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*Measures and Means of Unity in the
Church at the Present Time*

A C H A R G E

DELIVERED TO THE

CLERGY OF THE ARCHDEACONRY
OF MAIDSTONE

At the Ordinary Visitation

IN APRIL, MDCCCLXXIV

BY

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CANTERBURY; A. GINDER, ST. GEORGE'S HALL; HAL DRURY, MERCERY LANE;
MAIDSTONE, WICKHAM AND SON

1874

TO THE REVEREND THE

RURAL DEANS AND CLERGY

OF THE

ARCHDEACONRY OF MAIDSTONE;

AND TO

THEIR LAY BRETHERN, THE CHURCHWARDENS AND SIDESMEN,

ASSEMBLED WITH THEM IN VISITATION; -

This Charge,

PUBLISHED IN COMPLIANCE WITH REQUESTS

WHICH FAITHFULLY REFLECTED THE WRITER'S DESIRE FOR THE QUIET

AND LEISURELY CONSIDERATION OF ITS SUGGESTIONS,

IS

RESPECTFULLY AND AFFECTIONATELY

Inscribed.

A CHARGE

MY REVEREND BRETHREN,

We are permitted again, "through the good hand of our God upon us," to meet together, in conformity with duly established custom and rule, for the duties of our Ordinary Visitation. And I would begin by observing how much serious and salutary thought, of a character such as we should wish to impress itself upon our solemn gathering here, may naturally be awakened within us by the first act of our opening proceedings, the calling over the names of the Clergy ministering in the deanery, or deaneries, here visited. We never meet on these occasions from year to year, but we miss from the sacred roll, in this place or that, some one who has been taken from among us; his time of service brought to an end on earth, and his place here knowing him no more. On the present

occasion I think it but fitting on my part, and what will be in accordance with the feelings of the Clerical Brotherhood of the Archdeaconry, to make special allusion to one who was lately taken to his rest, after a pastoral charge of one parish in the deanery of Dartford for a period of fifty-six years; and who calmly passed away, in full possession of mind and consciousness to the last, in the ninetieth year of his age—the oldest member of our Brotherhood, or, in our accustomed manner of speaking, the father of the Archdeaconry. It was to myself a great satisfaction to have seen again, after a long interval, the aged vicar of Horton Kirby,¹ when I visited his parish last summer and partook, in company with the Rural Dean, of the hospitality of his mid-day meal; and to have tendered to him, in the record which it was my duty and privilege to enter in the parish book, congratulations on the complete restoration which, in his prolonged incumbency, he had been permitted to see, of the village church in which he had for so many years ministered. I seem to myself to linger the rather on the memories of such a scene, because it is one with which, in its characteristic features, the country parsonages of England are not unfamiliar; a picture like that which the poet of our Christian

¹ The Rev. George Rashleigh, M.A., after serving in succession the curacies of Meopham and Harrietsham, both in the county of Kent, was instituted in 1818 to the vicarage of Horton Kirby; a parish at that time within the Diocese of Rochester, but incorporated into the Diocese of Canterbury and the Archdeaconry of Maidstone, in January, 1846.

Year has drawn of "the woodland scene," so
"quiet,"

"Each flower and tree, its duty done,
Reposing in decay serene,
Like weary men"—

though, indeed, in an instance like this, hardly
seeming to be "weary"—

"when age is won ;
Such calm old age as conscience pure
And self-commanding hearts ensure,
Waiting their summons to the sky,
Content to live, but not afraid to die."¹

Or it may be that the pastor whose familiar presence, or well-known name, is missed, when the sacred roll is called over, is one who, as in another case,² though he had exercised his office for some seven-and-forty years, appeared as if he might have continued many years still in the gentle kind-hearted discharge of varied duty. In these our yearly gatherings, at the same time, we have the satisfaction of welcoming to fresh scenes of spiritual labour members of our body who have been performing duty, and gaining experience, in other portions of the vineyard; transferred, in some instances from other deaneries of the Arch-deaconry, or other parts of the Diocese; or who have earned therein, by active duty in the prime of life, a removal to the more suitable and congenial

¹ *The Christian Year*, "All Saints' Day."

² The allusion was to the Honorable and Reverend Sir Francis Jarvis Stapleton, Bart., Rector of Mereworth.

tasks of a smaller and lighter cure. We are also privileged, each year, to receive into our company some fresh recruits added to our ranks; our younger brethren, ordained to titles, or coming into curacies, in the Diocese: and I trust that amidst all the attractions to other lines of life, of worldly profit and distinction, there may never be wanting an adequate succession and supply of men for the ministry of the Church; enrolled in His immediate service, to whom it was promised in the word of prophecy, that in the day of His power,—in the day of His “going forth to war”—His chosen servants should “be willing,” or, in the expressive language of the royal Psalmist, should be “free-will offerings” of themselves “in the beauties of holiness.”¹ Amidst such sympathies the bond of brotherhood can hardly fail to be strengthened amongst us by these assemblings of ourselves together, in duly appointed order, from time to time; and if, as is sometimes felt, the seclusion or separateness of a country parish has a tendency, in some degree, to shut up each in his individual sphere of labour, we shall feel that “it is good for us to be here,” as brethren and fellow-labourers in Christ; if, while we are reminded on these occasions how each one is the responsible keeper of a distinct portion of the flock, we are not less effectually taught to feel that “we, being many, are one body in Christ, and every one members one of another.”²

¹ Psalm cx. 3; comp. P. B. Version.

² Rom. xii. 5.

I intimated to you, my Reverend Brethren, when I met you last, that I hoped to complete, in the course of the summer and autumn, the Parochial Visitation on which I had entered three years ago—my fourth Parochial Visitation of the entire Archdeaconry. This I was enabled to accomplish last year; visiting, in order thereto, a large proportion—rather more than 130 churches; completing the Visitation of the deaneries of East Charing and North and South Malling, and going round the entire deaneries of Croydon, East and West Dartford, and Shoreham. Although I have had the opportunity, in each place, of recording on the spot what it was continually my privilege to express, of satisfaction at the work which had been taken in hand, and either, perhaps, by a great effort, or by patient continuance and perseverance from year to year, carried into effect, I cannot but avail myself of the present opportunity of saying how much we have to be thankful for, looking back through the last five-and-twenty or thirty years, in the great and beneficial change which has been wrought. It may seem to be of externals that I am speaking primarily, when I advert to the state of the material fabrics of our churches, and the works of repair and restoration which have been undertaken in respect to them; but if I regarded these matters in the first instance, I might justly plead that these are things specially committed to the subordinate charge of the Archdeacon, and

claim his immediate attention. But, indeed, constituted as we are by Him who made us, the outward and the inward have a close and intimate connexion with each other: each has, within its appointed limits, its proper place, and neither of them is to be neglected. And I am expressing, I am sure, the results of the experience of many a zealous and spiritually-minded pastor, if I say that, when he sought to form habits of devout worship, and diligent attendance on the means of grace, in the people entrusted to his care, he found it absolutely essential that the place of worship should bespeak, in its outward appearance and fitting adornment, that it was “none other but the house of God;”¹ and that internal rearrangement, removing unsightly pews, or pens, and galleries encumbering the fabric and most unfavourable to devotion, and enabling “the rich and the poor” to “meet together,” in due order and without confusion, and at the same time with the full privilege of Christian brotherhood, before the Lord, who “is the maker of them all,”²—that this was felt to be, and had proved itself, one of the first steps to be taken in the restoration, in its highest sense, of the Church in the parish, the edification of the whole body, the building up of the spiritual fabric on the one only foundation, CHRIST JESUS.

It is, moreover, to be borne in mind that, of the churches of which I have spoken—of those in

¹ Gen. xxviii. 17.

² Prov. xxii. 2.

particular which I visited last summer in the deaneries of Croydon and Dartford—a considerable number are new churches, built within the last few years, to supply the spiritual necessities of an enormously increased population, in what has now become a vast suburb of the Metropolis. There are also signs among us of increased attention to the condition of out-lying hamlets, far removed, in wide-spread parishes, from the mother church, and requiring the erection of chapels of ease, or school chapels, such as is now building at Boro' Green, in the large parish of Wrotham, to supply a want which will now more than ever be felt, in consequence of the formation of a new line of railway communication from Sevenoaks to Maidstone. The works, in different places, of which I spoke last year as in hand have been finished, or are still going forward; the now completed new church at Sittingbourne (Trinity Church) has been consecrated anew; the church at Eynsford reopened; a new church at Leysdown, in Sheppy, building on the ancient site, in the place of a sadly mutilated fragment of the original edifice, will be ready for consecration next month; to be followed shortly by that of the new church of Murston, in the same deanery. There is now, I would mention further with special satisfaction, a good prospect, the complicated difficulties which stood in the way having been happily overcome, of the building of a new church in the populous parish of St. Peter's,

the West Borough of the town of Maidstone. I would also refer, with grateful recognition of a large and bountiful exercise of individual liberality on the part of a lay parishioner,¹ to the proposed enlargement and restoration of the church of Boughton Monchelsea, in the deanery of Sutton.

And this leads me to speak, passing on to the building up and strengthening, as I trust, of the spiritual fabric of the Church amongst us, of the opportunity which has been lately afforded, and which I have desired to turn to the best account, for completing the organization for conference of Clergy and Laity in the several deaneries of the Archdeaconry. The arrangements which, at the meeting of Rural Deans—called together, as has been customary, by his Grace the Archbishop—last autumn, at Addington, I was requested to make, for the election of Clerical and Lay delegates to the Diocesan Conference shortly to be held, under his Grace's presidency, at Lambeth, made it desirable, I thought, that in the several deaneries which had not already made such provision, an Association of Clergy and Laity should be formed, by the election of Lay Consultees, to form a consultative body, side by side with the Ruridecanal Clerical Meeting established some years ago in the several deaneries. The special duty of these associated bodies of Laity with Clergy is consultation

¹ William Moore, Esq., of Wierleyⁱⁿ

from time to time on subjects "which have regard to temporal matters, to the rights and privileges of the Church in relation to the State, and particularly such questions, affecting the interest and welfare of the Church, as are likely to form the subjects of legislative measures." From the regular action of such local bodies great benefit would doubtless be derived, in connexion with the Church Defence Institution in London: especially if meetings were held, as has been done in the central deanery of the Archdeaconry—the deanery of Sutton—shortly before the meeting of Parliament, and in the nearer view of the questions which it is probable will be opened there in each coming Session.

For it is clearly necessary, in the opinion, I may say, my Reverend Brethren, of zealous and well-affected Churchmen throughout the land, of the Clergy and Laity alike, that her members should be closely joined together in her defence, both for her sake, and for the sake of the country, whose best interests and happiness are assuredly bound up with her safety and honour, her strength and extension. And I may, perhaps, the more freely express this sentiment at the present time, because just now, owing to the circumstances of the political world, there is something like a temporary lull, in regard to the designs and operations of those who would seek to disturb, or remove, the Church of England from the place which she still occupies, notwithstanding manifold changes of late

years, in the national system. We must expect—and fully lay our account for it—that those “who wish not well unto our Sion” should recruit their forces, and renew their assaults upon her, whenever they think the time is come when they may hope to gain an advantage over her. We must expect it, I have said; and perhaps I might say we can hardly wish it to be otherwise. For we cannot doubt that, if the Church be found faithfully and in good earnest carrying on the spiritual warfare appointed for her against the powers of evil, the powers of evil will not fail to put forth their combined efforts against the Church. If she were found slumbering at her post, and allowing things to hold on their downward way “according to the course of this world,”¹ “the world would love his own;”² and “the prince of this world”³ would arouse no opposition to that which was, silently but surely, doing his work. It cannot be doubted that the opposition which has so strangely, and—one would have thought it must have been felt—so suicidally, on a Christian view of things, risen up against the principle of Religious Education, has been caused by the fact that the Church has during the last quarter of a century—I might rather have said, during the last half century—been earnestly and steadily exerting herself in that holy cause, and has borne an enormous proportion of the work

¹ Eph. ii. 2.

² S. John xv. 19.

³ Ibid. xiv. 30; xii. 31; xvi. 11; comp. Eph. ii. 2.

that has been done. And therefore at no time can we relax our efforts, or suspend our watchful care; knowing that our only secure hope and trust are in Him who will not be wanting to us, if, through His grace and help, we fail not in our duty to Him.

But at the present moment there is something like a pause and intermission in the external operations of the enemies of our established order; and it becomes us to turn it to account. It would be unsuitable, my Reverend Brethren, in this hallowed place, and in this sacred gathering of ourselves within its walls, to enter upon questions of secular politics, or to discuss the circumstances or the causes of recent changes. But it is to our purpose, I think, in connexion with the special duties of our spiritual office in relation to our countrymen, to note thoughtfully and thankfully one or two points bearing closely upon it. Whatever other influences, of various kinds, may have been at work among our people, it cannot be doubted, I think, that a powerful effect has been wrought by an apprehension of insecurity in regard to our most cherished institutions, and in particular with reference to the Church, and the cause of Religious Education. And to those who think and feel that they are great and manifold blessings—blessings of a peculiar and distinguishing character—which Almighty God in His goodness has bestowed upon this our land, in the constitution of our Church and State, and the sacred

interests, political, social, and domestic, enshrined therein, it is no small thing that, amidst the confusions existing, or the conflicts going on, in other countries of Europe, in France and Spain, in Germany and Italy, our countrymen should have a heart given them to prize, and an earnest zeal to preserve, the privileges and possessions of their own heritage. With the unsettledness of opinion unhappily prevailing in the world around us, the restlessness of mind and “freedom of thought,” as it would call itself, too nearly akin to the predicted “lawlessness” of which we have been Divinely warned as a characteristic of “the last days,”¹ it is no small matter, assuredly, that there should be the signs amongst us of a disposition in men’s minds to “continue in the things which” they “have learnt and been assured of;”² an inclination to pause, amidst the rapid moving onward of many running to and fro³ in a self-confident progress; to “stand in the ways,” as the prophet exhorted his countrymen of old, “and see, and ask for the old paths,”—not therefore to stand still, much less to go back, but to “*walk* therein that” they may “find rest unto” their “souls.”⁴ There may be, to a great extent, a very inadequate appreciation of the distinctive Faith, “the form of sound words,”⁵ which the Church has had committed to

¹ 2 Tim. iii. 1; comp. 2 Thess. ii. 7—τὸ μυστήριον τῆς ἀνομίας.

² 2 Tim. iii. 14.

³ Dan. xii. 4.

⁴ Jer. vi. 16.

⁵ 2 Tim. i. 13.

her keeping, and in which she is to instruct her children; there may be much vagueness, in like manner, in the idea formed by many of what a "religious education" really requires: but on these points it is *our* duty and office, my Reverend Brethren, to correct what is wrong, and to supply what is wanting; happy and favoured if there are tokens meanwhile vouchsafed to us, that the vineyard which hath been given us to cultivate hath been planted, by the hand of "the Lord of hosts," and the tender care of His Well-beloved, "in a very fruitful hill;"¹ in a soil which will repay the diligent labour of the husbandman, in fruits of righteousness to be rendered to the Lord of the vineyard, when the day of our toil and watching is over, and He cometh to take account of His servants, and to give them their eternal reward.²

With such duties before us, not less pressing—nay, rather more pressing—than ever, and amidst such encouragement, not unreal nor unsubstantial, given us in our work, it will be our wisdom, I think, my Reverend Brethren, to turn to account as best we may the suspension of hostilities which may, in whatever degree, be granted to us, with a view to guard our holy citadel from dangers which seem, at the present moment, more threatening than those which beset us from without. It is more necessary than ever that the ministers of the

¹ Isaiah v. 1.

² S. Matt. xx. 8.

sanctuary, the leaders of the spiritual host, should be a united body; giving no occasion, by misgiving or mistrust, or unfounded prejudice against the Church's true principles, to any movements from within which might accomplish that, to her hurt, which open adversaries would in vain have endeavoured to effect.

If we were to form our judgment of the condition of the Church amongst us from some of the organs of what would claim to be "religious" opinion, it would hardly be too much to say, that we should regard the Church as a body divided into two or more parties, set to "bite and devour one another," with an enmity, and a desire of mutual extermination, which would lead us to expect no other result than that they should "be consumed one of another."¹ If, however, from the pages or the columns of such-like organs of religious party, we looked to the actual working of things around us, it would assuredly, I think, be a more cheering view that we should take, a more hopeful conclusion that we should come to. I would refer, for instance, to the Mission lately held in the Metropolis under the sanction and authority of the three Bishops under whose Episcopal care London and its suburbs are placed. We need not concern ourselves here with any details of the working of the Mission, varying greatly as they did in different parishes, according to the

¹ Gal. v. 15.

judgment of their respective Clergy. Nor is it necessary to enter upon the consideration of the question, generally, concerning the expediency of such Missions, their immediate effects, or the permanent results to be looked for from them. What I would call attention to simply is the fact, that men who might have been regarded as standing at the opposite ends of the line of theological opinion, or religious practice, were found working together in organizing and carrying into effect the arrangements of the Mission. It was reported, some twenty years ago, with reference to foreign missions, by one who was excellently qualified to report,—I mean the zealous and devoted first Bishop of New Zealand, the present Bishop of Lichfield—when he revisited this country after several years, that, with the work before them in heathen lands, men of different and opposite schools of religious opinion, as they would be regarded at home, worked together cordially as brethren in the fields of Missionary enterprise. And so it would seem to have been among us at home, in the earnest attempt to make an impression on the practical heathenism of our crowded cities. It cannot now be said with any truth that, with the vast pastoral work to be taken in hand, amongst the multitudes that are “scattered abroad, as sheep not having a shepherd,”¹ the Clergy of the Church of England were spending their time and wasting

¹ S. Matt. ix. 36.

their energies in conflicts about lights and vestments. Men of different ways of thinking may have differed greatly, as has been said, in the programme of services and sermons in their several churches, mission chapels, or other places of religious worship; and, of extreme men, some may, possibly, have wished to encourage modes of dealing with individual consciences which are not recognized in the order of our Church, and which would suggest the idea of sympathy with Rome; while others, perhaps, may have desired to introduce irregular forms of extempore worship, involving questionable departures from established order, and savouring rather of the Genevan Reformation, or of the uncontrolled excitements of sectarian Revivalism. But such instances—such dispositions of mind—are, I believe, comparatively few in relation to the great body of the Ministers of our Church. They are few in comparison, I am persuaded, who would deliberately scheme to remove the Church from the basis upon which, on the distinctive principles of our own Reformation, she was recognized as built, the one Catholic “foundation,” once for ever laid, “of the apostles and prophets, JESUS CHRIST Himself being the chief cornerstone;”¹ or to undo the work of our own Catholic-minded Reformers, by altering her formularies, and, under plea of completing the work, conforming her platform rather to the systems of Calvin

¹ Eph. ii. 20.

and Zwingle. With the increase and enlargement of pastoral zeal, more earnest care for souls, springing out of love unfeigned, as we may believe and trust, towards HIM who died to save them, there has been of late years a greatly increased intercourse among the clergy, meeting together, without distinction of party, in Ruridecanal gatherings such as I have already referred to, in Diocesan Synods in some instances, but especially in the Provincial Synods, the Convocations of Canterbury and York; and also opportunities of free communication and interchange of thought between Clergy and Laity, in Diocesan Conferences, and Church Congresses, or joint meetings such as I have spoken of. Men of different schools have learnt thereby to appreciate and to borrow, in some sort, from each other what was good, and what might fitly be combined, because it was not really diverse, but only another component element of the rays of the many-coloured light which Christ, "the Light of the world," caused to shine upon His Church. What might have been taken at one time as characteristic of one party, in contradistinction to another, is so no longer: rearranged churches, and choral worship, or well-ordered choirs, are now no party badge; nor, on the other hand, hearty congregational hymn-singing, or earnest sermons and cottage lectures. It has been found that "Evangelical Truth" and "Apostolical Order" are not opposed to each other; that there is room for

both, without passing the limits prescribed by the Church of England.

At the same time, there *are* undoubtedly limits prescribed, without which liberty becomes license, and instead of agreement there is discord, and instead of brotherly confidence suspicion and alarm. Of late the popular cry has been in favour of "elasticity" almost unlimited, and against the claims of established "uniformity;" but sometimes, all of a sudden, but perhaps not unnaturally, dissatisfaction as great is awakened against what are the natural results of an excessive elasticity; and there is a clamour for uniformity, and its strict observance, to be enforced by some summary provisions or other of strict compulsory law. Men need, meanwhile, sometimes to be reminded that they cannot have the unbounded exercise of both at the same time—unlimited elasticity and stringent uniformity. And therefore, my Reverend Brethren, as I ventured, when I last addressed you, to recommend a certain moderation in the use of that liberty which legislation had recently given, so as not to arouse the dissatisfaction which is apt to be awakened when men know not what they shall find in the order of service when they come to church, I trust, on the other hand, that by due caution, and by carefully avoiding, as much as may be, everything calculated to give needless offence, or to occasion just suspicion, we may escape the

danger of provoking hasty or harsh Parliamentary legislation of an adverse character, and the drawing narrower lines of doctrine or discipline than those of the Church of England. It were easy, by an indiscreet or inconsiderate exercise of the liberty which, we may conceive, public opinion has granted to our private notions and personal conscience, within the limits of strict law, to let loose the waters of bitterness in a torrent which might overflow the ancient landmarks which our fathers have set; the remedy sought going far beyond the evil experienced, and involving the Christian privileges of the many, Clergy and Laity alike, in the loss and ruin brought about by the excesses of a few.

It is a condition of affairs which specially calls for mutual forbearance, in charitable consideration for the earnest feelings engaged on both sides; and which claims also, I may say, a fair and equitable construction of the proceedings of our spiritual Rulers, and of those who are, in whatever degree, responsible for the exercise of ecclesiastical discipline. It has been so constantly in men's mouths of late years, how great a mistake was committed in regard to what became the Wesleyan schism in the last century; and how great wisdom, on the other hand, as it was said, the Church of Rome had shewn, in past times, in giving a sanction and a *status* to new developments of religious zeal which might otherwise have rent her asunder, or parted

off from her ranks, that there might well be felt, on the part of the Heads of the Church, a disposition to tolerate much which they could not cordially approve. And it is also to be borne in mind, how great difficulty and perplexity has been imported into these matters by the tendency to carry them into courts of law, to the neglect of the provisions of the Prayer Book for the interpretation of doubtful rubrics; and I must add, moreover, by the rulings of the Judicial Committee of the Privy Council, which, I apprehend, it is simply impossible for the utmost legal ingenuity to reconcile satisfactorily with each other. A great change, you are doubtless aware, has been made in this matter, since we last met, by the Act¹ passed last year “for the constitution of a Supreme Court, and for other purposes relating to the better administration of Justice in England, and to authorize the transfer, to the Appellate Division of such Supreme Court, of the jurisdiction of the Judicial Committee of Her Majesty’s Privy Council.” In the original form of the bill, as brought into the House of Lords, ecclesiastical causes were specially excepted from its provisions; but in the House of Commons, by what seemed a remarkable concurrence of all parties, this exception was thrown out. Subsequently by communication and arrangement between the highest authorities, ecclesiastical and legal, it was provided in the Act, that “the Court of Appeal,

¹ 36 & 37 Vict. cap. 66.

when hearing any appeals in ecclesiastical causes which may be referred to it shall be constituted of such and so many of the Judges thereof, and shall be assisted by such Assessors, being Archbishops or Bishops of the Church of England, as Her Majesty, by any general rules made with the advice of the Judges of the said Court, or any five of them (of whom the Lord Chancellor shall be one), and of the Archbishops and Bishops who are members of Her Majesty's Privy Council, or any two of them (and which general rules shall be made by Order in Council) may think fit to direct." Some such provision for spiritual assessors, it appears to me, is required by right reason, as well as by the recognized principles of the constitution and law of England in regard to spiritual matters. It was laid down in the preamble to the great Statute of Appeals, in the reign of Henry VIII,¹ that, in this realm of England, the body spiritual had "power, when any cause of the law divine happened to come in question, or of spiritual learning," that "then it was declared, interpreted, and shewed by that part of the said body politick, called the spirituality, now being usually called the English Church,"—to the exclusion, as it goes on fully to state, of any foreign power—"and the laws temporal . . . administered, adjudged, and executed by sundry judges and ministers of the other part of the said body politick, called the

¹ 24 Henry VIII. cap. 12.

temporalty;" and that "both their authorities and jurisdictions do conjoin together in the due administration of justice, the one to help the other." If, amidst the difficulties of the question in regard to a Court of Final Appeal, and in consideration of the objections which had been found to apply to a combination of spiritual persons with temporal judges in the constitution of the tribunal, it has seemed fit to make the Supreme Court of Appeal a purely secular Court, it is clearly necessary that there should be some provision for aiding the Court by a reference to assessors on the spiritual questions involved in such causes; unless, indeed, there be no such science as theology, and no room for the application of the inspired Apostle's saying in regard to the "comparing spiritual things with spiritual,"¹ in matters concerning which St. Paul would, certainly, not have been content to leave them to men uninformed in sacred learning, though they were skilful grammarians, and good logicians, or acute philosophers, in the schools of Greece.

But bearing in mind what that holy Apostle's judgment was, with regard to bringing questions which affected the Christian brotherhood before the outer tribunals of the secular empire, I cannot but think, my Reverend Brethren, that the results of our experience commend to us more than ever, in the cause alike of truth and of peace, the rule

¹ 1 Cor. ii. 13.

of our own Church, embodied in our Prayer Book, concerning points upon which doubts arise, or diversities spring up, in the Church's ritual. Let me repeat, though it were needlessly, words from the Preface to the Book of Common Prayer, which embody, as it appears to me, the more fully the more they are considered, the very principles of an Episcopal Church, and therein of Apostolical Christianity. According to our Church's just and reasonable statement, if I may recall it again to your minds, "there is no remedy, but that of necessity there must be some rules;" and, therefore, "certain rules are," in her Book of Common Prayer, "set forth," "few in number," and "plain and easy to be understood." She is conscious at the same time that "nothing can be so plainly set forth, but doubts may arise in the use and practice of the same;" and hence her provision that "for the resolution of all" such "doubts," and, more than this, "to appease all such diversity (if any arise)," recourse shall be had "to the Bishop of the Diocese, who by his discretion shall take order for the quieting and appeasing of the same;" with the final proviso to guard all, "that the same order be not contrary to anything contained in this Book of Common Prayer." It is a rule implying paternal and filial relations between the Bishop and the Clergy and people of his Diocese; it gives him a certain "discretion" within defined limits.

And I the rather dwell on this rule, and its

mind and spirit, at the present time, because one whose words would, I should think, carry weight with younger men, from his age, and his position, for so many years now, in relation to the religious movement forty years ago, has lately said publicly,¹ in reply to the question put to him what he thinks "would be the remedy for the present confusion," that he believes it would be "a better understanding between the Bishops and the Clergy;" the Bishops being regarded as "Fathers in God;" "their spiritual relations to the Clergy not merged in that of executors of disputed 'law,' but free to advise and act out of their own minds." He believes that if the Bishops, untrammelled by disputable decisions—but, of course, it must be said, in conformity with the great principles of the Church's law—"would consider in each particular case the joint wishes of the congregation and the Clergy, there would be no insuperable difficulty in ending these confusions." "The Bishops," he doubts not, "will be influenced by their own feeling, and by a sense of their spiritual office, to resume their fatherly relation to all their Clergy;" and their Clergy will again rejoice to think and speak of them as "fathers in God;" and "God, the great Father of all, we may hope," he says, "will turn the hearts of the fathers to the children, and the hearts of the children to the fathers." It were

¹ See a letter from the Rev. E. B. Pusey, D.D., dated "Christ Church, March 28," inserted in *The Times*, of March 30.

a consummation, my Reverend Brethren, you will feel with me, I am persuaded—and our Lay brethren also will feel with us—devoutly to be wished. But it can be attained only by mutual charity and forbearance, and by the sacrifice oftentimes, it may be on both sides, of personal will or individual taste. And if it be asked in which quarter the overtures of peace should begin, as between Bishops and Clergy, in any instance in which, unhappily, peaceful relations have been interrupted, the holy Apostle's order would seem to be, "Children obey your parents in the Lord: for this is right." "And ye, fathers, provoke not your children to wrath."¹ The sacrifice which it may involve in some cases will surely appear the easier, when it is borne in mind, that it is not the holding or teaching of this or that doctrine, on whatever side it be, that is concerned; but rather the abstaining, perhaps, from some outward practice or rite which, we are told, has been in some instances pressed upon the Clergy by their people, in order to the more vivid expression of doctrine, or which has seemed when assaults were made upon it to be identified—mistakenly, I think, sometimes—with doctrine which might therefore appear to be compromised by omitting the rite or practice.

"When ritual was first attacked," we are told, a clergyman said publicly to a body of laity, "We, the clergy, taught you the doctrine; you said to us,

¹ Eph. vi. 1, 4.

Set it before our eyes." The Roman poet and moralist has taught us how much more sensitive the eye is than the ear. He tells us, in familiar words,

"Segnius irritant animos demissa per *caurem*
Quam quæ sunt *oculis* subjecta fidelibus."¹

His expression is, in the application which I venture to make of it, specially significant and appropriate—"irritant animos." "I entirely admit," says the writer of the letter I have quoted, "that there *are* ritualistic observances which would jar on the devotional feelings of persons really devout." "We naturally wish," he says, "for calm in the worship of God. Changes upon changes," the writer goes on to say, "such as in some *few* churches are introduced, so as to give rise in people's minds to the question, 'What next?' are, of course, very unedifying"—and to many minds, I may add, in the Horatian phrase, "irritating." I speak from personal observation and experience—I am happy to say, not in my own Archdeaconry, or in the Diocese; but it is a matter which concerns us all.

"Nam tua res agitur paries cum proximus ardet."

It is not a question of restricted liberty in teaching every thing that the individual clergyman may hold, in the way of opinion and doctrine, within the utmost limits of the Church's formu-

² HORATI *De Arte Poetica*, l. 180.

laries, "no man forbidding him." Such liberty has been proclaimed by the rulings of the Judicial Committee, with singularly equal political justice, we may say, in regard to three different schools of thought, if one must recognize them so, in the three trials, first of *Gorham v. the Bishop of Exeter*, next of *Williams v. the Bishop of Salisbury*, and *Wilson v. Fendall*, and lastly of *Sheppard v. Bennett*; decisions which, while in turn they startled men of different ways of thinking, it has been truly said were in accordance—in the first two cases notoriously—with a widespread opinion of the expediency of such comprehensiveness and latitude. But in regard to what is done, as distinguished from what is taught, in public worship, the most zealous laymen might well bear to be reminded, that the tenderest consideration must be shown to divers feelings, and that the atmosphere of public worship and united devotion should be calm and peaceful as the air of Heaven.

With reference, however, to these matters it has come to pass, by a strange sort of fatality, that rubrics touching on points for delicate treatment, and which, by the light of history carefully studied, may be proved, perhaps, to have been left designedly in some degree open, and therefore in a like degree ambiguous, have been submitted to the hard handling of courts of law, when they were intended rather for the gentle "discretion" of Fathers in Christ; while, on the other hand, the

spirit of private judgment has been let to have free scope in the wholesale substitution of services and ceremonial which by no possibility of interpretation could be brought under the provisions of our own Prayer Book. Temporal law, meanwhile, taken out of its own sphere and province, palpably fails to perform a work for which it was never fitted; it deals with the "letter" that "killeth," rather than with "the spirit" which "giveth life;"¹ and disappoints then most grievously the expectations of men, and causes the most scandal and offence, when it exhibits in matters of religion that powerlessness which, in Acts of Parliament on civil and temporal matters, proverbially leaves openings for violation of its provisions, by skilful chariotteering through clauses which had been devised with all the ingenuity of practised artificers. It is a different spirit from this by which the Christian Church is governed: "we have not so learned Christ."

Let us humbly trust that He in whose hands are the hearts of all men, and who turneth them "as the rivers in the south,"² will so guide and govern all things, that faith and patience, both so greatly needed, may have their "perfect work;"³ and that His Church, protected alike from untempered zeal or mutual distrust within, and from rude and hasty interference from without, may joyfully

¹ 2 Cor. iii. 6.

² Psalm cxxvi. 4, comp. Prov. xxi. 1.

³ James i. 4.

serve Him "in all godly quietness." It is now just thirty years ago, my Reverend Brethren, I cannot help recalling to mind—the period, as we count it, of one generation succeeding another—that, in attendance on Archbishop Howley, at his last Visitation of his Diocese, I heard him speaking to his Clergy of the then "present crisis" (for "in that light," he said he regarded it) "when the course of a few years must determine," as he expressed it, "whether the Church shall attain the happy condition of fulfilling her solemn obligations to God and man, without diminution of her energies by intestine distractions and troubles, or whether the increase of dissensions shall produce a state of confusion which will deeply affect her honour and usefulness. At the same time," he added, "I must say that I see every reason to hope for the best." "Our peril," he said, "lies in disunion. In other respects the position of the Church affords ample encouragement for humble reliance on the protection and blessing of that special Providence, which has hitherto preserved it from many imminent dangers from within and without, in the days of our forefathers, and not less conspicuously in our own during the last half century." "The storm of popular violence," the Archbishop went on to say, "which caused some apprehension for our ancient establishments, has now subsided; and I believe that at no other period in our history has more affectionate rever-

ence been felt towards the Church, or its usefulness more justly appreciated, and its claims more generally recognized. In this disposition," he said, "I see indications of permanency, distinguishing it from those sudden bursts of excitement which, like a blaze among stubble, incidentally kindled, and soon extinct, have sometimes been the forerunners of a reaction unfavourable to its object. A preference founded on observation of facts, and clear perceptions of duty, may reasonably be expected to be lasting."¹

The Archbishop was looking back through the preceding thirty years, which had passed since he was first called to the Episcopate, to preside over the See of London. "And here," he said, "I may be indulged in an humble expression of gratitude to that gracious Providence which has lengthened my days beyond the ordinary term of human existence, that I might behold what, I trust, is but the commencement of this renovation, might witness the union of Clergy and Laity in labouring for the good of society through the agency of the Church." It was thus that he looked upon it—as the commencement, he hoped, of a great renovation; and "with the prospects opening before us, with the fullest persuasion that the great Head of the Church will not abandon His ministers while they do Him faithful service," he cast his eyes "forward with hope," as he said, "though not

¹ Charge to the Clergy of the Diocese of Canterbury, 1844.

altogether free from anxiety, to the future destinies of our Church." The last thirty years, my Reverend Brethren, I think, have abundantly fulfilled, in regard to the Church, the hopeful anticipation which, in a spirit of watchful care and wise and fatherly love, her aged Primate, your own Diocesan, then expressed; and they have made assuredly not less important his earnest and affectionate warnings against the danger from internal divisions.

May it please HIM, that Almighty Guardian and Guide, who hath "been our refuge from one generation to another,"¹ to grant to us the fulfilment, in such measure as may seem fit to His wisdom and goodness, of the ancient "prayer of Moses, the man of God,"—whether it please Him, our Ruler and Guide, that our days of service in His Church here on earth shall be a few more or less—a prayer whose language is associated in all our minds with the most sacred memories of the departed, and the holiest aspirations for those who have entered into their labours; "Shew thy servants thy work, and their children thy glory. And the glorious majesty of the Lord our God be upon us; prosper Thou the work of our hands upon us: O prosper Thou our handywork."²

"To God, only wise, be glory through Jesus Christ. Amen."³

¹ Psalm xc. 1. ² *Ibid.*, vv. 16, 17. "Order for the Burial of the Dead."

³ Rom. xvi. 27.

BY THE SAME AUTHOR.

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