

The Church

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Original Poetry.

THE CHURCH IN 1842.

"The spiritual fabric of this Church
Founded in truth—by blood of Martyrdom
Cemented—by the hands of Wisdom reared
To beauty of Holiness—with ordered pomp
Decent and unrevoked."—WORDSWORTH.

I.
"Branch of the Apostles' Vine!"
"Child of the ancient line,
"From Heaven to Earth two thousand years unbroken!
"Church of the Forest-Land!
"Nursling of God's broad hand!
"Awake—Arise!—thy call to battle's spoken!"

II.
SHE IS AWAKE!—Her God
Half veils his chastening rod,
And calls her forth—'and robes her form with glory;
Youth decks the holy Bride,
Age brings ancestral pride,
The flame of morn,—the gorgeous lights of glory.

III.
Behold her robe of light
With blood of Martyrs bright,
Shed from the hour when Stephen's soul fell sleeping—
High stars of glory crown her,
Flash from her radiant crown,
The bright memorial of her Champions keeping.

IV.
From many a far-off wild,
She calls each long-lost child—
Round her bright banner in the blue leaves streaming—
And Faith's glad welcome floats
On triumph's holiest notes,
To hail each fire on fresh-sprung Altars gleaming.

V.
Speed her bold champions forth!
Broad West and boundless North,
From lonely heathlands by wild, dark forests bounded:
From Haron's stormy deep
Down to the Ocean's wide,
The plaintive call for Gospel aid is sounded.

VI.
Ice-haunt and torrid beam,
Dark wood and rushing stream,
The worldling's taunt,—the body's toil and sorrow,
Check not their feet, who bear
The bright Cross, every-where—
Their night of pain heralds a glorious morrow.

VII.
Glad the fair Sabbath morn,
As dawn light colors morn,
The holy bell's soft chiming floats and lingers;
And round fresh village spires
The forest sunset's fires
Gild with last light their "heavenward pointing fingers."

VIII.
Then the glad Church-mongers throng,
With anxious eyes and song,
The holy bell's soft chiming floats and lingers;
And round fresh village spires
The forest sunset's fires
Gild with last light their "heavenward pointing fingers."

IX.
Thou! on whose potent breath
Hang Judgment,—Life,—or Death,
Oh speed her on, Thy holy name confessing—
Till her high task is done
And the broad Earth, as one,
By her pure shrines shall ask thy priceless blessing!

X.
Firm on Thy holy hill
Bear her bright rampart still,
Stronghold for Truth when men or fiends assault her;
She with that Truth had birth,
And its last light on Earth
Will gild her Cross,—HER APOSTOLIC ALTAR!

ZADIG.
Toronto, December, 1842.

REASONS FOR RETURNING TO THE CATHOLIC CHURCH OF ENGLAND;

IN A CONVERSATION BETWEEN MR. SECKER, A CHURCHMAN, AND MR. BROWN, A METHODIST.

DIALOGUE VI.

(By a Correspondent of "The Church.")

Mr. Brown.—Since our last conversation, Mr. Secker, I have been considerably disturbed in my feelings; not that I have been shaken in my intention of returning to the Church, so far at least as to attend upon her public services once every Sunday, and upon her sacraments regularly, for you have proved, beyond reasonable doubt, that not to do so would be to commit the sin of schism; and when a duty is once proved, no objections, however painful their existence may be, can excuse the neglect of such duty: but the uneasiness, to which I allude, has arisen from this cause, that after I had almost come to the resolution altogether to leave the Methodists,—the reasons for which I will tell you immediately,—I pressed my intention to some of my friends, and they named me so strongly with the argument that "when the Church becomes worldly and formal, men are not only justified but imperatively called upon to separate from it," that I confess I was unable to answer them to my own satisfaction. Pardon me, but before you endeavor to meet this objection,—if indeed you are able to do so,—permit me to state why I have thought of entirely leaving the Methodists. You remember what was said respecting "authority" as a rule of conduct in our last interview. Now if the Church has the right to forbid Dissent, and even to excommunicate those who refuse to obey; I cannot but see that her authority must be equally binding as regards *partial separation*, such as that in which some Methodists indulge; I see also that if such separation be not absolutely schism, it is the very next step to it; and then I am all but convinced that no ministry is lawful, but that which is Apostolic and Episcopal. Now as every thing connected with Christ and His Church is of the most awful importance, I felt that I durst not longer remain in questionable parts, lest haply I might be found in those which are absolutely forbidden. I was therefore about fully to return to the Church, when the doubts as to which I speak as to its being formal and worldly, were fresh suggested to my mind in a manner which has made me feel particularly uncomfortable. I know that duty never calls to two ways, and yet I am, I acknowledge, quite at sea; I fear to move, lest I should leave Christ, and I dare not stay in flat opposition to those principles of submission to lawful and scriptural Church authority which we were lately considering, and to those injunctions which require us to "mark them that walk disorderly, and not after the tradition which he received" (Rom. xvi. 17; 2 Thess. iii. 6, 14; 2 Tim. Titus, &c.).

Mr. Secker.—I understand your difficulty perfectly; it is one which long painfully affected my own mind; but rely upon it, Mr. Brown, it arises from a *distortion of facts, and a misapprehension of duty*. You know nothing is easier than to bring slanders charges against either individuals or communities, which, though they be entirely false, it may yet require long and painful efforts to disprove. Thus, if I were to begin to insinuate in public that you were not thoroughly upright in your commercial transactions, or not a strictly sober man, false as both one and the other would be, it might yet cost you considerable trouble before you could entirely disabuse the public of the suspicion that there was some ground for the slander. So it has been with the Church; the Dissenters have studiously represented it as being devoid of all spiritual religion, a lifeless image, cold and dead,—a congregation of mere formalists, who neither sought Christ, nor desired the influences of His Holy Spirit; while, on the contrary, their own communities are represented as sanctuaries of primitive purity and simplicity, in which alone the truly pious can find either Christian

communion or spiritual profit. With regard to these latter assertions I shall say little,—I do not wish to become the accuser of the private characters even of those who, not content with the error of having forsaken our Reformed Catholic Church, do yet add the sins of unholiness and slanderous speaking concerning her; this only will I say, that those who, amongst the Methodists and other Dissenters, are the most distinguished for their well-informed piety, are the individuals who have the least to say respecting the piety of Dissent as contrasted with that of the Church. With respect to the Church itself, while I know how far short too many of its members come of that spiritual devotion, and of that hungering and thirsting after righteousness which should distinguish every believer in Christ Jesus, still I trust that that "pure and undefiled religion," which only springs from a true faith in Him, and which St. James declares to be this, "to keep ourselves unspotted from the world, and to visit the fatherless and the widow in their affliction," is to be found in our Church in greater abundance than elsewhere. It is charitable to hope that the Dissenters have commonly judged otherwise, not altogether from their unholiness of the Church, nor to use harsher terms, but from their strange ignorance of what composes the visible Church of Christ.

The holy sacrament of baptism was adopted by Christ himself as the rite whereby all, whether Jewish and Pagan adults or the infants of Christians, were to be admitted into His Church; and mark, my dear Sir, that as it is the only rite sanctioned by divine authority for this purpose; therefore, all who are duly baptized are thenceforward positive members of the Church and continue to be so, unless, by competent authority, they are openly excommunicated, and thereby cast out of the pale of the Church,—a measure which the Bible only permits in extreme cases. It is evident, therefore, as the heart of man is naturally prone to sin, that in the Christian, as it was in the Jewish, Church, very many of its members will be unworthy. The Methodists and other sectarians, on the contrary, have, I fear most unwarrantably, made new and unscriptural conditions of entrance into, what they call, their various churches; hence though they profess to baptize the children of their people, and thereby to unite them to Christ, they do most inconsistently refuse to regard them as true members of their religious body; their condition of membership being not that which Christ instituted, but a test of their own! This, I may justly remark, was not originally the case with Methodism; Mr. Wesley always strongly insisted upon it that his people were not a Church, but simply Societies within the Church of England; therefore, however unwise this step might be, still he did not usurp the authority of Christ, by making new conditions of admission into His Church. Nay, such an usurpation as this the Romish Church itself, either by Pope or Council, never ventured upon; this was left for the boasted "private judgment" of Dissent to do; and now alas! Methodism has fully fallen into this snare also. I have made this statement for the purpose of showing you how it is, that, by superficial observers, the Church should be thought to be less holy in its members than Dissent; namely, that as the sectarians acknowledge none as members of their, so-called, churches, except persons chosen from amongst adults who have already exhibited some degree of seriousness; it may well be supposed that, in proportion to their numbers, they will have an appearance of greater purity than our Apostolic Church, which does not deny the rights of membership to any of those who, according to Christ's institution, have, by baptism, been once received therein, even though the lives of many of them should be far from such as becometh those who have the vows of the Lord upon them. Thus, Mr. Brown, I think persons are mistaken as to the matter of fact in the grounds upon which they suppose Dissent to be more holy than the Church; for you see that to make the comparison fair, it is the serious and devout communicants of the Church, those who are attentive upon her various ordinances, who must be compared with the members of dissenting denominations, and then in practical godliness I do not suppose that you yourself think that the Church will suffer by the comparison.

Mr. Brown.—No indeed; for though I have no doubt as to the true piety of very many of the Methodists still I am quite of the opinion of your candid friend the Rev. Mr. Secker, "that piety in the Church is generally much more solid than amongst the Sectarians." Your incidental remarks too respecting the new conditions of church-membership, which the dissenters would establish, strike me very forcibly; indeed now you have brought the matter before me I could wonder how an innovation which appears so dangerous and unscriptural could so long have escaped my observation; it is like robbing those of their Christian privileges and casting them again out of the pale of the Church into the wide world of iniquity whom, in the name of Christ, they have professed to receive as the children of God; and truly those who are thus treated can never be expected to feel that having been "baptized into Christ" the vows of the Lord are upon them. I fear such Ostreich-like conduct towards the "lambs" of Christ, interwoven as it is in the very nature of dissent, goes far to prove how great is the evil of schism.

Mr. Secker.—I think then we are agreed that, with all its faults, we shall not mend ourselves by leaving the Church in the hope of finding a purer Christian community; especially when we bear in mind that great improvement, which, by the mercy of God, has taken place within the last few years in the Church of England both as respects Apostolic Order, Scriptural zeal, and personal holiness. But to give your friends all the advantage of their objection, I will suppose that "the Church is as cold in its love to Christ and as formal in its piety towards God" as they imagine, and even then I am prepared to show, as I stated a while back, that it is an entire misconception of the duty of duty to suppose that even in such a case it would be right to leave her communion, for that the man who does so, is guilty of the sin of schism. This I prove by the following considerations:—

I. That in the Jewish Church, however sinful were its priests, or however corrupted were its ordinances, no one could forsake its pale or neglect its services without rendering himself liable to the judgments of Almighty God for so doing. Thus we find it written in the book of Deuteronomy, "And the man that shall presume to do so, shall be cut off from the people, and shall be put to death." (Deut. x. 12) and in Leviticus dreadful are the threatenings which Jehovah pronounces against those who should despise his statutes, or whose soul should abhor his judgments so that they should not do all his commandments but break his covenant" (xxvi. 15, 16, &c.). And here you see is no exception made, in case the priesthood itself should become unholiness, as indeed we know it oft-times did;—the command to unity is exceeding broad. I thus judge therefore that as schism was a crime so hateful to God, under the Old Dispensation as to be punished with death, even so still He must look upon it with abhorrence.

Mr. Brown.—But what have we to do with Jewish laws? Christ you know came to do away with the Mosaic Ritual and to set us free from all such bondage.

[The person here alluded to is Mr. Hughes, a Baptist preacher, who was Secretary to the Bible Society. His words are:—

"From my extensive intercourse with Christians of all denominations, I have come to the full conviction, that there are no bodies of persons in the nation among whom the Spirit of the Gospel is so consistently exhibited, as among the pious members and ministers of the Established Church. The piety in that quarter is a better case, more deep, more solid, more simple, more scriptural, less showy, than in any other."—Ed. Cu.]

Mr. Secker.—True; Christ did abolish the Mosaic Ritual, with all its burdensome ceremonies; but remember, my dear friend, that He himself says, "Think not that I am come to destroy the law and the prophets; I am not come to destroy, but to fulfil." (Matt. v. 17.) Now from the way in which most Dissenters speak of the Jewish Dispensation, one would be ready to suppose it to have originated with Moses, and that Christ, as its bitter enemy, sought to destroy it root and branch. Whence, Mr. Brown, I appeal to you as a man of sense and candour, whence has arisen this desire of the Dissenters to pour contempt upon a Dispensation which was established solely by God himself? Is it not because there, God himself speaks so clearly, both by precept and example, respecting the Divine authority of Ministers and Rulers, the necessity of obedience, the sin of division, and the other evils necessarily connected with democratic insubordination and religious dissent, that they feel themselves bound, in self-defence, to deny the authority of these his former teachings? But this cannot be right; for God changeth not, and human nature also remains the same in all its distinctive peculiarities; hence I can scarcely understand how any honest man can dispute that the great principles upon which God acts towards His people must be the same in all ages; it is the mode of carrying them out only which can vary; and it is in the Jewish Church alone to which we can look for an example of those principles by which He would have His Church guided; as under our Dispensation He tests our reverent obedience and holy love by pointing us, as it were, to that, to learn his will respects the principles upon which he would have his visible Church ordered. Thus St. Paul tells us that the Jewish Dispensation was "the shadow of heavenly (or Christian) things"; and "the pattern of things in the heavens" (Heb. viii. 5; and ix. 23.). I judge, therefore, by the example of the Jewish Church, that even spiritual deadness forms no sufficient apology for our forsaking the Church of God.

2. The next reason, why I think it wrong to leave the Church on account of its supposed deadness and formality, is, that no provision for so doing is made in the New Testament. I have, in our former conversations, shown how exceedingly strong is its language against the sin of schism and division; surely then, seeing that so much is said against leaving the one Catholic Church of Christ, if the formality of its ministers or members had been a sufficient reason for doing so, such an exception to the general rule would have been explicitly stated; whereas I think you will find, upon examination, that there is not the most obscure hint to that effect.

Mr. Brown.—Nay, there I think you are scarcely correct. I will mention three passages, that do appear to me, I confess, to authorize separation; at least I know that the Dissenters build greatly upon them. They are these: "Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord." (2 Cor. vi. 17.) The next is this: "Now we command you, brethren, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye withdraw yourselves from every brother that walketh disorderly." (2 Thess. iii. 6.)—And lastly, that striking and important injunction in the Revelations, "And I heard another voice from heaven, saying, Come out of her, my people, that ye be not partakers of her sins, and that ye receive not of her plagues." (xviii. 4.) These, I think, contain the strength of the Scriptural argument in favour of Dissent; and would they not justify it, if only their opinions against the Church of especial Laodicean lukewarmness were correct? which, however, I agree with you in believing they are not.

Mr. Secker.—Really, I am astonished when once the things is fairly brought to the test, to find how entirely unsupported by Scripture is the separation from our Church of either the Puritans of former times, or the Methodists of modern days. And indeed, my good friend, I can easily perceive that you are only trying to make the most of your friend's objections, satisfied yourself that they are baseless. I will, however, take your texts in the order you gave them.

The first, then, taken from the Second Corinthians, you will find, if you read the context, relates solely to the obligation which rested on those who professed to be disciples of Christ, entirely to forsake the rites of Paganism, and to form no intimate friendships, and especially no matrimonial connections, with their heathen neighbours. This passage then has not any, nor even the most remote, reference to the relation which Christians bear to the Church.

The next, taken from the Second Epistle to the Thessalonians, so far from sanctioning separation, does itself positively command us to avoid all such persons; for the disorderly person whom the Apostle commands the true Christian to avoid, is the very man, as the rest of the verse you quoted says, who walks "not after the tradition which he received of us"; that is, who refuses to submit himself to his lawful spiritual rulers. And if, owing to a lax state of discipline, disorderly or worldly-minded persons are unhappily found in communion with the Church, the utmost that this passage enjoins, or indeed permits, the conscientious Christian to do, is to stand aloof from such individuals so far as not to seek their friendship, or close intercourse;—to leave the Church of Christ on their account were to fall into that very sin, against which the text in question is mainly pointed, namely, spiritual disobedience. In truth, Mr. Brown, it is this very spirit of *spiritual insubordination* which causes so much division. Private members of Christ's Church, are sitting each one in judgment upon his brother, and fancying that they are to purify the house of the Lord, and to remove His prophets.

The last passage you advance, from the Book of the Revelations, is an exceedingly important one; but has nothing to do with the present question; it speaks in reference to a Church which has apostatized from the truth, or wickedly and wilfully corrupted it. The passage referred to, does, I think, satisfactorily vindicate the German Reformers in leaving the Church of Rome, though not, I fear, in setting up a *new and human polity*, and dispensing, on the plea of necessity, with the Divine institution of Episcopacy; and certainly it fully justifies our Church in having thrown off a foreign and unscriptural yoke, and in refusing to hold communion with other churches, so long as they sanction the iniquities, and share in the corruptions, of the Papacy. But as the Dissenters in general, and especially the Methodists, do not charge the Catholic Church of England with apostasy, or wilful corruption of the truth, this passage, themselves being judges, does form no apology whatever for their separation from it, and consequent violation of the Divine precepts to unity and spiritual submission, which are so often repeated in the Sacred Scriptures. Indeed, the command to unity in the Christian Church appears to me to be positive, with this single exception, that "we ought to obey God rather than man." And therefore, as many of the requirements of the rulers of the Romish Churches are directly contrary to God's Word, it is clear that men ought not to obey them, and you know unless even the laity in the Romish Church conform in every thing, they are liable to be cast out of its pale; so that no choice is left to them but either to disobey God, or to submit to alienation from the Romish communion. But how different is the conduct of the English Church! She teaches no unscriptural doctrines,—enjoins no superstitious rites; and yet if the weak minds of any of her laity should be scrupulous, she tenderly bears them, and does not cast them out of her pale, because they may not comply with all that she thinks desirable. How totally, therefore, without excuse, are those who separate

from her! for, supposing the charge of formality against her were true, yet as she certainly does not forbid her members seeking after all holiness, they are in no wise justified in leaving her; because she neither enjoins any thing contrary to the Word of God, nor forbids any thing which it teaches us to seek after.

Thus, then, the state of the scriptural argument appears to be this,—that in God's holy word, the unity of the Church and a dutiful submission to its precepts is strongly insisted upon, nay, positively enjoined; and that no permission whatever is to be found in the whole Bible authorizing men, under any circumstances, to forsake the communion of, or to refuse obedience to, the one Apostolic Church; (saying the one fact, that it should become, as in the case of Rome, decidedly anti-Christian); and further, that in the Bible we have an example of the Church of God being in that state in which the Dissenters profess to believe the Church of England to be, namely, itself lukewarm, and its priests corrupt; and that yet none of its members were permitted to leave it under the pretence of forming a purer church; but, on the contrary, the man who, at any part of its history, forsook the Jewish Church, was declared to be cut off from the privileges of the people of God, and was even to be put to death! The same principle is evinced in all the Apocalyptic Addresses to the Angels of the Seven Churches, and especially in that to the Church of Laodicea, for, fallen as it was, and fearful as were the threatenings denounced against it, *not one word* is said intimating that the truly pious who yet remained in it should leave it and form a new and surer church; so with respect to the Church of Sardis, also, surely if dissent were at all justifiable, the "Spirit" would have enjoined those few names, "who alone of all the Church in Sardis had not defiled their garments," to forsake their brethren, of whom God himself declares, that though "they had a name to live, they were dead,"—but no, not the least hint of the kind is given. It appears then, Mr. Brown, I think beyond reasonable contradiction, that he who forsoke the Church of England does so, not only without the sanction of Holy Scripture, but in direct opposition to its sacred teachings.

Mr. Brown.—You have indeed most satisfactorily answered the objections of my friends. Ah! Mr. Secker, what a sad pity it is that men will "lean to their own understandings," and be guided by their own imaginations rather than by that "sure word of Prophecy" to which the Apostle directs us. I tremble to think how awful is the responsibility which the Dissenter of every grade takes upon himself.

Mr. Secker.—I am rejoiced that you view the matter so seriously; it is, in truth, a subject of vast importance, and the more I investigate it, the more deeply do I mourn over the errors and dangers of dissent. There are yet two or three other reasons, which are all that I shall at present adduce, which though not perhaps so obvious as the last, are yet worthy of your serious attention.

3. The doctrine of the Catholic Church of Christ in all ages has been this, that He left upon earth One Church, and in that Church certain Holy Sacraments and other ordinances, which were to be administered by One Apostolic Episcopal Ministry, and by them only, and that when so administered, they were designed to be the channels of Divine grace to the faithful. I am not now speaking of the correctness or incorrectness of these doctrines, but wish simply to impress your mind with the fact, that they were the opinions of the universal Church of Christ for thirteen or fourteen centuries, and are yet held by its overwhelming majority. Now, the argument which I will found upon these facts is, that the conduct of Dissenters in leaving the One Catholic Church, and making to themselves teachers who are not of that One Apostolic line, is in direct opposition to the doctrines and teachings of the Church, both ancient and modern; and surely the truly humble Christian will fear to associate himself with those who thus oppose themselves to the wise and holy, the confessors and martyrs, who have composed the holy Catholic Church; indeed, if such an opposition of our private judgment to the general voice of Christ's holy and primitive Church be not in very many cases indicative of that "haughty spirit which goeth before a fall," I know not what is so. And especially has the conscientious believer, who has wandered into the paths of dissent, reason to tremble, when he considers that, according to the faith of this Church, the very Sacraments are invalid when administered by unepiscopal or schismatic hands; a doubt even on this subject is awful to those who know how "generally necessary" the Bible teaches us that Baptism and the Lord's Supper are to salvation.

4. Another sin consequent upon dissent is this, which, however, I think I have named to you before, that, if the individuals who leave the Church are holier and better than those they leave behind, they, by their dissent, rob the Church of the benefit of their righteous example; of the blessing attendant upon their faithful prayers; for when a man has left the Church, it will not any longer be the subject of his continual fervent prayers; and then it greatly prejudices the thoughtless against spiritual religion, to see its loudest professors thus self-opinionated and regardless of the voice of the Church, and I must add, so careless also even as respects the intimations of the Word of God itself, when they oppose their sectarian prejudices. It is impossible to say how great has been the mischief done by dissent in this way.

5. Lastly, the sin of modern dissent may be read in the evils which have flowed from it. The Puritans left the Church under the plea of seeking greater purity, and the consequence has been the spread of Quakerism, of the Baptists, Socinians, Chartists, &c. &c., and the sowing of bitterness and wrath and strife, amongst those who are called the children of God.—For what sect is there that does not frequently indulge these feelings towards the Church? Nay, how can it be otherwise,—when once men imagine that they are at liberty to leave the Church of Christ for every cause, division must produce discord. The Primitive Church dwelt in peace, because its members were of "one accord," and of "one heart and one mind."—And once admit the right of individuals to dissent from the one Catholic Church, and you have no longer any sufficient argument whereby to stop these infinite divisions to which men's fancies will undoubtedly lead them. In the reign of Queen Elizabeth, for many years the Church of Christ in England was one; now, those who profess to belong to it, form a most bewildering variety of sects, the number of which is almost daily increasing. Mr. Brown, can principles, of which such multiplied divisions are the unavoidable fruits, have the sanction of Him, who prayed that "His Church might be one, as He and the Father were one?"

Mr. Brown.—Thank you, thank you, Mr. Secker. I do most clearly see that the Divine example of the Jewish Church, the Bible, the voice of Christ's Church, individual safety, the good of the Church, and the welfare of the world, are all opposed to dissent; and, therefore, deeply feel that the Christian's only lawful weapon, when he fears that the Church is lukewarm or its Ministers unfaithful, is fervent, labelling, believing prayer, like that of the Prophet Habakkuk, to Almighty God, that He will graciously pour out the influences of His holy Spirit, and "revive His work in the midst of the years, and in wrath remember mercy." May I, my dear Sir, trespass again upon your kindness, as there are yet some other matters upon which I wish to obtain your views, and will for that purpose postpone my journey.

Mr. Secker.—Indeed, my dear Sir, I have been afraid I should weary you; but really the importance of the subject of Church Unity and Scriptural Order does grow upon myself the more I consider it. I am, therefore, rejoiced to find the deep interest you take in these things, and shall be most happy to continue our conversations until, as far as I am able, I have removed all your lingering fears or objections.

THE CHRISTIAN YEAR.

(By the Rev. F. W. Faber.)

The Christian Year is regulated, as you well know, by the life of our most blessed Lord and Saviour.—We are here in this world with our loins girded and our lamps burning, waiting for the bridegroom. The Church, therefore, on the four first Sundays of the ecclesiastical year, calls upon us to prepare for the joyous festival of our Saviour's Advent. Christmas Day, The Massacre of the Holy Innocents, the Circumcision of Christ, and His Epiphany, which is the birthday of the Gentle Church, follow in quick succession. On this last great event the Church in the fulness of her joy dwells for five or six Sundays, when she abruptly breaks off on Septuagesima Sunday, three Sundays before Lent, that we may not pass too quickly and too unprepared from a season of joy and festive thoughts to one of dimness and penitential tears. By this time we are sobered and subdued, and saddened by the recollection of our sins; and, as our Saviour passed away from the world by the leading of the Spirit, for forty days of fasting and temptation and spiritual conflict in the wilderness, so the Church, like the moon going behind a cloud, enters the solemn season of Lent. The five Sundays which intervene are still festivals; but the collects are of a more humble and pensive nature. As we approach Easter the gloom of Passion week gets thicker and deeper until Good Friday, the day of shame when our sins crucified the Lord of life, and which we yet call Good for the precious gift it gave us, redemption from everlasting slavery. Through Easter Eve we wait in silence while our Lord is laid in His Sepulchre of stone; till the Easter sun begins to rise, and the Sun of Righteousness rises with it with healing on His wings; and the Lord appears to us in the Holy Sacrament, as He did to Simon, when He first arose, and when He was made known at Emmaus in the breaking of bread. For three whole days this high Festival is prolonged, till on the Wednesday in Easter week we return to our worldly occupations.—For five Sundays more the Church is with her risen Lord, till on Ascension Day she sees Him received up to glory. And, as she may not be with Him yet, but must remain on earth both a widow and a bride, she prays that we may in heart and mind thither ascend and with Him continually dwell. One Sunday more, and we arrive at the Feast of Pentecost, Whitsunday, and celebrate the outpouring of the Holy Ghost when the Church was endowed with that power from on high, which shall not fail her until time shall be no more.—This festival also for its greatness is prolonged three days, there being a service both for Monday and Tuesday in Whitsun week. Lastly, as in the Name of the Trinity we were first baptized and by that mysterious Name we must be saved, the Church calls upon us, by the confession of a true faith, to acknowledge the glory of the eternal Trinity, and in the power of the Divine Majesty to worship the Unity. For, knowing our weakness and our want of faith, and our irreverent boldness in prying too curiously into things which Angels only desire to look into, she in her wisdom had prayed for us the Sunday and all the week before, that we might have a right judgment in all things. After this follow four or five and twenty Sundays, which, as they celebrate nothing, are simply called the Sundays after Trinity. These are times of stillness and retirement. The first half of the year the Church by mighty and spirit-stirring festivals kept raising our love to Christ to its very height. Now she bids us set out in common life those feelings we have gained. She bids us modestly and meekly live holy lives as the only worthy fruits of those high and noble affections.—Thus the shining pathway of her year keeps mounting higher and higher till it touches the adorable Trinity, when it again sinks silently down in awe till Advent comes round once more.

Beside this, she has sprinkled lesser festivals all over the year, like fragrant flowers to refresh us, in which she celebrates the blessed Virgin, the Baptist, and the Holy Apostles and Evangelists. One she has set apart in honour of St. Michael and all Angels, that we may duly reverence* those bright guardians who are ministering spirits to the heirs of salvation; and another to the commemoration of All Saints, the multitude that no man can number, that we may not forget the Dead, knit together with us in one communion and fellowship, in the mystical Body of Christ our Lord. In the course of this holy year, the Psalms are read through twelve times, in her daily services, the Old Testament once through with the Apocrypha, and the New Testament three times except the Revelations. Thus in a calm and clear order the life of our blessed Saviour and all He did for us, the doctrines of our most Holy Faith, and the examples of the most eminent Saints, are brought before us one after the other without any confusion; and with services so wonderfully adapted as to stir the heart of the coldest, and win the admiration of the worldly man, even where they cannot interest his affections.

Here then is our remedy, here our safeguard against religious excitement,—in the Prayer-book. It is handed down to us by the wisdom and the piety of ancient days, and consecrated by the memory of the Dead, whom it has guided so faithfully through the tossing world to their eternal rest. Its daily psalms and lessons, and its simple collects, form a manual of private or family devotion, where the public service is unhappily dissipated, such as the most affectionate fervours of a sober-minded piety could desire. Thus the Church, like a wise Mother, keeps feeding us with the bread of life with an unsparring hand; and as the Apostles gave the bread to the people, which the Master first had blessed, so does she from Him rightly divide the

* [The reverence due to angels is thus very scripturally stated by the Rev. E. J. Bennett, in his admirable "Lectures, Sermons on the Distinctive Errors of Romanism," p. 404:—

"The utmost height to which our Church carries her notion of the reverence which is due to angels or saints, is that of holding them in memory. She thinks it right to commemorate them, she thinks it a right doctrine also to hold that we join with them in a mystical communion and fellowship; they in heaven forming the invisible, and we on earth forming the visible Church of Christ; but anything beyond this she utterly abhors. Thus you will see, in regard to angels, a special duty set apart by our Church for their commemoration. On the 29th of September,—the festival of St. Michael and all angels,—we address Almighty God in prayer, asking that 'as the holy angels always do Him service in heaven, so by His appointment they may always do and defend us on earth'; wherein you will perceive, that so far from our worshipping or doing them service, themselves. And though we recognize them according to the scripture, as 'ministering spirits, sent forth to minister for them who shall be heirs of salvation' (Heb. i. 14), and so pray for their success; yet it is not when they pray, but to God. We pray not that they will directly aid us, but that we come to God, and be their guardians; but we pray to God to send them to us; though recognizing in them an elevated scale of existence, yet not so elevated that they are with us fellow-servants. Thus, particularly in the hymn 'Te Deum laudamus' we join them with ourselves in our praise of God: 'To Thee all angels cry aloud, the heavens and all the powers therein; to Thee cherubim and seraphim continually do cry.' And in the hymn 'Benedicite': 'O ye angels of the Lord, bless ye the Lord, praise Him and magnify Him for ever.' And in a similar manner in the holy communion, we do not praise or worship them; quite the contrary; we join ourselves to them in their own angelic hymn to God: 'Therefore with angels and archangels, and with all the company of heaven, we laud and magnify thy glorious name.'—Ed. Cu.]

word of truth to those that seek it: and yet, when all are satisfied, her treasure is not less. Each day and week, each season of the year is furnished with its own peculiar subject for religious meditation. We know that what may be done at any time is for the most part left undone altogether. Were we left to ourselves, there would be doubtless many times when we should not meditate on holy things, simply because no thought was ready to our hands; and many subjects would probably be entirely omitted, and many subjects upon sufficiently. But now we have always matter for pious reflection. Some one heavenly thought is given us by the Church to carry in our hearts day by day into the throng of toil and business; and there it dwells ready at any time to come to our aid against temptation, to put impure and wandering thoughts to flight, to fill up idle minutes which Satan else would occupy, and to be as it were a sanctifying leaven to all our worldly schemes and cares.

PAPAL THEOLOGY.

(From the Philadelphia Episcopal Recorder, of the 17th Dec.)

Many of our readers have heard of Dens' Moral Theology. It is a standard book of Theology prepared for the use of Romish Seminaries, and for the instruction of Romish candidates for orders. It is the standard by which the confessional of the horrible system of Romanism is governed and directed. But all that we have ever heard or imagined of the guilty principles and character of this book, is exceeded by the fact upon our examination. Such is its pernicious character, in the vile and obscene expressions and ideas with which it is filled, that it cannot be translated or circulated without a pestilential influence in any community. There is an impossibility therefore of making either Romanists or Protestants generally acquainted with the principles which this priesthood is taught, or by which the secret system of confession is conducted. We are ready to challenge the production of the book by those who study and maintain it, if they dare to exhibit it to the community. But we express the solemn conviction of our minds when we say, that we believe it utterly impossible that any man, of whatever previous purity of character, can study this book which is commended by their Episcopal sanction, and used as the text book of their Seminaries, without being corrupted and depraved, unless with sincere loathing of the whole, he renounces it and casts it from him, which is impossible, if he remains a Papist. The Rev. Mr. Berg, of this city, has made a synopsis and translation of a large portion of this outrage upon man, that Protestants may see something of the principles and influence of that Anti-Christian power which is rising among us with such fierceness and strength. He has translated from the Latin of the Mechin edition of 1838, from the press of the Archbishop, published by J. Harmstead, No. 38 North Fourth-street, Philadelphia. 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