

nial visitation on Monday at St. Luke's Church, Liverpool. In his charge to the clergy his Lordship referred to the fact that "at the present time the services of our Church are made a subject of much discussion. Some persons object that our ordinary Sunday service is too long; others are desirous of introducing alterations into the substance of the Liturgy itself." After expressing his own feelings that the ordinary combinations in our morning service does not appear too long, assuming that it is read solemnly and reverently, his Lordship proceeds to say that, "if there is any real cause for shortening its duration, I should myself, if engaged in parochial duties, seek to meet the exigency by confining my sermons within narrower limits, particularly on the Sundays when the Sacrament of the Lord's supper is administered. I do not say this to disparage the value of preaching. I do not say it in forgetfulness of the efficiency with which you yourselves perform this important part of your office; but I would say that hurrying through the service of the Prayer Book is a thing not to be excused on any ground—perhaps least of all on the ground that we are thereby gaining an extension of time for our own discourses. In cases where three services have been established on the Sunday, the Bishop admits that "some practical inconvenience may be found to arise from the length of the customary morning service, and from the repetition of the same evening service twice. If this be so, one obvious mode of removing the inconvenience might be by a separation of the threefold morning service, so as to have in the first place the morning prayer alone, then the Litany and the Communion together, and lastly, the evening service in its proper place, with a sermon at each of the services if the minister has an assistant curate to take part of this succession of duties; for I think it is too much in ordinary cases to expect that one clergyman, unassisted, can long continue to bear such a pressure of duty and to be really efficient in its performance. I mention this expedient not from any wish to see it adopted, but because, if the Sunday morning service is in any case to be shortened, this might be better done by some internal regulation of the Church itself than by an interposition of the Legislature. It is not that I shrink from any contact with the Legislature when the occasion requires it, but I think that where questions affecting the discipline and administration of the Church can be lawfully settled by its own internal authority, this method is the wisest and the best. Even so I should deprecate any deviation from the settled practice in my own diocese, unless it had previously received a general sanction or permission from the archbishops and bishops collectively. Were this sanction even obtained, I should deprecate any deviation unless it were generally acceptable to the regular congregation of the church." The Bishop then proceeds to offer some remarks on "the wish that has been manifested in some quarters for alterations in the substance of the liturgy. Among the principal particulars in which, as I understand, such alterations are desired, are the services relating to the sacraments and to the burial of the dead, the forms of absolution and of ordination, and the use of the Athanasian Creed. Alterations in these particulars could only be made by the joint concurrence of the Convocation of the Church and the Legislature of the realm. Every one must see with what embarrassments such a course might be beset; what a latitude of discussion might be opened in the popular branch of the Legislature, and what a disruption might possibly ensue within the Church itself." His Lordship alludes the case of the American Church as an example that a desire for change to some extent may not be inconsistent with a sincere fidelity to the essential

doctrines which our own Church professes, and which she can never cease to profess without ceasing to be herself; but while expressing these sentiments, he recalls to their minds "the risk attending any attempts at change; the danger to the peace of the Church; the excitement, the agitation, the contention that would ensue. Even if the attempt was not abortive, even if changes were made to satisfy some, there is reason to fear that they would dissatisfy others, and might produce disunion and secession. All the clergy of our Church have declared their unfeigned assent and consent to the liturgy as it stands. Can we be equally sure that they would all accept it with the same unanimity when it had been altered?" In answering the question, "Is the case such as to demand any change?" his Lordship says, "With respect indeed to the general tenor of our Sunday service, I am not aware that any exception is taken to it, or any indulgence of construction required. It is about other parts of the liturgy that difficulties have been raised. In particular, we know that the baptismal service has been the occasion of much controversy: I hope I shall not offend any one if I add controversy arising, in my opinion, to a very great extent, from what creates so many controversies and renders any solution of them hopeless,—I mean the use of the same words in different senses. However this may be, I think the practical difficulty of the case is very much removed, if not altogether removed, by the latitude of construction which on this point has long been tacitly recognized in our Church, and has recently been confirmed by the authority of a judicial decision." Without entering into any examination of the parts of the liturgy to which exception has been taken, his lordship refers to the solemn form of words used in the ordination of priests,—"whose sins thou dost forgive, they are forgiven," and "whose sins thou dost retain they are retained," which his Lordship says must only be understood in a limited sense. He also touched upon the subject of the confession of sins. Besides the general confession, the Liturgy in two passages recognizes a more special confession, but remarks, "It is limited in both instances to cases where the individual is disturbed in his conscience, and feels a burden and a doubt in his mind, and needs and seeks counsel and comfort. But with the exception of these particular and extreme cases, our Church does not point to any special confession of sin to be made by penitents to the minister; much less does our Church warrant inquisitorial interrogatories to be addressed by the minister to the penitents; least of all interrogations from which the sensitiveness of female delicacy shrinks, against which the instinct of manly spirit rebels. Tell penitents to confess their sin, but to confess it unto God, unto their Heavenly Father, who heareth in secret, and who, when he heareth, will forgive. Tell them to confess their sin to Christ, whose ear is ever open to hear their cry—to hear it with all the tenderness of human sympathy, with all the saving grace of a Divine Redeemer's love, with all the prevailing efficacy of a Divine advocate's intercession." On the subject of church-rates, the Bishop says,—"If the question were only one of theory and abstract reasoning, I should not hesitate to avow my own opinion that there is nothing unjust or oppressive, no real grievance, in the legal system of our church rates. I think that the Church, as a national institution, is entitled to a continuance of this measure of national support. Even those who in the free exercise of their religious liberty, have separated themselves from its membership, yet share in the general benefits which it produces on the community at large; they acquired their property with the full knowledge of this liability

being attached to it. No principle of toleration is infringed; no right of private judgment is restrained; every individual is free, as he ought to be free, to follow the dictates of his own conscience as to the form of worship which he will adopt and the religious body to which he will join himself. The only control over him is this, that he is required to bear his part in such reasonable expenditure as the majority of his parish may recognize to be necessary for upholding their church, in which all the inhabitants, he among the rest, can claim, and do possess an interest." But admitting the difficulty of carrying the theory of the law into practice systematically and universally, he says, "The recent demonstrations of opinion in the House of Commons still more distinctly prepare us to expect that the present system of church-rates, as it now still exists by law, will not long remain unchanged. The bill that was introduced last session into that house and read a second time proposed the abolition of church-rates absolutely and unconditionally. But some who voted in the majority for the second reading did so not from a desire that the bill should be finally passed in that form, but with the hope that in committee, conditions might be introduced and the bill be so altered as not to extinguish church-rates without providing, to some extent, a substitute for them. It is, I think, much to be wished that some fair substitute could be devised, or some reasonable modification made in the existing law. But desirable as such a measure may be, we cannot conceal from ourselves the difficulties that there are in passing any definite scheme for this purpose. I will only give one instance by way of illustration. A scheme has, I believe, been suggested that every person who will make a formal declaration of his being a Dissenter shall thereby be exempted from the payment of church-rates, and, by parity of reason, excluded from any right to take part in the proceedings of the vestry. Such an arrangement would, no doubt, remove one practical difficulty, because none could then complain of having to contribute to the maintenance of more than their own place of worship. But while I frankly admit this I must own that I could not reconcile myself to the scheme without some reluctance. I think it would make a more positive, a more exclusive, a more permanent line of demarcation between the members of our Church and the various denominations of Protestant Dissenters than has hitherto existed. It would act as a kind of registration, arraying men in separate if not hostile ranks, from which afterwards they could not, without the exercise of much moral courage, summon up resolution to recede."

VISIT TO JAPAN.

We think the following letter will interest those of our readers who desire that missions should be established in Japan. The *New York Church Journal*, to which we are indebted for it, takes it from the *New York Herald*.

United States Steamer Powhattan, Singapore, March 12, 1869.

As the introduction of Christianity for the second time into Japan is without question the most important undertaking of the age, I wish to show the shoals and the quicksands which exist in the way of its execution.

The churches which are preparing to take advantage of it are undoubtedly sincere in their wishes for the propagation of the Gospel of Christ; but if the latter gather up hurriedly a score or more of missionaries and pack them off to Japan, as they would to a newly-discovered island of savages, they will do more to retard their object than the subsequent efforts of years will wipe away. I have but lately returned from Japan,