

# Dominion Churchman.

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THURSDAY, OCT. 26, 1876.

## TWENTIETH SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY.

The thirty-fourth chapter of the Prophecy of Ezekiel contains a severe reproof of the selfishness and negligence of the shepherds of Israel, who fed themselves and not the flock; and a prophecy of the times of Messiah, who shall be the shepherd of his people, and restore them to soundness, safety and prosperity. The thirty-seventh chapter contains further prophecies of the blessings of Messiah's reign, and, altogether is one of the most striking chapters in the book. The vision of the dry bones is exceedingly impressive, and was intended to point out the general restoration of the Jews from their several dispersions, notwithstanding the apparent impossibility of such an event. The union of two sticks by a miraculous interposition, indicates the consolidation of the entire Jewish people, Israel and Judah, into one purified and harmonious nation, over which Messiah should reign. That this prophecy is intended literally to be fulfilled is as much to be expected as any other prophecy of Holy Scripture; unless indeed the Book of God is to be regarded, from beginning to end, as an allegory, or in other words as a myth, containing neither history nor prophecy, but merely a set of principles in the ordinary and progressive course of development. Nor let it be supposed that the personal reign of Christ on earth is at all subversive of the highest authority bestowed upon the church,—but rather as the completion, the consummation and a full manifestation of her high powers, her lofty claims, and her glorious triumphs. For it will be as the Head of His Church, as the Saviour of the Body that He will appear, glorifying it, and receiving in return, His own glory reflected from it.

At Evensong we begin the book of the prophet Daniel, which is as remarkable a production of its kind as any in the sacred record. The year of the captivity must be dated from B.C. 606, the fourth year of Jehoiakim, according to Jeremiah; and the decree of Cyrus was issued at the end of the seventy years, B.C. 536. Daniel's third year refers to the time when Nebuchadnezzar was sent by his father from Babylon to attack Jerusalem. On his way he fought the Egyptians at Carchemish, reduced

the provinces of Syria and Phœnicia, and the following year took Jerusalem. The event occurred on the 18th of the month Cisleu, or November. The first chapter of Daniel gives an insight into some of the customs of the oriental courts, and shows the integrity and devotion to the Lord God of Israel, manifested by Daniel and his companions. The word in the 12th verse, translated *pulse*, means all kinds of garden herbs and roots. The new names given to them were some of them taken from the names of deities of Babylon; Belteshazzar from *Bel*; Shadrach from *Sac*; as Nebuchadnezzar was derived from the god *Nebo*.

THE COLLECT must be understood to have a direct reference to the EPISTLE and GOSPEL:—"That we being ready both in body and soul, may cheerfully accomplish those things that thou wouldest have done." The Epistle is apparently chosen as an illustration of the festivity of Christ's kingdom, in which the sensual pleasures connected with heathen rites are superseded by the psalms and hymns and spiritual songs of Divine worship, which, in the best ages of the church, has always been made up, for the most part, of singing and making melody to the Lord, and is ever consecrated by the "giving of thanks," the offering made in the Holy Eucharist to God the Father, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ. Of this latter, as well as of the call of the Jews and Gentiles, and the final marriage supper of the Lamb in Heaven, the Gospel ought to be interpreted, and it is so applied in the exhortation to the Holy Communion.

It has been much disputed, what is to be understood as the wedding garment, spoken of in the parable. The Romanists have been eager to press this passage into their service, in the controversy concerning the relative value of faith and charity. They assert that the guest must have had faith or he would not have been present at the feast, and therefore it must have been charity, in which he was deficient. But in saying this, they are taking advantage of the double meaning of the word faith, and playing off the occasional use of it as a bare assent to the truth, against St. Paul's far deeper use of the word, when it is only in the latter use of it that any would assign this guest's exclusion to his wanting faith. If we were required to decide between faith and charity, as that which was intended by the wedding garment, we must unquestionably accept the former, as infinitely the deepest and truest, since the flower may be said to be contained in the root, but not the root in the flower, and so charity may be said to be contained in true faith rather than faith in charity. St. Ignatius called the two, "the beginning and the end of life: faith the beginning, and charity the end."

The wedding garment then is

righteousness in its largest sense, the adornment of the new and spiritual man,—including the faith without which it is impossible to please God, and then holiness without which no man shall see Him, or, like His guest, shall only see him to perish at His presence:—it is the faith which is the root of all graces, the mother of all virtues; and it is likewise those graces and those virtues themselves. "Let us contemplate this guest," says Archbishop Trench, "as a self-righteous person, who is making and trusting in a righteousness of his own, instead of believing in a righteousness of Christ's, imputed and imparted,—or let us see in him a more ordinary sinner, who with the Christian profession and privileges is yet walking after the lusts of the flesh in unholiness and sin, in either case the image holds good:—he is rejecting something, even the true robe of his spirit, which has been truly given to him at his baptism; and which, if he has since let go, he may yet, on the strength of that gift, freely at any moment claim:—he is a despiser, counting himself good enough merely as he is in himself, in the flesh, and not in the spirit, to appear in the presence of God."

## THE PROPHET DANIEL.

This was the man greatly beloved under the old dispensation, as St. John was the beloved disciple under the new. To the one was communicated besides other revelations, the most definite prophecy of the time of Messiah's first appearance on earth, and to the other the fullest account of the events in the Christian dispensation, that shall immediately precede the manifestation of the "latter day glory." It is most likely on account of the fact that his prophecies point to the exact period when Jesus appeared as the Christ, the Anointed One, and that he therefore gives the most incontestable proofs that they must have rejected the Messiah, that the later Jews do not reckon Daniel among the prophets. In this respect however, they contradict the statements of the more ancient among them. Josephus calls him "one of the greatest of the prophets," and says that he not only foretold future things, which was common to him with other prophets, but also prefixed a time for their coming to pass." To a Christian, our Saviour's authority is decisive in the matter. In St. Matt. xxiv. 15, he expressly calls Daniel a prophet, wherein he likewise, without a doubt, spoke the belief of the Jews of that day. And if we consider the greatness and importance of some of his prophecies, wherein he plainly points out the time of Christ's coming and of his sufferings, and the large extent and grandeur of his other prophecies; as when he gives an account of the four great monarchies of the world, we can have no hesitation in considering him to