

**MATUTINAL MINUTES, BEING
SHORT SERMONS, PREACHED
CHIEFLY OT MATTINS, AT S.
MATTHIAS', STOKE NEWINGTON**

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C. R. TOLLEMACHE

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Matutinal Minutes,

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SHORT SERMONS

PREACHED CHIEFLY AT MATINS,

AT S. MATTHIAS, STOKE NEWINGTON,

BY THE

REV. C. R. TOLLEMACHE, M. A.

Assistant Curate.



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A D V E N T .

"The patient waiting for Christ."—2. Thess. iii., v.

WHAT a very different way we have of thinking about the Second Coming of Christ from what the first Christians had! Practically, we say "My Lord delayeth His Coming" "Where is the promise of His Coming; for since the fathers fell asleep, all things continue as they were from the foundation of the world."

The blessed Apostle could not say of any congregation now, much less of any church, "I thank my God always on your behalf for the grace of God which is given you by Jesus Christ, that in everything ye are enriched by him; in all utterance and in all knowledge, so that ye come behind in no gift *waiting for the Coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.*"

The truth is we have forgotten that the Office of the Church of Christ on earth is to prepare men for the Second Coming of Christ. The great Spiritual truth of Her betrothal is that on which rests Her mission to prepare Herself for perfect union with Her Lord.

We think of a holy life rather as a preparation for a happy death than as a preparing of the soul for Christ. Religious people act on the supposition that the end of the world is indefinitely postponed, and that our own end is the great thing to prepare for. We know that the Apostles expected our Lord's Second Coming, and yet that centuries and centuries have rolled by, and still He is not here; and we argue that what has been will be. And we shall go on in our blindness, and perchance our children after us, till one day shall undeceive the world and Jesus shall indeed come, and men will be like the foolish virgins, unprepared to meet Him.

The Christian Sect commonly called Irvingites has brought pointedly into prominence the old Christian attitude of watching and waiting for Christ. For it would seem that God brings good out of evil, and that sects are from time to time permitted to arise and bring into prominence certain forgotten truths and doctrines and force them on the attention of the Catholic Church. And I, for one, think that we owe it to this sect that it has brought forward this aspect of Primitive Christianity, and made Churchmen think of it, and perchance paved the way to a purer faith and a holier life among Christians.

How beautiful a thing was the "patient waiting" for Christ, which was the normal attitude of the early Christian Church! Amidst rampant heathenism and oppressing Judaism, the faithful few toiled on "thro' evil report and good report," brightened by an ever-

present hope—the hope of their Lord's Second Coming.

That hope lightened their sorrows, and chastened, and yet intensified their joys—it was with them “in their going out, and in their coming in”—it sanctified every deed; it purified every thought and word! The Betrothed was waiting for her Bridegroom. He only tarried; and when a few blessed martyrs received their crowns, it was no sign that the Bridegroom had deserted Her; on the contrary it was a sign of His love. Those souls He had surely loved with a special love. He had taken them to Himself before the final consummation.

It was thus that the first followers of the Crucified looked on their life on earth “a life hid with Christ in God”—a life taken out of the world around—a life spiritual and unworldly—one as different from what is now called Christianity, as light is from darkness. I say nothing of their doctrine or their worship, how much deeper and purer and full of faith was one; how much more solemn and dignified and seemly the other than what most people suppose. I speak only of the spiritual life of the Christian Church as a body, and that spiritual life was “patient waiting for Christ.”

We have lost that perpetual Advent in which they lived. It is only for these few weeks before Christmas that our minds are specially directed to the thought of our Lord's Second Coming.

And because we do not think of His coming again, though we profess it every day in the Creed, therefore the Church has practically relaxed her discipline; and