

# The Western Churchman

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## PUBLISHERS' NOTICE.

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## THE ARCHBISHOP'S LAST SERMON

Last words are always precious. The visit of Dr. Benson, the late Archbishop of Canterbury, to Ireland, will for many a day linger in the memories of Irish churchmen and churchwomen in every land, and so we need no excuse for the republication of his last sermon, preached in Armagh Cathedral. His Grace chose as his text, Rev. I. 1, "The Revelation of Jesus Christ."

"St. John has well called his book the Apocalypse of Jesus Christ. It is the presence of Christ as living in this world which is unveiled in it scene after scene. In it the power of Christ is again and again threatened, the light of Christ is again and again in eclipse, and crisis after crisis that kingdom and light are re-established and re-established and renewed, through conflict, suffering and darkness, from His resurrection to the final reunion with Himself of saved

and purified humanity. He only is shown forth in the Apocalypse as the one principle of progress, the one principle of liberty. The unveiling, the revelation, the Apocalypse of Christ is so completely the subject of The whole book that after the title no form of the word unveiling recurs in it. It is constantly used to describe an unveiling which should be progress for every soul, as well as the whole world. For most of us there are crisis of unbelief—eclipses of Christ. There are reassertions, recoveries, restorations, before we can become wholly His, and before He is wholly ours. St. Peter speaks of such an unveiling of Christ to our mind as proceeding steadily by means of grace, which streams out from God upon our disciplined thought and sober hope. He bids us trust upon the grace which is borne in on us in the unveiling of Jesus Christ. St. Paul dwells on a spirit of unveiling which enables us to realize divine facts more vividly, to perceive their bearings, and to reach true conclusions as to what the power of Christ really is what His present energy is, what His church was meant to be, and actually is, in relation to the physical and moral world. No one who reads his lofty prayer which he tells the Ephesians he offered constantly for them, can question that he taught that a tone of mind is attainable by us to which Christian truth grows daily plainer, deeper and fuller; that it is a tone able to strengthen our moral and intellectual power, while it belongs itself to a higher spiritual region above and beyond both. He prayed that they might be able to comprehend what is length and breadth and depth and height and to know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge; that they might be filled with all the fulness of God. Now, my dear friends, there are three kinds of unveiling of which I would like to speak: to you this afternoon, three kinds of unveiling which are always going on—the unveiling of Jesus Christ personally to us; the unveiling of Christ's exotics if we are observant and the unveiling of our selves to those who watch us from the other world. What St. Paul says about the things which he wishes should be unveiled to us, is a simple appeal to facts—to facts which are within the capacity of almost all to ascertain, who will give themselves with a perfectly simple earnestness

of mind, to rule their lives, to keep their conscience pure and unviolated, who will place themselves in the presence of and surrender themselves to the influence of Jesus Christ. Most of us are really conscious how much clearer our vision would become if we were always perfectly sincere in listening to conscience, perfectly manly in following and obeying, and perfectly independent of fashion and opinion. There may be those and I cannot account for it, who are not sensitive to spiritual impressions, but there are many more who know what spiritual impressions are, but who do not realize them with force, and many more still, who do know and who do realize them, and yet do not know fully how high and how close are the relationships into which they have been brought by those impressions. And yet this ungrasped thing this carelessly handled thing, is the power of the Gospel; this half-perceived light is the light of the world. The promise of the Holy Ghost is the promise to us of a Divine Companion—"I go away, but I will send Him unto you." There are those who do not know or see Him, but ye know Him, for He dwelleth with you and shall be in you.' It is so possible to be interested in His teaching; it is so possible that even our hearts may burn within us as that teaching penetrates us, and even then our eyes may be hold; so that we do not know who this strange Companion this Divine talker is. How does it come to us? Some one has talked with us, some one has read to us, some one has lodged words of St. John or St. Paul, or Christ in a sacred corner of our hearts which has been opened by a grief or by a love, or by something keener than either, and we would not for anything part with what we have so seen and known. Have we not noticed how the Divine Companion delights in the companionship of good men with each other? The companionship of two young soldiers, David and Jonathan, is the most tenderly described episode in the Old Testament. It was when two friends sat together in the country inn, when the evening walk and talk had been enjoyed, and they had pressed their unknown friend to stay, it was then in the social act when He blessed the bread and divided it, it was then their eyes were opened and they knew Him. It was when some disciples were gathered together pray-