The Church.

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Poetry.

ACTIVITY.

Open the casement, and up with the Sun!
His gallant journey is just begun:
Over the hills his chariot is roll'd,
Banner'd with glory, and burnished with gold,—
Over the hills he comes sublime,
Bridegroom of Earth, and brother of Time!

Day hath broken, joyous and fair:
Fragrant and fresh is the morning air,—
Beauteous and bright those orient hues,
Balmy and sweet these early dews;
O, there is health, and wealth, and bliss
In dawning Nature's motherly kiss!

Lo, the wonderful world awakes,
With its rosy-tipp'd mountains and gleaming lakes,
With its fields and cities, deserts and trees,
Its calm old cliffs, and its sounding seas,
In all their gratitude blessing HIM
Who dwelleth between the Cherubim!

Break away boldly from Sleep's leaden chain;
Seek not to forge that fetter again;
Rather, with vigour and resolute nerve,
Up, up, to bless man, and thy Master to serve,
Thankful and hopeful, and happy to raise
The offering of prayer, and the incense of praise!

Gird thee, and do thy watching well,
Duty's Christian sentinel!
Sloth and Slumber never had part
In the warrior's will, or the patriot's heart;
Soldier of God on an enemy's shore!
Slumber and Sloth thrall *thee* no more.

THE HISTORY OF THE PRAYER BOOK.

(By the Ven. Archdeacon Berens, M.A.)

CHAPTER VI.—(CONCLUDED.)

Of the manner in which these orders were enforced by the ruder instruments of those who had overthrown the Church of England, many instances are found in the histories and memoirs of the times.

Sanderson, who after the Restoration was for a short time Bishop of Lincoln, was a man of distinguished learning, and of singular kindness and gentleness of disposition. His high character occasioned his being named as one of the Assembly of Divines, though he never attended. He was for many years Rector of Boothby Pannel, where he continued to officiate, though for some time the profits of his living were sequestered by Parliament. "Here the soldiers of the Parliament would appear, and visibly disturb him in the church when he read prayers, pretending to advise him how God was to be served most acceptably: and he not approving, but continuing to observe order and decent behaviour in reading the Church Service, they forced his book from him and tore it, expecting extemporary prayers."

"At this time he was advised by a Parliament man of power and note, that loved and valued him much, not to be strict in reading all the Common Prayer, but make some little variation, especially if the soldiers came to watch him; for then it might not be in the power of him and his other friends to secure him from taking the Covenant or sequestration;[1] for which reasons he did vary somewhat from the strict rules of the Rubric."[2] The opinion of our Liturgy expressed by this meek and holy man in an accidental conversation with his honest and single-minded biographer, deserves to be repeatedly brought forward.—He did most highly commend the Common Prayer of the Church, saying, "The Collects were the most passionate, proper, and most elegant expressions that any language ever afforded; and that there was in them such piety, and that so interwoven with instruction, that they taught us to know the power, the wisdom, the majesty and mercy of God, and much of our duty both to him and our neighbour; and that a congregation behaving themselves reverently, and putting up to God these joint and known desires for pardon of sins, and praises for mercies received, could not but be more pleasing to God, than those raw unpremeditated expressions, to which many of the hearers could not say, Amen." And he then commended to me the frequent use of the Psalter or Psalms of David: speaking to this purpose, "That they were the treasury of Christian comfort, fitted to all persons and all necessities; able to raise the soul from dejection, by the frequent mention of God's mercies to repentant sinners; to stir up holy desires, to increase joy, to moderate sorrow, to nourish hope, and teach us patience by waiting God's leisure; to beget a trust in the mercy, power and providence of our Creator; and to cause a resignation to his will; and then, and not till then, to believe ourselves happy." "This," he said, "the Liturgy and Psalms taught us; and that by the frequent use of the last, they would not only prove to be our souls' comfort, but would become so habitual, as to transform them into the image of his soul that composed them."[3]

Dr. Hackett[4] is recorded as the last man in England who persisted to read the Liturgy after it had been proscribed by Parliament: and the following anecdote is given by his biographer, illustrative both of his attachment to the Church, and of his holy courage. One Sunday, while he was reading the Common Prayer in his church, a soldier of the Earl of Essex came and clapped a pistol to his breast, and commanded him to read no farther. The Doctor not at all terrified, replied, "I will do what becomes a divine, and you may do what becomes a soldier." The tumult was quieted for a time, and the Doctor permitted to proceed.[5]

The example of Sanderson in deviating a little from the Rubric in these times of disturbance and peril, was followed, perhaps unknowingly, by the learned and clear-headed George Bull. "The iniquity of the times," says his biographer, the pious Nelson, "would not bear the constant and regular use of the Liturgy; to supply therefore that misfortune, Mr. Bull formed all the devotions he offered up in public, while he continued Minister of this place,[6] out of the Book of Common Prayer, which did not fail to supply him with fit matter and proper words upon all those occasions, that required him to apply to the throne of grace for a supply of the wants of his people." "And his manner of performing the public service was with so much seriousness and devotion, with so much fervour and ardency of affection, and with so powerful an emphasis in every part, that they who were most prejudiced againt the Liturgy, did not scruple to commend Mr. Bull as a person that prayed by the Spirit, though at the same time they railed at the Common Prayer as a beggarly element and a carnal performance." "A particular instance of this happened to him while he was Minister of St. George's. He was sent for to baptize the child of a dissenter in his parish; upon which occasion he made use of the Office of Baptism, as prescribed by the Church of England, which he had got entirely by heart; and he went through it with so much readiness and freedom, and yet with so much gravity and devotion, and gave that life and spirit to all that he delivered, that the whole audience was extremely affected, with his performance and notwithstanding that he used the sign of the cross, yet, they were so ignorant of the Offices of the Church that they did not thereby discover that it was the Common Prayer. After he had concluded, the father of the child returned him a great many thanks, intimating at the same time, with how much greater edification they prayed, who entirely depended upon the Spirit of God for his assistance in their extempore effusions, than those did who tied themselves up to premeditated forms; and that if he had not made the sign of the cross, the badge of Popery, as he called it, nobody could have formed the least exception against his exception against his excellent prayers. Upon which Mr. Bull, hoping to recover him from his ill-grounded prejudice, showed him the Office of Baptism in the Liturgy, wherein was contained every prayer which he had offered up to God on that occasion; which, with farther argument that he then urged, so effectually wrought upon the good man and his whole family, that they always after that time frequented the parish church, and never more absented themselves from Mr. Bull's communion."[1]

A lively picture of the persecution of those who preserved their attachment to the Prayer Book during the Protectorate, is furnished by the private diary of a layman, that zealous promoter of useful knowledge and cultivated taste, the accomplished Evelyn. A few extracts may be sufficient.

In 1654, December 3, he wrote thus. "Advent Sunday. There being no office at the church, but extempore prayers after the Presbyterian way,—for now all persons were prohibited, and most of the preachers were usurpers,—I seldom went to church upon solemn Feasts, but either went to London, where some of the orthodox sequestered Divines did privately use the Common Prayer, administer Sacraments, &c. or else I procured one to officiate in my house; wherefore, on the 10th, Dr. Richard Owen, the sequestered Minister of Eltham, preached to my family in my Library, and gave us the Holy Communion."

"December 25, Christmas Day. No public office in churches, but penalties on observers, so as I was constrained to celebrate it at home."

In 1655, (p. 252.) "On Sunday afternoon, I frequently stayed at home to catechize and instruct my family, these exercises universally ceasing in the parish-churches, so as people had no principles, and grew very ignorant of even the common points of Christianity; all devotion being now placed in hearing sermons and discourses of speculative and notional things."

November 27. "This day came forth the Protector's edict or proclamation, prohibiting all Minististers of the Church of England from preaching or teaching any schools;—in which he imitated the apostate Julian; with the decimation of all the royal party's revenues throughout England."

December 25. "There was no more notice taken of Christmas Day in churches. I went to London, where Dr. Wild preached the funeral sermon of preaching, this being the last day; after which Cromwell's proclamation was to take place, that none of the Church of England should dare either to preach or administer Sacraments, teach schools, &c. on pain of imprisonment or exile. So this was the mournfullest that in my life I had seen, or the Church of England herself, since the Reformation; to the great rejoicing both of Papist and Presbyterian. So pathetic was his discourse, that it drew many tears from the auditory. Myself, wife, and some of our family, received the Communion. God make us thankful who hath hitherto provided for us the food of our souls as well as bodies! The Lord Jesus pity our distressed Church, and bring back the captivity of Zion!"

Again, August 3, 1656. "I went to London to receive the blessed Sacrament, the first time the Church of England was reduced to a chamber and a conventicle,—so sharp was the persecution. The parish-churches were filled with sectaries of all sorts, blasphemous and ignorant mechanics occupying the pulpits every where. Dr. Wild preached in a private house, where he had a great meeting of zealous Christians, who were generally made more devout and religious than in our greatest prosperity."

1657, December 25. "I went to London with my wife, to celebrate Christmas Day, Mr. Gunning preaching in Exeter Chapel, on Micah, vii. 2. Sermon ended, as he was giving us the holy Sacrament, the chapel was surrounded with soldiers, and all the communicants and assembly surprised and kept prisoners by them in the house, others carried away, some to the Marshal some to prison. When I came before them, they took my name and abode, examined me why, contrary to an ordinance made that none should any longer observe the superstitious time of the Nativity, (so esteemed by them,) I durst offend, and particularly be at Common Prayer, which they told me was but the Mass in English, and particularly pray for Charles Stuart, for which we had no Scripture, &c,; finding no colour to detain me, they dismissed me with much pity of my ignorance. These were men of high flights, and above ordinances, and spake spiteful things of our Lord's Nativity. As we went up to receive the Sacrament, the miscreants held their musquets against us, as if they would have shot us at the altar, but suffering us to finish the Office of Communion, as, perhaps, not having instructions what to do in case they found us in that action."

Nor was it in England only that the adherents to the Prayer Book were thus molested. Persecution followed them across the Atlantic. "Long before the termination of the seventeenth century, the numbers of the Church of England in the colonies were greatly exceeded in number by those of other persuasions. Nor was this all. From one donomination they soon experienced a violent and long-continued opposition. At a very early period a few persons withdrew from communion with the Puritans, and assembled separately to worship God, according to the Liturgy of the Church. This was too much to be patiently endured by the dominant majority. The leaders of the party (of the Church of England), two brothers named Brown,—the first champions of religious liberty in America,—were expelled from the colony of Massachusetts, and sent home to England. Heavy fines were inflicted on those who took part in the ceremonies of the Church; severe laws were enacted against the observance of any such day as Christmas, or the like; and, to use the words of an eminent New England Jurist, 'an inquisition existed in substance, with a full share of its terrors and its violence.'"[2]

[1] Walton says that his living was sequestered, 1644.
[2] Walton's Life of Sanderson. [3] Ibid.
[4] The biographer of Archbishop Williams, and distinguished for his able speech before Parliament in defence of the Cathedrals.
[5] Not unworthy of being mentioned with this, is the case of the Westminster scholars, who are stated by Dr. South, he being one of them, and present at the time, to have offered up public prayers for King Charles, within an hour or two before the time of his being beheaded. Of this disinterested, and in those times dangerous, demonstration of loyalty and charity, South in his quaint manner remarks, "that they were not only called, but really were King's scholars." This, and the anecdote of Hackett, are taken from that excellent publication, the Penny Sunday Reader, by Dr. Molesworth.
[6] St. George's near Bristol.

DIALOGUE

BETWEEN THE REV. HENRY HOOKER, A.M., AND MR. CLAYTON, A DISSENTER, ON THE APOSTOLICAL SUCCESSION.

(By a Correspondent of The Church.)

No. VIII—(CONCLUDED.)

Mr Clayton.—Have you any instances that you could name? I hardly think it fair to deal in generalities.

Mr. Hooker.—Yes: I could name several cases. But let one suffice. You have no doubt heard of Mr. Finney, who was so celebrated and so popular a preacher, in the opinion of many, some twelve or fifteen years ago, in Western New-York.

Mr. C.—Oh! yes; I have often heard of that man of God; and have also heard of the great good that he was the means of effecting.

Mr. H.—As to the good, I fear that there was less than was at first expected; though it would be strange, if the Almighty did not bring *some* good out of so much evil. But to instance his proceedings in Rochester, N. Y.; we are told that "when he commenced his operations there he soon found himself "at the head, and the accredited leader, of an army "of crusaders not less zealous than himself; or than "were the followers of Peter the hermit. He and "his disciples preached, exhorted, and denounced the "religious conservations, night and day; and not in "the churches only, but in the streets, and wherever "they could find hearers; and truly there was little "difficulty in finding hearers, if any were within a "mile of them. For months they continued their "labours in this way, using every frightful means "imaginable to move and melt the stoney hearts of "the people. They succeeded in moving and breaking many hearts. To give a notorious example of "their manner of preaching, and one in which the "enthusiast slides so easily into the fanatic; the "leader of the crusade, in one of his terrific harangues, "in allusion to a recent fire in the place, when a large "quantity of tanner's work was consumed, and produced an intense heat over a large space; in allusion to this, he said 'A soul that had been in hell "but thirty years, would have frozen to death if taken "out and thrown into your boasted fire, which you "think was so very hot; and you'll find it so, impertinent sinner, if you don't come forward to be prayed "for! Come forward I tell you; for *if you do not "come forward this night, you may depend on being "damned*, and sent to hell, as many times hotter than "that fire was, as that fre was hotter than the frozen "ocean at the north pole.'"* It is notorious that he and his associates regularly descended from their pulpits, after the most awful harangues and most fearful threatenings of eternal condemnation, book and pencil in hand, and going up to each person in the house, asked him if he was willing to go forward to be prayed for. If he refused, or if, as in the case of timid, serious, sober-minded persons, especially young females, they enabled to make no answer, he immediately said, "Then I will put you down in the devil's book." Mr. Colton, in his Reasons for Episcopacy, tells us: "I have just heard of an interesting girl driven to distraction in the city of New York, at the tender age of fourteen, by being approached by the preacher after a fearful sermon, with a secretary by his side with a book and pen in his hand, to take down the names of those who by invitation remained to be conversed with. Having taken her name, the preacher asked, 'Are you for God, or the Devil?' being overcome, her head depressed and in tears, she made no reply. 'Put her down in the Devil's book,' said the preacher to his secretary. From that time the poor girl became insane, and in her simplicity and innocence has been accustomed to tell the sad story of her misfortune!" It is stated on good authority, that Mr. Burchard, a worthy ally of Mr. Finney's, on more than one occasion during his crusade in Vermont, stationed a bugler in the steeple of the meeting-house, whose business it was to blow a tremendous blast on his bugle at that part of the preacher's discourse when he described in awful terms the day when the archangel's trumpet shall sound and all the world shall be called up for judgment!—These and other tricks and proceedings, equally shocking to every well ordered and properly balanced mind, marked the course of the New School Presbyterians, and no doubt at once drew attention to their sect, and greatly augmented the number of their converts, such as they were.

Mr. C.—I hope, Sir, that you do not suppose that their converts were not really and truly men and women converted to God.

Mr. H.—I know nothing regarding any of them. But, if we are to believe the accounts we hear regarding them from all parties, we will have much cause to doubt the reality of their conversion. In proof of this, I would again quote the testimony of the article regarding Mr. Finney's proceedings at Rochester. It opens by stating that "the population of Rochester "was far from being remarkable for profligacy. It "contained many most worthy and exemplary families, and its several large churches were well attended. The religions societies of the place were "gradually and soberly increasing, and the hope was "that Rochester would become not less distinguished "for its religious and moral character, than for its "enterprise."

Such was Rochester when Mr. Finney began his operations there. "The immediate effect on many "persons, before thoughtless and indifferent, was apparently favourable; and the almost entire population was misled into the unfortunate opinion, that "the crusaders were doing good. The reaction, however came at last, and within a few months; and "among many other of its horrid features, *appeared "not fewer than* THREE PROFESSEDLY INFIDEL NEWSPAPERS! A large proportion of the population became *scoffers of everything sacred*, and to a degree "all unknown before: *rude oaths and other dismal "evidences of ostentatious, brazen immorality, were encountered in the streets to the dishonour and defilement "of the land:* and this too, as no one doubted, the "fruit of fanaticism."

But candor demands of us to remark, that the above-named *successful* leader stopped short of thorough fanaticism, for he was able to discern and confess his error; and he published the declaration, that, *of the multitudes of his converts, a large majority, within two years, had become so basely wicked as to be a disgrace, not to religion only, but also to human nature itself.* At Lyons, in the county of Wayne, one of the scenes of his crusade, he is said to have used this language on a return there after a few years absence in Ohio:—"When I go over these scenes of my former labours, I am humbled to the dust. In "these regions I once counted my converts by hundreds and thousands; but where are they now? "Gone! But where? To the grave? No, alas! "would that they had gone to the grave in peace! "But, they are gone *back to the world!* Out of "the multitudes who once made Christian profession, scarcely one or two solitary ones remain. The "rest have returned 'as a dog to his vomit; and "as a sow that was washed to her wallowing in the "mire'! Nay worse: multitudes of these people "have taken to themselves spirits worse than themselves; and I tremble lest the end of these people "be worse than the beginning"!!

Mr. C.—Why this is astonishing! But it accounts for the fact of which I have heard, that such men as Messrs. Burchard and Finney have in a great measure lost their importance and once wonderful popularity in the neighbouring republic.

Mr. H.—Perhaps then, Mr. Clayton, you will give the more attention to the following remarks, which I shall adduce from eye-witnesses, of the evil results of these awful proceedings:

Mr. Colton,† in his Reasons for Episcopacy, tells us that "A little while since I visited an insane hospital, and wandered through its cells and more public rooms. I was struck with the predominance of *religious mania.* Those most annoying to me, as a visiter, and who talked the most, and would follow us as far as permitted, were of this class. They were generally innocent; but the utterance of their wild vagaries, all connected with religion, melancholy affecting. When I went into the male department, and mingled with a group of the patients in one room, to some of whom I was formally introduced by the keeper, what was my astonishment on meeting there a former ministerial brother and intimate acquaintance! He was once a settled minister in my own neighbourhood, highly respected for his talents, and esteemed for his exemplary virtues; he had many times occupied my pulpit, and been a guest at my house: I had respected and loved him. . . . . I learned upon inquiry, that he had been there some three or four years; that his mind had been upset in consequence of having engaged with excessive zeal in the religious excitements which have lately characterised our country, especially in protracted meetings: that towards the close of his career, his zeal and labours were so extraordinary, as to have procured for him in many minds the reputation of a prophet; that at last he became completely mad, and was brought to this place a perfect maniac. I left the hospital under the dominion of overwhelming and indescribable emotions. 'And is this,' thought I, 'one of the consequences of the fanaticism that has been raging in my native land!'"

Mr. C.—This is an awful case indeed; but I should still hope that it is almost a solitary one.

Mr. H.—I am sorry to say, Mr. Clayton, that I cannot encourage you to entertain such a pleasing hope. Mr. Colton says further*: "This unexpected occurrence has induced me to embrace all convenient opportunities of inquiring into the different species of mania which prevail in our insane hospitals. I am so credibly informed as for the present to rest under the conviction, that religious mania is greatly the prevalent species in the land; and a Christian gentleman of the highest respectability, intimately conversant with this subject, has told me that it comprehends a numerous class. I feel inclined to give much credence to this statement, from the recent religious history of our country, and from the known susceptibilities of our nature under those startling and astounding shocks which are constantly invented, artfully and habitually applied, under all the power and sympathy of a studied and enthusiastic elocution, by a large class of preachers among us. To startle and to shock is their great secret—their power. Religion is a dread theme in itself. To invest the truths of religion with terrors that do not belong to them, by bringing them out in distorted shapes and unnatural forms: to surprise a tender and unfortified mind, by one of awful import, without exhibiting the corresponding relief which Christianity has provided; to frighten, shock, and paralyze the mind with alternations and scenes of horror, carefully concealing the ground of encouragement and hope, till reason is shaken and hurled from its throne, for the sake of gaining a convert, and in making a convert, to make a maniac,—as doubtless sometimes occurs under this mode of preaching, for we have the proof of it,—involves a fearful responsibility." †"The superstitions and enormities of the Roman Church gave birth to what is commonly called French infidelity. The fanaticism of our country, (says Mr. Colton) if it should extend itself widely and prevail long, would not probably create an infidelity so fierce, because it is not imposed by authority; but it would bring religion into general contempt."

Mr. C.—I should hope not, Sir.

Mr. H—I fear, Mr. Clayton, that your hope would not be realized. But I trust that the fanaticism of which Mr. Colton speaks has had a check, but not without destroying hundreds of precious souls.

I shall, in conclusion, only quote the evidence of Bishop McIlvaine on this subject. His language is strong and glowing, and evidences a mind fully persuaded of the truth of what he asserts and the absolute necessity for asserting it. He says, speaking of the effects of the proceedings of "the New School Presbyterians," and their kindred sects: "The heresies that have grown up amidst the fragments of the broken walls and neglected gateways of the *visible* Church, in some parts of our Christendom, mocking all efforts to eradicate them; the growing neglect of public worship, so much complained of; the wandering of the rising generation from the paths of their pious ancestry—the daily decreasing hold of a settled and permanent pastoral ministry, upon the affections of the flock; the appetite for change of ministry and the facility with which it is effected; the daily encroachment upon the office and authority peculiar to the ministry, and the alarming pressure under which the pastor especially in his choice of expedients for usefulness and in the use of discipline, is more and more bowed down into submission to the sheep of the pasture, no matter how untaught or how misled—the thirst for new and exciting modes of preaching and promoting religion; the miserable dryness that produces this outcry for stimulating measures of relief; the hasty adoption of whatever has obtained the repute of a successful contrivance for creating excitement, leading to a contemptuous laying aside of fear and venerable usages, as if in all the past the Church had been only in childhood, and all that adhere to her examples were still in infancy; the strife and divisions that have sprung up over this field and are now rife with the seeds of manifold, more the addition of new and arbitrary terms of communion, as if the Lords' table were at the mercy of the caprice of every congregation or sect: the unauthorised ministers that have taken advantage of the many breaches in the wall of the vine-yard, to enter in and spread the infection of deadly errors—the liberty afforded to the cold-hearted but heated fanatic to stalk at large, torch in hand, and lay waste the work of years of patient, faithful labor; raising the flock against its shepherd; subdividing congregations, till each fragment becomes too small to live; dropping their drag-net into every stream; attracting attention by every stratagem; and under the name of converts to Christ hurrying all that are caught, however dissimilar in every thing but a public adoption of the livery of their leader, into a public profession of religion; while lovers of truth are ashamed, the unpenitent are hardened, and infidels scoff; these bitter things are *some* of the fruits already reaped, for which multitudes of sober minded christians, of all names, are in great mourning, lamenting after times that with many have passed away—times of order and peace, of government and soberness—anxiously casting about for some remedy, or at least some refuge, till this storm be overpast."

Mr. C.—Does the Bishop account in any way for this awful state of things which he describes in such glowing colours?

Mr. H.—Yes, he says: "The beginning of all this is to be found a long distance back; when, for the promoting of a more spiritual state of religion, Christians began to undervalue external institutions, putting them at the mercy of individual or local caprice, or fancy. The beginning, apparently inconsiderable and unobserved, except by a few that were wise, was, 'as the letting out of water.' By making all kindred streams its tributaries, it hath swollen to a desolating flood. Its first object was a more vital faith; its last result will be a more hardened infidelity. Its exciting cause was in part the fear of a supposed remnant of popery in the prescribed forms and dignified ritual of a portion of Protestant Christendom. It will not have run its course, before, under an abhorrence of what are comparatively only the accidents of Popery, it will have adopted all that is evil in its nature—the *formality* of godliness without its power: a formality *with fanaticism and all its power*, that compasseth sea and land for proselytes, establishing its inquisition, and proclaiming its anathemas, such popery, with its miracle—working machinery; and its '*opus operandum*' of 'anxious seats,' and confessions, its dependance upon saints, though living, for 'marvellous things,' more than upon the power of God; its substitution of measures and talismanic words, for the operations of the Holy Ghost, and its effect of satisfying the sinner's conscience by certain ceremonial conformities which every leader, as the infallible head of his party, may have adopted, and which operate like an authoritative absolution upon a troubled mind. Popery, such as this, the essence of genuine popery, with a new form and Protestant name, doth already work to a most alarming and yet unobserved extent!"

Mr. C.—All I can say, Sir, that this, if true, is most astounding; and I really am free to confess that, from what I have heard of Bishop McIlvaine, agreeing so fully with what you state regarding him, I can hardly doubt its truth in the fullest extent.

Mr. H.—You may fully rely on this as being a picture by no means too highly coloured. I trust you will consider well what you have heard to day. Remember that it is on the results of their preaching that your friends chiefly depend for their defence. Having spoken so long, I feel tired, and must close for the present. I shall be happy to see you soon again, Mr. Clayton.

Mr. C.—You may depend on my considering well what I have heard this day. It has made too deep an impression on me to be soon forgotten. Good afternoon, Sir.

Mr. H.—Good afternoon, Mr. Clayton.

[1] Nelson's Life of Bull, p. 39, 40.
[2] See Caswall's well-written and pleasing account of the American Church, p. 165.

* New York *Churchman*, October 6th, 1838, p. 1. † p. 41

* P. 43. † P. 45.
‡ Bishop McIlvaine's Second Charge, pp 16, 17, 18.

THE CHURCH AND HER TEACHING.

(From a Letter of Archdeacon Philpot to a fellow-prisoner touching Infant Baptism.)

I received yesternight from you, dear brother, saint, and fellow-prisoner for the truth of Christ's Gospel, a letter, wherein you gently require my judgment concerning the baptism of infants; what is the effect thereof. And before I do shew you what I have learned out of God's Word, and of his true and infallible church touching the same, I think it not out of the matter to declare what vision I had the same night, while musing on your letter I fell asleep, knowing that God doth not without cause reveal to his people, who have their minds fixed on him, special and spiritual revelations to their comfort, as a taste of their joy and kingdom to come, which flesh and blood cannot comprehend.

Being in the midst of my sweet rest, it seemed to me to see a great beautiful city, all of the colour of azure and white, four-square, in a marvellous beautiful composition in the midst of the sky; the sight whereof so inwardly comforted me, that I am not able to express the consolation I had thereof; yea, the remembrance thereof causeth as yet my heart to leap for joy: and as chrity is no churl, but would others to be partakers of his delight, so methought I called to others (I canno tell whom); and while they came, and we together beheld the same, by and by, to my great grief, it fadd away.

This dream I think not to have come of the illusion of the senses, because it brought with it so much spiritual joy; and I take it to be of the working of God's spirit for the contentation of your request, as he wrought in Peter to satisfy Cornelius. Therefore I interpret this beautiful city to be the glorious Church of Christ, and the appearance of it in the sky signifieth the heavenly state thereof, whose conversation is in heaven and that according to the primitive church which is now in heaven, men ought to measure and judge the Church of Christ now in earth; for as the prophet David saith, "The foundations thereof are in the holy hills, and glorious things be spoken of the city of God." And the marvellous quadrature of the same, I take to signify the universal agreement in the same, and that all the church here militant ought to consent to the primitive church throughout the four parts of the world; as the prophet affirmeth, saying, "God maketh us to dwell after one manner in one house." And that I conceived so wonderful joy at the contemplation thereof I understand the unspeakable joy which they have that be at unity with Christ's primitive church; for there is joy in the Holy Ghost, and peace which passeth all understanding, as it is written in the Psalms, "As of joyful persons is the dwelling of all them that be in thee." And that I called others to the fruition of this vision, and to behold this wonderful city, I construe it by the will of God this vision to have come upon me musing on your letter, to the end that under this figure I might have occasion to move you with many others, to behold the primitive church in all your opinions concerning faith, and to conform yourself in all points to the same, which is the "pillar and stablishment of truth," and teacheth the true use of the sacraments; and having, with a greater fulness than we have now, the first-fruits of the Holy Ghost, did declare the true interpretation of the Scriptures according to all verity, even as our Saviour promised to send them another Comforter, which should teach them all truth.

And since all truth was taught and revealed to the primitive church, which is our mother, let us all that be obedient children of God submit ourselves to the judgment of the church for the better understanding of the articles of our faith, and of the doubtful sentences of the Scripture. Let us not go about to shew in us, by following any man's private interpretation upon the word, another spirit than they of the primitive church had, lest we deceive ourselves; for there is but one faith and one Spirit, which is not contrary to himself, neither otherwise now teacheth us than he did them. Therefore let us believe as they have taught us of the Scriptures, and be at peace with them, according as the true Catholic Church is at this day; and the God of peace assuredly will be with us, and deliver us out of all our worldly troubles and miseries, and make us partakers of their joy and bliss through our obedience to faith with them.

Communication.

DR. PUSEY'S SERMON BEFORE THE UNIVERSITY OF OXFORD.—No. III.

Rev. Sir,—The next passage to which I would draw the attention of your readers is somewhat remarkable.—"Probably one ground why so little needed to be said in the New Testament as to the forgiveness of sins of a Christian very grievously fallen was, that our Lord had left a living provision in his Church whereby the penitent, however fallen, should be restored." Here then is a concession, that there is little or no mention in Scripture of the so called "great authoritative act whereby God in the Church still forgave the sins of the penitent"; and this admission should have the greater weight, coming as it does from one well able to make the most of the slightest foundation for his opinions. Perfectly coinciding with this statement, that "little is said in the New Testament of the forgiveness of sins" in the way for which Dr. Pusey argues, it must however be maintained that the Scriptures of the New Testament abound richly in promises of forgiveness to repentant sinners, however fallen: I had always considered—have I been mistaken?—that the forgiveness of sins was the unspeakable gift of the New Covenant,—nay, was *the very Gospel itself*, embracing all who shew forth "repentance towards God and faith towards our Lord Jesus Christ": in proof of which it were superfluous to heap line upon line from the Word itself. A reason however is suggested for the undeniable silence of Scripture upon this—in Dr. Pusey's system—very material point of Christianity, namely, that Christ had left "in the Church a living provision" by which this silence is supplied.

Here, then, we must join issue upon the great Protestant doctrine of the "sufficiency of Holy Scripture," which is thus decidedly impugned: here we are told of a "great authoritative act" connected with man's salvation,—an act of the utmost importance to sinners,—most essentially heightening the value of the Church—giving to an external act of her ministry a quality upon which the intensest feelings, the earnest expectations of an expiring Christian are to be called forth, as pronouncing his future lot through all eternity,—and of all the long chain of religious rites, and typical ceremonies, and sacrifices, that were ever enjoined by heaven or invented by man, what in importance to the believer could transcend this?—before it all sacraments, true or false, must dwindle into secondary things; and yet, of such an act as this must be to the Christian's soul, the Holy Spirit has left no record,—has left his silence to be supplied *from other sources*—from sources to which he has not even directed us. I care not of what other sources men may tell us,——I heed not however "mighty a voice," if that voice sound not in unison with the Record of eternal Truth vouchsafed to us,—if it utter an uncertain sound,—if its language be not the language that "God spake in these latter days by his Son." If it is not in the Scriptures, it is an addition to them, which our Church disclaims any power in herself or man to make; and it is not a mere ceremony that falls within the Church's appointment, but it "embodies a doctrine" in itself contradictory to the Divine Record that we possess. Our Church believes that "Holy Scripture containeth *all* things necessary to salvation," and Holy Scripture contains not *this*, its most able advocate himself being our witness.

To proceed with the sermon.—"And in healthful times, when discipline was observed, and when people were in earnest about their souls, and felt the pressure of their sins, and the darkness of the absence of divine grace, the forgiveness of sins was seen, and witnessed, and felt, and shone forth in the renewed life and health of the soul, whose restoration was furthered by the Church's love and prayers. The penitent then saw the oppressed set free, and knew that his own chain of evil habits might be loosed; the Church could give account of the source of her power, appealing to the commission given her by her divine Lord, and the workings of that power were the pledge of it to all; saying to the lame by the decrepitude of sin, 'walk' and 'run in the way of God's commandments'; and to the leper, 'Wash in Siloam, (him who is sent) and let thy flesh come again as that of a little child.' She showed that she was clad with the power of her Lord, and no one needed to ask, 'By what authority doest thou these things?'"

We cannot of course say decidedly to what times the preacher refers with so commendatory a phrase as "healthful," that is, as compared to times when religion is in a diseased state; but we gather with much certainty from the tone of the passage, that he refers to some period when Church discipline, as to penance and confession, was fully observed, and when this doctrine of Absolution was the belief of the whole Christian community. All this flourished under the old Roman Catholic system in our own country; but it can hardly be of that period that this language of approval is openly held. We will therefore suppose that the allusion is rather to the earliest ages, when great strictness was observed in excluding from participation in any Christian privileges "such persons as stood convicted of notorious sin," who were only re-admitted upon profession of repentance and promise of amendment. The censure of the Church and the punishment of excommunication were then remitted; and *this* forgiveness of sins was seen plainly enough. That the "restoration" of sinners to the favour of God was and is "furthered by the Church's love and prayers," we cannot doubt, since that is the great work committed to her—to feed Christ's sheep, to save that which was lost, to correct the sinner from his ways; her Saviour's work was her's as far as it was to "preach the acceptable year of the Lord, to bind up the broken-hearted"; but this latter she does by spiritual instruction, advice and comfort, not by propping men up with the rotten staff of positive absolution: she does it by the various means of grace that she provides, and to this object—the restoration of sinners, the care and love and prayers of the Church are indeed directed. But in the glowing language with which the preacher panegyrizes the assumed action of the Church in this matter, and in the application, though only figuratively, of the words used by our Saviour in the very miracles which *proved* his mission, it is designed to lead us to view the Church as then in the unquestioned exercise of the full power of absolving sinners in the way that he represents,—absolving them not merely from ecclesiastical censure, but from God's anger. Penance, confession, absolution, then flourished; forgiveness of sins, meaning of course the Divine forgiveness, "was seen"; "The Church showed that she was clad with the power of her Lord." Observe this wording—not with power *by* her Lord, but with his actual power—to forgive sins, of course. How did the Church show this? Were there any proofs of her being invested with this power? Could she do this? Have her records perished in the dust of time? Could she do this? We think not; for even this extravagant claimant for Church power can only speak of the forgiveness of sins being "seen, and felt, and shining forth *in the renewed health and life of the soul*," and the "workings of that power" were the restored penitents "*running in the way of God's commandments.*" But these are not proofs of an absolving power in the Church, for they are equally the results of many other of her offices, by which she exhorts, reproves, rebukes, by which she calls sinners to repent and to bring forth works meet for repentance, and by which generally she preaches the Gospel of Christ. Did no fruits of this nature follow the preaching of the Baptist, of Christ himself, of the Apostles? Yet we do not read that receiving absolution was a preliminary step to wards a renewed life and conversation. Many rejected, but many believed, His word who "came to call *sinners* to repentance." Did they all crowd to receive absolution? But it may be said that these were instances of a first reception of Christianity, not of the forgiveness of *Christians* relapsed into sin. Then we will give these cases up, but will still ask—Is the ministry of the Word, the ministry of reconciliation, as addressed to Christians, ineffectual to cause men to "walk in newness of life" without "absolution"? For a long time ever since the Reformation, penance, confession and absolution, in this sense, has been disused in our Church, as far as they include the idea of forgiveness of sins by the Church; and surely her field has not been barren, nor her portion of the Lord's vineyard unfruitful. So that in fact the proofs that the preacher speaks of, and with which those "healthful times" are represented as abounding, are hardly sufficient to certify the possession of such a power, inasmuch as the same results have belonged to all periods when the Gospel of Christ has been preached in its simple purity, unencumbered by the traditions of men.

But let us ascertain whether the *facts* of the Church's claims in the early ages to an absolving power, bear out Dr. Pusey's description. Bishop Burnet, combating the doctrine that assigned to absolution the high character of a Sacrament, says, (Article XXV.) "It will be a thing no less absurd to make the form of a Sacrament to be a practice not much elder than three hundred years; since no ritual can be produced, no author cited, for this form (Ego te absolvo,) for above a thousand years after Christ; all the ancient forms of receiving penitents having been by a blessing in the form of a prayer, or a declaration; but none of them in these positive words, I absolve thee."

The same erudite author states in another place: "confession was at first made publicly; but the inconveniences of that appearing, and particularly many of these sins being capital, instead of a public, there was a private confession practised. . . . . All was in order to the executing the canons, and *for keeping up the discipline of the Church*, ... and when the time of the penance was finished, they received the penitents by prayer and imposition of hands, into the communion of the Church. This was all the absolution that was known during the first six centuries." Also in another place, on Article XXV., he says, "And in the last place we except to the form of absolution in these words, I absolve thee. We of this Church, who use it only to such as are thought to be near death, cannot be meant to understand anything by it, but the full peace and pardon of the Church: for if we meant a pardon with relation to God, we ought to use it upon many other occasions. The pardon that we give in the name of God is only declaratory of His pardon, or supplicating in a prayer to Him for pardon. In this we have the whole practice of the Church till the twelfth century universally of our side. . . . In the twelfth century some few began to use the words 'I absolve thee.' . . . So sure a thing is tradition, and so impossible to be changed, as they pretend, when within the compass of one age, the new form I absolve thee, was not so much as generally known; and before the end of it, the old form of doing it in a prayer, with imposition of hands, was quite worn out. The idea that arises naturally out of these words is, that the priest pardons sins; and since that is subject to such abuses, and has let in so much corruption," &c., it behoves us to be careful how such an idea is propagated. Thus it appears that all the power that the Church claimed in the "healthful times" of the early ages was *disciplinary*; she cut off from her fellowship notorious offenders till they acknowledged their errors and made public profession of their repentance, and then removing their disabilities, she received them again into her bosom, with solemn prayer to God on their behalf.

The next passage in Dr. Pusey's Sermon that requires notice, as containing a fallacious and dangerous theory, is the following:—"Thus the practice of the Church became the comment upon holy Scripture; just as the apostolic rite of infant baptism pointed out the meaning of our Lord's words: 'Suffer little children to come unto me,' about which otherwise there might have been much doubt; or as any of the Creeds, which rested on holy Scripture, taught us meanings of the divine word which, but for them, we should never have received." The very obvious objection to this passage is that it makes the Scripture in some measure defective without