The Church.

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CHARGE

Of His Lordship the Bishop of Montreal, to the Clergy of the Diocese of Quebec, delivered at Christ Church, Montreal, at the Triennial Visitation, in 1848.

(*Concluded.*)

What, then, is our commission as preachers of the Gospel? *Go ye into all the world and preach the Gospel to every creature: go ye and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost, teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you.* This commission to evangelise the world, which accomplishes its object by being so distributed in different hands, through the wisdom of him who *divideth to every man severally as he will*, as to reach all times and places, and in which we have our part and proportion, within the sphere respectively assigned to us,—comprehends, we see, the administration of the ordinances of Christ and the training of the people in whatever he has instituted or made matter of instruction: but looking at it in that more confined view in which it relates to *preaching*, in the *common* acceptation of the term, how important, how pregnant with momentous consequences, how awfully responsible is the task of the preacher!—And what is to be his prominent and primary object? what is to be his grand and leading theme? I will premise that I am not excluding direct *practical* instruction: I insist upon it: I hold the neglect of it to be alike *un*-evangelical and of mischievous consequences, and I believe that to be truly faithful, a minister must so preach as will, in many places, subject him to the charge of not preaching the Gospel, as Scott, (although his views are, in some instances, marked with no faint tinge of dissent,) has well observed that if *Christ* were now upon earth, there are many quarters in which he would be called a *legal preacher*:—But, this being understood, what, I ask, is to be the prominent and primary object, what is to be the grand and leading theme of the christian preacher? what is to be the pervading vein which is to run through all his teaching of every kind? Is it not to *magnify the name of the Lord Jesus?* to act as the *ambassador of Christ, beseeching* men *in Christ's stead, to be reconciled to God? to testify the Gospel of the Grace of God? to preach peace by Jesus Christ? to preach the unsearchable riches of Christ? to know nothing*, comparatively, among the hearers, *but Jesus Christ and him crucified? to preach Christ crucified* as *the power of God and the wisdom of God?*—We have to deal with men, in the execution of our message, not as righteous, but as sinners whom we are to call to repentance; as spiritually sick to whom we are to be the instruments of applying the remedies of the physician who alone has power to heal and to save,—the remedy of his blood to wash them clean from the leprosy of their guilt, and the remedy of his Spirit to work in them *repentance unto life*, to *give them a new heart and a new spirit*, to *strengthen them with might in the inner man*, to fill them *with peace and joy in believing*, and to cause them *to bring forth the fruits of righteousness which are by Jesus Christ, unto the glory and praise of God.*—It is very true that we do not address baptized attendants upon the christian ministry as if they were Heathens, we do not address them (at least we commit a great mistake if we do,) as if they had never *heard* all these things, but we have to address a vast proportion of the company of professed christian worshippers, as if they had never *felt and applied* them; as if, with reference to any home-felt and personal application on their own part, of the glorious and tremendous truths which we proclaim, we were *bringing certain strange things to their ears.*—We do not address them (at least we are very wrong and greatly fly in the face of our own Articles if we do,) as if they had never been made partakers of the privileges of the covenant, but we must address them as if they had not improved their privileges, as if they were not following up their obligations; as if they were not, as a matter of course, still *remaining*, according to the language of the baptismal Office, *in the number of the faithful and elect children of God*; as if, although they are *of Israel*, they were not *Israelites indeed.*

This high ground of Gospel truth is a ground which we must unflinchingly, unswervingly keep—nothing, if we would share in the hopes of the Apostle that nothing should divide him from Christ, nothing must divide us from it, in life or in death: we must hold our followers here and carry, always in harmony with these views of Religion, our monitions and exhortations, both private and public, as well to the sick as to the whole,—taking heed at the same time that we are EXAMPLES, *the believers in word, in conversation, in charity, in spirit, in faith, in purity.* Unless we are faithful, earnest, exemplary, heavenly-minded, devoted ministers of Christ, it is to very little purpose either to charge upon men the doctrines of Grace or to vaunt the Apostolicity of our Communion. Alas! when we all look at our deficiencies and compare ourselves with the exalted standard which is proposed to us,*—if there be one who has the task allotted to him of charging his brethren, can he fail to find an echo in his own bosom to the words of St. Bernard, *Non quòd ego ista faciam dico: sed quòd facere vellem et non fecisse pœnitet et non facere piget.*†

Nevertheless, this is not all. To sound the trumpet of good tidings and to carry on the direct warfare against the devil, the world and the flesh, in teaching and in personal example, is not all. We should desire, with Chillingworth, to have no enemies but the devil and sin. But so it cannot be. There are errors to be combatted: there are differences to be dealt with, within and without; there is a swarm of prejudices, misconceptions and misrepresentations perpetually to be beaten off, and perpetually returning to the attack: there is a side to be chosen and a stand to be maintained upon certain points which are made the subject of question and the test of party; there is a system and train of prescribed ordinances to be carried out, in all patience, watchfulness, fidelity and wisdom, *for the edifying of the body of Christ*,—a series of acts laid down, in which we are to help on the individual souls committed to us, step by step and stage after stage, in their journey, and in none can we say that *there is neither adversary nor evil occurrent:* there are many subordinate features of our system to be defended and upheld: there is the plausible fallacy to be encountered that because they are of subordinate importance they are, therefore, of none.

With reference, indeed, to points upon which men differ within the Church itself, there are some, and these I shall first touch upon, which are considered, by common understanding, as open questions, in relation to which the Bishop, consequently, cannot assume a dictatorial tone nor insist upon this course or upon that; but upon which, I do not know that it is interdicted to him to state his own opinion upon an occasion like the present, however it may happen to conflict with that of persons entitled to his utmost respect—but at least he may offer advice upon the *manner* in which those who think with him, should sustain the side which they have embraced. In fact, he, perhaps, owes it to his Clergy, while he continues to preserve a marked line of proceeding in any question which divides the Church, to put them in possession of his reasons for doing so, and they, correspondently, owe the same kind of explanations to their people.

I think, then, that with reference, for example, to the Bible Society,—that dazzling institution which undeniably has effected extensive good,—we should take care to counteract any such impressions as that if we decline to support this Society, it is because we are determined to keep up old prejudices and party spirit; because we are indifferent, if not hostile to the free circulation of the word of God; because we want to substitute human authority for divine; or because we are afraid of the effect of an unfettered recourse, to the Scriptures, upon the set of principles to which we are attached. We ought not, in the jealousy which we should manifest over every thing which can effect the estimation, and, consequently the profitableness of our ministry, to be content with feeling that we have good grounds for what we do, and so let men think and say what they choose: we ought to make it understood, (that is, so far as it is left in our power to do so, for we know, unhappily, that there are parties who do not choose to understand us, and will not let us be understood any where, if they can help it,)—we ought to make it understood that, whether we are right or wrong in declining to support the Bible Society, we do not decline upon any such grounds whatever, as these. To me, I do confess that it has always appeared a great fallacy to say that the Bible Society rests simply upon the common acknowledgment of the Bible. It appears to me rather to rest upon an assumption that God has provided nothing else but the Bible for the work of religion upon earth; that *there* is the Bible, and every man is to make what he can of it, and that is the way in which the Christian Faith is to be propagated over the world. Whereas in the Bible itself, we find that there are sacraments ordained and a ministry constituted, and here the questions present themselves *in limine*, who is to dispense those sacraments? and where and what is that ministry? If it be really not agreeable, if it be most plainly in opposition to what we find in the Bible, that there should be an infinite diversity of christian teaching, and an unrestricted multiplication of sects, and a still accumulating creation *ad libitum* of new ministries, without any necessity of tracing up their title to a distinct and authenticated source;*—if, as we believe, there be no authority, which can be produced from the Bible to shew that, provided men agree (supposing *that, argumenti gratiâ*, to be *possible*,) upon a certain well understood standard of essentials, all these divisions and subdivisions and varieties and irregular formations, in some of which the sacraments are dropped out or altered in their application,—are to be regarded as collectively making up the proper idea and exhibition of the Christian Church—then I apprehend that we may warrantably stand aloof from any amalgamation with so heterogeneous a mass, and may be permitted calmly and charitably to state that, by taking our place, as one among many, in the aggregation of sects, we should conceive the act to imply (and surely it is difficult to escape from such a view of the question,) a recognition of what we believe that the Bible does not teach, and to be equivalent to giving in our adhesion to a system of operations different from that by which the Apostles planted the Faith among the nations. We conceive that we should commit ourselves to a vast deal more than merely assisting in the circulation of the Scriptures,—for, if this were all, we would be behind none in our desire to promote the work. While we unreservedly and cordially subscribe to the language of our own Articles, Homilies, and Ordination service, respecting the sufficiency of holy Scripture alone, for the basis of all saving truth, we conceive it to be a wholly untenable ground to take up, that popular idea—an idea often expressed by those who are themselves specially anxious to give a strong extraneous bias to the readers of Scripture, but expressed just in such a manner, that men, to be commonly consistent, ought to give to their unlettered brethren the Bible in the original tongues, and to tell them that they want no Church nor Ministry to translate it, for they have the promise that *they shall be all taught of God*, and they must not lean upon man. In fact, it is not unfrequently seen that, under the colour of *standing fast in the liberty wherewith Christ has made us free* and *calling no man our father or master on earth*, appeals are too unscrupulously made to the lurking old Adam in the bosom of man, and his natural pride and impatience of restraint are the more dangerously fostered, because the occasion is ministered to him, of clothing them with the semblance of a certain spiritual enlargement and elevation of mind and a conscientious and manly assertion of his christian birthright.

These remarks apply generally to all those mixed operations in Religion or religious education, in which the Church loses her distinctive place and character, and, by so many degrees, sinks in one great element of her efficiency in the world, while other parties who have nothing to lose of the same kind, are naturally rejoiced to bring her down to their own level, and perfectly appreciate their advantage in doing so.—They apply also to all those occasions of daily occurrence, in which men flatter one another with the persuasion that they really are liberal and enlightened, if they attach no importance to differences in Religion and can fluently run off certain phrases respecting denominational preferences and sectarian views, under which term they would, by a singular inversion, comprehend the consistent preservation of Church-principles and the conscientious and well-examined maintenance, with no breach whatever of charitable feeling, of the line of distinction between the Church and Sectarianism properly so called.† I am happy to believe that it is not necessary for me to spend much labour in insisting or enlarging upon notions at once so shallow and so perilous as those which I am here combating: but as they prevail very extensively in the world and are perfectly accommodated to the spirit of the world and are echoed right and left by the daily press,—with no small share of odium thrown upon those who entertain contrary sentiments, we have here a duty to perform in endeavouring to correct this tendency in that portion of the public mind which is accessible to our influence, and seeking to infuse sounder principles, and habits of thinking of less hurtful consequence. Many most sincere Christians are led into errors upon these points in which they stand upon common ground with the worldling and the sceptic who are indifferent to all religion, and who, while the *God of this world* hath *blinded their eyes* and hidden from them the *light of the Gospel*, look down from an imaginary elevation, upon the proceedings of those who *earnestly contend for the faith once delivered to the Saints*, as upon a squabble of mere party zealots. Few, very few men know how to preserve a clear and discriminative line in reasoning and in forming their conclusions upon questions, great or small, which are agitated in the world; and thus many are seen to confound the principles of toleration with the want of all principle attaching to latitudinarianism; many are led to think that *because* persecution and compulsion in Religion are equally unchristian and unwise, *therefore*, (although some will impose one limitation and some another upon such a principle,) all forms which religious faith may assume, are equally to be esteemed, encouraged and supported. Whereas, in point of fact, an idea like this, if properly examined, will be found only to begin and end in infidelity.—There is something plausible, something soothing to our self-love—something which flatters the mind of man with a false idea of its own expansiveness and superiority, in the sentiment which we find embodied in the standard poetry of our language, and which corresponds very closely with language often used by zealous believers, with little suspicion of its real ultimate tendency, to express their views of liberality and love,—

> "For modes of faith let graceless zealots fight,
> His can't be wrong whose life is in the right."

a statement of the case, which, in a sense somewhat different from that intended by the poet, is correct; because a truly christian life would be the evidence of a true faith and is not to be found apart from it among men—but, according to the notion meant to be conveyed,* it is only by a few steps removed from the language of the same poet, in his well-known universal prayer,—

> "Father of all, in every age
> And every clime adored,
> By saint, by savage, or by sage,
> Jehovah, Jove or Lord."

and what christian can fail immediately to perceive the character of infidelity stamped upon these lines, in which the idea of a real Revelation from God as distinguished from the inventions of men in Religion, is plainly, although inferentially, excluded and the filthy abominations and revolting cruelties of heathen superstition, whether among the great and polished nations of historical renown, or the various shades of barbarism and semi-barbarism which develope themselves in different branches of the human family, are placed upon a par with the *grace and truth* which *came by Jesus Christ.*

What the world calls liberality, therefore, is something which, as the commissioned guardians of God's eternal truth and the appointed dispensers of those remedies which he has provided against the curse and venom of sin, we should at least be cautious in adopting. We ought to consider, if we open one barrier after another what we are doing, and where, in other hands to which it must pass, it is likely to stop. We must evidently draw a line somewhere, even with reference to those who profess and call themselves Christians, in our recognition of what is safe and solid in Christianity, and if we conscientiously see reason to narrow the circle more than our dispositions would prompt us to desire, we must not be afraid of the [illegible] to narrow it more than is judged necessary by others who are our own brethren in the ministry, we must be content to bear the pain caused to our feelings by that difference—but we shall do well, if we cannot convince them that we are right, at least to satisfy them that we act from honest and not unexamined conviction ourselves.

The same remark is appropriate in the question respecting Temperance Societies. Very hard things are sometimes said of our Clergy because, in the vast majority of instances, they do not unite with these associations; and these hard things are not likely to be softened by our seeming quietly to acquiesce in the imputation, as if we could not rebut it, that we do not choose to take our part in the movement, because we do not choose to forego our own indulgence. Still less are they likely to be softened by our railing against the Temperance Societies, or denying that they have effected any good, or venting mere sarcasm and ridicule against these institutions, of which very excellent men among our own clergy, and more of the same stamp among the Episcopal Clergy of the United States are members and champions. I believe there may be cases in which, upon the Apostolic principle that *it is good neither to eat flesh nor to drink wine, nor anything whereby thy brother stumbleth, or is offended, or is made weak*, it may be right for the Clergy, if no obstacle be found in the effect upon their health, to adopt the rule of the Temperance Societies in their own personal practice which, of course, does not imply that they must join in membership. But there are other cases in which, upon the very same principle, and in the right and commendable exercise of the wisdom of the serpent they will avoid, by any needless austerity and rigour, to damage the influence which they possess for good; and, with a single eye to the glory of God, the good of the Church, and the good of souls, will rather expose themselves to be, in some quarters, called *wine-bibbers*, with their divine master, than to be branded in other quarters as fanatics, for following, in this point the discipline of the Baptist. In taking such a course, however, upon these or other grounds, they ought to be prepared to justify it; and men ought to know what their grounds are. Men who do not know it, *ought* to know that there are a great number of holy and exemplary persons who decline connection with the Temperance Societies, and that both clergymen and laymen, far from being chargeable, on this account, with a tenacity of personal comfort and indulgence, a charge which is the precise echo of that which is brought against the marriage of the Clergy, by the champions of Rome, may have strictly conscientious scruples respecting, not only the expediency, but the very lawfulness of these Societies. They may conceive that what they have to teach mankind by precept and example, is to know, in all points, how to *use this world as not abusing it*, how to practise discretion and self-control without renouncing the objects which afford exercise to those qualities; how to partake of the *good creatures* and gifts of God, of which wine having the power of intoxication is manifestly represented in the bible as one, without passing the bounds befitting a follower of Christ. They may conceive that it is wrong and of hurtful consequence, as a *general* principle, to impose upon men the necessity of forswearing what, if formed in the school of Christ, they ought to know how to make use of, and apply it to its proper purpose, in moderation; such *moderation* being a pervading maxim of the life of faith. They may urge that the love of money is said to be the root of all evil; yet we do not teach men that the *use* of money must be *extirpated*, we teach them to use it rightly and beneficially. They may view with distrust and alarm which ought not to be lightly treated, the inroads of a system which, professing to effect a vast moral renovation among mankind, and, in a manner, to regenerate them by masses, without making the Gospel its instrument either directly and exclusively or by necessary concomitancy, opens a door to more extensive and more serious consequences than can, at the moment, be discerned. They may entertain very decided objections, which cannot be justly resolved into mere prejudiced or interested opposition, to the exaction of pledges to *man*, to a particular effect, which effect if it be really nothing more than the observance of *Temperance*, has been long before comprehended in the pledges given to God himself by every baptized person who by subsequent acts has recognized his baptism; or, if it be something more than the temperance respecting which St. Paul reasoned before Felix, then outgoes the demands of the Gospel and seems to exalt another standard above it. They may judge that the first display of his miraculous power which the Lord Jesus was pleased to make upon earth, appears to be set in a questionable light by the language held at Temperance meetings, and in Temperance publications. They may be strongly inclined to associate with tendencies to error in religion, quite unsuspected by men who, from the best motives are eager advocates of what is called *the Temperance movement and the Temperance cause*, proceedings which have something evidently in common with those of certain authors of schism and propagators of false opinions in the early Church who fulfilled the prophetic descriptions* at which I have already glanced, and of whom the following account is given by the learned and accurate Bingham, in his Antiquities of the Christian Church:—

"Many Hereticks, such as the Manichees, Priscillianists and others, pretended to be more spiritual and refined, because they abstained from wine and flesh as things unlawful and unclean; and upon this score censured the Church as impure and carnal, for allowing men in the just and moderate use of them. If any Clergymen, therefore, so far complied with Hereticks, as either in their judgment to approve their errors, or in their practice by an *Universal Abstinence*,"—(observe the expression)—"to give suspicion of their siding with them, they made themselves obnoxious to the highest censures. The Apostolical Canons order, that if any Bishop, Presbyter, or Deacon, or any other Clerk, abstain from marriage, flesh, or wine, not for exercise but abhorrence; forgetting that God made all things very good, and created man male and female, and speaking evil of the workmanship of God; unless he correct his error, he shall be deposed, and cast out of the Church."

I shall simply add, upon the subject of Temperance Societies, that if, upon grounds like these, we feel it our duty to stand apart from them, we must remember that we stand apart from a movement which, as there is reason to believe, sweeps in many religious teachers by the mere force of its popularity; which is caught at, among them, as an engine of influence to further particular interests and designs; and which is applauded and countenanced by many laymen who are sufficiently removed from all intention of joining these Societies themselves or practising their rules; and that we are consequently called upon in a powerful way to expect by the course which we have taken. We have here an additional incentive to that ceaseless circumspection which should prompt us, in our love to the cause committed to us, to take heed that the adversary shall have no evil thing to say of us; and to watchfulness over ourselves, in constant recourse, by prayer, to the succours of the Divine Spirit, which is necessary to our exhibiting the devotedness to our work, the holiness of life, the humility of temper, and the religious subjection of the flesh to the spirit, which should eminently characterize the *man of God*, and without which he cannot be worthy of the name; without which he will only hurt the Church, by any high-toned assertion of her principles.

So far with respect to some examples of what are generally admitted to be open questions in the Church. But there are other points in which liberties have been assumed and deviations have been practised and defended, wholly incapable of being justified upon any sound and safe principles whatever, and irreconcilable with our obligations as Clergymen of the Church of England. I shall not repeat here what I have felt myself called upon to say upon former occasions respecting those views and leanings of which the depreciation of the word of God, as the guide of man,† is one dangerous feature, and of which the extreme development has been the attempt actually to force,—*ut Serpentes avibus geminentur, tigribus agni*,—the Anglican Confession of Faith into an accordance with the decrees of the Council of Trent. It is not at all necessary, I am happy to persuade myself, that upon points of this nature, I, in this Diocese, should come back again and again to the charge. I should certainly feel it my duty to do so, if I were to see in our horizon, indications of the danger here in question. Others, so predisposed, may possibly descry it; for it has always and every where been found that to raise the cry of approximation to Rome, however utterly causeless and unjust, and even opposite to the fact, will serve the purpose of blinding the eyes of men against a discernment of the reality of the case, by the ready use of a word of charm which, in a manner, unites the winds and at once envelops the whole ground of discussion in thickening clouds of dust. Such a practice, therefore, is much too tempting and too easy, to admit of the expectation that it can be over looked by parties openly or covertly opposed to what the Church of England truly is—parties possessed by the burning and irrepressible love of controversy, or anxious to maintain some particular views in which the Church, rightly and fairly regarded, stands much in their way, or animated by a latent desire, natural to the human heart, to pull down constituted authority and to substitute an influence over the minds of men, in the wielding of which they can be personally made prominent. And, therefore, the ready and convenient alarm about Rome will be insinuated or declared. Yet, in honest reality, the correctives which we of the Clergy have occasion, so far as may be permitted to us, to administer to the prevailing tone and tendency of public sentiment, in Church matters, in this Diocese,—far from being applied to check an over-done spirit of Churchmanship, an over-strained appreciation of cutward ordinances, an excessive veneration for order, for authority, for unity and co-herence, for maintenance of rule, for love of ancient usage, and proper ecclesiastical effect in the arrangements of the house of God,—ought precisely to be calculated to work in an opposite manner, for I almost think that our people, taken as a whole, are behind all the world at this day, in the favourable change which has passed over the Church of England in a proper regard to all the points just indicated as capable of being carried to an extreme; a regard which, if kept within due bounds, is more closely interwoven than many persons will consent to believe, with her zeal and with her efficiency, in the exalted task to which she is called; with the prospects of her advantageously recommending the truth as it is in Jesus,—(in magnifying the native power of which, it is quite a mistake to exclude the effect of auxiliary and subordinate influences,)—to the world of nominal believers, to the classes of men in christian lands who look with a disdainful or doubting eye either upon the Faith itself or upon our profession of it, to the blinded idolater of Paganism and to the dimly seeing disciple, in the east or in the west, of any of the debased and superstitious forms of Christianity.

The dereliction of Church principles, then in another direction from that of assimilation to the standard of Rome; although I do not anticipate among my brethren of the Clergy, the prevalence of any other than an acquiescing sentiment in what I am about to say,—may challenge some few brief remarks. Men who are uninformed upon the subject with which they undertake to deal, charge us with Popery or Tractarianism, by which they mean a modification of Popery, if we uphold the essential difference between our Church and any form of dissent, the Apostolic succession of our Bishops, the legitimate application of the term Regeneration to the performance of baptism, the efficacy of the Sacraments, if rightly received, as vehicles of grace, the expediency of the frequent iteration—the daily iteration of it can be fairly established and maintained—of divine service; the solicitous provision made for reverential and solemn and touching effect in the worship of God, in the points of Architecture, Church-music, the whole conduct of our liturgical performances, the whole spirit of our regulations established *for the work of the service in the house of the Lord.* If there are men who conscientiously oppose us in these points, let them oppose us; and if they cannot be convinced that they are mistaken in doing so, let them remain in their opinion—only do not let them say that they are attached to the system of the Church of England—that they are, in heart and in affection and in judgment members of that Church; for in every single point which has been enumerated, I have stated what is distinctly and prominently, plainly, and undeniably characteristic of that Church. If they agree with us, as many bodies of Dissenters do, in some leading points of doctrine, that will not make them Church of England men, if they dissent from us in the points here in question, even if these did not, as they do, involve points of doctrine; the very utmost that can be then said is, that they are only partially Dissenters, but certainly Dissenters to a sufficient extent to fall within the category of Dissent.

I shall, however, forbear from any further remarks, except upon one of these points. I mean the use of the word *Regeneration* as applied to Baptism. I say *as applied to Baptism*, for if any man who cordially consents to such an application of it yet considers that it may also bear an application to an ulterior change which, alas! in a vast proportion of baptized subjects, is too evidently needed—with him, I am not prepared to maintain that we have a right absolutely to quarrel, provided he carefully guard his use of the word, (although we might prefer another ourselves,) against doing any prejudice to views exhibited in the formularies of the Church, and against giving any encouragement to the establishment of certain tests of conversion, of which it is not unfrequently the effect to *make the heart of the righteous sad whom God hath not made sad, and to strengthen the hands of the wicked by promising him life.* I do think, my brethren that there Scripture relating to the baptism of adult recipients of the rite, containing expressions which it is not safe to apply, in an unqualified manner, to the case of infants. But with reference to those who would wholly disjoin Regeneration from baptism, who would forcibly put asunder what God hath joined together, the being *born of* WATER *and of the* SPIRIT, I would observe that they not only refuse to hear the voice of the early Church, and repudiate the distinct and positive declarations of the Church of England, conveyed partly in the form of solemn prayer to God himself, in her Offices of Baptism and Confirmation, her Catechism, Articles and Homilies, but openly desert the doctrines of the Reformation at large, and set themselves against the whole array of theologians who, in that crisis, digested into system the capital truths of the word of God. I may be permitted to state that I have examined fifteen Confessions of Faith of that date, drawn up in Latin, being a collection of the Confessions of Faith of the Reformed countries, including the British Isles; and that with one very obscure exception, I find them all employing the language of the Church of England, or language closely accordant with hers, with reference to regeneration and adoption in baptism. I also find Calvin in his Institutes distinctly admitting the same view of the case. I find it again in the baptismal Liturgy of the French Walloon Churches, a copy of which, published a century ago, is in my possession. I meet with it once more in the "Litanies of Baptism," in use among the Moravians or the United Brethren. And it has been pointed out to me by one of my own Clergy here present, that it appears in the celebrated Westminster Confession of Faith, drawn up by the Assembly of Divines, as also in their larger and shorter Catechisms which are incorporated with that Confession. Another, also here present, has furnished me with the copy of a hymn of which Charles Wesley was the author, prepared for the occasion of baptism in the Wesleyan body, in which the same sentiment is poetically expanded.

We are not bound by any of these authorities except our own Church. But it is useful to shew the error of those who suppose that, in this and in other points, the Clergy of the Church of England are speaking the language of the Church of Rome when, in point of fact, they are speaking that of their own Church and at the same time of the oracles, in many instances, of the very parties who bring the charge against them.

I believe that there are few greater mistakes, among the multitude of mistakes into which, through the infirmity of fallen nature, men are betrayed in matters of religion, than the mistake of supposing that, by maintaining the views of the Reformation upon this point, we are endangering vital and spiritual Religion, and teaching men blindly to rely upon the *opus operatum* of the Sacrament, as if the business of their salvation were done once for all. The prayer of the Church that the baptized child may *ever remain* in the number of God's faithful and elect children, and the charge to the Sponsors respecting its training, may, of themselves, suffice for an answer to such a supposition. It is, indeed a sad, although a very common error, in running away from formalism and superstition and the ascription of merit to ceremonial works, to run into the opposite extreme, and to hold it for an evidence of spirituality to depreciate the ordinances of the Faith, as well as the stated observances of the Church. And let us beware how we so dangerously tamper with words or rather so violently wrench them to our purpose, as to force an escape from the doctrine of the Church upon the point here in question, either in a broad and general view of the subject, or by recourse to the contingency of particular circumstances, such as faith or the want of it, in the Sponsors, upon which we may imagine the effect of the performance to depend. Such a notion as that at which in particular, I have here glanced, appears to be of close affinity with the Romish doctrine of *intention* on the part of the Priest—but in its consequences to be worse, inasmuch as the parties are multiplied upon whose state of mind, the efficacy of the Sacrament is presumed to depend; and one manifest consequence would be *this*, that we could not know with certainty who has been efficaciously, and, therefore, who has been *really* baptized, and who has not; and the baptism of some among ourselves here present, who are commissioned to baptize others might, for what we know, have been null. Can it be reasonably supposed for one instant, that baptism was solemnly instituted by Christ to leave men, with reference to the benefits attaching to it, upon a footing, so utterly precarious as this? Or can any man deliberately believe that such an idea was in the contemplation of the Church, when, for example, with a double affirmation of the indubitable nature of the truth so declared, she declares it "*certain* that children who are baptized, dying before they commit actual sin, are *undoubtedly* saved."

I have detained you too long, and must omit many points upon which I should have been glad to speak; but I have yet one or two intimations to make to you, which I will endeavour as briefly as possible to dispose of.

In my last Charge, I recommended that, where more could not as yet be done, in the way of observing the appointed holidays of the Church, the observance of three particular days (besides Christmas day and Good Friday, which I took it for granted to be observed everywhere without exception,) namely, of Ash-Wednesday with the use of the Commination-Service, Ascension-day and All Saints, should at once be introduced. And I stated my *reasons* for this recommendation. I now request my brethren to receive it in the light of an injunction, and I propose to make it the subject of enquiry in my periodical visitations.

The Law in this country is exceedingly defective upon the subject of the solemnization of Marriage, and the rules of the Church cannot be enforced respecting the performance of the ceremony in the House of God, without exposing our Clergy when they have to do with the more lax or ill-instructed adherents to our Communion, to the mortifying and most improper consequence of being told that the parties, although *both* professedly belonging to us, will have recourse elsewhere, which threat is accordingly carried into execution: unless, indeed, there is a delicacy or something better, to be found on the part of all the other ministers, who may be accessible, which forbids their interference with our discipline,—a view of the case which I am not aware to be entertained in any such quarter. It never can be our part, however, to yield up our own duty of conformity to the edifying and reverent practice of the Church in this behalf, because there may be some of our people who will not conform with us; and I wish it to be understood that our Clergy are not at liberty in this Diocese either to administer baptism to children in health or to celebrate marriage, in any other place than the Church, except when the parties reside at such distance from any Church as to be precluded from habitually attending it for public worship.

In the same manner, the great and mischievous facility which is given in other quarters, to the performance of marriage, whether from the evasion of the law or from the deficiency of its provisions, in relation to the due and full publication of Banns, must not, at whatever risk of consequences, be a precedent for us. It must be admitted, at the same time, that, there are particular cases, where, from the actual impossibility of carrying out the letter of the rule, in its application to the residents of remote settlements where service

Whatever may be the practice of other parties with reference to our people who, in the case of contracting matrimony, are impelled—either for the sake of escaping questions or procuring some little momentary accommodation to their worldly convenience, or avoiding the seriousness and holiness with which we desire to invest the occasion,—culpably to desert their own Church,—we must never regard this as a ground for making reprisals, if parties, neither of them belonging to us, from some personal offence taken or other difficulty in their own Communion, apply to our Clergy to be united together. It happens, occasionally, that two Roman Catholics, desirous of being united together, embarrassed by some of the multiplied rules of their Church or not choosing to submit to the exactions of their Clergy, apply to the Clergy of the Church of England. In such cases as these, I feel it to be my duty to direct that our ministrations should be decidedly refused. Our Clergy standing in no official relation to either of the parties, they have evidently and upon the face of the thing, no claim upon our service; and it never can possibly conduce to the dignity or credit of the Church of England, that she should be made the *mere convenience, for the occasion*, of persons who come to her, because they cannot or will not settle the matter with their own Clergy, as they by their rules, require. It cannot raise the estimation of our Clergy to have it said, not justly, indeed, but with a sufficient colour of reason, to be capable of harm, that such and such persons cannot get married in their own Communion, but let them go to the English Clergy and *they will marry anybody.* I will not allude to so unworthy an insinuation as that any of our body could be influenced by the thought of the fee.

The Law ought to provide that where both parties belong to one Communion, it is to the Clergyman or Minister of that Communion that they must have recourse; and there ought also to be legislative remedy interposed to correct the great irregularities which prevail in relation to the publication of Banns. The grievance of which we have to complain in the matter of Marriage Licenses is not encouraging with reference to any hope of amended legislation upon other points connected with the subject of marriage; but the agitation of the subject among our Clergy and well-affected followers, in communication with their representatives in legislature, may ultimately effect something in this behalf, and the subject should be kept alive.

I must press upon the Clergy the necessity of exact and scrupulous conformity to the law which, in this part of the Province, regulates the registration of baptisms, marriages and burials, and of *promptly completing* the entries of every such act. Habits of inattention in this particular, may be productive of most serious inconvenience and damage to parties engaged in settling questions of inheritance or division of property; and the legal penalties attaching to any omission or neglect in keeping the Register are of a severe kind.

There is also a voluntary record which I request the Clergy to keep and which I am desirous of having open for my own information, from time to time, if I am spared in the administration of the Diocese. I mean a record of persons who receive the rite of Confirmation, with a note attached, in each case, indicating the date at which they first join in the holy Communion.

The subject of a distinctive and properly ecclesiastical dress for the ordinary occasions of life, has been often discussed in this Diocese, and my own sentiments in relation to the *general principle* on the one hand, as well as to the expediency, on the other, of the adoption by an individual Diocese or by individual Clergymen, of distinctions not assumed by the Church of England elsewhere or by the body of Clergy within the Diocese itself,—have been sufficiently made known. I only revert to the subject for the sake of

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* We may trust that a remark made by the great Montesquieu upon the Christian Clergy, the Clergy of the Church of Rome being in his view, will at least, in the sense here in contemplation, never derive support from what is to be seen among ourselves. He speaks of the zeal of the Jesuits *pour une Religion qui humilie bien plus ceux qui l'écoutent que ceux qui la prêchent.*

† Medit.: cap. VI.

* What the early Church thought respecting the necessity of a regularly warranted title to the Ministry, (although even the Schismatics and heretics of that day never dreamt of such a deviation from original order as that of dispensing with Episcopal Church Government,) appears, among numberless other instances, from the following words of the martyr Bishop, Cyprian:—*Hi sunt qui se ultrò apud temerarios convenas, sine divinâ dispositione, præficiunt, qui se præpositos sine ullâ ordinationis lege constituunt, qui, nemine episcopatum dante, episcopi sibi nomen assumunt.* Tract: de simplic: prælat.

† Τους δὲ μερισμους φευγετε ὡς αρχὴν κακων says another martyr Bishop nearer to the Apostles, (Ignat: ad Smyrnæos) and he only echoes the language of St. Paul and of the Lord himself. I have in different former publications, endeavoured to indicate the mischiefs done to the cause of the Gospel, by the divided and disjointed state of the Protestant world, but so far as what I have said is at all known or remembered, it will be observed that I have always acknowledged the faults of our own party, and have been willing that we should bear our just share of the blame.

In going back to the fathers and applying their testimonies, to things around us, it is sad indeed to observe with what close and remarkable exactness the following passage from Lactantius, exposing the discordance to be witnessed among the ancient philosophers, as contrasted with the unity, in its own proper subsistence, of the Faith which they opposed, will now serve to describe the separations among Christians themselves, in their effect upon the cause of Christ in the world: *Sed cum inter se magnâ concertatione dissideant, secumque ipsi plerumque discordent, apparet eorum iter nequaquam esse directum: siquidém sibi quique proprias vias impresserunt, confusionemque magnam quærentibus veritatem reliquerunt.* Alas! that any enemy of the Faith, Mahometan or Pagan, Jew or Sceptic, should be able to turn against us a passage like this and to say—*Suo sibi hunc jugulo gladio!*

* I am well aware that the celebrated Bishop Warburton, both in the notes of his edition of the works of Pope and in a series of letters (which last, however, I have never seen,) published expressly for the object of defending the Essay on Man, has undertaken to vindicate his friend from the imputation of disparaging *Revelation* in these two lines. But what it is intended here to shew, is that these *latitudinarian* views in Religion, *tend to infidelity*, and that the sentiment of this distich is only a stepping-stone to the sentiment of the *Universal Prayer.*

It is rather a singular account of the Essay on Man, which is found in a biographical notice of Warburton—"It is universally believed that the author had, in the composition of it, adopted the philosophy of Lord Bolingbroke, whom, on this occasion, he had *followed as his guide, without understanding the tendency of his principles.*"

* Found in 1 Tim. iv. 1 sec.

† Προσεχειν δὲ τοις προφηταις ἐξαιρετως δε τῶ ευαγγελιῳ is the rule for counter-working mischievous influences in the Church, left to us by St. Ignatius, who will never be charged with not being sufficiently high in the assertion of Church authority.