

THE
CHURCHMAN

DECEMBER, 1887.

ART. I.—THE PROPOSED SUPPLEMENT TO THE
CHURCH CATECHISM.

IN the Catechism which the Church of England has appointed to be learned of every person before he be brought to be confirmed by the bishop, the catechumen is taught what privileges as a Christian he has received, and what he is, as a Christian, bound to believe and to do; and he is further instructed as to the nature and effects of the two Sacraments of Baptism and the Lord's Supper. But he is not taught anything concerning the Church—neither what it is, nor in what relation he stands to it. This omission the Lower House of the Convocation of Canterbury regards as a great defect, and, with the object of supplying it, the majority of that House have agreed upon the following series of questions and answers, which they have submitted to the Upper House to be adopted as a supplement to the existing Catechism, and to form part of the teaching of the Church of England in future:

I. (Q.) What meanest thou by the Church?—(A.) I mean the Body of which Jesus Christ is the Head, and of which I was made a member in my baptism.

II. (Q.) How is the Church described in the Creeds?—(A.) It is described as One, Holy, Catholic, and Apostolic.

III. (Q.) What meanest thou by each of these words?—(A.) I mean that the Church is One, as being One Body under the One Head; Holy, because the Holy Spirit dwells in it and sanctifies its members; Catholic, because it is for all nations and all times; and Apostolic, because it continues steadfastly in the Apostles' doctrine and fellowship.

IV. (Q.) We learn from Holy Scripture that in the Church the evil are mingled with the good. Shall it always be so?—(A.) No; when our Lord comes again, He will cast the evil out of His kingdom; will make His faithful servants perfect both in body and soul; and will present His whole Church to Himself without spot, and blameless.

V. (Q.) What is the office and work of the Church on earth?—(A.) The office and work of the Church on earth is to maintain and teach everywhere the true Faith of Christ, and to be His instrument for conveying grace to men, by the power of the Holy Ghost.

VI. (Q.) How did Our Lord provide for the government and continuance of the Church?—(A.) He gave authority to His Apostles to rule the Church; to minister His Word and Sacraments; and to ordain faithful men for the continuance of this ministry until His coming again.

VII. (Q.) What Orders of Ministers have there been in the Church from the Apostles' time?—(A.) Bishops, Priests, and Deacons.

VIII. (Q.) What is the office of a bishop?—(A.) The office of a bishop is to be a chief pastor and ruler of the Church; to confer Holy Orders; to administer confirmation; and to take the chief part in the ministry of the Word and Sacraments.

IX. (Q.) What is the office of a priest?—(A.) The office of a priest is to preach the Word of God; to baptize; to celebrate the Holy Communion; to pronounce absolution and blessing in God's Name; and to feed the flock committed by the bishop to his charge.

X. (Q.) What is the office of a deacon?—(A.) The office of a deacon is to assist the priest in Divine Service, and specially at the Holy Communion; to baptize infants in the absence of the priest; to catechize; to preach, if authorised by the bishop; and to search for the sick and the poor.

XI. (Q.) What is required of members of the Church?—(A.) To endeavour by God's help to fulfil their baptismal vows; to make full use of the means of grace; to remain steadfast in the communion of the Church; and to forward the work of the Church at home and abroad.

XII. (Q.) Why is it our duty to belong to the Church of England?—(A.) Because the Church of England has inherited and retains the doctrine and ministry of the One Catholic and Apostolic Church, and is that part of the Church which has been settled from early times in our country.

I do not think it at all likely that the Upper House will adopt the proposal of the Lower, and therefore in the following paper I shall not enter upon the question whether it would be lawful for Convocation to impose upon the Church of England any such supplement to our present Catechism. But the fact that these questions and answers have been agreed upon by a large majority of the Lower House gives them of itself a weight and certain appearance of authority, which may cause many, both of the clergy and laity, to regard them as expressing the doctrine of the Church of England upon the subject to which they relate; whereas they are, as I shall endeavour to show, in one fundamental point directly opposed to the teaching of some of our most eminent divines, to the language of our Book of Common Prayer, and to the statements of our Blessed Lord Himself. In other particulars also the answers which the catechumen is instructed to give are such as would be strongly objected to by many who are loyal members of our Church.

I am well aware that, in speaking thus of what has been, after much discussion, deliberately approved by such a body of clergymen as the Lower House of the Convocation of Canterbury, I shall appear liable to the charge of great presumption and self-conceit. But the matter appears to me of so great

importance to the welfare of the Church that I cannot remain silent upon it; and I am confirmed in my view of it both by the eminent names to be found among those who voted in the minority, and also by the letters which have since appeared in the *Guardian* and other newspapers.

I propose, therefore, to submit to the readers of THE CHURCHMAN the reasons why I consider these questions and answers to be altogether unsuitable for the purpose for which they are designed—viz., that of teaching the children of Church of England parents what they are “bound to believe and to do” in their relation to the Church.

For their instruction herein they must obviously, first of all, be taught what the Church is; and accordingly the proposed Supplementary Catechism rightly commences with the question, “What meanest thou by the Church?” The answer, however, “I mean the Body of which Jesus Christ is the Head,” would not of itself convey to a catechumen any idea of what the Church really is—an *assembly* or *society* of persons separated from all others by certain “notes of distinction,” as Hooker says. The description of the Church as the Body of Christ (Ephes. i. 22; v. 3; and Col. i. 18), like the description of it as the Wife of the Lamb (Rev. xix. 7; comp. Ephes. v. 22-33), or as a Holy Temple, builded on Jesus Christ as the chief Corner-Stone, for an Habitation of God through the Spirit, represents only the spiritual relation of the Church to Christ, and of the members to one another. It does not tell us of whom the Church consists, and is therefore altogether unfit for a definition.

“The conception of the Church which has been handed down to us by the acknowledged masters of Anglican theology may be seen,” as the Rev. Brownlow Maitland has observed in an able letter to the *Guardian*, “in Hooker’s ‘Ecclesiastical Polity,’ Book III., and in Barrow’s ‘Sermon on the Unity of the Church.’”¹ According to it, the term *Church* taken absolutely and apart from particular uses, covers two entirely distinct bodies or communities—the one being distinguished as *mystical*, the other as *visible*. The mystical Church,” he adds, “is defined as the sum total, known to God alone, of all true members of Christ, whether passed away, still living, or yet to be born, who together make up the Body of Christ in its pre-ordained completeness. On the other hand, the visible Church is the aggregate of the various communities of baptized persons professing the faith of Christ which at any moment exist in the world, and is a body in con-

¹ Extracts from these works are appended to this paper.

tinual flux, full of imperfections, and comprising both the sincere and insincere, the good and the evil."

From this conception of the Church the proposed Supplemental Catechism, as Mr. Maitland remarks, "departs fundamentally." It entirely ignores the "distinction between the ideal and the actual" Church—the mystical body of Christ and the multitude of baptized persons in the various local Churches throughout the world. Omitting any express description of the Society which constitutes the Body of Christ, it teaches the catechumen to say that he was admitted into it at his baptism. "And of which (Body) I was made a member in my baptism." This answer, it must be observed, is followed by nothing to qualify it. It stands altogether by itself, and therefore implies that every baptized person was at his baptism made a member—and, consequently, that all who have been baptized are, or have been, members—of the Church which is the mystical Body of Christ. In other words, the proposed Supplemental Catechism teaches that all those who constitute the visible Church, in which, as is expressly affirmed in the fourth question, "the evil are mingled with the good," are the Body of which Christ is the Head; a doctrine directly contrary to that of Hooker and Barrow;—contrary also to the language of our Book of Common Prayer, which explains the mystical Body of Christ to be "the blessed company of all faithful people;"—and contrary to the sayings of our Lord Himself, who, in His Sermon upon the Mount, told His disciples that at the last day He should reply to many who would say unto Him, "Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in Thy name . . . and done many wonderful works?" (*i.e.*, to many who had been members of the visible Church), "I never knew you;" a saying which certainly implies that they had never been members of His Body. Also, in the parable of the tares and the wheat, wherein He prophetically represented the visible Church as it should in future ages exist in the world, while He described the good, represented by the wheat sown by the Son of Man, as the children of the kingdom, He described the evil, represented by the tares mingled with them, as *the children of the wicked one*, who had been sown by the devil; and who, therefore, could never have been members of the Body of which Christ is the Head.

It may indeed be said that the latter part of this answer is in exact agreement with our present Catechism, wherein the catechumen is taught to say that he was, in his baptism, "made a member of Christ, the child of God, and an inheritor of the kingdom of heaven." But in our present Catechism this answer is followed by the question, "Dost thou not think that thou art bound to believe, and to do, as they have

promised for thee?" to which the catechumen is taught to reply, "Yes, verily, and by God's help so I will. And I heartily thank our heavenly Father, that He hath called me to this state of salvation, through Jesus Christ our Saviour. And I pray unto God to give me His grace, that I may continue in the same unto my life's end." The two answers in the Church Catechism are so connected with each other, that the person who makes the first is assumed to be able to make the second; and whosoever can make the second may also rightly make the first, by which he expresses his assurance that he has been truly baptized by *the Spirit* into the Body of Christ.

The result of ignoring this distinction, so clearly and correctly pointed out by Mr. Maitland, appears in the next two answers of the proposed Supplementary Catechism upon the description of the Church as "one, Holy, Catholic, and Apostolic." The questions evidently relate to the visible Church, in respect to which the late Dean McNeil, in his valuable work upon the "Church and the Churches," says that what we commonly term the Church, being the "visible society which God has been pleased to institute of all baptized persons, has become the visible dwelling-place of the Church of God in its successive generations while militant here on earth, and is called by many of those titles (*used in a lower sense*), which in their high, true, literal sense, belong only to the Church mystical, comprised among the members of this society." To the same effect is the teaching of Hooker and Barrow (see Appendix).

But this proposed Supplement, in answer to the question (which, as I have said, evidently refers to the whole multitude of baptized persons), "What meanest thou by each of these words?" altogether ignores any such explanation of them, and, instead of teaching the catechumen that they are, all or any of them, to be regarded as "*used in a lower sense*," teaches him that they mean what they would if the Church of the baptized were identical with the Church of the elect, the *many called* identical with the *few chosen*. Now, when we reflect upon the present condition of the visible Church—the fundamental differences among the separate Churches of which it is composed as to their articles of faith and their modes of worship, and their feelings towards one another—would it be possible for us to teach our children that they all really constitute one Body under the One Head, that the Holy Spirit sanctifies all their members, and that they all "continue steadfastly" in the Apostles' doctrine and fellowship?

Upon the answer to the fifth question, "What is the office and work of the Church on earth?" that it is "To maintain and teach everywhere the true Faith of Christ, and to be His

instrument for conveying grace to men, by the power of the Holy Ghost," I have found it very difficult to form a distinct opinion. In an able letter to the *Guardian*, Canon Bernard expresses his "strong sense of its scantiness and inadequacy," and herein I perfectly agree with him. He proposes to substitute for it, "To glorify God by worship and service, to keep and teach the true faith of Christ, to be His instrument in His ministration of grace and salvation, and to preach His gospel to the world." This would certainly be a very great improvement upon that proposed by the Lower House of Convocation; for the special office of the Church is, as declared by it, to *glorify God* (Eph. iii. 10, 21); and this *by worship and service*. But both the one and the other answer appear to regard the Church rather as a human organization (which indeed every particular branch of the visible Church really is, but which is not the aspect in which the question leads us to regard it), than as a company of believers, or professed believers, in Christ, which is the character in which it is always represented to us in the Apostolical Epistles. There seems to me to be in them a confusion between the office and work of the Church as designed of God, and the duty of a particular Church as an ecclesiastical association. "The Church of God at Corinth," "the Churches of Galatia," "the Church of the Thessalonians in God the Father and in the Lord Jesus Christ," to which the Epistles of St. Paul were addressed, and the seven Churches of Asia, to which our Lord's messages were sent, were all local branches of the visible Church, such as is the Church of England at the present day; and we might expect that we should be able to learn from the Apostle's Epistles, and from our Lord's messages, what was their proper office and work. We could not, however, learn from them what it is proposed to teach the catechumen in the answer of the proposed supplement or in the latter part of that suggested by Canon Bernard. The Scriptures convey the divine idea of the office and work of a Christian community; these answers seem to express the human idea of the office and work of an institution founded for religious purposes.

The following five questions and answers are intended to instruct the catechumen as to what he is to believe concerning the provision which our Lord made for the government and continuance of the Church. The time does not allow me to examine them severally in detail; but I would observe that, if I understand their purport rightly (and I am confirmed in my view by the debate upon them in Convocation), they teach (1) that none but the Apostles, and those ordained by them for the continuance of the ministry, were in the primitive Church authorised "to minister His Word and Sacraments;" (2) that

the three orders of bishops, priests and deacons were instituted by the Apostles for the government and continuance of this ministry in all branches of the Church throughout all future ages, so that without them there could be no valid ministry, and no true Church; and (3) that the functions of bishops, priests and deacons have been substantially the same in all the Churches of Christ from the beginning to the present time.

Now I am aware that members of the old High Church School, many of them eminent for their holiness and their learning, have in former generations held, and do in the present hold, these opinions; but the members of the Lower House of the Convocation of Canterbury, who would impose this supplementary catechism upon the Church of England, must also be aware that those who belong to what is called the Low Church School, many of them also eminent for their holiness and learning, have in every generation regarded the same opinions as unauthorised either by the Scriptures, or by the earliest Christian writers, or by our own Church.

The Scriptures, while they tell us that our Lord, gave to the Church, together with Apostles, prophets, and evangelists, also pastors and teachers, do not tell us how these were appointed or what was the distinction between them. They tell us also that Paul and Barnabas, after they were expressly chosen by the Holy Ghost to be Apostles to the Gentiles, were ordained with the laying on of hands by "certain prophets and teachers" at Antioch; and they indicate that Apollos, whom the Apostle Paul called his *brother*, and whose ministerial work he distinctly recognised, was never ordained, but only received letters from the brethren at Ephesus exhorting the disciples at Corinth to receive him. The angels of the seven Churches, to whom the messages of our Lord, recorded in Rev. ii. and iii., were commanded by Him to be given, are supposed, with probability, by many commentators, to have been presiding bishops; but this is only a matter of conjecture.

Again, the Scriptures tell us that St. Paul "ordained elders in every Church" which he founded in Asia (Acts xiv. 23); and that these, who were called by him *bishops* (Acts xx. 25) were ordained by the laying on of his hands (2 Tim. i. 6), and the hands of *the presbytery*. Moreover, we read that he appointed Timothy and Titus to the temporary charge over the Churches at Ephesus and Crete, with what we should call episcopal authority as to ordination, and the maintenance of discipline; but we do not read of any similar appointments over other Churches, nor of the practice of any Churches as to confirmation and other matters.

Our own Church says, as the proposed Supplementary Catechism says, that from the Apostles' time there have been

these orders of ministry in Christ's Church: bishops, priests and deacons; but it does not say that they have been in *all* the Churches of Christ. They may have been, and probably were, in the Church of Ephesus, when they were not in the Church of Corinth. Our Church also ascribes the appointments of divers orders of ministers in the Church to "the divine providence" of Almighty God (Ordering of Deacons), and to His "Holy Spirit" (Ordering of Priests and Consecration of bishops); but it does not say that they have been so appointed for every particular Church, and that it is imperative upon all Churches to have them. Again, in the 23rd Article of Religion, "Of Ministering in the Congregation," our Church, while forbidding any man "to take upon him the office of public preaching, or ministering the sacraments in the congregation, before he be lawfully called and sent to execute the same," says that "those we ought to consider lawfully called and sent which be"—not ordered by bishops, but—"chosen and called to this work by men who have public authority given unto them in the congregation to call and send ministers into the Lord's vineyard."

The "Excursus" of Bishop Lightfoot on the Christian ministry in his edition of the "Epistle to the Philippians," and his edition of the "Epistles of St. Ignatius," upon which is an able paper by an English Presbyter in the *CHURCHMAN* of last July, show that, in the judgment of one who combines in a remarkable degree a power of careful examination and freedom from prejudice with extensive learning and sound judgment, neither the Scriptures nor the earliest Christian writers warrant us in assuming that episcopacy was the only form of Church government in the primitive Church.

It is not, therefore, surprising that the proposal to impose upon us a catechism, which would teach our children that the Presbyterian clergy of Scotland and America, and of the Churches on the Continent of Europe, together with the ministers of all Wesleyan, Baptist, Congregational, and other Christian communities throughout the world, were none of them to be accounted true ministers of Christ, should have excited in a large number of loyal members of the Church of England the feeling expressed to me in a letter from an old friend, that "if these sentiments gain much hold upon the clergy, we shall be dŕestablished, and *deservedly*." The following extract from a sermon by the late Archdeacon Hare, sent me by the same friend, expresses the opinion of that eminent man upon the subject:

I can only express my regret that, where such strong arguments in favour of episcopacy may be drawn from the history and idea of the Church, many of its advocates, not content with proving that it is *the*

best form of Church government, have resolved to make out that it is the only one, and have tried to rest it upon Scriptural grounds, which, in fact, only weaken their case. For I cannot discover the shadow of a word in the Gospels to countenance the interpretation referred to. Feeble and flimsy as are the Scriptural arguments on which the Romanists maintain the inalienable primacy of St. Peter, they are far more specious and plausible than those derived from the same source, on the strength of which it has been attempted to establish the absolute necessity of episcopacy to the existence of a Christian Church. I am aware the interpretation I am controverting has been maintained by some very eminent divines in former times. But a greater weight of authority is against it. Our Reformers, and the still more highly gifted men whom God called up in Germany and France to awaken the Church out of her spiritual sleep, knew nothing of the absolute necessity contended for; although they, too, would gladly have retained the episcopal order in their Churches, if the course of events would have allowed of it. And need I remind you what is the argument of the noblest work our Church has produced, the *Ecclesiastical Polity*? You know that, instead of arguing that episcopacy is the only institution conformable to Scripture, the point Hooker undertook to prove was that episcopacy is not contrary to Scripture, as it was declared to be by the Puritans. He contends that, while in matters of Faith there must be unity because the object of Faith is one, in matters of polity and discipline there may be diversity; yet that every established form of ecclesiastical government is rightly to be esteemed ordained by God, even as every established form of civil government is ordained by God. On this foundation he raises his structure; and thus the arguments in favour of episcopacy, from the history and idea of the Church, become all the stronger, being freed from the strengthless props by which they are usually surrounded.

As evidence, also, of the opinion held by many learned men upon the subject, I would refer to a sermon upon the subject in a volume by the present Dean of Peterborough, entitled, "The Church, the Ministry, and the Sacraments."

On the answer to the eleventh question, "What is required of members of the Church?" I would observe that, according to our present Catechism, *all* which is required of a Christian is that he should fulfil his baptismal vows. The use of the means of grace (what these are is not mentioned in the proposed supplement) is requisite only for enabling him to fulfil them. To "remain steadfast in the communion of the Church, and to forward the work of the Church at home and abroad," are requirements which seem to have been suggested by the idea of a Church of human organization rather than one of divine institution. It describes the duty of a zealous Churchman rather than that of an earnest Christian.

The answer to the twelfth question, "Why is it our duty to belong to the Church of England?" implies that the Church of England has inherited and retained from its first settlement in this country the doctrine as well as the ministry of the one Catholic and Apostolic Church. If this had been so, there would have been no need of the Reformation of the sixteenth century; and, indeed, the rejection of the

Bishop of Colchester's proposal to insert a reference to the Reformation would almost seem to show that, in the opinion of the majority of the Lower House of the Convocation of Canterbury, there was no need for it. It would, however, be an evil day for the Church of England when this was made a part of the catechetical instruction of her children.

I have now finished my painful task. It has occupied much more time than I anticipated; and yet I am conscious of having performed it very imperfectly. I trust, however, that, notwithstanding I may have fallen into error in some particulars, the substance of what I have written will commend itself to an unprejudiced reader. I am aware that in writing so strongly in condemnation of this proposed catechism upon the Church, I shall myself be condemned for casting a grave stigma upon a body of men, many of whom are held in high estimation for their intellectual abilities, their learning, and personal piety. I am very sorry to have been constrained to do so; but their high position and great influence render the propagation of erroneous doctrine the more dangerous, and the obligation to withstand its progress upon those who so regard it the more imperative. I do not hesitate to say that I regard the doctrine of this proposed catechism as full of danger to the Church of England; and I have felt that, as an aged Bishop, holding no office which gives me a voice in the councils of the Church, I ought not to shrink from expressing my opinion in the manner that I have done.

CHARLES PERRY (BP.).

HOOKER, Book iii.

That Church of Christ, which we properly term His Body mystical, can be but one; neither can that one be sensibly discerned by any man; inasmuch as the parts thereof are some in heaven already with Christ, and the rest that are on earth (albeit their natural persons are visible) we do not discern under this property, whereby they are truly and infallibly of that Body. Only our minds, by intelligent consent, are able to apprehend that such a real Body there is, a Body collective, because it is a huge multitude; a Body mystical, because the mystery of the conjunction is removed altogether from sense. Whatsoever we read in Scripture concerning the endless love and the saving mercy which God showeth towards His Church, the only proper subject thereof is this Church. Concerning this flock it is that our Lord and Saviour hath promised, "*I give unto them eternal life, and they shall never perish, neither shall any pluck them out of My hands.*" They who are of this Society have such marks and notes of distinction from all others, as are not objects unto our senses; only unto God who seeth the hearts and understandeth all the secret cogitations, unto Him they are clear and manifest.

And as those everlasting promises of Love, Mercy and Blessedness belong to the mystical Church, even so, on the other side, when we read of any duty which the Church of God is bound unto, the Church whom this doth concern is a sensible known company, and this visible Church

in like sort is but one, continued from the first beginning of the world to the last end. The unity of which visible Body and Church of Christ consisteth in that uniformity which all several persons thereunto belonging have, by reason of that *one Lord*, whose servants they all profess themselves; that *one Faith*, which they all acknowledge; that *one Baptism*, wherewith they are all initiated. The visible Church of Christ is therefore one, in outward profession of those things which supernaturally appertain to the very essence of Christianity, and are necessarily required in every particular Christian man. . . . Is it, then, possible, he asks, that the selfsame man should belong both to the Synagogue of Satan and to the Church of Christ? Unto that Church, which is his mystical Body, not possible; because that Body consisteth of none but only true Israelites, true sons of Abraham, true servants and saints of God. Howbeit of the visible Body and Church of Jesus Christ, those may be, and oftentimes are, in respect of the main points of their outward profession, who in regard of their inward disposition of mind—yea, of external conversation—yea, even of some parts of their very profession, are most worthily both hateful in the sight of God Himself, and, in the eyes of the sounder part of the visible Church, most execrable.

UNITY OF THE CHURCH.

EPHESIANS iv. 4: "One body and one spirit."

DR. BARROW writes:

We must observe that to the Catholic Society of true believers and faithful servants of Christ, diffused through all ages, dispersed through all countries, whereof part doth sojourn on earth, part doth reside in heaven, part is not yet existent; but all whereof is described in the register of Divine preordination, and shall be collected at the resurrection of the just; that, I say, to this Church especially, all the glorious titles and excellent privileges attributed to the Church in Holy Scripture do agree.

This is the Body of Christ, whereof He is the Head and Saviour.

This is the spouse and wife of Christ, whereof He is the bridegroom and husband.

This is the House of God, whereof our Lord is the Master; which is built "on a rock," so that the gates of hell shall not prevail against it. . . .

This is the "elect generation, royal priesthood, holy nation, peculiar people."

This is "the general assembly and Church of the first-born, who are enrolled in heaven."

This is "the Church which God hath purchased with His own blood;" and for which Christ hath delivered Himself, that He might sanctify it, and cleanse it with the washing of water by the Word, that He might present it to Himself a glorious Church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it might be holy and unblemished.

Afterwards he adds:

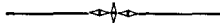
The same titles also, in some order and measure do belong and are attributed to the Universal Church sojourning on earth.

For, because this visible Church doth enfold the other; because, presumptively, every member of this doth pass for a member of the other (the time for distinction and separation not being yet come); because this, in its profession of truth, in its sacrifices of devotion, in its practice of service and duty, doth communicate with that; therefore

commonly the titles and attributes of the one are imparted to the other.

"All," saith St. Paul, "are not Israel who are of Israel," nor is he a Jew that is one outwardly ; yet in regard to the conjunction of the rest with the faithful Israelites, because of external consent in the same profession, and conspiring in the same services, all the congregation of Israel is styled "a holy nation," "a peculiar people."

So, likewise, do the Apostles speak to all members of the Church as the elect and holy persons, unto whom all the privileges of Christianity do belong ; although really hypocrites and bad men do not belong to the Church, nor are concerned in its unity, as St. Austin doth often teach.



ART. II.—"THE LIFE OF THE WORLD TO COME."

THE familiar confession, so often made in our modern congregations, "*I look for the resurrection of the dead, and the LIFE OF THE WORLD TO COME,*" has been avowed, though not always in those words, by the very noblest saints in bygone ages. "The elders," in a long course of centuries, "all died in faith," not having received *the promise*;¹ and when we study their biographies (many of them inspired), in order to ascertain the object to which they were looking on, we have strong ground for concluding that they expected *a perfectly recovered human existence on man's earth renewed.*

That expectation, if it *was* the end which they foresaw, would be in accordance with human nature's deepest needs. Amidst the groanings, the disappointments, the perplexities of this revolving globe, nothing could be more reasonably attractive to men or women intelligently pious than the prospect of vigorous health of body, mind, and spirit, with surroundings exactly adapted to gratify it, in the visible presence of the Redeemer.

And the conduct of those ancient worthies justifies the inference that the future before their mind's eye corresponded accurately to the truest longings of man ; because their whole being was unmistakably stirred, purified, and refreshed by it. In times of tribulation or of wealth they patiently wrought righteousness ; they waxed valiant in fight, and out of weakness were made strong, through their faith in a resurrection to "a better country."

Nevertheless, the very future which appears to have so constantly cheered and improved those former generations is not the usual object of expectation with large numbers of godly folk in the present day. The ancient hope has vanished from very many hearts. The complaint of Dr. Chalmers, about

¹ Heb. xi. 39.