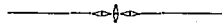


variety in views. I do not like this word "views," but I am at a loss to find another which expresses what I mean. There must be differences in our aspect of facts. Minds, circumstances, abilities, intelligences, and tastes vary. What is one man's meat is another man's poison. This cannot be helped. There are diversities of operations by the same Spirit of God. But among things needful, that we may be Christians indeed, in whom is no guile, the knowledge and use of this law is not merely desirable, but prominent, essential, inevitable. We must honestly follow after truth ourselves, and be ready to believe that those from whom we differ may be equally sincere. The Father seeketh such in all the relationships of life.

Then divisions, or parties, if we like to term them so, lose their sting, their taint, their bad nature, and yet retain all their force. As each seeks truth rather than victory or sectional triumph, so, and so alone, the cause of righteousness advances in the Church and in the State. We must not be silenced by the reply that this is Utopian. It is simply true. And only as it prevails can there be true national and individual life. This is the salt of the earth which alone saves the people and the man from corruption, disappointment, and shame. The Father seeketh such to worship Him, or to serve Him, in any way. It is this which marks the "Christian" way of life and work, as distinguished from the ancient Jewish or the modern worldly.



ART. IV. — FASTING COMMUNION NEITHER PRIMITIVE, NOR APOSTOLIC, NOR DIVINE.

PART II.

PASSING onwards down the stream of history, we find no support for the practice of fasting before Communion, notwithstanding the efforts made by some to discern such support where none exists, until we come to Tertullian, A.D. 192, who as a Montanist would regard fasting as meritorious. We are not, therefore, surprised at his praise of the woman who received the Communion *secreto* and *ante omnem cibum*. But his evidence as to the practice of the Church goes quite in the opposite direction in another passage as follows: "Eucharistiæ Sacramentum omnibus mandatam a domino tempore victûs ETIAM in antelucanis cœtibus de presidentium manu sumimus" — "The Sacrament which was commanded by the Lord to all at the time of food, we partake of ALSO at our meetings before dawn at the hand of the presiders."

This is clear evidence that what our Lord commanded still

was observed in the practice of the Church, though Mr. Puller with inaccuracy translates *mandatum* "administered," and is also evidence that evening celebrations at meal-time still survived in Christian communities. And here, as an admirable comment on Tertullian's "Etiam in antelucanis cœtibus," it is well to add the late learned Bishop Jeune's words, taken from his charge in 1867, and so recently quoted by the Bishop of Exeter with approval:

The hour of administration has varied greatly in the Christian Church. In Tertullian's time it was observed, not only in the evening at the Love-feast, but in assemblies before dawn. In the age of St. Augustine, the Christians of Egypt were in the habit of communicating on Saturday evening, but generally in the morning, certain days excepting, when the administration was in the afternoon. St. Augustine, too, observes that in some places in Africa, on the Thursday before Easter, the Communion was administered both morning and evening, and in other places only towards night. Our Church has not limited the celebration of the Holy Communion to any special hours of the day. The ordinary time of celebration is at the close of the first hour of evening. But warrant and example there surely is for evening Communion in the institution of His Supper by the Lord, and in the practice of Apostolic and after times.

The valuable note in Bingham is also to be read with care on this point: ("Fell. Not. in Cyprian Epist.," lxiii., p. 156). "Constat Eucharistiam licet horis antelucanis sumtam vespere etiam distribui solitam, cujus rei locuples testis Tertullianus" (Lib. de Cor., ciii). 'Eucharistiæ sacramentum tempore victûs de presidentium manu sumimus,' and "Consuetudo post cœnam communicandi diu duravit in ecclesiâ."

Now it will be noted that, notwithstanding the growing prevalence of exaggerated and metaphorical language as to the Lord's Supper, and the admitted and consequent increase of the practice of fasting before Communion, there was no appeal at this date to an Apostolic or Divine authority to justify the custom. Such a notion was never dreamt of till much farther on down the centuries.

The practice CREPT in, and centuries later it was necessary to imagine, even if it could not be produced, an Apostolic direction for a practice the very opposite to that of our blessed Lord. But the Saviour's example lived long in the early Church, for the practice of Communion on Saturdays after the daily meal was for centuries observed by such large and important Christian communities as those in the vicinity of Alexandria, the Thebaid, and others in Egypt itself (Socrates, quoted by Bingham, "Antiq.," vol. v., p. 292). Would such a widespread custom have been possible contrary to Apostolic practice and precept? If such precept, reversing the order of Christ, was appealed to by the Church of that age, let it eb

produced, or proof given that such an Apostolic precept was even THOUGHT of at this date.

In the article in "Biblical Antiquities" we find the following passage on this custom of some of the African Churches: "The practice then noticed was probably a relic of the primitive Church, both as to time and manner, when the Lord's Supper had been like other suppers, eaten in the evening; when an evening meeting on the first day of the week meant the evening of Saturday (Jewish mode); when the thought that fasting was a necessary condition of partaking of the Supper of the Lord was not merely not present to men's minds, but was absolutely excluded by the Apostle's rule that men who could not wait patiently when the members of the Church met, should satisfy their hunger beforehand in their own houses" (E. H. P.).

Advancing to Cyprian's time, A.D. 248, we still find evidence of the prevalence of the custom of after-supper Communion. Cyprian, contending with the Aquarians, does not contend with them (Bingham) about celebrating after supper, but only because they did not use wine on BOTH occasions. He would not have so easily passed over the evening celebration had not the custom been *largely prevalent*; all he contends for is that the general custom of the Church to celebrate only in the morning was not contrary to the rule of Christ: "Though He gave it in the evening after supper, because He had particular reason for what He did to signify the end of the world; but we offer in the morning to celebrate His resurrection" (Bingham, "Antiq.," vol. v., p. 294)—a statement unwarranted as a matter of fact and theologically unsound, inasmuch as the Lord's Supper is "for the continual remembrance of the sacrifice of the death of Christ" (see Cor. xi. 26).

And he gives another reason why they did not celebrate in the evening—because the people could not so well come together in the evening as in the morning, an argument which nowadays makes as strongly in favour of evening Communion, as it possibly in Cyprian's day may have told against it. He (Cyprian) plainly implies the prevalence of non-fasting Communion when he says "that people who only offered water in the morning should not salve their consciences by offering the mixed chalice when they came together AD CŒNANDUM"; and his arguments as above are obviously and wholly unconvincing, as against Communion after supper.

Once more we ask, Where in the history of the Church up to this date is there any trace of any Apostolic tradition against post cœnal Communion, or in favour of fasting Communion, or even of any knowledge of or belief in the existence of such tradition? We can see nothing of the kind; but we

CAN see the rise of superstition, we can read the carnal, metaphorical, exaggerated language of many of the Fathers with regard to the Lord's Supper, and we know of the slanders and persecutions of the heathen. Then, as now, were banded together against the doctrine and custom of the primal Church the dragon, the false prophet, and the wild beast.

We may safely sum up the question to this date in the words found in Bingham's note: "Exhis patet totis tribus primis Christianismi seculis, tametsi sacramentum mane sumi soleret, apud ecclesiam usitatum fuisse ut id etiam a cenatis sumeretur" (Vid. Dall., "De objecto Cult. Relig.," lib. ii., chap. xiv.; Bingham, vol. v., p. 293).

We now come to the time of Augustine and the Council of Carthage, A.D. 397, of which he was a member, when it was attempted to stamp out the primitive custom by the decree: "Ut sacramenta altaris non nisi a jejuniis hominibus celebrantur excepto uno die anniversario (quo cœna Domini celebratur)"—an unscriptural prohibition, which bears remarkable testimony to the nature of the Divine institution, and the time and hour of its original appointment, and, be it noted, to the prevalence of the custom in the Church of non-fasting Communion. About the same time is the letter of Augustine to Januarius ("Epist.," cxviii.): "Though it be apparent (*satisliquidum*) that when the disciples first received the body and blood of the Lord they did not receive fasting, yet does anyone blame the universal Church because all men receive fasting?" and he goes on to argue from the expression (1 Cor. xi.): "The rest will I set in order when I come"—that fasting Communion was then made the rule of the Church by the Apostle Paul (Bingham, vol. v., p. 289).

This bold assertion, the great name of Augustine, and the other influences already at work, undoubtedly immensely strengthened the practice of fasting Communion; and at last, A.D. 680, the Council of Trullo forbade even the Maundy Thursday celebration in the evening, authorized by the Council of Carthage, by which provincial Councils we are as much bound as by the decrees of the Council of Constance in 1414, which forbade the cup to the laity.

And now let us return to Augustine's letter, upon which, as the apex of the pyramid, the erroneous edifice is built.

Quoting St. Paul's words, τὰ λοιπά, in 1 Cor. xi. 34, "The rest will I set in order when I come," he deduces from them—he does not state a fact, he merely draws an inference from the words of St. Paul, by the flimsiest process of reasoning, that "fasting Communion" was the rule established by the Apostle when he came to Corinth.

And when we ask the evidence of this astounding assertion,

will it be believed that all we have is Augustine's words, "unde intelligi datur"?

We are told that St. Paul reversed his own solemn authoritative conclusion; we are told we may invert or read backwards the canon in Holy Writ, laid down by the Apostle, upon the feeble and utterly erroneous conclusion, "unde intelligi datur."

There is no pretence at bringing forward evidence as to matter of fact. The argument of Augustine is simply this. "The custom of fasting Communion is very general (universal it was not), THEREFORE this was one of the things altered by St. Paul," a conclusion which is to be met with an unhesitating negative.

If the *ipse dixit* of Augustine, or of the erratic Tertullian, be of sufficient weight to override the plain directions of Holy Scripture, there is an end of the Bible as a rule of faith or practice, and there is substituted for it the varying uses of the Church, not of the first century, but of the fourth or fifth or seventh century. The abuses in Corinth were most grave and serious, and they were brought to the formal notice of the Apostle. He blames them for indecent haste, he warns them of the judgment of God, and he solemnly lays down the remedy for their unseemly participation of the Lord's Supper.

"If any man hunger let him eat at home"; he does not recommend fasting Communion; he commands with all his Apostolic authority the very reverse.

But there were other matters, τὰ λοιπά, therefore not this. This question he had settled—he had spoken, "causa finita est," but there were "other" matters, *i.e.*, matters outside this, upon which he had not spoken, and, plainly and without doubt, those matters were "the rest" which he would "set in order" when he came.

The removal¹ of the abuses in Corinth was a crying and an *immediate* necessity—the judgment of God was abroad in death and sickness, and the inspired Apostle lays down the authoritative decision, and, the necessity being an imperative and pressing one, he meets it, not in the future, but at once with the rule, "If any man hunger let him eat at home."

We are asked to believe that the Apostle St. Paul contradicted his own written words, and reversed his own official and inspired decision, upon the strength of Augustine's "unde intelligi datur."

We must in this matter take our stand on the impregnable rock of Holy Scripture, and as from that elevation we survey the subsequent centuries, we are shut up to the conclusion, not

¹ See again the late Rev. C. H. Marriott's tract, to which I am again here indebted.

that early Communion is to be forbidden to the discretion of the Church, but that fasting Communion is neither so consonant to the institution of the rite by our blessed Lord, nor so agreeable to the practice of the primitive Church, whereby every meal was consecrated, and the solemn rite itself was made a part of and to follow the supper of the *Ἀγάπη*, of which Chrysostom says, "It was a custom most beautiful and most beneficial, for it was a supporter of love, a solace of poverty, a moderator of wealth, and a discipline of humility."

But it is sometimes said the "Church has power to decree rites or ceremonies." True, but we have shown *this* alteration was not made by Apostolic or primitive authority; and granting the AUTHORITY of the Church to decree rites, no such decree WAS made either by the Church or by General Council, and, even if it were, such decree may have been wrong or inadvisable.

The authority of a judge, a parent, or a teacher is not always wisely exercised, and Churches and General Councils "MAY err and HAVE erred, even in things pertaining to God," so that we cannot accept the practice of fasting Communion either as consistent with Holy Scripture, or as having been commanded by the primitive Church, or desirable on the ground that it was prescribed by some provincial Council of Carthage, or on the flimsy basis of "unde intelligi datur," or because it was enforced by King Edgar, A.D. 960, when our British Church was under the heel of Rome and transubstantiation was formulated, and this practice was used to impress the delusion.

Again, it is argued that because certain matters may have been legitimately changed, this change is also desirable. Without stopping to comment on the reasoning, it may be said that the change of the Sabbath was probably (*a*) of Apostolic origin, and answers to the (*b*) test, "Quod semper, ubique ab omnibus," but that fasting Communion is certainly not of Apostolic origin, and for four centuries did not comply with Vincentius Lirinensis' canon as above.

It is said that change has been made as regards posture, the upper room, the private house, the ordinary dress.

Passing over the fact that the surplice is a relic of the ordinary dress, and the argument that had we strictly followed our Lord's example many troubles would have been saved the Church, it is sufficient to say that changes consistent with the spirit of the sacred ordinance, and upon which there rests no suspicion that *the object of their introduction was to teach transubstantiation*, are very different things from the introduction of such a change as "fasting Communion," which is opposed to the very essence and soul of the ordinance, and against which there is in the prayer of consecration the ever-

lasting protest of the Church of England, "Likewise, after supper, He took the cup."

If fasting Communion is consistent with the mind of the Church, why perpetuate the condemnation of it thus contained in the services of the Church? The Church of England enjoins kneeling in the reception of Holy Communion, but until she gives as clear a direction as to fasting as she does with reference to kneeling reception, no arguments from the change in the latter direction are of any use as regards a practice against which the words just quoted in the Communion Service are a standing warning.

It will also be noticed that in the inspired accounts of the sacred ordinance it is not the dress, nor the posture of the recipients, nor the place of its institution which has been eternally stamped upon the forefront of the holy rite, but only the time of its celebration, and the fact of its reception "after supper."

It is this fact, destructive as it is, of fasting Communion which the Spirit of God has engraved upon the rite by the title of "The Lord's Supper."

There is no rule in the Church of England fixing the time of celebration. Dr. Hook says, "THERE IS NO DIRECTION about what time of the day it shall be used, only custom has determined that it shall be used in the forenoon" ("Church Dictionary").

And we may fairly suppose with the late Bishop of Lincoln that the possibility of evening—which of course would be non-fasting—Communion is contemplated in the rubric, which directs that "the table shall stand where morning and EVENING prayers are appointed to be said."

But another and grave objection to fasting Communion is derived from the object with which the practice is now pressed. Under the plea of greater reverence—greater reverence than that prescribed by the example of our most blessed Lord and His Apostles!—it is used to teach the doctrine that there is "a substantial presence of Christ's body" made to coalesce with or under the forms or veils of the elements by the act of consecration."

It is admitted that many, of course, have advocated fasting Communion who do not hold either this delusion or the almost identical one of transubstantiation.

But the general object of the leading spirits of those who now advocate fasting Communion is to teach thereby what is erroneously called "higher," or "Church" doctrine, the presence, "after the manner of a spirit," of the body and blood of Christ in the elements. And it is to be noted here that inasmuch as ANY presence of body and blood must be a corporal

presence, the addition of the word "spiritually," by which is meant "after the manner of a spirit," as Gardiner meant it, is simply a self-contradiction. With this great danger in view the Church of England will do well to discourage fasting Communion, and without refusing liberty in other directions, to maintain the evening and non-fasting celebration as most in accordance with our Lord's personal example.

It is said men should not receive after a heavy dinner and sumptuous fare. Neither should they receive at early fasting celebration after a wine-party or a card-party protracted to twelve or one the night before. I have known this done, but, as a matter of fact, the other error is PRACTICALLY UNKNOWN, and both of these classes are most unlikely to come to the Lord's Supper at all. Thus in both cases the very improbable abuse should not be pushed as an argument. The reasons advanced in favour of fasting Communion are of the following nature: That as Christ's body was put into the "new tomb wherein never yet man was laid," so it should be with the sacred elements ("Ritual Reason Why," p. 161).

This argument the late Bishop of Oxford is said to have called "foolish and disgusting"; "foolish" because the purpose in view is defeated by eating a breakfast to follow the Holy Communion as completely as if it preceded participation, and "disgusting" to introduce the question of digestion at all. And it is clear that an argument of this kind reveals the real object with which fasting Communion is pressed, *i.e.*, the restoration of the Mass into the English Church, and the teaching of a carnal or corporal reception of Christ's body "after a spiritual manner," the expression in inverted commas being a contradiction and not an explanation of the doctrine, although it is quite sufficient to throw dust into the eyes of thousands.

Again, the practice of fasting Communion is advocated on the ground of there being more self-denial and reverence in a fasting and early reception than in an evening and non-fasting Communion.

But this is a direct condemnation of the action of our blessed Lord; and, besides, it cannot be too clearly stated that acts of self-denial of mere human selection are not at all honourable, and are really pieces of "voluntary humility," and to "the satisfying of the flesh."

There is no merit and no reverence and no cultivation of the true spirit of self-denial in choosing the most inconvenient and uncomfortable time for Holy Communion or in fasting reception.

If we desire to cultivate the habit of godly self-denial, let us take the list of "mortifications" which St. Paul suggests to us in Col. iii., and not those created by our own carnal imaginations.

God imposes upon us mortifications which humble us to the dust, while those of our own selection puff up the fleshly mind.

Arguments against the practice may be multiplied :

(a) Fasting Communion, which practically must be a very early reception, would of course condemn and put an end to evening or any non-fasting Communion as an "act of gross irreverence," and would therefore be tantamount to an excommunication of the greater number of the wives and mothers of the working classes.

(b) The hurry of getting up, the bustle, the rush to be in time, which are no imaginary evils, but would in many cases certainly exist, unfit the mind for the sacred rite.

(c) There is the danger of a sense of merit stealing into the mind from the inconvenience thus incurred and SOUGHT AFTER, and of a laxity of life being indulged in for the rest of the day. There ARE cases where on Sundays early and fasting celebrations, followed by French novels and lawn-tennis, are, I regret to say, the order of the day.

(d) Evening, which naturally would be non-fasting, reception is a quiet, reposeful time, calculated to rouse within us the sacred memories of that upper room furnished, of the moonlit Kedron, of Mount Olivet and Gethsemane. Evening and post-cenal reception was the custom of the early Church, and was the example set for the Church of all ages by the Lord Jesus Christ our Sacrifice and our Pattern.

Chrysostom, in a passage deliberately mutilated we cannot doubt by the "Ritual Reason Why," recalls this solemn fact to our mind amidst much protestation against the accusation of having administered the Communion to those who had broken their fast; he says, "If I have done this, let my name be wiped out of the catalogue of bishops," and he goes on to say that even if he *had* done so, and if they still object, "I have done nothing unreasonable," οὐδεν ἀκαιρον τῶν πραγμάτων ἐποίησα, "let them degrade Paul, who baptized a whole house after supper. Yea, I will dare to say (τολμᾶ λέγειν) a bolder thing, LET THEM DEPOSE CHRIST HIMSELF, WHO GAVE THE COMMUNION TO HIS DISCIPLES AFTER SUPPER" (Chrys., "Sermo ante Exil.").

I conclude with the famous reply of Bishop Jeune in Convocation to Bishop Wilberforce so recently brought forward by Canon Fleming in the columns of the *Record*: "When Bishop Wilberforce was contending that the institution of the Lord's Supper at night was an exception, and could not be quoted as a rule, Bishop Jeune replied: 'Then let my Lord's exception be my rule.'"

Appended are the utterances of some of the bishops of our Church :

I. THE ARCHBISHOP OF YORK (DR. MAGEE).

I have never been able to agree with those who regard evening Communion as in itself a sin, or even as a practice forbidden by our Church. I cannot set aside the plain, and to my mind conclusive fact, that the first Communion was celebrated at eventide, by Him who assuredly would not have done so had the certainty of His example being followed involved the certainty of sin! I cannot but see, moreover, that if the evils which arose from evening Communion in the Church of Corinth warn us of the danger the custom involves, it is clear, first, that it was a custom in Apostolic times, and secondly, that the inspired Apostles did not believe that the best way of preventing these evils was absolutely to prohibit the custom.

("Primary Charge to the Clergy of Peterborough Diocese," 1872, p. 18.)

II. THE BISHOP OF WINCHESTER (DR. THOROLD).

(A) On evening Communions I must not be silent, for in 100 churches in the diocese the returns show them to be celebrated, while, in the Metropolis, generally they appear to have increased from 65 in 1869, to 267 in 1880, a circumstance which would not readily be accepted as significant of a corresponding augmentation in the clergy of the Evangelical School. Four years cannot make me forget that at St. Giles' I instituted the practice, and at St. Pancras continued it, with an entire conviction both of its suitableness and necessity. But this shall not diminish my anxiety, if possible, to get behind the grave prejudice that clearly exists against it in the minds of brethren whom I deeply respect; and while vindicating the liberty wherewith I believe we may suitably claim to be free in this matter, to appreciate and consider their difficulties.

Is it illegal? I take it to be in this respect precisely on a footing with early Communion, neither more nor less. Perhaps the Prayer-book contemplates neither.

Is it un-Catholic and inconsistent with antiquity? The blessed Lord instituted it in the evening. For the three first centuries, until it became abused, it was certainly celebrated occasionally at that hour. But were this argument ten times stronger than it is, it is not worth a feather's weight in the face of the undoubted liberty of the English Church to decree rites and ceremonies for herself, as to when she thinks proper. Nay, I would eagerly fling all the traditions and decrees of the mediæval time into the Dead Sea sooner than rob one humble soul for which Christ died of the Blessed Sacrament of His body.

Is it inconsistent with that clearness and devoutness of spirit, which the recent partaking of food might be supposed to endanger? Precisely as much as a mid-day Communion. The poor have no experience of late dinners.

Is it irreverent or slovenly? If it be, it is the clergyman's fault. I have never found it so.

But is it necessary? From an experience of twenty-four years, emphatically I say *it is*, and while fully appreciating the important experience of those who think otherwise, I claim hearing and respect for my own. The mother of a young family, the busy household servant (especially where there is only one), the working man often late marketing on Saturday night, and who needs his Sabbath rest for body as well as soul, the medical man, and, where she is wanted at home, even the Sunday-school teacher, these value and require evening Communion, since not only is it often the only time possible, but it is the time when the day's labour is over and the evening rest is come. If in some cases it might be an exaggeration to say that any other hour is *always* impossible—yet those who know the selfishness of ungodly employers,

will confess that occasionally it may be—an evening Communion will often make the difference between an ordinance received once a month and once a year. While I would never press evening Communion, nor even hastily introduce it without cause, God forbid that I should discourage it where the people value it, and the attendance is sufficient. At St. Pancras I was careful always to have an early celebration on the same day, so as to disappoint none who valued the ordinance weekly. This avoided a stumbling-block. Let us give freedom and take it, protecting ourselves, and considering our brethren.

(“Primary Charge to the Clergy of Rochester Diocese,” 1881.)

Again, in his Second Charge (1885), he speaks to the same effect, on page 94 :

(B) Twenty-eight years ago, when the question had not been even stirred, I was called, when quite a young man, to succeed Bishop Bickersteth at St. Giles'-in-the-Fields. It was a charge of 25,000 souls. To my great concern, both early and mid-day Communion were scantily attended by the poor, and it occurred to me that the quiet evening hour might suit them better. Before taking any action, I consulted the Bishop. His answer was indecisive. I felt sure he meant me to use my own discretion. Had he forbidden me then, I should instantly have obeyed him. Later on, after my fuller experience of its necessity, had he, or his wise successor, forbidden it, I could not have disobeyed him. But I might have declined to become responsible for fatally diminishing the people's highest privileges, and I think I should have respectfully placed my resignation in his hands. I quite admit that the early hour is no difficulty for working men. They are used to it ; but I am quite sure it is impossible for their wives, and for many medical men. Also I concur with those who, for their own edification, prefer the morning hour. To the objection, however, that it (evening Communion) encourages indolence, I can only say, so far as the clergy are concerned, that the most self-denying service we ever took at St. Pancras was at the monthly evening Communion, when, after a heavy day's labour, we administered the holy rite often to over two hundred communicants ; sometimes in the end so exhausted, that I, for one, hardly knew how to walk home. Any who have even the faintest suspicion that an evening Communion necessarily implies slovenliness or irreverence, I invite for fairness' sake to visit, if they have the opportunity, the church I have already named in the evening of the last Sunday in the month, and I am mistaken if they will not be impressed with the pathetic reasonableness and the blessed solemnity of that quiet holy service, as they have seldom been impressed before. The letter below reached me with one of the Visitation Returns. Is our brother to be forbidden ?

“After a long-lived prejudice against evening Communion, I have come firmly to the conviction that without them the Church is practically excommunicating the great body of the wives and mothers of the poorer working classes. They can attend church at no other time. No morning hour would suit them ; nor would their husbands permit them to attend at any but an evening hour.”

III. THE (LATE) BISHOP OF MANCHESTER (DR. FRASER),

in his Primary Charge, delivered himself as follows :

I found evening Communion, I may say, *established* in the diocese when I became bishop. I have not hitherto thought it necessary to express an opinion either in their favour or against the practice. On three occasions I have taken actual part in them. On one of these occasions—on a Thursday in Holy Week, the “Dies Mandati”—I do not know that I ever took part in a Communion on which there seemed

to rest a more solemn awe, or which seemed to bring more comfort and joy to my own soul. It is said, I am aware, that "Evening Communion is of questionable legality in English Church law, and have been repudiated by the whole Church Catholic for twelve hundred years, and by all save one tiny and crotchety communion for three hundred years more." The innovation is asserted to be "almost invariably found where the most rationalising teaching on the sacramental mystery prevails." "It means Zwinglianism, and nothing less." "It is the most self-indulgent mode of celebrating the memorial of the Passion, and therefore unsuitable." There are some remarkable admissions among these strongly-worded objections. It is admitted that four centuries of Christian history passed before evening Communion was formally repudiated. Not only was the first Communion celebrated in the evening, but so was the Communion at Troas, where Paul "continued his speech until midnight"; so too, no doubt, were the Communion at Corinth, to which men came in disorder, not because they were held in the evening, but because they had not been taught or did not realise the solemn and mystical character of the act. The "tiny and crotchety communion" which departed from the asserted custom of the universal Church was the great Church of Carthage—the see of the metropolitan of the province of Africa, and the seat of at least seven General Councils—which, in a council at which Augustine was present, held in A.D. 397, passed a canon that the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper should be celebrated by none but such as are fasting, except on one day in the year, the Thursday before Easter, when it was the custom of African Churches, in imitation of our Lord's example, to celebrate the Eucharist after supper. But the African was not the only Church that adopted evening Communion. Socrates tells us, though he notes it as a singularity, that the Churches of Egypt and the Thebais were used to administer the Lord's Supper on Saturdays, after eating, in the evening; and Cyprian gives a reason why in his time they did not celebrate in the evening generally as in the morning, because the people could not so well all come together in the evening as in the morning; from which Bingham rightly infers that "it is plain in Cyprian's time there was no absolute rule to forbid communicating after supper, though the practice began generally to be disused, and the common custom was to receive fasting and at morning service." And Cyprian's principle could entirely justify the occasional use of evening Communion in such populations as ours, his declared object being that "all the brotherhood might be present."

There appears to me to be gathering round the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper a mass of semi-superstitious rather than Catholic and rational practices, which make me resent any attempt to abridge the liberty of a national Church or even of an individual priest, in matters of this kind. I must leave the question, brethren, to your own sense of expediency, to your experience of what you find best to promote the devotion of your own people, only asking you to remember that you must justify your departure from usual practice by a strong conviction that the change ministers to edification.

("Primary Charge," 1872, p. 104.)

And again, in his Charge for 1884 :

I did not ask for a return of the number of parishes in which there are evening Communion; but it must be considerable, chiefly in the towns. I delivered myself of my mind on this subject in my Primary Charge; and I have seen no reason to change it. I found, as I then said, the custom established in the diocese when I became bishop; and I have never felt that I ought to prohibit it, even if I had the power, or

even desire, to restrain it. It can be justified by the necessity of the case ; and those who saw the reverent demeanour of the 135 communicants, almost entirely of the working class, to whom I assisted in administering the holy rite in the Church of St. Matthias, Salford, last Sunday evening but one, would not raise any objection to the practice on that score. Indeed, except on the somewhat vague ground that it is an "un-Catholic" usage, I am at a loss to understand the objections that are made. Paul certainly had no scruple about "breaking bread" at Troas at an evening Communion, and if the institution of Christ were to be pressed, as it sometimes unduly is in every particular, it would certainly point in this direction. But the practice does not seem to me to need such justifications. As long as the same deep spirit of reverence is maintained, it cannot matter at what hour this sacramental and memorial act is done. We justify ourselves on the plea that there are many of our parishioners, and those the very poorest, to whom it would be a serious difficulty, amounting in some cases to almost a hindrance, to communicate earlier in the day, and for them we provide more suitable opportunities. I do not deny that evening Communion has their special dangers, and I most earnestly beseech all the clergy to use them carefully, to see that there is no relaxation of reverence either in the administration or the reception of this most holy Sacrament. As I said in my first Charge, the departure from usual practice can only be justified when "the change ministers to edification."

IV. THE BISHOP OF EXETER (DR. BICKERSTETH)

not only gives his own testimony, but quotes that of other eminent authorities also.

There is another question upon which some of the most laborious parish priests in the diocese have asked my judgment, I mean the celebration of the Holy Communion in the evening. They have introduced the practice from a deep conviction that only an evening—in addition to an earlier—administration of the Lord's Supper met the needs of all the members of their flocks ; and the numbers who avail themselves of it have, they think, abundantly justified this return to a primitive and Apostolic use ; but they have been pained by the severe criticism and condemnation which other Churchmen have not scrupled to pass upon this practice.

Now, in the first place, we must remember that there is just as much authority in our Prayer-book for an evening celebration, as for an early celebration before Morning Prayer. Our Church has not fixed any limits of hours for the administration of the Lord's Supper, or affixed or prefixed that administration to any service.

Let me adduce the following testimonies to this. Bishop Phillpotts, my predecessor in this see, writing to Mr. Croker (1840), says :

"I apprehend that you are quite right in your supposition that the Communion Service is a distinct office altogether, and was wont to be performed at a separate time from either Morning or Evening Prayer. I apprehend, too, that there is no rule and no principle which connects it more with Morning than with Evening Prayer."¹

The late learned Bishop Jeune, in his Charge for 1867, says on this subject :

"The hour of administration of the Lord's Supper has greatly varied in the Christian Church. . . . In Tertullian's time it was observed not only in the evening at the Love-feast, but in assemblies before dawn. In the ages of St. Augustine, the Christians of Egypt were in the habit

¹ "The Croker Papers." Murray, 1884.

of communicating on Saturday evening; but generally in the morning, certain days excepted, when the administration was in the afternoon. St. Augustine, too, observes that in some places in Africa, on the Thursday before Easter, the Communion was administered both morning and evening, and in other places only towards night. Our Church has not limited the celebration of the Holy Communion to any special hours of the day. The ordinary time of celebration is at the close of the first hour of evening . . . but ample warrant there surely is for evening Communion in the institution of His Supper by the Lord, and in the practice of Apostolic and after times.¹

And the late Bishop Wordsworth, of Lincoln, in speaking of Fasting Communion, says :

“Christ never intended, the Ancient Church never dreamt, that in matters ritual and ceremonial one fixed and rigid rule should be enforced everywhere and at all times. On the contrary, it is desirable that they be not the same everywhere and always, but should vary in different places and seasons. It cannot be doubted that, at the close of the fourth century, it was the practice of the Church to receive the Communion before any other food, and it would be presumptuous and irreverent to say that the Church did not act wisely and well. If we had lived in those days, our duty would have been to conform to this rule. But then it is no less certain that it would be also irreverent and presumptuous to take upon ourselves now to impose customs of the fourth century in opposition to the usages of the particular Church in which our own lot is cast by the good providence of God. If, however, it be right to impose an early fasting Communion from the fourth century, why not an evening Communion from the first century, and to impose that as a matter of necessity?”

“The following facts,” the Bishop continues, “are plain and certain :

“(1) Our Blessed Lord did not institute the Holy Communion fasting.

“(2) The Primitive Church hallowed its daily food by receiving the Holy Communion after it.

“(3) The office of the administration of the Lord’s Supper in our Liturgy points to evening as well as morning: ‘The Table shall stand where Morning and Evening Prayers are appointed to be said.’

“WE NEED NOT SCRUPLE TO SAY THAT ANY MEMBERS OF THE CHURCH OF ENGLAND WHO, ON THE PLEA OF REVERENCE FOR THE AUTHORITY OF THE ANCIENT CHURCH, VENTURE TO REQUIRE FASTING AS A CONDITION OF ADMINISTERING AND RECEIVING THE HOLY COMMUNION, NOT ONLY SET THEMSELVES UP AGAINST THE AUTHORITY OF THE CHURCH OF ENGLAND, WHICH, FOR THE MOST PART, ADMINISTERS THE COMMUNION AT MID-DAY, OR EVEN LATER, BUT EVEN AGAINST THAT ANCIENT CHURCH TO WHICH THEY APPEAL.”

THOMAS STANLEY TREANOR, M.A.

ART. V.—THE SANTAL MISSION.

PART II.

IN a former paper we spoke more particularly of the past and present. We now turn to the future. The question is, Do the Santals believe in a future *staté*? Most assuredly they do; but, at the same time, there is a general indistinct-

¹ Charge of the late Dr. Jeune, Bishop of Peterborough, 1867.