

DIOCESE OF HURON.

The Secretary of the Church Society respectfully informs the Clergy of the Diocese of Huron, that the next Collection for the Church Society is appointed, by the Bishop, to be made during the month of October, and the proceeds to be applied to the Mission Fund of the Diocese.

Ingersoll, Sept. 12, 1859.

A CHARGE DELIVERED TO THE CLERGY OF THE DIOCESE OF HURON,

In St. Paul's Cathedral, London, Canada West, at his primary visitation, in June, 1859, by Benjamin Cronyn, D.D., Lord Bishop of Huron.

The most established believer, the most pious and devoted servant of Christ, when he looks into his own heart and faithfully compares his life with the holy spiritual law of God, when he finds that the flesh, with its corruptions and lusts, daily wars against his soul; when he is constrained to cry out with the Apostle, "O wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me from the body of this death," is often tempted to doubt whether he has been made partaker of converting and sanctifying grace, and even when he rejoices, to rejoice with trembling. How much more, then, shall the minister of Christ stand in doubt of the spiritual state of his people when he looks upon his congregation and beholds amongst them many who evidence by their lives that the spirit of Christ is not in them; that they are not "the Epistles of Christ known and read of all men;" that they have not overcome the world, but that the world daily overcomes them; that they are walking, not after the spirit, but after the flesh, and setting their affections, not on things above, but on things of this world. Surely, in such a case, it becomes the watchman of the Lord to raise his voice and to testify to those who are thus dead in trespasses and in sins, that, "unless they repent, they shall assuredly perish;" that though they may belong to the visible Church, if they are not made partakers of the sanctifying influence of the Holy Ghost, they shall never sit down with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob in the Kingdom of God. The unscriptural mode of addressing mixed congregations of professing Christians as alike partakers of the grace of Christ, will act as an opiate to the consciences of the people, and can only have the effect of rendering more profound the spiritual sleep in which so many of them lie.

My Reverend Brethren, I would earnestly press this subject on your most serious and prayerful attention, error here will prove fatal to your real usefulness as ministers of Christ. Nothing worthy of our high calling is effected unless sinners are converted and brought to Christ for salvation. For this we should study, for this we should labour, and above all, for this we should pray without ceasing. For it is by the Almighty power of God's Spirit alone that the Gospel is made a savor of life unto life in those who hear it.

I shall now offer a few remarks upon the Articles and Formularies of our Church. At your ordination you were asked, "Are you persuaded that the Holy Scriptures contain sufficiently all doctrines required of necessity for eternal salvation through faith in Jesus Christ? And are you determined out of the said Scriptures to instruct the people committed to your charge, and to teach nothing as required of necessity to eternal salvation, but that which you shall be persuaded may be concluded and proved by the Scripture?" and you replied, "I am so persuaded and have so determined by God's grace." This question and an-

swer are in strict accordance with the VI. Article of our Church, and embody the great Protestant principle which was the basis of the Reformation: that the written word of God is the only rule of faith and practice in the Christian Church. The thirty-nine Articles are not to be regarded as a substitute for or a supplement to God's written word, they are a summary of those doctrines which we believe to be fully contained in that word. If from brevity or obscurity, or any other cause, (for human works are always more or less defective,) an explanation of the Articles or any of them, becomes necessary, we are to have recourse for guidance, direction, and explanation to the written word alone. The VI. Article clearly states "that whatsoever is not read therein, nor may be proved thereby, is not to be required of any man, that it should be believed as an article of the Faith," and the first homily most emphatically teaches us, that "there is no truth nor doctrine necessary for our justification and everlasting salvation, but that is, or may be drawn out of that fountain and well of truth." The Articles of our Church were originally framed for "the avoiding of diversities of opinions, and for the establishing of consent touching true religion," and in the Royal declaration prefixed to them it is declared, "that the Articles of the Church of England do contain the true doctrine of the Church of England agreeable to God's word," and referring to the unhappy differences which then prevailed, we find these strong expressions, "we will that all further curious search be laid aside, and these disputes shut up in God's promises as they be generally set forth to us in Holy Scriptures, and the general meaning of the Articles of the Church of England "according to them," and that no man hereafter shall either print, or preach to draw the article aside any way, but shall submit to it in the plain and full meaning thereof; and shall not put his own sense or "comment to be the meaning of the Article, but shall take it in the literal and grammatical sense." The original object then for which the Articles were adopted, and the strong language concerning them which I have just read, prove beyond question that they were intended "when first published," to be the strict and only exposition and standard of the doctrines of the Church of England, from which no departure was allowed, and as they are, at the present time, subscribed by all who are admitted to the Ministry in our Communion, and no authority is given to draw them aside or explain them away, it clearly follows, that we are bound to regard them as the strict, dogmatical and unchangeable expositions of the doctrines of the United Church of England and Ireland. To them, as the only authoritative standard, all differences which may arise on points of doctrine are to be brought. The laws of England recognise the Thirty-nine Articles as "the confession of the true Christian faith, and the doctrine of the Sacraments," thus constituting them the Canon of doctrine of the Church of England. But if we have in the Thirty-nine Articles a standard of doctrine in strict accordance with, and resting on the basis of God's revealed word, we have reason, my Brethren in the Ministry, to rejoice that we have in the Book of Common Prayer a standard of devotion so pure, so spiritual, and so scriptural, that, even our enemies themselves being judges, no material flaw or defect can be found in it. At his ordination every Clergyman signifies his assent and consent to the Book of Common Prayer, and declares that "it containeth in it nothing contrary to the word of God, that it may lawfully so be used, and that he himself will use the form prescribed in the public prayer and administration of the Sacraments and no other." Thus we are provided for our public ministrations, with a form of prayer

eminently calculated to stir up a spirit of devotion in the minds of our people, and to enable them to pour forth the most earnest and spiritual aspirations, in language the most appropriate. All the doctrines of the Gospel upon which the salvation of the sinner depends, are so interwoven in our services, that the man who is well acquainted with them, and who uses them constantly and intelligently, is not likely to be corrupted from the simplicity which is in Christ. Above all we have so much of God's word introduced into all our services, and we are so constantly referred to this infallible source for guidance, both as to life and doctrine, that no service for Public Worship can be conceived more scriptural. When we reflect that our Reformers had to arrange a Service for a Clergy not half converted from the errors of the Church of Rome, and for a people still devotedly attached to the old formularies to which they had been so long accustomed, we cannot fail to admire the wisdom which was given to them, whereby they were enabled to effect so difficult and delicate an object without compromising the great truths of God's Holy Word. In the preface to the Book of Common prayer, it is stated that, "It has always been the wisdom of the Church of England, ever since the first compiling of the public Liturgy, to keep the mean between the two extremes of too much stiffness in refusing and of too much easiness in admitting any variations from it." And we are reminded in the same preface, that the Book of Common Prayer is entitled to "such just and favourable construction as in common equity ought to be allowed to all human writings." An eminent Historian of the Reformation thus speaks of the alterations made in the Book of Common Prayer in the time of Queen Elizabeth: "For the performance of which service there was great care taken for expunging all such passages in it as might give any scandal or offence to the Popish party, or be urged by them in excuse for their not coming to Church and joining with the rest of the Congregation in God's Public Worship." The language of our Church, then, and of our Historians, concerning the Book of Common Prayer, is entirely different from that employed concerning the Articles. A spirit of wisdom and prudence, combined with a strong desire to render the public worship such as to induce those who were still attached to the Church of Rome to attend the public services of the Church, presided over the compilation of the Liturgy, and an equitable construction such as is due to human writings is claimed for the Book of Common Prayer. Whereas the Articles were framed "for the avoidance of diversities in religious opinions," and no departure from them is allowed, but they are to be taken in the strict literal and grammatical sense. We are thus furnished with a Canon of doctrine in the Articles of our Church, and with a manual and standard of devotion in our Book of Common Prayer.

There has been much controversy, as to whether the language of our formularies is to be interpreted by the Articles of the Church, or *vice versa*. From what I have now brought before you concerning both these sources of information, it is evident that the Thirty-nine Articles are our *ultima ratio* in all questions of doctrine, and that where any of our formularies are expressed in ambiguous language and appear inconsistent with the plain statements of the articles, we are bound to interpret the former by the latter. It would be most unnatural, I had almost said absurd, to interpret the articles which were agreed upon by the Archbishops and Bishops of the Provinces, and the whole Clergy, for the avoidance of diversities of opinions, and for the establishing of consent touching true religion," by the services which were framed with the avowed purpose of