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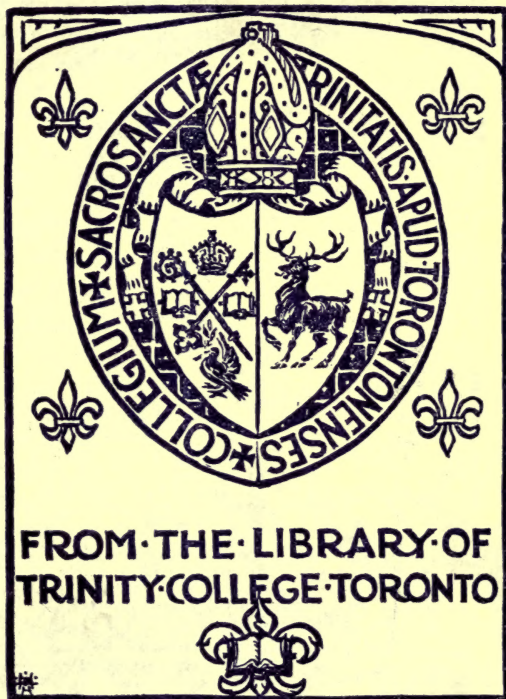
THE SPIRITUAL EFFICIENCY
OF THE CHURCH
THE PRIMARY CHARGE DE-
LIVERED AT HIS VISITATION
TO THE CLERGY AND
CHURCHWARDENS OF HIS
DIOCESE
BY CHARLES GORE, D.D., D.C.L.
BISHOP OF WORCESTER

OCTOBER, 1904
JOHN MURRAY, ALBEMARLE STREET,
LONDON, W.

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SPIRITUAL EFFICIENCY

1ST EDITION *December, 1904*
Reprinted. *March, 1905*

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SPRITUAL ENLIGHTENMENT
THE SKIMMY CHARGE
DELIVERED AT THE VISITATION
TO THE CLERGY
AND CHURCH WARDENS OF
THE PARISH
BY CHARLES WATSON, B.D., D.C.L.
BISHOP OF WINDSOR
OCTOBER 1844

PRINTED BY
HAZELL, WATSON AND VINEY, LD.
LONDON AND AYLESBURY

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I

AT WORCESTER

OCTOBER 11TH, 1904

MY BRETHREN, THE CLERGY, AND THE CHURCHWARDENS,—

A bishop's visitation is his inquiry into the efficiency of the officers and apparatus of the Church within his diocese. But the word "visitation" has scriptural associations, and it is these which give to what we are occupied in its religious meaning. A bishop's visitation is a rehearsal of the great inquiry when the Lord "cometh out of His place" to visit the Church, which is His representative and His body on earth. That He, our divine Lord, will make strict inquiry into the efficiency of His ministers and agents, is nowhere stated with such penetrating force as in the parable of the talents.¹ There Christ represents Himself to us under the figure of what we should call an exacting man of business of the best type. The characteristics of the first-rate man of business remain the same in the twentieth century as in the first, though the methods of business have changed with the possibilities of communication which in our time enable a man to conduct his affairs from a distance. In the older days this could not be; and the man of business in the parable is obliged, during his own absence from home, to distribute his capital for use among his most trusted agents.

¹ Matt. xxv. 14-30.

He gives sums to be employed in commercial enterprise to different managers, the sums varying according to the varying ability which he has discerned in each. When, after a prolonged absence, he returns, he makes exact inquisition to discover whether the best possible use has been made of his capital. He is satisfied when he finds his capital doubled. Then he rewards his agents munificently. As we should say, he makes them partners in his business and its profits. But the man of slenderest capacity, to whom the smallest sum had been entrusted, had been afraid of the risks of commercial enterprise. His employer seemed to him too exacting, "reaping where he had not sown and gathering where he had not scattered"—that is, supplying too little and asking too much; and he had been afraid. He had done nothing. He had simply wrapped the money up and kept it safe: "Lo, there thou hast that is thine own." He had not rebelled; he had not been fraudulent; like other characters in other parables. He represents respectable inefficiency discouraged and paralysed by what seems too great a task—too great a demand. He complains of the intolerable conditions of his lot. And the owner does not repudiate the severe character assigned to him. He accepts it. "You knew," he says, "that I was an exacting man demanding the highest possible return for my money: you ought therefore to have employed it to the best possible profit. As you have not done this, but have been inefficient and have shrunk from the struggles and ventures involved in success, I call you a worthless and slothful servant, and I punish your worthlessness by rejection from my service and my household into the dark world outside, to meditate there upon the faithlessness and folly of what seemed to you to be only reasonable complaint and prudential caution." "Cast ye the unprofitable servant into the outer darkness; there shall be the weeping and gnashing of teeth."

I often find myself astonished that we reflect so little upon this tremendous parable, which meets with so direct a challenge many of our most common moods. Christ is not merely the taskmaster. He is the Son of the Father. Fatherhood is the best and completest description of God. But He is also our "great taskmaster." He so describes Himself in this and other parables. And the only way to find God a Father merciful and forgiving at the last is to accept Him, where He so presents Himself, as the taskmaster who seems to set us an impossible task. To be inefficient; to refuse the conditions of successful effort which seem too hard for us; to decline the constant and persevering ventures of faith; to accept failure—this is to forfeit our right to call Him our father, as well as our right to call Him our master. It is to find ourselves rejected and in the outer darkness. There are so many conditions of life in which we find ourselves complaining that what is required is too much for us: that God gives so little and asks so much. And it is when we are in this despondent and faint-hearted mood; when we are disposed to acquiesce in being inefficient and to be content with being respectable, that this story of the man of the one talent who, because he was content with respectable inefficiency, found himself not merely lightly accounted of, but utterly rejected—this story, I say, hits us so hard. He that hath ears to hear let him hear. It may be the bishop, paralysed and crushed by a task the vastness and complexity of which seem to make it impossible to attain any tolerable measure of efficiency; it may be the town vicar, who is overwhelmed by impossibly manifold demands upon him, and who perhaps can find no curate; it may be the country parson, despondent because he finds nothing but discouragement and apathy, or it may be quarrelsomeness and unreasonableness, round about him; it may be the curate, who does not find in his vicar the man to

take an interest in him—to teach or guide or encourage him; it may be the churchwarden or other layman, who knows how things ought to be in the Church of God, and what a minister of Christ ought to be, and finds things in fact so different. All alike feel that God—if the ideal of Christ's kingdom in the New Testament really represents His mind—is asking of us too much and giving us, as it seems in our experience, too little. Upon all of us, then, bracing in its simple severity, the claim of God as the man of business, relentlessly demanding efficiency in the stewards of His concerns, falls as a summons we cannot ignore, which so long as life lasts rests upon us inexorable. There must be no "marking time." The Church's capital of all kinds, material and spiritual, must be employed at its utmost productiveness for Christ's work, which is the salvation of souls. The great day of visitation is at hand. It will sweep away all the conventional excuses—such as the man of the one talent had found so satisfactory, doubtless, in his own family and circle while the head of the business was out of sight. It will wither them into nothing.

I have been obliged to speak of Christ's requirement as the requirement of efficiency. I am well aware that the word is very easily open to misconception. Efficiency means in our Lord's sight the turning of souls from sin to God: it is by no means to be identified with apparent success or popularity. Our Lord Himself, the pattern of efficiency for us, seemed to fail. Men, like Judas, doubtless said or felt that He knew too little of the ways of the world to succeed. We know that a man who does his utmost, in work and prayer, faithful unto death, shall be proved efficient in the great issue. He shall see of the travail of his soul and be satisfied, when the shallow and worthless work of others who seemed successful will have been burned up and have come to nothing. We must of course, therefore, be

very careful that we mean by efficiency what our Lord means by it. What I want to impress upon my own mind and yours in this day of visitation is this only: our great taskmaster requires of every one of us, under exceedingly difficult conditions, courageous and untiring efficiency in His Father's business up to the extreme limit of our capacity, till the day when He comes to pass His sentence upon our work.

I would say, then, to every one of you, what I continually say to myself: make a fresh beginning and do your best, till Christ, and not your own wilfulness or weariness, relieves you of your task. And, unsatisfying as our age is, strangely lacking as it seems to be in depth, or enthusiasm, or capacity to go forward in united action, it is still an age which appreciates a man when it sees him. Paralysed and disorganised as our Church seems, still it gives a man great freedom to do his best. When I am despondent I can refresh myself by thinking of this man and that, this priest and that layman, who are individually doing such excellent work—and there are so many of them: and at least they are not hindered by undue restriction. We all need to take courage from such examples, and to cultivate the individual vision, courageous initiative, and persevering patience.

Yes, as my swift life nears its goal
'Tis all that I implore:
In life, in death, a chainless soul,
And courage to endure.

But what we are concerned with is not only ourselves and "our own work," as we should say. In varying degree, we are each of us responsible for the Church as a whole, or that part of it which we call the Church of England. Is the Church efficient? Are we, as a body, making the best of our position, our heritage? That is the great

challenge—the challenge which my great predecessor, Hugh Latimer, pressed home with such startling force upon the Convocation of the clergy nearly four hundred years ago.¹ Have we made the best of our opportunities and resources? Are we even now on the way to make the best of them? My friends, I do not want to seem to be a pessimist. But I am sure there is a kind of optimism, which refuses to probe our real diseases, which is very unlike the spirit of the prophets; and there is a clear-sighted sincerity in dealing with our shortcomings which the spirit of the prophets requires of us. It is not pessimism. For no man can be, on the whole or at the bottom, a pessimist, who believes in the victory which once for all overcame the world; who believes that Christ is on the Throne, and that the “real Church,” responsive to His Spirit, is His living Body. I am quite sure, with a certainty which I never find to waver, that, through whatever purging fires of judgment, there will emerge out of the Church of England something which shall prove her to have been all along a living limb of the great body. But what does cause me to tremble is that there seems to be among us so little corporate penitence: so inadequate a sense of the way in which as a society we have misused our resources, and, I fear, are still on the whole content to misuse them. The time was when the Church was plainly the National Church. Hers was, for good and evil, the religion of the nation. This was, on the whole, still the case down into the eighteenth century. It is through our own sins that this position has been, conspicuously, lost.

The Church now appears as only one among many religious bodies. It stands side by side with the confederation of the Nonconformist bodies, and the much smaller but compact and solid body of Catholics owning the Roman obedience. Well, what are we doing now to train those

¹ See pp. 90-91 of this volume.

who *are* our members, the residue of the flock, in the appreciation of their membership? It is a singularly confused age. The movements of mind are perplexed and uncertain. There is no open vision. The social tendencies of the time are hesitating and contrary. Whether socially or intellectually, it is very hard to say whither we are going. But in the midst of such a confused scene those who really believe in Christ and His Church, who have a confident hope and a clear guidance for themselves and for humanity, ought to stand out in society, as a light in a dark place, a city set on a hill. What we want in every parish is not more Christians so much as better Christians, and not more Churchmen so much as better Churchmen. Those who believe, those who are willing, ought to be taught, helped, guided, established, consolidated into a faithful and intelligent body of Churchmanship, with zeal for the cause of the Church, rightly understood as being the cause of Christ, not for controversy, but for maintenance and for progress. And the Church body in every parish ought to be conscious of its communion with the Church all through the land and beyond it, awake to its large interests and joyful in its large fellowship. The future of the Church is very uncertain. In any crisis our capacity to deal with the situation and our opportunity to make our just claim heard and felt, will depend upon the solid body of instructed Churchmen who can act together; as was said of the men of Issachar, "Men that had understanding of the times, to know what Israel ought to do; the heads of them were two hundred; and all their brethren were at their commandment."¹ Well, now, what are we doing to train such a body of Churchmen? I wish to speak with much thankfulness of the United Parishes Organisation, which seems to me to be aiming exactly at the right mark and with very consider-

¹ 1 Chron. xii. 32.

able success. But, on the whole, I feel that the teaching force of the Church, just at the moment when it ought to be strongest, is unusually weak. But of this—the teaching office of the Church—I shall have more to say elsewhere.

Once again, we have had great revivals of religion in the immediate past—evangelical, catholic, social—movements, for any one who has eyes to see, complementary, not antagonistic. Their force seems for the moment somewhat spent; but in some measure they have coalesced, and in great measure they have affected great districts of the Church's life. Well, now, what use have we made of the leverage which great religious revivals supply to remove defects of organisation, to abolish scandals, to effect reforms? Something has been done in the revival of Convocation (though nothing yet for the reform of the Lower House); something, in the revival of Church councils, such as diocesan conferences, Church congresses, parish councils; something more in the Houses of Laymen; something more in the National Church Council. All this may culminate in the supply of the necessary instruments for an efficient corporate life, if the necessary driving power is behind it. But how very little diffused at present is any real consciousness of what it is we ought to be endeavouring to acquire or to remove! Let me give some instances.

A Church no more than a nation can exist healthily without legislative power somewhere to adapt ancient law and unchanging principles to modern needs. Christ meant His Church to have such power—the power to bind and loose—that is, legislative and judicial power. We have lost that power through our own faithlessness these many centuries. It has become specially evident recently through the manifest impossibility of thinking of Parliament as an assembly representing the Church. But the consequence of this long abandonment of the necessary process of

adjusting abiding principles to changing needs is that we have a number of antiquated laws which cannot really be put in force, and a system clogged with obsolete elements. Our confusion, our lawlessness, are due in the main to our having lost the powers of legislation and discipline necessary to any living body—powers with which Christ deliberately endowed His body. These points are evident enough; but how very few of us Churchmen, comparatively to the whole body, are really alive and awake to the great deficiency? We lament the evils of our own particular parish; we resent what annoys or hurts our own feelings in our own place; but it is comparatively few of us who are alive to our responsibility for taking our part in making the Church as a whole more efficient.

Again, centuries ago Latimer¹ made a soul-stirring protest against the sale of ecclesiastical benefices—that is, the turning of the pastoral office, or the trust of appointing to the pastoral office, into a matter of merchandise. Everybody takes it for granted that such a system would be intolerable for educational posts or posts of government. But how sluggish has been, and is, the conscience of the Church in regard to such a moral enormity as that a patron can sell for money, as a mere matter of commerce, to the highest bidder the right to appoint the pastor of souls, and how miserably inadequate have been the dearly won reforms in this respect.

Once again, a main source of inefficiency among us is that clergymen can, nay, often for pecuniary reasons must, retain their spiritual offices when they are past work. Inefficiency must have gone very far indeed before they can be legally removed, and even when that point has been passed, mercy to the individual has often been allowed to override justice to the flock. Why have we no pension fund? Many religious

¹ See p. 91.

bodies, with less wealth at command than we ought to have, have such a fund. It is, I believe, even more necessary than an augmentation of the income of benefices. Why has the financial intellect in our Church (great enough in bulk surely) elaborated no scheme, and the wealth of our Church not been appealed to, to supply or assist the means of retirement without absolute pauperism when men are no longer capable of pastoral office? Why, further, when means for retirement are available, whether in the case of bishops or incumbents, has it been left wholly to the individual, in spite of all the warnings of experience, to determine its occasion?

I have named only a few points which obviously have hindered corporate efficiency—the lack of legislative power, without which no society can healthfully exist; the old scandal of the sale of patronage; the inefficiency due to the lack of means for retirement; the mistake, where means exist, of leaving the decision in the wrong hands. I am persuaded that the revivals of religion among us ought to have been directed to serve, far more than they have, as levers for the removal of abuses. We are still extraordinarily and lamentably tolerant of abuses such as are real wounds in the body of Christ, running sores which keep us weak. If you say, What can *we* do to remove those things? I say, First of all, feel them. The mark of God's approval is set first on those in Jerusalem who have sighed and cried for the evils that are done in the midst of her.¹

“He that lacks time to mourn, lacks time to mend.” I am persuaded that we need corporate penitence in far fuller measure: the fear among us of divine judgments upon our sins as a body, our great and conspicuous failures in efficiency. I am persuaded that, while we cling to our principles, to our divinely given creed and constitution, so tightly that nothing can loose our hold, we need, as to our methods, our rules and

¹ Ezek. ix. 4.

our organisation, a far greater and more widespread demand for change. Again and again, at this point and that point, we have suffered, and we do suffer, the Word of God to be of none effect by our traditions. We tolerate abuses which are real wounds, real sources of weakness in the body, by a mere appeal to our English customs. Yet these things could be altered, if more people cared. I am persuaded that most Englishmen are reasonable, if they will take the trouble to be interested. Impracticable zealots, "impossible" minorities, at present are allowed too much importance, because very often they are almost the only people in the field. We could get things altered for the better if we all of us—the great mass of moderate men—would take our part; would be at pains to see what wants altering, to consider the way to alter it, and then to supply the driving force to make the machine of progress work.

We are to be occupied in an inquiry into efficiency. That is a visitation. It demands both knowledge and sympathy in the visitor. I know too well how badly equipped I am for the task. My previous experience before I became bishop had been, for various reasons, both at Oxford and Westminster and in a non-parochial community of clergy, almost entirely extra-diocesan. I had hardly ever been to a confirmation, since I was myself confirmed, before I was called upon to confirm. I have never attended an archidiaconal or episcopal visitation till I am called upon to visit. I knew nothing about the laws of dilapidations or faculties, or the thousand and one details of ecclesiastical law and administration with which a bishop is required to deal. I knew as little as possible about the clergy or parishes of this diocese, much less than I knew about a number of other dioceses. I have had the advantage of invaluable and most generous assistance

from the Bishop of Coventry, while he was with us under that name, from the archdeacons, from many of the rural deans, from my legal officers, from very many churchwardens and other laymen. For all this I am indeed thankful. Nevertheless, I have found it extraordinarily difficult to learn my business. To become acquainted with the persons and characteristics of eight hundred clergy and the internal affairs of five hundred parishes, as a man ought to be acquainted with them who is to be (in any real sense) superintendent, especially if he is anything but quick in the apprehension and memory of individuals, is a portentous task. How many mistakes, sometimes grievous mistakes, I have made through impatience or culpable forgetfulness, how many through culpable lack of sympathy, I am only too depressingly conscious. That you have borne with me as you have is a mark of the greatest generosity and forbearance. As I have grown—very imperfectly—to know the diocese, the first thing which has become apparent is that it is not so much one diocese, as three. To an extraordinary extent the three archdeaconries are distinct in interests and sympathies ; so much so, that it has been found necessary—to the great damage of diocesan cohesion—to work the organisation for Church Extension and Church Education, and more recently the Ordination Candidates Fund, as archidiaconal instead of diocesan organisations. After the twelve months for which I asked for consideration, it became evident that the very first step in improving the organisation of the diocese was to make Birmingham, the great midland centre, a separate episcopate. About the overwhelmingly cogent reasons for this you have heard more than enough ; you have been praying—I know by the result that many of us have been praying very earnestly—for the constitution of the new diocese. Now, by the mercy of God, it is in immediate prospect. But of the new diocese I speak to-morrow ; to-day, of what will remain the see of Worcester.

If we proceed on the lines anticipated, there will be left to the see of Worcester the present archdeaconry of Worcester, with the exception perhaps of some parishes chiefly on the northern borders of this county; and the whole, or almost the whole, archdeaconry of Coventry—in all, about 375 or 380 parishes, with 520 to 530 parochial clergy and a population of, say, 600,000¹—a diocese not too great in matter of numbers, but still consisting of two quite disconnected territories. Still, doubtless, when the Bishop of Worcester wants to get diocesan representatives together, he will have to hold meetings in Birmingham. He will constantly pass through Birmingham. My own belief is, that a satisfactory arrangement will not be arrived at till Coventry becomes the seat of at least a suffragan bishop. Meanwhile, a first step after the division of the diocese will be the reorganisation of some of the rural deaneries. The rural deaneries in this diocese vary extraordinarily in coherence. In some the rural dean knows all about his rural deanery, and in a real sense represents it to the bishop, and is an effective means of communication with it. In others the whole ruridecanal system is almost in abeyance—a name with little corresponding reality. In some cases, I suppose, these variations correspond to variations in personal characteristics; sometimes weakness is due to the rural deanery being too large; sometimes to its being too small; sometimes to its not representing any natural unity of parishes. I am certain that the system of rural deaneries, with ruridecanal chapters and conferences, needs reawakening into life, where it is at present torpid.

The ruridecanal system is, I believe, the best means of fostering the diocesan spirit. Other means will be the Church Extension Society, which, in view of the needs of some parts of the county, needs to be renewed to fresh

¹ See p. 26: more exactly.

activity; and the Ordination Candidates Fund,¹ which, I am thankful to say, has met in this archdeaconry with generous support—much more generous than in the other archdeaconries. I hope it will be a great means of making the diocese feel a common interest in the supply of candidates for Holy Orders.

Besides these, and as important as anything, is the Church Education Society, in which I earnestly desire to see all the Church schools united. Its affiliation fee² is intended to provide a common fund, out of which poorer schools may be helped to meet the demands—generally the righteous demands—of the education authority. Some such fund must exist, or the weak schools will go; and each single school which goes must weaken the position of all of them. Besides this, we stand for one educational cause (a cause of which I hope to speak at more length at Coventry on Thursday), and it is most important that we should think of each school, and of each church and each parish, as parts of one organisation. In all ways we must strengthen the corporate spirit—that is, in its fuller meaning, the sense of membership in the Church Universal and its responsibilities. We must not be contented till we are much more conscious than we commonly are at present of these widespread and universal responsibilities, till, for instance, every parish as a matter of course gives to missionary work among those who do not yet acknowledge the name of Christ its place of proper prominence in teaching, and prayer, and alms-giving—I say, deliberately, every parish. But the step to the catholic

¹ I have spoken about this fund for assisting candidates for ordination so much, and there has been such full information in the diocesan magazine, that I am not saying more here. At present our income in the archdeaconry of Worcester may be estimated at £700; in that of Coventry, £160; and in that of Birmingham, £100.

² This fee is, in this archdeaconry, 6*d.* per child, with a maximum of £15 and a minimum of £2.

spirit is the diocesan spirit. That sorely needs quickening among us. In particular, I must indicate one point where the deficiency has been shown. The bishop's articles of inquiry to churchwardens for this visitation have not been returned at all in 185 cases out of the 535 sent out. This is a serious omission. Before the next visitation something must be done to prevent a repetition of this experience. May I, however, express my thankfulness to those churchwardens who have not only made returns, but been at pains to represent to me serious drawbacks in the life of the parish? In all cases, as I have given them cause to know, I have taken notice of their complaint: in some cases with good result. I hope where I have succeeded in accomplishing nothing, the churchwardens and other parishioners will become effective members of the Church Reform League.

Turning to the archdeacon's and rural deans' returns, I find that on the whole our church fabrics in this archdeaconry are in good order. Doubtless the last century saw an immense reformation in this respect. Where serious repair of the fabric has been reported to be still needed, I will ask the archdeacon and rural dean to keep their eyes open to the matter, and to let the bishop hear, after the interval of a year, if the need is being met. I would make the same request in other cases where deficiency has been reported in any particular. With some of these cases I shall deal at other centres of visitation.

When we turn from the fabrics of the churches to the use we put them to, I find the following statistics forthcoming: In the diocese as a whole the number of confirmation candidates, which has been rising, represented last year an average of 1 to (about) every 140 of the population.¹ But there are striking differences between the averages of different

¹ More precisely, 7·03 per thousand.

places. Thus the average of the last three years is in Worcester about 1 in 90; in Coventry 1 in 150; in Dudley and in Birmingham 1 in about 300. The variations in country parishes are equally great. Of course spiritually such statistical results indicate very little. In some country parishes it appears to be the case that almost every one will be confirmed, if only they are not made to feel too seriously what it means. But these statistics do indicate real and important differences in the general position held by the Church in different parts of the diocese. More really informing, however, than statistics, I find the experience, which certainly has impressed me in most places when I have been going about confirming, of the reverence and what I may call spiritual aptitude exhibited by the candidates. It is borne in upon me again and again that there is more spiritual capacity in our people in town and country than we have yet found means, in most cases, to evoke or develop into instructed and permanent Churchmanship.

As to how many of those confirmed become more or less regular communicants—as to the proportion of our communicants to the population—I sought to form an estimate; but I put so little trust in it that I decided to withhold it.

To pass to statistics of services: Out of about 265 parishes¹ (including in one some combined parishes), 164 appear to have weekly communions—nearly two-thirds. This represents, doubtless, a great change for the better in the last twenty-five years. But not much more than one-third (98 churches in all) have one regular daily service; only 49 have both daily services ordinarily said. In 106 churches there appear to be (outside Lent and Advent) no regular service on weekdays at all. In this matter I earnestly pray for reconsideration. Let me read to you the Prayer Book rubric: “All priests and deacons are to say daily the

¹ These statistics apply only to Worcester archdeaconry

Morning and Evening Prayer either privately or openly, not being let by sickness, or some other urgent cause. And the Curate that ministereth in every parish-church or chapel, being at home, and not being otherwise reasonably hindered, shall say the same in the parish-church or chapel where he ministereth, and shall cause a bell to be tolled thereunto a convenient time before he begin, that the people may come to hear God's Word, and to pray with him."

There has been nothing to antiquate that rule of the Church, except bad custom. If the Church had free power of legislation, it certainly would not be altered to-day. I believe I do my duty in pressing it on many men older and much more religious than I am. We may not find the response which George Herbert found at Bemerton, or other men in more recent times, to the offer of daily common worship. We may not find any response at all; but we are bound ourselves to the saying of our daily offices publicly or privately by the intention of the Church. To observe that obligation in all cases, except of very rare emergency, is, I know by experience, in the long run of the greatest spiritual profit; and I am persuaded we had much better, as a rule, say our offices, as the Prayer Book intends, in church, as the representatives of the people, at a regular hour (that in itself is good), even if we must be often quite alone; and we should call attention to what we are going to do *for* the people by a few strokes of the bell, even if very few of them can be persuaded to join us. Vicarages would more constantly have been built close to churches if this good observance had been maintained, and that would have been a gain from many points of view.

It is a simple ideal, which may be realised generally, that in every parish the parish priest should be known ordinarily to say the daily services in church, and should celebrate the Holy Communion weekly at least; and I would add that

the Church should, where it is possible—and it is, I am sure possible without serious risk, almost everywhere, as experience shows when it is tried—stand open all day for those who like to come in and use it for quiet and worship.¹ The opportunity may be used by few at present ; but speaking for myself, I know that as I go about in England I am constantly deterred from seeking the parish church, under circumstances where I should certainly seek it if I were touring abroad, simply because it is so uncertain whether I shall find it open. I wish I could read to you from his primary charge at Peterborough the strenuous words of one revered in this place—Bishop Creighton—both on open churches and on daily services.²

As regards celebrations of Holy Communion on ordinary weekdays, I am sure that the principle of our Church is the right one, that the frequency of celebration should depend upon there being a sufficient number of persons (which can be reckoned on the average) to communicate with the priest. Sunday celebration has been the rule of the universal Church at all times ; but daily celebration has been by no means so general.

I am going to take this opportunity to speak a few words about the use of music in Church services, even though in so doing I must anticipate the report of our diocesan committee, from which much is to be hoped. This Cathedral gives us an admirable type of service, which for reverence and beauty is unsurpassed, for the maintenance of which I endeavoured yesterday³ to express our profound debt of

¹ I have noticed that when robberies take place it is as often from closed as from open churches.

² See *The Church and the Nation*, p. 111 ff.

³ On Monday, October 10th, I held the visitation of the Cathedral, and took the opportunity to thank the Dean and others specially concerned for the admirable maintenance of the fabric and services, for

gratitude as to others concerned, so specially to the Precentor. This type of service, in which, so far as the singing is concerned, only the choir can join, is the type of service which, for my own sake, I prefer. But it is, I am convinced, not the type of service which ought to be imitated in parish churches, except a very few. In most parish churches we have fallen, I know not how, under the despotism of choirs. From the time we say the vestry prayers before the service to the time we return to the vestry, we have come to regard monotoning on a high note as the proper method of reciting, as if there was something sacred about the note G. I am quite sure we need largely to restore the use of the natural tone of voice in public worship. In particular I should suggest—it is no more than a suggestion for your consideration—that the preparatory and concluding prayers in the vestry should be said and replied to with *Amen* in a quiet, natural voice. Choirs should be taught to say prayers as well as sing them. Then when the choir and minister have taken their places, the sentences and introductory address should be simply read, and the confession should always be said, not sung, in a quiet, natural, low voice, as is intended, “in a humble voice,” and this should continue for the absolution and the Lord’s Prayer. This is liturgically proper, as well as spiritually convenient. It is a penitential preparation for the service of praise.¹ In the same way the prayers after the third collect had better, in my opinion, the admirable efficiency of the Cathedral King’s School, for the educational and moral excellence of the choir school, as well as for the great personal kindness shown by all the members of the Cathedral body to me. Complaints were invited from the various members of the Cathedral body, but none were received. There were no further public proceedings.

¹ In the “Book annexed”—the statutory Prayer Book—two black lines are drawn after the absolution to separate off the penitential introduction from the service proper. The Lord’s Prayer however is also preparatory.

be recited and replied to in a natural reading voice.¹ They are a sort of appendix to the sung service. There would thus be restored to our service a wholesome exercise of the natural speaking voice in which all can join. I am thankful that in these respects "advanced churches" are returning to old-fashioned ways. The service which may properly be sung may be taken to extend from the "O Lord, open Thou our lips" down to the third collect. Even in this we shall follow ancient precedent, as well as common sense, if we say the Apostles' Creed and the Lord's Prayer on a low natural note or in the speaking voice. There remain for chanting the versicles and responses,² the psalms, canticles, lesser litany, with the chief collects, as well as anthem and hymns. Even here I think we should do better often on Sunday at one service to read the psalms. And I think that choirs may be prevented from being discouraged by any such reduction of the amount sung, if they are regularly practising some special rendering of a canticle or anthem, or some rendering of the sung portions of the Communion Service, and then (when they are as perfect as may be) sing in the service what they have practised. What we suffer from now is a superstition that the service cannot be properly done unless it is done with the same amount of singing every Sunday, and unless the whole service, in spite of liturgical propriety, is sung in the same way. And may I earnestly ask choirs and organists to remember that nothing is more difficult or more rare than an intelligent singing of the psalms. As to hymns, I am sure we need a great deal more attention to their meaning. They should be carefully chosen to fit in with the appointed service of the day and to

¹ Except in very large churches, where a high reciting note may be the only audible note.

² May I remark that it is quite incongruous that the responses should be sung when the versicles are not.

illustrate it. And the hymn after the sermon should often be chosen to gather up the teaching of the sermon. At present there is, I think, extraordinarily little attention paid to choosing the hymns so as to be in tune with the appointed service and the teaching which is to be given.

I think we could do much more towards restoring the service of the Holy Communion to its proper place of dignity as a sung service, if all our congregations and choirs were to be taught some one rendering of its fixed portions. I am told by the best authority that the Nicene Creed was sung universally over Western Europe to the same tune, without variation, from the time when it began to be used till about the Reformation.¹ That tune still exists. It seems to me worthy to be restored. But all I ask is that there should be one or two unison services which every choir and churchgoer would know as a matter of course. Then occasional variations and elaborations and additions might be super-added.

But I am sure we should do well to take pains to prevent our services from being protracted by elaborate music under ordinary circumstances. I have been present at many services where the music outran the capacity for sustaining the spirit of praise in any except very exceptional Christians.

We need earnestly to pray and labour to restore the power of corporate worship. People come to church not to enjoy themselves, but to learn to worship God. That is the homage we owe as creatures to our Creator, and redeemed men to our Saviour. Services are acceptable to God in proportion to the reality of praise and prayer which comes from the hearts of those who take part in them. We should provide every facility for kneeling—a matter on which I have tried to speak particularly in confirmation addresses—and we clergy should use every means that love and wisdom suggest to teach our

¹ Strictly, till the Reformation in England; in Continental Europe till the end of the fifteenth century.

people to worship. The Prayer Book is not perfect ; but it is what God gives us to use ; and we must study it respectfully and make the best of it, praying for such alterations as we think are required for edification ; remembering always that the parson's own reverent devotion, as well as his careful and audible and intelligent reading and singing, is a chief instrument for leading the people to worship. The time was when this county was covered with monastic homes of devotion. They were swept away. It was the intention of the Reformation to make worship more "common"—more intelligible to all men, more open to all, more common to all. The measure of success attained has been pathetically small. Whether the mass of our people to-day understand our Prayer Book services better than in the middle ages our forefathers understood theirs, I cannot but doubt. Even in recent years I am sure advance in worship has not kept pace with advance in ceremonial and ornamentation and music. It does not please God to have what we call a "better service" unless the people can join in it better. But none the less we must labour faithfully to restore the spirit of common worship, and the sense of our common brotherhood in the Church before God, high and low, rich and poor, one with another ; that when our Lord comes He may find that we have been doing our best with the talent of worship committed to us.

II

AT S. MARTIN'S, BIRMINGHAM

OCTOBER 12TH

I ENDEAVOURED yesterday at Worcester to examine the religious meaning of visitation, which is an inquiry into efficiency. I took my starting-point from the parable of the talents, in which our Lord presents Himself to us in the guise of the head of a commercial business demanding courage and thoughtful energy in every one of His agents, and refusing altogether to accept the plea that He is too exacting as an excuse for faintheartedness and failure to go forward. Our Lord then is over us all, clergy and laity, who hold our several posts in the Father's business, exacting of every one of us efficiency—demanding in each case that the capital at our disposal, the spiritual and material resources to our hand, should be used to the best advantage for the promotion of the Kingdom of God. This demand of our Lord's for efficiency in the agents of His business gives us a great deal of cause for serious reflection.

When we endeavour to inquire into the efficiency of the Church in this diocese, as a matter of external organisation, we are first of all confronted with the paramount necessity for its division—in other words, for the Birmingham bishopric. Now, on this point we meet to-day in a spirit of great thankfulness. God has allowed us to come within reach of our

goal far more rapidly than we dared to hope. It is but some eighteen months since we ventured, with trembling, to give a fresh start to the enterprise; and already we have our money promised, and in greater part collected, and the necessary Parliamentary facilities provided by the passing of the Southwark and Birmingham Bishopricks Bill.

We owe a great act of thankfulness to God, who has heard our prayers. I hope that such an act of thankfulness has already been made in all our churches, and I have just issued a form of thanksgiving and prayer combined, which I should wish to be used till the new diocese is actually founded. We propose, further, that when the bishopric is actually constituted, we should, more formally, celebrate a great thanksgiving. Under God's good hand, we owe a great debt of gratitude to the Prime Minister for resolutely persisting in passing the Bill, not, I suppose, without having to overcome considerable resistance. We owe much gratitude also to the Archbishop, who has never remitted his efforts to secure the passing of the Bill; and to all those who have worked hard for us in Parliament and here in Birmingham—amongst whom, as we all know, Mr. Walter Fisher, who has singularly identified himself, heart and mind, with the bishopric of Birmingham, is the chief. Again, we owe our gratitude to our subscribers; and, as in pious duty bound, I ask you who care for our Church thankfully to remember in the Lord the name of Thomas Henry Freer, sometime Archdeacon of Derby and late Canon of Southwell, who, by his bequest of £10,000, additional to his donation of £10,000, has made up the sum (£118,000) necessary to provide both the statutable minimum income of the bishop (which is £3,500 until a house is provided, when it becomes £3,000), and to pay our incidental expenses, and who in the future, though not in the present, has provided some further endowment for the see. When I think of what we owe to those

sons of Birmingham who were at King Edward's School about 1840, I can frame no better prayer than that among the young sons of Birmingham to-day there may be those who will love both Birmingham and their religion as they did and will serve them as well. I shall not be satisfied until there is some noble church in Birmingham to commemorate the names of Westcott, Lightfoot, Benson, and others who were educated with them. And in giving thanks we must not forget those in the diocese of Lichfield, of whom the bishop is chief, who have dealt in this matter so generously and self-forgetfully.

It is of the highest importance to constitute the new diocese as soon as possible. May I therefore beg all those whose subscriptions are yet unpaid to let us have the money at once, if they can, even if the time-limit of their promise has not wholly expired. The capital sum necessary to supply the statutable bishop's income has to be handed over to the Commissioners, and the church which is to serve as a cathedral named, before we can obtain the Order in Council to constitute the bishopric. My hope is that we shall be in a position to hand over the money by the end of this year, and that Birmingham will have its bishop early next year. Then, and not till then, will the new diocese with its bishop be in a position to apply for a second Order in Council for certain very important purposes; that is to say, for its proper share in the episcopal patronage which has hitherto belonged to the Bishops of Worcester and Lichfield; and for the inclusion of whatever parishes outside its statutable limits it may be decided to include in the new diocese. There will also be such questions as the establishment of a new archdeaconry; the readjustment of rural deaneries; the establishment of honorary canonries; the appointment of lay officers, to be dealt with. But all these matters belong to a second Order in Council, which can only be obtained after the new diocese

is constituted and the bishops concerned are all in their places.

As to the boundaries of the new diocese, what is fixed by Act of Parliament is that it shall consist of the archdeaconry of Birmingham—that is, the rural deaneries of Aston, Birmingham, Coleshill, Northfield, Polesworth, Solihull, and Sutton Coldfield—with the rural deanery of Handsworth, which comes in from Lichfield, consisting of Handsworth, Harborne, Smethwick, Birchfield, Hamstead, and Perry Barr.

As fixed by Act of Parliament, the new diocese will have 129 parishes, 271 clergy, and a population of (say) 900,000, leaving Worcester with 382 parishes, 538 clergy, and a population of (say) 628,000.¹ I speak my own opinion only when I say that the new diocese ought not to be largely increased. There are some seven or eight parishes which, in my judgment, ought to be included, but not many more. A committee will consider the matter, and make a proposal on behalf of the Bishopric Committee, which will then be considered by those concerned. I think no district need be under any alarm that it will be forced against its will into the new diocese. There is time for consideration, for we cannot apply for the second Order in Council till the new diocese is constituted and its bishop appointed.

I wish to add that the question of who shall be the new Bishop of Birmingham is left by the law completely at the discretion of the Crown, as in the case of any other bishopric.

When the bishopric is founded it will be no time of repose, but only a fresh departure in faithful energy. New life will have to be infused into our system of rural deaneries, which is capable of being made a most valuable means of imparting both to clergy and laity the sense of belonging to a diocese.

¹ The population of the dioceses at the census of 1901 was 859,465 and 602,891 respectively. The figures above allow for the estimated increase since that date.

A quite new start will have to be made with the work of church extension, and with that of church education. The Church Extension Society must become in some measure commensurate with our needs—more like what the Bishop of London's Fund is in London. The Ordination Candidates Fund will have to be made much more adequate. At present, while our need of more clergy is so vastly greater, the support accorded to this fund in this archdeaconry does not amount to one-sixth part of what it has received in the archdeaconry of Worcester.¹ All this means only that the Church in Birmingham, having gained what it has so long needed, a centre and organisation of its own, must make a fresh start, with thankfulness and hope, in doing in this city the work which properly belongs to our branch of the Church of Jesus Christ.

Besides the bishopric, you have another occasion for thankfulness in the restoration of the Queen's College, which ought to be, in happy co-operation with the University, a very great source of strength to the Church in Birmingham. You can look to-day at the new buildings nearly complete. But you trust that that outward reconstruction will be only the symbol of a deeper restoration, which, indeed, has already been going on silently, and for which we all owe a very great debt of gratitude to the zeal, efficiency, and courage of the Warden.

When I examine the rural deans' and churchwardens returns, I find that there are more, and more important, churches in this archdeaconry than in either of the others, which are either in great need of repair or in actual danger of becoming ruinous. This is a serious matter. It is much less serious, but still important, that there are several

¹ See p. 14

churches the patronage of which is in the hands of trustees, whose number has been reduced by death and not replenished. I hope that in every one of those cases the body of trustees will be made complete, and all uncertainties about the trust cleared up before the parish becomes vacant. Passing to lesser, but still not unimportant, things, a great number of churches are reported as lacking an inventory of goods and ornaments, the possession of which in certain circumstances is an important safeguard against loss and disputes. I am speaking about this matter, and about parochial returns, at another centre,¹ and I ask your attention to what I have said, when you have this charge in print. In some parts of the archdeaconry considerably more attention seems still to be needed to the care of the registers. I ought to add that the law requires that a transcript of the registers of baptisms and burials should be sent in annually before June 1st to the diocesan registry. The law intends the registry, as well as the parish, to retain the record of these events. This is not done in some 182 churches in the diocese. In some churches the accommodation for kneeling is reported as inadequate. I would beg the rural deans who have reported on these or the like deficiencies in some of the churches to renew their inquiries after a year in these particulars, and to let the bishop hear, if nothing adequate has been or is being done.

As to the statistics bearing on the use we are making of our churches, I find that, out of the 112 parish churches of the archdeaconry, in rather more than one-fifth the two daily services are said; in considerably more than one-third there is one daily service; on the other hand, more than one-fifth (25) have no weekday services at all at ordinary seasons. About three-fourths of our parishes have the Holy Communion weekly. I will not repeat what I said yesterday on most of these matters, in view of the directions which our

¹ See p. 64 ff.

Church gives us ; but I will in very few words set before you and before myself a simple ideal—that there should be in every parish weekly communion, the daily service, an open church, and the parson living close by it. There are, I know, many parishes in Birmingham where the appointed rectory or vicarage is at a distance from the church ; and the incumbent has a right to live in his parsonage—nay, more, apart from special permission, he is bound to do so. In some one or two of these cases I would not have it otherwise, even if I could. To take an analogy from a city with a good Church name, Leeds : I think that the Vicar of Leeds, being, as he is, something much more than the vicar of one parish, is rightly provided with a house at a distance from the parish church. But such cases are quite exceptional. Even where the rector or vicar *must* live at a distance, it is much to be desired that a clergy house, or home for the assistant clergy, should be close at hand. I cannot help setting the ideal before you ; the parts of it hang together. If we had held to the Prayer Book rule of daily service, we should never have built our vicarages so far afield. And a closed church, especially in a crowded neighbourhood, means that the real use of a church for private as well as public prayer, and for opportunities of quiet, has never been appreciated ; that the Church is very far indeed from being what it ought to be, the Church of the people.

Indeed, the phrase “the Church of the people” falls on our ears as representing an ideal that in Birmingham, at least, is very far off. Since Birmingham began to grow, under the influence of the Five Mile Act, the Church in Birmingham has never been anything such as the phrase would suggest. Still to-day, the status of the Church here in Birmingham is very different from what it is in most other parts of the

diocese. You may illustrate this by the proportion of confirmation candidates to the population, which in the city of Worcester is 1 in 90 every year, and in Birmingham about 1 in 300. In fact, what we have before us is still, after all the labours of many who have done such good work, at the best a work of recovery.

In speaking of this work of recovery, I am not thinking of the relation of the Church to Nonconformists. The history of religion in Birmingham since the seventeenth century is very largely the history of Nonconformist activity and influence. But our churches are surrounded by masses of people of various classes of society who have no settled religious convictions or practice, and sin of all kinds abounds and offends our Creator and our Redeemer.

When I speak of the work of recovery, it is of the recovery of men from evil life and irreligion that I am thinking. This is the only real church extension : the increasing the number and the zeal of those who, not by sacramental incorporation only, but in heart and will, belong to Christ, and own Him in His Church, the visible society which is His Body. And I have no doubt along what lines this church extension must proceed. It is not by cheapening religion and making it easy ; it is not by converting worship into entertainment and the pulpit into the platform. It is by deepening and restoring the moral witness of the Church ; by making men feel anew the fear of God and the horror of sin, and so, only so, the sense of thankfulness to our Lord as their Redeemer. I do not say that our moral condition is worse than it has been at other times—I have recently read Latimer's sermons, and I suppose the worst that I could say is that we are not so much better than our fathers as we sometimes fancy ;—but I do say that our moral condition is such as to give us most serious cause for alarm.

We have great sins, so prevalent that we call them

“national.” Drunkenness is the instance most commonly given. In part we try to deal with this by legislation. Opinions differ as to the motives and the merits of this year’s Licensing Bill. I will say this only: I trust that all those who are concerned in the working of it, including temperance reformers, will do their best to make it work well. But it has made a number of us who are interested in temperance reform conscious that we have in the past probably been making a mistake in laying so much stress upon the reduction of the number of public-houses, as if this of itself would carry us far in the way of reform. Politicians have very good cause to complain of us if, when a measure is passed aiming, more or less effectively, at the reduction of the number of public-houses, which is what we have constantly asked for, we are found saying that that, after all, is not the most important thing; but I fear that it is the fact. We shall have to admit a mistake. I fear that the reduction of the number of public-houses will in most places do very little¹ compared to what would be done by a reduction of hours during which the public-house is open. I believe that the temperance movement in the future will fasten itself (so far as legislation is concerned) upon earlier closing of public-houses or shorter hours; and beyond that, again, upon some form of public control of the liquor traffic. Thus I do not doubt that there is a great deal still to be done by way of direct legislation. Further, a great deal more is to be done by way of general social legislation and action of a remedial and preventive kind.

For drunkenness is not our only sin. If drunkenness slays its thousands, lust slays its ten-thousands. I fear that in town

¹ I had not, when this was delivered, seen Archdeacon Madden’s striking paper read at the Church Congress and printed in *The Guardian* of October 5th. But, on the whole, Dr. Shadwell (*Drink, Temperance, and Legislation*, Longmans, 1903, pp. 140 ff.) seems to me to say what is the probable truth on this subject.

and country the moral conscience as to the indulgence of sexual appetite is very low. Now, both in regard to drunkenness and in regard to uncleanness, something must be set down to the discredit of bad housing in town and country. Attention to housing—better enforcement of the laws we actually have, and some improvement in them—coupled with attention to the provision of more abundant places of healthy recreation, would do a great deal for us. Legislation, again, may do something to check the spreading plague of gambling, and to check commercial dishonesty. But behind all these widespread sins—drunkenness, lust, gambling, dishonesty—I cannot but feel, more widespread than any of these and more deep-rooted, inaccessible to any legislation, a lack of the sense of what sin is: a strange absence of the fear of God, of the solemn sense that we are responsible beings, responsible to a righteous Judge. I seem to see it in all classes: in literature of many kinds, in popular theology and popular science. It colours the novels we read and sometimes the sermons we hear, and the philanthropic efforts we set on foot. It is the idea, more or less consciously held, either that men cannot help themselves because of their inherited natures or their circumstances; or that God is a good-natured being who must be supposed to make it all right for men at the last. We say that it is only natural that the young should expect to have their own way and to do as they please¹; that in maturer life you can hardly expect any one to resist strong temptation or to rise above his surroundings; and that strong passion is an excuse for almost anything. Moreover, we have come dangerously near to toleration, or apology, in our attitude towards the

¹ "I only want my children to have a good time," a mother said to me; "they will have trouble enough when they grow up." But what are we preparing for our children in the battle of life except certain failure, if they have not learned discipline and obedience when they are young?

last act of defiance of God—suicide. Am I not speaking the truth? Is not the severe view of sin very far away from us and from popular religion? Is it not lamentably true that the modern man does not much trouble himself about his sins? Yet the severe view of sin, and of its consequences in time and in eternity, is the necessary basis of any really Christian belief, even as the Old Testament stands before the New, and John the Baptist prepares the way for Christ. We feel the need of a revival of religion among us, as real and wide as the revival which marked the rise of the Methodist Society. We pray, I trust, “O Lord, revive Thy work in the midst of the years”; “O Lord, raise up, we pray Thee, Thy power and come among us.” But I am persuaded of this: the prelude and the accompaniment of any such revival of religion must be a reawakening and deepening of the consciousness of sin and of the eternal doom upon it: a rekindling of the old belief in righteousness and judgment, in heaven and hell. And that first in us, the preachers. It is as knowing in ourselves the fear of the Lord, that we can persuade men.

Do I, God’s servant, really believe that nothing is of serious moment for me comparably to the getting rid of those qualities or tendencies which make me unlike Christ, and must, if they lay final hold on me, separate me eternally from Him? Is this what I mostly think about with the utmost seriousness of reflection?

Do I, God’s minister, really believe, as I move about among men and women, and mark the prevailing sins, that they who do such things shall not inherit the Kingdom of God? This means that though God loves each single being with His essential and unchangeable love, and yearns for the renewal of each, yet He cannot take them into fellowship with Himself without a thorough change of character: that wilful and unrepented sin—sin which will not yield to God—does at the

last and beyond death bring both banishment from God and the punishment which it has made for itself, both "the outer darkness" and the "indignation and wrath, tribulation and anguish." If we believed about sin what God's prophets, and His Son, and His Son's apostles have reiterated; and if we believed (as we then only really can) in the great redemption from sin which Christ has won for us by His self-sacrifice, how different we should many of us be! How the thought of our own comfort and ease, and dignity and prospects in life would shrivel up! How awful sin would be to us in ourselves and others! How insistent we should be, "in season and out of season," with the message of God! "In season and out of season"—that means not that we should press religion upon people without regard to their state of mind; but that through favourable and unfavourable periods, when serious religion is unpopular as well as when it is popular, we should have one over-mastering thought—that is, the desire to carry out the work of our Lord the Redeemer.

I want to press this upon you: we have to relay the moral foundations, to renew the work of John the Baptist.

There is a false science, a complete mistaking of what biology really has to tell us about heredity, to be exploded. Science, rightly so called, tells us, no doubt, that we inherit the moral and physical materials of a hundred lines of ancestry—materials enough, I suppose, to make up hundreds of lives. But science, properly so called, is not fatalistic. Unless I am very much mistaken, scientific men are very much less disposed than they were to claim for science any right at all to deny the existence of will or spirit, and the share of will or spirit in determining events. As far as science is concerned we *may* hold, and so far as our moral self-consciousness is concerned we *must* hold, that it remains for the choice of a man's will to develop this or that among the tendencies of his nature, and so to become this sort of man or that. Again

there is a false popular use very commonly made of the idea of development, to suggest that sin is only a survival and an imperfection which civilisation is tending to outgrow. I say boldly : I can conceive no idea so utterly unsupported by fact. There is no kind of evidence that the tendency to sin is being outgrown or lessened as man becomes more civilised, though of course sin changes its character in passing out of barbarism into refinement. On the other hand there is evidence superabundant in all directions that sin, as it degrades the individual life and turns its development into deterioration, so tends to sap and destroy civilisations by turning them into corruption. As the revival of personal religion among us depends upon a restoration of the moral conscience, so equally does the maintenance of our social progress, which is seriously threatened in many directions by nothing else than sin—that is, the choice of what is morally lower instead of what is higher.

Again, there is a false theology, a false idea of divine goodness, to be dissipated. Our sense of justice, reinforced by our Lord's teaching, makes us postulate in God a goodwill towards every one of His creatures and equitable dealing. He (God our Father) will have all men to be saved ; and He will, here or hereafter, supply those who consent at last, under whatever teaching of experience, to respond to His love, with the opportunity to come to the knowledge of the truth. But, what we know of God from nature and conscience, what we learn of Him through the teaching of Christ—teaching which is as severe as it is loving—does not, nay, most certainly does not, warrant the belief in a good-natured God, who must make it all right for every one at the last, however he neglect or squander or refuse the divine offers. I am sure of it, if that is the truth, either Christ did not know the truth or He did not choose to tell it us.

Brethren, these false ideas, derived from science and theology misunderstood, have to be dissipated. The idea of real personal

moral responsibility, of God's unalterable holiness and unalterable requirement of righteousness in us, of death and judgment, of heaven and hell, of judgment upon societies as well as upon individuals—these fundamental moral ideas of the fear and love of God have to be restored. Moreover, definite moral teaching has to be given. We have not only to convince men that drunkenness and dishonesty and lust are wrong, which they more or less acknowledge, but to bring home these things to them in a concrete form. Hugh Latimer's sermons are an admirable example of a concrete moral teaching—so admirable that I am going to circulate with this charge a sermon preached about the teaching of this, the greatest master of Christian morality among my predecessors in the see of Worcester, on the occasion of the opening of "Bishop Latimer's Church."¹

But we can only teach others if we know. We must know with a trustworthy and careful knowledge what the current forms of temptation actually are for this and that class of persons—in this kind of business and in that form of pleasure. Only if we know thus intimately what is going on, will our moral teaching sound real. And we can only know, if we are in constant personal touch with men and women of awakened consciences who are in the midst of the temptations which belong to this or that class of society, and who are both looking to us for help and helping us. We have to study how to convince of sin; for example, how to bring home to men in a convincing form the sinfulness of gambling or of dishonesty. Once more, we have got to give clear moral teaching about sexual morality. I am persuaded that no parents ought to let their boys or girls grow up to learn from unclean sources, or by the prying of prurient curiosity, the facts of sexual nature. The information may be given in different cases by father or mother, by doctor or schoolmaster or clergyman. But every child growing to puberty ought to

¹ See p. 84 ff.

know the treasure he or she has got to guard, and how to guard it. Boys' Guilds, the Church Lads' Brigade, the White Cross League, the Girls' Friendly Society, the Mothers' Union—these are all agencies which can be used. Women can instruct girls, and men boys; laymen can teach as well as clergymen. But we have got to teach men plainly the meaning of God's law of sex.

On the whole the Prayer Book is extraordinarily strong in moral teaching. The catechism, the preparation for confirmation, the exhortation in giving notice of communion (which I would have read in every church not less than once a quarter, with its serious and careful teaching about self-examination and repentance, and its offered remedy for the burdened conscience which cannot deal with its own sins), the tremendous language of the Communion Service, the constant reading of the Old and New Testaments, the prefacing of every Communion Service with the Ten Commandments—all this gives us the richest possible guidance in becoming moral teachers both of old and young. God give us such fresh zeal for souls, such passion for righteousness, such hatred of sin, such love of Christ, that we may startle and awaken, and win, and guide and strengthen, our brothers and sisters!

That is my message. It is my most profound conviction. John the Baptist must once again go before Christ.

And this also I want to say. Our ideas of evangelising those now outside seem often to me to be proceeding upon a wrong and unscriptural line. We are inclined to make religion easy: by what we call bright services or something akin to Pleasant Sunday Afternoons: to keep people attached, in some degree, to the Church by making such attachment cost as little as possible. I am quite sure that this is not the right way. It is certainly not the way of the Bible or the Prayer Book. The way of the New Testament is to create a compact society in the middle of the world which should

arrest attention and attract—by amiability indeed, but also by exhibiting a life lived at such a high level in the fear and love of God, at such a high level of self-discipline and self-control, as that men should be drawn to it, as something indeed which costs much, but has also very much to give. And the idea of the Prayer Book was that the Church in England was to exhibit a high degree of moral discipline. This idea was common among the Reformers: there was to be a revival of corporate discipline. Church membership was to mean much.

Let us examine the ideas expressed in the Prayer Book, Articles, and Canons. The baptism of the infant was to be accompanied by solemn undertakings, made by communicant sponsors, that the child should be brought up to know the meaning of its Christian profession. It was to be submitted as it grew to public catechising, which was to culminate in confirmation. Admitted through confirmation to communion, it was still to be the subject of moral discipline. Failures in moral life, failures in church-going, failures in communion, were to subject the ordinary Church member to public discipline: if he were obstinate, the discipline was to take the form of excommunication and public penance, followed, where penitence was duly shown, by readmission to communion. The Church services were to be constantly rendered in every parish on week-days and Sundays; the fasts as well as the festivals were to be publicly announced and observed, dispensations being asked for and obtained when they were necessary; marriage was a public act, under public discipline, and indissoluble; the requirements of the Church were upon the individual through his whole life long, from the cradle to the grave; and the rites of the Church for the dead were for those who had not been formally, or by their own act, excluded from her communion.

I am only recalling a fact familiar to all those who have

made any study of the Prayer Book or of Church history. As late as 1805 in this diocese, I find the churchwardens required to report "whether there are any in your parish guilty or whom you think upon just ground to lie under a common fame of" such and such familiar sins, or who "absent themselves from public worship." The idea of a general discipline over the whole community is maintained. This is, beyond all possibility of question, the ideal and the law of the Prayer Book. It has broken down: in part, no doubt, because it was sought, fatally enough, to impose all this religious conformity by the power of the king and the civil magistrate; it was sought to treat dissent in its widest sense, or the refusal of religious conformity, as a breach of civil law. Then, when this impossible attempt was abandoned, the idea of the purely religious and voluntary obligation of membership was left sorely weakened. Gradually the whole idea of religious discipline as belonging to the Church seems to have vanished. The Roman Catholic Church, the Jewish community, the Methodist Society—these made (it was understood) specific requirements upon their members. But the Church was and is commonly regarded as the residuum of religious bodies: bound to supply its ministrations for those who like to ask for them, at a little fee or without fee as the case may be, but without asking any questions or making any requirements. Now, that is not the way which our Lord commends. Church membership is now, thank God, a purely voluntary thing. The rights of the citizen and of the man are equal for members of all religious bodies or of none. But we have our special commission, and our special responsibility, and we must try to realise it by making our Church membership mean something real in the way of moral effort and acceptance of the duties of membership.

Thus, I am sure we ought not to acquiesce in the quite

indiscriminate baptism of infants without the security which the law of the Church as to sponsors is intended to provide for their Christian bringing up. I am sure true theology does not justify us in any such belief in the efficacy of a sacrament as would warrant us in administering any sacrament quite indiscriminately.¹ The idea of sponsors is that they represent the Church, into which the infant is being baptized, undertaking with the parents for its Christian education. This is the sound idea. Now I do not want any violent change—any sudden insistence upon the letter of the Prayer Book rule. Even if we could lawfully do it, I could not countenance a refusal to baptize any child, at the last resort, because there were no sponsors. But we must take a great deal of trouble about the matter. In most departments of life we can accomplish something real if we take enough trouble. It is a good thing to require previous notice of baptisms, then to call on the parent, to ask about sponsors, to elicit responsibility; it is a good thing to have a sufficiently large guild of people ready to act as sponsors for children unprovided with them, and to make friends with the family afterwards. There are difficulties. Families move about. There will be much disappointment and some fruitless effort. But you can accomplish something if you try.

Next, I am sure we should maintain the Church's rule about confirmation. In the case of those who join the Church from Nonconformist bodies, confirmation is not only the divine occasion for the bestowal of a special gift, which it is in all cases; but also it acts as their formal admission to Church communion. We have often in the past made a great mistake in dispensing with it. Twice in my life I have had to do with individuals—Presbyterian and Nonconformist—who, after being allowed to join our Church

¹ May I refer to the Bishop of Manchester's *Pastors and Teachers*, pp. 22 ff., about which book a little more is said on p. 58.

without confirmation, have become Romanists. And they told me that the fact that the Church had not acted up to her own rule, and had seemed to be afraid of her own principles, had impaired their allegiance at starting. People do not respect a communion which does not seem to respect itself.

I will not go on through a number of details—as to the law of marriage and the maintenance of an intelligible and really Christian use of Sunday; as to the duty of common worship; as to the meaning and duty of almsgiving and fasting as well as prayer; as to the maintenance of some real standard of discipline among communicants. Let me return to my main point. The way of Christ is to raise up in the midst of the world a society of men who are identified with no special class, and are possessed of no special qualifications in the way of wealth or ability, but who arrest attention by the moral power of their individual and social life, by their self-control, their allegiance, and their love. Church membership must be seen to mean something in every parish. Then it will do its work.

And in every parish, beside the regular members, the communicant body, there will be others who attend the services. We ought to give the freest welcome to men to use our churches, to come and get what they can by listening and worshipping, without any kind of restriction or inquiry. But the nucleus of every congregation ought to be the body of communicant members, acknowledging their duty as members. And we ought to do everything that is possible to develop among our communicants and those whom we hope to bring to communion a warm feeling of brotherhood. I am sure that by comparison with some Nonconformist bodies we fail in letting young men and women feel that, when they begin to attend one of our churches, they are welcomed into a living brotherhood.

There is such a thing as rigorism, as an attempt to impose too strict a discipline, an attempt such as Catholics and Puritans at certain moments of history have made, with the result of encouraging hypocrisy and promoting reaction. We are in no such danger. Our danger is the opposite, of letting Church fellowship mean nothing and be despised in consequence. We cannot restore altogether the ideal of discipline embodied in the Prayer Book. But we can study the Prayer Book respectfully, and we can obey the Church's plain rules in most cases ; and we can seek in all ways to let it be felt and understood that a Churchman is one who accepts the responsibilities of his membership. This is not a gloomy doctrine, believe me. We shall only be happy as Churchmen if our Churchmanship costs us something.

I am sure that the movement for a representation of the laity in the councils of the Church is a right one. I am convinced that their representation is altogether consistent with the principles of the Church and compatible with the special function of bishops and priests, which is the ministering of the Word and sacraments. But I am sure also that "political rights are," as Mazzini said, "correlative to political duties done," and that a laity who are to share in governing must be a laity accepting the very moderate amount of spiritual discipline which our Church asks of them. There are, I think, three conditions necessary if any such discipline is to be recognised. First, there must be absolute impartiality between rich and poor ; secondly, a frank acceptance of the voluntary basis for Church membership, and the equal civil, social, and educational privileges of all denominations ; thirdly, it must be made evident that the clergy themselves are the first to welcome and accept spiritual discipline of a legitimate sort where it touches them.

In what I have been saying I have been asking for a

deepening of the sense of corporate life. But it will have been plain that I am asking also for a deepening of the sense of individual religion. In Church, as in State, the advance of socialism, of the claim of the society over its members, demands, if it is to be healthy, a corresponding advance in individual responsibility. The idea of the Body of Christ, with its sacramental fellowship, which the Tractarian revival has done so much to restore to us, is in no sort of antagonism to the idea of the converted will and heart, as that on which true Christianity rests, which we owe to the Evangelicals. S. Paul is the apostle both of individual faith and of the Body of Christ. Sacramental fellowship always degenerates into formalism without strong insistence upon individual conversion; and conversion fails of its perfect work if it does not lead forward into the fellowship of the one Body.

III

AT S. MICHAEL'S, COVENTRY

OCTOBER 13TH

A BISHOP'S visitation is an inquiry into efficiency. It is a rehearsal of the great and rigorous inquiry which our Lord, as in the parable of the talents, bids us expect at His hands into the use which we have made of the spiritual and material capital put at our disposal for the purposes of His kingdom. In making such an inquiry into efficiency in this diocese, I am almost constrained to treat it, as in fact it is, not as one, but as three. The three archdeaconries are in fact extraordinarily distinct in character and sympathies. And Coventry is, if I may so say, the least episcopal of the three; partly perhaps because the bishop has in this archdeaconry less influence by way of parochial appointments than in the other two, but much more because, owing to its remoteness from Worcester, he has a much worse chance of getting to know the district and of exercising actual supervision. I cannot doubt that this has been a great evil. The tendency has been for the very idea of the episcopate as a pastoral office to be lost in the idea of the bishop as a remote official, whose services have to be invoked from a distance on certain special occasions. I have received so many pathetic appeals from parishes seeking the sort of personal assistance which they ought to be able to claim from a Father in God, but

which I have not been able to render to them owing to distance and lack of time. The diocese of Worcester is now to be divided. The Act of Parliament allows the constitution of a new diocese of Birmingham, consisting of the archdeaconry of Birmingham and the rural deanery of Handsworth. It also affords opportunities for the addition of other parishes by means of an Order in Council. If it is desired, some parishes from the archdeaconry of Coventry might be added: opportunity will be given very shortly for the discussion of any such proposal. But doubtless the bulk of the archdeaconry of Coventry will remain in the diocese of Worcester, and the old difficulty of the distance of Coventry from Worcester will remain, though no doubt the Bishop of Worcester will have much more time than formerly to attend to this part of the diocese. But I cannot help thinking that the best present solution of the need of some episcopal supervision for the archdeaconry of Coventry would be found in the reappointment of a Bishop Suffragan of Coventry, only now really for Coventry, and not for Birmingham. The difficulty, of course, would lie in the provision of a sufficient salary and position for such a suffragan bishop; and the matter is one which can only be considered by the Bishop of Worcester when the new diocese is fairly constituted. Besides this, other steps will need to be taken to give to the Church in this part of Warwickshire more sense of diocesan unity and corporate life. Fresh life will have to be put into our system of rural deaneries, and a fresh impulse given to the archidiaconal societies, which ought to be symbols of a general sense of responsibility for the Church as a whole, beyond the limits of the parish. We must try by all means in our power to become less purely parochial and to deepen the sense of corporate life.

When I examine the returns from this part of the diocese, I find that there is still a considerable number of the fabrics

of churches more or less urgently requiring attention, and a certain number of interiors of churches and churchyards are reported as needing more care; in other cases insufficient care of the registers is reported; in several cases no preachers book; in others no record of collections, or proper presentation and auditing of parochial accounts; in other cases inadequate provision for kneeling. Not in most of the churches, but in a considerable minority, there appears to be, in matters which touch their fabric or furniture, room for improvement. I am referring specially to the sort of improvements which can be secured by attention and trouble, without much expense. To one matter especially, affecting the whole diocese, I wish to call your attention. It is highly desirable that there should be in every parish, secure and kept up to date, an inventory of goods and ornaments. At present it is a very small minority which has such an inventory. I hope that this defect will be supplied. I wish in particular to call your attention to the *Terrier and Inventory*, published by Longmans, Green & Co.,¹ under the authorisation of the Convocation of this province, as giving an excellent form for this purpose. In this and other respects I would ask the rural deans to make inquiries next year whether the deficiencies which they noticed this year have been made good, or are on the way to be made good, and communicate with the bishop.

As regards our use of the churches, I find a somewhat lower level in this archdeaconry than in the others. I will mention here only one point. In less than one-third of the churches in this archdeaconry is there one regular daily service. (I include, of course, those, about one-sixth, where there are two.) One rural dean notes: "The vicar is one of the few country clergy who have daily service." In almost

¹ Sold at the National Society's depository, Sanctuary, Westminster. Price 8d.

one-half (56 out of 116) there is no regular weekday service at all, out of Lent or special seasons. I earnestly commend to your attention what I have said on this subject at Worcester, which you will receive in print. I am quite sure that an open church and daily services are, even if few use them, a blessing in a parish. I am sure that the neglect of the Church's rule in this respect has meant in the long run a loss of spiritual character and devotional habits on the part of the clergy. It has promoted secularity; and if we had had open churches, and more regular saying of the daily service, many other things, including visiting the school, would have been more regularly done, and the church would have worn more constantly the aspect of a house of prayer.

Brethren, I am thankful not only for most forbearing kindness to me personally, but for very many evidences of life and zeal and improvement in this part of the Church; but I cannot help feeling that there is a somewhat lower standard in some respects in a considerable portion of parishes in this archdeaconry than in that of Worcester, to which it may naturally be compared. I think if an inquiry into efficiency is to be real, that it is my duty to call your attention to this, and ask your earnest prayers for recovery where recovery is needed.

I have been speaking during the last few days about the Church's worship at Worcester, and at Birmingham about church extension of the most fundamental sort—that is, the work of spiritual awakening and moral recovery. To-day at Coventry I would use what time remains to me to speak of the Church's work of teaching. And I will take as my point of departure the report that in this archdeaconry, as in Worcester, catechising of the children in church (in some

degree) is reported from about half the churches; in the archdeaconry of Birmingham from about two-thirds.

Taking my starting-point from this question of catechising children in church, I want to ask your attention to the whole of the large question of our duty in the matter of religious education in its widest sense. In spite of all our talk about religion and the widespread discussion of religious problems, I think that while, in certain respects,—in the building and repairing of church fabrics, in the furnishing of churches, in the conduct of divine service, in missionary enterprise abroad and at home, in the apprehension of the social bearings of Christianity, in the scientific investigation of Scripture and the critical knowledge of our religion—in all these matters and others not here alluded to we have been making real progress: on the other hand, in realising the office of the Church as a teacher of the nation, or of that part of the nation which more or less definitely owns allegiance to the Church, we have not been making proportionate progress; I think I ought to say we have not been making progress at all. Yet our Lord founded His Church to teach the nations. “Go ye,” He said, “and make disciples of all nations . . . teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I commanded you: and (that ye may do this) lo, I am with you all the days, even unto the end of the world.”

It is a very difficult lesson that the Church is commissioned to teach. It is a lesson unpalatable to flesh and blood—a lesson of such high and serious import that when our Lord pressed it upon men Himself with His own lips, even while He illustrated it by His own works of love and character of self-sacrifice, His own people refused to learn it; yes, rather than learn it, they rejected Him. The causes of this rejection are still at work among us. “The city, the great city . . . where also our Lord was crucified,” is the worldly world everywhere and always; it is human society, as it

goes about its business and its pleasures, leaving God out of sight. This is the meaning of the scriptural term "the world" in a bad sense. And this world's attitude towards Christ to-day is what it was when Christ was visible among men. It is because the lesson the Church has to teach is so unpalatable to flesh and blood, even while it is so plainly and truly the Gospel of our salvation, that our Lord refused to commit His teaching merely to men in general, as a man does when he writes a book or takes some other way of announcing what he believes to be valuable, leaving it to the public opinion of society to appreciate and retain. To do this would, He saw, have been to build His spiritual fabric upon shifting sand. "Jesus did not trust Himself unto them, for that He knew all men, and because He needed not that any one should bear witness concerning man; for He Himself knew what was in man." He chose to have some more stable foundation than common opinion for His message to rest upon. He built His Church upon something rocklike—that is, upon a specially selected agent—Peter—or, as it appears, upon a specially selected group of agents—the twelve apostles—the twelve foundation stones of His city, Peter being only their first leader and representative. These men were not merely individual agents; they were to be the officers of an organised and permanent society. But they were its first representative members as well as its officers. As being such, He tried and trained and commissioned them. Upon their training He spent the chief efforts of His ministry among men. In the power of His resurrection He renewed their commission and gave them final authorisation; and He filled them with the Holy Spirit of power and truth.

These agents, His apostles, at once the rulers and the representatives of the Church which gathered round them, went

out authorised by Christ's commission and empowered by His Spirit to be the teachers of the nations. Before the time came for them to pass away, they had realised that they were to appoint and authorise successors, who in their turn were to hand on the trust: "The same commit thou to faithful men, who shall be able to teach others also."¹ The Church is thus a living body entrusted with a doctrine to carry down through the ages, a joyful doctrine of salvation; but, human nature being what it is, a doctrine unpalatable to flesh and blood, a teaching about God and moral duty and sin and the way of salvation which we men are always trying in various ways to evade, or to distort, or to water down till the real character of its claim is weakened and accommodated to human likings. Of this message committed to the whole Church the clergy are specially put in trust, and the Bishop's primary office is to be responsible for its safeguarding and its transmission. This is specially emphasised in our services of ordination and consecration. It is a special characteristic of our Reformation, stamped upon our Prayer Book, that in its estimate of the office of the ministry the aspect of authority and duty to teach was emphasised and raised in high relief, while the sacrificial aspect of the priesthood was (by comparison with the unreformed estimate of it) put in the background. The Anglican Church, then, lays special stress upon the Church's duty of teaching, and entrusts it most specially to the clergy. The Bible is to be the testing ground, the only touchstone, of teaching. But the Church and the officers of the Church are the authorised teachers. The order of ideas is: "The Church to teach, the Bible to prove."

Now it is important that we should feel that this order of ideas alone really keeps true to the historical facts about the

¹ 2 Tim. ii. 2.

New Testament. The New Testament was not, in any part, written to give men their first teaching in Christianity. Every book of the New Testament was addressed to those who had already been taught their religion as members of the Church. "That thou mightest know the certainty concerning the things wherein thou wast instructed," S. Luke writes his gospel.¹ "Now I make known unto you," writes S. Paul to his Corinthian converts,² "the gospel which I preached unto you, which also ye received, wherein also ye stand, by which also ye are saved; I make known unto you, I say, in what words I preached it unto you." He is writing, you see, to remind them of what he taught them when they first became Christians. This is what S. Paul elsewhere speaks of as the "pattern of teaching whereunto they were delivered,"³ and the writer of the Epistle to the Hebrews speaks of it as "the rudiments of the beginning of the oracles of God"—the Christian alphabet, as it were, which he complains that they seem to need to be taught over again.⁴

All the books of the New Testament were written for members of the Christian Church who had already received their rudimentary instruction in Christian faith and duty and sacramental privilege. The books of the New Testament are to instruct them more completely, and to remind them, and to encourage them in holding and practising what they have already believed. More than that: what the rudimentary instruction imparted in the apostolic churches, and accepted by the converts there, was, we can, in outline at least, plainly discern. The revelation of God in Christ, and by His Spirit, and the threefold Name herein implied, the Name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost, is assumed as accepted and known. Also the incidents of the life of Christ, and the special significance of His death and

¹ Luke i. 4.

² 1 Cor. xv. 1, 2.

³ Rom. vi. 17.

⁴ Heb. v. 12.

resurrection ; the moral duties of religion ; the meaning of the Christian sacraments ; the realities of coming judgment and the life to come.¹ It is remarkable. If you were to seek to compile a document embodying what the books of the New Testament assume that every member of the Church knows already, that and nothing but that, you would find that it would correspond with wonderful exactness with our catechism, including the Apostles' Creed. The chief detail of difference would be that our catechism does not refer to "the laying on of hands," which the Epistle to the Hebrews puts among the rudiments. I repeat then—the idea that men are meant to pick out their religion for themselves from the Bible is completely unhistorical. As the Church existed in fact and taught for some sixty or seventy years before all the books of the New Testament were written, so in theory the books of the New Testament are intended for those who have been already taught their religion by the teaching Church—for people, as we should say, who have been already taught their catechism.

The Church, I repeat, exists as a continuous historical society, founded and empowered to hand on by a constant succession of authorised ministers a form of sound words—a tradition about God and man—about moral duty and judgment—about sin and redemption, of which the outline is given in creed and catechism, and which finds its certificate and testing ground, and the filling in of the outline, in Holy Scriptures.

To maintain this position—that the Church is to teach the rule of faith in the first instance, and then to refer men to the Bible—is not in any way to depreciate the Bible. The more we study tradition in any society, the more we perceive its tendency to become one-sided or degraded. We see this in

¹ This will be seen in the passages referred to above, with Rom. vi. 3 ; 1 Cor. xi. 23.

the case of the scribes and Pharisees, the representatives of divine tradition among the Jews. We see it in the case of the catholic Church. The safeguard against such deterioration in the tradition of the Church lies in what our part of the Church specially insists upon—the constant reference to Scripture. Would to God that I could believe that there is as much study of the Scriptures among us as among our forefathers. Certainly there is nothing that can take its place. And by far the greater part of the Scriptures is intelligible to all of us; while, as to its difficulties, there are abundant books to help us, accessible to those of the smallest means.

There are two directions in which confusion of mind is widely prevalent on this subject of the teaching office of the Church, especially as regards the teaching of children.

First, people confuse this idea that the Church should present herself as a teaching body to train the children of the Church generation by generation in the truths of the catechism—claiming to impress this simple pattern of teaching on young and malleable hearts and minds—people, I say, confuse this idea of dogmatic teaching with the idea that we want to teach children an elaborate or controversial theology, such as would be found in ponderous volumes entitled “Dogmatic Theology.” The idea is absurd. We want to teach them the catechism—than which no document was ever devised less controversial—which contains, in fact, the very irreducible minimum of theological statement. We want to teach children “dogmatically” if you will, in the sense, and only in the sense, in which educators from Plato to Hegel, in which almost all more recent educators, have perceived that education must be dogmatic: in the sense, namely, that the rudiments or main outline of the subject must be presented to the child in the form of simple instruction to be received in trust, ratified at starting only by the affection and reverence which should subsist between teacher and taught, and then clothed upon

by the awakening power of the mind gradually verifying, or, if need be, in points correcting it.

The other great current delusion is that there is any other body which can, except by a grave inconsistency, either undertake to teach religion, or authorise the religion to be taught, than the religious body to which the pupil or child belongs. Time was when there was in a full sense a national church. The nation identified itself with the Anglican Church. The Church was given a monopoly of the teachers' rights and duties. The schoolmaster required a licence from the bishop or ordinary. "No man shall teach either in public school or private house but such as shall be allowed by the bishop of the diocese." So runs the canon. Now all this general jurisdiction of the Church over education has been abolished, as by the Endowed Schools Act of 1869 and by other enactments. In that full sense an established religion has quite passed away. The nation no longer says to one particular religious body, "You alone are authorised to teach in my name: for your religion is the national religion." But this was the only way in which the nation or state could undertake to authorise a particular creed,—only by identifying itself with a particular religious body. Having ceased to do this, rightly in my judgment, it can only take up the position of encouraging all religious bodies to teach religion to those who wish to learn it from them, or wish their children to learn it from them, with perfect impartiality. The modern state cannot for itself frame or select a standard of religious and moral teaching, and say, "This shall be the national standard of religious teaching." Nobody, in fact, proposes that it should do exactly this. But there is a very widespread delusion that there is a common Christianity, called undenominational, which can be tacitly taken as the national basis of religious teaching, while the particular tenets of religious bodies are treated as extras.

What is this undenominational religion? It is the residuum or the result of the activity of the different religious bodies in the past. The Church has taught; the Methodists have taught; the Baptists have taught; and so forth. The result is that, through elementary schools, through Sunday schools, through sermons, through a general knowledge of the Bible, there is a diffused Christianity in the nation—the result, I say, of the activity of the different religious bodies in the past. But if we are asked to trust to this, to confide the religious future to this, to let it set a standard of religious and moral teaching, we must know what it is. What is this undenominational Christianity? What, more or less exactly, does it consist of? There can be no answer. You cannot say what it is.

Twenty-five years ago, perhaps, people could talk about an orthodox Protestantism as being broadly common to all—with specific doctrines of the Holy Trinity, the divinity of Christ, the inspiration of Scripture, the Atonement, heaven and hell. What has come of this more or less specific religion of twenty-five years ago? What is common Christianity to-day? What is the common belief to-day, for example, about the inspiration of Scripture? about the Atonement? about hell? Who could venture to say? Who could venture to forecast what it will be twenty years on? Nothing is more certain than that popular religious belief is in a condition of vaguest and most shifting uncertainty. And moral standards—standards of moral duty—are not much more secure or definite, even on quite fundamental moral points. No; nothing is more certain than that the common opinion of the nation will provide at this period in which we are living nothing like a religious and moral standard which can be taught. If any definite religion or morality is to be taught the children, it must be religious bodies, with more or less definite standards, which are to teach it.

Well then, I say we stand upon Christian principles, upon historical facts, upon common sense, when we claim that, as the nation has ceased as a nation to identify itself with a particular and definable form of the Christian religion, so henceforth religious instruction shall be, in all possible ways, left, with perfect impartiality, to be controlled, outside the home, by the religious bodies which the parents of the children either belong to or choose to represent them.

But this position carries certain consequences. First, it carries with it in the political region a certain claim in the matter of national education, elementary and secondary—a claim for perfectly fair play. The Nonconformists are, for the most part, satisfied to let their children be taught the Bible undenominationally—that is, without standard or formula, without any security as to what in particular any individual teacher will teach them. We of the Church mostly, the Roman Catholics and the Jews, are not content. We say the religious body is, outside the home, the only proper teacher of the children who belong to it, through agents authorised by itself, who may, of course, be the ordinary teachers in the school if they consent to be appointed. Now, whether we retain our present system of two distinct classes of provided and non-provided schools, or whether we alter that system, we must claim absolute equality of treatment as between the denominational or definite and the indefinite or undenominational kinds of religious teaching. If one is to be included in the ordinary curriculum, then both. If one is to be relegated to outside hours, then alas! both. If the ordinary teacher is to be allowed to teach one kind of religious teaching, then both, at his or her free choice. We must claim absolutely fair play—no more and no less. On this ground we must take our stand absolutely: there shall be no preference given to undenominational, over denominational teaching in the eye of the state. I am persuaded

that in the long run this absolutely equal treatment is the only alternative to secularism in the national education, from which I pray we may be defended, but which is, I think, much less far off than it looked three years ago.

But another consequence follows. If the Church has this teaching office, we, especially we of the clergy, must qualify ourselves to fulfil it, especially in the Church, and first towards the children. It is, I fear, our condemnation that, with the large opportunities which in the past have been ours, we have trained so small, so meagre a body of intelligent Churchmen, of Churchmen who know why they are Churchmen, in any class of society. I am persuaded that, by comparison with the clergy of the Roman Catholic Church, we have used our opportunities as teachers very poorly. We have lacked the skill and the zeal. To teach the children of the Church, that is part of our primary business. It stands in the front rank of duty. The deacon, the catechist, the Sunday-school teacher, these, in their various ways, will give us their willing help. But the curate (in the Prayer Book sense), the man who has the cure of souls, his is the primary responsibility. In the uncertainty which besets the future of day schools, we need to learn afresh to use every one of our churches for effective catechising. That is the rule of our Church.

“The curate of every parish shall diligently upon Sundays and holy days, after the second lesson at evening prayer, openly in the church instruct and examine so many children of his parish sent unto him, as he shall think convenient, in some part of this catechism.”

Where the evening service is, as mostly in our day, in the later evening, and not in the afternoon, the catechising may be done at a special service, to which, however, parents and elders should be encouraged to come. Bright catechising is a pleasant and instructive thing for elders to listen to.

Doubtless to make it effective requires a great deal of thought and study and pains. But, as I say, it is in the first line of clerical duty. I am quite sure, if I may put it in the most solemn form, Christ our Master holds us responsible for it. And a man who has learned to catechise children has also learned to teach adults. We must also take careful thought for the whole of religious instruction in the parish. We must make it a primary aim so to organise and use Sunday schools as to make them effective trainers of young Churchmen. We must make the Sunday schools lead up to the catechism, and the catechism to the confirmation class ; and we must find in our training of confirmation candidates our great opportunity both for training the young intelligence and of winning the heart for Christ. And the confirmation class should lead on to the Bible class. If thus, in the region which, necessarily and under all political contingencies, will remain with us, we are becoming real and effective teachers of the young and are helping others to become so, the Church will become equipped to make the best of whatever opportunities, direct or indirect, the future of our state schools may provide us with. On this department of our duty, I commend to the most careful consideration of you all the book that was (thank God!) written amongst us, and is now published for a shilling by Messrs. Longmans—the Bishop of Manchester's *Pastors and Teachers*.

But we have not only to teach the young. People forget what they learnt as children, or they learnt nothing: then they grow serious with advancing years, or they are in some special way converted to God, or they fall into intellectual and moral perplexity. In any of these cases they want teaching, and are ready to receive it. They have ears to hear. Such people are not the majority, no doubt; but the Bible is wonderfully contemptuous of majorities. The idea of

the New Testament especially is that the select body, which knows and cares, is what matters. That is to be the salt of the earth and the light of the world. Each church ought indeed to have its doors wide open to all who will use it, to all who will come to get any manner of good. They are "the birds of the air which lodge in the branches" of the great tree. But besides these there are the real living members, the "branches of the vine." With them is our first responsibility. The nucleus of every congregation ought to be a body of really instructed Churchmen, who know why they are Churchmen; what they believe about God and Christ and themselves; why, believing in Christ, they believe also in the Church; why they believe in sacraments as well as in the Word of God; and who know further how to join intelligently and heartily in our common prayers and eucharist.

And these nucleuses in each congregation should be conscious of their union in a large fellowship such as can represent the largeness of the catholic Church—first of all, of course, in the diocese. Ah! brethren, how our hearts beat when we hear of the many thousands, the elect of the artisans of Birmingham, who gather on Sunday to the early morning schools. All honour to those who have gathered this fellowship together. Would to God we could simply throw ourselves into the movement as it is. But we are restrained. We know that the first hours of Sunday are claimed by Christ for something different from the early morning school. We cannot abandon the ideal that the Christian must consecrate to worship, and especially to the eucharist, the first hours of Sunday morning. But, oh, the shame of it! Why have we no similar or equal body of zealous men: no like fellowship, large and inter-parochial, for artisans who know themselves to be Churchmen, and know that the religion of the Church is the religion of humanity

and the Bible? Brethren, penitently and humbly we must make continual fresh beginnings. We must study the old faith and the new needs, and learn to reinterpret the one in terms of the other. And we have our great opportunity; for, after all, the future should be with the full faith of the Church. I am persuaded of it. What is called "orthodox Protestantism"—the Protestantism of the middle of the last century, which centred everything in the Atonement and the textual inspiration of Scripture—is very hard hit. The old phrases about the Blood of Christ, for all the deep truths which they contain, have come to sound very far off from the modern man, whether artisan or professional man.¹ The old belief in the Bible which, as it were, took all the books on a level, and quoted a statement from the Book of Jonah, and another from the Chronicles, and another from the Gospels, as if they were all of equal historical certainty because they were in the Bible, has been shattered by critical methods, by the diffusion of the knowledge that the Bible contains all kinds of literature, with all kinds of historical values. But the faith is not destroyed: only the unhistorical way of treating the Bible. The needs of the human soul remain the same. And the old catholic faith, older by many centuries than Calvinism or Romanism, the old faith of the Apostles' Creed—that faith in God and man; in man's capacity and in God's moral requirement and in judgment to come; in human sin and divine redemption; in the birth and life and sacrificial death and resurrection of the Son of God in our flesh, the revealer of God and the representative of man; in the coming of His Spirit and the establishment of the true brotherhood of redeemed men

¹ I should wish to be understood to mean only—what I have explained in *The Epistle to the Romans* (Murray), vol. i. pp. 143 ff., vol. ii. pp. 215 ff.—that the evil has been the isolation of the idea of Atonement from that of Incarnation, of the blood shed—"the blood which is the life thereof"—from the life communicated.

in the Church ; in sacramental acts binding men together in one body in Christ to God—this old faith centring in the person of Christ and the events of His life, this rests, I am sure, on irrefragable historical witness, it focusses all the various books and elements of Holy Scripture for us, and gives them back to us—every one of them—with a value which critical inquiry cannot affect.

But we are responsible for qualifying ourselves to help the men and women of our time who are perplexed or earnest, and who want to be taught. Be they few or many, they exist. They want guiding and teaching. It is our office to help them. But how often “the hungry sheep look up and are not fed”! My brethren, I implore you, older and younger, as you remember what exactly you promised at your ordination and what was the charge committed to you, as you realise that nothing really matters for you and me except what Christ, our Master, thinks of us—I implore you to be learners. So only can you be teachers. From time to time revise your own beliefs from the foundation. Learn afresh what you believe about God, and on what grounds: what about your destiny and judgment to come; what about Christ; what about the Holy Trinity; what about the Church; and, again, on what grounds. Go on, prayerfully and with real intellectual efforts, studying the Bible and getting light from more modern books. Every man can become something of a scholar if he goes on learning till his death. Only by being continual learners, in the old school and in new schools, can you hope to be a teacher. And how can I, ordained to be a teacher, evade that duty?

There is only one other word I want to say. The clergy are teachers by their special office. But they can only effectively carry out that office by using, also, the services of others. We want to make great efforts to make our Sunday-school teaching effective. There are some in this diocese and

in this archdeaconry who can give you a great deal of help in this matter. We want to use also more widely, as catechists and lay readers, the services of those laymen who have the gift of teaching and preaching and the love of Christ in their hearts. I am anxious—no one could be more so—to go as far as is possible, as far as ever the law allows, in sanctioning the services of these lay ministers as teachers—in exceptional cases, and for special purposes, even in church. But you will, of course, understand that I am bound to insist—as I have insisted in two cases in this archdeaconry—that those laymen who are thus to exercise the office of catechist and teacher in our mission chapels and churches shall give the Church such guarantees of allegiance and fitness as are involved in their being first of all licensed by the bishop for the office. And I must add this. A committee of Convocation has produced a report which, if it be accepted even in its main lines, will involve some alteration in our present diocesan regulations for lay readers. Nay, apart from such action of the province we belong to, we are not ourselves satisfied with our present system. What I would say is : we must accept and obey our present regulations, and meanwhile look forward to their revision in the future. And I would earnestly beg all those who hold licences as lay readers or catechists in the diocese to remember that the future use or extension of the lay ministry depends in great measure upon the loyalty which they show to the rules which they have undertaken to obey.

My brethren, clergy and laity, I pray you to gird yourselves with all diligence to the work of receiving and delivering the message of God, in your own homes first, where you are nature's priests, and in the Church. Of that message we clergy "are made ministers, according to the dispensation of God which is given us for you, to fulfil the word of God ; even the mystery which hath been hid

for ages and for generations, but now is made manifest to His saints . . . which is Christ in you, the hope of glory : whom we preach, warning every man and teaching every man in all wisdom ; that we may present every man perfectly initiated in Christ Jesus : whereunto I also (let each one say with S. Paul) labour, striving according to His working, which worketh in me mightily.”¹

¹ Col. i. 25-9.

IV
AT HOLY TRINITY, STRATFORD-ON-
AVON

OCTOBER 14TH

I HAVE at Worcester, Birmingham, and Coventry respectively dealt with matters affecting the three archdeaconries. This fourth centre for visitation at Stratford-on-Avon has been added to the other three for the convenience of the clergy and churchwardens, and I am proposing to speak to-day first of one or two smaller matters: of the burdensome requirement made upon the clergy for "returns," and of the law of faculties; and then of a much larger matter concerning the Church of England as a whole—namely, our internal unity: as to how the Church of England is to be held together.

Of returns: I have taken steps to relieve you of the obligation to make returns for the Diocesan Calendar, by providing the great mass of the information from the returns already made for the Church Year-book, which are put at the bishop's disposal, or from other records in the Registry. I only want the clergy and others to bear in mind that they must now themselves, and unsolicited, supply to the Editor of the Diocesan Calendar information as to any change in their address or railway or telegraph station.

Besides this, the labour of making returns for the Church Year-book—which is the most comprehensive of the requirements—would be greatly reduced if all the clergy would acquire the S.P.C.K. Vestry-book, which is specially adjusted to the headings of the Church Year-book; and if they would always keep their own tabulated returns from year to year. To facilitate this we will endeavour to secure that duplicate forms shall be sent to the clergy, or be easily procurable by them, so that they may return one and retain one.

Of faculties: Many alterations have from time to time been made in the ornaments, and sometimes in the fabrics, of churches without a faculty; and it has been the custom in this diocese for the bishop's permission to be sought and given in the case of some minor alterations—stained windows, smaller monuments, etc.—in place of a faculty. There is often some discontent when a faculty with its attendant fee¹ is required. Now I want to say something on this matter. The bishop has no legal power to give permissions for any change in the church fabrics, or any addition or alteration of ornaments, in any other way except through his Consistory Court by faculty. All other episcopal permissions would be found null and void, in the eye of our law, if objections should be raised by any of the parishioners. The requirement of a faculty is the way in which our law provides that an alteration or addition shall be made secure from subsequent interference, and that the parishioners shall have their voice heard before any alteration is made in the fabric or ornaments of the church. Not that the bishop's Chancellor cannot override the vote even of the majority of the parishioners, if he thinks it factious

¹ Amounting to £2 13s. 4d. for minor alterations, if unopposed.

and unreasonable; but he must hear what they say before he decides. I think it is important that this law of faculties should be in future better observed. As to the expense, the fees for faculties have been fixed by Parliament at the recommendation of the clergy in Convocation. I am inclined, so far as I can ascertain at present, to doubt whether the amount of legal business necessary in the conduct of the affairs of so many parishes—including the great amount of advice which the clergy and churchwardens obtain at present on all manner of questions gratis from the legal officers of the bishop and diocese—I doubt, I say, whether all this could be more economically managed than it is at present, or the expense more equitably distributed. But of course, if the clergy or churchwardens in this respect feel they have a grievance, they can again express it, and it can be considered. But it is necessary, if it is to have any weight, that a complaint should represent a considerable body of well-informed opinion. Meanwhile, the law of faculties remaining what it is now, there is one means of reducing the expense which it is worth suggesting. It is that there should be formed in a parish from time to time some general scheme of alterations or decorations, for which one faculty could be obtained, and which could then be gradually carried out in the course of years. This would have one special advantage, that a general scheme of decorations for each church—whether in the way of ornaments, windows, tablets, or whatever other additions may be desired—could be drawn up and authorised by faculty, and afterwards individual donors could be asked to fall in with the proposed scheme and carry out some part of it, at the penalty of having otherwise to pay the expense of a separate faculty. I venture to commend this to your attention. At present the way in which we admit decorations to churches seems to be extraordinarily casual and contrary to artistic propriety.

And whatever you think of this suggestion, I ask you to remember that the bishop has no legal power to grant the permissions which have been customary in this diocese in lieu of faculty, and does not intend to grant them in future, though of course he can be consulted as to whether in any particular case a faculty is necessary. For example, a faculty is not required for the provision of anything which is held to be necessary for carrying out the prescribed order of the services of the church: as a pulpit, or lectern, or church bell, or even an organ where none such exists, though it is required for substituting one such article of church furniture for another which existed before. Or, again, a proposed change may be too small for the law to be set in motion to effect or control it.

I am now proposing to speak on a more spiritual and more important subject: one, moreover, which concerns the whole of our branch of the Church rather than this particular diocese—I mean internal unity: on the question of how the Church of England is to be held together. I am sure that our ability to play a useful part in any larger schemes of reunion—the reunion of a divided Christendom—whether at home or abroad, depends on our own principle of unity among ourselves being first of all made more intelligible. It must become more obvious to men in general *that* the Church is one, and *why* it is one. We stand for comprehensiveness, thank God! But comprehensiveness, if it means anything, implies limits. A comprehensive body means a body which can admit much liberty of difference, because it is bound strongly together by aims and principles held in common. Otherwise it is not a comprehensive body at all, but a mere concourse of jarring atoms. At present the world jeers at the extreme differences of opinion and ceremonial which are

to be found in the Church of England. Such extremes undoubtedly exist. They are, for obvious reasons, much heard of. But in almost any diocese—certainly in this—they represent small minorities of men who are held together by the great central mass of men who are (for good and evil) moderate men. If you try to conceive a split in the Church of England as represented in this diocese, or this neighbourhood, and begin to consider at what point it would take place, and who would go one way or the other, you very soon see that the extreme differences are linked by infinitely minute gradations into a unity singularly hard to sunder. But we want to make this unity which really exists much more conscious. We want to realise much more constantly, and to make much more plainly evident to others, what principles hold us together—what we all stand for in common; and therefore also what we must disown, what we must repudiate and exclude, deliberately and remorselessly, as inconsistent with even our comprehensive unity. For all comprehension implies limits.

In the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries the Church of England set itself to a very difficult task: the task of holding together in one the different tendencies in religion, which the profound shaking and sundering of the ancient fabric of Christianity had brought about—the tendencies which may be called traditional and Protestant, or High Church and Low Church, or Catholic and Evangelical—to hold them together in one body, as being at bottom not really contradictory, but complementary. And this very difficult task has been made even more difficult than it need have been, by the fact that the Church suffered herself to lose the power of self-government, which any living society requires, to adjust ancient principles to new needs. Still, the task, however difficult, seems to be set us in the providence of God; and it is not hopeless, if we will consent to think more than we are in the

habit of doing about our common and fundamental principles. What are the fundamental principles of our communion? It is the clear and living sense of these which we want to rekindle in the minds of clergy and laity alike.

It is not difficult to characterise the Church of England as the providence of God sent her forth on her new task after the Reformation.

First, she was no new Church and she professed no new faith. She retained the old catholic basis of doctrine and order, especially as concerned the creeds, in which universal consent, the common religion of Christendom, was especially expressed, and the ancient episcopal succession in the ministry of the Word and sacraments. So she remained part of the old and the catholic Church, with the obligations which belong to such membership.

Secondly, our forefathers of the sixteenth century accepted something which at the time seemed new. They accepted what was the chief point of the Reformation movement—the appeal to Scripture, or to the original apostolic Gospel, in order to purify and simplify a distorted and corrupted and overloaded tradition. And in order to guard tradition in the future from the perpetual tendency to distortion and accretion, they enthroned Scripture as the one final ground of appeal in doctrinal matters, “so that whatsoever is not read therein, nor may be proved thereby, is not to be required of any man.”

Thirdly, our forefathers, at the Reformation, without going to a point necessarily incompatible with real catholicism, made the most of the national principle, and expressed this especially in the Book of Common Prayer, which was to be the one service book for the English people, or, as events have interpreted this, for such of the English people as have remained adherents of the Church of their forefathers. In this book was to be summed up and expressed all, or almost all, that was expected

or required of clergy or laity, so that thereby the ecclesiastical authority might be both limited and directed.

Now, I believe that behind all our shortcomings and positive faults these three fundamental appeals of the Church of England embody lasting and true principles, and are still intelligible and effective, and still carry with them the loyalty of the great body of Church people. I still believe that if by a wide measure of conscious agreement among bishops, clergy, and laity we could agree to abide by these principles, as they are given concrete shape, both positively and negatively, both for inclusion and for exclusion, both as giving us comprehensiveness and also limits, to abide, I say, by these principles, and by these only, I still think the Church of England may make its corporate calling and election sure.

In detail, then: (1) There must be no compromise as regards the fundamental creeds. When the clergy, as representatives and mouthpieces of the Church, stand saying, "I believe," there must be no doubt that they mean what they say. Undoubtedly other requirements besides the creeds are made upon their belief, but they are vaguer. They "assent to the Book of Common Prayer and the Thirty-nine Articles," and they assert that "the doctrine therein contained is agreeable to the word of God"; but this assent was deliberately altered by the combined authority of Church and Parliament in 1865, so as to become general, and not particular. We no longer declare, like our fathers, that we "willingly and *ex animo*" "acknowledge all and every of the articles therein contained, being in number nine and thirty, besides the Ratification, to be agreeable to the word of God"; and, as a result of this change, we can no longer fairly be regarded as bound to single phrases or expressions in the articles. Again, we are required, before we can be admitted to the order of

deacons, to express our “unfeigned belief in all the canonical Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments”; but that expression of belief can be fairly and justly made by any one who believes heartily that the Bible as a whole records and contains the message of God in all its stages of delivery, and that each one of the books contains some element or aspect of this revelation. In other words, I “unfeignedly believe all the Scriptures,” if I believe them to contain and embody the Word of God. This definition of the meaning of the question I have often repeated. I am delighted to find that it agrees with the definition given by one who was the weightiest opponent of what is commonly called the Higher Criticism—I mean the late Bishop of Oxford. “That is the sum of the sense in which you may interpret this question according to the *intentio imponentis*: do you believe the Holy Scripture as the Word of life, as containing in the Old and New Testaments the revelation of the purpose and work of Almighty God through Jesus Christ our Lord?”¹

I repeat, then, that by far the most definite doctrinal requirement made upon the clergy is that involved in the continual public recitation of the creeds to which their office binds them. “I believe that Jesus Christ is very God, of one substance with the Father, who for us men, and for our salvation came down from heaven, and was incarnate”; that He was “born of the Virgin Mary,” and that “the third day He rose again from the dead”; are phrases which admit of no ambiguity. The last quoted clauses are intended, and have always been understood, to lay all possible stress upon the events recorded having really happened. They mean that the historical records which contain the narratives of the birth and resurrection of Christ are true in fact. Now we are in our days challenged by a not unimportant group of

¹ The context is admirable: see Stubbs' *Ordination Addresses* (Longmans, 1901), pp. 40-41

men to admit the legitimacy of the recitation of these words by clergymen who, at the least, regard (for example) our Lord's birth of a Virgin, or His bodily resurrection, as highly doubtful. Now I say, quite deliberately, let us be very gentle with scrupulous and anxious consciences. Let us be very patient with men under the searching and, it may be, purifying trial of doubt. But when a man has once arrived at the conviction that he cannot honestly affirm a particular article of the fundamental creed, the meaning of which is unambiguous, to be true, let the public conscience of the Church tell him that he is not qualified to be an officer of the Church which makes the public recitation of the clergyman's personal belief in these, among other, articles a central element in its great acts of worship. What has been challenged in this matter is the public conscience. It is the public conscience which is asked to weaken the obligation of belief by consciously allowing an unreal sense of explicit words. Let the public conscience therefore reply to the challenge as explicitly as possible.

It is sometimes pleaded that we all of us recite one clause at least in the Athanasian Creed in less than its natural sense—the clause, namely, which runs: “Which Faith except every one do keep whole and undefiled, without doubt he shall perish everlastingly;” and that therefore no objection can be urged against reciting other clauses of the creed with a similar laxity of meaning. Now, I think it is true that we do almost all of us read into this clause of the Athanasian Creed large qualifications which are not in its original or natural meaning. I think this is so much to be deplored that, sooner than that we should go on doing what savours in any degree of unreality, even in a single clause of a single creed or canticle, I earnestly desire that our present use of the Athanasian Creed should be altered. I even think with Bishop Lightfoot that “the retention of the admonitory

clauses in their present form tends to throw a general discredit on the sincerity of dogmatic professions." But if any one proposes to make the use of these general propositions of the Athanasian Creed in less than their natural sense into a pretext for using the articles "I believe that Jesus Christ was born of the Virgin Mary" and "rose the third day from the dead" in a sense which they will not bear, I have no doubt what is my reply. I say, apart from the difference in the character of the two kinds of statements (a difference which is very great),¹ the sense so commonly given to the minatory clauses in the Athanasian Creed is the only sense in which the Church of to-day gives it us to use. Our province of the English Church has in effect said so through her Convocation.² Whereas, on the other hand, the whole Church, and the English Church in particular, holds fast to the simple meaning of the historical and other articles of the creeds. Twice this year the bishops of our province have repeated formally that "this House is resolved to maintain unimpaired the Catholic faith in the Holy Trinity and in the Incarnation, as contained in the Apostles' and Nicene Creeds and in the *Quicumque vult*, and regards the faith thus presented both in statements of doctrine and in statements of fact as the necessary basis on which the teaching of the Church reposes." For a clergyman, then, to continue to say, "I believe that He was born of the Virgin Mary, and that

¹ The difference between a particular historical statement, I mean, and a general statement of consequences. Any statement of the latter kind is understood to admit of exceptions.

² That is, the Convocation of Canterbury wished a note to be appended to the creed to the effect that "the warnings of this confession of faith are to be understood no otherwise than the like warnings of Holy Scripture. . . . The Church does not herein pronounce judgment on any particular person or persons, God alone being the judge of all." This note satisfied few; but it justified interpreting the clauses of the creed with serious qualifications. It was meant to do this.

He rose the third day from the dead," if in fact he supposes that our Lord was born, like other men, of a human father and mother, and that His body rotted in the grave where men first laid Him, or elsewhere, is to use words both in a way which empties all words of meaning, and in defiance of the sense in which the society of which he is an officer certainly intends them to be understood.

I should not have troubled you with this argument, in view of the fact that the clergy in this diocese are loyal to the creed with a unanimity which is very much more obvious than any of our differences, were it not for the fact that in the case of one clergyman who was beneficed in this diocese I felt obliged to tell him in a letter, which I afterwards thought it my duty to make public, that an argument to which he had committed himself in a public journal appeared to me to be quite inconsistent with the profession of the creed. I told him that it was, in my judgment, inconsistent with public honour that a man should hold his official position in virtue of constantly saying "I believe" such and such propositions unless he did believe them, and that I could not understand how, if he did believe them, he could write against them, as I understood him to have plainly done. He met this protest of mine by what I could not but think the best step which, under the unfortunate circumstances, he could take—that is, by voluntary resignation. As it has been stated several times in public that I forced him or pressed him or requested him to resign, I wish to let you know that I simply published the letter I have referred to. What more I should have done, if anything, I certainly communicated to no one. I never anticipated his resignation; I never asked him to resign or suggested it to him. It was entirely his own act. I only accepted it. I am as anxious as any one can be to retain the comprehensiveness of the

Church of England ; but that comprehensiveness must rest on an acknowledged basis of common belief, and that acknowledged basis is the creed.

I know that there is in many minds a fear that after all the creed, and especially the clause which affirms that our Lord was born of a Virgin, will be found to rest on untrustworthy evidence. I would earnestly beg Englishmen not to allow themselves to be deprived of their fundamental faith by mere rumour, or on the authority of other people. I beg you to ascertain for yourselves, as every fairly educated man can do, whether it does not, in fact, rest on evidence of convincing strength—convincing at least to any one who is prepared to believe it. It is my conviction, based on the most careful study I can give the matter, extending over many years, that no fair historical criticism can dissolve the force of the evidence we have to the following propositions : That our Lord was, and knew Himself to be, sinless in the midst of a sinful world ; that, moreover, He claimed from His disciples the sort of allegiance and faith which only God can rightly claim ; that He worked miracles which no reasoning can allow us to ascribe to anything less than the creative power of God working with Him to authorise His teaching ; that after His death and burial His tomb was found empty on the third (or, as we should say, second) day, and His disciples were raised from despair and despondency to certain and confident faith by repeated manifestations of Himself risen in a body, transformed and spiritualised, but the same. I am quite sure that it is those who disbelieve, and not those who believe, these central facts who do violence to the evidence. So far we depend on the apostolic witness. The witness of the apostles was to be eye-witness. It included therefore only what they themselves had seen and heard. It therefore extended only from the baptism of John up to the Ascension.

It was only on this evidence, which, by the nature of the case, did not include the circumstances of our Lord's birth, that men were asked to believe. It is only on this evidence, the evidence of our Lord's public life and claims, His death and resurrection, that men ought to be asked to believe to-day. The Virgin Birth was, and still is, not among the evidences by which faith is, in the first instance, to be generated. But when men had believed, in the circle of the first believers, the secret of His birth could be told. The two records that we have in the first and third Gospels bear upon themselves the traces—the unmistakable traces—of coming from the Jewish cradle of our religion, and, further, from the only two first-hand witnesses who existed of the circumstance of our Lord's birth without a human father—I mean Joseph and Mary. The narrative in S. Matthew is plainly based on Joseph's report. It tells the story from Joseph's point of view. The narrative in S. Luke can be, if it be authentic, only in origin Mary's. I have then no doubt whence the two narratives come in substance. I am convinced also that those who already believe in Christ as sinless Man and God incarnate, and as the One who rose from the dead, will not hesitate to believe what comes to them on such good evidence about the circumstances of His birth. A friend of mine was once asked, "Would you believe any mother, however pious, who should tell you such a story about her son? Would you not at the best think she was the subject of an illusion?" He replied: "If her son had been what Jesus of Nazareth was; had done what He did; had died for men and risen again—I should not hesitate to believe what she told me." That is sound reason. In particular, all the Gospel narrative conveys the impression that Christ's humanity was real, but different from ours in the vital point of sinlessness—freedom from the taint and tendency of sin. I am persuaded that it is only

as sinless, and so far unlike us, that He is able to be our Saviour and our new life, as well as our pattern in that new life. But a sinless manhood in the midst of a universally sinful world—and the best of mere men have been the most conscious of their sinfulness—is a moral miracle which postulates some physical miracle in the constitution of His manhood. We believe in Christ, true man but new man; made man by a fresh creative act of God to redeem a fallen and disordered humanity. We believe that He was born of the Virgin Mary, and our reason and sense of evidence confirm the belief.¹

And it is important to make it plain that if we reject the destructive criticism which denies the truth of the Gospel histories, it is not because we refuse to allow criticism to be applied to the Gospels. Of course, they must be examined—criticised, that is—like all histories. I beg you to observe that the men who have fortified our religious belief on the historical side in recent years have been men who believed in criticism, and were critical historians—Westcott, Lightfoot, Hort, Sanday. They have never been heard repudiating or ridiculing criticism. But criticism applied to histories reaches different results, according to the date and character of the narratives. We reject the destructive conclusions with regard to the Gospel narratives, because we find the

¹ I have dealt with this matter at greater length in a volume called *Dissertations* (John Murray, 1896). We are sometimes told that if Christ's sinlessness logically postulates His miraculous birth, it logically postulates also the sinlessness of His mother—that is, her immaculate conception. I am not convinced of this. But in any case I am sure that a logical postulate is very weak ground for maintaining that any event actually happened, apart from historical evidence of its occurrence. Now there is nothing that can be called historical evidence of the immaculate conception of Mary. In the case of our Lord's birth of a virgin, there is trustworthy historical witness, which logical considerations only confirm and help us to accept. Moreover, the historical record arose quite independently of any considerations of logic.

criticism which draws these conclusions is unsound of its kind ; because we think it would tend to render all historical certainty impossible ; because we feel that its results are due mainly to a manifest prejudice against the possibility of miracle.

(2) Here then, first of all, the Church of England is to make it plain that she is one. The world to-day is full of a confusion of beliefs and opinions. The Church with all her varieties of allowed opinion must stand, and be known to stand, for agreement on the old fundamental faith, as it is expressed in the creeds. Now this agreement guarantees sufficiently faith in the Bible. A man who believes the creed will always be found to believe that the Gospels are real history ; that the apostolic interpretation of Christ's person as given in the Epistles is the true account ; and that the Old Testament, whatever varieties of literature it contains, represents the divine education of the people of God up to Christ. In other words, a man who accepts the creed is certain to believe that the Bible contains the word of God in all the stages of its delivery, and this is all that is necessary for the full religious use of the Bible. This brings us to the next great principle of unity which ought to characterise all the teachers of our Church. We have promised to teach all we teach out of the Holy Scriptures, and to refrain from making the great claim upon man's faith for anything " but that which we are persuaded may be concluded and proved by the Scriptures." It is not enough to say, " The Church teaches so and so." Like S. Cyril of Jerusalem, we are to say to those we teach : " Do not believe me, unless you receive the proof of what I say from Holy Scripture." Now our persuasions as to what is in the Bible may vary more or less on minor matters ; but if all our teaching, as the Church

guides us to give it, is constantly and humbly referring itself to Scripture, that will give it a unity of tone and character. In spite of all the perplexity that recent criticism has engendered about the Bible, every thoughtful man or woman feels that there is that in the Bible which there is in no other book. They want to be helped to feel that the spiritual value of the Bible remains, independently of any necessary changes in the literary estimate of the books. They want to be helped to understand the Bible, as we clergy can help them, if we are ourselves constant and diligent learners; and, as we claim to give them Christian teaching, they want to be shown that what we teach them is really there in the original message of the apostles. For there is a multitude of religious doctrines, some of which have been widespread, some of which have even obtained general currency in the Church (perhaps in the time when the Bible had dropped somewhat into the background); there is, I say, a multitude of such doctrines and opinions, more or less pious, more or less probable, which we may altogether refuse to condemn, but which yet, as failing to refer themselves back to the New Testament, we have no manner of right to teach, as part of the authoritative Christian message, for which we can claim men's acceptance in the name of Christ. This is to be our next great bond of unity—the scripturalness of our teaching.

(3) The third bond of union among us touches not our teaching, but the services we use. Every clergyman admitted to any incumbency or licensed curacy solemnly undertakes “in public prayer and administration of the sacraments to use the form in the Common Prayer Book prescribed and none other.” So the undertaking ran absolutely till 1865, when the exception was added, “except so far as shall be ordered by lawful authority.” What the lawful authority is,

is not specified. But it must be, at lowest, the authority of the ordinary. Some power the ordinary must be allowed to have to sanction occasional special prayers or special services and to sanction customary omissions, such as the omissions at most celebrations of Holy Communion of the long exhortation. But when exception has been made in favour of such omissions or additions, which require the authorisation of the ordinary, the fact remains that every minister among us, whether priest or deacon, incumbent or assistant, is bound as an honest man to use only the services prescribed in the Prayer Book. Within these limits we have authority. Outside them our pretensions would be arbitrary and intolerable.

And if we are bound to use the Prayer Book services, we are morally bound to study them and to make the best of them. There has been recently very much help given us in this direction. We need to study the Prayer Book afresh, without prejudice, so that we may render the services intelligently and intelligibly, letting what private prayers we say, as in the Holy Communion, be simply private prayers, which do not interrupt the service, but are quite unostentatious and subordinate; and taking care that the ceremonies we use are the prescribed ceremonies; or, when these must be supplemented, such at least as simply tend to bring out the meaning of the prescribed service. I am sure we want to recognise a distinction between such musical and ceremonial accompaniments of a service as really tend to set it forth, and such as overlay it and obscure it and distract attention from it.

I know of course that there are and will still remain greater differences in ceremonial between one church and another than are wholesome in the same community. We certainly ought, not to be all alike, but to be nearer together than we are. I know, also, that we have a history of controversy and

mistakes behind us which will not be easily obliterated ; and that our ceremonial law is obscure and uncertain in many points, and cannot always in the letter be either obeyed or altered. These are great difficulties. But I think we all feel the enormous moral danger of self-will in matters of worship. I think we all, or almost all, feel that the real dignity of worship in God's sight depends upon the service being entered into by the body of the worshippers with intelligence and sympathy ; and that nothing is so empty as a style of worship which outruns the capacity of the people and leaves them puzzled and alienated. We recognise, almost without exception, that everywhere, but especially in country places where there is only one church, we need to make very readily such sacrifices in respect of the ceremonial we ourselves approve, in one direction or in the other, as are necessary to keep the people together. We recognise, on the other hand, that in towns a wide difference in the degree of ceremonial may rightly, under our present circumstances, be tolerated, if the same service is everywhere evidently and reverently rendered, and the conscientious feelings of the congregation are respected. I am thankful to say the ritual difficulty does not appear to be considerable in this diocese ; and I have received only one complaint on this head, and that easily dealt with, in the churchwardens' returns. What I feel quite sure of is that we need to be at pains to think not of our own churches and congregations only, but of the whole Church, and to make the most, deliberately and always, in teaching and worship, of our great principles of unity—the creeds, the ground on which we stand ; the Bible, the sole court of reference for our teaching ; the Prayer Book, as keeping our worship, even with varieties of ceremonial, still the same. I pray that we may be kept from all needless suspicions and unjust accusations one of another ; that we may make the best of one another, and encourage one another in the

great task of converting and building up the souls of men. God looks through all outward splendour to the souls of men; He seeketh men, the souls of men, to worship Him in spirit and in truth. And in following out the great purpose of the kingdom, "the wisdom which is from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, easy to be entreated, full of mercy and good fruits, without variance, without hypocrisy."

I pray that we may cultivate this spirit, every one of us; and that those within and those without our communion may come to recognise more and more what are the great unifying principles for which the Church of England stands.

Only so—only when we have made it more evident to ourselves and to others what our own grounds of unity are among ourselves, and what we stand for as one body—only so can we play any useful part in restoring unity to a divided and distracted Christendom. The divisions of Christendom are flat contrary to the will of Christ; but it is quite certain that we as a body can play no part in restoring intercommunion till our own internal unity is better secured. At present I notice that when any individual makes suggestions, or takes some positive step, in the direction of intercommunion with some Nonconformist body, or with some other portion of the ancient Church, such effort not only effects nothing, but always becomes a cause for increased disunion and suspicion among ourselves. Let us by all means co-operate with other religious bodies in promoting social reforms: let us co-operate with individual scholars and students of all denominations in the study of Scripture (the study of Scripture in Europe generally to-day is markedly inter-denominational); above all, let us cultivate personal relations of friendship with those who belong to other religious bodies than our own; but—let us

take it for granted—before we can play our part in any measures for bringing any sundered portions of the Church together, we must be more conscious of our own unity; and a proposal made to those outside our communion by one individual belonging to us, if he has not got the general mind of our Church with him, is sure to do harm rather than good.

A SERMON

PREACHED AT THE CONSECRATION OF THE BISHOP
LATIMER CHURCH,¹ JULY 23RD, 1904

“A preacher of righteousness.”—2 PETER ii. 5.

THE dedication of your new church to Hugh Latimer, one of the greatest and best of the Bishops of Worcester, was a settled thing before I became bishop; but I accept the arrangement with gratitude, if for no other reason than because it has given me a fresh opportunity to engrave upon my own mind the image of this great preacher of righteousness, this great and vigorous lover of God's people. And on this day of the consecration of Bishop Latimer's Church I would do my best to make his name a living thing in your hearts and minds.

He was born about 1490 at Thurcaston, in Leicestershire, the son of a small yeoman, or tenant-farmer, who brought up his family in godliness and honesty; made enough out of his land to keep his family and some half-dozen men; to marry his six daughters with a small portion; to send his sharp-witted son to school and then to Cambridge (for the educational ladder was a great reality in those days in England); and all the while to “keep hospitality for his poor neighbours” and “to give some alms to the poor.” Altogether a noble, industrious, and religious figure is this of Hugh Latimer the elder as his famous son portrays him for us.

¹ Built through the munificence of one single anonymous donor.

His son grew up to see English agriculture decay, and the class to which he had belonged extinguished or impoverished; partly through the suppression of the monastic cultivators, partly under the pressure of the wool trade, which led to the substitution of pasture for agriculture, to the unjust enclosure of lands formerly held in common, and to the rack-renting of the farms, largely such as had been monastic property and had passed into less merciful hands :

“Whereas,” says Latimer, “there have been a great many householders and inhabitants there is now but a shepherd and his dog.” “All such proceedings do intend plainly to make the yeomanry slavery.” “He that now hath my father’s farm payeth £16 a year (four times the former rent), and is not able to do anything for his prince, for himself, nor for his children, nor to give a cup of drink to the poor.”

What we should call Latimer’s “ardent socialism” (for he was a prince of Christian socialists) was due in great measure to the thoughts bred in his keen mind by the depopulation of the country districts, and the poverty and misery of the peasantry. Once more, the suppression of the schools, which had been largely connected with guilds and chantries and monasteries, broke down the educational ladder: “Charity is waxen cold,” cries Latimer; “none helps the scholar nor yet the poor. And in those days, what did they when they helped the scholar? They maintained them who were very Papists, and professed the Pope’s doctrine; and now that the knowledge of God’s Word is brought to light and many earnestly labour and study to set it forth, now hardly any man helps to maintain them.” “If ye bring it to pass that the yeomanry be not able to put their sons to school (as indeed Universities do wondrously decay already), and that they be not able to marry their daughters to the avoiding of whoredom, I say, ye pluck salvation from the people and

utterly destroy this realm. For by yeomen's sons the faith of Christ is and hath been maintained chiefly. Is this realm taught by rich men's sons? No, no; read the Chronicles. Ye shall find sometime noblemen's sons which have been unpreaching bishops and prelates; but ye shall find none of them learned men." "The Commons be utterly undone, whose bitter cry ascendeth up to the ears of the God of Sabaoth."

Such were the abiding social judgments of Latimer. As for his religious beliefs, he remained at Cambridge till he was thirty—"as obstinate a Papist as was any in England." Then (as he says) he began to "smell the Word of God," first through Thomas Bilney (a martyr for the reformed opinions before Latimer became a bishop), who came to him to make his confession. And "by his confession I learned more than before in many years." After that he was with increasing sympathies on the side of the new learning, and his extraordinary power in preaching and force of character made him a leader, the most powerful in the land. He was a Protestant of the older type, before Calvin's influence was felt. He was strongly "anti-Calvinist," as we should say. "Christ shed as much blood for Judas as He did for Peter." "We may be in the book (of life) one time, and afterwards, when we forget God and His word, we come out of that book: that is, out of Christ, which is the book." "God would have all men to be saved; His salvation is sufficient to save all mankind, but we are so wicked in ourselves that we refuse the same."

So he reiterates. In fact, Latimer's strong moral sense gave him little taste for speculation on "the decrees." Moreover, he had no faculty for systematic theology. What he rebelled against in the unreformed theology was chiefly two things. First were the practical abuses. He saw men all around him "tithing mint and anise and

cummin, and neglecting the weightier matters of the law"—that is, he saw them occupied with acquiring merits by what were called "voluntary works," works over and above the necessary duties of the Christian—the adorning of churches, the going on pilgrimages, the decoration of images, the "setting up of candles," and neglecting the plain duties of moral reformation and works of mercy: "The images are to be clad in silk garments, and those also laden with precious gems and jewels; as who should say that no cost can be too great; whereas in the meantime we see Christ's faithful and lively images, bought with no less price than His most precious blood (Alas! alas!) to be a-hungered, a-thirst, a-cold, and to be in darkness, wrapped in all wretchedness, yea to lie there till death take away their miseries."

He saw religion converted, as it were, into a vast system of insurance against purgatory. Christians were occupied in providing for their own and others' souls in purgatory, instead of becoming better men and women here and now. He saw a vast system of money-getting, a gigantic traffic connected with what he called the "purgatory pick purse," and multitudes of clergy ordained as "massing priests" who did not preach or teach or labour to make men better. He saw the bishops absent from their dioceses, giving themselves to affairs of State and to the luxuries of the world; "unpreaching prelates," whom he seeks to put to shame by his famous reminder that "the devil is never out of his diocese"; he "always applieth his business."

The whole organisation of the unreformed Church seemed to Latimer to be directed to a wrong end, to something quite different from Christ's kingdom. Thus he was forced into violent reaction against the whole system. He is no doubt indiscriminating and harsh in his language. He does not seek to discover the element of truth which lay behind the

corruptions. But that which he was striving for was the kingdom of righteousness. What he desired was that all men should see that the Christian religion was nothing else than the becoming like Christ.

The other conspicuous feature in his Protestantism was his desire to go back to a simple gospel of divine love: that God had sent His Son to be the saviour of the world; that He had won for us and for all men the forgiveness of our sins; that if we would have faith in Him our sins were forgiven; we had neither need nor power to purchase salvation by accumulation of merits; it remained for us simply to accept the great salvation, to repent of our sins, to make restitution for wrong done, and then, rejoicing in the light of the face of Christ, who had reconciled us to God, to go on our way to make His kingdom of righteousness and brotherly love prevail. Behind an accumulated mass of traditions Latimer wanted to go back to the religion of the Bible, in which his soul recognised and welcomed a revelation of God to his moral nature—the revelation of a God of righteousness, of justice, and of love. And it must be said that with all his repudiation of human merits, and his insistence upon the freedom of Divine grace and forgiveness, he is in no danger of condoning moral laxity. He is always insisting upon the requirement of the moral law, on the reality of God's moral judgment, on the restoration of ecclesiastical discipline and excommunication for moral offences; and to the necessity of repentance he never wearies of adding the necessity of restitution of goods unjustly gotten, and the righting of wrongs done, as far as human power goes. Without this, though he appears to feel that he preaches to deaf ears, he is for ever insisting there is no real repentance. Latimer is a Protestant, then, because the moral aim and character of the Christian message had been overlaid with corruptions and superstitions;

and he does not spare his own side when he sees lawlessness, selfishness, and greed masquerading under the pretext of zeal for the Gospel. A reformer of Latimer's moral earnestness could not but find his bitterest disappointments among "false Gospellers." Such was his Protestantism.

He was distinguished as a preacher from the first; and a preacher before all things, a preacher of extraordinary power, he remained: perhaps the greatest popular preacher England has ever had. Violent he was sometimes in matter and manner; but he illuminated all he said with a profound moral fervour, a profound knowledge of human nature, and an extraordinarily lively wit and fancy, which shrank from no "merry tale" which could illustrate in the pulpit or out of it what he wished to enforce. A real preacher, like his beloved S. Augustine, in eager response to the feelings of his hearers, speaking the language they understood with point and force, and repeating himself again and again till he had fixed what he wanted to say in the minds of his hearers. There is nothing stronger in English literature by way of moral invective than his sermon before the Convocation, and nothing more Christian in English preaching than his sermons on the Lord's Prayer.

He spent himself effectively in pastoral work when he held his country parish in Wiltshire; and when he became Bishop of Worcester (in succession to a series of non-resident Italian bishops) he threw himself eagerly into the work of the diocese. He took great trouble to get good men promoted, and to extirpate abuses according to his lights. But he was bishop less than four years; he was hampered during those years by money difficulties ("No man," he said, "having the name of so many things hath the use of so few"); and doubtless he was not an administrator by nature. In the reaction towards the older style of doctrine and discipline which characterised the later years of Henry VIII., he resigned his

bishopric and retired for a while into the background, till he came out again with renewed vigour as a preacher on the accession of Edward VI., and (refusing to resume his bishopric) remained a dominant influence as a preacher in the ranks of the extremer reformers till Mary's accession put the power again into the hands of his opponents, and he died a martyr to his convictions (just under the window of the room which I used to occupy in college at Oxford), with the great words to his companion in the flames—"Be of good courage, Master Ridley, and play the man: we shall this day light such a candle by God's grace in England as I trust shall never be put out."

I have done my best in a short compass to give you some account of the man whose memory and teaching this church is to recall to you. But, fresh as I am from the volumes which contain his writings and the records of his sermons which remain, I must come back to the chief general impression which they make. It is that Latimer was, among English Christian teachers, the prince of Christian socialists, the forerunner of the Maurices and Kingsleys and Westcotts of later days. Righteousness—righteousness as shown in personal life and social dealing, the social reforms which are necessary to vindicate and establish righteousness among us in England, the motives and threatenings and encouragements which the doctrine of Christ supplies for one who hungers and thirsts after this righteousness—these things are first in his mind; they are continually recurring in his every sermon. He feels, as deeply as any man ever felt it, not that men are equal—he is no leveller—but that in God's sight every man counts for one, and no man counts for more than one. The moral gain to common men and women—that is the standard by which he measures the value of religious activities. "The end of your Convocation," he says to that assembly of the clergy, "shall show what ye have done; the fruit that

shall come of your consultation shall show of what generation ye be. For what have ye done hitherto, I pray? These seven years and more? What have ye engendered? What have ye brought forth? What fruit is come of your long and great assembly? What one thing that the people of England hath been the better of a hair? or you yourselves either more accepted before God, or better discharged towards the people committed to your care?"

And later, when the Reformation had gone further, he still challenges it by its moral fruits. The property of the monasteries ought to have gone to the furthering of education and the good of the people. But had it?—

“Abbeys were ordained for the comfort of the poor; therefore, I said, it was not decent that the King’s horses should be kept in them, as many were at that time; the living of poor men thereby minished and taken away.”

He saw Church property passing to the selfish use of the rich, and Church preferment made a matter of traffic, livings bought and sold as property: “Oh! Lord,” he cries, “in what case are we! If the great men in Turkey should use in their religion of Mahomet to sell, as our patrons commonly sell benefices here, the office of preaching, the office of salvation, it should be taken as an intolerable thing; the Turk would not suffer it in his commonwealth. Patrons be charged to see the office done, and not to seek a lucre or a gain by their patronship.”

Latimer was afraid of no powerful person or interest. He speaks his mind boldly to Henry in his full power, and gives the plainest advice to the young Edward, surrounded by his courtiers. Like John the Baptist, he gives the simplest message of righteousness to every class of society: to nobles and magistrates, that they be accessible to the cares and needs of the poor; to lawyers and physicians, that they serve the poor man’s needs as the rich; to bishops

and priests he delivers a plain message indeed. Before merchants and shopkeepers he denounces in detail the dishonest tricks of the trade, describing them so minutely, vividly, and humorously that he begins to be afraid the innocent will learn craft from him. He speaks to parents and to children, to masters and to servants, of their mutual duties. He is impartial all round. "The servant who has his whole wages and does but half his work, or is a sluggard, that same fellow, I say, is a thief before God." The profession of reformed opinions is of no avail against Latimer's keen shafts. "He was a Gospeller, one of the new brethren, somewhat worse than a rank Papist." We get a terrible picture of a country full of sin in Latimer's sermons—covetousness, fraud, irreverence, lust, and lying. He has the spirit of the Old Testament prophets in him. But it is not only denunciation which comes from his lips. He presents to us a noble positive ideal of social righteousness, based on faith in God the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost. He is no hard Puritan. He is for the consecration of all life, with its occupations and amusements; with all the members of the body, high and low, rich and poor, one with another co-operating for the good of the whole. No communist: he maintains stoutly the legal basis of private property, while he lays on all property the properly moral claim that it shall be used for the good of the whole under the laws of God.

My brethren, I am thankful that the name of Hugh Latimer should be held in reverence amongst us through the building of this church. I fancy that there is a great weariness of doctrine that has no manifest effect upon life. But I fancy that a Christian doctrine which is brought to bear powerfully and directly upon life, individual and social, a doctrine that makes directly and forcibly for righteousness, a doctrine of the kingdom of Christ, full of sympathy for

common human needs and full of indignation—full of the fire of the Lord—against injustices and social wrongs, a doctrine of human brotherhood under Christ for our Captain—and what is all this but another name for scriptural doctrine?—for this, I fancy, there are hearts awake in all classes. We need a clergy to teach, saturated in Scripture, bold as John the Baptist, fearless as he and unworldly as he, able to rebuke sin with power, and to show the way of righteousness, full of the spirit of brotherhood, knowing the human nature, the needs, the aspirations, the difficulties, of common men, taking in the whole of life, to preach once again a Gospel for the poor, so that the power of the Spirit may win them again for Christ and for His Church.

A princely liberality has given you this church, and Hugh Latimer's name is named upon it. I would say, Be true to his spirit. Let his moral gospel be heard and felt here.



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