

commands the servants in a tone of authority, that one or other of the wedded pair was a member of the holy family, possibly one of her nephews, the sons of Alphaeus. Whether the ceremonies lasted for seven days, as was usual for those who could afford it, or only for one or two, as was the case among the poorer classes, we cannot tell; but at some period of the entertainment the wine suddenly ran out. None but those who know how sacred in the East is the duty of lavish hospitality, or how the obligation to exercise it to the utmost is felt, can realize the gloom which this incident would have thrown over the occasion; or the misery and mortification which it would have caused the wedded pair. They would have felt it to be a bitter and indelible disgrace.

Under these circumstances there was a special reason why the Mother of Jesus should say to Him "they have no wine." She had evidently gathered, either from His own express declaration, or from such circumstances as the Baptist testimony, that He would before long manifest to the world the glory which she knew from the first to be His. She intimates to Him that He had better do it now, and save their relatives from disgrace. But it was necessary to show her, now at once, and forever, that henceforth He was not Jesus the Son of Mary, but Christ the Son of God. And so with gentle, respectful repression He taught her that His thoughts were not her thoughts, neither His ways her ways. He calls her not mother for the rights of that relationship were at an end; but woman, the term of tenderest and most respectful regard. Nor can we doubt that the look and accent with which these words were spoken would still further take away any painfulness which the slight check they conveyed, might otherwise have involved. And so with undiminished faith, and no trace of painful feeling, Mary said to the servants, "Whatsoever He saith to you, do it." The stone water-jars which in the East are set at the door with water for washing the feet and hands of guests, were at this stage of the feast empty. He commanded them to be filled to the brim, and then to draw out. The governor of the feast, who knew nothing of what had taken place, mirthfully observed that in offering the good wine last, the bridegroom had departed from the common custom of banquets.

It was His first miracle: yet how unlike all that we should have expected. How simple, unobtrusive, and divinely calm is He. The method of the miracle is beyond our powers of conception. And yet it was not performed with any pomp of circumstance, or self-glorification. Christ, by his presence at the marriage feast, gave his sanction to the genial and innocent enjoyments of human life. He came to sanctify all our life—its times of joy, as well as its times of sorrow, to lift them above the spirit of this present evil world to which they have perpetual tendency to subject themselves, and to consecrate them to God. And so He who, to appease His own hunger, would not turn the stones of the wilderness into bread, gladly exercises for the sake of others His transforming power, and relieves the perplexity and sorrow of a humble wedding feast, by turning water into wine. The first miracle of Moses was one of retribution, turning the river of a guilty nation into blood. The first miracle of Jesus is to fill the water-jars of an innocent family with wine.

The miracle was also a symbol and prophecy of all Christ's work upon earth, of what He is doing even now, turning sinners into saints, earth into the new paradise of God, and men into the likeness of angels, the water of earth into the wine of heaven, which He will drink new with us in the kingdom of God, at the marriage supper of the Lamb.

Correspondence.

All Letters will appear with the names of the writers in full and we do not hold ourselves responsible for their opinions.

THE HON. S. BLAKE ON SACERDOTALISM

To the Editor of the Evangelical Churchman:

SIR,—I heartily endorse and re-echo Mr. Blake's wish that you will allow a full, free, and fair discussion of this question now that it has been brought forward. I will do my best to be brief and clear in what I write. The case then, as I gather from all that Mr. Blake and you, Mr. Editor, have written and said stands thus. 1st. That the only true, loyal members of the Reformed Church of England are those who call themselves Evangelicals. 2nd. That those who are called High Churchmen, or Sacerdotalists, as the fashion now is, are "false" to Reformation principles. 3rd. That Messrs. Langtry and Ford have pronounced themselves Sacerdotalists, and that, therefore, no Evangelical, i.e., as I understand you maintain, no true and loyal member of the Reformed

Church of England can support or countenance or have anything to do with an institution in which these Sacerdotalists are allowed to open their mouths. I asked Mr. Blake in your columns to tell me, why not? Is it because we teach doctrines which the Church of England does not teach, or that we encourage practices which the Church of England disallows? What is the meaning of this dreadful word Sacerdotalist? What heresy or sin does it describe? And when and where did I avow myself guilty of it?

Mr. Blake answers, 1st. "The sacerdotal view of the ministry regards it as an order of sacrificing and mediating priests (*hieries*)." But, Mr. Editor, you have more than once pointed out that this word *hieries* is, in the New Testament, applied to all the laity; and that, therefore, Mr. Blake is himself a *hieries*, a sacrificing and mediating priest, according to his own translation. And it surely cannot be a disqualifying offence, even in the eyes of Evangelical Churchmen, to believe concerning the ministry what Mr. Blake's translation obliges me to believe concerning himself. I beg, however, to call the hon. gentleman's attention to the fact that neither I, nor any of the accused with whom I am acquainted, has ever described himself as a "sacrificing and mediating priest." It is the slanderous appellation of enemies. I do not believe, and I do not know any High Churchman who does believe in the priesthood, in any sense, which does not believe in, and hold up the sacrifice of Christ upon the cross as the one only meritorious cause of human redemption, or that interferes with His office as the one Mediator between God and man, in any other way than Mr. Blake's prayers for his wife and child interfere with that office.

Mr. Blake answers second, It means as Haddon on "Apostolic Succession" states, without bishops no presbyters; without bishops and presbyters no legitimate certainty of sacraments; without sacraments no certain union with the mystical Body of Christ, viz: with His Church, without this no certain union with Christ; and without that union no salvation." "This book," Mr. Blake says, "is pervaded with Romish teaching, and I understand, is used as a text book in Trinity College."

Now I beg to tell Mr. Blake that his understanding is, for once at least, a very insecure foundation on which to base an assertion. The book is not used as a text book in Trinity College, and never has been so used. It is prescribed as a text book for the Ordination Examination by the Bishop of Toronto, whom Mr. Blake has publicly endorsed and proclaimed as a thoroughly Protestant and Evangelical Bishop. The pupils of the Protestant Episcopal Divinity School are therefore instructed in this book which Mr. Blake, the head centre of the School, declares to be pervaded with Romish teaching.

I suppose then, Mr. Editor, I may safely assume that this sacerdotalism of which Mr. Blake accuses me, is not such a disqualifying thing after all, as he wishes people to believe, as it is endorsed by you, and by my much-esteemed Bishop. Mr. Blake says this same sacerdotalism is taught in Blunt's Key to the Prayer Book, which was introduced into the Church School by Mr. Langtry. Perhaps it is. I do not know, as I am sorry to say, I have never yet read Blunt's little book through, and have not looked at it for several years.

But I beg to tell Mr. Blake that the rest of his statement, "and was ordered out of it by the late Bishop on a remonstrance made to him by a layman of this diocese," is simply absolutely, and in every sense untrue. Neither Bishop Bethune, nor any other Bishop, ever ordered Blunt's Key to the Prayer Book out of the Bishop Strachan School, ever remonstrated against its use, or even once spoke to me about it. I withdrew the book myself as soon as my attention was called to certain statements in it. And what is worse, Mr. Blake knows this, for the statement has twice been made in open Synod in the presence of Mr. Blake and of the late Bishop. On two occasions it has been made in the newspapers, on one of which Mr. Blake, as I accidentally discovered, was himself my anonymous opponent.

Mr. Blake evades my second question altogether. Wherein does a person, guilty of being what he calls a Sacerdotalist, differ in doctrine or practice from the doctrinal statements and prescribed usages of the Church of England? He talks about comprehension, and implies that while they probably don't differ at all, yet that won't satisfy Evangelical Churchmen. From which I think the inference is fair that Mr. Blake is not after all anxious to uphold the principles of the Reformed Church of England, but to substitute for them that emasculated Plymouthism with regard to Church, and ministry, and sacraments, which under the sacred name of evangelicalism he, and in my judgment, you, Mr. Editor, have been labouring so assiduously during the past few years to propagate. That he does not denounce me as unfit to be trusted as a teacher, because I do not teach the doctrines and principles of the Church of England: but because I do.

And that the whole slanderous imputation which he intends to convey to the minds of uninstructed people by using the appalling word Sacerdotalist, has no other object than to trade upon the prejudices of the ignorant, that he may build up the Protestant Episcopal Divinity School, and thereby establish his own rule over this diocese. I can only add that if Mr. Blake's quotation from my speech in Synod, pointing out that you, Mr. Editor, and the Church Association in their occasional papers, flatly contradicted the statements of the Church of England, be satisfactory proof to Mr. Blake's mind that I have proclaimed myself a Sacerdotalist in his sense of the word, then I am sure every fair minded man will feel devoutly thankful that the risk of having to stand before the judgment-seat of such a man has been taken away.

Yours, etc.,

Feb. 27th, 1882.

JOHN LANGTRY.

UTILITY OF LENT.

Does the observance of Lent do any good? This is a pertinent question, and deserves a very thoughtful consideration. We make some suggestions by way of answering it.

If any of us make a mere form of the observance of Lent—if, beginning with Ash Wednesday, and closing with Easter Even, we abstain from the theatre, balls, parties, worldly amusements, and devote ourselves to church-going, to fasting, and the like, and stop there, the danger is that it will be after all a mere form, and will do us harm rather than good. That men make this mistake there can be no doubt; and if they suppose the world is blind to this inconsistency, they make another mistake. People generally, and especially children, are quick to see what is real, and what is put on. They understand perfectly the difference between sanctimoniousness and a true Christian life and spirit. To observe Lent, therefore, as a mere form, is to do ourselves an irreparable injury, and bring discredit upon our Church and the cause of religion. We have a kind of horror of any conspicuous, cut-and-dried ways and fashions during the Lenten season. Better that we be as quiet and unobtrusive as possible.

But while this season may be, and often is, misunderstood and sadly perverted, we can have no doubt that it is a wise appointment, and can be made of incalculable service to Christians. Let us look at a few of its benefits.

1. It makes a break in our every-day life, which is much needed. The recurrence of Sunday is a great help; but we need something more. After the excitement of the autumn and winter, we need a period of change and rest—a kind of prolonged Sabbath. Every year in our cities and towns, and indeed, throughout the whole country, life becomes more and more intense. By reason of the rapid transit from one point to another in these later days, this intensity is spread over all the land and among all the people. Therefore a Lenten season is needed everywhere.

2. While the Church acts as a whole in the matter, and gives its sanction to the observance of the season, it still has in view the spiritual good of its individual members. This is the prominent idea. It is, therefore, for each individual member to consider how the observance may be made to promote his or her highest good.

3. If we turn our thoughts to the study of our own lives—taking up the feelings, the thoughts, the motives, the passions, the ambitions, in fine everything which makes up what may be termed our inner life—and then look at our words, our actions, our example, and our position and influence, we shall probably discover a good deal which could be made better by a little attention. The business man will be made to ask himself whether all his modes and ways are exactly right and upright—whether, by precept and example, he is training up his sons and clerks to be true, right-minded, honourable men. The woman of influence and wealth will also be driven to consider her habits, her principles, her ways, and her fashions. Is she setting in her family, and out of it, the example and pattern which her daughters and others should imitate? How about the simplicity and godly conversation of her daily life? Is Christ in it all, and does His spirit run through it all?

Indeed, all classes, from the highest to the lowest—men, women, and children—when they look narrowly into their lives will discover a great deal which needs correction, a great deal which is not only un-Christlike, but directly opposed to Christ and all His teachings. Now, to all such, the Lenten season comes as a benediction. Through weeks it is reminding them and all others that the service of God is not a lip service, a mere form of words or outward acts, but a real thing of the heart; and that to be of any use here or hereafter, it must lift up a whole life to a likeness in spirit, word, and deed, to the life of the Son of God. With such an end in view, our Lenten season may be an unspeakable blessing. Without such an end it may be a curse to us.