

occasional communicants. This would place a Romanist in a worse predicament even than a dissenter. It was a handwriting on the wall which must have caused the future king some anxiety. His day was coming.

The foundations of the present magnificent St. Paul's Cathedral were laid in Sheldon's time. The old St. Paul's had been destroyed in the great fire of London which succeeded the plague. A new building, the conception of Sir Christopher Wren, was to replace it, and every pains was taken to make it a building worthy of the great nation and Church which it was to represent. How far this was carried out every visitor to it can testify.

But Archbishop Sheldon saw only the commencement of this great work. He died in 1677.

Hard things have been said of the Church of England during this stirring period, and the cry, chiefly, was that she was wanting in spiritual life, that was simply an outward form of religion convenient for offenders against the law of God in high places, that profligate characters were her support and her patrons, and many other things of a kindred nature. The loose morality of Charles II. and his court lent color to all this, but it is to be remembered that these things did not go on unrebuked by the Church, and that it was an age of as faithful preaching and writing as the Church had ever seen. Sheldon lived amongst splendid men throughout the three kingdoms, men who shed lustre upon the Church in their own day and for all time by their holy living and saintly words. Such men were Bryan Walton, editor of the Polyglott Bible; Thomas Fuller, the quaint historian; Joseph Hall, whose "Contemplations" give no uncertain sound; Archbishop Usher; John Pearson, author of the "Exposition of the Creed"; Bishop Cosin; Jeremy Taylor, whose spiritual power has never been excelled; Isaac Barrow; Robert South, and many more of the same kind that might be mentioned.

Sheldon was succeeded by William Sancroft, who was destined to see fresh trials for Church and State which the peculiarities of the age were to involve.

He was born at Fressingfield, Suffolk, on the 30th of January, 1616. He graduated from Emmanuel College, Cambridge, in 1637, and in 1642 was elected a fellow. Three years afterwards he saw the beheading of Archbishop Laud, and then the tragic death of Charles I. Ushered into the iron rule of Cromwell, he could see no chance for men like himself in England. He could not take oath to the "Solemn League and Covenant," nor yet to the "Engagement," which was a brief Act passed by the Cromwellian Parliament to replace the Covenant. It ran thus: "I do declare and promise that I will be true and

faithful to the Commonwealth of England, as it is now established, without a king or House of Lords."

Rather than take an oath of this kind, Sancroft resigned his fellowship in 1650, and left his native land. At the Restoration he gladly returned, and at once met with preferment. In his voluntary exile from home and country he had not only been able to support himself, but also to assist his friend, Dr. Cosin. On the Restoration Cosin became Bishop of Durham, and gave Sancroft the rich living of Houghton-le-Spring and a canonry at Durham. He also became master of his own college, then Dean of York, next Dean of Canterbury, and then Dean of St. Paul's.

He gave large amounts of money towards the restoration of old St. Paul's, and when it was destroyed in the great fire he set resolutely to work towards rebuilding a temple which was to be "exceedingly magnificent."

From the Deanery of St. Paul's he was suddenly and unexpectedly elevated to the primacy at the age of sixty-one. It was a most unusual thing to promote a priest thus suddenly over the heads of all the bishops. It caused much dissatisfaction and some resentment. It is said that the king (Charles II.) had a great liking for Sancroft, and that the Duke of York also (the heir to the throne) advised his appointment.

(To be continued.)

CONSECRATED OLD AGE.



ONE of the finest instances of this is to be found in the late Bishop of Chichester, who, less than a year ago, departed this life, at the age of ninety-four, in the midst of a busy and active career.

When the Venerable Richard Durnford, Archdeacon of Manchester, was appointed by Mr. Gladstone Bishop of Chichester, at the age of sixty-eight, there was an undercurrent of disapprobation throughout England that one so close upon the allotted three score years and ten should be expected to fulfil the active duties of an English bishopric. Yet the appointment proved a successful one in every sense of the word, clearly showing that it is a good thing sometimes to judge of a man more by what he is and what he appears to be capable of doing than simply by his age. Some men are old at fifty, others are still young at sixty. Bishop Durnford showed unmistakably by his life and work that a man may be comparatively young at seventy. Many who complained at his appointment went to their graves long before him, and he lived on, a vigorous active bishop, for twenty-five years. There have been men appointed to the episcopate quite young in life, who were not allowed to work for anything like so long a time as twenty-five years.

Within five years of his consecration, so