

“Pray ye to the Saviour who willeth not the death of a sinner that He would not delay my timely exit, but that still He would guard it. Fortify with your prayers a poor unworthy creature, that the enemy who lies in wait may find no place where he may fix his teeth and inflict a wound.” He died as he had lived, a humble follower of the Master he had served so faithfully. His contemporaries called him the thirteenth Apostle, and ten years after his death he was canonized by the Church as a saint and doctor. I cannot better conclude than by quoting the words with which Luther, writing some 400 years later, sums up his life and character, and which are given by a modern writer of St. Bernard’s life.

“Thus died Bernard, a man so godly, so holy, and so chaste that he is to be commended and preferred before all the Fathers. He, being grievously sick and having no hope of life, put not his trust in his single life, in which he had yet lived most chastely, nor yet in his good works or deeds of charity, of which he had done many; but removing them far out of his sight, and receiving the benefit of Christ by faith, he said, ‘I have lived wickedly, but Thou, Lord Jesus, dost possess the Kingdom of Heaven by double right: first, because Thou art the Son of God; secondly, because Thou hast purchased it by Thy Death and Passion. The first Thou keepest for Thyself as Thy birthright; the second Thou givest to me, not by the right of my works, but by the right of grace.’ He set not against the wrath of God his monastic state nor his angelical life, but he took of that one thing which was necessary, and so was saved.”

C. J. RIDGEWAY.

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ART. III.—PLAIN FACTS AND FAITHFUL TESTIMONIES IN SUPPORT OF CHURCH DEFENCE.

THE *history* of the National Church undoubtedly furnishes an abundance of plain facts in favour of her position and maintenance. Her *work*, too, has long been, and still is, such as should strongly commend her to the intelligent and honest support of every candid mind. Such support is a matter for the earnest consideration, or rather the favourable decision, not only of her own members, but of all who are capable of arriving at a sound and unprejudiced judgment with regard to her position, history, and work. We need not—indeed, her true defenders will not—sanction any abuse which may admit of a sufficient and reasonable remedy. Whatever the abuse may be—and some will point to one thing, some to another—if such objectors have reason on their side when they speak of

it as an "abuse," then we may hold that the Church would be all the stronger, and do her work, her great and invaluable work, all the more faithfully and efficiently, if that abuse were wiped out. Such a belief may possess all the strength of a deep-seated conviction. We may even strive earnestly to give it effect in some well-considered way which is not characterized by excess or defect at least as serious as that of the evil we wish to remove.

Some speak of *Church defence* in a way which leads others to think that the only idea they have of it is that of a defence of the Church's prestige; whereas our chief concern is that she should be allowed to retain her rightful means and opportunities, and to occupy her true position, for the sake of the work in which she has so long been faithfully engaged. Without those means and opportunities it is idle to suppose that she could do all she is now doing for the good of the people and the improvement of all classes of the community. No spiritual work in which a body of men are engaged can be carried on in this world without means at least adequate to what is done. And where such work is increasing instead of diminishing, where the workers are growing in faithfulness and zeal, where they are bringing increasingly all their powers to bear upon the work to which they have devoted themselves, and where thousands are receiving ever more and more benefit from their ministrations, where the Word of God and His holy Sacraments are faithfully proclaimed and administered, there at least no reasonable means and opportunities for doing such a work should be denied, much less unjustly taken away. The serious consequences which such an act would involve should receive careful and honest consideration. Where no better means can be devised of gaining their professed aim by the advocates of so-called "religious equality" than that of depriving the most successful body of Christian workers in the land of their rightful possessions and means of carrying on their work, it is only right that such advocates should be warned of the responsibility which they incur, and that we should be united in the defence of what they unjustly attack. We shall do well not to boast of anything "beyond our measure," but we must be prepared to resist and denounce all legislative proposals of a harassing and destructive character. The Church has survived many such attacks, and may have to meet and overcome many more, therefore we shall do well not to become indifferent to the plain facts of her past experience. Rather let her strive in fulfilling her great mission to become still more faithful, and fulfil it in the assured belief so nobly expressed by the Bishop of Manchester: "I believe that at this hour there is nothing in the world so inde-

structible as the Church of Christ. Empires may rise and fall, republics may prosper and fall into ruins, philosophies, sciences, social organizations may succeed each other in endless variety ; but the Church of Christ will exist through them all and survive them all, giving them whatever of true strength they possess while they are passing across the stage of time, and using them all in turn to prepare her own ultimate triumph. You may rob the Church of Christ, and strip her as bare as she was when she came into the world ; but weaken her or subdue her you cannot so long as the spirit of her heavenly Master dwells in her heart and inspires her life."

Equally wise in many respects, and deserving of quotation and consideration, are the words of one who was generally recognised as occupying a high position among Christian writers and workers, especially as it has so distinct and important a bearing on the subject before us. Dr. R. W. Dale, in his "Lectures on Preaching," says: "I am increasingly disposed to value the trite and the commonplace, especially in everything that relates to the practical ordering of life and the securing of the great ends of human existence. With Nathaniel Culverwell, I always reverence 'a gray-headed truth.' When a truth comes to me which has been reasserted year after year for centuries, it comes with the sanction and authority, not of an individual man, but of successive generations of men. Our time in this world is too short for experiments the issue of which is uncertain. In the great affairs of life we can afford to risk nothing. It is as if we were making our way across a mountainous and perilous country, through which we had never travelled before. We are bound to reach the distant hospice on the other side of the great pass before the darkness sets in. We cannot venture on doubtful and unknown paths. Here is the well-beaten track under our feet ; let us keep to it. It may not be quite the shortest way ; it may not take us through all the grandeur and sublimity which bolder pedestrians might see ; we may miss a picturesque waterfall, a remarkable glacier, a charming view ; but the track will bring us safe to our quarters for the night. Yes, I repeat that in all that affects the supreme objects of life I believe in the trite and commonplace ; and anyhow, just as in directing a stranger among the hills we feel obliged to point out to him the regular path, even though we ourselves might venture now and then to get away from it ; so in giving advice to others, we should be very cautious how we diverge from the conclusions which have been established by long experience and the general consent of wise men." Such a statement is both weighty and valuable. Let us "inwardly digest" it.

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