

VOLUME IX.—No. 23.]

A CHARGE

DELIVERED TO THE CLERGY OF THE DIOCESE OF QUEBEC, IN THE CATHEDRAL CHURCH OF QUEBEC, AT THE TRIENNIAL VISITATION IN 1845, BY GEORGE J. MOUNTAIN, D.D., LORD BISHOP OF MONTREAL.

And now, my brethren, having done my best, not in the way of injunction imposed, but simply of assistance offered, to clear away certain embarrassments which might possibly, in some instances, be found to perplex you in practice, and in others to create difficulties of a conscientious kind, and having attempted to set in their just light, some questions of principle which greatly agitate the Church, I shall proceed briefly to notice some points connected with our liturgical performances, in which a closer adherence to rule appears both feasible and desirable, or in which an improved attention is to be recommended to exterior solemnity of effect.

Upon the whole, I believe, that a much nearer approach has been made in this Parish than in any other within the Diocese, (although we are but very weakly handed for the performance of all our public duties, and are without any one of the materials of a Cathedral establishment) to the full observance of the Church in the matter of public worship. But we do not in all points afford an example to be cited as a model. I am much disposed, for reasons which cannot require any other statement than that which is prefixed in the prayer-book to the office of baptism itself—to recommend the administration of this sacrament after the second lesson, closing the evening service for the purpose, whenever the clergyman serves the same congregation in the same day. But although there are Chapels in this Parish—one of them is left to us—in which this practice has been established, it has not yet been introduced in the Mother-Church itself, chiefly because the existing arrangements which are in force for placing the font, and which it is not quite easy to alter in a satisfactory manner, would exclude a very large portion of the congregation from the benefit of witnessing the rite. The baptism of children in health, except in places remote from any Church, should never be administered in any other building; and the same rule will apply to the solemnization of marriage.

With reference to the other Sacrament, I am of opinion that the practice of monthly Communion might be established with advantage in every Parish and Mission in the Diocese, except where there are so new that the religious habits of the people remain to be formed; and in these, the establishment of the rule might be prospectively entertained. More than this it does not appear to me that you could wisely attempt; less, I regard as constituting a deprivation to which a company of believers ought not to be subjected, presumed to hold that high and scriptural view of this sacrament which is maintained in the Articles, Homilies, Liturgy and Catechism of the Church. Weekly Communion I do not think that we could attempt with success,—nor do I well see how the form of notice would be in all respects appropriate to an occasion understood to recur with every celebration of the Sunday; but it is well known that, in primitive days, the Communion was always administered in public worship; and with regard to the notion of modern times, that the solemnity of the ordinance is better preserved by making it of rare occurrence, it is worth remembering that Calvin, a great authority in the eyes of some parties who hold this view respecting the sacrament, professes himself at a loss to know who ostensibly introduced the practice of infrequent Communion, but has no difficulty in fixing upon Satan as its author.

The Cathedral is used, without any distinct services, as the Parish Church. The services performed, (besides those of a College, as of Christmas-day and Good Friday, on which there are always two services with sermons,) for the congregation attending it, are as follows:—Early morning prayer (at 7 A. M.) on every Wednesday and Friday throughout the year.—Morning service and a Lecture upon every day for which an Epistle and Gospel is provided.—Afternoon service and a Lecture on every Sunday, except on Wednesdays and Fridays. There is also a monthly afternoon service with a Lecture, on each Friday before the Communion. Of these week-day celebrations, the Passion-week and other Lenten services, as well as those on Easter Monday and Tuesday, are performed in the Cathedral; the rest in all Saints' Chapel, within the Cathedral-yard.

To some persons living at a distance from Canada, this might not appear much, and additions to it may in the course of time be made. But, besides other considerations which might be stated, the nature of the services which are attached to a daily service, unless there were some endowment out of which to provide for all the extra expenses to be incurred in warming the church, keeping open the approaches to it, &c. &c.

Cathedral at home, of reading the early prayers in one of the side Chapels of the building, may be applied as a good precedent for the use of all Saints' Chapel for the use of the minor altars.

Some arrangements, however, are now in agitation. (Aug. 1845) The Church of England speaks constantly of the Lord's Supper as being a memorial, and that it is very prominently in the character of a memorial,—"do this in remembrance of me." But it is equally evident from Scripture that to treat it merely as a memorial, is a sadly low and inadequate view of the ordinance, and nothing can be more gloriously repugnant to the view taken by the Church of England.

In the 25th Article the two Sacraments are declared to be certain sure witnesses and effectual signs of Grace by which God doth work invisibly in us, &c. In the 28th it is affirmed that to such as worthily receive, with faith receiving the Lord's Supper, the bread which we break is a partaking of the body of Christ, and likewise the Cup of blessing is a partaking of the blood of Christ.

In the 29th part of the Homily of the worthy receiving and reverend eating of the Sacrament of the body and blood of Christ, the following passage occurs:— "Thus much we must be sure to hold, that in the Supper of the Lord there is no vain ceremony, no bare sign, no untrue figure of a thing absent, but as the Scripture saith, the table of the Lord, the bread and wine are the body and blood of Christ, the announcement of his Lord, the memory of his body and blood of the Lord in a marvellous incarnation, which by the operation of the Holy Ghost, (the very bond of our conjunction with Christ,) is through faith, wrought in the souls of the faithful, whereby they receive his body to eternal life, but they surely trust to win to their souls a resurrection to immortality."

In the Communion-office, those who refuse to partake are represented as separating themselves from their brethren who come to feed on the banquet of that most heavenly food; prayer tables of those who receive the bread and wine may be perceived that Christ's most blessed body and blood; and thanks are offered that God vouchsafes to feed those who have duly received these holy mysteries with the spiritual food of the most precious body and blood of his Son our Saviour Jesus Christ. In the Catechism, the body and blood of Christ are said to be truly and indeed taken and received by the faithful, in the Lord's Supper. These statements of the views of the Church are very familiarly accessible, but the explanation of them collectively is not so, and, when guarded by the explanations which they stand in conjunction, constitutes all that Churchmen can want, to be distinctly assured of what she teaches. The error, for example, of imputing to her, from the language just quoted from the Catechism, the maintenance of notions respecting the doctrine of Transubstantiation, appears not only from the strong, explicit, and reiterated statements of an opposite reference to be made in all the other formularies to which she herself, and most plainly, from the Catechism in itself, and from the very part of it in which the explanation is found. In the question, and answer immediately preceding, or "TRUSTED, in opposition to the outward part or sign, and blood, the limitation of the communion of the body and blood of the faithful, manifestly excludes the doctrine of the change in the elements." This also corresponds most exactly to the language of the 28th Article. There is no mistake to be made about the sentiments of the Church of England on the subject of the sacraments, except where men are desirous of making it. Any thing which differs from the plain statements and definitions to which reference is here made, it denotes the occasional language of some theologians whom she honours, where they are writing in a looser kind of way, it may be found, upon closer and more careful examination, to disappear.

The utter loss in many places of the practice of catechizing the youth of the flock, and the obstacles which lie in the way of effectually establishing it, are among the prevalent evils of the present times. A great deal is done by other and more popular modes of religious instruction for the young, and much good, it may be hoped, is thence effected, as much piety, no doubt, is there enlisted; but it is a good not always unmingled with objectionable ingredients, nor is there any other method of laying the foundation, as the Apostle speaks, and communicating the principles of the doctrine of Christ to persons of yet tender years, at all comparable to that of the direct oral instruction of the lawful pastor set over them, their relation to whom should mix itself with all their religious associations, and mould their religious habits for life. It is thus that the bonds of Churchmanship are formed in their stability and strength, and that, under the divine blessing, a tone and consistency is given to the character of the Christian, which other methods of training, more replete with excitement and exhibition, can rarely bestow.

It is to the restoration of the office of Deacons in its original separate efficiency, that we must look for any extensive accomplishment of this and many other improvements in the Church: but the unaided pastor, in the mean time,—unaided, I mean, by this apostolic provision,—should do what he can, and I could cite examples in which the clergyman, presiding himself over the whole proceedings of the Sunday-School and personally both guiding and drawing out the minds of the children, is very effectually building up the lively stones as a spiritual house. The plain Catechism of the Church, although by no means to be made exclusively the matter of instruction, ought never to be lost sight of; and in fact there is no topic of Scripture which it may not serve to introduce—for it divides itself, in the scheme of Religion which it sets before the mind of the neophyte, into four grand heads—the points of belief—the points of practice—the necessity, nature, and efficacy of prayer, and especially of prayer for divine grace—and the doctrine of the sacraments. And I have known excellent and, I believe, abiding effects produced by constantly calling back the youthful mind to that which the Catechism sets out, the fact of solemn admission in infancy to the privileges of the Christian covenant and the duties springing from that dedication to God.

I shall not further notice the two opposite errors of disproportionately exalting and irreverently depreciating the sacraments and outward ordinances of our holy Religion, than to point out the necessity of your diligently guarding against the growth of either. In most parts of this diocese, the latter error, I apprehend, is that with which you will have to contend, rather than the former; and there is often much difficulty in dealing with it—because the mind which conceives it, is apt to be puffed up with a delusive notion that it is an evidence of spirituality to make light of ritual observances, and is thence rendered inaccessible to any proper recommendation of them, as proceeding from a party pre-judged, from the very fact of offering such a recommendation, to be imperfectly enlightened. To administer the corrective of such mental distempers, requires much of what, in the phraseology of the world, is called tact: it demands the full exercise of that wisdom of the serpent which we are charged to couple with the innocence of the dove.

One thing, I believe, is certain, that we can never make head against this description of error by compromise and concession; by explaining away the language of the Church in accommodation to the views of such parties, or assimilating her practices, as far as we can venture to strain them, to their prepossessions. Whoever knows any thing about the Church of England knows that she is a Church distinctly and invariably maintaining for herself, within her own pale, with whatever charity she may regard the deviations of other parties, the principle of the episcopal succession, and repudiating all ministrations which do not carry this stamp;—a Church not made at the Reformation, but simply purified, in that struggle, from her corruptions, being the same Church which existed in the British Isles before those corruptions began; a Church hanging high in her temples the lamp of the word of God and giving to her people the same blessed light in their dwellings,—but at the same time a Church with a hierarchy, with a venerable ritual, with forms and usages retained from early days, with a system of doctrine and of worship in which the dignity, the sacredness, and the efficacy of the sacraments appointed by Christ, are studiously kept in view.—These features of the Church we may fancy that it is our policy to disguise—but how can we do it, if we would?—they are; they belong to her: they stand out among her salient characteristics and hold their places among her inalienable distinctions; and far from seeking to keep them in the shade, we should make full advantage of them for the cause of holy truth committed to our hands. I do not mean that we should be perpetually harping upon them or ostentatiously and boastfully proclaiming them; once rightly understood by her people, they ought to be regarded, in a manner, as things of course—as common established and recognized vehicles, and aids not needing to be loudly insisted upon, for communicating and conveying to men the Grace of God which bringeth salvation; but in order to their duly working this subsidiary part, we must present them in their proper aspect and invest them with all their legitimate force and effect. The Church has most carefully stamped upon them all a character of external reverence and order, and given them, at the same time, a meaning and a spirit by the part which she instructs her people to take in them,—they, on their side, in too many instances, do what they can to obliterate all this—the beautiful significance, the decorous solemnity, the contentaneous fervour of her worship is lost in the name of its performance; in many Churches they refuse to let their own voices be heard at all in the responsive accents of devotion; few only in the congregation, can be brought to bend the knee before their God, and in all the forms and observances of the Church there is a desire evinced to escape from the open acknowledgment of religious faith and feeling which they import, and to discharge them in a manner more accommodated either to the prejudices of a party or to the ways of the world. In some places, a total disregard may be observed of the reverential care which should be shown for the house of God and its several appurtenances; it is found perhaps encumbered with unsightly objects or disfigured by shabby and decayed articles of Church furniture, or merely provided with the coarsest and most common vessels for the administration of the sacraments,—its appendages altogether being in a style which any respectable householder in the same community would blush to exhibit in his own dwelling.

All such tendencies as these, it is our duty, with every manifestation of gentleness and prudence, but yet with earnestness and zeal, to counteract. And in the cultivation, in particular, of a combined devotional feeling in our Congregations, and the use of those helps which are calculated to promote it, one thing to be especially recommended is the improvement of Psalmody. The day I hope is coming when in all the episcopal Churches, whether British or foreign, the sound of the solemn Chant will be constantly heard in the praises of God; and wherever the means of introducing this practice are at command, or can by fair exertion be procured, let us endeavour not to be behind-hand in this Diocese.

If there are prejudices to contend with upon any of these points, we must seek by judicious means to remove them. I am sorry, indeed, to be obliged to confess that there have been some instances in the Church at home, of a zeal in such matters observant of prudential restraints, and that there have even been manifestations of a love for practices savouring of error and superstition which may not unreasonably account for the existence of suspicion and alarm in other quarters;—and it is with much regret that I have seen one passage in a pamphlet sent round\* (I know not by whom, nor do I question their motives, whoever they were,) to all the Clergy of this Diocese, in which the use of images in churches, is spoken of at least in a very unguarded manner. The predilection of Queen Elizabeth for images which is there noticed, produced, it is well known, the most earnest remonstrances from the Archbishop and Bishops, their authorities being taken "from the word of God, from sentences out of the ancient fathers, and from other weighty considerations;" and the Queen herself was brought to view the subject in the most opposite light; in fact she went into the extreme of objecting to pictorial illustrations of the prayer-book. Even historically, therefore, the statement in question conveys impressions which are not correct; but, apart from this consideration, such endeavours as those to which I here allude, are precisely calculated to obstruct the very object which they are designed to promote. In the minds of a vast multitude of persons, they tend to invest all ideas of the maintenance of Church principle and all just concern for the reverence of the sanctuary, with the character of an approximation to Romanism; and they thus afford a handle to the adversary, of which it is sufficiently certain that full advantage will be made. In itself, however, it is truly a strange idea that it is symptomatic of corruption in religion to be solicitous for the beauty and majesty of the House of God, or to study solemnity of effect in framing the appointments of worship. I believe that those who attentively note all the influences which act upon man, will find that the Protestant faith has received deep and most extensive prejudice from the meanness of many Protestant places of worship and their secular architecture and arrangement, the irreverence of feeling connected with the sanctuary, the slovenliness of preparation for the work of the service in the house of the Lord, and the undisciplined deportment and gestures of those who go their way into his gates. I believe that these causes have largely contributed to the stiffer adherence of Romanists to their own system, and the defection of many persons, not confined to the less enlightened classes of the community, from the ranks of the pure Protestant faith. But, in itself, and independently of all consideration of incidental effects, what is the correct view of this subject? Was the feeling of David, who longed to build a suitable temple to the Lord, and grieved that the ark of God was under curtains while he was himself in occupation of a palace, a feeling to be discarded in the higher school of the Gospel? Would it be otherwise than a Christian and acceptable work, if any powerful monarch with a princely mind for other great undertakings, were, in humble devotion, and in visible testimony before the world of the value of the Faith in his eyes, to imitate the example of Solomon, and to expend freely his treasures for the erection of some vast and magnificent Cathedral? The yoke of Jewish ordinances is broken, and the large and unfettered liberty of the Christian Church in framing the exterior appointments of divine worship leaves them susceptible of adaptations, according to the language of our 34th Article, to "the diversities of countries, times, and men's manners;"—but with reference to the general principles by which we are to be guided in matters of this nature, in what part, I beseech you, of the New Testament are we taught to dismiss our concern for the seemliness and dignity of the house of our God, or to hold cheap the exterior demonstrations which naturally serve to represent, among such creatures as men, the inward feelings of awe and reverential love? The holy movement of wrath which was stirred in the bosom of the Saviour by the dishonour done of old to his Father's house: the approbation with which he received the manifestations of popular feeling when the crowd spread their garments in his road, and in the train which they formed to attend him, carried branches of palm in their hands: the rebuke which he gave to those who checked the disposition of the woman to honour him by the costly offering of ointment of spikenard, (an incident which is admirably applied to our present purpose in a passage cited, in the strongest terms of commendation, from Sir Edwin Sandys, by the great Protestant champion Chillingworth, but too long to be here introduced): the Apostolic direction that all things in religious assemblies should be done decently and in order, applied in times when the Church is at peace, and Christianity is professed by great and powerful kingdoms and by communities in which the arts have reached their highest advancement, and when all which meets the eye in opulent private houses, displays an elaborate finish and is regulated with a fastidious exactness;—again, the questions (in their most natural acceptation,) of the same Apostle, "What have ye not houses to eat and to drink in?—or despise ye the Church of God?"—these surely are testimonies not calculated to favour the idea that it is a censurable superstition to impress some outward and peculiar character of sacredness upon things which are set apart to God.

I trust, therefore, that we shall not be met by any such objection if we make it our aim, so far as our means will go, to establish a correct architectural taste and to study all proper ecclesiastical effect in the construction and interior arrangement of our churches. I have no hesitation in avowing myself one of those who hail the prospect of ultimately eradicating from Christian churches the present system of enclosed pews; and although they must continue, perhaps for a long time, in most places, to be tolerated, I hope that it will not be so long before every church even in this poor Diocese is provided with a decent font, and all other requisite appendages for the proper celebration of divine offices. And I am happy to think that the huge enclosed pen (for I do not know by what more appropriate name I can call it), in which our Clergy have long been doomed to read the prayers, and, yet more, the congeries of desks, as one of your own body has, in conversation, most happily expressed it, which blocks up the perspective of many aisles, absolutely forbidding—I am pained that you should still see a signal example in this very church,—absolutely forbidding to the view of a great part of the congregation the solemn ministrations, of different kinds, which are performed within the communion-rails, so that many parents, for example, may attend a confirmation without being able to see their own children confirmed,—will soon every where give place to a less encumbered, more seemly, and I may surely add, more edifying arrangement.

Men whose names and memories we honour,—men, in comparison of whom, I for one, will owe myself to occupy, and that, *longo intervallo*, a new secondary place, have sanctioned and allowed some of the arrangements in churches, which now we venture to condemn; but it was simply because they felt with practices which, though exceedingly modern in the history of the Christian Church, had, before the day, obtained the ascendancy, and were generally prevalent in the temples of the national establishment. With respect to the frequency of public worship it is sufficiently evident that from the nature of the climate, from the scattered state of our country congregations, from the number of detached stations at which the same minister is often obliged to officiate, from the scanty provisions at command for the maintenance of service, and from other local peculiarities, it is very generally impracticable for the clergyman to introduce in any one of his congregations many additional observances of this nature. There is, I do hope, no more now in the Diocese in which Christmas-day, Ash-Wednesday, and Good-Friday are not kept.—The Communion-service should be always used upon Ash-Wednesday, and the intentions of the Church in framing that service and appointing the season of humiliation which it serves to open, should be explained to the people. To the observance of these days, I think that that of the Festivals of the Ascension and of All-Saints day might everywhere be added,—the former because it may be improved to very edifying purposes as the real anniversary of a signal and glorious event in the history of our Redeemer, and a marked point in the series of commemorative observances which relate to that history,—the latter (All-Saints' day), because it furnishes the opportunity of exhibiting collectively before our people the general object of all the different Saints' days, which, for the reasons just stated, may, in some places, be found too numerous to be observed. In cases where they are more advantageously situated, more may, of course, in proportion, be done.

I am well aware that among my brethren now before me, there are some who, at present, are little concerned in several of the points upon which I have touched,—men who, toiling through weary ways in the forest, or traversing, at another season, through snows, the waste howling wilderness, seek out the sattered sheep of Christ and meet them, a few here and a few there, for divine worship, in the log-built school-house, or the unpainted and unfinished wooden church, with its rough and temporary fittings,—cannot afford to be distressed about all the niceties of order or the materials of solemn and dignified effect. Yet even in situations like these, the grave deficiencies of the English ritual and the simple distinctive appendages of the English Clergy, bespeak a reverence not wisely disregarded, and wake up a train of beneficial associations. And the habits of the Church ought to be given: the system of the Church established in its regularity, in the infancy of settlement, so as to grow up with its advance. But however humble, however rude, may be the scene of your labours, you have higher things in your hands as ministers of God, than any which relate to mere external auxiliaries of devotion venerable forms. And God forbid that in upholding the usages of the Anglican Church or pleading the precedents of ecclesiastical antiquity, we should resemble those zealots who are described by an early historian of the Church—"Such," he says, "as like of these rites," (i. e. these in particular of which he is speaking,)—I take the passage from a very old English translation, through which alone, I happen to have access to this writer,—such like of these rites do commend them upon the posterity for a long time. But to pen in paper the infinite and divers ceremonies and customs thoroughout cities and countries, would be a very tedious piece of work, and scarce, nay, impossible to be done." And again he speaks of some who, neglecting the precepts of the Gospel, "yet contend about holidays as it were for life and death; they despise the commandments of God and establish their own canons of their own." &c. of course, as of authority superior to that of the word, or co-ordinate with it.

My brethren, I am devotedly attached to the Church of our fathers, and I have, in the exercise of the best judgment bestowed upon me, steered clear, through life, whatever odium might threaten on the one side, or whatever applause might invite upon the other, of any surrender, any compromise, of Church principles by identifying myself with the proceedings of the great popular and mixed Associations of the day,—the supporters of which will, I hope, at least extend to us who cannot co-alesce with them, the benefit of their own principles, which, recognizing and countenancing all separations made upon the plea of conscience, and treating with equal indulgence all new peculiarities of opinion, can hardly, a fortiori, be adverse to our holding ourselves apart in our original position, and maintaining intact our primitive regimen. Here, then, although in no feeling of harshness, in no haughty arrogance of exclusive privilege, in no contemptuous severity of judgment,—here I stand entrenched: *hic moras ahenas esto*: but let my tongue be palsied, let my right hand be withered, if ever I speak or write on behalf of the Church, her ministry, her ceremonies, her very sacraments, in a manner calculated to displace or disparage the direct, broad, earnest, unshrinking proclamation of salvation by the blood of my Saviour and by that alone, or the constant and faithful urgency of appeal to the hearts of hard-hearted wretches and unthinking sinners,—of whatever privileges, attaching to the new covenant, they may have been made partakers,—to go immediately to God himself; to seek from the Lord a new heart and a new spirit, and pray, in the strivings of a contrite bosom, that they may be made new creatures in Christ Jesus.

APPENDIX. Extract from Chillingworth's "Preface to the Author of Charity Maintained," prefixed to his "Religion of Protestants a Safe Way to Salvation." Referred to in the foregoing Charge.

"For what, if our devotion towards God, out of a desire that He should be worshipped as in Spirit and in Truth in the first place, so also in the Beauty of Holiness?—What if out of fear that too much simplicity and nakedness in the public service of God may beget in the ordinary sort of men a dull and stupid irreverence; and out of hope that the outward state and glory of it, being well disposed, and wisely moderated, may engender, quicken, increase, and nourish, the inward reverence, respect, and devotion which is due unto God's sovereign majesty and power? What, if out of a persuasion and desire that glory may be won over to us the sooner, by the removing of the scandal out of their way; and out of an holy jealousy, that the weaker sort of Protestants might be the easier seduced to them by the magnificence and pomp of their Church-service, in case it were not removed? I of our Church, more of late than formerly, have set them selves to adorn and beautify the places where God's honour dwells, and to make them as heaven-like as they can with earthly ornaments? Is this a sign that they are had for their object the correction of some very loose and crude ideas upon the subject of the Church of Christ and her ordinances?"

See Strype, Annals of the Reformation, vol. I. c. 18, and Life of Abp. Parker—Book 2. c. 6. The term *unpurged*, of which I have made use above, appears to have been the most appropriate which could have been chosen, for the author of the sermon sent round as described, (Dr. Hook), in his Church Dictionary, explains the word *Impure* in a manner satisfactory to persons holding the strictest Protestant views. See also his Sermon on the Novelties of Romanism.

See the Extract at the end of this Charge. A similar argument might be drawn from the manner in which Joseph of Arimathea and Nicodemus testified their feelings towards Christ after his death:—"They came," says Dr. Doddridge, "with all holy reverence and affection, to take down those sacred remains; nor did they think the finest linen, or the choicest spices, too valuable for such an occasion."

can perform in enriching, or skill in adorning, the Temple of God; or to set out His service with the greatest pomp and magnificence that can be devised. And although, for the most part, much baseness and childishness is predominant in the Masters and contrivers of their ceremonies, yet this outward state and glory being well disposed, doth ingender, quicken, increase, and nourish the inward reverence, respect, and devotion which is due unto sovereign majesty and power. And, although I am not ignorant that many men well reputed have embraced the trifling opinion of that disciple, who thought all to be wasted that was bestowed upon Christ thought all to be wasted that was bestowed upon Christ thought all to be wasted that was bestowed upon Christ

close, and near, and sensible. They trust in what they can see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and handle with their hands. And they will not open their hearts to feel that all these things must be dissolved; and to consider what manner of persons they ought to be, in all holy conversation and godliness.— Or looking around no longer on others, let us look to ourselves. What shall we think of the state of our own immediate neighbourhood, of those many thousand souls, who, as one parish, should be one religious community, striving to work together in the service and worship of God? Are they living as men who of a certainty know that all these things shall be dissolved; who bear in mind that the heavens shall pass away with a noise, the elements melt with fervent heat, and the earth also, and the works that are therein, shall be burned up?

My brethren, you at least, by your very presence in this place, profess to believe in earnest the faith of God's word. To you, as to a Christian congregation, the rest are apt to look, and to judge from your conduct of the effects of Christian doctrine. To every one of you, therefore, your minister would now apply these words of the apostle. What manner of person oughtest thou to be? Every one well knows the answer. Ye ought to be occupied in all holy conversation and godliness. Ye ought to be looking for, and hastening unto, the coming of the day of God.

Every one of you has now heard the solemn assurance of this world's speedy destruction. Every one of you has been told, with no less authority than the word of God Himself, that "the day of the Lord shall come." Examine then yourselves now, honestly, and plainly: do you study to live in all holy conversation and godliness? do you look for, do you haste unto the coming of that day? How often do you seriously reflect on the dissolving of this world, and of the day when God shall make new heavens and a new earth? With what degree of earnestness, and stedfast resolution, do you practise a holy conversation and godliness? In what sense of speed, by what zeal and diligence, and fervour in well doing, can you esteem yourselves to be making haste to meet your Lord?

If after honest examination you must acknowledge yourselves, each severally, to be far from what you ought to be; receive in conclusion the following directions for your future guidance and improvement. Be on your guard against the particular temptation, which results from your seeing all things continue as they were from the beginning of the world. Let your familiarity with their settled order never tempt you either to mistrust, or to overlook, the certainty of their final dissolution. Reflect once at least every day, I would rather say once every hour, on the fixed decree of God, that these things must pass away.—Accustom yourselves, by frequent meditation, to regard all you see around you, even the world, and the works that are therein, as devoted to be burned.—Pray frequently that your affections may be set on things above.—Direct your thoughts earnestly to the hope of a future life in heaven. And endeavour to consecrate your ordinary business, by doing it in the fear of God, and with the desire that his blessing may attend it. Never suffer yourselves to reckon with any thing like certainty on the future in this world. But, whilst you work with diligence, and design with prudence, bear in mind how soon the day cometh when all these things shall pass away; how entirely it depends on the will of God, whether all you purpose shall not be cut off by the end of the world, or by, what to each singly is the same thing, the end of life.

And more especially have an eye to these two things, the second coming of Christ, which may happen any day, and which Scripture bids you look for each day of your lives; and the hour of death, which if Christ come not first, is sure to overtake you ere long.—When that hour arrives, it is, to them that die, the last. From the moment of our departure is dated to each separately the commencement of eternity. From that moment our existence will no longer be counted by hours, or months, or years. But in a manner which no human imagination can apprehend, all who shall have died will approach at once to the day of final judgment. Set then that day ever before your eyes. Look for it with faith and hope. Hasten unto it with devotion and love. For, whatever the tongue of the seer may say, whatever the senses may suggest, whatever the weakness of our nature may doubt; certainly, as the world now exists, it shall be dissolved, surely as God's word is spoken, "the day of the Lord shall come."

A DIFFICULT TEXT. (From the Calendar.) The following anecdote is told on the authority of a correspondent of the London Christian Observer, for September. Whether the story be true or not, it explains a passage of Scripture, which has been a stumbling-block in the way of many, among whom may be some of your readers. They may like to see it in The Calendar.

The witty Earl of Rochester was once in the company with King Charles II., his Queen, his Chaplain, and some of his ministers of state. After they had been discoursing on public business, the King, of a sudden exclaimed—"Come let us unbend our thoughts from the cares of state, and give us a generous glass of wine which cheereth, as the Scripture saith, both God and man." The Queen hearing this, modestly said she thought there could be no such text in Scripture; and that the idea seemed to her little less than blasphemous. The King replied, that he was pretty sure he had met with it somewhere in his Scripture reading. The Chaplain was appealed to, and he was of the same opinion with the Queen. Rochester suspecting the King to be right, and being no friend to the Chaplain, slipped out of the room, to enquire among the servants, if any of them were conversant with the Bible.—They named David, the Scots cook, who always carried a Bible about him; and David being called, recollecting both the text and where to find it, Rochester ordered him to be in waiting, and returned to the King. This text was still the topic of conversation; and Rochester moved to call in David, who, he said, he found was well acquainted with the Scriptures. David appeared, and being asked the question, produced his Bible, and read the text, (Judges ix. 13.) The King smiled, the Queen asked pardon, and the Chaplain blushed.—Rochester now asked the Doctor, if he could interpret the text since it was produced; but he was mute. He therefore requested David to interpret it, who immediately replied, "How much wine cheereth man, your Lordship knows; and to show you how it cheereth God I beg leave to remind you, that, under the Old Testament dispensation, there were meat offerings, and drink offerings. The latter consisted of wine, which was typical of the blood of the Mediator; which by a metaphor, was said to cheer God, as he was well pleased in the way of salvation that he had appointed; whereby his justice was satisfied, his law fulfilled, his mercy reigned, his grace triumphed, all the divine perfections harmonised, the sinner was saved, and God in Christ glorified."

PLAY. The words commonly used to signify play are these four: relaxation, diversion, amusement, and recreation. The idea of relaxation is taken from a bow, which must be unbent when it is not wanted, to keep up the spring. Diversion signifies a turning aside from the main

THE DAY OF THE LORD. (From Sermons by the Rev. C. Girdlestone.) "Seeing then that all these things shall be dissolved," and seeing that the day when they shall be dissolved is "at hand," "what manner of persons ought ye to be, in all holy conversation and godliness, looking for and hastening unto the coming of the day of God?" Ought ye to be taken up so entirely with the thoughts of this world, as seldom to reflect on the next? Ought ye to be known as Christians only by name; whilst ye seldom think of the life, the death, the resurrection, or the second coming, of that Saviour, through whom alone ye can hope to escape the wrath to come? Looking indeed around us on the whole race of mankind, or looking only on those who profess to believe in Jesus Christ, and in his Gospel, we cannot fail to see that most men are far from what they ought to be. Heirs indeed they are of immortality. But are they not also, in great part, servants of sin, and therefore devoted to eternal death? Called indeed they are to a new and lively hope of a better resurrection, to a life of holiness on earth, and of happiness in heaven. But are they not also, in great part, engrossed by sense, seduced by the world, and taken captive by Satan at his will, so as to hearken to him now, and to dwell with him in torments hereafter?—God invites them. They come not. He calls them. They hear not. He reveals to them the truths of eternity. They attend not. He renders under the veil of sense, and points through the wreck of matter to the opening dawn of endless light. They behold not. Their thoughts are engaged with that which is





