

appropriate sermons. On all sides, in town and country, something seems to have been done to notice the day, and a great outburst of loyalty, not unmixed with fervent prayers for our Queen, went forth on Trinity Sunday, 1886.

It was quite right that this exceptional outburst should go forth, and for several reasons. We have been reminded, almost to weariness, that only three English Sovereigns have reigned for a longer period than Queen Victoria. They are Henry III., Edward III., and George III. But since the dates of their reigns have not been fully given, we may, perhaps, be pardoned if we note them for the purpose of comparison. Henry III. succeeded to the throne on the death of King John, which occurred on Oct. 18, 1216, and reigned till Nov. 16, 1272—56 years, 29 days. Edward III's accession was proclaimed by heralds on Jan. 24, 1327, after Parliament had decreed the termination of Edward II's reign. Edward III. died on June 21, 1377; his reign, therefore, lasted 50 years, 5 months. George III. succeeded to the throne on the death of his grandfather, George II., on Oct. 25, 1760, and himself died on Jan. 29, 1820, having reigned 59 years, 3 months. The very length of Queen Victoria's reign, then, seems to call for special remark. But there is much more than this. During these forty-nine years many changes—religious, political, and scientific—have come over the land; and could we transport ourselves back to the year 1837, we should hardly know that we were in this same England of ours. The sound of the trumpet which those few men at Oxford had sent forth on the wings of "Tracts for the Times" had only just begun to rouse men out of the torpor into which they had fallen, as regards dogmatic theology, during the years blighted by the soulless morality which constituted the preaching of the Georgian era. The best-ordered churches had the Holy Communion administered only once a month, while in country parishes three or four times a year was the average of the number of Communion. Daily services were unknown, carelessness and neglect were rampant, and the only alternative, except in a few places where the priest was a traditional High Churchman, to shocking irreverence, was a devout Evangelicalism. When we turn to the changes which have come about in the political complexion of the country, we shall find that it is a long cry back to the early days which succeeded the passing of the first Reform Bill. Since then the franchise has been twice extended, until now every household has a vote, and every lodger, duly qualified by residence, has the like privilege. There is much to be thankful for in the increased esteem with which the ruler of this country is held by lovers of the constitution, and it is very much due to the Queen's own regard for constitutional action that this is so. There will always be unquiet spirits who are discontented with the laws under which they live, who are ever anxious for radical changes, even in countries where the government is republican; but it is safe to say that no monarch ever sat upon a throne more firmly planted than that upon which our Queen sits, and its

stability is assured by the deep personal love with which she has inspired every one of her subjects. Changes have taken place during the last fifty years which are good, but many also have been brought about which are, in our estimation, little short of disastrous. We are referring, of course, to the legislation which has deprived the Church of some of her ancient privileges, and has tended towards the exaltation of the power of the world over the rights of the Church. From the year 1868, when Church rates were abolished, down to the present time, when attempts are being made to rob the over-worked, under-paid clergy of their tithes, we have witnessed a succession of legislative acts which, paralleled as they are in other countries, give good ground for the common belief that the "man of sin," spoken of by St. Paul in his Second Epistle to the Thessalonians, is none other but the secular power seeking to usurp God's place over His Church. It is through no fault of Queen Victoria that the Disestablishment of the Irish Church, the Divorce, the Public Worship Regulation, the Burials, and other Acts, passed in the teeth of the Church, should have become law during her reign. They are the natural outcome of the progress of Liberalism.

In science, too, the advances made during the present reign have been literally stupendous. In 1837 the *regime* of stage coaches was not yet over, and the few railways which existed never suggested to the most confident believers in the future that was before the "Iron Horse" that the country would be covered by a network of iron rails. Electricity, though even now in its infancy, has been tamed to perform wonderful works in the service of man—the telegraph, telephone, and electric light have all been brought into common use during the Victorian era. In fine, there is not a branch of applied science in which wonderful discoveries have not been made, and which the resources of civilization have not laid under a debt of obligation.

During the whole of this period, and amidst so many and such vital changes, our Queen has ruled wisely and well; and, as one of the preachers on Sunday said, the best projects for the amelioration of the people, which Socialists claim as their own, have received their initiative from Queen Victoria, instigated thereto by the genius and wisdom of the late Prince Consort. Well may her subjects pray that she may live not only to complete her jubilee year, but many more years in which to preside over the destinies of a people whom she appreciates, and who appreciate her.—*Church Review*.

WATCHING.

THE duty of watchfulness is enjoined again and again in Holy Scripture upon Christian people. As Christ's faithful soldiers and servants they are called upon to maintain this attitude, and to guard especially against slothfulness and sleep. Watching implies wakefulness; that idea alone supplies sufficient matter for meditation, and self-examination, in an age of drowsy indifference. Those who are

not wakeful cannot be efficient watchers. Fear and hope generally keep men wakeful. Drowsy indifference implies the absence of both. People who watch in earnest, watch against something, or for something, in a state either of anxious anticipation of evil, or of joyful expectation of good. The criminal watches fearfully for the executioner; the bride watches for the bridegroom. As Christians we not only watch against sin, but for Christ's coming. We are not soldiers of Christ in an enemy's country, and our hearts are by nature prone to sympathise with the enemy, and to encourage us to desert our colours. Our Spiritual life is a warfare for which the necessary armour has been provided. It is stored in the armoury of God for our use. The weapons entrusted to our care require to be kept bright, in constant readiness for action. At any moment in our daily life we may be called upon to guard against and resist an attack of the enemy. Hence our condition must always be one of watching. We are the Lord's servants, the highest dignity to which a man can be called; and our work is to do our Master's bidding whilst watching for His return.

As God's servants and stewards we should watch that we do not waste His property. Our talents will have to be accounted for. Every faculty is from Him, and ought to produce interest for Him. We should be watching for opportunities of serving Him. An opportunity missed may never recur, and the loss occasioned by our want of watchfulness, to the cause of God, in ourselves and in others, may be, so far as we are concerned, irreparable. We should watch when we are resting; for Satan is busy while we rest. No bolts and bars, no chancel gates, no cloister can shut him out. We should watch when we are in company. The heavenly mind must be kept up, even in business. The conscious presence of God should never leave us. If we cease watching we take harm. The soul needs winding up always, for it is apt to run down, and to contract somewhat of spiritual deadness from necessary duties and business.

The need for watchfulness is the more imperative on account of the tendency to sleep, which always prevails in the Church of God. When David's heart was right with God, he was watchful; but ever so strong a man as he—a "man after God's own heart"—was overcome by slothfulness, and neglecting to watch he fell into the enemy's power. When Israel, after their deliverance from Egypt, fell into idolatry and worshipped the golden calf; they had ceased to watch; indeed, they had left God's service altogether, and gone over to the enemy. The disciples were sadly deficient in this grace when they slept in the Garden of Gethsemane, unable to watch even one hour with the Lord Jesus. But Satan took care that Judas did not sleep. God keeps watch over our secret sins, and our secret fears. When Jacob was afraid of Esau on his return from Laban, he spent the night in prayer to God, and the ever-wakeful and watchful God answered and blest him. God is ever watching us. He takes account of our slothfulness or