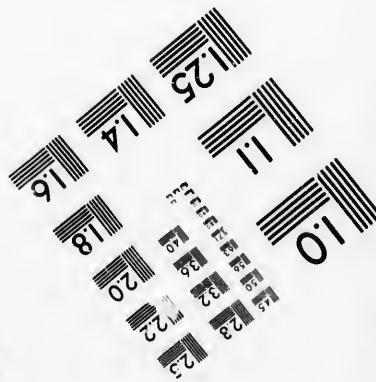
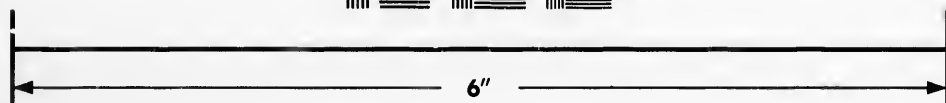
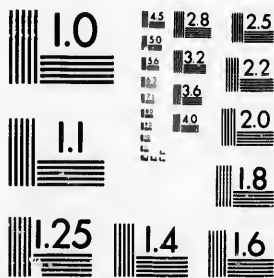


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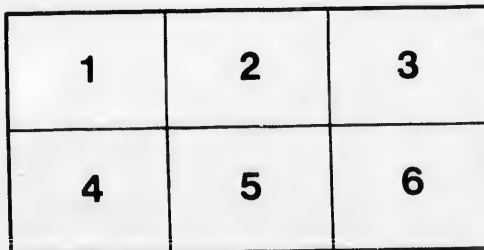
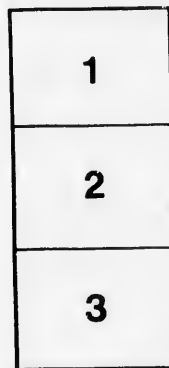
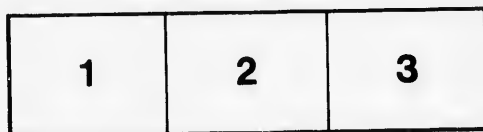
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A CHARGE

DELIVERED

TO THE CLERGY

OF THE

DIOCESE OF HURON,

IN

ST. PAUL'S CATHEDRAL, LONDON,
CANADA WEST,

AT HIS

TRIENNIAL VISITATION, IN JUNE, 1862.

BY THE

RIGHT REV. BENJAMIN CRONYN, D.D.

LORD BISHOP OF HURON.



LONDON, C. W.:

PRINTED BY THOMAS EVANS, DUNDAS-STREET WEST.

1862.

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A C H A R G E,

&c., &c.

WE are permitted, my Reverend Brethren, in the providence of God, again to meet as one body, after the lapse of three years, in conformity with the practice of the Church, to take counsel concerning the important interests committed to our care. Such meetings of the Clergy are eminently calculated to be profitable to all engaged in them. On these occasions we are enabled to advise, exhort, encourage, and cheer each other, and thus to strengthen our hands for the work to which we are called.

When we reflect on the importance of the subjects which are to be brought before us—that it is not the transitory and perishing things of time alone which are to engage our attention, but the vast concerns of an endless eternity, our feelings should be deeply solemnized; and our thoughts elevated above everything low and earthly, and we should lift up our hearts, with our hands, to the Giver of all Grace, that he may be present with us in our deliberations, and may direct all our consultations to the advancement of His glory and the good of His Church through Jesus Christ our Lord.

In addressing you, my Reverend Brethren, I shall first notice some events of a public character which have recently occurred, and in which we, in common with all our fellow-subjects, feel a lively interest. I shall then consider the changes which have taken place in this portion of the Lord's vineyard, in which, by the providence of God, our lot has been cast. I shall also briefly touch upon some subjects of a practical nature, which call for attention; and I shall lastly dwell upon some points of doctrine, which appear to me to be peculiarly important at the present time.

Within the past year our nation and our beloved Queen have been visited by a most severe affliction in the death of the late Prince Consort. This event cannot be regarded in any other light than as a great national calamity. Now, that it has pleased the Great Disposer of all things to remove his Royal Highness from amongst us, our eyes have been opened to his real value and his inestimable worth. With that modesty which is ever a characteristic of true greatness, he was content to devote his great talents and his varied intellectual attainments to promote the prosperity of the country and the good of mankind, without seeking praise of men. There lives but one, who can tell how much of that wisdom and sound discretion in the management of public affairs, which

has rendered the reign of our beloved Queen conspicuous above those of her predecessors, were due to his sage counsels, and how much of the virtue which has adorned the English court, and made it illustrious throughout the world, is to be ascribed to the admirable example which he set in every relation of life. How faithfully he discharged the duties of a father has been made apparent to us in the conduct and bearing of his son, the heir apparent to the throne, who, during his late visit to this country, gained the most favorable opinions, and conciliated the most loyal affections of all who beheld him, by the modesty and affability of his manners, and by the entire absence of all those vices which so often sully the characters of the young. The best earthly wish which we can cherish in our hearts and present to God in our prayers for Albert Edward Prince of Wales is, that he may tread in the footsteps of his truly excellent father, and may emulate the virtuous example which he has set. It remains for us and for all members of the church to humble ourselves under the mighty hand of God, who has inflicted this heavy chastening upon the nation, and continually to pray that such wisdom may be imparted to our beloved Queen, and to those placed in authority under her, "that all things may be so ordered and settled by their endeavors, upon the best and surest foundation, that peace and happiness, truth and justice, religion and piety, may be established among us throughout all generations."

During the past year questions of the deepest importance have engaged the attention of the Ecclesiastical Courts in England. The judgment which has been delivered in the case of the Bishop of Winchester against the Rev. D. J. Heath, demands our careful attention. In that judgment, we find the position laid down, as the principle by which the learned judge was to be guided in forming his opinion concerning the doctrine taught by Mr. Heath, that "the plain grammatical sense of the article must be taken as the judicial construction" of it; and he refers to the judgment of the Privy Council in the case of Gorham against the Bishop of Exeter, as conclusively and finally establishing the same principle. This, my Rev. Brethren, should ever be kept in mind. There has been, of late years, a habit of regarding the Thirty-nine Articles of our Church as giving no certain sound, but as capable of being loosely interpreted to suit the views of every subscriber; a non-natural sense of them has been advocated in many instances, and they have not unfrequently been drawn aside from their literal and grammatical sense, contrary to the express declaration prefixed to the Articles. This practice has ever been reprobated by the true friends and conscientious adherents of the Church. Their hands will now be strengthened by the decision to which I advert; for we have the judgment of the highest court in the realm, which is legally binding, and from which there is no appeal, that whatever is not in accordance with the Articles, literally and grammatically interpreted, cannot be regarded as the doctrine of the Church of England.

The publication of that infidel work, known as "Essays and Reviews," which, emanating from men who had repeatedly given their assent and consent to all things contained in the formularies of our Church, yet assails

almost every doctrine set forth in these formularies, has given rise to the case of the Bishop of Salisbury against Dr. Rowland Williams, upon which the judgment of the Court of Arches has not yet been pronounced.* This case brings up many painful thoughts, when we consider that for several days the question was gravely discussed whether a clergyman of the Church of England may with impunity hold and teach, that the Bible is an expression of devout reason—that it is the written voice of the congregation—that the Church is as much inspired as the Bible—that certain parts of the Sacred Canon may be repudiated—that prophecy may be entirely denied—that the narratives of Scripture may be treated as myths—that the incarnation may be spiritualized—that a sinner is not justified for the merits of our Lord Jesus Christ by faith. In one word, that the entire system of doctrine set forth in our Book of Common Prayer may be called in question with impunity. Let us pray that wisdom from on high may be imparted to those who may be called to give the final judgment in this important suit; that as in the Gorham case, so also in this, we may have a clear decision from which there shall be no appeal, and that the doctrines of our Church concerning the inspiration of God's word, and concerning the justification of the sinner only for the merit of our Lord Jesus Christ by faith, may be vindicated, and that it may be made apparent to all that the Articles of our Church speak an intelligible language, and cannot be treated with contempt or explained away with impunity.

Since we were last similarly assembled, some important changes have been effected in the Church in Canada. The Diocese of Toronto has been divided, and another Diocese has been added to the four which previously existed in this Province. We have every reason to hope that the increase of the Episcopate will, in this instance, as in all similar cases, be attended with an increase in the zeal and energy of the members of our communion included within the

* Since this charge was delivered, the judgment of Dr. Lushington, the Judge of the Court of Arches, has reached this country. We find that Dr. Williams has been condemned on the first six charges brought against him by the Bishop of Salisbury—that he is also condemned on the seventh, which is to be "reformed"—that the eighth charge was rejected with a strong censure contained in the following words:—"For this reason, though I think Dr. Williams' opinion militates against one of the most important doctrines held by the most venerated divines of the Church, I cannot come to the conclusion that the Articles of religion or the Liturgy have in this respect been violated." The ninth charge is rejected on the same ground, but the teaching is pronounced by the learned Judge "very erroneous," but is "not deemed to come within the condemnation of the law." The tenth and eleventh charges are rejected on similar grounds. The twelfth charge is to be "reformed," but it is substantially admitted; it relates to the atonement, and the Judge thus expresses himself concerning it: "I think such declaration is inconsistent with and contrary to the thirty-first Article. The thirteenth charge was withdrawn. The fourteenth charge was rejected. The fifteenth charge, concerning justification by faith, is admitted as "wholly inconsistent with the 11th Article." The sixteenth charge was admitted; the 17th charge was rejected; and the Judge, in conclusion, thought it desirable to give leave to appeal to Her Majesty in Council." The judgment in the case of Fendall v. Wilson was delivered at the same time, it is in many respects similar to that in the case of Dr. Williams. Both these cases are now to be brought before the Privy Council. Never were more important issues submitted to this august tribunal. We wait with prayerful expectation the final judgment of this the highest Court in the realm.

limits of the new Diocese. For our Right Rev. Brother who has been called to fill the Episcopal office in the Diocese of Ontario, our prayers should continually ascend, that the Chief Shepherd and Bishop of our souls may impart to him in large measure His grace, that he may be enabled fully and faithfully to discharge the high duties which devolve upon him.

It has pleased Her Gracious Majesty the Queen to appoint a Metropolitan for the Province of Canada. You will remember that three Canadian dioceses petitioned for this appointment. The Diocese of Huron declined to do so, for several reasons, the principal of which were, that we believed that in the Synod law, to which Her Majesty had given her assent, we possessed all the power which was necessary for the government of the Church, and we feared that Provincial Synods which would be assembled by a Metropolitan would involve the diocese in an expense which, in the present state of the funds of the Church, would be felt to be oppressive. The result has proved that our fears were not groundless, for a large part of the expense incurred by the only Provincial Synod which has been held, has not yet been provided by the diocese; and from the tardy and feeble response which has been made by the congregations in all parts of the diocese, to the appeal made to them on this subject, it is apparent that the members of the Church do not feel disposed to contribute for this purpose.

It is generally believed that the collection which was called for to defray these expenses operated unfavorably upon the other funds of the Church Society, which, I am sorry to say, do not this year equal the sums collected in the previous year. This subject will be brought before you in the business of the Church Society, and I commend it to your most serious consideration; for I fear if our Church Society is rendered unpopular with our congregations, by such appeals being frequently made, our missionary efforts in the diocese will be impeded, and much injury will result to the spiritual interests of the Church. The Metropolitan has given notice of another meeting of the Provincial Synod, to be held on the tenth day of next September.

For some time past I have felt the want of a school of theology in the diocese, where young men offering themselves as candidates for holy orders might receive such teaching, and undergo such training in pastoral and parochial work, as would fit them to enter upon the duties of independent missions with reasonable prospect of success. At present young men are taken from college, or from their studies, and placed in charge of missions far removed from their brethren in the ministry, and the result has been, in more cases than one, that, in the zeal of youth, and through the want of some experienced friend to counsel them, some injudicious step has been taken and offence given, which it has required years to remedy.

In England and Ireland young men are placed in the commencement of their ministry under some experienced rector or incumbent, and acting under his direction, the evils which I have mentioned are avoided. But in this country it is not in our power to adopt this wise plan. Therefore, I have for some time desired to have a theological college, entirely under my own control, where

the doctrines of our church may be taught, where I shall have the opportunity of ascertaining the fitness of men for the office which they seek, and where they may be trained in pastoral and parochial duties.

Last year Dr. Hellmuth, who had long been known in Canada as general superintendent of the Colonial and Continental Church Society in British North America, was compelled, by ill health, to resign his connection with that society, and to go to England. I gladly availed myself of the opportunity of appointing him as my commissary in the United Kingdom, to solicit aid for the erection of a school of theology in the diocese; and having appointed him Archdeacon of Huron and assistant minister in the cathedral, he went to England for the purpose of laying before our brethren there our wants and wishes upon this subject. I am truly thankful that, through the Divine blessing upon his efforts, the venerable archdeacon has met with a large measure of success amongst our friends at home. The sum of over five thousand pounds has been the result of a few months' unwearied exertions in the mother country. I regard this as an earnest of what our brethren at home are disposed to do for us toward carrying out the object we have in view.

Exception has been taken to some statements made by the archdeacon at a meeting in London. I have examined these statements, as explained by the archdeacon, and so far as the part of Canada with which I have been intimately acquainted for nearly thirty years is concerned, I feel assured that his statements are strictly in accordance with facts. With many of the dioceses in British North America I have had little or no acquaintance, therefore I cannot from my own knowledge speak of them. But as Dr. Hellmuth has acted for so many years as general superintendent of the Colonial and Continental Church Society in British North America, I should not be disposed to question his testimony as to the religious state of these dioceses.

Whether it was prudent in the archdeacon, while representing me in England, to have made statements concerning other dioceses, may be questioned by some, but it must be borne in mind that the archdeacon addressed a meeting of avowedly evangelical clergymen in Islington, not so much as my representative, as the late general superintendent of the Colonial and Continental Church Society, and I presume he thought that as he had acted so long for this society, of which all the clergymen he addressed were zealous supporters, it became him, when resigning his official connection with it, to give these gentlemen the result of his experience and observations in the British North American Provinces. I think it due to Archdeacon Hellmuth to state here that my confidence in his sincerity, his piety and veracity, is entirely unshaken, and that I shall continue thankfully to avail myself of his valuable services for the work in which he has proved himself a faithful and efficient laborer.

One thing I must not omit to state, that my instructions to Archdeacon Hellmuth were, that he should solicit aid from our brethren at home for an institution which should be thoroughly Protestant and evangelical, so that hereafter, when the constitution and laws of the institution are made public, no charge may lie against him of having sought and obtained aid under false pretences.

I now proceed to lay before you such statistical statements of the position of the Church in our own Diocese as may enable you to form a correct estimate of the progress which, by the Divine blessing, we have made since the last visitation, and also of the work which yet remains to be effected before the Diocese can be said to be at all adequately supplied with the ministrations of the Church. Some changes have taken place amongst the clergy since the last visitation. The Rev. Francis Campbell, who was the first missionary appointed to Goderich and the neighborhood, at a very early stage of its settlement, and who resided there for many years, has been removed by death; and a few clergymen have left the Diocese. At the last visitation the number of the clergy, including the Bishop, the Parochial Clergy, Travelling Missionaries, Missionaries to the Indians and the fugitive slaves, was fifty-seven; the number at the present time is seventy-seven; being an increase of twenty in the last three years. In the course of the next three months I expect, if spared, to add four to this number, which will give eighty-one clergymen to minister to the spiritual wants of our brethren scattered over 137 townships, to preach the gospel to the red men of the forest, many of whom are yet in Pagan darkness; and to proclaim true liberty to those despised sons of Africa, who have escaped from slavery, and have found a home and a refuge amongst us. The population of the diocese has largely increased during the past three years. In 1859 it was estimated at 402,581. This estimate was formed on the best data we could then obtain, and was considered correct; now we can state accurately that it amounts, according to the government census taken in 1861, to 472,791, showing an increase in two years of 70,210 souls. To meet this increase in the population we have added twenty to the number of our clergy. From this it is apparent, that, if we look only to the number of clergymen in the diocese, we may be disposed to felicitate ourselves on the progress we have made; but when we take into account the number of emigrants arriving yearly amongst us, from various quarters, say 30,000, the painful conviction is forced upon us that we are falling behind the population year by year, and that efforts almost superhuman will be required from us, aided by all the assistance we can obtain from our brethren and the great Church Societies of our fatherland, in any degree to meet the demands for the ministrations of our church which are thus every day increasing upon us. The census of 1861 shows the number of churchmen in the diocese to be 91,874, while the astounding fact is recorded that there are in the diocese 11,524 who return themselves as having no religion or no creed. Surely this is a state of heathendom amongst ourselves which loudly calls for Christian effort. Since the meeting of Synod in June last, I have visited 58 congregations in the diocese, and preached 124 sermons. I have confirmed 1,171 candidates, consecrated 9 churches and 5 burial-grounds, ordained 7 deacons and 6 priests, and travelled 3,534 miles within the diocese, besides journeys to Quebec, Montreal, Kingston and Toronto, on the business of the church. I purpose, with the Divine blessing, to visit the northern part of the diocese, comprising the counties of Bruce, Huron, Grey and Perth, during the present summer.

At our meeting in 1859, I reported that the Society for Propagating the Gospel in Foreign Parts had granted £100 sterling per annum, to aid in the support of missionaries in the diocese; this grant was to terminate at the end of three years. I then expressed the hope that, when the real state of the country was known to that benevolent society, which has for so long a time liberally contributed to the support of the church in Canada, the grant would not only be extended but enlarged. The event has proved that I did not calculate rashly on the good feeling of our brethren, for since that time the grant has been continued and twice increased. I lately received a letter from the Secretary of that society, in reply to an application which I had made for an additional grant, stating that the society had decided to increase the grant to £1,200 sterling per annum, and to continue it for two years and a-half from 1st July next. I would here call attention to the conditions which accompany this grant of the society; that before the termination of the grant, "one or more of the following steps shall have been taken by the inhabitants (from local resources), towards the independence of the mission:—1st. The erection in each of a parsonage, with a glebe attached. 2nd. The erection in each of a church. 3rd. The collection and investment of an endowment fund in each mission, equal to half the society's grant, or sufficient to produce an income of £40 per annum." I would also remind the missionaries who are supported in part by this society, that it is required by the society, that every missionary shall send in a quarterly report of his mission, to be forwarded by me to the society. This condition has, in some cases, been overlooked, but I trust that all the missionaries of the society will, for the future, show their appreciation of the liberality which we have experienced, by forwarding to me regular reports each quarter of their proceedings, and of the state of the church in their respective missions.

The venerable Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge still continues to make grants for the building of churches, and, with their assistance, already forty-three churches have been erected in the diocese. This society has also contributed £500 to the fund for the support of a theological college in the diocese.

The Colonial and Continental Church Society has also continued their valuable assistance to us. The agents of this excellent society still carry on the labors amongst the fugitive slaves, and one missionary to the Indians on the river Thames, is mainly supported from their funds.

I have been desirous for some time to add to the number of our missionaries to Indians scattered throughout the diocese, but for want of funds have been unable to do so; I have made several applications for this purpose to societies at home, but the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts alone, has responded to my appeal, by granting £100 per annum towards the salary of the missionary on Walpole Island.

You will see, my reverend brethren, from these statements, that much remains for us to accomplish—that we must not consider ourselves relieved from

the responsibility of exerting ourselves, because our brethren at home thus assist us. Our congregations in the various missions, even in the most recently settled parts of the country, must be required to do what they can towards the support of the missionaries laboring amongst them; and our brethren in the more wealthy settlements must be exhorted to contribute liberally of their substance, that the Lord's work may be carried on in every part of the diocese.

And here I think it well to bring before you the claims of the Church Society. By the machinery of this society, the clergy have frequent opportunities of bringing the wants of the church before their congregations, and of urging upon them their duty to contribute liberally to its funds. In their quarterly appeals to the people, the clergy should not rest satisfied with a cold, formal statement concerning the object for which the appeal is made, but should show the people that the interests of the church in the diocese are now in their hands, and that, unless the several congregations are alive to their duty, and liberally contribute for the extension of the operations of the church, we must retrograde instead of advance. The annual meetings of the parochial associations should be conducted with spirit, both by the clergy and laity of each mission, and the deputations which are appointed to attend these meetings should be regarded only as auxiliaries. I fear it has become too much the custom to leave the entire business to the deputations; thus the interest of the laity in the meetings has been allowed to cool. Every effort should be made to induce the members of the church not only to attend the meetings, but to take a lively interest in them.

I would therefore press upon you, my reverend brethren, the performance of this duty to the Church Society, as of paramount importance. Were our diocese divided into parishes, and each parish provided with an endowment for the support of the minister, the only duties which would then remain for the clergy, would be to minister in holy things, and to be active in works of charity. But circumstanced as the church in this country is, the clergy are called upon to use every means in their power to obtain from the people, funds, which shall be employed in extending to their brethren in the remote and destitute parts of the diocese the spiritual privileges which they themselves enjoy. All our efforts should be directed to the expansion of our influence and operations throughout the length and breadth of the diocese, and we should be careful not to encourage any feeling in our own minds, or in the minds of others, or to advocate any measure, which might have a tendency to weaken our sympathies with our destitute fellow-churchmen in the diocese, or to contract the sphere of our usefulness amongst them.

While speaking of the Church Society, it is forcibly called to my recollection that, in the course of the past year, it has pleased our Heavenly Father to remove, by death, from amongst us, one of the most zealous friends of that institution. The late Absalom Shade was always found ready to devote his time,

and to give his most valuable assistance, towards carrying on the business of the society, and for promoting its objects in every way in his power. He was a steady friend and liberal contributor to every object of the church, from the period of the division of the diocese, until his death; and in the last act of his life, he evinced that his zeal for the church was not an idle profession, but an influential principle, by the bequest of the munificent sum of over £3,000 for the permanent endowment of the church in Galt. Being dead, he yet speaketh; and it may be hoped that the noble example which he has set will be followed by others, to whom God, in his providence, has given largely of this world's goods, and that, when they come to surrender their stewardship, they may, like our departed brother, remember that all which they have has come from God, and properly belongs to him, and that therefore it is their duty to devote a liberal portion of that which their Heavenly Father has freely bestowed upon them, to promote his cause in the earth. While we deeply sympathise with the bereaved widow of our departed brother, we feel assured that it will be a source of comfort and of grateful thankfulness to her to know, that the memory of her much-loved husband will ever be held in highest honor by all true friends of the church in the Diocese of Huron, and that the example which he has set may still continue to be productive of lasting good to the church, even in future generations.

The subject of endowments is now engaging the attention of our brethren, in many Colonial dioceses; and the venerable Society for Propagating the Gospel has, with its accustomed liberality, undertaken to grant a sum equal to one-fifth of the amount which may be contributed in any diocese, for this object. Notwithstanding the many calls which we are making upon our people, for the support of their clergymen, for the erection of churches and parsonages, and for other objects of the Church Society, I think that something might be accomplished towards carrying out this desirable object; small portions of land might be obtained, either by gift or purchase, in the several missions; subscriptions might be sought, which, though small separately, in the aggregate would amount to a respectable sum, and bequests for such a purpose might be expected. The Society for Propagating the Gospel would add a fifth to the amount thus obtained; and in a few years a provision would be made for the permanent establishment of our missions in the diocese. I commend this subject to your careful consideration and to that of the Church Society.

The subject of Sunday School instruction is one which has engaged the attention of some of the best and ablest men in our church; upon it I desire to offer a few suggestions. It has been for some time regarded as a necessary part of the ministerial work, and as furnishing one of the most efficient instrumentalities for benefitting the youthful members of our congregations. Bishop Law, when speaking of Sunday Schools, says:—"There are few means by which a minister of our church can more effectually promote the cause of order and religion.

A Sunday school is an easy, cheap, and unmixed good." And we find the same approval of Sunday schools in many Episcopal charges delivered within the last few years; indeed no difference of opinion appears to exist as to their importance. In this country more particularly, where few opportunities of instructing the young are afforded to the minister throughout the week, the Sunday school may be regarded as furnishing the only opportunity of instructing the youth of our congregations in the principles of religion. The common school system of education, though excellent in many respects, does not even pretend to provide adequate religious instruction for the young. We must, therefore, look to the Sunday school to supply that which every parent should regard as indispensably necessary to the well-being of his child. We know that the teaching of the heart exclusively belongs to God. He alone can bring home the truth with saving power to the soul; still it is of inestimable value, that the young mind should be stored with the knowledge of God's word. In how many cases have we found that the good seed sown in the young breast has remained for years apparently dead and utterly unfruitful, while the noxious weeds of vice and ungodliness have become more rank from year to year. But when the Holy Spirit has imparted his life-giving influence to the soul; when his quickening power has been experienced, the good seed which has so long remained unproductive has been made to spring up, and bring forth abundant fruit to God. My reverend brethren, we cannot overrate the importance of the Sunday school; I would therefore urge upon you to give much of your thoughts and attention to this subject. Be not discouraged, if you behold but little fruit from your labors; "let patience have its perfect work;" "in the morning sow thy seed, and in the evening withhold not thy hand, for thou knowest not whether shall prosper either this or that, or whether they both shall be alike good." I know that the great difficulty experienced in conducting Sunday schools, is the want of suitable teachers; but even this difficulty, great as it undoubtedly is, may be overcome by faithful perseverance; suitable books for the assistance of teachers can at first be procured, and in time, as the interest of the teachers in the work increases, they will conscientiously apply themselves to the work; and in preparing to instruct others, they will themselves learn many things of which they were before ignorant. There should be in every mission as many Sunday schools as there are congregations; and as the clergyman cannot, because of his other duties, superintend them all, he should engage the assistance of such suitable persons as are willing to undertake the duty of teachers, and he should meet them occasionally, for the purpose of reading with them those portions of scripture, and of considering the subjects which are to occupy their attention in the school. This employment of the members of the congregations will have another salutary effect. Those who are alive to the interests of their immortal souls naturally feel desirous to make themselves useful to their fellow-men; and where no opportunity of doing this is offered in

our church, they are sometimes led to connect themselves with other bodies, where their desire for useful employment, especially on the Lord's day, may be gratified. For these reasons, and for others, upon which I cannot now enlarge, I would most earnestly urge upon you, my reverend brethren, the duty of promoting as much as possible the formation of Sunday schools in your missions. These schools will serve as nurseries, in which candidates for confirmation may receive that instruction which will fit them to partake of that sacred rite with intelligence, and in a frame of mind suitable to a participation in such a solemn act of religion. It is to be regretted that so many of the candidates admitted by confirmation into the full communion of our church, appear not to be duly affected by the solemn service in which they engage; this is painfully apparent in the fact, that many of those confirmed abstain, perhaps for years, from approaching the table of the Lord, or partake of this high privilege only occasionally. I am happy to remark a great improvement in this particular; still much remains to be done. I trust the clergy will use every effort to impress upon the minds of those who present themselves as candidates for confirmation, that it is their duty, when they have made public profession of faith in Christ, and of obedience to him, to evince their sincerity by becoming regular attendants at the table of the Lord. It is the practice of some dioceses in the United States not to receive any into the church by confirmation who are not prepared to become communicants. I hope the improvement which has commenced in this diocese will continue to progress until the evil of which I have complained is entirely removed from amongst us.

There are two points of doctrine which I desire to bring before you, my reverend brethren, because that on them much controversy has arisen, and the truth of God, as revealed in His word, and set forth in the articles and homilies of the Church, has been much perverted. One is the great and fundamental doctrine of justification by faith only, and the other the scriptural doctrine of absolution, or, as it has been styled, "the power of the keys."

Concerning justification by faith only. Every man who professes to take the Bible as his rule of faith, must acknowledge that it is therein clearly taught that "a man is justified by faith without the deeds of the law"—that this same doctrine is enunciated in various forms in our Lord's discourses, and in the preaching of the first ministers of Christ, as recorded in the Acts of the Apostles, and in the Epistles, and it must be equally apparent to every man reading our articles and homilies, that this same doctrine is much insisted upon in them, and is there presented to us in every variety of form. We know that upon the doctrine of justification by faith only, without works, the great battle of the reformation was fought,—that our reformers considered that error upon this point was the keystone of the system of Romanism, which they combated even to death. The eleventh article of our church clearly defines this doctrine, and the homily on the salvation of mankind, to which we are remitted by the article

for further instruction upon this point, thus teaches, that "this saying, that we be justified by faith only, is spoken for to take away clearly all merit of our works, as being unable to deserve our justification at God's hands, and thereby most plainly to express the weakness of man and the goodness of God; the great infirmity of ourselves and the might and power of God; the imperfection of our good works, and the most abundant grace of our Saviour Christ, and therefore wholly to ascribe the merit and deserving of our justification unto Christ alone, and his most precious blood-shedding. This faith the holy Scripture teacheth us; this is the strong rock and foundation of the Christian religion; this doctrine all old and ancient authors of Christ's church do approve; this doctrine advanceth and setteth forth the true glory of Christ, and beateth down the vain-glory of man. This, whosoever denieth, is not to be accounted for a Christian man; nor for a setter-forth of Christ's glory; but an adversary of Christ and his Gospel, and for a-setter-forth of man's vain-glory." So clear, so express, so pointed is the teaching of our church upon this most important question. This doctrine of justification by faith only, must therefore, in terms, at least, be professed by all who are not prepared openly to reject the authority of holy scripture, as the inspired word of God, and the rule of our faith, and also to set aside the teaching of our church. But in order to reconcile the verbal profession of this doctrine with a real rejection of it, those who are in their hearts opposed to it, have had recourse to the expedient of changing the meaning of some one of the leading terms of the proposition in which this truth is conveyed, and thus making it to set forth a doctrine the very opposite of that which the inspired writers of the holy scriptures and our Reformers intended to express. The first term which has thus been diverted from its natural meaning, is "works," or its equivalent phrase, "deeds of law." It has been asserted that the Apostle Paul, when speaking of "works," or "deeds of law," in the passages of his Epistles in which this doctrine is set forth, means not works done in obedience to the moral law, but ritual observances of the ceremonial law. The man who propounds this opinion must calculate very largely upon the ignorance of those whom he addresses; for the sins which the Apostle Paul enumerates, when treating upon this subject, are, without exception, offences against the decalogue or moral law. He declares also that by the law we obtain the knowledge of sin, and he plainly indicates to us the law to which he refers, in the following statement: "For I had not known lust except the law had said, thou shalt not covet." This should be sufficient for ever to decide the question as to what works the Apostle intended, when he declared, that "a man is justified by faith without the deeds of the law." Our church plainly teaches the same, both in the articles and homilies. We therefore conclude that when it is affirmed that a man is justified by faith only, without works, all works of every kind, moral and ceremonial, are as the homily expresses it, "shut out from the office of justifying."

The term faith has been dealt with in the same unscrupulous way, in order to evade the force of the scriptural statement that "a man is justified by faith, without the deeds of the law." It has been argued that the term faith in this proposition means fidelity, and that therefore the sinner is justified by his fidelity to God; in other words, by his own works and deservings. This is too palpable a corruption of the scriptural doctrine to need any further comment. Again, it has been said that faith means, not simply trust in the merits and atonement of Christ, but that it includes all evangelical righteousness, or all Christian privileges and gifts; therefore, the sinner is justified by his evangelical obedience; in other words, by his own works and deservings, contrary to the express declaration of God's word and the article of our church. Let us hear what the pious Bishop Beveridge says, concerning this view of faith: "Although faith be always accompanied with obedience and good works, so that it can never be without them, yet in the matter of our justification, it is always opposed to them by St. Paul; and, indeed, to look to be justified by such a faith, which is the same with obedience, or which is all one, to be justified by our obedience, is to take all our hopes and expectations from Christ, and to place them upon ourselves; and, therefore, this opinion of faith overthrows the very basis and foundation of the Christian religion." Again, it has been said that faith means "the faith," or Christianity which includes the ordinances, the sacraments, and the priesthood of the Christian system. This is the most subtle and mischievous perversion of the truth which has been propounded. For the man who adopts this gloss upon the word faith, is led to place his dependence for justification before God, not simply and unreservedly on the all-sufficient merits and perfect atonement of the Son of God, but in the ordinances, the sacraments, and the priesthood of the Church. This is the system adopted by those Oxford Divines, who, for several years past, have been corrupting the streams of divine truth at that fountainhead of knowledge, and who have been endeavoring to introduce into our church that master corruption and most deadly plague spot of Rome, sacramental justification and sacramental salvation. These divines teach, as a necessary part of their system, that faith is only a secondary and subordinate instrument in justification, that baptism is the primary, and the chief, indeed the only instrument by which the blessing of justification is conferred. This is precisely the doctrine of the Council of Trent on this question. In its sixth session it decreed, "that the sacrament of Baptism is the only instrumental cause of justification, without which justification is obtained by none."

The teaching of our church is entirely opposed to this fundamental error of the Church of Rome. In the eleventh article we read: "wherefore that we are justified by faith only is a most wholesome doctrine," and in "the second Homily on the passion," the following most conclusive passage occurs: "Now it remaineth that I show unto you how to apply Christ's death and passion to

our comfort, as a medicine to our wounds, so that it may work the same effect in us wherefore it was given, namely, the health and salvation of our souls. For as it profiteth a man nothing to have salve, unless it be well applied to the part infected; so the death of Christ shall stand us in no force, unless we apply it to ourselves in such sort as God hath appointed. Almighty God commonly worketh by means, and in this thing he hath also appointed a certain mean, whereby we may take fruit and profit to our soul's health. What mean is that? Forsooth it is faith. Not an unconstant or wavering faith, but a sure, steadfast, grounded, and unfeigned faith. "God sent his son into the world," saith St. John, to what end? "That whosoever believeth in him should not perish but have life everlasting." Mark these words, "that whosoever believeth in him." Here is the mean whereby we must apply the fruits of Christ's death to our deadly wound. Here is the mean whereby we must obtain eternal life, namely, faith;" and again in the same; "By this then you may well perceive that the only mean and instrument of salvation required of our parts is faith—that is to say, a sure trust and confidence in the mercies of God; whereby we persuade ourselves that God both hath and will forgive our sins—that he hath accepted us again into his favour—that he hath released us from the bonds of damnation, and received us again into the number of his elect people, not for our merits and deserts, but only and solely for the merits of Christ's death and passion;" and again: "Thus have you heard in few words the mean whereby we must apply the fruit and merits of Christ's death unto us, so that it may work the salvation of our souls, namely, a sure, steadfast, and grounded faith. For as all they which beheld steadfastly the brazen serpent, were healed and delivered at the very sight thereof from their corporal diseases and bodily stings, even so all they which behold Christ crucified with a true and lively faith, shall undoubtedly be delivered from the grievous wounds of the soul, be they never so deadly or many in number. Therefore, dearly beloved, if we chance at any time, through frailty of the flesh, to fall into sin, (as it cannot be chosen, but we must needs fall often,) and if we feel the heavy burthen thereof to press our souls, tormenting us with the fear of death, hell, and damnation; let us then use that mean which God hath appointed in his word, to wit, the mean of faith, which is the only instrument of salvation now left unto us. Let us steadfastly behold Christ crucified with the eyes of our heart. Let us only trust to be saved by his death and passion, and to have our sins clean washed away through his most precious blood, that in the end of the world, when he shall come again to judge both the quick and the dead, he may receive us into his heavenly kingdom, and place us in the number of his elect and chosen people, there to be partakers of that immortal and everlasting life, which he hath purchased unto us by virtue of his bloody wounds." I have made these long extracts from the homily, because of their great clearness and of their direct bearing upon the subject before us. In these there is

no instrument acknowledged in the justification and salvation of a sinner, but "faith only." According to this teaching it is not by his fidelity, or evangelical obedience; it is not by a participation in all the ordinances, privileges and sacraments of the Christian system, that man can be justified before God; but through the obedience and death of Christ accounted unto him for righteousness, through the alone instrumentality of a living faith.

While hearing such passages as these which I have quoted from the Homily on the Passion, we feel as if we breathed a clear and heavenly atmosphere, our souls are enlarged and strengthened, and we are enabled to look beyond the clouds of unbelief which sin has engendered, to him who has purchased for us by his merits and death an incorruptible crown, and who has promised that where he is, there shall also his people, even all who believe upon his name, be, in everlasting blessedness.

The term justification has shared the same fate as those which I have just considered. Some have interpreted it to mean nothing more than the forgiveness of sin. But the eleventh Article, the title of which is, "Of the Justification of Man," thus explains the term justification: "We are accounted righteous before God, only for the merit of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ by faith, and not for our own works and deservings." Thus teaching that the man who is justified, is not only freely and fully pardoned by God, but is also accounted righteous for the merits of our Lord Jesus Christ by faith, and the same is taught in the first part of the Homily on the Salvation of Man, where we read, "So that Christ is now the righteousness of all them that truly do believe in him. He for them paid their ransom by his death. He for them fulfilled the law in his life. So that now in him, and by him, every true Christian man may be called a fulfiller of the law, forasmuch as that which their infirmity lacked, Christ's justice (or righteousness) hath supplied." I cannot refrain, while upon this subject of justification, from quoting an eloquent passage from the writings of that most eminent of English divines, Richard Hooker, in which he would almost appear to paraphrase that passage which I have just quoted from the homily of our church. He says: "Christ hath merited righteousness for as many as are found in him. In him God findeth us if we be faithful, for by faith we are incorporated into Christ. Then, although in ourselves we be altogether sinful and unrighteous, yet even the man which is impious in himself, full of iniquity, full of sin, him being found in Christ, through faith, and having his sin remitted through repentance, him God beholdeth with a gracious eye; putteth away his sin by not imputing it; taketh away the punishment due thereto by pardoning it; and accepteth him in Jesus Christ, as perfectly righteous as if he had himself fulfilled all that was commanded him in the law. Shall I say, more perfectly righteous than if himself had fulfilled the whole law? I must take heed what I say; but the Apostle saith, 'God made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin, that we might be made the right-

eousness of God in him.' Such are we in the sight of God the Father, as is the very son of God himself."

Justification, then, not only means the forgiveness of sins by the death of Christ, but the imputation of righteousness through his merits—thus it is that we are accounted righteous before God.

Other opposers of the doctrine of justification by faith only, have invented a two-fold justification, that by this device they may evade the force of the proposition—"We conclude that a man is justified by faith without the deeds of the law." Great names may be quoted for this treatment of the term. But neither in the word of God nor in the articles and homilies of our church do we find the slightest intimation of a two-fold justification before God. The quotations which I have already made from these sources will be sufficient to establish this position.

I have dwelt longer than I intended upon this point; but such is its importance, and such the effect which our views concerning it produce upon our entire system of doctrine, that too much attention cannot be bestowed upon it. I would exhort you, my reverend brethren, to study carefully the three homilies on the doctrine of justification, with which our church has provided us, and to compare them with the word of God; and should you desire to extend your researches beyond these, I would recommend the work of Bishop McIlvane on Oxford Divinity, to your careful perusal, and the sermons on the nature and the effects of faith by James Thomas O'Brien, D. D., formerly Fellow of Trinity College, Dublin, now Bishop of Ossory, as well calculated to bring before you the various views which have been enunciated upon this subject. I am happy to see that the latter work, which for some years has been out of print, has been recently republished in England. In this you will find the erroneous views concerning justification enunciated by Bishop Bull and Archbishop Lawrence, clearly exposed and conclusively refuted.

The consideration of the scriptural doctrine of absolution, or "the power of the keys," will form a suitable sequel to the solemn service in which we were this morning engaged. When we take part in the admission of brethren into the holy office of the ministry, we cannot fail being reminded of that eventful period in our own history, when, according to the apostolic institution, we ourselves were received with prayer and the imposition of hands, as ministers of Christ, and thus devoted to his service in the church, forever. It is well, my reverend brethren, that we should have clear and distinct views concerning the sacred office which we fill, and to be well assured that our views rest upon the solid basis of God's inspired word. There is no subject upon which more error has been successfully intruded upon the church, than the doctrine of absolution, or the power of the keys, committed by our Lord to his Apostles. We find the Apostle Peter thus exhorting the presbyters in his day: "Feed the flock of God which is among you, taking the oversight thereof, not by constraint, but

willingly, not for filthy lucre, but of a ready mind, neither as being lords over God's heritage; but being ensamples to the flock." The apostle, in this warning, recognizes the danger of the ministers of Christ assuming an undue power over the people committed to their charge; and we know from the history of the church, that even in the days of the apostles, men began to covet pre-eminence, and to assume over their fellows a power which was never committed to them by the Lord.

Let us now consider the nature of that authority which our Lord conferred upon his apostles, and which was conveyed in the words, "whose sins thou dost forgive, they are forgiven, and whose sins thou dost retain they are retained." The various interpretations which have been given of these words of our Lord, may be included in two. One is, that the commission has reference to persons, and confers upon him who is rightly admitted into the sacred ministry, a judicial power to pardon the sins of individuals. The other is, that this commission has reference, not to persons, but to characters, and confers upon the minister authority to declare and pronounce, to the people of God, the full and free salvation which has been purchased by the blood and righteousness of Christ, and that God pardoneth and absolveth all who truly repent and unfeignedly believe his holy gospel. How the apostles of our Lord interpreted these words, and what power they believed to be committed by them, we can best learn from their own acts, from the inspired history of the church recorded in the Acts of the Apostles, and from their writings. We find the first ministers of Christ, immediately after our Lord's ascension and the outpouring of the Holy Spirit, proceeding to exercise their ministry, and we cannot trace, in anything which has been recorded of them, the slightest hint, that they believed that an absolute and judicial power of forgiving the sins of men was committed to them; on the contrary, we find Peter, upon whom the high honor was conferred of being the first to use the keys of the kingdom of heaven, committed to him and the other apostles, by opening the door of faith to both the Jews and the Gentiles, thus setting forth the authority conferred upon him by our Lord. In his address to Cornelius and his friends, he says, "and he commanded us to preach unto the people, and to testify that it was he which was ordained of God to be the judge of quick and dead; to him give all the prophets witness, that, through his name, whosoever believeth in him shall receive remission of sins." Such is the apostle's statement of what he was commanded by our Lord to do. He was to preach and to testify, not to forgive sins. He was to declare, with authority, that whoever believeth on the Son of God shall have eternal life. St. Paul thus declares the same truth when addressing his brethren at Antioch, in Pisidia: "Be it known unto you, therefore, men and brethren, that, through this man is purchased unto you the forgiveness of sins, and by him all that believe are justified from all things, from which ye could not be justified by the law of Moses." And when the jailor at Philippi, under

deep convictions of conscience, and in great alarm of soul, put to him and Silas the important question, "Lord, what must I do to be saved?" the apostle replied, "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved." Thus, in the exercise of their ministry by these apostles, we see no trace whatever of an idea existing in their minds that they possessed the power to forgive the sins of those penitent and earnest-minded men who applied to them for spiritual counsel. But they fulfilled their office, when they declared to them, that, through Jesus, whosoever believed on him, should receive remission of sins. We find, also, the Apostle Paul giving charge to Timothy and Titus as to the exercise of the ministry committed to them, and there is nothing in any of his epistles which will bear the interpretation that these men of God had placed in their hands such a tremendous power as that of judicially pronouncing the forgiveness of those over whom they were placed. Paul's exhortations to Timothy were, "preach the word;" "study to show thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth." If the apostle had committed to Timothy the power of forgiving the sins of men at his pleasure, would he not have instructed him in the proper use of such an awful power? We also find the Apostle Paul exercising discipline in the church at Corinth by excommunicating and again restoring the incestuous man, but we find no intimation that he claimed the power of pardoning his sin. From these and very many other passages of God's word it appears that the scriptural doctrine of absolution, or the power of the keys, is, that unto the apostles of our Lord, and through them, to all the ministers of Christ, in every succeeding age, is committed authority to go into all the world and declare a free and finished salvation, through the atonement and righteousness of Christ, to every sinner who believeth the record of God concerning his Son. This is that ministry of reconciliation which is given to us, to wit, that "God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them, and hath committed unto us the word of reconciliation. Now, then, we are ambassadors of Christ, as, though God did beseech you by us, we pray you, in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled to God, for he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin, that we might be made the righteousness of God in him."

It remains now to examine whether the teaching of our church corresponds exactly with this scriptural view of the ministerial office and authority. A candid examination of the various services of the church will show that the words of our blessed Lord, retained by us in the ordination of priests, must be interpreted in this latter sense, as conferring authority upon the minister to declare to sinners the free forgiveness of sins, through faith in Christ Jesus. The first form which I will consider is that which occurs in our daily service. In this it is stated that God hath given "power and commandment to his ministers to declare and pronounce to his people, being penitent, the absolution and remission of their sins." God alone forgives. "He," that is God, "pardoneth and ab-

solveth all them that truly repent and unfeignedly believe his holy gospel." All here is in strict accordance with the scriptural view above given. God pardons and absolves; the minister declares and pronounces the pardon thus given of God, and the penitent and believing sinner may take to himself the comfort which is to be derived from the glad tidings thus proclaimed. This, which is the ordinary form of declaring and pronouncing God's forgiveness of sin in our church, is styled in the rubric prefixed to the office, "The absolution or remission of sins." Thus does the church explain what she intends by the ministerial power to absolve and remit sins. Also, in the communion service, that which in the rubric is called the absolution is in the form of a prayer offered to God for the pardon and deliverance of those who, with hearty repentance and true faith, turn unto him. There is here no judicial power to forgive sins ascribed to the minister, but God is recognized as being the alone bestower of forgiveness upon those who truly turn to him. When, in these two services, which are continually brought before the people, our church has thus defined her meaning of the word absolve, it is manifestly unfair to seize upon and misinterpret the same word in the service for the visitation of the sick, which must be regarded as a form, provided for an extreme case, to be used, not at the suggestion of the minister, but at the humble and hearty desire of the penitent. It will be found that when the ministerial office is duly and faithfully discharged, and Christ's salvation clearly declared by the minister, no member of his congregation will ever think of expressing a desire for the use of this form. But those who feel sincerely anxious concerning the salvation of their souls will rest satisfied with the truth of God faithfully proclaimed to them, and will be content to enter upon an unseen eternity, trusting in the all-sufficiency of Christ, and believing the blessed assurance, that, for his sake, their sins and iniquities God will remember no more. Speaking from my own experience of nearly forty years in the ministry, I would say to you, my reverend brethren, preach Christ in his fulness, and such mental and spiritual darkness as the desire for this form of absolution upon the part of a sick and dying man would imply, will not exist. But he who is the Sun of Righteousness will, with his bright beams, dissipate all the clouds of sin and unbelief, and will enable the humble and penitent believer to resign his spirit into the hands of his Heavenly Father, in sure and certain hope of the resurrection to eternal life. The true remedy for such spiritual clouds and darkness is sweetly indicated in the following lines:

Sun of my soul, thou Saviour dear,
It is not night if thou be near;
Oh, may no earth-born cloud arise
To hide Thee from thy servant's eyes.

Abide with me from morn till eve,
For without Thee I cannot live;
Abide with me when night is nigh,
For without Thee I dare not die.

It is by the presence of Christ alone, realized by faith, that the sinner can be effectually sustained as he enters the dark valley of the shadow of death.

The following view of the form of absolution in the service for the visitation of the sick, which has strong reasons to recommend it, has been taken by many eminent divines of our church.* It has been said that it was specially intended for times and for a state of the church when men were often by the decree of the ecclesiastical authorities, or *ipso facto*, excommunicated for the committal of some grave offence against the church: In such a case a man whose conscience had been wounded and his soul terrified by the thought that he had been cut off from the body of the faithful, might earnestly desire, before he departed this life, to be reconciled and restored by the authorized minister and representative of the church, to that communion from which he had been separated. In the collect which immediately follows the absolution, the man who has been just absolved is represented as still *most earnestly desiring pardon and forgiveness*, and the following petitions are presented to God for him: "Open the eyes of thy mercy upon this thy servant, who most earnestly desireth pardon and forgiveness," "preserve and continue this sick member in

* Amongst those divines who have taken the view here given of this form of absolution, I would only mention Wheatly, in his "Rational Illustration of the Book of Common Prayer," under the head, "*The form of absolution seems only to respect the censures of the church*," he thus writes: "Now, whether the church designs, by this form, that the priest shall convey God's pardon to the conscience of the sinner, for his sins and offences committed against him; or whether he shall only remit the censures of the church, and continue him in the privilege of church-communion, which he may be supposed to have forfeited by the sins he has confessed, is thought by some not to be clearly or determinately expressed. But if we look forward to the collect immediately after to be used, it looks as if *the church did only intend the remission of ecclesiastical censures and bonds*. For in that prayer the penitent is said still *most earnestly to desire pardon and forgiveness*; which surely there would be no occasion to do, if he had been actually pardoned and forgiven of God, by virtue of the absolution pronounced before. * * * Now it is plain that the authority first promised to St. Peter (Matt. xviii. 18), and afterwards in common to all the apostles, was a power of admitting to or excluding from church-communion. * * * But now it is the opinion of Dr. Hammond, and from him of a late author of not inferior judgment (Dr. Marshal), that this passage has much the same significance with the former, and that the terms in St. John (xx. 23) of *retaining and remitting* are equivalent to those in St. Matthew, of *binding and loosing*. * * * And if this be the sense of the words in St. John, then it is plain that this commission, as well as the former in St. Matthew, confers only a power of *excommunicating and absolving*; and consequently that no authority can be urged from hence for the *applying of God's pardon to the conscience of a sinner or for absolving him any otherwise than from the censures of the church*. * * * As to the form of absolution, of which we are now discoursing, a parenthesis was added at the last review, to intimate that this is not to be used even over the sick, *unless he humbly and heartily desire it*. For it is fit a man should show an earnest desire and a due sense of so great a benefit before it is offered to him; and then, *if he be rightly instructed in the end and design of it, and the form itself be applied with that prudence and caution above described*, the use of it surely may not only tend to the good of the penitent, but may also prove of singular service and advantage to the church."

the unity of the church; and, forasmuch as he putteth his full trust only in thy mercy, impute not to him his former sins;" and in the prayer which follows for a sick person, when there appeareth small hope of recovery, we find this petition: "Give him unfeigned repentance for all the errors of his life past, and steadfast faith in thy son Jesus, that his sins may be done away and his pardon sealed in heaven before he go hence and be no more seen." And again, in the commendatory prayer, this petition is offered for the soul of the dying man: "Wash it, we pray thee, in the blood of the immaculate lamb that was slain to take away the sins of the world, that whatever defilement it may have contracted in the midst of this miserable and naughty world, through the lusts of the flesh, and through the wiles of Satan, being purged and done away, it may be presented pure and without spot before thee." From the purport of these prayers, it would appear that the absolution which, when earnestly desired by the sick man is to be pronounced by the minister, must be regarded as something different from the forgiveness of sin, which is in these prayers ascribed to God, and asked in the name and for the sake of Christ, for the man upon whom the absolution has just been pronounced. If our church regarded this absolution as conveying a plenary pardon for sin, it would be a solemn mockery to call upon God immediately afterwards to forgive those sins which had already been pardoned by the absolution of the minister. From all this it has been maintained that the absolution in the office for the visitation of the sick, was intended to meet the ease of those who, for offences against the church, had been placed under ban and excommunication, and who, after confessing faith in Christ and entire dependance in him for their salvation, desired to be restored to the communion of the church from which they had been excluded. Viewed in this light, which indeed appears to be the only light in which it can consistently be viewed, the service is not open to the attacks made upon it by the enemies of our church.

I am free to state that, in my opinion, the use of this form of absolution, in the lax state of discipline amongst us, when excommunication is unknown, and when there are no church censures to be removed, would be calculated to mislead and to induce in the minds of ignorant members of our communion who do not understand the real meaning of the form, a belief that our church encouraged the unscriptural and soul-deceiving doctrine that a power to pardon had been committed to the ministers of Christ. It is your duty, my reverend brethren, to be careful, lest, by the injudicious use of any of our church services, you should lead the people to place their dependance for pardon and salvation on anything, save in God's mercy, through the perfect atonement and spotless righteousness of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.

And now, my reverend brethren, I would, in conclusion, address to you the words of the great Apostle of the Gentiles: "I charge you before God, and the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall judge the quick and the dead at his appearing

and his kingdom ; preach the word ; be instant in season, out of season ; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all long-suffering and doctrine." "Speak the things which become sound doctrine." "Study to show yourselves approved unto God, workmen that need not be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth." "Give attendance to reading, to exhortation, to doctrine." "Meditate upon these things ; give yourselves wholly to them ; that your profiting may appear to all." "Take heed unto yourselves and unto the doctrine ; continue in them ; for in doing this you shall both save yourselves and them that hear you." The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit. Amen.

