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AS INSTRUMENTAL TO

CHRISTIAN UNITY;

BEING THE

Annual Sermon,

PREACHED, BY APPOINTMENT OF THE BISHOP,

BEFORE THE

Sixtieth Annual Convention of the Diocese of New Jersey,

ON THE LAST WEDNESDAY IN MAY, A. D. 1843:

BY

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Although it is not usual in the Diocese of New Jersey to publish the Convention Sermons, the Author of the present Discourse felt bound to yield to the advice and request of many of the Clergy and Laity, who heard it, and who thought that its publication might be of service to the Church.

Sermon.

1 CORINTH. xii. 12, 13.

"For as the body is one, and hath many members, and all the members of that one body, being many, are one body, so also is CHRIST. For by one SPIRIT are we all baptized into one body, whether we be Jews or Gentiles, whether we be bond or free; and have been all made to drink into one SPIRIT."

THE oneness of the Church, its intimate and mysterious union with CHRIST, and the greatness of its trust as His visible agent, and the living witness of His presence upon earth, are themes upon which St. Paul delights to dwell, and which raise his spirit to its loftiest height, and task to the utmost his power of utterance. Were an uninspired preacher to recur to the subject thus frequently and fervently, without the sanction of holy writ, he would be suspected at the least of pious phrensy. As it is, we may with St. Paul magnify the Body, while, with St. Paul, we seek through the Body to glorify the Head. Is not indeed the common prejudice against what is called "*Church Doctrine*," (I had almost said against the Church itself,) a necessary consequence of unworthy and unscriptural views of the nature and office of the Church? Can any Christian, who recognizes the mutual and indissoluble union between CHRIST and the Church, as set forth in the text for instance, possibly treat the doctrines and principles that flow from it with levity or indifference; or denounce as "bigots" those who feel bound, with the Apostle, to give them due prominence in the Gospel system?

Were I asked to define "Gospel preaching," I would say it means "preaching JESUS CHRIST;" not merely the preaching certain select doctrines about CHRIST, how important soever they may be; but the preaching CHRIST *Himself personally, in all His relations to us*, as equally in all the one Object of our faith and love; as our "IMMANUEL, GOD *manifest in the flesh*," humbling Himself that we might be exalted; dying that we might live; interceding for us, that we may have grace to look to Him; mysteriously united with His Body, the Church, that as members thereof we may have fellowship with Him and the FATHER, by the HOLY GHOST, through the means of grace stored up in it. In this way alone, it seems to me, can we preserve the integrity and harmony of the Gospel system; thus alone can we vindicate the importance of every, the minutest part of the economy of grace, whether it pertain to doctrine or discipline; for thus preaching CHRIST, "CHRIST *is all and in all*." Such surely is the rule of our Church; for in her prescribed round of holy services, she sets forth CHRIST personally, and that in a *historical* or *dramatical*, not in a *speculative* way, as the Object of our faith. She sets before us facts relating to CHRIST as the basis of our faith, and Himself as its great Object; not abstract principles or doctrines, about which we may speculate and argue, until we lose sight of the Day-star in a fog of our own creation.

The difference between the two methods of teaching referred to, will account, I think, for the difference between the views which even good men take of the Church and its office. In the speculative method, the individual mind is every thing; no one can speculate for another; the Church cannot speculate at all; here therefore the Church is but an assemblage, accidental or voluntary, of so many separate units, each to itself significant in its own insignificance, which remain together for a season, through mere *vis inertiae*, or a chance agreement in opinion. Such at least is the tendency of this

method or system; though good men, by a happy inconsistency, seldom follow it to its natural issue.

In the other system, persons and facts, external and superior to the individual mind, are the realities with which it deals. Here the Church is the sole competent witness, apart from whose testimony, as the keeper and interpreter of God's word, the individual is liable to err. Here without wholly merging his individuality, or forgetting his personal responsibility, each one feels his dependence as one member out of many of one Body, in connexion and communion with which alone he is sure of deriving from its one Head light, and life, and health.

In this point of view the consideration of the *nature and office of the Church*, and of the *means ordained for the fulfilment of that office*, is eminently important and practical; and not less appropriate, I trust, to the present occasion.

I. The text presents to us the Church as "one Body" in CHRIST, composed of many members, "all by one SPIRIT baptized into that one Body," and by virtue of their union with it, and, through it, with its Divine Head, "made to drink into one SPIRIT." And as if to *identify* CHRIST and the Church, the Head and the Body, and to silence all objections to the doctrine of their mysterious oneness, the text designates the Body by the name of its Divine Head; "as the body is one, and hath many members, and all the members of that one body, being many, are one body; *so also* is CHRIST," that is the Church.

This mysterious truth, that there exists between CHRIST and His Church, not merely communion, but a proper union, so that He is Head of the Church in a sense in which He is the Head of no other body, sharing with it, through His glorified humanity, His inherent divinity, is the true foundation of just and worthy views of the nature and office of the Church, and is set forth unequivocally in many passages of

holy writ. As, for example, in our blessed LORD's prayer for His disciples, before His Passion; "Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on Me through their word; that they all may be one; *as Thou, FATHER, art in Me, and I in Thee, that they also may be one in Us*: that the world may believe that Thou hast sent Me. And the glory which Thou gavest Me, I have given them; *that they may be one, even as We are One, I in them, and Thou in Me.*"* How can we interpret this emphatic language, without either explaining it away, or denying our LORD's proper divinity, unless we recognize some closer bond of union between Him and His Body, the Church, than His disciples' faith, or obedience, and the like?

St. Paul again and again sets forth this doctrine, as in the fifth chapter of the Epistle to the Ephesians, where he employs holy matrimony as a symbol of the "great mystery" "concerning CHRIST and the Church;" and asserts expressly, "We are members of His Body, *of His flesh, and of His bones.*" And, not to multiply quotations to the same effect, in the first chapter also, where after describing our blessed LORD's glorious exaltation, he declares that GOD the FATHER "gave Him to be the Head over all things to the Church, which is His Body, the fulness of Him that filleth all in all." Upon which emphatic words St. Chrysostom remarks; "Look again whither He hath raised the Church! As though He were lifting it up by some engine, He hath raised it up to a vast height, and set it on yonder throne; for where the Head is, there is the Body also. There is no interval to separate between the Head and the Body; for were there a separation, then were the one no longer a Body, then were the other no longer a Head. * * * In order then, that when you hear of a Head, you may not conceive the notion of supremacy only, but also of consolidation, and that you may not behold Him as a Supreme Ruler only, but as Head

* *St. John's Gospel*, xvii. 20 ss.

of a Body, He adds, *The fulness of Him that filleth all in all.** * * * *The fulness of CHRIST is the Church.* And rightly, for the complement of the head is the body, and the complement of the body is the head.”*

Grant the mysterious union between CHRIST and His “mystical Body,” and you harmonize all these and similar passages of His holy word. And as for this mystery, it is solved (as far as may be) by the greater mystery, in which it is involved, the Incarnation of the SON of GOD, whereby He took into personal union with Himself the nature, not of *a* man, but of man, so that the two natures, the divine and human, form but one CHRIST, to the unspeakable glory of the adopted and exalted nature.

As to the *nature* of the Church, then, we conclude that it is CHRIST’s “mystical Body;” “the blessed company of all faithful people;”† in which GOD has “knit together His elect in one communion and fellowship;”‡ so that in CHRIST they are all mysteriously one both with Him and with one another, even as He and the FATHER are One; and in Him have communion and fellowship, not only with all saints, but with the FATHER, by the HOLY GHOST; and that not for a season only, but through all eternity. Verily, “glorious things are spoken of thee, thou city of GOD!”§

II. The *office* of the Church as “the Body” of CHRIST, His “fulness,” or complement, the tabernacle of His SPIRIT, is to be the visible witness, representative, and agent to mankind of its Invisible HEAD, and to serve as His instrument for conveying to the nature He has redeemed, and adopted the benefits of His cross and passion. The Church has (so to speak) a sacramental character. For it is “an outward and visible sign” to mankind, of CHRIST’s invisible presence and

* See “Library of the Fathers,” (Oxford, 1840,) vol. 6, p. 127.

† *Concluding Prayer in the Communion Service.*

‡ *Collect for All Saints’ Day.*

§ *Psa. lxxxvii. 2.*

power, "ordained by CHRIST Himself;" it is the "means whereby" its members receive from its HEAD all gifts and graces; and its very existence is the "pledge to assure" us of the efficacy of all the means of grace committed to it by CHRIST, and of the certainty of all His promises given to it, even as of that especial one, "the gates of Hell shall not prevail against it."*

"*Ye are the light of the world,*"† said our blessed LORD to His disciples, presenting His Church to view as the great *light-house* of the earth, ordained *to turn men from the gulf of perdition to the way of life*; and in this respect to act as His representative or substitute, and to be the sign of His presence; for He also said, in a higher sense, "*I am the light of the world.*"‡ Again, He said, "*Ye are the salt of the earth;*"§ intimating that His "mystical Body" should be the tabernacle on earth of the SPIRIT of Holiness, for the benefit of all mankind, who might partake of the SPIRIT's "seven-fold gifts"|| by becoming very members incorporate in that Body, which is, "*the fulness of Him that filleth all in all.*" Finally, He said, "Lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world,"¶ assuring to His Body perpetual union with its Divine Head, guaranteeing to it, and through it to the world, the fulfilment of all His gracious promises, and all His awful threats; and setting to all its lawful acts done in His name the seal of His authority.

The office of the Church, then, is to carry on upon earth in CHRIST's name and stead the great work, for which He became incarnate; to the end that all mankind may actually realize the inestimably precious and glorious privileges, of which they have been made capable by the infinite condescension of the SON of GOD in becoming Man! The more deeply we feel our need of CHRIST's gracious mediation in

* St. Matt. xvi. 18.

§ St. Matt. v. 13.

† Ibid v. 14.

|| *Veni Creator Spiritus*, in Ordination Service.

‡ St. John viii. 12.

¶ St. Matt. xxviii. 20.

our behalf, and the more reverently we regard this greatest of mysteries, the more justly will we estimate the importance of the Church's office, and the value of the means ordained for its fulfilment.

III. It has been already remarked that defective views of the nature and office of the Church have occasioned the too prevalent prejudice against "*Church doctrines*." But I fear that there is a still more prevalent aversion, arising partly from the same source, to their practical application, or to the *discipline of the Church*; which includes all the means ordained, whether immediately by CHRIST Himself or mediately by His authorized agents, for attaining the great end of His incarnation and the Church's institution. Nor is it strange that the discipline of the Church should be less acceptable than its doctrine; for it is not until obnoxious principles are reduced to practice that they provoke vigorous and determined resistance. It is not easy to speak at once briefly and clearly on a topic that has become so perplexed as this momentous one. Not to mention now other causes of this perplexity, the very distinction between doctrine and discipline has helped to confirm the erroneous notion, that while the former is certain and immutable, the latter is uncertain and variable. Now I submit that this notion is as unsound and false as it is fatal to the welfare of the Church. I grant that within certain limits the discipline of the Church is variable; and that so far it "may be altered, abridged, enlarged, amended, or otherwise disposed of, as may seem most convenient for the edification of the people, according to the various exigencies of times and occasions"—as the Preface to the "Book of Common Prayer" sets forth. But this plainly refers to allowable modification of the *details* of discipline, the *substance* thereof being preserved entire. In like manner, too, the doctrine of the Church may be set forth and illustrated variously, "according to the various exigencies of times and occasions," "provided

the substance of the Faith be kept entire;" as was done, for instance, by the First and Second General Councils, of whose joint labours the Nicene Creed was the result. Discipline is in fact based upon doctrine, and is its outward developement. The existence of "one Catholic and Apostolic Church" is an article of the Creed, and of "the substance of the Faith;" its outward organization belongs to discipline, and is partly immutable, partly mutable. Its three-fold Ministry, for instance, and the investiture of the highest order with the prerogatives of perpetuating the sacred line and of governing the lower orders, are of the substance of discipline, and may not be altered; while on the other hand the distribution of certain functions among them, (the granting or denying, for example, the right of preaching to Deacons,) is not essential to the integrity of discipline, and therefore may be changed. So, again, the doctrine of "one Baptism for the remission of sins" is an article of the Faith; while its administration belongs to discipline, and in some respects may, in others may not, be altered.

These distinctions, though obvious, are apt to be forgotten; and because parts of the Church's discipline are confessedly susceptible of change by lawful authority, men come to undervalue the whole, and set aside each for himself, one this part, and another that, as suits their several tastes or passions, until they fairly get rid of the whole.

We, my Brethren, "have not," I trust, "so learned CHRIST."* We know that He vouchsafed to set the example of "fulfilling all righteousness"† by complying with the minutest requirements of that imperfect dispensation, which he was on the point of superseding; and that when He censured the Pharisees, it was not for doing the less, but for leaving the greater undone.‡ It has been our privilege, moreover, to be trained in a branch of CHRIST's Catholic Church which bears witness to the importance of decency and

* *Ephes.* iv. 20.

† *St. Matt.* iii. 15.

‡ *Ibid* xxiii. 23.

order, if she has not an effectual discipline. Still I trust I am not singular in the feeling that we have more to sorrow over than to glory in; for some of our privileges, as Churchmen, have been well nigh forfeited; certainly their enjoyment is suspended; others again are sadly undervalued and neglected. This abatement of our privileges is partly our own fault, and partly our hereditary misfortune. If we strive to amend wherein we are faulty, it may please God to repair the rest. To this end it is needful we should know our loss, that we may the more diligently seek its recovery. I can but suggest a few particulars in which it behoves us either to use neglected privileges that are accessible to us, or to seek by lawful means the recovery of others that seem lost.

Our blessed LORD, before His Ascension, provided for the organization of the Church, by ordaining and empowering His Apostles in His stead; "as My FATHER hath sent Me, even so send I you." First in order of time, therefore, the Ministry of the Church meets our view; it being the germ from which the Body grew, and by which it has continued to be propagated until the present hour. I pass by its three-fold constitution as an essential part of Church discipline; for this, among ourselves, is an allowed fact, though it has been long a prominent topic of controversy between the Church and the denominations that have sprung up without her fold during the last three centuries. Essential as the Episcopal constitution of the Ministry is to its very being, it is not the only thing essential to its well-being. The great stress that has been necessarily laid upon this part of the ministerial question, has withdrawn attention too much from other important parts. In particular I would instance the question as to the just extent and limits of ministerial power and authority, as one that has been in a great measure passed by in silence; and practically settled, I fear, more in deference to "the spirit of the age" than the spirit of CHRIST. I know that this is what is called "a delicate subject;" and that some may be ready to ascribe

jealousy on this score, to zeal for one's Order rather than for CHRIST. But surely, Brethren, that is a false delicacy, which withholds necessary truth, because it may expose one to false imputations. If we preach what we believe to be truth, only when our motives cannot be misconstrued, we shall be, at the best, "dumb dogs."* All that I desire, brethren of the clergy and laity, on the present occasion, is to "stir up your pure minds by way of remembrance."† And I have too much confidence in the present audience to apprehend serious misapprehension of my scope.

I have implied that the question as to the just extent and limits of the power and authority of CHRIST's Ministers has been tacitly settled in our Church, mainly in deference to "the spirit of the Age." Nor is it strange, considering human infirmity, that such has been the result. Bear in mind the prejudice against the Church at the period of its organization, because it was unhappily associated in the minds of men with a government, whose oppression had constrained a Washington to revolt; and whose deeper wrongs against the Church of this country, in denying it Bishops of its own, from low views of State policy, were mildly punished by the defeat of their armies and navies, and the loss of their territory. Allow for the natural anxiety to conciliate and disarm this prejudice, by the utmost concessions to popular feeling, that were deemed consistent with the integrity of the Church. Add to this consideration the fact that the Church, during the Colonial period, had no discipline and no effective government, because it had no governors; its nominal head being the Bishop of London. Remember too, that it was reduced apparently to the verge of extinction; so that it had no one element of strength, except the promise of CHRIST's presence, which even good men seldom fully realize when every thing seems to be against them. Take into the account all these considerations, and I think you will perceive how the venerable men who were instrumental in organ-

* *Isaiah* lvi. 10.

† *2 Peter* iii. 1.

izing the American Church, were tempted to go too far with the popular current; or were themselves unduly biassed by the prevailing prejudices against any concentration of authority in the hands of those, who are not strictly creatures of the popular will, and therefore its supposed executors. Even now, when the temptation and bias are not so operative as they then were, we sometimes hear sound Churchmen defending, if not commending, our Ecclesiastical Institutions, by tracing the analogy between them and our civil institutions; which, it seems to me, is at the best arguing backwards. It is a slender argument in favour of CHRIST's Kingdom, which "is not of this world,"* to show that it resembles any particular earthly government; seeing that it was ordained to sanctify them all, and to co-operate with each and all in securing the well-being of man. It is only by maintaining its own divine principles unmixed and unimpaired, that it can promote effectually either the temporal or the eternal interests of men. To these principles it is bound to adhere with unflinching firmness, under every modification of human government; though they may be at utter variance with the principles of the latter. It is thus only that it can fulfil its high office as CHRIST's "mystical Body;" and thus only that it can change the character of a bad earthly government, even while it acknowledges its authority, and patiently submits (if need be) to its tyranny. It was thus that the Primitive Church subdued its tyrants and persecutors, conquering while it suffered. Had it accommodated its principles to the policy of the Empire, it had escaped persecution, and (humanly speaking) had perished. It was not until after it had allied itself with the civil power, and conformed to State policy, that the Eastern Church sank gradually into a spiritual torpor, from which it has not yet been roused; and that the Western, rising up after a while against secular domination, formed to itself at length a spiritual tyranny, that provoked Prince and people to rebel against its abused

* *St. John* xviii. 36.

authority; and thus by its ambitious attempt to bind the earth in one under Papal sway, rent in many pieces CHRIST's seamless vesture.*

Now our Church has a duty to the government of this land, as well as to the souls that constitute its population; and that is in its discipline as well as doctrine, to bear witness to "the Truth" as it "is in JESUS."† Thus it will contribute to preserve the principles of the civil government unimpaired, if they be true; and to correct them if they be false. It does not belong to the Minister of CHRIST to discuss the merits of schemes of civil government, especially in this place. But it will not be deemed wrong to avail ourselves of the admission now very generally made by thoughtful men, that there is danger of conceding too much to the popular will, and that it

* This view may appear strange to many, who have been led by the exaggerated language of mere declaimers against Rome, to suppose that the Papacy was an off-hand creation of Satan. Without denying that the system has Anti-Christian elements, which proceed from the author of evil, we are warranted by History in regarding it as the gradual growth of ages. It took its rise in the honour accorded the Roman See, because it was the Apostolical See of the West, founded by St. Paul and St. Peter—because Rome was the civil centre of the world—and its Church, therefore, "as a city set on a hill;" and because the early Bishops of Rome worthily distinguished themselves by their patience in suffering for the truth, and by their energy in defending it. Upon this solid foundation, this *Primacy of honour*, conferred on zeal by love—the genius and ambition of Leo the Great began to raise the gigantic superstructure of that *Primacy of Power*, which from the middle of the 5th century to that of the 10th, continued to uprear itself, whether under Greek, Barbarian, Frank, or German rule. The false and fatal policy of the Carolingian and Franconian Emperors, who sought to make the Church part and parcel of the machinery of the Feudal system, justly provoked the resistance of the reforming party in the Church during the 11th century. But unhappily the Churchmen of the age only turned the arts and arms of their opponents against themselves. Gregory VII., and those who followed him, made the Pope, what the Emperor sought to make himself, the main-spring of the Feudal system, chief alike in State and Church; thereby opposing one usurpation to another. Hence in due time the fiction of "the double sword," and the manifold devices of the Papacy for the attainment of secular ends, which tempted men at length to see in Rome the Apocalyptic Babylon, and in its Bishop "the Man of Sin," the very Anti-Christ. See this view ably illustrated in Bowden's "Life and Pontificate of Gregory VII.," London, 1842.

† Ephes. iv. 21.

is a fallacy to ascribe to it infallibility; that good laws do not ensure good government, when the governed are the governors, since each man excepts himself from their operation; and that the widest diffusion of power in theory, is not inconsistent with the greatest concentration of it in practice. The supremacy of law is a mere abstraction, an idle dream, when the law has no administrators to enforce its penalties, who are raised above the influence of fears and hopes excited by their dependence upon the rampant and capricious mob. Now although our Church as a community has few, too few, alas! of the multitude in it, still it needs, like every other community, the wholesome restraint of laws, wisely enacted and faithfully administered. The laws we have, at least in part; but what are the penalties for their transgression; and who are their administrators and executors?

True, the Clergy are to a certain extent, subject to the law, and liable to pains and penalties, in case of grievous transgression. And it is well that it is so; for he cannot govern who does not obey. The majesty of the law should be vindicated by the punishment first of all of the most prominent of its transgressors. But if the operation of the laws should begin here, ought it to end here? Has CHRIST exempted the lay-members of His mystical Body from the duty of obedience, or from the punishment due to disobedience? Or, to speak more justly, has He denied them the benefit of that kind severity, which punishes the sin that it may rescue the sinner? Surely not, dear Brethren, if St. Paul's practice, recorded by inspiration, and that of Apostolic men, attested by all the remains of the early writers, affords sure indication of "the mind of CHRIST." And yet is it not a fact that the laity of the Church are virtually exempt from all subjection to law, (except so far as they are a law to themselves,) from all deference to authority, and all penalties for acts of omission or commission; unless indeed their transgression should be so flagrant and offensive as to constitute their admission to com-

munion a common nuisance? Are not the Clergy deprived of the power of fulfilling their solemn obligation "to reprove and rebuke," as well as to "exhort?" Would it not be deemed an act of impertinence in a Parish Priest to admonish a member of his flock of any improprieties of conduct that might endanger his safety and offend the Church, though not flagrant enough to call for excommunication; especially if that individual were influential in the world? Would the strict and impartial enforcement of the Rubric introductory to the Communion Service, against "those communicants betwixt whom the Minister perceiveth malice and hatred to reign," be at all endured in these latter days; unless the parties were too obscure to gain notice or sympathy? Ponder these things, Brethren, and see whether the power of "binding and loosing,"* which CHRIST committed to His Ministers, has not been well nigh abolished among us? Partly owing to the prevalent misapprehension of the nature and office of the Church, and partly to the laxity of principle that characterizes us in our civil and social relations, the Clergy have been degraded from the rank of Ministers of CHRIST and the Church, preaching His word, dispensing His sacraments, administering His laws, and applying His salutary discipline, to that of hirelings of the people, allowed to pray, and bless, and give the bread of life to the few who think it worth the seeking, provided they preach palatable truths in a pleasing way, and make themselves in every day life popular and acceptable to the omnipotent majority! Brethren, I put it to your experience and your consciences, is the picture overcharged?

Nor is the Ministry alone degraded; the bad leaven has infected the whole lump; every ordinance and means of grace is undervalued and impaired. *Preaching*, which the fashion of the day would fain magnify, is debased rather than exalted; for the human element bears a larger proportion to the divine, than it did in the better days of simple faith and

* *St. Matt.* xvi. 19; xviii. 18.

hearty obedience. *Prayer* alas! is not what it once was, a perpetual incense rising to heaven each day from every altar, in every Church, and coming back in daily supplies of grace for every need of all the Church's members. CHRIST's promise, "Where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them,"* we deem of none effect. We think it unavailing for a few to gather with CHRIST's Minister in His Holy Temple, and seek His blessing on the absent many as well as the present few; although "the effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much;"†—much more the united prayers of several. Were the Daily Prayers of our Church offered up, morning and evening, in even one Church in each town and city of our land, we might confidently hope that better things are in store for us, and that we will find grace to seek, one by one, the recovery of all our privileges in the fulfilment of all our duties.

As with Prayer, so with the *Holy Sacraments*. Misapprehension of their nature has begotten indifference to them, and indifference neglect, amounting in many instances to their entire disuse. Decency, as well as duty, requires that we should bring our children to "the laver of regeneration,"‡ wherein "we are all baptized into one Body;" and it is generally done, though seldom with the reverential alacrity, which the Church enjoins. And then too many are ready to do it in a corner, as if ashamed "to confess CHRIST before men,"§ celebrating Holy Baptism either in a private house, or after the congregation have left the house of God; while few make much of it, by holding it up continually to themselves and their wards as the instrument of the new birth; the oath that binds them in perpetual fealty to CHRIST; the sign upon their foreheads, to remind them each day of the world, the flesh, and the devil, renounced indeed once for all, but still to be shunned, subdued, resisted, even until death.

* St. Matt. xviii. 20.

† Titus iii. 5.

† St. James v. 16.

§ St. Matt. x. 32.

As to the other Holy Sacrament of our LORD's Body and Blood, it is painful to think, and hard to speak in fitting terms, of the sad and shameful neglect and contempt into which it has fallen! When one thinks that CHRIST Himself ordained it, under circumstances so peculiarly touching, with a scope so comprehensive, and a design so gracious and beneficent, the commandment, "*this do ye in remembrance of me,*"* comes home to the heart with a weight of obligation unsurpassed by that of any divine command, even of the decalogue itself. And when we realize its importance as a "means of grace," whereby we are made partakers of CHRIST's Body and Blood, and of the benefits of His Cross and Passion, the privilege and the necessity of using it frequently appear unspeakably great and urgent. And yet the vast majority of those, for whom it was ordained, and who are commanded to celebrate it, turn their backs upon it; not knowing (we trust) what they do, and to what great peril they expose themselves! And how seldom do the few who communicate repair to this heavenly banquet, which was to the faithful of old as needful as their daily bread!

No other fact so loudly calls for the revival of the Church's discipline, as the prevalent neglect and contempt of this Holy Sacrament. In apostolic and primitive days all the members of the Church partook of it at least on every LORD's day, and on every Festival. He who, by his own act or that of the Church, was excluded from communion, was to the faithful "as an heathen man and a publican."† Then to be shut out from communion was the severest of temporal punishments, whose remission was anxiously sought by lengthened penitence and humiliation, consummated by public confession and absolution. Now, on the other hand, the Ministers of CHRIST have to entreat His disciples to come and partake of the children's Bread, as though it were a favour done to themselves personally;—while little or no discredit attaches to its

* *St. Luke* xxii. 19.

† *St. Matt.* xviii. 17.

rejection. Of course excommunication has no force, and is but a name ; since men feel that they lose by it little, either of influence or privilege. The Church in her liturgy still testifies to the value and necessity of the Sacrament, and exhorts to its worthy reception. But she imposes no penalty for neglect upon her lay-members. Their rejection of the chiefest of CHRIST's ordinances does not even disqualify them for the highest offices of trust in His Church to which laymen are admissible ! Even the very laws, which bind communicants and clergy, may be framed, in part at least, by men who, however irreproachable in their conduct when tried by the world's code, are living in habitual and open transgression of the fundamental law of Church Communion ! Surely, Brethren, there is some great defect in the practical working of our ecclesiastical system, when men of respectability and character can come to the Sanctuary of God, for the express purpose of legislating therein, and begin their labours by an overt act of transgression against its very constitution, and yet not be a wonder either to themselves or others ! What would be thought of the civil legislator, who should claim his seat in the legislative hall, while he refused to take the oath to obey the constitution ? Yet the cases are analogous.*

* It might easily be shown how the neglect and abuse of CHRIST's Holy Sacraments has led to general corruption of practice in all the particulars of Christian duty. For instance, the low views of Baptism have occasioned the almost universal indifference to Baptismal Education, so that sponsors are mere shadows ; the Catechism an antiquated form, superseded by primers and picture books ; the lambs of the flock, specially consigned to *Apostolic* care by CHRIST Himself, aliens from the one Fold, unworthy of a *Deacon's* care ! Again, the degradation of the Holy Eucharist has brought down Alms-giving from the rank of a sacred Christian duty, and a high Christian privilege, to that of a voluntary service, a sort of supererogatory work, that may or may not be fulfilled, as each one listeth ; so that little of what Christians give is offered on the Altar as sacred to the LORD ; while the office of collecting and administering alms is regarded as a secular one. Who would dare to vindicate the Sacerdotal character of Deacons, against those who make them merely "ministers of meats and drinks," on the ground that they were appointed to be chiefly and primarily receivers and distributors of the oblations of the faithful, and to visit

Now, Brethren, I speak thus freely, not to censure the individuals who act thus inconsistently, but to illustrate by a strong case the great decay of discipline among us, and the urgent need of its revival. The fault and the misfortune attach to all in some degree; and it belongs to all, as members of one Body, to seek in the lawful way, abatement of the evil. At the same time it is the duty of all, who feel sensitively the evils, which the gradual corruption and decay of the ancient discipline have entailed upon us, to exercise great patience and forbearance, both as regards their brethren whom they deem in error, and the practical discipline of the Church which they look upon as defective. For, as before intimated, laxity of discipline is our inheritance, and therefore in part our misfortune, rather than our fault. Some of the causes which have contributed to its entailment upon us have been glanced at already. Did the limits of a single discourse permit, it were easy to trace the operation of others, not less powerful. Chief among these is the perversion of spiritual power and ecclesiastical discipline by the Popes during the ages that preceded the Reformation, to the furtherance of a selfish and secular policy. The abuses and excesses of the Papacy occasioned that popular revolution on the continent, which terminated, contrary to the design of its leaders, in the practical assertion of the dogma of individual, against Papal, infallibility, and in the consequent rejection of all deference to authority and all effective discipline. And although the Anglican Reformation was conducted and consummated under different auspices, this spirit of ecclesiastical insubordination nevertheless infected sadly no small part of the population of England, and through it has invaded, or rather pervaded, our own land. Nor are we

and relieve the sick and the prisoner, the fatherless and the widow? To make good their title to be "Ministers of the Sanctuary" we must show their right to preach, baptize, &c. So little is Alms-giving esteemed!

For "the *doctrinal* use of the Sacraments," as instrumental in witnessing to the truth, and preserving the purity and integrity of the faith, consult a brief, but able, "Charge" of Dr. Waterland, in the 8th volume of his Works.

sufferers only by the recoil which Papal abuses occasioned. King-craft has been quite as deadly a foe to the discipline of the Church as priest-craft. Henry VIII. sought to make the king Pope of England, and to employ the Church as a mere engine of state policy. And although God overruled his purely selfish conduct for the good of His Church, and suffered him not to have all his way, still the Church in England has always been sorely let and hindered by the State, in the exercise of its spiritual powers, and in none more than in the administration of its discipline. The enforcement of spiritual censures by civil disabilities, and the influence of the Erastian principles, which had been dominant in England since the Revolution, had quite crippled the Church courts and suspended the vigorous administration of Church discipline in England before our Church was organized independently of her venerable mother. She was thus sent forth (as it were) from the quiet of an indulgent home, unused to "endure hardness"* and severity, half of her celestial armour quite unproved, to battle against the spirit of misrule, in the chosen asylum of spiritual malcontents! What wonder that her soldiers still seem but half accoutred for the battle!

Brethren, we need "the whole armour of God,"† if with holy Daniel we would "stand in our lot at the end of the days."‡ The Church ought always, but now more than ever, to appear complete in her celestial panoply—"terrible as an army with banners."§ Discipline, I confess, is not popular; recruits may be less numerous and her ranks less dense, at least for a season. But what then? Better far the hundreds of Sparta than the myriads of Persia: "there is no restraint to the Lord to save by many or by few."|| It is ours to use the means appointed, His to give the blessing.

Now more than ever, I repeat, does it behove the Church to use with diligence and fidelity all the means of grace, and

* 2 *Tim.* ii. 3.

† *Dan.* xii. 13.

§ *Cant.* vi. 4.

‡ *Eph.* vi. 13.

|| 1 *Sam.* xiv. 6.

above all to impart to her ranks vigour and compactness by the revival of her discipline. For the self-constituted bodies around us are fast breaking up, and Papal Rome, who has set up her rival altars against us, is moving heaven and earth to gain proselytes from them, and to seduce (if she can) our own members from their allegiance. And we must needs confess that her prospect of success is fair, unless we rouse ourselves from our false security, and fit ourselves to cope with her successfully. For she has the appearance at least of strength, where our Church is weakest; nay more, she has held fast to much of the ancient discipline, while she has grievously corrupted it; and hence she presents a formidable front, and holds out to those, who are weary of the prevalent confusion and turmoil, no small temptation to seek (though vainly) peace and repose in her bosom. And though few as yet feel the misery of misrule or anarchy, it will not long be so: men tire of restless wandering after truth, and become sated with the license of self-government, and seek at length a guide and governor. Rome knows the hour of weakness, and turns it to account. If we go on, thinking that all is well with us, content to hold our own, we shall fail to discharge our duty to the multitudes, who soon will crave the comfort of order and obedience, and shall see our own children yielding to the tempter's arts, and seeking from a stranger the blessings denied them in their parental home. Anarchy remember, prepares the way for tyranny; the license of democracy for the servitude of despotism.

But how you may say, can we revive what is decayed, and regain what is lost? If I may venture to suggest, where I have no authority to prescribe, I would say, Brethren of the Clergy, that to us it belongs to prepare the way, by preaching the whole truth respecting discipline, as well as doctrine, in their just relation to the nature and office of the Church, with meekness and faithfulness combined; seeking that peace only, which is begotten of Truth and nurtured by Charity. I need

not add, what your own hearts will suggest—the force of our example in obeying scrupulously all the laws of the Church, whether relating to things essential or indifferent, and in gladly heeding “the godly admonitions of our Bishop and other Chief Pastors, who according to the Canons of the Church may have the charge and government over us.”*

Upon you, Brethren of the Laity, much depends in the furtherance of this work. Though you are not, and cannot be, the administrators of the laws and discipline of the Church; for “all members have not the same office;”† still you take part in their enactment and amendment, and you can materially retard or promote their enforcement. For love, not fear, is the great moving power in the Church of God. And love by its very nature binds together and unites in one all whom it in common animates. While, therefore, the law of love excludes wholly the license of private judgment, which is the offspring of selfishness, it sanctions, as well as sanctifies, the force and power of common sentiment and principle. The Ministers of CHRIST are not “lords over His heritage;”‡ but rather “your servants for JESUS’ sake.”§ Their power is paternal and corrective, not despotic and destructive. It is based wholly on the love and respect, which are freely accorded them by CHRIST’s disciples, for the love they bear Him. “He that receiveth you, receiveth Me, and he that receiveth Me, receiveth Him that sent Me.”|| Just in proportion as you know and love CHRIST, and realize the true nature and office of His Body, the Church, into which “we are all baptized,” and in which “we have been all made to drink into one Spirit,” will you reverence the just authority of those who represent CHRIST in His Church, and uphold them in applying all the means ordained of CHRIST for the attainment of the great and gracious end of His Incarnation, the glorifying of

* *Ordination Vow of Priests and Deacons.*

† *Romans xii. 4.*

‡ *1 Peter v. 3.*

§ *2 Cor. iv. 5.*

|| *St. Matt. x. 40.*

His Church, in and with Himself, and through it of His AL-
MIGHTY FATHER.*

Finally, Brethren, let us, one and all, remembering that
“there are diversities of gifts, but the same Spirit,” and “dif-
ferences of administrations, but the same LORD,”† exercise the
gifts and fulfil the administrations assigned us, “as to the LORD,
and not unto men;”‡ to the end that we may realize the gra-
cious design of God, when He ordained, “that there should be
no schism in the body; but that the members should have the
same care one for another.”§ Thus walking in the “more ex-
cellent way” of “charity,”|| we shall have the witness within,
that we have indeed been “made to drink into one Spirit;”
and when our Divine Head shall again manifest Himself in
His glorious Majesty, He will own us as living members of His
Body, and will “receive us unto Himself, that where He is,
there we may be also.”¶ “Beloved, let us love one another,
for love is of God; and every one that loveth, is born of God
and knoweth God. He that loveth not, knoweth not God; for
God is Love.”**

* See our blessed LORD's Prayer in the 17th Chapter of St. John's Gospel.

† 1 Cor. xii. 4, 5.

§ 1 Cor. xii. 25.

¶ St. John xiv. 3.

‡ Col. iii. 23.

|| Ibid. v. 31.

** 1 John iv. 7, 8.