

THE FOURTH SUNDAY AFTER EPIPHANY.

THE spiritual enemies of men, in the conquest of which Christ manifested His glory, are many and mighty, and they may well receive an early consideration in the Church's year. "We wrestle not against flesh and blood"—these are not our principal enemies. If these were our only opponents we might win the battle the more easily. We wrestle against enemies mightier in power, greater in intelligence, more crafty in subtlety, and of a more determined will. This truth, however, is not realized by most men till after a long period of contest with invisible and unknown enemies. From time to time, in the world we inhabit, events overcloud, and oftentimes appear to contradict, this great truth. But in the end it will assert itself infallibly. Philosophically speaking, it is a somewhat violent assumption that man is the highest being in the created universe, that between man and his Maker there may be no gradations with different moral colourings of intermediate life. Surely it would rather be reasonable to suppose that the graduated series of living beings, which we trace from the lowest of the zoophytes up to man, does not stop abruptly with man, but that it continues beyond him, although we may not be able to trace the invisible steps of the ascent. And when we come to Scripture teaching, we find that revelation does but confirm these anticipations, when it discovers to faith, on the one hand the hierarchies of the blessed angels, and on the other hand the corresponding gradations of evil spirits, principalities, and powers, who have abused their freedom and their abilities, and who are ceaselessly laboring to impair and destroy the moral order of the universe. These spiritual beings, good and evil, act upon humanity as clearly, as certainly, and as constantly, as man himself acts upon the lower creatures around; and thus it is that we have, in the power of Divine strength, to wrestle against our spiritual enemies. This power of Divine strength was exercised by the Saviour of men in the days of His flesh. He successfully combated our spiritual enemies, and in His might we may go forth also from conquering unto a final conquest.

LAY HELP, ITS USE AND ABUSE.

UNTIL recent years the Canadian Church seems to have known little about any systematic employment of lay readers as a substitute for the official presence of a clergyman in conducting divine services; whereas now there is a strong inclination to adopt some system which will give laymen thus employed a recognized position in the machinery of the Church. As churchwardens, sidesmen, visitors, synodmen, Sunday School teachers, &c., the utility of lay help has long been known. Are we on the eve of a "new departure," which will open to laymen a semi-official function of still greater importance? One thing is certain, that whereas in past years clergymen, acting as missionaries, burdened themselves with the mental and physical fatigue of so many as five services on a Sunday, beginning their week at 7 or 8 a.m., and keeping it up till 9 or 10 p.m., and travelling 30 or 40 miles to do it, it is now found possible for this burden to be divided so that ten services may be held over the same area with no fatigue whatever to any one concerned, several laymen officiating in lieu of the clergyman at less important points, while he is himself sufficiently occupied at places of greater importance. In the phraseology of our United States cousins, who, in the far west, are

fully alive to the necessity of keeping pace with the advancing population—this use of lay help by a clergyman is called "spreading oneself;" because in reality the clergyman keeps himself, by periodical exchange of services, in thorough acquaintance with all stations in his Mission, while the gaps of his absence are filled by his lay "lieutenants."

While the Church at large gains immensely by this new arrangement, and competes with superior material against the hitherto greater odds of Dissenters, there is just a little danger of our people falling into a habit of measuring clerical and lay "service" from a secular point of view. Because the services of a layman can be secured at little or no expense as compared with that of a clergyman. The question of "cheap labour" becomes a real one, and there is some danger of the importance of the clerical office being forgotten or ignored. It is very necessary that the clergyman should make his office felt through every corner of his Mission, so that the distinction may not be forgotten. This, however, can be easily effected by confining to the priesthood the duties strictly peculiar to it, such as the administration of the sacraments, the use of absolution, &c.

On the other hand the Lay Reader thought a temporary officer should not be considered a mere "make-shift." There ought to be some sense of solemnity and sanctity, and official dignity and importance, attached to the exercise of his office. It is, in point of fact, a modern substitute for the Holy Order of Deacon—now almost lost as an integral part of the Apostolic Ministry; and the sanctity of that Order should be reflected upon its temporary substitute in Church machinery. The Lay Reader, in fact the Lay Helper in general, is a "quasi-deacon," scarcely even a sub-deacon. There can be no doubt that a staff of Deacons proper could discharge much more efficiently and satisfactorily, most, if not all, of the functions now dependent upon lay officials. The men originally chosen for the diaconal functions of "serving tables," &c., were not so much to be expressly men of "business capacity" as men of a special sanctity of life and character, not only of "honest report," but "full of the Holy Ghost and of wisdom." The best method still of supplying the Church's want would probably be, after all, to raise laymen possessing desired qualifications for "Church business" to the Holy Order of Deacons, giving them the title, the authority, and *grace*, as well as the functions of the Deaconate.

THE BISHOP OF TASMANIA AND THE DEAN OF ST. PAUL'S ON THE PRESENT CRISIS.

THE Bishop of Tasmania has addressed an important letter to the Archbishop of Canterbury on the gravity of the present crisis in the Church in the Mother country. The Bishop has little sympathy with the doctrinal teaching of the ritualistic school, but says he is startled by the calmness with which the secular press contemplate the spectacle of zealous men, however mistaken, imprisoned for conscience sake. The motive, however, he says, is very transparent. The ultra-Liberal section can welcome no weightier argument in favour of disestablishment, while the more conservative section hope to resist those arguments by the use of physical coercion and the vindication of human law.

He goes on to say: "While these two sections differ in their ultimate purpose, they are unhappily agreed in the same task of educating the nation in the belief that the Church has no independent status, no divine origin, no historic continuity, but is, as Mr. Bright has called it, a 'creation of the

State." I fear that the Public Worship Regulation Act has, perhaps unconsciously, lent its support to this disastrous view of transferring to a secular judge a responsibility hitherto supposed to be inherent in the spirituality, and a right to inflict penalties upon those who believe, however erroneously, that obedience to his authority is disobedience to Christ. Meanwhile, a very large body of moderate Churchmen are taking serious alarm, and bear in mind the sad but noble behaviour of the Free Church in Scotland—*sad*, as all schism is sad; *noble*, in its witness for the independence of the Church of Christ. . . . One of two results must sooner or later follow, either an exodus disastrous to the cause of that tolerance and happy balance which is now secured by the action of one school of free thought upon another, or a very considerable leakage on the part of the laity in the direction of Rome or unbelief. This silent leakage is already doing its work, if I may trust the witness of well-informed and moderate Churchmen. One such, in consequence of my letters to the *Times* and *Guardian*, writes to me that so far from my fear being groundless, three laymen within his own observation, two of them possessing large properties, have lately gone over to the Untramontane schism, and seven others are virtual sceptics, *all of whom were under what is called Evangelical teaching.*"

In reply to this and more of the same kind, His Grace tells the Bishop that he is under some misapprehension; and requests him to call and see him in order to talk the matter over!

The following is the letter of the Dean of St. Paul's, referred to in our last issue:—

"SIR,—The short and easy method of dealing with the Ritualists—I mean in argument—is, that English clergymen are ministers of an established Church, and are therefore as much bound to submit to all that Parliament orders as any other public functionaries—to submit or to resign; and by an Established Church, as used in this argument, is sometimes expressly signified in words, but always implied, whether people see what they mean or not, a State Church, deriving all its rights, duties, and powers from Parliament, for unless this were so, the inference would not hold. If the Church be supposed to have an existence and powers of its own, besides what the State gives it, and, however closely joined with the State, to be something which the State, though it may claim to regulate, can neither create nor destroy, then the debate is open whether the conditions and co-operation have been observed on either side. Whether the ritualist contention in particular is right or wrong is another matter.

If this proposition is true, that an Established Church is what Parliament makes it, or allows it to be, and nothing more, then everything easily follows. People may well express surprise at clergymen's conscience for disobeying Courts of Justice. "Mutinous ecclesiastes" and "bad citizens," are too light terms of condemnation for those who defy the law of England, and throw all the social order into confusion, which they are especially sworn and paid to maintain.

But if this is a true account of the Church of England, and the old constitutional theory of a union of Church and State, recognized as well as violated in a thousand transactions of our history, be a figment, then other consequences, too, will follow.

It will follow that all that is found in the books of our greatest masters of religious teaching, in all Churches and sects, about the nature of the Christian Church, is ranting nonsense.

It will follow that the Ritualists are, indeed, rebels, perhaps more inexcusable than any who are troubling the Queen's peace in Ireland. But it will also follow that the English Church is not what religious men of all schools, Churchmen and Non-conformists, believe a Church to be.

It will follow that such a claim as Mr. Voysey—for whose honesty and courage I have a high respect—expressed in the subjoined advertisement, is