

PROPOSED CONFIRMATION, &c. BY THE LORD BISHOP OF MONTREAL.

September 15, Thursday—Wakefield, confirmation, 10 a.m.
 September 18, Sunday—Aylwin and Allrine, consecration of church and confirmation.
 September 20, Tuesday—Hull, confirmation, 5 p.m.
 September 21, Wednesday—Buckingham, confirmation, 11 a.m.
 September 25, Sunday—Montreal, ordination, 11 a.m.
 September 27, Tuesday—Berthier, confirmation, 7 a.m.
 September 28, Wednesday—Kildar, confirmation, 3 p.m.
 September 29, Thursday—Chertsey, consecration of church 11 a.m.
 September 30, Friday—Rawdon, confirmation, 10 a.m.

Church Observer.

"One Faith,—One Lord,—One Baptism."

MONTREAL, WEDNESDAY, SEPT. 14, 1870.

MONEYS RECEIVED.—We trust that those of our subscribers who have not yet remitted the amount of their current year's subscription, in response to the call made in July last, will pardon us for again directing their attention to this very interesting subject. We may just remark, that on that occasion we stated it as our intention to mail accounts to all who still happened to be indebted, on the 1st of August for the current year's subscription. In response to that appeal, a considerable number enclosed remittances to our address; but there is still a large number to be heard from, and we would respectfully suggest to those the propriety of complying with the modest request we made on the occasion referred to. We presume our friends forget that the terms of payment for the *Observer* are in advance; and as we are not now making an unreasonable request, we trust we may be spared the trouble—to say nothing of the expense—of repeating the same by mail.

CORRECTION.—Our issue of August 17th contained an admirable article from the *London Rock*, which we incorrectly credited to the *Record*. We are glad that our attention has been called to the error, which we take this, the earliest, opportunity of correcting.

CHURCH REFORM.—We are indebted to a valued correspondent for a neatly bound copy of the Rev. J. C. Ryle's "Church Reform Papers"—(seven in number)—recently published in London. The first of the series we copy in this week's *Observer*, and purpose to continue one every week, until the entire seven are published. The Rev. author concludes his preface as follows:—"I now commend the whole subject to the serious attention of every churchman—especially to evangelical churchmen. This matter concerns ourselves. Let us not allow it to fall into the hands of our enemies by our neglect. If I can only set evangelical men thinking I shall be content. Let my name perish, so long as the real spiritual interests of the Protestant Church of England are promoted."

RE-STATEMENT OF DOCTRINES.

No. 2.

In our last number we endeavoured to point out a few of the difficulties attending the literal interpretation of those portions of Scripture which are usually cited as establishing the doctrine of transubstantiation. For this purpose we selected the words on which our opponents most strongly insist, namely, those which Christ used in instituting the Sacrament; and we drew certain inferences from the sense in which we have every reason to believe those words were understood by the disciples. Unless it can be proved that they *must* be taken literally,—that is to say, that to understand them figuratively involves contradiction or absurdity,—it is a waste of time to quote

them parrot-like, as if the mere quotation of them had all the force of a demonstration. But it has never been shown that contradiction or absurdity is involved in attaching a figurative sense to them; on the contrary, what contradiction there is must attach to the other interpretation. No Roman Catholic will pretend that the literal sense involves no difficulty at all, or that there is the slightest difficulty in understanding Christ's words figuratively. There is a disposition, rather, to exaggerate, if possible, the difficulties in the way of taking the words literally, the merit of faith being supposed to increase in proportion to the incredibility of the thing believed. A believer in transubstantiation, therefore, has no interest in explaining away the difficulties with which the literal interpretation of the words, "this is my body" is involved. He should rather seek to increase the difficulties in order to enhance the merit of believing in spite of them. But to do this he must allow that the figurative interpretation is more natural and credible than the literal,—an admission which to every one who does not believe things on the score of their incredibility will be quite conclusive as to the sense in which the words are to be understood. If we are to adopt as a principle of Biblical interpretation that when a passage may be construed in two senses, the one natural and in agreement with reason, the other forced and contrary to reason, we should prefer the latter, as making the larger demand upon our faith, it is time to enquire whether, after all, a written revelation is to be regarded as a boon or the reverse. It is sufficient for our present purpose, however, to have it conceded that the passages usually quoted as establishing the doctrine in question not only do not prove it, not only are susceptible of an interpretation fatal to it, but that this interpretation commends itself directly to the understanding of everybody who does not make the belief of seeming impossibilities meritorious.

II. In our former article we stigmatised the doctrine of the real presence, as held by Romanists and Ritualists, as one involving absurdities. We cannot but regard as an absurdity the assertion that a body whole and complete can occupy an infinite number of places at one and the same time. There are some propositions which lie at the very foundation of all human knowledge, which it is equally impossible to prove and disprove. Except when disputants are interested in calling them into question they are assumed and reasoned from with the utmost confidence. One of these primary truths is that every substance is one and no more, and can occupy but one part of space at any instant of time. It would be by referring to this principle that we should refute the statement that on a certain day, at a certain hour, a vessel was in the middle of the Atlantic and at Quebec. We should not attempt to disprove it; the assertion would carry its own refutation. This is a primary truth, on which we act every moment of our lives; we cannot raise our finger without illustrating it. Before touching the question whether this principle applies equally to immaterial substances, we would remind our readers that, according to ordinary Romish teaching, it is Christ's material body which is displayed on the altar—His body and blood,—the very human nature which He bore upon the earth. Matter can therefore be free from a property which, by universal consent—the consent, even, of those who hold the paradox,—is essential to matter. But it is an outrage to reason to pronounce that to be matter which is not subject to the conditions to which matter, as such, is subject. Is it more absurd to suppose that the pen with which we are writing is at this moment in our hand and

lying on the table, than to assert that Christ's material body, whole and entire, is at the same moment on thousands of Romish altars? Either the body is not matter, which the Romanist says it is, or it cannot be in more places than one, which he asserts it can. But the same difficulty besets us, if we suppose that Christ's spiritual and glorified body, and not His material form, whole and entire, is present on the altar. A spirit may be ubiquitous, but it cannot be proved that a spiritual body may. Body, whether spiritual or material, implies limitation and locality. So we read that those who die in Christ shall be raised as spiritual bodies, and that so raised they shall be distinct,—units,—persons. And should it be objected that it is too much to suppose that Christ's spiritual body is identical in its properties with the spiritual bodies of His risen people, we answer that there is no proof to the contrary. On the contrary, what evidence can be adduced goes to establish an identity of nature. That body with which Christ ascended to heaven was beyond doubt a spiritual body, for it was not subject to the laws which matter universally obeys. The ascent was witnessed by the apostles, who testify that they saw one body, only one body—a body which, like their material bodies, had limitations and locality. There is no reason to believe that the spiritual body which ascends has undergone any change since the ascension, or that it has ceased to be one and indivisible, or acquire the purely spiritual property of ubiquity. Till this is established, we cannot believe that Christ's spiritual body can be in ten thousand places at the same moment, any more than His material body could have been. In a subsequent article we shall discuss some of the arguments used by Roman Catholics and Ritualists—we cannot separate them, and the latter seem rather proud of the association,—and seek to discredit the testimony of the senses.

AMERICAN IDEAS.

When a family difference has been happily composed, and all those immediately affected by it are anxious to forget all about their disagreements, it often happens that some injudicious and maladroit individual, with a mania for stating things as they actually occurred, and with a desire to appear in the matter, will step in to narrate in full the circumstances of the quarrel, and set everybody once more by the ears.

The Rev. J. Constantine seems to be endowed with these mischievous propensities. We suppose that every member of the church in this diocese, with the exception of this rev. gentleman, is so well satisfied with the present incumbent of the see as almost to be grateful for the controversy which terminated in his lordship's election. We also doubt whether, with this exception, there is a single person who would wish to revive the Cathedral agitation, or would be so rash as to say a word to disturb the present peaceful state of things. Again, everybody but the Rev. Mr. Constantine so gladly assented to the compromise by which the Synod, at its last session, was enabled to send a unanimous address of sympathy to the sister church in Ireland, that good feeling might be supposed to be thoroughly restored. And, lastly, we think that no one but the rev. gentleman would have judged it expedient to contrast the obligations under which we lie to the mother church, and to the Protestant Episcopal Church respectively. But Mr. Constantine, in his recent pamphlet, "On the influence of American ideas in the Anglican Church in the Diocese of Montreal," has shown that there is at least one individual whose recollection of past strifes is so vivid as to disturb his enjoy-

ment of present peace, and who feels it incumbent upon him to do the very things which other people would most deprecate. We do not impugn the rev. gentleman's motives, which we believe to be highly creditable to him; but a sincere man may do an infinite amount of mischief, and it is because we believe this to be the tendency of the pamphlet before us, that we call attention to its contents. We are unwilling to allow it to go forth to the world, on his authority, that the clergy and laity of this diocese, as distinct, compact bodies, are at deadly feud; that the liberality of the mother church is received as a matter of course, and that while we are ready to take everything she can give us, we repudiate her claims on our filial affection; or that it is only the unflinching fidelity of the clergy which saves the church from the curse of tyranny on the one hand, and servility on the other. And we are equally unwilling that our American brethren should have reason to suppose for a moment that any one but Mr. Constantine regards their church as destitute of anything necessary to a complete ecclesiastical organization. We shall not examine, in detail, the curiously miscellaneous evidence which he adduces to prove that American ideas are becoming prevalent amongst us. It is plain that he looks at everything from the standpoint of dislike to American institutions, and takes everything as an indication that what he fears is actually coming to pass. For instance, an influential clergyman visits his friends in the United States for the purpose of interesting them in our diocesan missions: Some might think such a step ill-advised and unnecessary; but Mr. Constantine, looking into the very heart of the matter, declares that there was a deliberate design to flaunt American liberality to the disparagement of the continuous liberality of the mother church. Such extreme keenness of vision is, to say the least, unenviable. Again the Synod is convened for the purpose of electing a bishop for the diocese of Montreal. The nominations of the House of Bishops prove unacceptable, and the Synod is adjourned, their lordships affirming that their list of eligible names is exhausted. The nominations, on the one hand, and the rejection of the nominees on the other, are clearly constitutional, and, therefore, not open to criticism, as if either House transgressed its bounds. But Mr. Constantine discovers in every failure of the elective body to accede to the recommendations of the nominating body an attempt to foist upon the church foreign notions of the relations of clergy and laity. Again, on the adjournment of the Synod, the diocese is left without a bishop, and the province without a metropolitan. The former deprivation is felt to be serious, and an attempt is made to legally invest the Dean with such additional powers as are not essentially and exclusively episcopal. Some doubt the wisdom of invoking the authority of the legislature, but Mr. Constantine, who has as much enjoyment in detecting plots as others have in concocting them, sees in this appeal for parliamentary intervention part of an atrocious scheme for lessening the authority and influence of the bishops,—a further evidence of the existence of low, radical—in short, American—sentiment in the diocese. Further, it happens that a layman who took a prominent part in the rejection of the nominees of the House of Bishops is subsequently charged with being the moving spirit of an Annexation League existing in the city of Montreal. A letter which appears in one of the New York papers professes to give the fullest and latest particulars respecting this infamous cabal. Many people are so astonished at the revelation that they scarcely know what or whom to believe; most people acquainted with public matters