that he is only taking a

³ See Comber on the First Prayer at the Grave.

holy sleep, then, when sleep daily falls upon us, we may learn from it to die daily to the world, and also at last, really do that *once*, which we so *often* do in a *figure*. Christianity teaches that those who sleep in the dust will, if they have died in Christ, awake as surely as those who at night sleep in their beds. Nay, that we ever awake from our natural sleep in our beds is far less certain, than that we shall awake from our grave. "Our brethren," says St. Cyprian, "who, by God's call, are freed from this evil world, are not to be lamented excessively, since we know that they are not lost, but sent before us. Wherefore when we desire to go after them; we must not put on *black*, because they have received *white robes* ⁴."

“ WE MEEKLY BESEECH THEE, O FATHER, TO RAISE US FROM THE DEATH OF SIN UNTO THE LIFE OF RIGHTEOUSNESS; THAT, WHEN WE SHALL DEPART THIS LIFE, WE MAY REST IN HIM, AS OUR HOPE IS THIS OUR BROTHER DOTH.”

The person now buried, and of whom we with charity hope so much, "is by the

⁴ Cypr. de Mortal.

Church supposed to have confessed, and repented of his sins, to have been absolved, and to have received the holy sacrament according to her directions; and surely she may well judge and hope the best concerning those who are thus dressed for the grave⁵.”

On the other hand, it is a very old rule to speak the best of the dead: indeed, the dead were called “*the good*.” The service moves every one at the funeral to pray that he himself may be raised up from death here, otherwise the Church holds out no hope of a happy death and a joyful resurrection—the departed Christian had passed from death unto life before he left us: he had his share in the work of grace before he entered into glory. We must serve and weep in the Church below, before we can reign and rejoice in the Church above.

“AND THAT, AT THE GENERAL RESURRECTION AT THE LAST DAY, WE MAY BE FOUND ACCEPTABLE IN THY SIGHT; AND RECEIVE THAT BLESSING, WHICH THY WELL-BELOVED

⁵ See Comber, vol. iv. p. 466. Ed. of M.DCCC.XLI.

SON SHALL THEN PRONOUNCE TO ALL THAT LOVE AND FEAR THEE, SAYING, COME, YE BLESSED CHILDREN OF MY FATHER, RECEIVE THE KINGDOM PREPARED FOR YOU FROM THE BEGINNING OF THE WORLD: GRANT THIS, WE BESEECH THEE, O MERCIFUL FATHER, THROUGH JESUS CHRIST, OUR MEDIATOR AND REDEEMER. AMEN." As to our brother who is gone, we can at best but speak and live in hope; but for ourselves, we must strive that we may by holiness here be fitted for happiness hereafter, and be made meet to become partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light; for in vain do we hope to be found among the blessed at the last day, if we do not please God now. God is all holy, and heaven is a most holy place, the saints and angels are all holy, nor can any dwell among them, unless they be first made holy. How can we think it possible for an evil man to carry his wickedness and lust and envy and pride with him to God's glorious kingdom? Heaven would be no heaven to such an one. But to the holy, one smile of the Judge will be heaven.

Let us, then, turn from the grave thought-

fully, and strive by holiness to come, through Christ, to the happiness to which our dead are gone before us. The Lord pardon and amend us all, and turn us from the evil of our ways, and enable us so to live that we may be enlightened through the shades of death, by the bright beaming of His grace, and guided by His hand, and cheered by His voice, when our souls are going out of our bodies. But, brethren, to be sure of an easy and a truly blessed death, we should ever be watching, and praying, and lifting up our heart to God. When a man is *dying* it is then too late for him to *begin to live*. If *without* holiness no man shall see God; how utterly hopeless seems the case of him who has lived a wicked life all his days, and is now past living, and therefore past living a holy life! What works of holiness can be done by a man on his dying bed? His day is going down in darkness, his time of work is over, his account is closing, and he must expect his reward according to what he has already done. The eleventh hour *may* be passed, the door of pardon *may* be shut. When in death

men *begin* to cry out, "Lord, Lord, open unto us," their cry may be too late. But you believe that a true penitent may find mercy at the last gasp, even so, all who *truly* repent of their sins, sooner or later, will through Christ be saved; but the dying sorrows and the dying vows of a sinner, are no *proofs* of that state of heart which can find pardon with God. Repentance after baptism is a godly sorrow for sin; but it is also a thorough change of mind, and, more than all this, *amendment of life*. The very terms of our baptism bind us to a death unto sin, and a new birth unto holiness. A man must be but once born, whether naturally or spiritually. The Christian, having "tasted the heavenly gift, and having been made a partaker of the Holy Ghost" at baptism, when he sins against light and grace, and falls away, is in danger of God's wrath, which possibly is the reason why St. Peter tells of such apostates, that their latter end is worse than their beginning⁶.

⁶ 2 Pet. ii. 20. See Sherlock on Death, 28th edit. p. 211.

At baptism God receives us to grace and mercy upon solemn vows of living to Him. But He has nowhere promised to accept our dying vows instead of holy obedience and a life of good works. The Gospel requires real actual holiness of life, and when God cuts men off in their sins without any time to reform their lives, we must fear they have grieved His Spirit so often and so long, that even His long-suffering pity endures no further. So says Wisdom, "Because I have called, and ye refused; I have stretched out my hand, and no man regarded; I also will laugh at your calamity, I will mock when your fear cometh; Then shall they call upon me, but I will not answer; they shall seek me early, but they shall not find me⁷." We may not judge the state of such men; but if God grant forgiveness to such a death-bed repentance, which cannot bear any fruits, it is more than the Gospel has promised, and more than He has sent us to preach. There is nothing too hard or too good for the Lord; but we

⁷ Prov. i. 24.

may not rest our hopes on our own mere notions of His mercy and His love ; we dare not trust that mere *dying* vows or prayers or griefs will take a man to heaven : no words, nor tears, nor vows were thought enough in early Christian times to restore the fallen to the peace of the Church—they had much to *do*, and much to *suffer*, before they were treated in life and in death as true Christians. Now if the early Christians had thought, as many of us now think, or seem to think, that sorrow for sin and fruitless vows, or even fancied conversion, and unreal sights in the sick room, brought down God's pardon upon the dying, why did not the Church forgive such people, and receive them into her bosom again, without such a long and painful trial⁸ ?

“ Let no man deceive you : he that doeth righteousness is righteous, even as He is righteous. He that committeth sin is of the devil ; for the devil sinneth from the beginning. For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that He might destroy the works

⁸ See Sherlock on Death, p. 217.

of the devil. Whosoever is born of God doth not commit sin ; for His seed remaineth in Him : and he cannot sin, because he is born of God. In this the children of God are manifest, and the children of the devil : whosoever doeth not righteousness is not of God, neither he that loveth not his brother⁹.”

Let no man, then, cheat himself with vain hopes when he comes to die. Our account must be always ready, our house in order, our lights burning, our watch hourly. We must be watching for death and looking for our Lord. “ Watch, therefore ; for ye know neither the day nor the hour wherein the Son of Man cometh.” So may we all pass the time of our sojourning here with fear.

Our friend is dead—we have looked upon that coffin lowered into that dark house whence there is no return, the sad scene is floating before our eyes. Strip him who is gone of the life which is with God in Christ, and what is left ? a poor loathsome body, a lump of earth, a feast for worms. Scarcely four days have passed since he died, yet

⁹ John iii. 7—10.

now neither the wife of his bosom, nor the children who loved him, not one could now stand near him ; he is only fit for the bowels of the earth. But when we turn from the thoughts of the grave and its rottenness to Him who robbed it of its victory, and made it the gate of heaven to all believers, and when we realize by faith the glorious body into which, through Christ, the corpse will be changed, our hearts are lightened, and our eyes look upward. We hear as it were a voice from heaven, saying, “ Blessed are the dead that die in the Lord ; for they rest from their labours.” The dead who die in the Lord, live in Him, are one with Him, and He is one with them. The Church is the body of Christ, as the Gospel says : therefore to live truly in the Church, is to live in Him ; to die a faithful receiver of the body and blood of Christ, is to die in His Church, that is, to die in Christ ! Whether, therefore, living or dying we be true members of His Church, living or dying we are in Him. But branches really withered are not in the vine, but cast forth

to be burned. We must be fruitful in good works.

The two great sacraments of the Gospel bring us into this nearness and union with Christ, so that, by His mercy, through these we are raised up into Him. Thus, whether we live we live unto Him, or whether we die we die unto Him; so that living and dying we are His¹.

The believer's life is hid in Christ, he is buried with Christ². We must die with Him first, if we would live in light with Him for ever. If we would escape the second death, we must, while in this world, die daily to our sins, and daily rise to Him and with Him.

Seek then, brethren, while you may, by prayer, by good and holy works of love, through the pity of Jesus Christ, to escape the second death, worse even than the corruption of the grave; an undying death it is, "where their worm dieth not, and their fire is not quenched³."

¹ Rom. xiv. 8.

² Rom. vi. 4.

³ Mark ix. 48.

IF AT THE GENERAL RESURRECTION AT THE LAST DAY, ye would not rise to this woeful state, turn now to God with weeping, with fasting, with prayer. Leave the guilty world ; it is wrong, and as you cannot set it right, hang not your life or your joy upon its promises—they are lies, lean not upon it ; it will pierce you to the quick ; feed not upon its husks, they will famish your soul. Strive, seek to live above it, “to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord⁴.”

Let us rise hourly in His Spirit, in faith, in hope, in love, in joy, that we may hereafter be raised in Him, and with Him, to glory.

“BLESSED ARE THE DEAD WHICH DIE IN THE LORD.”

Let us then set the Blessed Saviour always before our eyes, and look up to His cross, and walk in His steps ; live less like the world, and follow the Captain of our Salvation, who has overcome the world, death, and the grave.

In the world we must be, but not *of* it.

⁴ Rom. vi. 11.

Count nothing hard which He asks, but do good to His poor ones, that at the last He may reckon it as done to Himself. He will thus make these poor bodies of ours yield to the Spirit ; He will bring our souls towards heaven : He died to destroy death *in* us and *for* us : He died to save us from hell : He rose to carry us to heaven : He toiled for us, and in pains, poverty, and griefs, laboured for us : He entered not into His own glory without suffering, and weariness, and death : He finished His work of mercy, then entered into His rest. All His followers of every age have toiled along the narrow painful path which leads to life. He bears our burdens and carries our sorrows ; He is touched with a feeling of our infirmities, and says, “ Take My yoke upon you, and learn of Me ; for I am meek and lowly in heart : and ye shall find rest unto your souls⁵.” To take the yoke of Christ, is to bend entirely to His will ; even as He Himself did not His own will, but the will of Him who sent Him. His will must be

⁵ Matt. xi. 29.

every thing to us. To all who thus bear His yoke He has promised rest. O that we had no will but His! Then the heaviest griefs would seem light, which bring us nearer to Him in whom is our rest here and hereafter—*rest* from pain of body and pain of mind, unbroken *rest from sin*: such is the rest that remaineth for the people of God. To us who are alive, what a sure and holy comfort it is to look forward to a day when our last battle will have been fought—our course finished—our tears wiped from our eyes—our sorrows over—our joys begun!

A man may bear his worst sufferings with a good heart, when he knows that he shall quickly see an end of them, that death will place him beyond their reach: “There the wicked cease from troubling; and there the weary be at rest. There the prisoners rest together; they hear not the voice of the oppressor. The small and great are there; and the servant is free from his master⁶.”

Men however, who are under a sense of guilt, should be more afraid of offending

⁶ Job iii. 17—19.

God, than they are of all the evils of this world. We must begin to live at once. Let us not fall back into sin and death again, nor be weary in well doing; for we are still but on a journey, and are as pilgrims. We must, as good soldiers, bear up against the trials of our lot, and endure to the end. Brethren, “ye are not as yet come to the rest and to the inheritance, which the Lord your God giveth you⁷.”

The Lord your God, your Saviour, has purchased this rest for you; He gives it you freely; He gives you back again to heaven and to endless life. Seek then to lay aside every weight, and the sin which does so easily beset you, and run with patience the race which is set before you, looking unto Jesus as the author and finisher of your faith, that you may be found among the faithful who live and die in Him, and through Him have a “right to the tree of life.”

May we all be found among the blessed dead, who rest from their labours and from

⁷ Deut. xii. 9.

every work, save the holy and undying song of praise, from which the redeemed ones “rest not day nor night, while they stand before the throne and before the Lamb, clothed in white robes.” Even here below let us join in the hymn of the spirits of the just, the strain of saints in heaven, and saints on earth, singing with one heart and voice, “Thou hast redeemed us to God by Thy blood.” May we often and deeply sigh and long after this blessed end; for what can we have which is so good, what so well worth our wishes and our prayers, our struggles and our toils? The land of rest—the prize—the crown of victory—the tree of life—lie full in view, and cheer us onward. Round the centre of happiness, the dwelling of God, we encircle our hopes and our wishes. As the flame rises towards heaven, so let the fire of your love go up brightly towards Him who is love. As the light-loving flower turns to the natural sun in the heavens, so turn us, O Lord, and we shall be turned unto Thyself, the cloudless Sun of Righteousness. Lift up your hearts, my brethren, unto the Lord; and, amid the

dry and dreary desert of the world, let us thirst for the living streams of His grace, as the parched and panting stag longs for the cooling brook ; let our words and our wishes, our labours and our prayers, be earnest, unceasing, fruitful, in every good work : wishes are weak and useless which pass not into deeds. To be looking at the road, or even walking in it for a time, will not take us to the place of peace where rest the holy dead who lived and died in Christ. We must be fitted for heaven, or heaven will not be suited or given to us. The land of the blessed, which lies beyond the flood of time, is not peopled by sayers of good things or by mere wishers ; it is not filled by barren and slothful souls. But how can we, dust and ashes as we are, deserve such unspeakable bliss? By walking daily, through sorrow and joy, through sickness and health, in the footsteps of our Saviour, bearing His cross, resting on His merits, leaning on His love, asking for His Spirit. Thus, through Him who loved us, and gave Himself for us, we are more than conquerors. In a word, make use of every means which

He has put within your reach. If we are in the Church, which is that holy body of which her Lord Jesus Christ is the Head, we shall be joining ourselves in heart, in mind, in worship, and in prayer, to the dead who have died in the Lord, who have passed through the dangers of this bad world, and are living with the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Ghost, and all the saints. Come, brethren, let us hasten to rejoin our parents, our friends, our neighbours, and to mingle with them, and all the citizens of heaven; and to swell the holy hymn which sweeps through heaven in praise to God. It was for Himself that God made us at first. It is for Him that we were made one in Christ Jesus, and born a second time; born of water and His Spirit, that we might know and serve Him in this world, that we might for ever bless and praise Him in the next. All is vain and false which does not tend to this end. How far and widely then do poor worldlings stray, the falsely wise, who have placed their end and wealth, their all, in riches or honour, in the glare of the world, or fleshly delight!

Foolish are they who seek for happiness where they will never find it, blind are they who will not seek it where alone it is to be found. Seek we then that wisdom which is from above, which is first pure, and then peaceable, that we may see and value those things which neither time nor death can take from us. God has raised us above all things on earth, above *ourselves*, that we might go up to Him in spirit and in heart here, and in our souls hereafter. Even in this life we have some weak rays of His glory, which shine in the beauty of holiness, or in the wonders of his works ; enough to give us a glimpse and foretaste of light, and life, and joy, without a veil, without a cloud, enough to recall us from sin and death, to lift us up from the dust of the ground, and the prison of our bondage. Our Lord came down to this world of death : He poured upon it His sweat and blood. Think, brethren, for what you were made ; the high happiness for which you are sent into this world ; and at every turn of your weary pilgrimage, keep looking out for the end of

your journey—the realms of peace, where, through the love and pity of your Saviour, you may repose on the bosom of eternal rest. But to have any thoughts worthy of God, we must, as it were, rise out of ourselves, we must see with eyes of faith, and hear with ears attuned to heavenly sounds. Before we go hence and be no more seen, we should listen to the voice from heaven, saying, “Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord.”

When we shall, sooner or later, awake from the short slumber of our earthly life, how will the brightest scenes of time fade from our view like a dream! how worthless, nay, worse than worthless will be all the false goods of this dying world!

In the order of nature, the body of man is nothing but dust and ashes, full of wants and pains, and after all only fitted for the grave. Nothing is so mean and sad as man in *himself*; nothing so great and happy as he is in *Christ Jesus*.

This world is his dark and cloudy restless night; the next, his light, his life, his rest,

his peace, his bright endless day. Well then and gladly may we listen here below to the heavenly strain—"Blessed are the dead that die in the Lord ; for they rest from their labours."

S E R M O N X I V .

P S A L M X C V . 1 .

“O come, let us sing unto the Lord.”

THE Psalm from which our text is taken is used at the beginning of Morning Prayer, and forcibly sets forth the feelings with which a pious mind draws near to God. It was chanted by the Jews at the opening of their temple service, and has for ages formed part of the divine service of the Christian Church. It begins, “O come, let us sing unto the Lord; let us heartily rejoice in the strength of our salvation;” and then, because we should at all times, when we come before God, bring with us a thankful heart, it goes on to say, “Let us come before His presence with thanksgiving, and show ourselves glad in Him

with Psalms ;” and for this reason, “ For the Lord is a great God, and a great King above all gods. In His hand are all the corners of the earth, and the strength of the hills is His also.” Then comes the thought of His greatness, “ O come, let us worship and fall down, and kneel before the Lord our Maker,” because He is *our* God : for the Psalms were written, not for Jews only, but for Christians also till time shall be no longer : “ we are the people of His pasture, the sheep of His hand.” He, the Good Shepherd, has laid down His life for the sheep ; we are washed in His blood, and clothed in His holiness, and fed in the green pastures of His word and sacraments. This Psalm is called the invitatory Psalm, because priest and people mutually call on each other to sing to the Lord, to set forth His praises with joy and cheerfulness. It is placed here as it were to tune our minds to the Psalms which follow, and is always used, except on Easter Day, upon which another anthem is said or sung ; and on the nineteenth day of every month, it takes its place in the regular course of the Psalms.

The 95th Psalm is not said or sung in its usual place, in the service of the nineteenth day of each month, because it is one of the Psalms for this day. It is well fitted for every day, whilst it is called to-day.

The solemn invitation to praise the Lord is henceforth obeyed by priest and people alternately singing or saying the Psalms in order of the morning service, who, at the end of every Psalm, sing or say the *Gloria Patri*.

When once we have knelt in penitence and mourned our sins, we go on to sing the Psalms of David with all the melody of praise. “These unfading plants of paradise become, as we are accustomed to them, still more and more beautiful; their bloom appears to be daily heightened, fresh odours are breathed out, and new sweets drawn from them. He who has once tasted their sweetness will taste them again¹.” They were read in the age of the Apostles, and in the early Church: indeed, the meanest Christian could say them from memory. “There is not a page of this book of Psalms

¹ Bp. Horne.

in which the pious reader will not find his Saviour, if he reads with a view of finding Him." Hence our Lord when on earth often quoted the Psalms. Since therefore He used them, and in their words breathed out His sufferings upon the cross, let us sing them to His glory and praise; "O come, let us sing unto the Lord." Indeed, from the morning of man's being to this very hour, the praise of God is the highest duty which man can perform on earth, for it most nearly rises to the melody of heaven. David calls upon the whole created world of nature to swell the loud song of ten thousand glad voices to the glory of God: the stormy wind fulfilling his word, and the still small voice of the summer's calm evening; the singing of birds in our land, the murmur of the sea-wave, the roll of thunder, the soft sighing among the forest leaves, all join in nature's harmony to the praises of Him "whose glory is above the heavens." So that ye may well say, "O all ye works of the Lord, bless ye the Lord, praise Him, and magnify Him for ever." While each of us for himself says, "I will praise the

name of God with a song, and magnify Him with thanksgiving².”

When music swells the voices of God's people, and breathes sweet incense of thanksgiving through His temple, their souls soar upwards with the sacrifice ; their hearts are knit together as one man ; at any rate, they feel as one family, loving each other, and loving their common Father and their God, to whom they are pouring out their mingled praises with “ the best member which they have.” “ O the wisdom of that heavenly Teacher, which hath by His skill found out a way, that, doing these things wherein we delight, we may also learn that whereby we profit³ ! ”

Vocal music is so old, that we scarcely know when or by whom it was first used. Some, like Bishop Ken, think it as old as the world. The garden of Eden itself was not, we may believe, unblest by “ singing and the voice of melody.” “ When the morning stars sang together, and all the sons of God shouted for joy,” man's ear

² Ps. lxix. 30.

³ Hooker, Ecc. Pol. book v. 38.

heard not and man's voice joined not the wondrous chant, for he was not yet formed "when God laid the foundations of the earth⁴." Heaven and earth, amid the happy groves of Eden, were sweetly tuned to raise man's being to Him who gave it, and made it innocent; and when man fell, and sadness passed over him, music came pleasantly to his ear, and lightened his sorrows.

To Jubal, who sprang from Cain, is due the earliest instrumental music: "He was the father of all such as handle the harp and organ⁵."

This passage takes in the whole of our information on the state or progress of music before the flood. About six hundred years after this event, we meet with its casual mention in the reproach of Laban to Jacob, by which we learn, that, at least in Syria, it was customary to celebrate any great event "with mirth, and with songs, with tabret, and with harp⁶." Many centuries afterwards we have the first specimen of a choral hymn of praise, in either profane or sacred

⁴ Job xxxviii. 4—7.

⁵ Gen. iv. 21.

⁶ Gen. xxxi. 27.

story⁷: this was sung antiphonally, first by one side and then by the other (partly as we chant the Psalm from which the text is taken in the morning service); Moses and the men on the one hand, and Miriam and the women on the other. A song of victory it was, and chant of praise to God, for His miraculous deliverance of the Israelites from the hand of Pharaoh, with musical instruments, and the dance, according to the usage of the Egyptians, who excelled in music, as in other arts, although they required no further knowledge in it than seemed sufficient to magnify their gods, their kings, and good men⁸. It was but natural that Moses, who “was learned in all the wisdom of the Egyptians⁹,” should keep up the knowledge of music among the Israelites, whom we find worshipping the golden calf, singing and dancing around the image¹⁰. When the armies of the Moabites and Ammonites were coming up

⁷ Exod. xv. 21.

⁸ See Bedford's *Abuse of Music*.

⁹ Acts vii. 22.

¹⁰ Exod. xxxii. 19.

against Jehoshaphat and the Israelites, Jehoshaphat encouraged his people to sing and to praise the Lord: "And when he had consulted with the people, he appointed singers unto the Lord, and that should praise the beauty of holiness, as they went out before the army, and to say, Praise the Lord; for His mercy endureth for ever. And when they began to sing and to praise, the Lord set ambushments against the children of Ammon, Moab, and Mount Seir, which were come against Judah; and they were smitten. . . . And they came to Jerusalem with psalteries, and harps, and trumpets, unto the house of the Lord¹." Shortly after the Exodus did God authorize and command the use of instrumental music upon occasions of religious service². In the book of Numbers, indeed, occur four of the most beautiful poems in the whole compass of Scripture³, chanted, however, not by the Israelites, but by a heathen prophet, in a style which seems to show the literary ad-

¹ 2 Chron. xx. 21, 22. 28.

² Lev. xxv. 9.

³ Numb. xxiii. xxiv.

vantage which a residence at a rich and peaceful court had given him over the sons of Jacob.

From this time we hear little of music or poetry among the Hebrews, till the time of the Judges. We then meet with the duet of Barak and Deborah, sung upon the defeat of Sisera and his host⁴. The sadly interesting story of the daughter of the valiant Jephthah recalls to our mind the Egyptian use of timbrels and dances⁵.

The song of Hannah, the mother of Samuel, "when her heart rejoiced in the Lord, and her mouth was enlarged over her enemies," leads us to the period when Israel became a kingdom⁶.

From this time we see music taking its place among the choicest gifts of the Great Giver. Prophecy, poetry, and music went up together unto the house of God, and set forth His praises. No sooner had the Israelites fully established themselves in their newly-gained provinces, than they fixed on a resting place for the ark, and settled the

⁴ Judges v.

⁵ Judges xi. 34—40.

⁶ 1 Sam. ii. 1—10.

sons of Levi, of which tribe were the musicians, by divine command ⁷, in their respective rights and places.

To the reign of David we must turn for the true encouragement and use of music in the worship of the tabernacle. To most of you, my brethren, David is well known as the sweet singer of Israel, who breathes in holy strains through the Psalms: the harp was his companion and his friend, as well amid the splendours of his court, as in the green pastures and lowly scenes of his shepherd life, always showing forth the loving-kindness of the Lord ⁸. Hill and valley, grove and stream, re-echoed to his hymns. The soothing power of music to lull and hush the stormy spirit of anger was felt when David took a harp, and played with his hand; then Saul was refreshed and became well, and the evil spirit departed from him.

That the Psalmist used his music in social worship seems plain: "I will give thanks unto the Lord with my whole heart, in the

⁷ Numb. x. 8.

⁸ Ps. xcii. 1—3.

assembly of the upright⁹.” He seems to have composed the music as well as the poetry for the tabor. He went on to assign the Levites their proper duties. For this purpose he “spake to the chief of the Levites to appoint their brethren to be the singers with instruments of music, psalteries and harps and cymbals, sounding, by lifting up the voice with joy¹⁰;” and “the number of them, with their brethren that were instructed in the songs of the Lord, even all that were cunning, were two hundred fourscore and eight¹¹.” God was pleased, at the temple dedication, to signify by a marked token His approbation of the mode by which, in all the pomp of ritual, with tuneful songs and rejoicing, and the full power of resounding chorus, Solomon ushered in this high and holy festival¹.” The few kings who sought to redeem music from that disuse and shameful neglect into which it had fallen under their idolatrous predecessors, were those who walked in the ways of David. A zeal for the Lord of Hosts showed itself in

⁹ Ps. cxi. 1; xxii. 22.

¹⁰ 1 Chron. xv. 16.

¹¹ 1 Chron. xxv. 7.

¹ 2 Chron. v. 13.

the renewed life of the music of the temple. For instance, in the earlier part of the reign of Joash, while he was doing "that which was right in the sight of the Lord²," he turned his thoughts to a reformation of the temple service, appointed the priests "to offer the burnt offerings of the Lord, as it is written in the law of Moses, with rejoicing and with singing, as it was ordained by David³." In obedience to the Lord's command, Hezekiah "set the Levites in the house of the Lord, with cymbals, with psalteries, and with harps," . . . "and all the congregation worshipped, and the singers sang, and the trumpeters sounded, and all this continued until the burnt offering was finished⁴."

As assistants in this good work of Josiah are mentioned "all that could skill in instruments of music." We find that he restored the singers the sons of Asaph to their place, according to the commandment of David⁵. In the very next reign commenced the gradual desolations of Judah; and when the wrath of the Lord arose

² 2 Kings xii. 2.

³ 2 Chron. xxiii. 16—18.

⁴ 2 Chron. xxix. 25. 28.

⁵ 2 Chron. xxxv. 15.

against the people, till the holy temple became an heap of stones, God caused "to cease from the cities of Judah, and from the streets of Jerusalem, the voice of mirth, and the voice of gladness, the voice of the bridegroom, and the voice of the bride:" for the land was desolate⁶. During the seventy years spent in Babylon, music seems to have been unheeded and neglected by the Jewish captives. "The mirth of the land was gone⁷." "How," said they, "shall we sing the Lord's song in a strange land⁸?"

"O no! we have not voice nor hand
For such a song in such a land."

When, at length, they returned to Jerusalem, instead of the two hundred and eighty-eight vocal performers, and four thousand instrumental performers, that composed the choir in David's time, the number of "singers, the children of Asaph," now numbered only one hundred and twenty-eight, who, with all who joined them, made only a total of two hundred singing men

⁶ Jer. vii. 34.

⁷ Isa. lxxiv. 11.

⁸ Ps. cxxxvii.

and singing women, and that out of a population of five thousand souls⁹. When the foundation of the temple was laid, “ they set the priests in their apparel with trumpets, and the Levites the sons of Asaph with cymbals, to praise the Lord, after the ordinance of David king of Israel. And they sang together by course in praising and giving thanks unto the Lord ; because He is good, for His mercy endureth for ever toward Israel¹.”

At the dedication of the wall of Jerusalem, there was singing with cymbals, and psalteries, and harps. It was the anxious desire of Nehemiah to bring back the music of the temple to something like its management by David and Asaph of old, in whose days “ there were chief of the singers, and songs of praise and thanksgiving to God².” Music seems to have been cast aside during the wars which harassed the Jewish state ; still it was only silenced that it might awake at the dawn of a more peaceful and a happier day. The ceremony of the dedication of the temple at Jerusa-

⁹ Ezra ii. 41.

¹ Ezra iii. 10, 11.

² Neh. xii. 46.

lem by Solomon was ushered in by a loud thanksgiving from the Levites, with the singers, to whom alone was intrusted this part of the holy services: robed “in white linen, having cymbals and psalteries and harps, they stood at the east end of the altar, and with them an hundred and twenty priests, sounding with trumpets. It came even to pass as the trumpeters and singers were *as one* to make one sound, to be heard in praising and thanking the Lord . . . that then the house was filled with a cloud, even the house of the Lord³.” The singers and boys stood over against each other⁴.

By this short outline drawn from the Old Testament, we see that the ancient Hebrews had a great taste for music, which they used in their religious services, in their public and private rejoicings, at their feasts. In our course through the Old Testament, we come to canticles of thanksgiving and

³ 2 Chron. v. 12, 13.

⁴ 1 Chron. xxv. 8. Bedford, from whom I have freely borrowed, thinks one side sang one verse and the other another, taking a step between the Psalm tune and the anthem.

praise, or songs written on the glad occasion of marriage ; as the Song of Songs, and also the 45th Psalm, which are thought to have been written in honour of the nuptials of Solomon. Music and singing, however, were sometimes heard in the house of mourning, or in scenes of sorrow, wailing over the dead. At Jacob's funeral the voice of mourning was heard in plaintive strains for threescore and ten days⁵. How tender and loving and sweetly melancholy is David's song of mourning over Saul and Jonathan ! " Ye daughters of Israel, weep over Saul." " O Jonathan, thou wast slain in thine high places." " How are the mighty fallen⁶ !" Such, too, the sorrowing song for Abner ; and again, for Absalom. Jeremiah lamented for Josiah : and all the singing men and the singing women spake of Josiah in their lamentations⁷. Again, take the Lamentations of Jeremiah on the destruction of Jerusalem. In short, throughout the whole of the Old Testament, we find man's voice tuned to music of victory or

⁵ Gen. l. 3.

⁶ 2 Sam. i. 24, 25. 27.

⁷ 2 Chron. xxxv. 24, 25.

downfall, of sadness or joy. Yet holy *praise* and *joyful thanksgiving* are the first and the highest subjects of music and song: “David set singers also before the altar, that by their voices they might make sweet melody, and daily sing praises in their songs ⁸.”

The praises of God are the theme of our heavenly song, and His goodness the ground of our praises. The well-tuned voices of thankful worshippers rise joyfully above the heart's deep cry for pardon. The sorrowing penitent, amid God's holy temple, like the poor publican, is unwilling, or rather unable at first to lift up so much as his eyes to heaven. The sense of his sins is heavy upon him. The burden of them is intolerable; he mourns from the bottom of his heart before the God whom he has grievously offended; and even when lightened of the awful weight which presses down the soul, he can only with the congregation *confess, supplicate, beseech*; so that, as sinners well-nigh struck dumb at our own

⁸ Eccles. xlvii. 9.

unworthiness, we breathe the prayer, “ O Lord, open Thou our lips.” No sooner are these words put up, than we go on to rehearse the noble acts of the Lord, and to show forth His praise. Henceforward praise and thanksgiving rise above prayer and supplication ; and are sung by the clergy and people to the glory of God. Faith, hope, and charity break forth into harmony ; each bears his part until love and song pass onward from the Church on earth, to the Church above, where love never faileth, and where the voice of praise never dies. There angels and saints keep up the deathless hymn of praise, from which “ they rest not day and night ⁹.” Praise and love outlive mortality, and form not only the subject of the music of the saints below, but of the saints above. When lip and heart and soul are tuned to sounds of praise which flow from many voices, we are carried well-nigh out of ourselves, and enjoy communion with saints and with God, and cry out with joy, “ O come, let us sing unto the Lord.” His

⁹ Rev. iv. 8.

goodness is the ground of our singing His praises, for what He has done for the children of men, in the great scene of His creation, of His care and safe keeping, and of the redemption of the world. These are the grounds and the cause of that Psalm which David put into the hand of Asaph and his brethren, his newly-formed choir; and hence we find at the close of every verse in Psalm cxxxvi., Asaph and his brethren were to give thanks, "because His mercy endureth for ever." In the Psalms, God's mercies are so often and so far made the ground of praise, that in Hebrew they are called, "The Book of Praises," or the book of songs of praise. While we call on earth and heaven to praise the Almighty for His wonders, to the glory of that nature which we cannot understand, it becomes us ourselves chiefly to sing praises to Him for His loving pity to us which we feel, and for all the good things we have and which we understand. Let then our hearts go up with thankful hymns, in real acts of praise for *special* mercies, with which He cheers us through this sad world; thus shall we sing

with the spirit and the understanding, thus our joy will arise from a true and meaning source, and thus our tuneful praises will flow from a motive real as it is devout.

The divine Psalms will carry us in prophetic song to the birth of the Saviour, the Son of David, when mortal ears heard for the first time the angel choir of heaven. Then it was that beneath the midnight sky a multitude of the heavenly host rejoiced, not that one sinner only, but that a guilty world was saved. Their unclouded sight saw more than fallen beings could see, their tongues sang words till then unknown to fallen beings. Long and often had the whole creation groaned and travailed for the bright coming of the great Deliverer ; and now at last, amid the deep stillness of night, the tuneful company of angels chant the longed-for tidings, which are wafted on the cool fresh breeze, and heard and welcomed by the poor shepherds who watched their flocks : “ And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God, and saying, Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will

toward men¹.” And through the Christian Church this heaven-tuned melody has, from the Saviour’s birth, flowed on from age to age, now thrills along the expanse of Christendom, and will echo on for ever :—

“ Glory to God on high, on earth be peace,
And love towards men of love—
Salvation and release².”

But this brings us to the New Testament, which will be our guide for the future in following the course of Church-music and psalmody. In the mean time, learn we to praise God for His daily and undeserved goodness to our souls and bodies, and let us daily say from our hearts, “ We bless Thee for our creation, preservation, and all the blessings of this life; but above all for Thine inestimable love in the redemption of the world by our Lord Jesus Christ.”

¹ Luke ii. 13, 14.

² Christian Year. Christmas Day.

S E R M O N X V .

LUKE II. 13, 14.

“ And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God, and saying, Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men.”

IN tracing the course of sacred singing and music step by step through the Old Testament, we learned, that to bless the Almighty Maker and to praise His holy name, is not only the bounden duty, but the highest happiness of all created beings, who have a heart to enjoy, a head to understand, and a voice to sing of the loving-kindness of the Father of Mercies. Even from the early dawn, until the end of time, to the countless

ages of eternity, the praise of God was and is and ever is to be the subject of hymns in heaven and hymns on earth—of the Church in glory, and the Church in grace. At the dawn of the first day which beamed upon the perfect work of the creation, “the morning stars sang together, and all the sons of God shouted for joy¹;” but man’s ear heard not, man’s voice chanted not the joyful melody which re-echoed through creation on the world’s first dawn; for when the foundations of the earth were fastened, and the corner-stone thereof was laid, man was not yet formed. David calls upon the whole of created nature—the heavens, the earth, the “stormy wind fulfilling His word,” to join together in one vast harmony of praise. All things were to bless the Maker, because He made them so good. O God, “WE BLESS THEE FOR OUR CREATION,” so did the saints before Gospel times: “The heavens declare the glory of God; and the firmament showeth His handy-work. Day unto day uttereth speech,

¹ Job xxxviii. 7.

and night unto night showeth knowledge. There is no speech nor language where their voice is not heard. Their line is gone out through all the earth, and their words to the end of the world : in them hath He set a tabernacle for the sun ²." Here night and day, the heavens and earth bear each a part in the loud chant which rolls its swelling wave through earth and sky.

Thus, brethren, praises to the Creator for the blessings of creation are the everlasting employment of all created things, whether in heaven, or in the earth, or in the sea : "Sing unto Him a new song ; play skilfully with a loud noise. For the word of the Lord is right ; and all His works are done in truth ³." Again, the 96th Psalm is, as it were, the harmonious voice of singing, rejoicing, and giving of thanks, flowing out and filling all lands, sweeping in triumph on the music of the floods, or awaking the deepest echoes of the hills, or breathing through the trees, and tunefully rising above the din of earth. Throughout

² Ps. xix. 1—4.

³ Ps. xxxiii. 3, 4.

the Psalms we have the holiest and fittest words in which we may sing our thanksgiving for God's great work of creation, preservation, and all the blessings of this life, which by His loving mercy we enjoy. We are here taught to sing of His goodness, His greatness, His wisdom. The heart's highest praises and holiest prayers are set forth in the Psalms of David, which formed a book of devotion for the Church of God before, and have done so since the birth of Christ, from the time of David to this our day—a space of nearly three thousand years. Not only the highest praises, but the deepest penitence are written in the best and fittest words. Hence it is, doubtless, that in every church in Christendom these awakening songs of praise are said or sung, and in many of our own churches, they are chanted daily. And how wisely! for nothing tends more to tune the soul to calm and grateful joy, than the holy breathings of these purest strains of sacred song. Their notes, when taken up by the whole congregation, roll their tide along, and carry many a cold and once lifeless worshipper in

their heavenward course; or, when the softer tones of the children float around and about us, they fill, as it were, the very air with the sweet incense of young voices, and spread themselves through aisle and arch of this large and lofty temple; now faintly dying away in lingering sweetness, now rising higher and higher, but not swelling into rich music; still, in Holy Writ, not more tuneful, perhaps, were "the mouths of babes and sucklings," which are foretold as the means whereby He "whose glory is above the heavens," should set forth His glory; and so it came to pass in the days of our Saviour's sojourn on the earth in the flesh, "the children cried out in the temple, Hosannah to the Son of David!"

"OUR PRESERVATION AND ALL THE BLESSINGS OF THIS LIFE" call for praises: "Bless the Lord, O my soul: and all that is within me, bless His holy name. Bless the Lord, O my soul, and forget not all His benefits⁴."

God has borne with us and carried us safely through many dangers and trials.

⁴ Ps. ciii. 1, 2.

He has watched over us, guarded, guided, kept, clothed, and fed us. He keeps us in health, and gives His good things to make us happy. But truly such a crowd of mercies rushes on our view, that of all the blessings of this life, we hardly know which to pick out from the mighty, the countless blessings which burst upon us; our preservation from day to day calls for louder, longer songs of grateful praise than we have yet lifted up before the throne on high. Life is too short to thank God for all His goodness. His mercies and blessings, like the angels coming down on the ladder which Jacob saw in his dream, rest on the earth and reach unto heaven; whether we travel backwards or forwards on the mighty roll of ages, or merely keep within the short range of our own being since we were born, we cannot but sing the praises of our Creator and Preserver, the Giver of all good, who hourly surrounds us with tokens of His love. That He who lives in uncreated light should *allow* us, and even *ask* us for the poor worthless offering of our praises, and should speak as if our praises added to His glory,

shows the unfathomable depth to which He has stooped. Over all the busy scenes of earthly joy, the dews of God's mercy have come down. The year is faded and worn and gone, but the God of nature crowns the year with His goodness, and fills all things living with plenteousness. The blessings of the present and the past, nay, even of the future, are clustering around us and awakening our hymn of thanksgiving to God for His goodness.

“BUT ABOVE ALL FOR HIS INESTIMABLE LOVE, IN THE REDEMPTION OF THE WORLD BY OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST.”

Redemption brought angels down from heaven to sing a new song on Christmas Day; the ears of men, and they no mitred priests or powerful princes, but poor shepherds, who kept their flocks throughout the chill and live-long night, now heard the angel-chant of heaven's choir. Of fallen men lowly were the first, who heard the host of heaven singing praise at the fulfilment of the early promise of redemption—the birth of our Saviour in our flesh upon the earth. Men and angels have a new song in their

mouths, the fulness of the time is come. The promised Redeemer is born among the sons of men : “ And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God, and saying, Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men ⁵.”

As at the first creation of this world, the sons of God, His creatures, made a joyful melody, so now at the second creation, the remaking of man who had undone himself, the bright army of heaven suddenly join the angel that had been the bearer of the glad tidings of great joy. The choir of heaven was now first heard on earth. It is true, the evangelical prophet, seven hundred years before, had been carried in a trance above this world of sense and time, and saw the veiled seraphim, and heard their alternate chant, “ Holy, holy, holy, Lord God of Sabbath ;” but it was not till the bright day-spring from on high was beginning to shine, and the infant Saviour was born and laid in a manger, that mortal man listened to

⁵ Luke ii. 13, 14.

the multitudes of the host of heaven, who welcomed the holy child Jesus with the song, "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men."

Now, brethren, if a chosen band of the angel-army of heaven came down to chant the praises of redeeming love, which regained not for *them* any thing which they had lost, and raised them no higher than they had been up to this day, with what glowing and heartfelt praises should *we*, the army of earth, sing the hymn of thanksgiving, we who were conquered, who were dead, but now, through the Captain of our Salvation, are more than conquerors, and living in His life, His light, and His love! Has the army of heaven felt more joy for us than we can for ourselves? Has the army of earth no ear, nor heart, nor voice, that it cannot pour forth its holy song of praise? Did angels, who needed not redemption, sing for joy that this day, to us who are fallen a child is born, a Saviour given, and shall we, the army of God, still upon our trial, we for whom this mercy is come down, and but for which we must be miserable

indeed, and for ever ; shall we keep silence ? Were we so deaf to Heaven's call, so dull, so dumb, and stupid, as to keep back the gift of song at such a time and place as Christmas and the church, would not the very stones cry out ? would not the lowest things that are put us to shame ? In the pages of the Bible we have enough, in the wonders of redemption we have plenty, to awaken within us the full loud joyous song. When we are grateful and glad, our highest thanksgivings flow out into music, " to make the voice of praise to be heard."

The last Psalm of David calls in nature and art to join in one vast harmony of praise : " Praise ye the Lord. Praise God in His sanctuary : praise Him in the firmament of His power. Praise Him for His mighty acts : praise Him according to His excellent greatness. Praise Him with the sound of the trumpet : praise Him with the psaltery and harp. Praise Him with the timbrel and dance : praise Him with stringed instruments and organs. Praise Him upon the loud cymbals : praise Him upon the high-sounding cymbals. Let every thing

that hath breath praise the Lord. Praise ye the Lord ⁶." We are soldiers and servants of Him who has overcome death, and opened to us the gate of life, and gained for us more than we had lost; while, then, fighting under His banner, let us this day raise our voices in tune with saints above and unfallen angels, with the redeemed who are beyond the grave, and with those who are still in the flesh. Let all swell the anthem to the glory of God and the salvation of men: "Sing ye to the Lord, for He hath triumphed gloriously."

We can only praise the Redeemer for what He hath done for us, for that goodness which we feel and understand. Our praise flows out of our gratitude, in well-tuned hymns, so that it is chiefly under the Gospel and in the Church that man's praises to His Saviour are a reality and a blessing. When the beloved Apostle had obeyed the heavenly call, "Come up hither, and I will show thee things which must be hereafter," he heard, amid the mansions of

⁶ Ps. cl. 1—6.

the blessed, the rich wave of holiest music sweeping through the echoing courts of heaven in one gust of endless song. “After this,” says he, “I beheld, and, lo, a great multitude, which no man could number, of all nations, and kindreds, and people, and tongues, stood before the throne, and before the Lamb, clothed with white robes, and palms in their hands.” These beings stand in front of the throne, upon which is seated the high and holy One who “inhabiteth the praises of eternity.” . . . “And all the angels stood round about the throne, and about the elders ;” *i. e.* the angels, the host of heaven are there, but they stand “round about.” Now, though the heavenly host, and the spirits of just men made perfect—angels and saints—are serving God, in the same scene, praising God day and night, that is, always, yet the hymn of the *angels* is not the hymn of the *redeemed*. Listen to the angels, “Amen : blessing, and glory, and wisdom, and thanksgiving, and honour, and power, and might, be unto our God for ever and ever⁷ :” a simple chorus of praise

⁷ Rev. vii. 9. 11, 12.

to the Almighty. Now hearken to the hymn of those whom no man can number who are standing nearest to the throne of God : They “cried with a loud voice, saying, Salvation to our God which sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb⁸ ;” or more at length in the 5th Chapter : “Thou art worthy . . . for Thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by Thy blood out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation.” The hymn of the *angels*, you see, is not sung to THE LAMB OF GOD WHICH TAKETH AWAY THE SINS OF THE WORLD. I mean, they do not sing in praises of *redemption* which they never needed ; for they kept their first estate, and are still the pure bright spotless beings they ever were. In the hymn of the spirits of the just, the one great theme of *saints* forms the burden of their chant, “THOU HAST REDEEMED US TO GOD BY THY BLOOD.”

The white-robed choir had passed through the vale of tears, and washed their robes in the blood of the Lamb ; and *therefore* are

⁸ Rev. vii. 10.

they before the throne of God, and always sing of Him and to Him who cleansed them in His blood: but the *host of heaven*, such as sang the birth of Christ this day, and peace to men of good will, stood next in order to the *saints*, those for whom the Saviour was born in our nature and our flesh, but rejoiced for us. It was vouchsafed to the beloved disciple to hear words which form part of his most glorious and unearthly vision: "the guileless virgin host, the first-fruits of the redeemed, who in white robes washed in blood, with palms of triumph in their hands, and calm sweet countenances, and eyes from which the vestiges of tears have been wiped away for ever, stand day and night to minister in the temple of God. The Apostle, rapt in ecstasy, listened to their song, which no man save themselves could learn, he heard their voices in number numberless, yet in *unison* unbroken, melodious as the golden harps whose strings they touched, full as the sound of many waters, deep as the tone of many thunderings; there still were pre-

sented before his eyes sights which taught him to believe, that as it was in the beginning, so should it be even unto the end, that tribulation should be the portion of the saints of God on earth, their trial here, their crown hereafter⁹." This day angels who never fell sing on earth, and archangels rejoice, and this day "it becometh well the just to be thankful." Can we then remain silent, or cease to make melody in our hearts, singing, "Glory to God in the highest?" Is there no joy which earth cannot give, and which time cannot take away? no well-tuned hymn of Christmas joy?

"Yet stay before thou dare
To join that festal throng;
Listen, and mark what gentle air
First stirr'd the tide of song."

Behold the great Creator of the world, the Lord Eternal, veiled beneath a creature's form; the Mighty God, a babe in a manger. "This is the day the Lord hath made, we will rejoice and be glad in it."

⁹ Paget, "The Living and the Dead."

"O day! which the seas and sky
 And earth and heaven glad welcome sing:
 O day! which heal'd our misery
 And brought on earth salvation's King:
 We too, O Lord, who have been cleansed
 In thy own fount of blood divine,
 Offer the tribute of sweet song
 On this blest natal day of thine¹."

Of all the days which rise upon us, this is the brightest, and the chief, the day in which we are to rejoice and be glad. Let us recal to mind those feelings of our childhood which used to gladden our Christmas and our homes. Our young hearts were beating with joy while we sat round our family hearth, among brothers, and sisters, and cousins, whom this happy season had brought together. How bright were *then* our hopes! how unselfish our minds and thoughts! how fresh and unclouded by sins and by cares! We rejoiced, though we scarcely knew the cause of our joy, in the holy child, Jesus; the voice of health and gladness was heard in our dwelling. And even now, my brethren, while we joyfully

¹ See *Lyra Catholica*.

meet those dear friends, from whom, perhaps, we have been long parted, and see our little ones, while they cluster around us like olive branches, let us tell them of the great God our Saviour, who left heaven for us, and became a little child, and, as on this day, was born in want, amid the tumult and the busy crowd, so that He was cast aside in a lowly stable of an inn, which found no room for Him who made the world, and who rules all things in heaven and earth, even the infant Jesus, the Son of God, the Son of man, the Maker of all things. Let us remember that unless *we* “become as little children, we shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven.” Far off from the fever and strife of the world, let us pour out, as from one mouth and heart, the angels’ hymn, and ponder in calm gladness the *tidings*, the *news*, the good news, joyful and great news, for which the world waited and groaned: “To you is born this day a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord.” Here is the ground of our thankfulness, the theme of our song. When God the Father sent the child, whose birth-day we are keeping, He

called on us to praise Him for redeeming love, for the inheritance which, through Christ, He gives us with the angels, and with the saints in light. Let then the deepest feelings burst from the prison of our heart into the liberty of holy song. Young people will sing these without danger; youth will be delighted without loss of purity; nay, they are the very charm of infancy: "Young men and maidens, old men and children, praise the name of the Lord." The Church, as a fond mother, loves to hear the least of her children sing praises to the mighty God, who, as on this day, became a little child for us, and in after time blessed little children in His arms. Let us turn once more to the little ones of Jerusalem, who took up the loud welcome which the people had been singing to the honour of Jesus. After He had entered into the city the last night before His crucifixion, in triumph, amid the crowd who sang to His glory, as He stood in the court surrounded by the Pharisees and doctors, the little children who had gathered about Him, took up the loud song of the people which greeted Him as a

king, and welcomed Him to their gates :
“ Hosanna to the Son of David ; blessed
be He that cometh in the name of the Lord.”
This they sang with the angelic chorus,
“ Hosannah in the Highest.” Now, though
it must be allowed, that there are many who
have but little ear or voice, yet there is no
one who should feel himself or herself alto-
gether unfit for joining in our congregational
singing. Let love and devotion tune your
praises and your will ; for most of you can
sing a hymn which God will hear and ac-
cept. We are not taught to believe that the
children of Jerusalem were better skilled or
more tuneful eighteen hundred years ago,
than the children and parents of the present
day, who are found in God’s house of prayer ;
indeed, the Pharisees and scribes seemed
to think that Christ would not suffer such
performers to go on with their hymn ; yet
the song of these untutored children has
come down to us with the angels’ “ Glory
to God in the highest.” After the lifting up
of our hearts in the communion, we say,
“ With Angels and Archangels, and with all
the company of heaven, we laud and mag-

nify Thy holy name; evermore praising Thee, and saying, “Holy, holy, holy, Lord God of hosts, heaven and earth are full of Thy glory. Glory be to Thee, O Lord most High.” Being by faith and the communion of saints united with the Church triumphant, we join in singing with the angelic host, “Holy, holy, holy, Lord God of hosts.” Although our bodies are on earth, yet in this seraphic hymn, they seem to be with the spirits of just men made perfect, so that with the whole host of heaven, we adore and bless our Creator, Redeemer, and Sanctifier². Now in the Liturgy of Jerusalem, the lifting up of the heart is in the very words of our office; but the latter part is longer than ours, and carries out the hymn which the children took up from the people, “Hosannah in the highest: Blessed be He that cometh in the name of the Lord: Hosannah in the highest³.” “Yea, have ye never read, that out of the mouths of

² Isa. viii. 3. Rev. iv. 8.

³ See Guide to the Daily Service. Stephen, 2nd edit. p. 365. Contracted from Comber, Palmer, Bp. Rattray, 1744.

babes and sucklings Thou hast perfected praise⁴?" The Latin Church also has retained this song of the children, and given it a higher place in the mass than even the "Gloria in Excelsis" of the Angels. As the poor woman's costly ointment, poured out in love and worship of her most Holy Lord, still fills the house (the Church) with its fragrance, and breathes still, and will for ever breathe the incense offered to her Lord, and be talked of among men, because *she did what she could*: so will the feeblest melody which the heart and the spirit sing to God, reach Him and live to His praise, and the good of him or her who thus gives to Jesus that heart from which thanksgiving flows. Nay, my brethren, the gift of a voice which can sing, and a heart which can praise, is bestowed upon us to make us like angels and saints in paradise. Shall they not then, to the best of our power and our skill, be improved and used in the glory of Him who gave them? Christ and His Church, by lovingly calling on us to sing

⁴ Matt. xxi. 16.

in company together in His house, remind us of the high dignity and rank of Christians. We are fallen beings, but Christ this day lifts up our head ; He opens our mouth in praise. And what ! though we have no choir of well-taught and well-paid singers, we are not so tuneless as to fail, if we have but heart and wish to join the stream of voice which flows from fifty children : for the flow of many voices, though it be neither deep nor very strong, will sweep with it, and roll onwards, and cover in its course here and there a tuneless voice.

In nature we find the most useful gifts bestowed upon the many, and few of us there are, who, with care, and study, and thankfulness, cannot join in singing the psalms in church ; where however only a few sing together, and they apart from the congregation, every false note becomes glaring, every failure a marked fault. The singing of psalms, and hymns, and spiritual songs, by a congregation, may either prove the most cheerful and soul-stirring, or else the dullest and most unmeaning part of the

whole service; when, for instance, the people will not join at all, or, joining, they merely drag along a weak and heartless note now and then, bear no real part in the public praise of God. On the other hand, he who truly does his best in the service of praise, is well pleasing in God's sight; for He says by the Psalmist, "Whoso offereth me praise, he honoureth me." The human voice is the sweetest and most musical of sounds, and best fitted to the praises of Him who teaches us to sing with the spirit and the understanding: even the stops in an organ which are honoured with the name of the *human voice*, both in the treble part and in the lower parts, are unworthy of such a title.

The first and great use of the organ is to sustain the vocal chant; but it is agreed, that a full chorus of voices alone, in time and tune, is the sweetest music, and makes the truest harmony⁵.

Only let every congregational singer guard against the natural falling of the

⁵ See Hawkins, vol. iv. b. iii. c. 8, p. 346.

voice, and take care that he be not overborne by the downward course of sound. The duty and privilege, however, and not the *manner*, of our public thanksgiving to God, are the matter which we have in hand, and are clearly set forth in the Old Testament. Moses, Samuel, Hannah, David, the children in the furnace, Habakkuk, Tobias, Judith, all sang praises to God.

When the infant Saviour as on this day was born among men, the choir of angels came down from heaven, and sang the glad welcome of their Lord and our Lord to earth, in which we, as part of His army on earth, have just joined; and our Lord Himself on the awful night of His betrayal, though keenly alive to the sufferings which awaited Him, the cup which did not pass from Him, just after the blessed sacrament of his body and blood, which He had been instituting, He with His disciples sang together a hymn, before they went to the garden of Gethsemane⁶. Even amid the

⁶ Matt. xxvi. 30.

cheerless gloom of the prison, in chains, and at midnight, St. Paul and Silas sang the praises of God so heartily, that all the prisoners heard them. Time would fail us to say in how many passages the Apostles desired the Christian converts to praise God with their voices. "Is any merry?" says St. James, "let him sing psalms⁷." St. Paul says to the Ephesians, "Be ye filled with the Spirit; speaking to yourselves in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs⁸." Writing to the Colossians, he enjoins the singing of "psalms and hymns and spiritual songs⁹." To sum up the whole :—the prophet Zacharias, the blessed Virgin, the Divine Redeemer Himself, the twelve Apostles, after His resurrection, and in the Churches which they founded, saints without number, and now the Churches which cover the world, as the waters cover the sea, send up the sacrifice of praise in hymns and psalms.

Both the Apostles St. Peter and St. Paul

⁷ James v. 13.

⁸ Eph. v. 18, 19.

⁹ Col. iii. 16.

teach us that all true Christians are in one sense priests unto God ¹⁰.

Now without mistaking the grace of baptism for the power of administering the holy sacraments imparted to man by Christ, through holy orders, you may see clearly, that, being made a priesthood to God, your duty is to offer a sacrifice. Now that sacrifice is the public song of thanksgiving. Your Saviour says, "My son, give Me thine heart;" and when your heart is His, out of its abundance it will pour forth His praises. While we are spending our time and our talent in private or public praises to God, we are cherishing a flower which will not wither on our grave, but bloom freshly in paradise. Holy song, like pure love, outlives our days on earth, and rises up as holy incense into that heaven whither the soul which breathes it is hastening. As the love which the hungry soul feeds on in the house of his pilgrimage, is a foretaste of that undying love which is now awaiting it at the marriage supper of the Lamb, so the faint

¹⁰ 1 Pet. ii. 5.

and yet imperfect hymns in which we thank God for His love, is the prelude to that eternal song which the noble army of martyrs, the host of heaven, the white-robed saints, and holy angels sing in praises to the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost.

THE END.

