

patronage in respect of churches which they or their ancestors had founded, and the right to worship in their parish churches. Now, all these rights and liberties which had been growing, were ratified and confirmed by Magna Charta as the law of the land. I do not well see how any church could be more fully established by law than was the Church of England prior to the Reformation. It is by some people assumed that the Church of England was made at the Reformation a department of the State, like the Army and Navy. But that is not true. The Church is no more a department of the State since the Reformation than it was before that event. The clergy are not paid directly or indirectly by the State since the Reformation any more than they were before. If a new church is required in any new district, the State does not build it, and appoint a clergyman, it has to be built and endowed by the voluntary efforts of churchmen in the same way as a Methodist or Independent church. The State cannot say to a clergyman go here or go there, as it can to its soldiers and sailors. If a soldier or sailor refuses such a command he is dismissed. A clergyman may say, (unless he be directly in the employ of the State, as for instance, an army chaplain), I prefer to stay where I am, and he can do so with impunity. It is true that the Crown, as representing the laity, nominates the bishops, but the choice of the Crown is restricted to members of the Church of England in good standing. Prior to the Reformation the Pope encroached on this right of the sovereign, but the statutes I referred to in my former letter show, that long prior to the Reformation, this was regarded by the English people as an usurpation. The right of the sovereign to nominate bishops seems to stand very much on the same ground as the right of private patronage. The sovereign usually founded and endowed the see and his right to be its patron followed. Whatever may be thought of that principle now-a-days, on the whole it has not worked badly, and is undoubtedly of great antiquity.

I must also object to your assertion that the Church of England cannot be despoiled because she does not hold her possessions as a corporate body. It is quite true she is not incorporated in gross, but she is incorporated in detail, not by any statute but by the common law of the realm which constitutes every bishop and parson a corporation sole. The very word parson means *persona ecclesie*. To say that the Church of England cannot be despoiled is a mere quibble. You might as well tell a person who had placed his money in the hands of a trustee, that the stealing of it from his trustee, would not have the effect of robbing him. You demur to the advocacy of the right of the Church of England to retain her possessions on mere legal grounds; but you must remember her rights are assailed on the ground of some pretended defect in her birth.

I do not fail to notice that the tenor of the *Week's* editorial was in favor of a reasonable compromise, but it appears to me that the public has a right to look to such newspapers as the *Week* to discuss this question from a higher plan than mere expediency.

The friend who advises us, when the burglar is at our door, to throw out our watch and purse and a few spoons by way of compromise in the hope that having got so much of our property he will leave us in peaceable possession of the rest, is no doubt a judicious friend whose advice deserves careful consideration. At the same time we expect our friend who is informed of the intended burglarious raid, to do his utmost to prevent it, and though the burglar may assure him that he is acting from the sincere conviction "that all property is robbery," yet we expect our friend as far as possible to make him amenable to that law which says in plain and explicit terms "Thou shalt not steal." This the *Week* does not fail to do unflinchingly when the rights of private individuals or civil corporations are concerned; but when it comes to discuss the same principles in their application to the Church of England, it seems to lose its backbone.

GEO. S. HOLMSTED.

SKETCH OF LESSON.

1ST SUNDAY IN LENT.

FEBRUARY 27TH, 1887.

The Journey.—The Bitter and the Sweet.

Passage to be read.—Exodus xv. 22-27.

How pleased young people are to meet any one who has travelled! How they hang on his words as he describes the incidents of his journey; this place associated with pleasant memories; that with discomfort, or perhaps danger. In this lesson we begin to read of the travels of the Israelites; we shall find that they had "ups and downs," and that all was not plain sailing with them, yet that day by day they were cared for during the forty years wherein God "led His people like a flock by the hand of Moses and Aaron" (Psalm lxxvii. 20).

I. *A Taste of the Bitter* (verses 22-24). 1. In the wilderness of Shur. After the thanksgiving song of the Israelites in which they expressed their faith, hope and love for Him who had brought them safely

over the sea, they joyfully commenced their long journey towards the Promised Land. A sandy desert had to be crossed. Even in the month which corresponded to our April the heat and drought would be felt. With what care would they see that all their leathern skins for holding water were filled. They travel for three days; the water is getting scarce. We can picture to ourselves the anxious faces of the older people as they see the dry parched lips and hear the cry for water. At length the sight of a grove of palm trees in the distance fills all hearts with joy, for surely there must be water there.

2. *At Marah*. Yes, they are not deceived, water is there in plenty. What joy! They dip their vessels into it and put it to their lips. Why do they not take a copious draught? Oh, horror! it is bitter, and unfit to drink. In anger and despair they crowd round Moses, saying, "What shall we drink?" How "soon they forgot His works, they waited not for His counsel" (Psalm cvi. 18). Moses did what the people should have done, "He cried unto the Lord," verse 25. Compare Psalm xviii. 6.

II. *A Draught of the Sweet* (verses 25-27). 1. *At Marah*. God heard Moses, and directed him to cut down a certain tree and cast it into the water. Immediately it became sweet, so that the people could drink it. Surely they will not murmur after this display of God's care and love for them.

2. *At Elim*. Refreshed and rested they passed on to Elim, where they had plenty of good water and grateful shade, and there they pitched their tents.

III. *Israel's Portion*. In thus healing the water God explained to the Israelites that now at the outset of their journey they should understand what He required of them—obedience (verse 56). If they gave him this, He gave them in return His promise that they should not see, as the Egyptians had done, blessings turned to curses. If they walked with Him as obedient children, they would find the Healer always with them, for "I am the Lord that healeth." Without Him it would be Marah, with Him Elim.

So with the Christian life. We must not expect to be free from trials, sickness, disappointments. These are the lot of all. But there is healing too: in every trial, sweetness, so long as Christ is obeyed. See the assurance (St. Matt. xxviii. 20), "I am with you always;" the promise (Rom. viii. 32), "freely give us all things;" the condition (St. John xv. 7), "if ye abide in Me." So shall we find the bitter turned to sweet. Christ is the "Tree of Life," "the leaves of the tree are for the healing of the nations" (Rev. xxii. 2).

Family Reading.

ON THE SUDDEN DEATH OF THE REV. W. R. FORSTER.

The day was full of calm and blessed thoughts, And gathering night fell crisp, and cold, and clear, Upon the peaceful vale, where Claverleigh Neath lofty hills, all crowned with Farmer's fields, And forests fair, lies nestling on its bright Plateau; near which mad river murmurs bye. While down the valley far, the sparkling stars Shone out, with glittering light; and through the gorge,

Not far away the whistling train wept by. And all the air around was musical, With tingling bells, as farmers westward drove To their far homes upon the spreading hills. And in the peaceful home at Claverleigh, All hearts were glad and faces bright with smiles, For Christlike was the household gathered there; And God had crowned, long days and years of prayer, And patient toil, with glad success that day; A temple, not unworthy His great name, Who comes to meet his people there, stands now A joy complete, a gladness evermore.

And so with gleeful hearts they hasten down The vale, to offer up their thankful praise To God Most High for His great goodness come. And as they sang the Priest, who led their song, The Father and the light of that glad home, Stooped down and spake in accents soft and low "My heart is welling up with deep desire The glory full of God, unveiled to see, By him to stand in that glad home of love, Where He Himself is light and temple fair."

"Sing,
Nearer My God to thee,
Nearer to thee."

The music ceased, and then that loving voice That spake so oft of yore, speaks once again, In tones of love, of which his heart was full. The peace of God, surpassing all that men Can dream or think, fell from his loving lips Upon their hearts, and all again was still. Then out into the night, with steadfast step, He hastened on that faithful friend and priest,
Nearer oh God to thee,
Nearer to thee.

For turning tow'ards his home so fondly lov'd
The darkness fell upon his waking eyes,
And then the veil was lifted up, and light,
Surpassing all that earth had ever seen,
Fell broad and strong upon his passing soul,
And bathed him in its gladdening waves profound,
Oh strange and bright that instant change for him.
And yet to him it seems but his own home
Transformed, and glad beyond all earthly joy,
For close beside him stands his own fair boy
Who died two years ago, but now has grown
To man's estate; and he who in his youth
Had passed long since behind the veil, was there,
And then an ever-growing throng of those
Whose trembling hands he once had held in his,
And guided up the narrow way of life
To the very gate of Paradise the blest;
A throng so glad and bright in life set free,
That through his soul it thrilled with deepest joy.
And then, beyond the brightness of the sun,
There fell upon that throng the full glad Light
Of God and of the Lamb; and so before
One beat of earthly time has past, he stands
More near to God Incarnate, there unveiled,
Than e'er while here on earth he dreamt could be.
And oh the thrill of joy and yet of pain
That through his being swept at sight of Him
The Holy One and Just—of pardoning grace
So full. Oh how unworthy there to stand,
He felt, till round his soul there passed the full
Enfolding life of Jesus Christ the Lord.
At touch of His all-cleansing hand each stain
Of sin was gone, and all within was pure.
And yet he had not passed from earth away,
For those he loved were there beside him still,
And he among his children standing near.
But wherefore now, their grief and terror wild,
The heaving breast and streaming eye and hands
Stretched out in agony? And wherefore she
The gentle patient loving wife, helpmate
Of long glad years of growing wedded love,
Who ne'er had spoke one angry, chiding word
To him or his, but ever guided all
With gentle speech and loving watchful care;
Who joyed in all his joys and more than half
His sorrow bore; why now that riven face
And trembling frame with deep distress bowed down?
In strange surprise on that bright world and this
Of gathering gloom, he gazed with wonder deep
Until upon his own pale face so cold
His wandering vision fell, and then the thought
I'm dead and they are left in that dark world
Alone, and so in trembling awe his soul
Shrank back from its deep joy so lately found
And falling prostrate at the feet of Him,
Whose love was thrilling all his being through,
He prayed aloud that he might leave his own
Exulting bliss and go again to glad
Their breaking hearts, and stay their falling tears.
And then His voice, in whose enfolding love
He stood so near to God, upon his ear
Like running waters fell in accents soft
And low. Those whom I love I chasten thus
And scourge with rods of pain, that they may learn
From earthly bliss to turn their hearts away,
And find in my glad presence near a joy
So full and deep that all of gladness earth
Can give, is but the shadow cast before
Of gladness welling up at my right hand
Forevermore, in that fair world where thou
And they shall meet ere many suns have set.
Oh wouldst thou have them miss the crown of life
And forfeit now their own high place in Heaven?
The time is brief, until the furnace heat
Of this affliction sore shall have refined
Them all as gold in fire is made more pure,
Then they in radiance brighter than the sun
Shall shine at my right hand for evermore.
And now with calm unswerving trust he turns
That loved one lost awhile, to Him whose strength
Supreme, and love unmeasured, great, he saw
Was doing all, yea more a thousand fold,
Than he had ever dreamt to do for those
He loved, and as he felt himself upborne
In that enfolding strength around him cast
And thrilled all through and through with love so vast
And deep 'in Christ Himself' and Christ in him.
All his in Christ and so most near to God.
Yea, nearer now to Him, than e'er before.
With loving trust profound he gives them up
To God. And evermore at morning prime
And as the darkness falls, yea all day long
With beating pulse of love he pleads with Him
In whom he lives, to guard from Satan's wiles
And guide in dangers hour, his loved ones here
And so the bond which death had seemed to snap
In twain, is closer bound than e'er before
For those whom he has loved and left awhile,
Call him to mind in every prayer of theirs,
And cry from hearts of deepest love outpoured:
O Father, grant to him eternal rest,
And on him let Thy light perpetual shine;
Oh make him glad in Paradise the blest,
And in the judgment day declare him Thine.

—JOHN LANGTRY.