

Lambeth was that considerable dilution of the wine, in the case of persons to whom stronger might be morally dangerous.

"TWO AND TWO BEFORE HIS FACE."

"After these things, the Lord appointed other seventy also, and sent them two and two before His face into every city and place whither He Himself would come."

Conscious of it or not, agencies are at work in us to make ready if we only will, for the entrance of the Lord of the heart into His home and dwelling-place there. Having created us for Christian service, as the true end and real glory of our being, our Father takes pains to fit and fashion us for that destiny, with all its honor and all its joy. By secret influences, untraceable as the wind that bloweth where it listeth, silently pressing on the springs of feeling and principle within us; by strange sorrows and misgivings there, by hours of uneasiness not explained; by sharp twinges of conscience; by open providences, prosperous or painful . . . this process of personal preparation is in continual operation. We ourselves are the cities and places whither He would come. He wants us, and He would have us with Him. . . . This is the Divine reality of our human life, and it throws over its common things one of their tenderest and most earnest aspects. Nothing is separate from this blessed plan; and so nothing is insignificant. Even the commonplace, in God's view, however it may be with ours, are parts of the formation of character. They are always teaching what manner of person we ought to be. The voice of the wilderness rings through them,—“Prepare ye the Lord's way.” He knows of each one of us whether the door is open or shut. And by one touch or another He will open it, unless we would rather die than live.

All our approaches to full religious truth, to spiritual power, or holiness, or peace, are gradual. The best are not best at once, any more than the very bad are worst at once. The towns and cottages of Palestine must hear a little about the Messiah before they see Him, and get used to His name “Is not this He that should come?” Not Elias, not one of the old prophets,—but everybody's Friend, the Saviour of publicans and labouring men, of sinning women, and of the little child. Were our ears open, we should hear about Him in other voices than those of sermons. Childish instruction is one of them, including all the little morsels of Christian knowledge that are scattered in the houses of the people. Many of them are but crude and broken bits; the information is scanty and one-sided; it is mixed with false theories and mistaken impressions; but there it is,—some precept about prayer, some fragment of the New Testament narrative, some text committed to memory, some names of saints, some verses of a hymn. Even in households not very religious, or in streets, or in secular schools, these crumbs of the sacred Bread of Life are dropped; and they help to prepare the way. The children cry in the market-place, “Hosanna to the Son of David!” and they may be the more glad to greet Him and sit at His feet afterward.

Sunday-school teaching, imperfect as it is, goes before the face of Christ, and that is a reason why it ought to be more carefully and thoroughly done. If there is too little of Christ Himself there, there are at least His promises, His gifts, His praises from young lips, and knees bent to Him. All habits of daily devotion are a preparation for Christ. He may not be faithfully received, or confessed, or followed; yet the practice of saying something often to God, “through Jesus Christ our Lord,” keeps a private by path where His holy feet may walk at any time, in some season of penit-

ence, or agony, or under the shadow of a cross.—Bishop Huntington.

"EPISCOPACY A DIVINE INSTITUTION."

(Notes of a Lecture by Rev. Wm. Matchette, Kildollagh, Coleraine, on the late Dean Boyd's "Episcopacy.")

REPLIES TO THREE PRESBYTERIAN OBJECTIONS TO "DIVERS ORDERS" IN THE MINISTRY.

1. "Forbidden by our Lord" (St. Matt. xx. 25, and parallel passages in St. Mark and St. Luke) —“The princes of the Gentiles, &c., it shall not be so among you.”

Reply.—This is no argument at all. The design of the passage is to restrain the worldly-mindedness of the disciples. But how this can mean that all the ministers of the Church are to be equal, is beyond comprehension.

2. "The same titles are given in the New Testament to all ministers."

Reply.—Admitted; but yet this is not a proof that the officers and offices were the same. Words change; thus the term "angel," which originally meant a "messenger," was in time restricted to God's peculiar order of spiritual messengers. Also, the term "apostle" originally meant a person sent on any business (Rom. xvi. 7; 2 Cor. viii. 23). Etymology proves nothing in the face of facts. The question is not the shadowy, unsubstantial, and unreal one of words and titles, but of things—offices and duties. St. John calls himself an elder (presbyter). Does this prove that he was not an apostle?

3. "In the New Testament the ministers were equal in rank."

Reply.—No! for the Apostles were the ordainers and rulers; and the fact that St. Paul delegated his ordaining and ruling powers to another—as Timothy and Titus—proves that the office was not peculiar to his apostolic character, but was to be continuative.

(N.B.—Of those three objections, viewed as arguments, the first is unsustainable the second a sophism, the third defective.)

FOUR PROOFS FOR EPISCOPACY.

1. From Reason. The great Head of the Church must not have intended to leave her government to chance or expediency. Such has never been the character of God's proceedings: instance the Jewish Church polity. His ways are not capricious; His plans are not perfection in one age and "monstrous absurdities" in another. Lay side by side the divine government of the Jewish Church and that ordained by our Blessed Lord:—

Old Testament	New Testament (Gospels).
One Lawgiver.	One Lawgiver.
12 Princes (Num. i. 16).	12 Apostles.
70 Elders.	70 Disciples.

Was there not design here? Thus we see—

II. Our Lord ordained imparity of ministers—viz, 12 apostles and 70 elders. Their commission was different: the 12 were sent into all world; the 70 into those places whither our Lord would come. The Apostles were "with Christ," witnessed His ascension, &c.

Eusebius, Jerome, and Epiphanius assert that Matthias was one of the 70.

Conclusion—Presbyterianism then was not the system ordained by the Great Head of the Church.

III. Government in the Apostolic Age (to end of first century):—

APOSTLES—Rulers, Ordainers (Acts xiv. 23; Acts xx. 17—35; 3 St. John 9, 10).

PRESBYTERS—Pastors and Teachers.

DEACONS—Assistants to Presbyters.

Circumstances did not permit of "apostolic episcopacy" being "diocesan"; but whether Episcopacy was general or local does not affect the question. The point that settles it is that

the Apostles ordained and ruled the Presbyters. We have moreover an instance of diocesan Episcopacy in this age—viz, that of St. James in the Church of Jerusalem, and early writers confirm this.

Conclusion:—Presbyterianism was not the system ordained by the Apostles.

Note—The fact of St. Paul's appointing Timothy and Titus to ordain and rule establishes the point that the inspired men of apostolic times intended the institution of Episcopacy to be permanent. The only Presbyterian retreat from this conclusion is the assertion that Timothy and Titus were only evangelists, itinerant missionaries. But where is the proof? None! They exercised the office of Apostle (=our Bishop), enjoyed the authority, and were recognised by antiquity as such.

IV. Early Church writers bear unequivocal testimony to our episcopacy, such as Polycarp Clement, Ignatius. Irenæus says "Polycarp was appointed Bishop by the Apostles." The names and lists of the Bishops of many Churches, especially of Asia Minor, are preserved by Eusebius and other ancient writers.

Conclusion—There is no alternative to an opponent of Episcopacy but either to admit that it was introduced by our Lord and His Apostles, or to deny its existence altogether.

—Irish Ecclesiastical Gazette.

THE SEASON OF ADVENT.

The Advent season falls at a time when the public mind is least prepared to heed its lessons or enter into its spirit. To many it is but the porch where they impatiently wait for the opening of the doors to let out the light, the music and the flower perfumed air of Christmas. It comes when the winter activity of gaiety and business is just swelling to the full tide and before men are sated and jaded as they are when Lent comes with its wholesome and welcome resting spell.

But Advent is a thought which ought to exercise a far more potent influence than it does. It is not a remembrance merely, it is an annual prophecy of what is far too much forgotten or too widely disbelieved. It is the prophecy and the Church's acceptance of the prophecy of the Lord's return in judgment. It is the one thought which it were well for Christians to have even in mind, because far beyond the force of the fear of endless retribution should be the force of the fear of righteous judgment. The mind cannot take in the eternity of loss and woe, but even the humblest mind can take in the idea of judgment, of absolute and instantaneous accountability. To answer for the deeds done in the body is an Advent thought, surely one which might well arrest the course of sin.

Again, we may think of this season as one wherein a man, looking deep into his soul, and realizing that Christ does the same, judges Himself impartially and in all humbleness. The scales fall upon his eyes; the estimate put upon his life and character by lenient or mistaken friends, his self opinion, insidiously tempered by the world's judgment, these are set aside and he confesses his weakness and imperfection because there shines before his eyes the perfect ideal of the coming Lord. Not in fear alone, but with a sad humility that is lit up by a divine hope, he listens for the Coming and resolves that for the future he will remember that there is One who penetrates the innermost secrets of his soul and who while He unerringly discerns what is wrong and unworthy, nevertheless has always on His face the light of an infinite compassion.

The Advent season, then, has in it the stern but salutary lesson of inevitable judgment, and the sweeter suggestion of a Saviour who, while he comes to judge, comes also to comfort, heal and inspire.