

Dominion Churchman.

THE ORGAN OF THE CHURCH OF ENGLAND IN CANADA.

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LESSONS for SUNDAYS and HOLY-DAYS.

MARCH 6th. 2 SUNDAY IN LENT.
Morning—Genesis xxvii. 1-41. Mark vii. to 24.
Evening—Genesis xxviii. 1-22. Romans xv. 8.

THURSDAY, MARCH 8, 1887.

The Rev. W. H. Wadleigh is the only gentleman travelling authorized to collect subscriptions for the "Dominion Churchman."

TO CORRESPONDENTS.

A quantity of Correspondence and Diocesan News unavoidably left over for want of space.

THE ATTITUDE OF THE CHURCH TO DISSENT.—Canon Wilberforce having preached in a dissenting place of worship brought down upon himself the blows of his Bishop's crozier.

Admitting the piety and zeal of Nonconformists, the Bishop of Winchester claims attention for the great principles of the English Church, which she has held almost throughout her history:—

One is that the Church of Christ, not only an invisible spiritual company, but the visible living organism, is a gift of God, and has lived on in an unbroken continuity from the days of our Lord's bodily presence to this day. So the Church is from above, not from beneath; and it is not possible for a single man or body of men in recent times to constitute a new Church at their own pleasure. Another is that, though the Church is Divine, it has yet human elements, and so may require pruning, prudent and careful pruning, if it runs into excessive or unhealthy growth.

Unless these two principles are true, the Church of England is indefensible; her very *raison d'être* is gone. The Church as one with the Church of the New Testament and the primitive ages; the Church as reformed (when corrupted) on the exact model of the primitive body; these two are the pillars on which she rests. To give these up is to give up all, for if they are not sound the Church of England cannot be defended, either (1), for having separated herself from communion with the Roman patriarch, or (2), for not simply taking her stand as one of a number of Protestant sects.

The Bishop, after enlarging on these principles, says that to concede that the Church is only one

sect among many, would be to concede everything which is worth living for and worth dying for, and urges that while he is willing to admit the devotion and holiness of great men like Cardinals Newman and Manning, he deprecates their defection from the Church of their forefathers; and while willing to admit the excellence of many Protestant Dissenters, he is not bound to repudiate principles which are dearer to him than life, and to break down boundaries which are calculated to preserve us from the imminent danger of losing all distinctive doctrines, and degenerating into mere schools of philosophy.

THE CONDITION OF THE BAPTIZED.—In the controversy between Canon Wilberforce and his bishop, the Canon thought to confound his superior by a question as to the state of the baptized which he vainly fancied would put the Bishop in a dilemma. The answer is very well worth studying by those who have the same loose ideas as this reply exposes.

Coming to Canon Wilberforce's question as to the condition of a baptized person, the Bishop thus answers it:—

'You know perfectly well that I never speak of Dissenters as heretics, that I never doubt the union to Christ or spiritual life of pious Dissenters. Of course I believe, that a person baptized into Christ, awakened to his privileges as a child of God, and living a Spirit-baptized life, is in a state of salvation, whether he be a Churchman or Nonconformist; and that one not so living is not in a state of salvation, be he Churchman or Nonconformist. Of course I believe, if the Lord Jesus Christ were to return to-morrow (and for His speedy return we constantly hope and pray) that He would find multitudes of Nonconformist Christians ready for His coming, and would call them to Himself to "meet Him in the air"; while multitudes of the members of the National Church could only expect to hear the words "Depart from Me." But this, if it proves anything proves too much. I have no doubt, I think that you have no doubt, but that in that great day, many, many devout Roman Catholics will rise to meet Christ in the air, and so will ever be with the Lord. I cannot conceive that men like your own uncle or Cardinal Newman, even though they left a purer for a more corrupt communion, will be rejected at the last. Does this prove that a clergyman of the English Church (if it were possible that he should be permitted) would be justified in officiating in a Roman church, either by preaching or celebrating Mass, or the like? Further than this, I do not doubt that, according to the teaching of our Lord and St. Paul, many of those who never heard of Christ will yet be saved by the mighty power of His incarnation and atonement and resurrection. Your argument might be extended so as to prove that therefore a Christian clergyman might officiate in a Mahomedan mosque or a Buddhist temple. I have no scruple in joining in worship, I have often done so, with Nonconformists or Roman Catholics. Their fellowship "with the Father and with His Son Jesus Christ" abundantly entitles us to communicate with them, not only socially or for moral or religious purposes (such as in Bible Societies, for the cause of religious education, &c.), but also in social prayer. But all this does not justify us in breaking down all lines of division, except in the legitimate way of striving to unite all in the one body of the one Church of Christ.'

THE CHURCH A DIVINE ORDINANCE.—In concluding the correspondence alluded to above, the Bishop, after adverting briefly to his efforts to promote the reunion of Christendom, and his sympathy with the professed object of the Evangelical Alliance, not with its action, which is to substitute 'alliances' of independent bodies, some of them most unevangelical, for the unity of the Church of Jesus Christ, the Bishop states his views on Dissent:—

'My chief objection to Dissent is not to the doctrines or discipline of any particular sect, but that

its very principle is to ignore the unity of the Church of Christ, inventing a thing unknown to Scripture and the primitive Christians of a spiritual, invisible community only, and, instead of the one Body of Christ, substituting a multitude of disunited and disconnected sects. All that tends to confirm and perpetuate this theory is a direct countermove to the prayer of our Blessed Lord, that His Church might be one as an united witness to the world (John xvii. 21).'

The Bishop gives a passing reference to the Canon's words, dwelling on the 'pedigree' of the English Church as an unfair gloss upon his own words:—

'My words in my former letter did not mean—I believe you hardly thought them to mean—a mere dwelling on what you call the 'pedigree' of the English Church. What I did say and mean is, that Christ's Church is a Divine ordinance, come down to us direct from God; that it was not a society formed by man; and that there is confusion in saying that, if a man or a body of men desire to institute a new sect they thereby can constitute a new Church. If any one can prove to me that the Church of England so came into existence at the Reformation, I will resign my bishopric and retire from her communion at once.'

ROMAN CATHOLICISM IN GREAT BRITAIN.—It appears from a comparison of statistical returns that there are considerably fewer Roman Catholics in the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland than there were thirty years ago. There has been, indeed, a large expansion in the number of the Romish clergy and places of worship, convents, and schools in this country; but, on the other hand, the population of the sister island has diminished so much that more has been lost than has been gained, when they are taken together into view. While this may tend to allay the fears of some, we are bound to express the hope that peace and prosperity may soon be brought to unhappy Ireland, and that Protestantism may gain, not by the mere diminution of the Roman Catholic population, but by winning its way among them, and bringing them to the light of the Gospel. If any part of our empire needs our most earnest prayers at this moment, it is that country that lies so near, and which is so full of suffering and distraction.—*Evangelical Christendom.*

THE STATE OF LUTHERANISM.—In the *Sunday Magazine* there is a remarkable article on Lutheranism. Professing the deepest veneration for the German Reformer, the writer ("Mary Harrison") admits that in his old age he fell away from the promise of his youth. As to his co-religionists, she says—"Any sense of awe before the presence of God, reverence, devoutness, is the last thing felt in a modern Lutheran service. In many churches they spit, much as they would in the beer shop and market house; and far more is there the air of profanity than of sacredness in the bearing of the congregations of them all. They lack every element which made their birth into the world a success." Again—"A more tyrannical priesthood, a more enslaved people is not found in Germany, nor even in Italy, than those who compose the Lutheran Church of to day; nor can we conceive a heavier day of judgment upon its ministers and people than that their founder should come again from his tomb and judge their barrenness and death." We cannot say that Lutheranism ever struck us as admirable, but Mary Harrison's testimony to its present condition is confirmed by most impartial witnesses.

This testimony is demonstrative against the somewhat hacknied saying that holding the doctrine of justification by faith only, is the sign of a prosperous Church. Lutheranism is built upon that doctrine, yet of all religious bodies it is showing more than any, signs of barrenness and death. The saying we refer to should be withdrawn.