The Catholic Register.

"Truth is Catholic; proclaim it ever, and God will effect the rest."—BALMEZ.

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EQUIVOCATION.

WRITTEN FOR THE REGISTER.

When Dr. Sullivan says of equivocation that "he knows it not," he is either guilty of a truism, not worth wasting episcopal breath on, or utters what it is very hard to get the right meaning of.

He does not know it in his own conduct. Very good. But the statement would be more honorable to him if coming from some one else. He does not know it amongst his highly favored parishioners of St. James'. Well, as a dear old friend used to say, in broken English, "Dat ees a pro-po-sition vich ees mouch harder to accept." He does not know it in society or the history of society, which we call literature. If so, he is already away up on the lofty places of sanctity which ordinary mortals can hardly hope to reach. St Aloysius never saw the faces of the ladies of the court in which he served: but, as Newman says, he was a saint, and we cannot judge saints by ordinary standards. The Doctor must be infinitely guileless, preternaturally lucky, if he knows not equivocation, for there is plenty of it scattered about, here and there, in town and country alike, and even according to Macaulay (Hist Eng. cap. xvi.) "Prebendaries and Rectors (the Doctor's title, we think) were not ashamed to avow that they had equivocated."

There is an innocence that comes *from* heaven, and is admirable; and there is an *innocence springing from* ignorance, which serves no good purpose in church or state. We are pleased to think the Doctor's simplicity belongs to the first category; and, if so be, anything of the nature of the second attaches to him he seems determined to get rid of it. In this he has our entire approbation: only we think he goes the wrong way about securing his end, when he asks us to give the doctrine of our Church on equivocation. (Parenthetically, we have no Church of ours the Church has us, and made and makes us Christians; not we it). It is natural, as well as charitable, to throw a plank to a man in the water, but you must have the plank before you can throw it.

And as there is absolutely no doctrine of "our Church" on equivocation, we can be of no service to the right rev. Rector. You cannot call simple condemnation a doctrine, and that is all the Church has to say about the ugly vice. All her catechisms, all her theologies, all her bishops and priests, and all her own pronouncements, are uniform in this matter. There is not an exception, not even one. And therefore whatever our willingness to comply with the (ridiculously absurd) request of Dr. Sullivan we can do nothing.

But we seem to hear him saying, in a kind of bowdlerment: "What, you don't pretend that Dens, and St. Liguori, and all of them, too numerous to mention have written on equivocation; and therefore there is a doctrine!" Well, I never, as I said last week, saw Dens, but I have St. Liguori, and St Thomas, and Gury, and Lemkuhl, and a number of others of the same kind, and from cover to cover of any or all of them there is not even mention made of equivocation. "Ha ha," breaks in the good Doctor, "I see now the effect of the villanous doctrine itself. You have learned it all too well. For you are equivocating in the most shameless fashion. Does not Dens, does not Liguori, do not all of them speak of equivocatio, as, under circumstances, allowable; and what is equivocatio but equivocation!"

Is that your knowledge either of Latin or of Theology? Does similarity of spelling or sound in the instance of two words, one Latin, the other English, imply identity of meaning? Have you forgotten old Arnold, Exercise II. teaching us that "we can hardly have a worse ground than that of the similarity of sound in Latin and English words on which to form our belief that their meaning is identical." Have you forgotten the dear old days of school, and the jokes, with little wit, but lots of laughter, that were founded upon such discoveries? Your own memory must be full of them, and therefore no more need be said in proof of this—which I lay down with all possible positiveness, and defy any one to refute—that the word equivocatio does not mean at all the same thing as the English word equivocation. And first, there is a word equivocatio, which is not English, nor yet again is it strictly Latin. You won't find it in any merely classical dictionary, for the very good reason that it was not coined until after that language had ceased to be popularly spoken. The word is of as purely Christian origin as the institution of Sunday in place of the Jewish sabbath; and Protestant ministers—as we see by the daily accounts, in the street car controversy—don't seem to know much about either.

What, then, is the meaning of the word equivocatio? Or why did the scholastic writers invent it? The answer to these questions is not very difficult.

Speech, or the power of passing thought from mind to mind is our highest natural endowment, and for that very reason its right use is accompanied as with myriad benefits, so also, by manifold dangers. "If any man offend not in word, the same is a perfect man." (St James iii 2) shows us the wide range of its influences upon moral and religious conduct and character. How to speak, and when and to whom and how much, and how to be silent. &c.: these are only a few of the knotty problems divine science has to investigate and solve, as well as it can, in the light of Revelation. It is easy to say the truth must never be violated. Any child can know that much. But there is a mighty difference between Truth and truths. God alone is Truth, as He is the Way and the Life, and when He speaks His Word, like Himself, is Truth, which we can grasp and possess, not by intelligent comprehension, but by supernatural faith.

But when we come to consider man as speaking, there is a great difference. His speech is not creative. It makes nothing now. It gives pictures and accounts, more or less complete, of the things he knows, whether by sense or intellect. Some things he knows with certainty, whilst of others he can only have opinions; and so on.

And of the matters he is sure of, there are some that he has no right to speak at all, or only at best to some persons. The truth of his information, may be the very reason why he ought not to speak of it at all, &c. There is no need nor is this the place, to go more minutely into this difficult question. Everybody, of any experience and good sense, knows how hard is the task so to manage the tongue that it may not say too much or too little, or speak at the wrong time, or to the wrong person. To withhold a truth is sometimes as much a duty as to tell it. A friend of my own lost his life through the imprudent frankness of his physician, in letting him know how ill he was. Again, no mother gives a full answer to four-year-old Tommy, when after kissing his new born sister, he enquires where they found her.

Difficulties of this nature are unlimited in number, some of them trifling, others grave, but all more or less trying to sensitive consciences, and Christian moralists, both Catholic and Protestant, have tried to find a safe road through them. In some instances the matter is practically settled, as in the phrases—"not at home," or "not guilty," in courts, or the kind of answers allowed in parliament. But no rule has ever been made, perhaps ever can be made which will not be objected to by somebody, either that it is too lax, or again that it is too strict. And yet men have to go on talking—it is the muscle and nerve of society. Is it not fit then, and naturel, that to help them able thinkers, who have a taste for casuistry should try to make some kind of order out of this chaos, and do what they can, by aid of eternal truth, to show us a way out of the countless perplexities that spring from the necessities of speech. Their essays in this direction, the scholastics called equivocatio, and this equivocatio, in the instance of every author I ever saw, excludes lying and equivocation totally and universally. All purely mental restriction, which is about the meaning of equivocation, is condemned entirely by every one of them; but a number of imaginary cases are given wherein it is allowable or a duty, or sometimes the most prudent course, to be silent, or evade, or throw dust in the eyes, as Newman calls it, or get without lying, out of answering a question, which one has no right or duty to answer, or the interrogator no right to ask. And to say that such teaching leads to or encourages (sinful) equivocation, is about as fair and honest, as to say that bad gases and bad smells and generally dirty surroundings lead to the source of hygiene whose very object is to put us on our guard against such things.

We conclude by assuring Dr. Sullivan that there is no doctrine of our Church on equivocation—if you accept the one word "Don't," a word which we would counsel him to study and practice before making grave imputations upon his neighbors!

Message to His Holiness.

The following telegraphic communications, have been interchanged between the Archbishops and Bishops of the ecclesiastical provinces of Toronto and Kingston and His Holiness on the occasion of the visit of the Apostolic Delegate to this city:

To His Holiness Leo XIII., Rome:

The Archbishops of Toronto and Kingston, with their suffragans assembled here under the presidency of the Apostolic Delegate, present to Your Holiness the expression of their filial devotion and of their gratitude, happy to have in their midst your representative, whose sentiments they share, and they accept in advance the directions of Your Holiness, being convinced that they will be most wise and best calculated to safeguard the interests of religion, so much put to test in Canada in consequence of recent events and circumstances.

The following answer was received:

The Holy Father has learned with much pleasure of the meeting of the Archbishops of Toronto and Kingston and their suffragans, held under the presidency of the Apostolic Delegate. The sentiments expressed to him on this occasion have given him much pleasure, and he loves to hope that such sentiments will have the much desired result of safeguarding the interests of religion in Canada.

Rampolla, Cardinal.

DANIEL O'CONNELL.

The Catholic Champion of Civil and Religious Liberty—An Eloquent Lecture by Rev. Father Ryan in St. Michael's Cathedral on Sunday Last.

As we stated in our last issue, Saturday, the 15th inst., was the fiftieth anniversary of O'Connell's death. We suggested that mention might be very appropriately and opportunely made in every Catholic pulpit on Sunday, of the great Emancipator's life and labors. Indeed we do not give ourselves the the credit of this suggestion—we got it from our Holy Father the Pope, who ordered special service to be held in honor of this anniversary in Genoa and Rome, and recommended some public and ecclesiastical notice of the event in Ireland, and indeed wherever Irishmen are and wherever the lesson and policy of moral power is appreciated.

We are sorry we cannot give a full report of Father Ryan's very able and eloquent lecture, the merits of which can be gathered from our few very hurried notes. The rev. lecturer began by saying he was justified in departing somewhat from the usual Sunday evening subjects by a notable and most interesting anniversary and by a suggestion of the Holy Father.

The anniversary was the fiftieth year of O'Connell's death, the Holy Father's suggestion that the day be fittingly commemorated. An enthusiastic admirer of O'Connell had said that he was the greatest man that ever lived. Cicero was great as a forensic orator, Demosthenes as a popular orator, O'Connell excelled each and surpassed both. Cæsar conquered kingdoms, Napoleon conquered kings. O'Connell did more—he conquered the kingdom and the king of England and he emancipated seven millions of Irish Catholic slaves. O'Connell would be best remembered as the Catholic champion of civil and religious liberty. After a brief and clear description of what civil and religious liberty is, the lecturer went on to show that at the beginning of the present century the penal laws of England deprived the Catholics of Ireland of all liberty, domestic, civil and religious. In a letter to her gracious Majesty Queen Victoria, O'Connell proved two things beyond the possibility of doubt or contradiction: First, that Ireland was the most cruelly governed country in the world, and secondly, that the Irish people were the most sensitive to tyranny and the most loyal to authority of any people on earth.

O'Connell's character and greatness would be seen in his twofold relation of education and emancipation of the Irish people and dictator to their tyrant masters. As educator and emancipator he showed he was what a brilliant Frenchman called him—the incarnation of the spirit of Ireland. As dictator he walked into the British Parliament, right up to the foot of the English throne, himself in chains, and seven million of slaves in fetters behind him. He walked out, walked home, a free man, the uncrowned king of an emancipated nation.

O'Connell gives us the service of his strength and the secret of his success in a few lines of a poem he was fond of quoting:

Thy chains as they rankle, thy blood as it runs,
But make thee more painfully dear to thy sons!
Whose hearts, like the young of the desert bird's nest,
Drink love in each life drop that flows from thy breast.

He knew and loved his country. He believed and hoped in God. Seventy Peers of France, headed by Count de Montalombert, presented him an address, and hailed him as the prophet and apostle of moral power and constitutional action, the benefactor of nations and peoples for all ages to come. O'Connell was loved and worshipped by the Irish people, but he sought something better than human applause. Living, he worked for heaven, and dying, he gave his soul to God, his body to Ireland and his heart to Rome.

Sunday Evening at St. Patrick's

At St. Patrick's Church on Sunday evening a solemn reception of new members of the Sodality of the Children of Mary was held. The church was crowded to the doors and scores had to turn away disappointed. The fame of Father John Bennett, C. SS. R., of Clapham, London, ex-Provincial of the order in England who preached the sermon, had attracted many from the different parishes of the city. Father Bennett has been traveling through the United States and Canada and is on his way home. He very kindly consented to remain at St Patrick's over Sunday and preach at the reception of members of the sodality. His subject was the Blessed Virgin. He exhorted to members of the Children of Mary to persevere in their good work. The congregation was held in the deepest attention by the impressive eloquence with which the gifted preacher spoke of Catholic devotion to the Mother of God.

Vespers were sung by the rector Very Rev. Father Wynn and Benediction was given by Father Grogan.

On Thursday, Ascension Day, First Communion and Confirmation will be administered by the Archbishop of Toronto to 50 children of St. Patrick's parish who have been prepared for the reception of the Sacraments.

A Pleasant Correspondent and Her Unpleasant Friend

WRITTEN FOR THE REGISTER.

One of the city ers, The World, has a writer, Katharine Leclie, whose name at the end of an article generally ensures my reading it. She is always bright, lively and, above all, natural. Nowadays one is so sick of what is called fine style that is a veritable treat to find any one who tells a plain story interestingly and keeps smooth description's glassy surface clear of unsightly, lumpy adjectives. Naturalness, or the absence of straining or affectation, is as great a merit in composition as it is in manners. This quality K. L. possesses, and, therefore, I always read what she contributes. This does not mean of course that I accept all she says; but difference of opinion, or even faith, provokes no bitterness in some minds, at least when put forward with modesty and candor.

Well, this agreeable correspondent some weeks ago paid a visit to the Cathedral at Ottawa on a Sunday; not, I am afraid, good lady, to say her prayers—though she, maybe, did that too—but to see what was going on, and especially to have a glimpse of the Apostolic Delegate. We hope she got a good full look at him and was satisfied. At all events *the report* she sent to her paper was very readable and good-natured. True, she found the atmosphere of the Basilica rather fluffy, but this, no doubt, was because two or three, mayhap four congregations had filled the sacred edifice at as many Masses before the hour had arrived for what our Anglican friends afraid of the right word, call the choral service. She went again in the evening for Vespers and Benediction, and was agreeably surprised with the singing and the service generally.

What we want to remark upon in first an observation by herself about the "shining Host looking like a golden sunrise," and secondly a comment by a friend of hers, that the whole thing was "a great spectacular show."

We put these two things together because both spring from imperfect knowledge, but chiefly because they are in such violent contrast. The first is kindly in sentiment, felicitously conceived and elegantly worded; the other is contemptuous, spiteful, and not a little Pharisaical, and as obviously thinking leads to slovenly speech it is also halting in expression. Spectacular is not a term of reproach, and as she—we assume the friend was a lady—meant to find fault it is manifest she meant to use the word theatrical. This would place herself on a pinnacle of high spirituality—which in minds like hers means only a liberty to hate every one but self—whence she could look down with due pity and scorn upon the poor Papists, engrossed with a big show to the utter forgetfulness of the "spirit."

Hegih ho! The ways of the world and of many things and persons in it! Benediction of the Blessed Sacrament is, next to the holy Sacrifice itself, the sweetest manifestation of Christ's love and is responded to on the part of the faithful by the deepest and most earnest acts of religious worship; and this lady sees nothing in it but a show! How can we explain such a state of mind and heart without imputing to her anything more than ignorance. Let us try.

The grizzly old Carlyle says somewhere that to a sheep the lovely moon in the heavens and the bottom of a tin dish is about one and the same thing: and he gives as the reason, first on the part of the objects, that they appear about the same size and both shine with a whitey light, and secondly on the side of the subject that most sheep are nearly blind and all sheep are stupid. But this requires further analysis. A sheep—and for the matter of that all irrational creatures—uses only one sense at a time and no understanding, and to that sense—sight in this case—it is obvious the moon and a tin dish are very much alike. A difference, however, and a very considerable one, there is, but it is discovered by another process than mere sight. The ear, conveying to us what other people have to say on the matter, and the intelligence working upon such information, &c., &c., have led most men, in utter contempt of the good sheep's view, to make a wide discrimination between the glorious queen of the night and the bottom of a tin dish. With sorrow and shame, rather than anger, we are forced to say this spectacular show person has not taken the method of reason, has, in fact, not got beyond the sheep stage of judgment in the *actions* she entertains about the indescribably touching rite of Benediction. She uses one, and only one sense, and no understanding and a good deal of ugly uncharity, and so comes to the conclusion that there is nothing there but a spectacular show—just as we suppose the sheep would say it would make no difference in the universe if the moon were replaced by a dish made of tin or other white metal. Well, well! The case is bad enough, but it might be worse. Ignorance doesn't kill, or the lambkin couldn't play under the load of its false notions: and so this person's digestion may continue good and her pulse normal and her sleep sound, though she sees no difference between the presence of God in His own institution blessing His kneeling children and—a "spectacular" show—a "great spectacular show!"

Dismissing now many reflections that come in here naturally, we ask why it should not be a spectacle, a great spectacle, the very greatest that earth and man's ingenuity can furnish? God is there and how else should we receive Him? If Her Majesty came amongst us would we not have flags and drums, and processions and pageants, and the best oratory we could command, and still feel sorry we had so little to show our loyal feeling at that? Nay would not this anti-spectacular person bring out her best gown, and don her most precious jewels, nay open her purse strings and give handsomely, and even if her wealth were expended in fireworks, as she saw them flash upwards and disappear would she not be proud it was her money that lent brilliancy to the occasion when all were rejoicing in presence of their Queen.

Human nature, whatever else it is, is not sheep nature. It has its ways—some bad of course, and some good—and amongst these latter the giving outward signs of respect to those who deserve it is as natural as it is right and good. Every body does it, society would be an old pond of stagnant water, hideous with lifeless carcasses, without it. The very animals of the field leap and play in instinctive recognition of the Being who blesses them. And shall old maidish sourness and spite find fault with us, and ignorantly sneer when at the approach of God, we imitate the three youths in the fiery furnace, and call upon earth and sea and sky, and all that are in them to help us in praising and blessing the Lord who has visited us in such loving mercy? But why not go in spirit, and without this pomp and show? Fudge and nonsense! Either people don't believe that, or if they do, they show a discreditable ignorance of human nature in action. Let us ask what constitutes the real celebration of day, the Queen's birthday? Is it the red coats or the flags or the bands, or the processions, singly or collectively? Or is it the men behind these things, and the spirit of loyalty that moves them? If you were commissioned to get up the celebration and offered your choice of the two, the men or the accompaniments, which of the two, the men or the accompaniments, would you take? You say each would be incomplete without the other. You want both, just so. And we in the great celebration, made by divine order in memory of God and Redemption, have both a spirit of undoubting faith that brings us to church, and of warm Christian charity—loyalty if you like the word—which bursts out into the "great spectacular show" you so ignorantly criticise. And the "show" as it is the natural outcome of the spirit of faith, so in turn, by the reaction of its influence, deepens and strengthens that faith, and is one amongst other reasons why there is more piety, devotion and true religious life witnessed at a single Benediction, than can be found in fifty conventicles, where there is nothing but spirit, and a very vinegarian spirit at that.

But though we have said enough to show the fitness of the surroundings of an altar at Benediction time, there yet remains "the reason" of it all, and that is that in acting as we do we are following, as nearly as we can, the model set us by Christ Himself. We are going to Scripture for our justification. How very touching to be told that our Blessed Redeemer, for our sakes, had reduced Himself to such poverty, that the foxes and the birds had homes, but he had not whereon to lay His head He was born in a stable, lived in poverty and died naked on the cross.

But,—and, we say, mark it well—He made one exception to His own rule, our great departure from it and that was just on the occasion of giving us this Sacrament which is the life and soul of Benediction. When He was doing the work of Redemption, He consented to be stripped of all things—when He was pleased to institute a commemoration of Himself, He insisted upon a large room, well furnished: and it is for imitating His example we are accused at. Who is most likely to be right.

Dramatic Entertainment.

Cardinal Wiseman's two-act drama, "The Hidden Gem," was placed on the boards in St. Michael's College hall on last Thursday evening by the students, who had full charge of the setting and performance of the play. As usual, these talented young gentlemen attracted a large audience and scored a brilliant success, all of the characters having been well sustained, and some of them in a manner exceptionally able and artistic. The President of the College, Rev. Dr. Teefy, has done much towards encouraging and developing this histrionic talent; and his pupils have rewarded him by a proficiency that clothes their entertainments with special merit which never fails to charm and instruct. The following is the cast of "The Hidden Gem:"

Euphoumanus, a Roman Patrician, Mr. S. H. O'Boyle; Alexius, under the name of Ignotus, his son, Mr. J. Enright; Carinus, a boy, his nephew, Master E. Bradley; Proculus, his Freedman and Steward, Mr. D. L. Brady; Eusebius, freed after Act I., Mr. T. Crowley; Bibulus, Mr. F. X. McDermott, Davus, Mr. J. Mulligan, Ursulus, Mr. L. Staley, Verna, Mr. P. J. Kelly, Slaves; Gaunio, a beggar Mr. M. J. Pickett; Imperial Chamberlain, Mr. J. J. Hughes; Officer, Mr. W. O'Callaghan; First Robber, Mr. W. Nanlon; Second Robber, Mr. Wm. Gibbons, Slaves, Attendants, etc.

The drama is founded on the supernatural. The chief character (Alexius), by some mysterious command, is sent away from his father's house to wander as a pilgrim for five years. At the expiration of that period Alexius, in a similar way is commanded to return to the ancestral home and die where he was born. Accordingly he retraces his steps to Rome and gains the house of his father in the guise of a palmer. Tired and foot sore the pilgrim rests for a moment within the grounds of the mansion, when he is seen by his father, and invited to take food and rest which the stranger seemed so much in need of.

Alexius, with evident reluctance accepts his father's hospitality, but studiously avoids revealing his identity. And yet the father often fancies he discovers a resemblance, which the son as often is on the point of admitting; but when about to yield he suddenly halts and leaves his parent still in doubt. For five years the palmer had partaken of the bounty of Euphemianus, and received from his benefactor favors so marked as to create jealousy amongst certain members of the household. The latter, composed of slaves and freedmen, were, with a few exceptions, hardened wretches, who conspired to rob and murder their master, and fasten the crime on Alexius. The leaders in these villanies were Proculus, Bibulus and Ursulus. For cool and audacious mendacity the two stood confessedly at the head of the class; and it was really a relief when Eusebius and Carinus came to the rescue of the innocent pilgrim, and confounded his accusers with proofs of their guilt.

Too late, however, for the pilgrim dies before Euphemianus is convinced of his innocence. Then also he learns that the dead body resting on the couch before him is that of his son, whose spirit took flight while the father ordered him to leave his sight for ever. A paper found on the body of Alexius craves pardon for those who had borne false witness against him, and this sublime spirit of charity melts the callous hearts of Proculus and his confederates, as, in the agony of their remorse, they plead for mercy and forgiveness.

The play, from beginning to end, ran smoothly. The scenery and costumes were appropriate, and the acting was clever. The music, under the direction of Mr. Bayley, was up to the standard of that gentleman's excellent taste and judgment. Thanks to President Teefy and the students of St. Michael's College for this delightful entertainment, so worthy in every respect—in text, in tone and elevating thought, in lasting impressions of all that is virtuous in human nature.

Confirmation at St. Paul's Church.

St. Paul's Church, Power St., was crowded to the doors at the last Mass on Sunday. His Grace the Archbishop, presided in cope and mitre. The Very Rev. Vicar General McCann preached an eloquent sermon on the nature and effects of Confirmation. At the conclusion of the Mass which was celebrated by Rev. Father Cline. His Grace assisted by the Vicar General and Rev. Father Hand, pastor of the church, confirmed 187 candidates. After the confirmation the Archbishop briefly addressed the large congregation and admonished the children upon the necessity of preserving the faith in which they were just then confirmed. He pointed out the enemies against whom they would have to do battle—the world, the flesh and the devil. The world with its evil maxims its scandals, its deceits, its vicious journals and obscene literature would seek to sully their innocent minds and corrupt their pure hearts; their rebellious passions would rise up against their practice of virtue, and the devil like a roaring lion would continue to attack them. To overcome the enemies of their salvation he exhorted them to have recourse to fervent and frequent prayer, and regular reception of the sacraments which would strengthen them in the grace of Christ. He pledged the boys to abstain from the use of intoxicating liquors until the age of 21. He highly recommended membership in the League of the Cross to the young men of the parish and praised the clergy of St. Paul's for their activity in promoting the good work of temperance. He expressed his satisfaction with the manner in which the children were prepared for confirmation by the pastor and teachers. He imparted his episcopal blessing to the children their parents and friends. Among the numbers confirmed were eleven converts, five ladies and six gentlemen, who were instructed and received into the church by the priests of St. Paul's during the winter months.

Lake Simcoe Ice.

The near approach of the hot season suggests that ice will soon be a commodity very much in order. As a sanitary precaution care must be observed by those who are about to use the frozen element, otherwise there is danger of contracting disease from impurities inseparable from inferior cuttings in polluted waters. There need be no misgiving, however, as to the stock of the Belle Ewart Ice Company, which is very generally conceded to be the purest article delivered in this city. For particulars apply at 18 Melinda street, or telephone 1047.

The Archbishop Goes to Oshawa.

The Archbishop, accompanied by Rev. Dr. Treacy, will attend on Sunday next at Oshawa, when two new altars in Father Jeffcott's beautiful church will be consecrated and Confirmation administered to a large number of children. The Archbishop will preach morning and evening.