

Christ's Prerogative in the choice of His Servants.

A SERMON,

PREACHED BY COMMAND OF THE LORD BISHOP OF TORONTO,
IN ST. PAUL'S CHURCH, LONDON, C. W., ON WEDNESDAY,
THE 8TH JULY, 1857,

BEFORE

THE MEMBERS OF THE SYNOD,
CONVENED TO ELECT A BISHOP FOR THE WESTERN
DIVISION OF THE DIOCESE.

BY HENRY HOLLAND, B.A.

Of Queens' College, Cambridge, Missionary at Tyrconnel.

PUBLISHED BY DIRECTION OF THE SYNOD.

REVISED EDITION.

TORONTO:

HENRY ROWSELL, KING-STREET.

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“ It seems to be the duty of each preacher in his turn to endeavour to fill in his own part in the great outline of Divine knowledge, not intruding himself into the province of others, or aiming at any thing for which he has not been qualified, either by the direction of his studies, or the range of his ministerial duties. Those whom God has not gifted with much learning, may still fulfil their calling by speaking forth the words of truth and soberness.”—*Bishop Selwyn's Four Sermons.*

CHRIST'S PREROGATIVE IN THE CHOICE OF HIS SERVANTS.

Acts i., 24, 25.—And they prayed, and said, thou, Lord, which knowest the hearts of all men, shew whether of these two thou hast chosen, that he may take part of this ministry and apostleship.

Thankful would the preacher have been, had the duty of addressing you on the present occasion, reverend fathers and brethren, been intrusted to one better qualified than himself, by attainments of learning and gifts of eloquence, and endowed with the experience and authority of riper years. Gladly would he have sat at the feet of many now present to have heard from their lips the words of exhortation and admonition befitting this solemn occasion. Such an occasion, doubtless, all who are present feel it to be. We have met for the discharge of a momentous duty, a duty which brings the most serious responsibility upon all who are concerned in it, and on the fidelity with which it is performed will the well-being of this portion of the Lord's vineyard be greatly dependent for all time to come. The effects of what we shall this day do will last long after we ourselves have passed from the present scene; they will be felt by remote generations. And, therefore, O that a deep and holy awe may now rest upon us; that both in the duty in which we are more immediately engaged, and in that to which this solemn act of worship is the introduction, we may realise the presence of our God and Saviour; and that the power of the Lord, the Spirit, being present to enlighten our understandings, to strengthen our weakness, and to unite us all in the bonds of love and peace, we may "by the same Spirit have a right judgment in all things, and evermore rejoice in His holy comfort."* If such a spirit pervade this assembly, the preacher may hope that what is about to be advanced, being received, not with captious suspicion, a disposition unprofitable to those who indulge it, but with candour and brotherly confidence, will tend to the edification of all. Then

* Collect for Whit-Sunday.

will the feebleness of the instrument serve but to magnify the power and grace of God and the efficacy of the Divine Word. Let that word speak for itself, and from its hidden treasures let us seek to draw such instruction as may contribute to our guidance in the matter we have in hand, and enable us to perform it to the greater glory of God and the high advantage of His people.

The passage of Holy Scripture from which the text is taken is naturally suggested to our thoughts by the occasion on which we are assembled. It contains an account of the first assembly of the Christian Church, for a purpose similar to that for which we are now gathered together. The Lord Jesus Christ, having finished the work which had been given Him to do on earth, had a few days before gone back to His father's house in Heaven. The eleven, standing around Him upon the summit of Olivet, had seen Him taken up. The everlasting doors had opened to take in the King of Glory. The conqueror had returned in triumph to His abode of peace. The disciples, no longer dejected and dismayed at finding themselves left alone and deprived of the personal presence of their master, but full of confidence and hope, were "waiting for the promise of the Father which they had heard of Christ," and "continued with one accord in prayer and supplication." But their original number was incomplete. The defection of Judas had reduced it to eleven, whereas twelve had been originally designed by the Lord to be the witnesses of His resurrection. It had been Divinely appointed that the number of the Apostles, the patriarchs of the Christian Church, should be the same with that of the Fathers of Israel. "That great city, the holy Jerusalem," which was seen in mystic vision by St. John, is described as having "twelve gates, and at the gates twelve angels, and names written thereon, which are the names of the twelve tribes of the children of Israel." "And the wall of the city had twelve foundations, and in them the names of the twelve apostles of the Lamb."* In order, therefore, to make up the original number, it was necessary, St. Peter declared, that of those of the disciples who had possessed the most intimate knowledge of their Master during His sojourn amongst them, one should be ordained to the same rank and office with

* Rev. xxi., 10-14.

themselves. Two, of whom both were supposed to be fully qualified, having been selected, the assembled apostles and disciples addressed to their Lord and Master the solemn prayer contained in the text: which done, "they gave forth their lots; and the lot fell upon Matthias; and he was numbered with the eleven apostles."

This prayer, there can be little doubt, was addressed to Christ. Such is the opinion of every expositor whom I have had the opportunity of consulting. The reasons for this opinion will probably suggest themselves to your own minds in following the present discourse; I shall not, therefore, now detain you with them.* The petition was made, as has been already stated, upon an occasion in many respects similar to that upon which we are now and here assembled "The number of the names together were about an hundred and twenty." It was upon the first appointment, otherwise than by Christ in person, of a Bishop in the Christian Church. In making this assertion, let it not be supposed that I am confounding the episcopal office with that which belonged exclusively to the apostles, and in which they had and could have no successors. In as far as St. Matthias was ordained in order that, with the rest of the apostles, he might bear the testimony of an eye-witness to the life, the miracles, the sufferings, and the resurrection of the Lord Jesus, there is no resemblance between the office to which he was appointed and that of the bishops of succeeding ages; but inasmuch as he was also ordained to be one of the chief rulers of the Christian Church, and to receive and transmit to others "the keys of the kingdom of Heaven," his successors are found in all who are promoted to the episcopal office.†

I may not forget that I am now addressing an assembly of Divines, and others, of whom all are intelligent members of the Church of England, and may therefore be supposed conversant with the arguments by which the apostolic and episcopal offices, except in the particular which has been mentioned, are proved to be identical. It is therefore unnecessary now to repeat those arguments. The appropriateness of the passage to our present circumstances will be admitted, and I may proceed at once to draw from it the inferences upon which especially I desire to fix your attention.

* See Note A. † Note B.

It appears, then, from the passage before us,—

I. That it is Christ's prerogative to choose those who shall be bishops and pastors of His flock.

The very words of the text direct us to this conclusion: "they prayed and said, thou, Lord, which knowest the hearts of all men, shew whether of these two *thou hast chosen*:" but they do more; they also suggest the grounds upon which the conclusion rests.

(1.) The first argument is afforded by the title under which Christ is addressed in the invocation with which the prayer opens: "*Thou, Lord.*" "To us there is but one Lord Jesus Christ;"* "Him God hath highly exalted, and given Him a name which is above every name: that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth; and that every tongue should confess that *Jesus Christ is Lord*:"† and He hath set Him at His own right hand in the heavenly places, . . . and hath put all things under His feet, and hath given Him to be the head over all things to the Church, which is His body, the fulness of Him that filleth all in all."‡ In regard, then, of the exalted rank which has been conferred upon Him as the Head of the Church, must our Lord Jesus Christ surely be supposed to select for himself those who shall rule under Him and administer the laws of His kingdom. To select the ministers and chief officers of State is the undoubted prerogative of royalty. The sovereign is ever regarded as the fountain of nobility and honour. It is a law of the Divine economy, an order of things which we see universally established, and to the fitness of which our natural sense bears witness. The exaltation which Christ has received consists, in part at least, in the exercise of this very prerogative: He is exalted expressly for this purpose. "I appoint unto you a kingdom," said Christ to His apostles, the future rulers and bishops of His Church, "as my Father hath appointed unto me; that ye may eat and drink at my table in my kingdom, and sit on thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel."§ To Christ, then, as He is *the Lord*, and to Him alone belongs the undoubted right of choosing from among His subjects those who shall be admitted to the distinguished

* 1 Cor., viii., 6. † Phil., ii., 9-11. ‡ Eph., i., 20-23. § Luke, xxii., 29.

honour of sharing with himself and administering under Him the government of His kingdom.

(2.) The terms in which the office is described lead to the same conclusion; "that he may take part in this *ministry and apostleship*." Ministry implies the office and functions of a servant, as in the words of our Saviour to the disciples, "who-soever will be great among you, let him be your minister; and whosoever will be chief among you, let him be your servant; even as the Son of Man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister."* The household in which this service is performed is the Church: the master is Christ. Of the various servants in a household, some are greater than others; to some it is appointed to labour and toil in subjection and obedience, to others is assigned the office of controlling the inferior servants and of regulating the affairs of the household: one is but a menial, another is the steward. This illustration of the various ranks and occupations of members of the Church is frequently employed in the New Testament. Thus, on one occasion, "the Lord said, who then is that faithful and wise steward, whom his Lord shall make ruler over His household, to give them their portion of meat in due season."† And St. Paul writes, "Let a man so account of us, as of the ministers of Christ, and stewards of the mysteries of God;"‡ and in another place, "A bishop must be blameless, as the steward of God."§ Now, however the inferior servants in a household are appointed, we know that the steward is invariably selected by the master himself, and holds his appointment from him alone. The capabilities required in him, the nature of the trust reposed in him, and the authority with which he must be clothed, make it necessary that it should be so.

It is also an "apostleship:" and whether we regard the nature of the office as it may be inferred from the derivation and literal signification of the term, which implies the being sent forth with a special mission, the office of an ambassador for Christ, or its original in the mission of the twelve and others mentioned in the New Testament, we arrive at the same conclusion, that those by whom it is to be filled must be chosen by Christ himself. Thus it is written, "It came to pass in those days, that He went out into a mountain to pray, and continued all night in prayer to God. And when it was

* Matt., xx., 26-28. † Luke, xii., 42. ‡ 1 Cor., iv., 1. § Titus, i., 7.

day He called unto Him His disciples : and of them He chose twelve, whom also he named apostles."* So that truly might He say to them, shortly before He suffered, " Ye have not chosen me, but I have chosen you, and ordained you."† What did the Lord also say to Ananias of Damascus, concerning that Saul of Tarsus who was afterwards known as Paul the Apostle? " He is a chosen vessel unto me." Hence St. Paul, speaking of himself and his coadjutors in the great enterprise, says, " By whom," *i. e.*, " by Him who was declared to be the Son of God with power," " we have received grace and apostleship for obedience to the faith among all nations for His name."‡

(3.) There is yet another argument suggested by the text in proof of this. To Christ belongs the prerogative of choosing His servants, because He only "*knows the hearts of all men.*" He only knows who are properly qualified for the office of ruling His Church, of piloting the ship through the storms by which she is assailed, of commanding the little band of warriors by whom the armies of the aliens must be put to flight. Reflect on the exalted position of those who are called to fill the episcopal office, and the vast influence, for good or for evil, which they exert over the whole body of the flock. For good : if careful in guarding that committed to their trust, the faith once delivered to the saints, and " being ready with all faithful diligence, to banish and drive away all erroneous and strange doctrine contrary to God's word ;" if " faithful in ordaining, sending, and laying hands on others ;" if " denying all ungodliness and worldly lusts, and living soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world so as to shew themselves in all things an example of good works unto others."§ For evil ; if taking the oversight of God's flock as though " by constraint," " for filthy lucre," or as " being lords over God's heritage."|| Reflect on the numerous, the peculiar qualifications necessary for the successful discharge of these various duties. When St. Paul exclaims, " Who is sufficient for these things !" it must surely be apparent to us, that, to decide who possesses such qualifications, demands more than human penetration and wisdom, that He only, who " searches the reins and heart," is competent to make the selection. When the sons of Jesse

* Luke, vi., 12-13. † John, xv., 16. ‡ Rom., i., 4-5. § Ordination Service. || 1 Peter, v., 2-3.

passed before Samuel, "he looked on Eliab, and said, Surely the Lord's anointed is before him. But the Lord said unto Samuel, Look not on his countenance, or on the height of his stature; because I have refused him: for the Lord seeth not as man seeth; for man looketh on the outward appearance, but the Lord looketh on the heart."* From this passage we learn how easily the amiable bias of private friendship, or admiration of many estimable qualities in others, may so conceal from us their faults and defects, as to render our judgment respecting them wholly erroneous. And on the other hand, dissimilarity of opinion or a mere difference of natural temperament, may create in our minds causeless prejudices against those on whom Christ has set the mark of His high approbation and choice. Many frailties in the Lord's servants which are hidden from us, to Him are well known. Rank, and power, and a prominent position in the Church, although often the objects of ambition, are attended with great peril. To Christ only are known the motives by which men are influenced, the temptations by which they might be most easily snared, and the effect which altered circumstances and new relationships might produce in bringing to view traits of character previously hidden, even from themselves.

To Christ then, both as *He is the Lord*, and as *He only knoweth the hearts of all men*, must be conceded the right of choosing for himself those who shall take part in the *ministry and apostleship* of His Church.

A second inference which may be drawn from this passage, in connexion with the narrative of which it forms part, is,

II. That in making known to the Church whom he has chosen to be its chief pastors, Christ nevertheless employs the instrumentality of human agency.

He did so under the Old Testament dispensation. When to Aaron and his sons was given the covenant of an everlasting priesthood, the Divine purpose was made known to Moses, and through him to the Church of Israel. Christ himself designated the twelve apostles by name. When it became necessary to fill the vacancy occasioned by the apostacy of Judas, St. Peter was directed to bring the matter before the synod of apostles and disciples, and by them was employed the method

* 1 Sam., xvi., 7

which has been already related for the ascertaining of Christ's will concerning the appointment. When Paul and Barnabas had been called to the apostleship by the Holy Ghost, certain prophets and teachers at Antioch were directed to separate them for the work, and to ordain them by the laying on of hands. In the designation of Timothy and Titus to be bishops of Ephesus and of Crete respectively, so far as we are informed, St. Paul alone was employed. From these instances we may infer that different methods, but all involving the instrumentality of man, have, on different occasions, been employed by Christ, in making known whom He has chosen to be the chief rulers of His flock.

The same inference must be drawn from the facts of ecclesiastical history. It does not appear that any settled method in the designation of persons to the episcopal office has always or every where prevailed, on the contrary there has been considerable diversity in the manner in which this has taken place. Here, however, it is necessary to observe that it has been a law of the universal Church, that, in the appointment of a bishop to a particular diocese or charge, two things should concur. First, the selection must be made of a person supposed to be properly qualified, who must, thereupon, be presented to the primate or metropolitan, and at least two bishops associated with him, for their approval. Being approved of by them, but not otherwise, he is consecrated by the laying on of their hands, and it is thus declared to the Church that he has been chosen and appointed by Christ to the episcopal office.

For the former of these objects we are assembled here this day; the latter belongs exclusively to those who have succeeded the apostles in the inheritance of Christ's promise,—“Lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world,”—the bishops of the Church, to whom it appertains to transmit to others the authority they have themselves received, and by virtue of which they administer the government of the Church. “Seeing that none but bishops do consecrate,” says the author of the Ecclesiastical Polity, “it followeth that none but they only do give unto every bishop his being.”* And the learned and excellent Bishop Beveridge has the following remarks upon the same subject: “The apostles being ordained and instructed by our Lord, took special care to transfer the same spirit to

* Hooker's Ecc. Pol., VIII., vii., 2.

others, which they had received from Him. . . . And where-soever we read that the apostles ordained any, they did it after this manner, even by laying their hands upon them. . . . Thus therefore it is that the apostolical office hath been handed down from one to another, ever since the apostles' days to our time, and so will be to the end of the world, Christ himself being continually present at such imposition of hands; thereby transferring the same Spirit which He had at first breathed into His apostles, upon others successively after them, as really as He was present with the apostles themselves, when He first breathed it into them."* And that this is in perfect accordance with the teaching of the Church of England, appears from the office for the consecration of bishops, where it is directed that "the archbishop and bishops present shall lay their hands upon the head of the elected bishop, kneeling before them upon his knees, the archbishop saying: Receive the Holy Ghost for the office and work of a bishop in the Church of God, now committed unto thee by the imposition of our hands."

But that with which at present we have to do, is the selection of an individual who shall be presented to the primate for approval, and thereupon for consecration and appointment to a particular charge; and it is in the mode in which such selection has been made that considerable diversity has prevailed. I may again quote from the "judicious Hooker;" "The manner of uniting bishops as heads, unto the flock and clergy under them, hath often altered. For, if some be not deceived, this thing was sometime done even without any election at all. At the first, the first created in the college of presbyters was still the bishop. He dying, the next senior did succeed him."† This rule, however, being found to lead often to the appointment of persons not duly qualified, in course of time gave way to the selection by the presbyters of a diocese, of that one of their number who was thought to be most worthy. "In which elections," continues the same writer, "at the beginning the clergy and people both had to do, although not both after one sort. The people gave their testimony, and showed their affection, either of desire or dislike. But the choice was wholly in the sacred college of presbyters."

In the fourth canon of the Nicene Council, however, as

* Beveridge's Works, vol. I., p. 10. † Hooker's Ecc. Pol., VIII., vii., 2.

quoted by the learned Dr. Brett, in his "account of Church government,"* it is decreed, "That a bishop ought chiefly to be constituted by all the bishops of the Province." And "The Council of Laodicea decreed about the same time, that bishops long approved both in faith and doctrine, shall be constituted for the government of the Church, by the metropolitan and neighbouring bishops; and that the multitude shall not elect any persons to be ordained."† Upon this the author observes, (supporting his opinion also by that of Bishop Beveridge,) that "The right of election was in the bishops present, but the consent and approbation of the election appertained to the people." And, further, "It is certain that the whole power of election, as well as ordination, was in the bishops, even as it had been in their predecessors the apostles." "However, I am persuaded," he continues, "that the people, amongst which I also include the clergy, generally nominated some fit person or persons, whom the bishops, if they approved of, consecrated, or otherwise ordered them to make a new choice; which, if they refused to do, then the bishops themselves appointed whom they thought fit." To this he adds that "afterwards, the form and manner of electing, though not of consecrating bishops, was a little varied." When a bishop was to be ordained, the clergy and chief men of the city assembled, and having chosen three well qualified persons, he of those three was consecrated whom the bishops judged most worthy. This was the rule in the Eastern Church; in the Western it was ordained that the bishops should name three persons, of whom the clergy and people should choose one.

In more recent times a still greater change in the manner of appointing bishops has taken place, as in England at present, where the election is but a matter of form, and the appointment proceeds entirely from the Crown.

It appears, then, upon the whole, from this brief review of Scriptural sanction, and the general usage of the Church, that although it may be questioned whether the mode of proceeding which has been decided upon for the present occasion, is the best that could have been devised for the attainment of the desirable object, there is sufficient precedent for its employ-

* An Account of Church Government and Governors, wherein is showed that the Government of the Church of England is most agreeable to that of the Primitive Church; by Thos. Brett, LL.D., MDCCX.

† Note C.

ment to warrant us in believing, that Christ will, by means of this instrumentality in connexion with, and subordination to, that of the bishops of the Church, be pleased to signify His will concerning the appointment about to be made.

Nor let it be by any supposed that because the Lord Jesus is no longer personally present amongst us; that because the age of miraculous interference and direct Spiritual illumination has passed away; that because the tongue of fire no longer descends from Heaven, and resting upon the head of the chosen apostle, points him out as the Lord's anointed; that therefore Christ has ceased to exercise His prerogative in the choice of His servants, or that He has not ample means at His disposal for the signification of His will. Is it not to those who are assembled by His authority, for the administration of the affairs of the Church, that the promise was expressly and originally intended, "Where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them"?* Do we truly and firmly believe, as we pray, "that the never-failing providence of God ordereth all things both in heaven and earth," and can we for a moment suppose that a matter which so immediately concerns the well-being of His spouse the Church, is left by Christ to be determined by accident or by the mere caprice of men? We dare not entertain a doubt but that He can and does, in a manner inscrutable to us, so control the minds both of individuals and of bodies of men, as by what appear to be their voluntary acts, to accomplish notwithstanding His own will, and to make His sovereign pleasure known.

Does any one present find it difficult to realise this? Let him only consider the network of circumstances by which each of the many individuals, who have been brought together to take part in this day's proceedings, is surrounded, and the diversity of influences which have been brought to bear upon him; with each of these let him connect the distinct declarations of Christ, that "the hairs of our head are all numbered," and that "not a sparrow can fall to the ground without our Father;" and let him crown his reflections with the consideration so emphatically stated by St. Paul, that "all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to His purpose," and I dare affirm that he will be sceptical on this point no longer.†

* Matt., xviii., 20. † Note D.

We have then sufficient grounds for the conclusion that while it is the undoubted prerogative of Christ to *choose His own servants*, it is nevertheless His pleasure to make known to the Church whom He has chosen to be its bishops and pastors, *by the instrumentality of human agents*.

From the passage before us, therefore, I proceed to infer,

III. That it should be the sole object of those who are intrusted with any share of this duty, and therefore, *that it should be our object upon the present occasion*, to seek to discover whom Christ has chosen. Again, mark the words of the text. "They prayed and said, thou, Lord, show whether of these two thou hast chosen." Are we now persuaded that it is the will of the Great Head of the Church that the office of the episcopate should exist for the government of His kingdom upon earth? We may also be assured that He has provided fit and proper persons to fill that office. And do we believe that it is by His permission and authority that we are now called upon to select from among the presbyters of the Church one whom we may suppose to have been by Him designed for the office? We may then surely expect to find in the New Testament, if not direct instructions, yet principles laid down which may be applicable to the occasion, and may very much assist our judgment. Many such are therein to be found. Such *e.g.*, is the direction given by St. Paul to Timothy: "Let the elders that rule well be counted worthy of double honour, especially they who labour in the word and doctrine."* And such is the rule laid down by our Lord himself in the parable of the talents, where it is the good and faithful servant who has been faithful over a few things, who is made ruler over many things. With the best reason surely may we suppose that he whom Christ has chosen to advance to a post of eminence and authority in His church, will be one who has been faithful in the management of the two or the five talents previously committed to his care: one who has been distinguished by an earnest devotion to the duties of his sacred calling, in whatever sphere he may have been bidden to exercise it; one who has continually kept in view the solemn account of his stewardship he must one day give at the judgment seat of Christ. Such an one will not have laboured in his own strength; he

1 Tim., v. 17.

will have been in the constant habit of seeking from on high the grace by which he has been enabled faithfully to discharge his duties. And it is reasonable to suppose that when more arduous duties and higher responsibilities are imposed upon him, he will be not less earnest in seeking nor less successful in obtaining the higher grace now required. But here it is necessary to observe, that as mere popularity is no just criterion of ministerial success, so neither will evident success be an invariable attendant on diligence and fidelity. The most skilful and devoted commander will often be, not he who is crowned with the laurels of victory, but he who in resolutely combating the difficulties of his position, and while taking the very measures by which ultimate success is secured, falls on the field of battle ; even as one of England's truest heroes, the noble Raglan, lately fell, a martyr to " his duty to the Queen." So may the most faithful and laborious of the Church's ministers have to toil, all life long amid much discouragement, and with little apparent result, while yet most surely laying a foundation for future triumphs, and sowing the seed of a harvest which others shall reap with joy.

And must it not be evident that it is those only who occupy positions of eminence in the church, such as command an extensive field for observation, and from which they can look down and see the various labourers in the vineyard, and judge how each fulfils the task assigned him ; that it is those only to whom the clergy are accustomed to confide their perplexities and sorrows, and to whom they resort for fatherly counsel and aid ; that they only can form even an approximate estimate of the character of each and of his fitness for a higher and more responsible position. Let me add, they only really know, because they know by experience, the peculiar qualifications required for the satisfactory performance of the weighty duties of the episcopal office. And I desire, with all due submission, to put it to those who hear me, whether these considerations do not serve to show the wisdom of that arrangement, by which a large share in the election of bishops was, as we have already seen, formerly given to the metropolitan and other bishops of a province.

But the pages of holy writ are not without further and even more explicit instructions for the guidance of the church in the

selection of her bishops. In the epistles of St. Paul to Timothy and Titus we have, first, an account of the qualifications required in those whom they, as chief overseers, were to ordain to the pastoral office in their respective churches. And though it may be objected that the word *ἐπίσκοπος* in the passages referred to is used to describe the office of an overseer of the flock rather than of the clergy, I maintain that they are not the less applicable to our purpose. For it is evident that if these qualifications are required in every pastor they should be found pre-eminently in one who is to be advanced to the office of a chief shepherd. And in this view I am supported by the Church of England, which has appointed the former of these passages to be read as "the epistle" in her order for the "consecration of an archbishop or bishop." What then are the instructions of the Holy Spirit on this subject given to the Church by the hand of St. Paul. "A bishop must be blameless, the husband of one wife, vigilant, sober, of good behaviour, given to hospitality, apt to teach; not given to wine, no striker, not greedy of filthy lucre; but patient, not a brawler, not covetous; one that ruleth well his own house, having his children in subjection with all gravity; (for if a man know not how to rule his own house, how shall he take care of the Church of God?) not a novice, lest being lifted up with pride, he fall into the condemnation of the devil. Moreover, he must have a good report of them which are without, lest he fall into reproach and the snare of the devil."* So far the first epistle to Timothy. In the epistle to Titus these additional requisites are mentioned: "not selfwilled, not soon angry; a lover of good men, just, holy, temperate; holding fast the faithful word as he hath been taught."†

But in these epistles we find secondly, instructions to Timothy and Titus themselves respecting the special functions which appertained to them as bishops of the church, and the temper and spirit requisite for a faithful discharge of the duties of their high office. And an attentive consideration of these will tend to throw further light upon the subject. Thus do we find St. Paul giving Timothy a solemn charge concerning the faith, of the integrity and purity of which he was the appointed guardian?‡ We infer that the first requisite in a Christian bishop is, that he be one holding the mystery of the

* 1 Tim., iii. 2, 7. † Titus, i. 7, 9. ‡ 1 Tim. i.

faith in a pure conscience." Do we find him next giving instructions concerning church order and the solemnities of worship? * We learn that one whose function it is to see the Church's ritual carried out, must himself be thoroughly imbued with its spirit. Is the selection and ordination of ministers his peculiar function? He ought surely to be one possessing in as eminent a degree as it is now vouchsafed to men the gift of discerning of spirits. † Is he set up on high as a watchman to warn the church of the dangers which surround and threaten her, the peculiar perils of the age? ‡ He must be one who has himself escaped from their influence. He is required to be "an example of the believers, in word, in conversation, in charity, in spirit, in faith, in purity." § He must be able to endure hardness, as a good soldier of Jesus Christ. || And while on the one hand, "the servant of the Lord, must not strive, but be gentle unto all men, apt to teach, patient, in meekness instructing those that oppose themselves;" ¶ on the other hand, he must "exhort and rebuke with all authority, letting no man despise him." **

When we have found one in whom, so far as we can judge, these various qualifications meet, we may reasonably hope that he is the individual upon whom has been set the seal of Christ's approval and choice.

It may perhaps be thought that a standard of excellence has been proposed to which none attain, and that therefore we must in vain look for one thus qualified. But suffer me to repeat what has been already said, that he who has appointed the office has most surely provided fit persons to fill it. The church to which we belong numbers her clergy not by tens nor by hundreds, but by thousands and tens of thousands; and in their ranks are many able, and gifted, and devoted men; men of high attainments and of sincere and unaffected piety; men who possess a true knowledge of human nature, and are not unacquainted with the world in which the Church's warfare must be carried on; men sound in the faith and warm in their attachment to the Reformed Catholic Church; men in whom firmness is combined with gentleness, moderation with decision; men who would shrink from no sacrifice to which duty might call them; men of prayer, and men of God.

* 1 Tim. ii. † 1 Tim. iii. ‡ 1 Tim. iv. § 1 Tim. iv. 12. || 2 Tim., ii. 3.
¶ 2 Tim., ii. 24. ** Titus, ii. 15.

Brethren and fathers in Christ, the honour of our master, which is at stake, the dignity of the office, which we would see held in high and universal estimation, our own welfare, and the welfare of those committed to our care, or as whose representatives we are here this day, demand of us that we look for high qualifications in him whom we elect as our bishop. We have all observed in every walk of life the marvellous influence exerted by a leader whose character is marked by earnestness, decision, and energy. His presence and example inspire with fresh ardour, the brave : while to the irresolute and timid, they give confidence and courage. Such a leader, may it be our happiness to obtain ! But on the forehead of God's high priest must characters of still higher import be inscribed. *Most earnestly* then, should we desire to have for our chief, one who shall leave behind him in every footprint the impress of holiness ; and the influence of whose example, reaching first to ourselves, and from us diffusing itself through our respective flocks, shall be powerfully felt and universally acknowledged.

And since, in our endeavours to discover whom Christ has chosen to this office, we shall, whether individually or collectively, if left to our unassisted judgment, be liable to mistake and error, surely it behoves us now to resort to the means employed by the apostles and disciples at Jerusalem for obtaining divine illumination and guidance. "They prayed." And I would ask, is the worship in which we are now taking part, with that more solemn service in which we shall immediately join, a merely formal act, a ceremonial of religion proper to grace the occasion, and nothing more ? I earnestly hope that there are none who so regard it, but that it is by all felt to be a reality of prayer, and will be by all employed in seeking direction and aid from on high. Assuredly if there is one time more suitable than another for making our supplication at the footstool of the throne of grace ; if there is one time in which more than at another we may expect to have our petitions granted ; it is the present hour. We are "all with one accord in one place." We are about to surround the holy table on which is commemorated that sacrifice through which "we have boldness and access with confidence to God." Let then the solemn interval which will be afforded to each during the administration of the sacred elements be thus employed ; and let this be the burden of our prayer : Do thou Lord, who

knowest the hearts of all men, be pleased to show, by the means of this instrumentality which thou hast sanctioned and employed, whom thou hast chosen, that he may take part in this ministry and apostleship.

A twofold advantage, it is humbly hoped, may arise from the consideration of the subject which has thus been brought before you.

In the first place it may be of use as serving to give reality and definite form to the responsibility which attaches itself to each one who is called to take part in the proceedings of this day. A vague sense of responsibility, and unaccompanied with a distinct impression of its limits and extent, and of the duties it involves, is rather perplexing than otherwise. Hence, I have endeavoured to show from Holy Scripture, what the duty is which is now imposed upon us, by what principles and rules we must be guided in performing it, and in what spirit it must be undertaken.

We are assembled, not as men who meet in a civil capacity, to perform a duty to the commonwealth, and to deliberate about the affairs of the transitory kingdoms of the world. Our style, and the purpose for which we are gathered together, as far transcend those of any such assembly, as stars of heaven surpass the glowworms of earth. Priests of the most high God, citizens of a kingdom that cannot be moved, and all brethren in Christ, we meet in His name and act by His authority. "He that holdeth the seven stars in his right hand, who walketh in the midst of the seven golden candlesticks," is in the midst of us. With what dignity then and gravity should we comport ourselves on so solemn an occasion! How carefully should every action and every word be weighed, that nothing fall from us unbecoming our high and holy position, or the relationship in which we stand to each other, or the object we have in view! And if there be one word of exhortation which more than any other the preacher would desire his brethren to suffer and with which he would conclude this discourse, let it be given in the words of St. Paul, "Let us follow after the things which make for peace, and things wherewith one may edify another."*

Finally, the consideration of this subject may be of use, as

* Rom. xiv. 19.

it tends to assure us that the government of the church is still carried on by Christ, notwithstanding the waywardness of men, and the opposing influences of this world, which may appear to be thwarting and counteracting His designs. We are sometimes in danger of speaking and acting as though, should the plans we have formed for the good of the church fail of being carried into effect, and the hopes we have indulged be disappointed, disaster and ruin must follow. Vain and foolish forebodings! May it not be said to us as it was said to the disciples on the sea of Galilee, "Why are ye so fearful? How is it that ye have no faith?" "The waves of the sea are mighty, and rage horribly: but yet the Lord who dwelleth on high is mightier." "The Lord sitteth above the water-flood: the Lord remaineth a king for ever: the Lord shall give strength unto his people: the Lord shall give his people the blessing of peace."

And now to God the Father, &c.

NOTE A.

"That the prayer is addressed on this occasion to the Lord Jesus, we may humbly conclude for the following reasons: 1st—Because He was 'the Lord,' specified immediately before this invocation in St. Peter's discourse, ver. 21. 2nd—In the election of presbyters, afterwards in the several churches, 'after prayer and fasting,' the apostles commended them to the Lord on whom they believed,' chap. xiv. 23; but that Lord was unquestionably Christ. 3rd—Our Lord himself expressly and formally assumed the title here given him, 'And all the churches shall know that I am he which searcheth the reins and hearts,' Rev. ii. 23." Dr. Hales quoted in a note of the Family Bible of S. P. C. K.

NOTE B.

"The first bishops in the Church of Christ were his blessed apostles; for the office whereunto Matthias was chosen the sacred history doth term *ἐπισκοπήν*, an episcopal office, which, being spoken expressly of one agreeeth no less unto them all than unto him. For which cause St. Cyprian, speaking generally of them all, doth call them bishops. They which were termed apostles, as being sent of Christ to publish his gospel throughout the world, and were named likewise bishops, in that the care of government was also committed unto them, did no less perform the offices of their episcopal authority by governing, than of their apostolical by teaching. The word *ἐπισκοπή*, expressing that part of their office which did consist in regiment, moveth not (I grant) their chiefly in regiment over others, because as then, that name was common unto the function of their inferiors, and not peculiar unto theirs. But the history of their actions sheweth plainly enough how the thing itself which that name appropriated importeth, that is to say, such spiritual chiefly as we have already defined to be properly episcopal, was in the holy apostles of Christ." Hooker's Ecc. Pol. VII. iv. 1.

For a popular discussion of the subject, see "A Presbyterian Clergyman Looking for the Church," chap. xxii. "The true issue."

NOTE C.

Of the people, St. Jerome complaineth that their judgments many times went much awry, and that in allowing of their bishops, every man favoured his own quality; every one's desire was, not so much to be under the regiment of good and virtuous men, as of them which was like himself. What man is there whom it doth not exceedingly grieve to read the tumults, tragedies, and schisms, which were raised by occasion of the clergy at such time as, divers of them standing for some one place, there was not any kind of practice, though never so dishonest or vile, left unassayed whereby men might supplant their competitors, and the one side foil the other. Ecc. Pol. VIII. vii. 6.

NOTE D.

The author cannot allow this sermon to appear in print without the following remark, intended to supply an obvious omission which he deeply regrets, and which was pointed out by a kind and valued friend immediately after its delivery:

It is not intended to be implied that the choice of man, in every instance, falls upon those whom Christ has approved and qualified for office in His Church. In making the selection, men may be swayed by evil passions, or blinded by error, or influenced by unworthy motives; they may neglect the means appointed for obtaining divine illumination; or they may proceed without regard to the principles by which their choice should be guided. Thus they may fail of ascertaining whom Christ has chosen, and may themselves come under condemnation as having betrayed their trust. The individual upon whom their choice falls may be unworthy, and the Church may suffer grievous injury. Nevertheless, as Judas was appointed to the apostleship by the Lord Himself, and Demas was selected to be the companion of his labours by St. Paul, even this may be needful for the discipline and probation of the Church, and may be eventually overruled for good.

NOTE E.

"It happened to me to be with Lord Raglan in an hour of trial more bitter than that to which I, a mere subordinate officer, now find myself exposed, and I saw that my Chief was able to bear all, and to stand firm by the army in its time of need, because he simply cast away every thought of self, and remembered,—these were his very words—remembered his duty to the Queen." Addresses of Sir Richard Airey, page 212.

The thoughts suggested by the following touching lines on Acts i. 21, 22, from Keble's Christian year, would have been embodied in the sermon, but for want of space.

Who is God's chosen priest?

He, who on Christ stands waiting day and night,
Who trac'd his holy steps, nor ever ceased,
From Jordan's banks to Bethphage height:

Who hath learn'd lowliness

From his Lord's cradle, patience from His cross;
Whom poor men's eyes and hearts consent to bless;
To whom, for Christ, the world is loss;

Who both in agony

Hath seen Him and in glory; and in both
Own'd Him divine, and yielded, nothing loth,
Body and soul, to live and die,

In witness of his Lord,

In humble following of his Saviour dear:
This is the man to wield th' unearthly sword,
Warring unharm'd with sin and fear.

