

BISHOP RYLE AND HIS CRITICS.

**B**ISHOP RYLE at the last Islington Conference delivered an address which being intended for a party manifesto has excited great interest, and brought out some trenchant criticism. The *London Guardian* quotes the Bishop's words, "The evangelicals know perfectly well that the Church of England has always been a comprehensive Church," and after giving a long list of High Churchmen, Dr. Ryle adds, "Is there one of them who we would have liked to have turned out of our communion? I reply not one." The *Guardian* points out that the Bishop's list is made up of names of dead men towards whom charity is easy! But it would have liked to see the Bishop of Lincoln's name in the list as one "especially dear to High Churchmen." Another writer points out that Dr. Ryle affirmed that "tradition as any part of the rule of faith is not recognised by the Church of England," which he asks him to reconcile with the words "It is evident unto all men reading the Holy Scriptures and ancient authors, &c." A third very ably dissects the following extraordinary statement, "I assert," says Dr. Ryle, "that the proportionate value or importance of any doctrine or ordinance in our religion must be measured by the frequency with which it is mentioned in Scripture and especially in the Epistles. Apply that test to the sacrament of the Lord's Supper and see what the result will be," which he contrasts with the following by Dr. Dale, the eminent Congregationalist. "The frequency and distinctness with which a doctrine is asserted in the Apostolic writings is therefore no test of its importance. It might even be contended with considerable plausibility that the importance of a doctrine is likely to be in the inverse ratio of the number of passages in which it is directly taught, for the central and most characteristic truths of the Christian faith are precisely those which the Churches were least likely to abandon. These truths were safe, and the Epistles generally deal with the truths which were in danger," &c.

Another demands where this new canon would leave the doctrine of the Trinity? The Rev. Edmund Venables, on other passages in the address writes as follows:

"Surely the Bishop of Liverpool, in his excessive eagerness to minimise the 'positive teaching' of Holy Scripture on the Lord's Supper, has been betrayed into a strange forgetfulness. He is careful to register the account of the institution of the Eucharist 'received of the Lord' by St. Paul, contained in the first Epistle to the Corinthians (ch. xi. 23-25), but he omits all mention of the verses that succeed that account in which the Apostle explicitly identifies the 'eating the bread and drinking the cup' with participation in the 'body and blood of the Lord.' I refer to verse 27, 'Whosoever shall eat this bread, or drink this cup of the Lord, unworthily, shall be guilty of the body and blood of the Lord,' and verse 29, 'He that eateth and drinketh unworthily, eateth and drinketh damnation'—i.e., judgment

—'to himself, not discerning the Lord's body.' These verses which so unhesitatingly identify the consecrated bread and wine with the body and blood of our Lord, and that even in the case of unworthy participants, are as entirely ignored by Dr. Ryle as if they had no place in the Divine pages. After referring to Acts ii. 42, 47, xx. 7, and 1 Cor. x. 16, and the four accounts of the institution of the rite in the three Synoptical Gospels and in 1 Cor., the Bishop proceeds:—"What is there in Scripture besides these passages about the Lord's Supper? I declare I can find nothing at all." Such an assertion is simply astounding. May I venture to quote the familiar proverb, 'None so blind as those who won't see?' and may I also refer the Bishop to the words of one of the most learned and sober-minded of our recent Bishops, who certainly was not "ritualist" or extreme High Churchman, Bishop Jacobson, who, when provoked by the scolism of those who evade the plain force of our blessed Lord's words on the plea that He also said, 'I am the Vine,' 'the Way,' 'the Door,' &c., impatiently exclaimed—"Those men do not attend to what St. Paul says about not considering the Lord's body," (Burgon's *Twelve Good Men*, Vol. II., p. 284)?

To turn to another point. The Bishop waxes very indignant with those who use the terms 'altar,' 'sacrifice,' and 'priest,' as 'ignorantly borrowing the language of the corrupt Church of Rome and countenancing a mischievous error.' Will he be surprised to read the opinion on these terms of Richard Baxter, who certainly was no 'ignorant borrower,' nor one likely to countenance Romish error. I quote from his *Catechising of Families* (Wordsworth's *Christian Institutions*, Vol. I., p. 504-5):—

'Q. What think you of the terms sacrifice, altar, and priest?'

'A. The ancient Churches used them all, without exception from any Christian that ever I read of.'

(1) As the bread is justly called Christ's body as signifying it, so the action described was of old called a sacrifice as representing and commemorating it.

(2) And the naming of the table and altar as related to this representative sacrifice is no more improper than that other, 'We have an altar,' &c., Heb. xiii. 10, seems plainly to mean the sacramental communion.

(3) And the word priest being used of all Christians that offer praise to God, it may surely as well be used of those whose office is to be sub-intercessors between the people and God, and their mouth to God in subordination to Christ's priesthood. *Causeless scruples pardon Papists.*

I think Bishop Ryle has much to learn before he presumes to preach so dogmatically.

A Bishop's Chaplain sharply rebukes Dr. Ryle for his partisanship as follows; "The Bishop forgets he is no longer plain Canon Ryle, but a father in the Church—a father, not of a clique or party, but of a diocese. The old Romans used to blush with shame when they beheld their Emperor joining in the

gladiatorial combats. There is a similar feeling in the breasts of Churchmen when they see those whom they have been taught to revere as patterns of all that is gentle and Christlike, tearing of their coats and joining hotly in some ecclesiastical fray. The Bishop may be right or wrong in the position he takes up; at any rate, it is a question of controversy which divides those over whom he is appointed to rule. By taking the one side he forfeits the esteem and confidence of the other. His influence is at once impaired. He becomes the shepherd of but half his flock. We have, and I suppose the Bishop of Liverpool has also, men of all schools of thought seeking ordination. Does he, when they approach him as their father, asking sympathy and advice, roughly repel them with dogmatic assertions of the Islington type? Does he tell them that all High Churchmen are hopelessly in error, and that the fast-diminishing Low Church school are the only true representatives of the English Church? If so I would respectfully submit that his lordship is in a false position."

Certainly if Dr. Ryle is sincere in his respect for the comprehensive character of the Church, he is most justly open to censure for "taking off his coat," rushing into an ecclesiastical fray and turning the Church into a Donnybrook Fair.

THE CATHEDRAL AND ITS USES.

(Continued from 27th June.)

It must needs be so. Consider for an instant those demands of our modern parochial life to which I have just referred, and then ask yourself what chance there is for the ordinary parish priest to do any real or effective work as a preacher? The most dismal aspect of the whole business is that we have ordinarily so utterly dismissed any smallest expectation that such an one ever will do any serious or worthy work in fulfilment of his prophetic office, that we cannot interest ourselves in the subject. And yet—I declare before God, and in the solemn light of His word and all the past history of His religion in the world, that a Church which neglects or ignores the prophet's office and the prophet's message is doomed to decay, to dishonor, and to death. It is in vain that we organize societies, and build parish houses, and multiply services—there must be a body of men who shall be to their age preachers, "prophets who will cry aloud and spare not," equal to the vindication of God's truth on higher and more public tribunals than the parish pulpit, "men of God who will step to the front in times of doubt and difficulty—who will take a clever but sophistical book and cleave through its subtle falsehoods with the sword of the Spirit—men who will speak the word for which a thousand hearts are waiting, and speak it with the power of one who has thought long and deeply."

And where are you to find such a body of men? How are you to train them—from what centre shall they go forth? Pray do not let any one of us be guilty of the impertinence of saying that we have gotten along well enough without any such body of men thus far, and that there is no need of them now. We have not gotten on well enough thus far, and even if we had, there are new needs, men and brethren, dawning upon the Church whose children we are, and it is at our peril that we disregard them. Says Canon Westcott, to whose calm judgment and matchless scholarship we may well turn in such a matter as this, speaking of "Cathedral Foundations in Relation to Religious Thought."—"The noblest organization is that in which there is the most complete separation of the functions of the constituent parts. Step by step that which was at first capable of manifold adaptations becomes specialized." And again and most significantly: "The highest developments of society will include the largest variety of distinct offices concentrated in different bodies."

Do we get the force of these words? What is there that has become more complex than our modern life—its needs, its perils, its employments, its rela-

\*Norris, p. 44.

†Essays, p. 109.