

NOTE that this sermon was given to those to be ordained into the Church of England on the **13th January 1856**. It reflects the times in which it was given and the opinions of a small group in that period.

It was only in 1850 that the Roman Catholic church re-established its ecclesiastical hierarchy in England (cardinals, bishops etc). This Sermon was just 42 months after anti-Catholic rioting in nearby Stockport following a proclamation from Lord Derby against Roman catholic processions and costumes. The presentation of this text here, for historical purposes, does not imply agreement with any statement herein. Some of the views expressed are quite contentious and few would express them today.

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Audience: Candidates admitted to Priests' Orders, 1856

Images of the cover pages of other books by E D Jackson follow at the end.

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THE CONSTITUTION OF THE
CHURCH OF ENGLAND
SCRIPTURAL AND APOSTOLICAL:
A SERMON
PREACHED AT THE
ORDINATION OF THE RIGHT REV. THE LORD
BISHOP OF MANCHESTER,
ON SUNDAY THE 13TH OF JANUARY, 1856.
BY THE
REV. E. D. JACKSON, B.C.L.
RECTOR OF HEATON NORRIS.

Published at the special request of the Candidates admitted to Priests' Orders at the above Ordination.

SERMON.

EPHESIANS, II. 20.

Built upon the foundation of the Apostles and Prophets,
Jesus Christ himself being the Chief Corner Stone.

If it were necessary, my Reverend and Christian Brethren, in the first ages of the Church to be able, according to the Apostolic injunction, to give a reason for the hope professed, how equally so in these latter days of universal enquiry an discussion! And indeed it may be said, that in one respect we lie under greater disadvantages than the first Apostles and Confessors of the Christian faith. They, in their spiritual controversies with their Jewish adversaries, encountered minds deeply imbued with reverence for ancient and divine things. In every Israelite there was a profound veneration for the inspired Scriptures, and no Christian heart could kindle with an apparently warmer fervour at the names of an Abraham or a Moses, a David or an Elijah, than the unbelieving children of the first promises. And even the Gentiles themselves, though doubtless holding in utter contempt the Jewish people and their singular polity, yet at the same time entertained a certain respect for the writings of Moses and the Israelitish prophets, confessing that they contained things grand, and spirit-stirring, and true, and worthy of universal acceptation.

But, alas! for us "upon whom the ends of the world have "come!" We as Christians, as Ministers of Christ, have not only to fight, like all our predecessors, against principalities and powers, and wickedness in high places; - we have to contend not only with an evil world still in arms against us, and to struggle with hearts as corrupt, as deceitful, as rebellious as ever, but we have especially to combat a spirit ever increasing, and surely not of heaven, - a spirit that draws no pleasure and catches no inspiration from the past, however holy and dignified, - a spirit that believes only in the truth and excellence of the present, to which antiquity is a childish dream, and authority an invention of priestcraft, - a spirit that has no admiration and no love for scenes, however consecrated by heaven-born events; for names, however connected with every thing that is pure and imperishable; for doctrines, however

weighty and solemn; for precepts, however elevating and ennobling, and sanctifying. "No, we live," the children of such a spirit cry, "in an age of progress; the day is for ever past when things were taken for granted on the faith of great names. We refuse to admit anything except on its own basis of truth and propriety. We are willing to argue the matter with you, and if you are able to convince us of the correctness of your way of thinking, we will acknowledge ourselves at once believers in your creed."

Now I ask, in what manner are we called upon to deal with this spirit of the times, so candid in appearance, so arrogant and self-sufficient in reality? Are we at once to turn our backs upon such disputants, exclaiming: "When you are in a more humble and teachable frame of mind we shall be ready to talk to you."? Surely not; for such a proceeding would be at once to renounce our office, and to deliver over the field of contest to the unbelieving enemy. Surely not, if we desire to follow an Apostle's example, who disputed diligently with the bitterest foes of his creed, and rejoiced to be "all things to all men, that he might save some."

Surely not, if we seek to "win souls" and make "full proof" of our ministry.

That warrior must expect but an inferior crown who avoids the post of stern difficulty, and chooses only to gain an easy victory. No; the Christian soldier must be armed at all points, and equally ready for offensive as for defensive warfare. In a word, he must accommodate himself to the character of the age in which he lives; he must use those weapons which are called for by the nature of the conflict in which he is engaged; and he must, on the strength of Omnipotence, be fully prepared to wield them, - to strike home, as well as to ward off - to prostrate a foe, as well as valiantly to maintain his ground. For this only may he hope one day to realise all the magnificence of the Redeemer's promise - "To him that overcometh will I give to sit down on my throne, even as I have overcome, and have sat down on my Father's throne."

These remarks, as you will perceive, apply especially to that subject which, at the call of one to whom duty as well as reverence enjoins obedience, I have chosen for this very

solemn and important occasion. It is the validity and excellence of the Constitution of that Church to which we belong. But what can I say, during the few fugitive moments at my disposal, on a question as boundless as it is sublime, as infinite as it is glorious; -especially as on the present occasion. I look around, and, as it seems to me, I behold this arena crowded with the imposing and sainted forms of those noble worthies who in all ages have fought the good fight of faith, and made so good a confession before many witnesses; those magnanimous Apostles, those intrepid Martyrs, those dauntless Confessors, those holy Bishops, those faithful Presbyters, those pious Deacons, forming part of that great cloud of witness who are ever looking down from the glittering eminences of heaven upon this arena of conflict, mourning over the defeats, rejoicing in the triumphs of us, their struggling successors?

And shall we, then, venture to defend the constitution of a Church to which such an illustrious company belongs? Is there not a fear, that in describing the excellences of that building of which they are the choice and polished stones, we may by our infirmities seem to detract from its matchless excellence and divine proportions? At any rate, we labour willingly in the best of causes; may we not, therefore, hope for the all-sufficient succour of the Chief Shepherd and Bishop of souls, who has said to this very Church, " Lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the world"? And so this must be our abiding consolation in the midst of confessed ignorance, and weakness, and insufficiency, that " we have done what we could."

We shall endeavour, in the briefest possible manner, to substantiate the four following propositions :-

- I. That there are evidences in Scripture of three kinds of orders, tantamount to those of Bishop, Priest, and Deacon in the Church of England.
- II. That this plan of Church Government was recognised and acted upon by the Primitive Church, and has in all subsequent ages received the sanction of the most learned and devoted of Christians.
- III. That these orders have descended in constant and unbroken succession from the time of the Apostles to the Church of England as at present constituted.

IV. That it is the form of Church government most adapted to the spiritual requirements and wants of mankind in all ages.

I.

Our first proposition is, -That there are evidences in Scripture of three kinds of orders, tantamount to those of Bishop, Priest, and Deacon in the Church of England.

The first ordination we read of in the New Testament was that of the Twelve Apostles. It took place, as you remember, after Christ had passed a whole night in prayer on a mountain. (Luke, vi. 12.) This ordination is recorded in Matt. x. 2; Mark, iii. 13; Luke, vi. 3. It is supposed that twelve Apostles were chosen, in imitation of the twelve patriarchs, who were the heads of the twelve Jewish tribes.

Bishop Hall says-- "What are the twelve tribes of Israel, but the whole Church of God? For whereof did the first Christian Church consist, but of converted Jews? And whither did our Saviour tend all his allusions but to them? They had their twelve princes of the tribes of their fathers, heads of the thousands of Israel. (Numbers, i. 16.) They had their seventy elders to bear the burden of the people. (Numbers, xi. 16, 17.) The Son of God affects to imitate this former polity, and therefore chooses his twelve apostles and seventy disciples to gather and sway his Evangelical Church."

What was the first commission given to the twelve Apostles? We are told (Matt. x. 6) they were sent to the lost sheep of the House of Israel, to preach, saying- "The kingdom of heaven is at hand;" to heal the sick, cleanse the lepers, raise the dead, and to cast out devils.

But this first selection or ordination of the twelve Apostles was confirmed by a supplementary one after Christ's resurrection, when, all being present but Judas and Thomas, it is said, (John, xx. 22)- "He breathed on them, and said unto them, Receive ye the Holy Ghost. Whose soever sins ye remit, they are remitted to them; and whose soever sins ye retain, they are retained."

And just before his ascension Christ further confirmed the eleven Apostles in their office; saying, (Matt. xxviii. 18)--

" All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth. Go ye, therefore, and teach all nations, baptising them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost; teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you; and, lo! I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world. Amen."

Such was Christ's ordination of his Apostles; and, as we shall see presently, they fully understood that, in virtue of their office, they not only had power given to them to work miracles -a power which soon ceased in the Church,-not only to feed and govern the Church of God committed to their care, but also to ordain others, whether as successors to themselves, or Presbyters and Deacons in obedience to them. It is said (Acts, xiv. 23) that "Paul," specially called to be an Apostle, with the assistance of Barnabas, ordained elders in every church, and prayed with fasting, and commended them to the Lord, on whom they believed." Indeed, as has been well observed, "whoever carefully reads over the New Testament will find, that scarcely any act of power was done by our Lord when on earth, which was not, at least in some degree, exercised by the Apostles after his ascension."

But now the all-important question arises, Did the Apostles communicate what may be termed their Episcopal power to others; and did these others, when so ordained, proceed to exercise the authority of the Episcopal office? It is clear that they did use this power; for Timothy and Titus, when they had themselves received Episcopal authority, ordained both Presbyters and Deacons, the one in Greece, the other at Ephesus, and throughout all churches within the circuit or diocese allotted to them. For St. Paul says to Timothy, (I Tim. iv. 14)-" Neglect not the gift that is in thee, which was given thee by prophecy with the laying on of the hands of the Presbytery;" that is, with the concurrence of the Presbytery, as proved by the passage 2 Tim. i. 6:-

" Where-fore I put thee in remembrance that thou stir up the gift of God, which is in thee by the putting on of my hands."

And what was that gift in one part of it? (I Tim. v.22.)

"Lay hands suddenly on no man ;" or the right of ordination.

And again, (2 Tim. ii. 2) St. Paul enjoins-" The things thou hast heard of me among many witnesses, the same commit

thou to faithful men, who shall be able to teach others also."

And the same Apostle speaks to Titus (Tit. i. 5)- " For this cause I left thee in Crete, that thou shouldest set in order the things that are wanting, and ordain elders in every city, as I had appointed thee." And having ordained these elders or Presbyters, both Timothy and Titus are described in the several Epistles as having due authority over them. Timothy is exhorted (I Tim. v. 19) "against an elder to receive not an accusation but before two or three witnesses; and them that sin, rebuke before all, that others may fear." And Titus, almost in the same words (Tit. ii. 15), is enjoined "to speak, to exhort, to rebuke with all authority." But if Timothy and Titus were mere elders, what right could they possibly have to judge and to punish elders?

Thus it is evident that the Apostles in their life-time committed some of their most important powers to others; because they could not be everywhere, and with all their zeal were insufficient to every work. What the name of these delegated officers of the Church was in the times of the Apostles, is uncertain. They were called Bishops, or overseers, only in common with the Presbyters, and not as a mark of a distinctive and higher office. But there is every reason to believe that the term Angels of the Church, (Rev. i. 20) is applied to the Bishops of the seven churches of Asia, in our sense of the term.

This name was borrowed from the synagogue, where the chief officer was so called; as also Episcopus, or Bishop. And the Christian Churches of Asia are thus addressed by the Saviour, through their chief officer, as the heathen nations of old were addressed by Ezekiel the Prophet, through their Prince or King. And that Christ is really addressing the Head or Bishop of each Church, called Angel in the 2nd and 3rd chapters of the Book of Revelations, is clear, from his speaking to the Presbyters and people in a distinct way from the Angel. Thus (Rev. ii. 24) addressing the Angel of the Church of Thyatira-" But unto you I say, and unto the rest in Thyatira, as many as have not this doctrine, and which have not known the depths of Satan, I will put upon you none other burden." And the same distinction is made in many of the other addresses,

showing that the word Angel is not used metaphorically to represent the whole Church of a particular place, but the chief officer of that Church; though, doubtless, the exhortations and reproofs addressed to him would be generally applicable to the rest of the spiritual community.

So much for the first ordination of our blessed Lord, that of the Apostolical order, afterwards transmitted by the Apostles, with many of its most important prerogatives, to successors, called in one place Angels, but afterwards, as we shall see, universally Bishops. The second ordination of our Lord was that of the Seventy Disciples, commissioned, as we find, (Luke, x. 9) to the ministerial office and work, to preach "that the kingdom of God was come nigh," and also to heal the sick. These seventy were not a mere addition to the Apostles, but a distinct order; for the Apostles were always spoken of as the Twelve, while these others were always distinctly called the Seventy. And after the ascension of the Saviour, the same distinction remained; one only being chosen out of their number to make up the full college of the Apostles in the room of the traitor Judas.

These seventy disciples chosen by our Lord to the ministerial office were the first Presbyters, or Priests, or Elders of the Christian Church. They were manifestly inferior to the Apostles, while the Apostles lived, for we never read of any authority exercised save by the Apostles. And if, as we have before proved, the Apostles transmitted their authority to successors, so then the succeeding Presbyters necessarily remained subject to these Successors of the Apostles.

Consequently, as before shewn, in the case of Timothy and Titus, these first Suffragan Bishops exercised all authority over the Presbyters. The word Presbyter seems indeed to denote the superintendence of one congregation, not of many;- that he is the Minister who is ordained and licensed by the Bishop to preach, administer the Sacraments, and attend to the weekly duty of the Pastoral office. A Presbyter cannot exercise authority over other Presbyters, because all Presbyters, as described in the Scriptures, are equal ;- but must be subject, in common with them, to the authority of his and their Superiors, who were, first the Apostles, and afterwards those to whom the Apostles delegated their power.

The third ordination mentioned in Scripture is that of the Deacons, who were, we are told, "set before the Apostles, who when they had prayed, laid their hands upon them." They were in the first place appointed to "serve tables," or to manage the pecuniary affairs of the Church; but were afterwards employed in the ministry of the Word, as proved from the example of Philip the Deacon, and from the passage Tim. iii. 13:--" For they that have used the office "of a deacon well, purchase to themselves a good degree, and great boldness in the faith which is in Christ Jesus." Being ordained in the first instance by the Apostles, they afterwards received the imposition of hands from their Successors in the Apostolical office.

Thus it is the honest boast and pride of the Church of England, that her constitution, as far as regards the offices of Bishop, Priest, and Deacon, is strictly in conformity with the Scriptural model. And does she say, think you, too much, when in the Preface to her Ordination Service, she affirms:- "It is evident unto all men diligently reading the Holy Scriptures and ancient authorities, that from the Apostles' time there have been these orders of Ministers in Christ's Church,- Bishops, Priests, and Deacons"? Or when, in the emphatic language of the text, we re-echo the inspired declaration,- Built on the foundation of the Apostles and Prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner-stone"?

II.

Our second proposition is, that the plan of Church government cw advocate, was recognised and acted upon by the Primitive Church.

And if we can prove this, we prove a very great deal

For, if our opponents say- "We understand the passages you quote from the Epistles to Timothy and Titus in a very different way from you ;"- "Very well," we answer, "let us then see how they understood them who lived in the time in which they were written, and to whom they were addressed."

And so we come to the works of the early Fathers; who, it is admitted by all, "applied themselves to the reading of the Scriptures with undivided attention, with intense thought,

and with holy admiration, as to that which was alone worthy to be studied."

First, then, let us take Hermas, generally supposed to be the same Hermas spoken of by St. Paul, in his Epistle to the Romans, the author of a writing called the "Shepherd of Hermas" -greatly esteemed in the Primitive Church. It is true that doubts have been entertained as to the date of this writing, hut not as to its accommodation to the principles and usages of the time in which Hernas is supposed to have lived.

He speaks thus :-" Hear now, then, concerning the stones that are in the building '°-that is, the Church Triumphant;- " the square and white stones, which agree exactly in their joints, are the Apostles, and Bishops, and Doctors "--that is, Presbyters -and Ministers"-that is, Deacons-" who through the mercy of God have come in, and governed, and taught, and ministered holily and modestly to the Elect of God, both that are fallen asleep, and which yet remain."

Let us next take the testimony of Clemens Romanus, that same St. Clement who was fellow-labourer of St. Paul, and whose name that Apostle declared "was written in the " Book of Life," and whom all antiquity recognised as Bishop of Rome. In his Epistle, generally supposed to be written before A.D. 76, and which Eusebius, quoting Irenaus calls "that wonderful Epistle of St. Clement," to the Corinthians; an Epistle so esteemed by the Primitive Church as to be read publicly in their assemblies,-he says, " Our Apostles knowing, by our Lord Jesus Christ, the contention that would arise about the name of Episcopacy; and they, for this very same cause, having received perfect knowledge, appointed the aforesaid"-that is, degrees of Bishop and Deacon (Capt.42), and gave them this prescript, that upon their death other approved men should succeed in their ministry."

He had before reminded them " how they had once walked according to the law of God, being subject," says he, " to your supreme rulers, and yielding due honour to the Presbyters." And afterwards he adds-" Let us venerate our supreme rulers, and let us reverence our Presbyters." The term "supreme rulers"

was in later times among the ordinary names of a Bishop, as we now say indifferently, prelate, bishop, diocesan, ordinary.

Let us next listen to the testimony of Ignatius, that famous Bishop of Antioch, who died so intrepidly in his Master's cause AD 110, four years after the death of St. John, having presided over his see for forty years. It was this unflinching martyr who, when dragged before the Emperor Trajan, made so bold a declaration, saying that he "carried the crucified One in his heart." "Dost thou, then, carry Him," cried the astonished Emperor, "Who was crucified, within thee?"

Listen to the simple, yet most beautiful reply of the Christian hero:—"I do; for it is written, 'I will dwell in them, and walk in them.'" Ignatius, says St. Chrysostom, "was personally intimate with the Apostles, was perfectly acquainted with their doctrines, being instructed by them, and had their hands laid upon him." Now what says Ignatius in his Epistle to the Ephesians, Sect. 2?—"It will become you to run together according to the will of your Bishop, as also ye do. For your famous Presbytery- worthy of God- is fitted as exactly to the Bishop as the strings are to the harp." And again he speaks to the same people of "obeying your Bishop and the Presbytery with an entire affection." Again- I exhort you that ye study to do all things in a divine accord, your Bishop presiding in the place of God, your

Presbyters in the place of the Council of the Apostles, and your Deacons, most dear to me, being entrusted with the ministry of Jesus Christ, who was with the Father before all ages, and appeared in the end to us." (Sec. 6.) Many other passages of similar import might be quoted from the Epistles of this Father of the Church. Doubts indeed have been thrown upon the authenticity of some parts of these Epistles, but there are ample testimonies to be drawn from the admitted passages.

These extracts sufficiently substantiate, I think, our second proposition, that the Scriptural plan of Church Government by Bishops, Priests, and Deacons, was recognised and acted upon by the Primitive Church. Time would fail in citing passages of later authority from the writings of Origen,

Tertullian, St. Cyprian, St. Augustine, St. Jerome, and others, and from the acts of the early Councils of the Church, all so clear and explicit that the strength of their evidence has often been admitted by opponents; and, indeed, some of the most candid of our adversaries have confessed that it is difficult to find an ancient Church without its Bishop, as well as its Presbyters and Deacons; though they question the supreme nature of the Episcopal authority.

But that which, we doubt not, will appear most startling to some, is the testimony to our form of Church Government from those who have always been considered most hostile to it. Would it be believed by many that the following passage is taken from the writings of Calvin, the founder of another and very different form of Church Government? "If they would," says he, "bring unto us such an Hierarchy wherein the Bishops shall so rule as that they refuse not to submit themselves to Christ, that they depend on him as their only head, then surely, if there shall be any that shall not submit themselves to that Hierarchy, reverently and with the greatest obedience that may be, I confess there is no anathema of which they are not worthy." A very memorable passage. Does not the case proposed exactly correspond with that of our pure and Scriptural Episcopacy?

But Calvin says again of Roman Bishops, very plainly:- "If they were true Bishops I would yield them some authority in this case, not so much as themselves desire, but so much as is required to the due ordering of the policy or government of the Church." And who will refuse to listen attentively to the voice of the pious Melancthon, be his creed what it may :- "I would to God that it lay in me to restore the government of Bishops, for I see what manner of Church we shall have, the ecclesiastical policy being dissolved. I do see that hereafter there will grow up a greater tyranny in the Church than ever before."

Or will you take Beza, generally supposed to be a more radical Church Reformer and higher Calvinist than Calvin himself? What says he of the English Church in reference to Episcopacy?

"Let them enjoy that blessing of God, and God grant that it may be perpetual unto them." Again- "If there be any who reject

altogether Episcopal jurisdiction- a thing I can hardly be persuaded of - God forbid that any one in his senses should give way to the madness of such men." Isaac Casaubon, another Swiss Reformer, confesses repeatedly that the Church of England "came nearer to the faith and form of the ancient Catholic Church than any other."

And this is the testimony of the most learned Grotius, a well-known member of a Presbyterian Church:- "Episcopacy had its beginning in the Apostolic times. The Bishop is approved of divine right. For this assertion the Divine Apocalypse affords an irrefragable argument. Those who think Episcopacy repugnant to God's will, must condemn the whole Primitive Church of folly and impiety."

We now think that our second proposition has been abundantly proved. The voice of Primitive Christianity combines itself, you perceive, singularly enough, in one lofty and melodious chorus, with that of the Great Protestant

Continental Reformation. And is this unintelligible, since the foreign Reformers were necessarily driven out of the Episcopacy of Rome by its corruptions, and yet were unable to form a new Episcopacy of their own?

Not so, blessed be God! in this most favoured land, where the Episcopacy reformed itself according to the Scriptural model, and then opened its comprehensive arms to all alike. And so let our detractors wonder no more that such a Church presents stones so rich, encrusted in her graceful arches, as a meek Cranmer, an honest Latimer, an unyielding Hooper, a solid Ridley, a steadfast Bradford, all sparkling with the ruddy glow of the well-endured fires of a stupendous martyrdom!

Let our enemies gaze no more astonished at the priceless gems adorning her celestial architecture, -a learned Jewell, an eloquent Hall, a profound Usher, a sublime Jeremy Taylor, a vigorous Barrow, a sainted Ken. Let them not ask, How comes it that this hallowed building is ever gathering to itself fresh stones, resplendent from the treasury of heaven; yea, and some of our own era, whose lustre is scarcely outdone by those elder treasures?

And let us not doubt that when the Great Head and King of the Church shall have made up all his jewels for eternity, some of the most effulgent in his Mediatorial Crown will have been plucked from the body of that very Church whose constitution we this day advocate with all the well-instructed and devout ages that have gone before,-not surely because it is of man's cunning invention, but because it is "built upon the foundation of the Apostles and Prophets, "Jesus Christ being the chief corner-stone."

III.

We pass over summarily our third proposition,-That the Apostolical orders have descended in a constant and unbroken succession from the time of the Apostles to the Church of England as at present constituted. For on this point happily there is little difficulty. Through the mercy of God, the Church in all time has taken the greatest care to preserve inviolate the succession from the Apostles. There are in existence catalogues of Bishops from the present year back to the day of Pentecost. It is true that the Church of Rome for a time pretended that this succession was lost in the first year of Queen Elizabeth, by the uncanonical ordination of Archbishop Parker; but this invention was for ever set at rest by the production of the original deed of consecration in the library of Lambeth Palace, with the signatures of Prelates and others competent to make a valid ordination.

Baffled in this manoeuvre, Rome pretends that our succession is broken by heresy and schism. But we contend, on the most valid grounds, that our Church is the true old Church of England, descending from the Apostles, and not tracing its origin, as falsely pretended, to Cranmer and Ridley, who, with the concurrence and assistance of the Church itself, met in Convocation, reformed it, -not erected it,-according to the power vested in every Church to reform itself. The truth is, the Roman Catholic body in this country are rather heretics and schismatics, since they refuse to submit to the Church lawfully constituted in these realms, and still cleave to those fearful corruptions from which the Church of England, through the blessing of God, hath cleansed and purified herself

"Where was your Church before Luther?" is a very common and triumphant query of the Romanist. It has

often been well answered :- " Where yours was not ; -in the Bible." But it may be also replied, and with equal truth :- "The Church of England is now where it was before Luther; --but purified, reformed, and regenerated according to the teaching of Scripture, and in complete accordance with the opinions of the Primitive Church." And so, in the beautiful language of Bishop Hall, " We do only protest this, that we are perfect Catholics.

Let the pretenders look to themselves; we are sure we are as Catholic as true faith can make us, -as much one as the same Catholic Faith can make us; and in this undoubted right we claim and enjoy the sweet and inseparable communion with all the blessed members of that mystical body both in earth and heaven; and by virtue thereof, with the Glorious Head of that dear and happy body, Jesus Christ the Righteous, the Husband of this one wife; to whom with the Father and the Holy Ghost be all glory and honour for ever and ever. Amen."

And as such, the Church of England shall live when the Church of Rome, or her corruptions, has perished for ever, great, incorruptible, free, - "fair as the moon, clear as the sun, and terrible as an army with banners." And why ? Because "built upon the foundation of the Apostles and Prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner-stone."

IV.

Let us conclude by a very few remarks on our fourth and last proposition, -That the form of government of the Church of England is most adapted to the spiritual requirements and wants of mankind in all ages. This proposition naturally follows from the preceding ones. For if our Church is built on the true and only Scriptural model, so as there is to be no fresh revelation to the end of time, this model must necessarily prevail as the best and fittest to the termination of all things.

And here we thank God, from the very bottom of our hearts, that in His great mercy He enables us, in our daily experience, to test the truth of this our last assertion, and of those precious promises made to His Church so many centuries ago, -promises of light, and life, and succour, and salvation.

For, see you not, just as the All-beneficent and true Creator has placed his eternal and lustrous bow in the clouds, a token, amid storm and rain and blackness, that he will never destroy the world again with a flood, but that seed-time and harvest shall continue to gladden our hearts, proving, by the constant recurrence of plenty, the veracity of the Word attested by heaven's many-coloured arch; --so, the same God has planted his Church on the surface of this dark and stormy world, and, engraving on its summit, in characters more blessed than the choicest rainbow-tints, these words of endless cooperation- "Lo! I am with you always, even to the end of the world;" -establishes at the same time the truth of this his promise, by causing, under the shadow of that Church, everlasting spiritual harvests to spring up, making "the desert and the solitary place "to flourish as the garden of the Lord."

I appeal, my Reverend and Christian Brethren, to the experience of the present times, whether our beloved Church has not shown herself most divinely adapted to the wants of the age in which we live. True, like everything earthly, the Church has her blemishes, -spots of terrestrial defilement dimming her fair and heaven-proportioned form. True, that she has had her periods of darkness, -her hours of slumber, -her days of sloth. For there never was, there never will be, there never can be perfection on this side of Eternity.

But let it suffice that those years of spiritual bondage are passed away. Is it not enough that for this our old and venerated Church of England, the voice has so audibly spoken:- "Arise, shine, for thy light is come, and the glory of the Lord is risen upon thee"? Oh, yes! for who can gaze upon our Zion, and see her shaking off the dust from her beautiful garments, and fairly aroused at that warning sound, amply girded, and manfully engaged in her work, but must "thank God, and take courage"?

Oh! lift up your eyes, all ye, and see how she is gone forth in that panoply which is not of earth;-and lo! at the bidding of Heaven, she has covered this our native land with the multitude of her schools and her churches; resolving not to rest till every most remote nook and corner thrills to the voice of hallowed exhortation. And then mark the sacred fire kindling into

intensity;- she looks abroad, and, shuddering at the view of the dark places of the earth, hastens to flood the globe with light and life through the proclaiming voices of her heralds of salvation.

Wherever beats the pulse of a responsible soul, there she turns her longing eyes, and yearns to carry pardon and peace and salvation. And in so doing, it is her praise and her honour that toleration is her watchword; charity is graven on the palms of her hands, and humility is written upon her heart of hearts. For she, unlike her arrogant rival and bitter enemy, -Scripture being alone her guide in practice as well as doctrine, -arrogates to herself no exclusive privileges, claims no monopoly of salvation; but rather extends the hand and the embrace of Christian sympathy to all those who "love the Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity and in truth." She agrees, indeed, to differ from others on minor points; -she harmonises and blends with all who will on important things.

Believing and knowing her own form of government to be the best, she can at the same time bear and forbear with those who think that they have "discovered a more perfect way." For, content with her mighty walk and mission, she is satisfied to do all the good she can; and thus, with heaven in her eyes and heart, her glowing hand-maids, Faith, Hope, and Charity by her side, she marches forth, following her Great Leader and Captain, by Him and through Him to enlighten, to evangelize, to bless, to convert, to conquer the world!

Such is the Church to which we all belong, and such her vast, and awful, and heaven-inspired mission. But while we may each and every one of us rejoice that our lot is set in such places, yea, that we have so goodly an heritage, in being permitted to enter into and hold communion and cooperate with such an august body; yet shame and confusion of face must belong to us, above all to him who addresses you, yea, to the very best of us, Ministers of the Sanctuary, when we think how unworthy we are of the privileges allotted us.

My Reverend Brethren, this day admitted into such a calling, you must feel with the profound humility of all the great spirits who have preceded you, how infinitely you are beneath the grandeur of your calling. For we cannot but believe that on such a day as this, humility -that grace so inseparable to the truly Christian character- is, if I may so speak, doubly

humble. For only turn your eyes for one moment to the colossal, the superhuman weight laid upon the shoulders of that body of which you are now enrolled as the most prominent members.

See you not how the Church, loving mother and delegated parent in the hands of her glorified Head, is summoned to take the whole man in all his stages into her tender arms, never to leave him till the responsibilities of time are swallowed up in the realities of eternity?

Is it not she who receives into her gentle embrace the infant just born into this naughty world, sprinkles its little face with the waters, imprints on its little brow the mystic cross of baptism, and initiates it into all the privileges of the outward and visible Church?

Is it not she who, in the touching rite of continuation, listens to the renewed vows of youth and reason, and sheds the Episcopal blessing on the kneeling throng? Is it not she that summons the adoring faithful to the richest of tables, crowned with the spiritual elements of the Saviour's body and blood? Is it not before her that stand the nuptial pair to pledge themselves in contracts of mutual love and fidelity, and to receive a ministerial benediction? Girt about by her countless children, does she not continually lift up her voice in the Sanctuary with prayers, intercessions, and praises, anticipating and antedating the joys of Paradise?

And finally, when the feverish dreams of life are for ever past away, and the soul is hovering on the brink of a new and untried existence, is she not there by the bedside of mortality, to whisper words of faith and hope, and to point to the only Guide that can smooth down, and brighten, and consecrate the last journey?

Nor is her work yet complete. Does she not stand the chief, the most dignified, the most consolatory of mourners at the last resting-place of humanity; and with a tear in her eye, but a glow upon her heart, she cries indeed, "Earth to earth, ashes to ashes, dust to dust!" but then she bursts forth again with all attendant angels into the most majestic and yet comforting of anthems :-

"I heard a voice from heaven, saying unto me, Write, blessed are the dead that die in the Lord, from henceforth; yea, saith the spirit, for they rest from their labours, and their works do follow them!"

Such is the Church, and such not because instituted and commissioned by man, but because "built on the foundation of the Apostles and Prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief cornerstone." As Ministers of such a Church, as organs of her doctrines, as called upon to officiate in her services, we may well cry aloud with him of old: "Who is sufficient for these things?" Despair indeed we might, knew we not that our strength is from another than ourselves.

Yes, in another than ourselves, I say designedly; for if we, or the Church of which we are the members, place ourselves in the room of Christ, or usurp his authority and functions, we are utterly powerless. He will not give his glory to another; no, not even to his own Church. But surely, when dismayed by the boundlessness of our work, and the responsibilities of our office, may we not take courage from the fact, that He who has preserved, and blessed, and honoured our beloved Church so long, only because we have honoured Him supremely and exclusively, will not fail us if we put our trust in him?

If the work had not been from God, it would long ago, as St. Paul's Jewish master prophesied, "have come to nought." The mother of St. Augustine, overwhelmed with grief at his youthful excesses, had recourse to a celebrated Bishop, entreating his intercessions at a throne of grace for her son, and falling at his feet with a torrent of lamentations and sighs. "Go, woman," said the holy man, "the child of such tears will never be suffered to perish."

Let us, my Reverend Brethren, lift up our heads, cast down and dismayed, like that of another Monica, by the difficulties before us, and rejoice, knowing that a Church, the child and offspring of so many divine commands, -consecrated by so many blessed tears, -embalmed by so many fragrant sighs, - adorned by so many good works, -illustrated by so many saintly lives, -ennobled by so many wondrous deaths, -perfumed by so many happy memories, -will never be suffered to perish.

No! The only concern is for ourselves; -to walk worthy of that exalted vocation wherewith we are called;- to tread in the steps of all the Great and Good who have gone before us.

Wherefore to this end, let us, each and every one of us, breathe from the very bottom of our hearts, the most appropriate words of our admirable Liturgy :-

“ Almighty God, our heavenly Father, who hast purchased to thyself an universal Church, by the precious blood of thy dear Son, mercifully look upon the same, and at this time so guide and govern the minds of thy servants the Bishops and Pastors of thy flock, that they may lay hands suddenly on no man, but faithfully and wisely make choice of fit persons to serve in the sacred ministry of thy Church.

And to those which shall be ordained to any holy function, give thy grace and heavenly benediction, that both by their life and doctrine, they may set forth thy glory, and set forward the salvation of all men, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.”

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