

next Sunday contains an awful warning against unordained men taking upon themselves to minister before God, while the Gospel contains the actual commission granted to the Christian priest, which form of words has always, everywhere, been used by the Catholic Church. The Gospel for the second Sunday speaks of the Good Shepherd and the hireling, and of the sheep who are under the hireling being scattered by the wolf, and not kept in the one fold. The connection between the Gospels for the first and second Sundays would seem to be this,—that there are men authorized by God, acting in His Name, and also men acting without God's authority and in their own name: while the Gospel for the third Sunday, as compared with the first and second, shows us that our Lord told His Church of the time when, though He should in the body be away from them, yet that in Spirit He would be present with them. As if He should say "ye have sorrow now," (at my departure,) but after the Comforter has descended upon you, "I will see you again" (that is spiritually and invisibly in the sacraments,) "and your heart shall rejoice, and your joy no man taketh from you." The fourth Sunday speaks plainly of that "gift for men," the abiding presence of the Holy Ghost, without which the Church, its promises, its sacraments, would have been what many alas! would try to make them, a body without a soul, an outward visible

sign without an inward spiritual grace.

This, then, would seem to be the general aim of the teaching of this season. The setting before us "the things pertaining to the kingdom of God," it is of the Christian Church, and our duty as members of it. "The Church" is not a sect of man's designing, or a mere "denomination" springing out of man's opinion or fancy, or exaggeration of truth; but it is an institution of GOD, formed for the regeneration of mankind, visible to the eyes of men, having its faith, its sacraments, and its duly ordained clergy; and to bring this before us seems to be one object of the proper scriptures for Easter-tide. In connection, then, with this, we must think of the commissioned ministers and stewards of Christ's Church; the dangers of unauthorized ministers; the transmission of authority by regular succession; the necessity of the Christian sacraments; and the gift and grace and comfort of the Holy Ghost. Who alone gives life to the whole Christian scheme. There are no doubt other gifts for men which the Lord has purchased by His death, and obtained from heaven, and bestowed upon each one of us; but this restoration of His presence to His people, in and through the means of grace in His Church, is the gift from on High, for which preparation had been made, and which will continue for the exaltation and salvation of men until the end of the world. A.

THE SPIRITS IN PRISON.

"By which also He went and preached unto the spirits in prison."—I. St. Peter, iii. 19.
(Epistle for Easter Eve.)

WHERE was the soul of our blessed Lord on this day? We know that his body was laid in the tomb in the garden, and that the stone which covered the mouth of the tomb was sealed up, for safety. But where was His soul? The creed says "He descended into hell." St. Peter tells us that David 'spake of the resurrection of Christ, that his soul was not left in hell, neither his flesh did see corruption." But what place is this *hell* spoken of in the psalm and in the creed? It is the place of the departed, the unseen world, the abode of the of the spirits of the dead. Perhaps it

would be better if we had a different word in the English language for this place, for "hell" often means the place of torment; while in the original language the place of torment, and the hell in the Psalm and in the Creed, are called by quite different names. If we did not know this, we might be very much perplexed to understand how our Lord could tell the penitent thief on the cross that he should be with him that day in "Paradise," "paradise" and "hell" sound so very opposite to us. When, however, we know that the "hell" into which our Lord descended was not the place of torment, but the place of departed