

ENGLAND.

THE SYNOD OF EXETER.

(Concluded from our last.)

Second day.—Thursday.

After Divine Service, the Synod resumed its sittings at Eleven o'clock, in the Chapter-house. The attendance was fully as great as that of yesterday.

The Lord Bishop, having taken his seat, proceeded to say that the great business of the day was the consideration of the Declaration on Baptism, with certain modifications, which he had printed since yesterday.

The Synod then proceeded to the consideration of this important document. The discussion upon it was very brief, and most harmonious, having relation merely to the phraseology employed in the first and second paragraphs. Eventually it was carried unanimously, on the motion of the Rev. Prebendary Oxenham, who delivered a very able speech, seconded by the Rev. Mr. Downall, of Oakhampton, and ably supported by the Rev. Prebendary Hole.

The following is a copy of the Declaration, as finally and unanimously adopted:—

DECLARATION I.

"We, the Bishop and Clergy of the Diocese of Exeter in Synod assembled, at this time deem it necessary to declare our firm and immoveable adherence to this great article of the faith—"One baptism for the remission of sins," affirming it as it is authoritatively set forth in the Nicene Creed, by the II Ecumenical Council, has since been held by the Catholic Church in all ages and is taught unequivocally by our own Church in its authorized Formularies, especially in the Offices of Baptism, and in the Catechism; and we are rather induced to make this declaration, because we hope that many who are now divided from us may be brought to agreement by thus knowing the real meaning and extent of the doctrine which we hold.

Therefore we declare that—

I. Acknowledging "one baptism for the remission of sins," we hold as of faith, that all persons duly baptized, (and being adults, with fit qualifications,) are not only baptized once for all, but also are baptized with the one true Baptism of Him, who "baptizeth with the Holy Ghost," and who thus maketh us "to be born again of water and of the Spirit," delivers us thereby from the guilt and bondage of all our sins, of original and past sin absolutely and at once, of sins committed after Baptism conditionally, when, with hearty repentance and true faith we turn unto God.

We hold as implied in the aforesaid article of the Creed all the great graces ascribed to Baptism in our Catechism. For—"By one Spirit we are all baptized into one body," even the body of Jesus Christ. We are made to be "His body," members in particular of "His body," "members of Christ"—and being thus "baptized into Him, we were baptized unto His death," who "died for our sins." We are dead with Him, "dead unto sin," buried with Him in baptism, wherein also we are risen with Him, "quickened together with Him," "made to sit together in Heavenly places in Christ Jesus," "our life is hid with Christ in God." Believing that the Holy Ghost so joins us in baptism to Jesus Christ, that we are "in Him," "created in Christ Jesus." We believe, also, that we are children of God in Him, and "if children, then heirs—heirs of God, and joint heirs with Christ," inheritors of the Kingdom of Heaven.

II. We hold accordingly that all infants presented either in Church or privately, according to the Book of Common Prayer, and baptized with water, "in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost," do in, and by baptism "receive remission of sins by spiritual regeneration," and are made members of Christ, being spiritually engrained and incorporated into His mystical body; original sin being so far from an obstacle to the right reception of baptism that, as St. Augustine says, "Infants, because they are not as yet guilty of any actual sin, have the original sin that is in them, remitted through the grace of Him who saveth by the washing of regeneration;" and as our own Church declares, that the baptized child "being born in original sin, and in the wrath of God, is by the laver of regeneration in baptism received into the number of the children of God, and heirs of everlasting life, for our Lord Jesus Christ doth not deny His grace and mercy unto such infants, but most lovingly doth call them unto Him;" and in accordance herewith, the 27th Article expressly says that "the baptism of young children is most agreeable with the institution of Christ."

III. We hold, that the imparting of the aforesaid graces in the baptism of young children is not hypothetical, depending either on the sincerity of those who present them, or any other conditions; for else it would follow, that in cases in which the said conditions do not take place, both the form of baptism itself and the Article "One baptism for the remission of sins," must be understood not as true, but as false and unreal.

IV. Lastly, we hold, and would earnestly impress upon all Christians, that the foregoing statements, rightly understood, so far from disparaging the need of conversion and amendment, are a most powerful incentive to newness of life, and especially to fervent prayer for renewed or continued grace, as long as the term of our probation in this life shall last. For baptism being the ordinance and instrument of Christ, by which we are "born again of the Spirit," it binds us to do that which it enables us to do, "to walk in the Spirit, and not to fulfil the lusts of the flesh;" for "if we live after the flesh, we shall die, but if through the Spirit we do mortify the deeds of the body, we shall live." Baptism makes our "body" to be "the temple of the Holy Ghost, which is in us, which we have of God;" and if any man defile the temple of God, him shall God destroy, for the temple of God is holy." Wherefore it follows that they, who being baptized live not after the Spirit, but after the flesh, do thereby draw on themselves greater damnation, or if "by the grace of God they arise again," have need of the deeper repentance as having done despite to the Spirit which was in them."

The thrill of solemn delight which pervaded the Synod on the unanimous adoption of this important Declaration, stamped by the Bishop rising from his chair, and solemnly pronouncing "God be praised!" and followed by a unanimous "Amen," is a scene never to be forgotten.

EDUCATION.—The next subject for discussion was that of education according to the principles of the Church of England, including schools for the poor, middle schools, the Training College for Masters at Exeter, for Mistresses at Truro, and inspectors.

The Rev. Chancellor Harrington brought under the notice of the Synod the worth and position of the Diocesan Training College at Exeter.

In reply to a question from the Rev. Dr. Harris, the Rev. Chancellor Harrington stated that the estimated cost of building a new college was £7000. The Rev. gentleman concluded by moving:—

"That the Clergy of the Diocese of Exeter, in Synod assembled, duly appreciating the advantages which this Diocese has already received from the Diocesan Training College, and feeling confident, from the proficiency of the pupils, as evidenced by their late successful competition for certificates of merit, that the wants of this Diocese may be fully supplied by the Exeter Diocesan College, if duly supported, resolve to promote the interests of the Training College in our several Deaneries, through the medium of the local boards, by augmenting the funds applicable to the purposes of the College, by endeavouring to obtain pupils, and especially by recommending for admission pupil teachers and stipendiary monitors, who may have successfully completed their course of apprenticeship; and we further resolve to aid the Diocesan Board in their endeavour to erect a college capable of receiving an increased number of pupils."

The Rev. Prebendary Lyne seconded the resolution.

A discussion followed, in which the greatest desire was shown to forward the object by all the Clergy who engaged in it, in the course of which it was explained by the Chancellor that the College would only require to be inspected in order to receive the grants from Government, but that it would not come under the Management Clause.

The resolution was unanimously carried; after which the Lord Bishop stated that he had put down his name as a subscriber to the College for £100. He should rejoice to make that amount annual for the next five years in furtherance of the object, if he might humbly presume to look forward to so long a continuance of his life. (Applause.)

SCHOOL INSPECTION.—This subject, being allied to the last, was taken into consideration, it being introduced by the Rev. Mr. Sanders in a long and very able speech. The Rev. gentleman described the disadvantages and imperfections of the existing system, which, he stated, had occupied the attention of the Diocesan Board in relation to the schools in connection with it. The inspection, he contended, would never be effectual until it was made periodically and systematically. This, he shewed, was the intention of the Board from their first report, in order to extend and improve education among the people, whilst not interfering with the control and management of local boards in their respective schools. A temporary arrangement was in the first instance made, by which a committee, in conjunction with the several local boards, took upon themselves the duties of inspection for one year. The temporary arrangement, however, owing to different circumstances, had, with some slight modifications, been carried on up to this moment; till now it was extremely desirable that a better plan should be adopted. The existing plan embraced two classes of inspectors—Diocesan and local. The former were appointed by the Board, and the latter by the local board; and there had been much difficulty in obtaining them, so that an enormous amount of labour had been thrown upon the honorary secretary (the Rev. Chancellor Harrington) in writing letters only to persons requesting them to undertake the duty. The reverend gentleman then described, from papers which he laid before the Synod, the objects to which the intention of the inspectors should be specially directed, and observed that, whilst Church action was secured, the advantages efficiency and uniformity all over the Diocese were points of the last importance in promoting education. He concluded by moving the following resolution:—

"That on any vacancy occurring in the number of Diocesan Inspectors, whether clerical or lay, the Archdeacons of the respective Archdeaconries be requested by the Diocesan Board to recommend to them proper persons to whom the Board may make application for their consent to act as Inspectors."

The Rev. Dr. Cornish said he had great pleasure in seconding the resolution.

The Rev. Chancellor Harrington suggested, in answer to a statement that the Inspectors had in some instances been refused access to schools, that it might have been under an apprehension that the Inspectors had not the Bishop's sanction. The fact, however, was, that every Diocesan Inspector had his Lordship's sanction in writing.

In the course of an interesting discussion of considerable length, a number of practical considerations were suggested, which were maturely considered. Among them was the appointment of a paid Inspector or Inspectors, but the difficulty in the way of this was stated to be the want of funds, for an adequate remuneration. One or two Clergymen recommended two paid Inspectors, a portion of the expense to be defrayed by a small annual payment from each school. All these, and a variety of other incidental topics, were discussed in a most solemn and calm yet cordial tone, without the slightest approach to bitterness or division; and, after some time had been profitably spent in this way, the resolution was carried unanimously.

In connection with the subject of inspection, the Synod took into consideration the papers laid upon the table by Mr. Sanders, with the object of securing efficiency and uniformity. It was, however, considered expedient not to adopt any resolution having specific application to them; but the Synod unanimously agreed to the following resolution:—

"That this Synod has such confidence in the Diocesan Board of Education that they are ready to accept from the board the papers which they have drawn up for the guidance of Diocesan School Inspectors."

The resolution was agreed to on the motion of the Rev. W. Karlsake, seconded by the Rev. Prebendary Oxenham.

In reply to a question,

The Lord Bishop stated that, as he had already given his sanction to the visits to schools by the Diocesan Inspectors, he should be happy to do the same in respect to the local inspectors.

It was thereupon resolved unanimously, on the motion of the Rev. Mr. Sanders, seconded by the Rev. Mr. Karlsake:—

"That this Synod rejoices to find that the Bishop is in the habit of giving his sanction to Diocesan Inspectors, and is glad now to hear that the same sanction will be extended to the local Inspectors."

It was further resolved, on the motion of the Rev. Prebendary Woolcombe, seconded by the Rev. Mr. Howell:—

"That a proposal be made to the several masters and mistresses of Church Schools in the Diocese, that they offer themselves for examination, in order to hold certificates of merit from the Bishop, and that the details now submitted (these details of examination were exceedingly comprehensive) be referred to the Diocesan Board for their consideration."

On the motion of the Rev. Chancellor Harrington, seconded by the Rev. Sub-Dean Stephens, it was resolved:—

"That the several resolutions adopted this day by

the Synod, having reference to the Diocesan Board, be transmitted to the General Committee, with a request that the best attention of the Board be directed to the matters contained therein."

And it was also resolved, on the motion of the Rev. Mr. Gossett, seconded by the Rev. Dr. Coleridge:—

"That it is, in the opinion of this Synod, highly desirable that at least one paid Inspector be appointed for the Diocese, to co-operate with the local and Diocesan Inspectors."

CATECHISING.—The best mode of carrying out the requirements of the Church, as stated in the Rubrics and Canons.

The Lord Bishop said that the question was one of great importance in itself, and also because it was the first of those matters brought under the consideration of the Synod which had to do with the actual law and Rubric of the Church. It was one of a class of subjects upon which he was very glad to have the counsel and assistance of his Clergy. It was also one of the best things which the Synod could do to recommend that which, by their general experience and their general knowledge of the state of their parishes, was likely to be the best and most effectual mode of carrying out the duty of catechising into thoroughly good effect. He might have his own opinions upon the subject; but he had not been a parochial minister now for twenty years, and he never had been a parochial minister in this Diocese. His ministry had been in a vast mining district in the north of England. Under these circumstances he was not prepared to say what was the best practical mode of dealing with the question; and therefore, he entreated the advice of his Clergy for his own guidance, for guidance was necessary, inasmuch as the law of the Church, which it was his duty to execute as far as he could, was involved in the case. He ventured to suppose that the Synod would not go the length of an absolute vote that the directions of the Rubric and the Canon should be carried into entire and strict effect. He ventured to say, also, that they would not come to a vote deciding that question.—They would probably rather come to a vote in which they would express their own views of the way in which it would be practically and discreetly carried out as far as possible. So much for an object which he might say was extrinsic, as prescribed by the law of the Church; at all events, they must look at this matter of the law of the Church with some caution.—They could not presume to decide its full and strict execution; and they would probably be unwilling to commit themselves to a recommendation of absolutely, strictly, and immediately carrying it out in all its details.

He would now say a few words upon the importance of catechising itself. He appealed to the knowledge of the Synod, which was more complete than his own, whether it was not the most efficient element in the whole of their ministry? He believed it to be so. The best catechist would generally be found the best general teacher in his own parish. The qualities for a good catechist were of no common kind; but they were at the same time, qualities that could be attained by attention and practice; and he believed, if the Clergy would give themselves very specially to the consideration of the best and most effective mode of catechising, they would have the satisfaction of finding that, as they improved as catechists, they would also improve in their knowledge of the great truths which they had to impress upon the people. He had endeavoured, in charging his Deacons, especially to impress upon them that it was their immediate duty to teach the children their catechism; that under the direction of their incumbents, it was their duty to do all they could, and to make it their earnest occupation, particularly during their Diaconate, to learn the best way of executing that important office of the ministry into which they had been introduced.—He ventured to entreat all his Clergy to assist in this great object. If he used strong words, he could only say they were words not stronger than had been used upon the same subject by men infinitely superior to himself. Bishop Burnet said of the Church Catechism:—"It is to be considered as the most solemn declaration of the sense of the Church, since that is the doctrine in which we instruct all her children." There was undeniable truth in this; and he thought the undeniable inference from this truth was, that it was their special duty to learn to catechise well if they could. Stillinger distinctly said that catechising must be considered as the peculiar glory of the Reformation. Before the Reformation there was hardly any catechising. Stillinger did not, however, mean to say that there was literally none, but that it was very slight. One of the glories of the Reformation was the introduction of the practice of catechising. He need not mention what great Divines among us had given all their energies, learning, and powers, to teach the Catechism well. He might mention, however, Hammond, Nicholson, and others, whose works were rich upon the subject. He might call attention to the works of another Divine, who yielded to no man that the English Church had ever produced in piety and goodness, and to not many in intellect. He did not mean to put him among the highest order of intellects, but he did mean to put him out as one of the most valuable examples that a Clergyman could have, and as one of the highest authorities upon the subject. He referred to Bishop Kenn. There was also Bishop Wilson. Bishop Wilson had an application made to him to allow a Sermon to be introduced at Evening Prayer instead of the Catechism, but he declined, it would in a great measure set aside the expressed duty of catechising, which he said was bound upon the Clergy by laws, Canons, and Rubrics; and because, if performed, as it should be, with seriousness and painstaking in explaining the several parts of the Catechism, it would be of more use to the souls, both of the learned and the ignorant, than the best sermon ever preached from the pulpit. (Hear, hear.) He confessed that this conviction of Bishop Wilson had his entire assent. Bishop Wilson went on to say, in his Charge of 1747, that in every one of their early meetings (for they had Diocesan Synods in the little Diocese of Man) he had occasion to insist upon the duty and necessity of catechising in the Church during Divine Service—that it was as binding as laws, Canons, and conscience could make it upon every Minister. This was a truth not to be questioned. He would only trouble the Synod with a practical remark, which, however, must be obvious to all of them; it was that, where the work was well done (not where it was carelessly or cursorily done), with preparation and care; where too much was not done at once, but where the Minister resolved fully to understand every clause and sentence of the Catechism, he believed there was no one practice more instructive to the people or more satisfactory to the Clergyman. (Hear, hear.) From experience he ventured to affirm that parents took great delight in hearing their children asked questions, and in having their intellect exhibited before their neighbours. A more effectual engine in the hands of the Clergy for exciting greater regard for the high truths of Christianity in all

their people—particularly in the hands of the rustic Clergy—could not be adopted than that of carrying out the practice of catechising as far as possible. (Hear, hear.)

The Rev. Mr. Yule expressed great gratification at the observations of the Right Rev. Prelate. He had been himself ordained by the late Bishop Carey, and afterwards appointed to a Lectureship in the extreme east of the county, founded by a distinguished family, for the purpose of catechising either at or after Evening Service. He held it nearly two years, and he could bear testimony to the great benefit which resulted to his people, especially to the poorer classes, from the practice. His successor, Bishop Metcalfe, held the Lectureship for a year, and he had also borne testimony to the great value of catechising in public during Service.

The Rev. Mr. Caryon moved the following resolution:—"Whereas the duty of catechising upon Sundays and holidays, after the Second Lesson at Evening Prayer, is enjoined by the law of this Church and realm; and whereas, in our opinion, the neglect of this duty has allowed ignorance and error on the first principles of our faith to grow and prevail; it seems to us that the practice of catechising is binding upon "the Curate of every parish," and should be carried out so far as each in his discretion shall judge to be most edifying to the congregation wherein he ministers."

He was himself deeply impressed with the importance of the practical influence of catechising upon the spiritual interests of their flock; and therefore he wished to obtain his Lordship's sanction and encouragement in further carrying it out to a limited extent. His Lordship's observations had relieved his mind upon the subject, and he felt sure that the opinion of the Synod would concur in the resolution. He did not dwell so much upon the binding character of the law of the Church upon the subject, but it was a relief to his conscience to be able to carry out the duty further than he had done; but he should rest his observations upon the spiritual importance of catechising, especially to the poor. His own experience in large parishes upon the subject was completely borne out by testimony and opinions adduced by his Lordship. Extreme ignorance prevailed among the poor, especially as to the first principles of faith. They preached day after day upon them; yet, on going to the colleges of their people, they found they had left no impression upon their hearts. But catechising led them to reflect and reason; it induced them to apply to their individual cases those great points which the Minister wished to bring before them. On these grounds he desired to have the sanction of such a declaration as that he had proposed. But, on the other hand, he admitted that they should proceed with caution.—There were difficulties and obstacles in the way, and he also felt that great personal qualifications were required in those who undertook the duty of catechists. It required great coolness, much energy, and logical precision, all of which must be studied before a Clergyman could stand before his congregation as a catechist; because they wished, in teaching children in public, to reach the hearts of their parents. The universal establishment of Sunday schools seemed, in some measure, to have superseded positive compliance with the law in this respect. (No, no.) He said to some extent; but, at all events, it was a consideration which should weigh upon the other side of the balance, whilst they were discussing the obligation of catechising during Service, and especially where there was a certain distaste to it in the minds of the people. In some places it might not be popular at first to be brought before their flocks; but it would be their own fault, or it might be their own infirmity, if catechising continued to be distasteful or unpopular to the hearts and minds of their people. They must be prepared for it with deep thought and fervent prayer for God's blessing; and he was sure that if they set about the work with due qualifications in themselves, the greatest possible practical blessing would result, both to their people and to the Church, from the re-introduction of the duty. (Hear, hear.)

The Rev. Mr. Karlsake, sen., seconded the motion. His own ministry had now extended to a period of more than fifty years, and he could assure the Synod that, during thirty-four years of that time, there had been no dissent in his parish. A Sunday school was established at that time, on which he withdrew from catechising in the Church during service, as the people thought the Sunday school was sufficient. But from that day dissent had certainly grown in the parish till it had reached a considerable extent; and he as certainly attributed it to the fact of having relinquished catechising. He recollected now with great pleasure the satisfaction with which parents listened to their children, and masters and mistresses to their apprentices (for apprentices were placed in farm houses in those days), and observed the improvement which they made; and he verily believed, from his experience as a Minister, though unhappily he was never able to catechise well, that a renewal of the practice would have a very powerful effect in keeping a knowledge of the faith in the recollection both of the young and the old. (Hear.)

The Ven. Archdeacon Moore Stevens said he had never discontinued catechising in his parish, and he could testify to its great value. It excited an interest in the faith among all classes, whilst parents were naturally pleased when they observed their children answering well and properly.

The Rev. C. B. Bartholomew expressed his warm concurrence in the resolution, and said he had no doubt that God's blessing would rest upon the practice. But under present circumstances in some districts they must go on cautiously. They must not set themselves too directly against existing prejudices. At the same time, where there were proper materials, and, above all, where there was a Clergyman who had acquired the necessary preparation of the heart and the intellect (for such a duty required a combination of the very highest powers), he could anticipate none but the most excellent results, both to the people and to the Church. Under such circumstances, a steady and constant determination on the part of the Clergy to revive the system of catechetical instruction, and thereby to convey to the minds of the poor a knowledge of the truth, would, under God's blessing, be the most effective instrument in disseminating the true faith, which unhappily was now in danger from so many and from such opposing quarters.

The Rev. Dr. Harris inquired whether the exercise of catechising should absolutely supersede the afternoon sermon, or whether that was discretionary, as parochial Ministers might find expedient?

The Bishop replied that he desired to avoid prescribing an exact line of duty where it was obvious that from circumstances much must be left to the discretion of individual Ministers who knew their own parishes much better than he could pretend to do. But he