

APPENDIX.

THE FIRST MIRACLE OF CHRIST

AND

PROHIBITION:

A SERMON PREACHED IN ST. PETER'S CHURCH, BROCKVILLE, ON THE
SECOND SUNDAY AFTER EPIPHANY (17TH JANUARY), 1886.

"This beginning of miracles did Jesus in Cana of Galilee, and manifested forth His glory."—St. John ii, 11.

IT is a thing for which we ought to be very thankful, brethren, that the Church's yearly system of teaching brings before us every incident of our dear Lord's life, and forces into prominence, each in turn, every saying, every work of His, whether we personally care to view it or not. In these days, when there are so many different kinds of religion, I think we may without much difficulty discern that each particular kind of religion has its own special "hobby," so to speak. It takes one or two "texts," and out of them manufactures its own theology: every other text must be made to fit into that, and is warped and twisted and turned until it does, after a fashion, fit in; and if, after all the manipulation, this cannot be effected, then it is summarily dismissed from the count as a "Judaism," or a "metaphor," or an "Oriental hyperbole," or something of that sort.

And as in other bodies, so in the Church of England, individual preachers have their "hobbies," their favorite doctrines, their favorite "texts." It is human nature after all; we are all partialists, more or less; and if we were left unrestricted, our congregations would too often be fed with some particular kind of spiritual diet, which might be wholesome and beneficial in due proportion, but if persisted in to the exclusion of all other kinds of food, would produce spiritual dyspepsia—a morbid unhealthy state—no matter what that particular doctrine may be.

Now what a grand and wholesome corrective to the individual preacher's fancies is the system of the Church, which forces us, whether we will or no, to take in every species of food which the Holy Scriptures contain. For to me this is one of the greatest evidences of the Divine origin of the Scriptures, that they are so multiform, so complex, so many-sided. Our spiritual nature is like our physical nature, very complex; and he who imagines he