

gifts of grace which He has willed that we should so receive. From the cradle to the grave she is ever ready to comfort us in sorrow, to strengthen us in weakness, to support us in every effort after a higher life. Her voice is never weary of telling us the Old Old Story of the love and mercy of Christ, her hand never ceases to point to Him, the Way, the Truth, the Life. She holds the Cross of the Crucified, uplifted in the sight of all men, and by the power of that Cross teaches them to overcome the World, the Flesh, and the Devil.

And when we look back through the ages and see how in her the power of her Lord has been shown forth; when we grasp the fact that though the human element in her has been marred by error, by weakness, by faithlessness, yet the Divine life has never been quenched, and that she is to-day essentially that Church which He left as His Witness in the world, we cannot but be thrilled with the thought that we, even we, should, by the grace of GOD, be reckoned among her members.

Very proud should we be, yet very humble! proud of our old historic Church, to whom that wondrous promise was made—"Lo I am with you always, even to the end of the world; but humble, oh how deeply so! when when we reflect upon our own unworthiness. "Ye are the salt of the earth," said Jesus to his disciples, "but if the salt have lost his savor, wherewith shall it be salted?" and again: "Let your light so shine before men that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven."

### GRADUAL GROWTH OF THE BIBLE.

THE earliest form in which a "Bible" was known, was in that of "the Law," a comprehensive name for the five books which, about 300 years before our Lord, began to be called "the Pentateuch" or five-fold volume. While the twelve tribes of Israel were united as one nation, and up to the time of the Babylonish Captivity, these five books (written continuously as one,) formed the Jewish Scriptures. The ten tribes who separated carried with them these Scriptures, and never allowed any other writings to be added to them. They were written in the ancient Hebrew character, which is now called "Samaritan," and the *Samaritan Pentateuch* is externally, the representative of the Holy Scriptures possessed by the Jews during the most important part of their history as a nation.

But before the captivity, Hezekiah caused other sacred writings to be collected together, though not to be added to the "Law"; and after the Captivity, Ezra and Nehemiah, under direction, collected all those which are now reckoned by the Church of England among the number of Canonical Books of the Old Testament, recopied them uniformly in the Chaldaic character (that now known as Hebrew), and arranged them in three divisions, namely (1) the Law, (2) the Prophets, (including "the former and the latter"), and (3) the Holy Writings, sometimes called generally "the Psalms," from the book with which they commenced. All the Hebrew books of the Holy Bible were thus put together