

**THE CHURCH AND THE WORLD. A SERMON,
WITH A PREFACE CONTAINING SOME
ACCOUNT OF THE AUTHOR'S DISMISSAL
FROM
HIS CURACY; AND COPIOUS TESTIMONIALS,
FROM THE REFORMERS AND OTHER EMINENT
DIVINES OF THE CHURCH OF ENGLAND**

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The Church and the World. A Sermon, with a Preface Containing Some Account of the Author's Dismissal from His Curacy; And Copious Testimonials, from the Reformers and Other Eminent Divines of the Church of England by Peter Hall

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PETER HALL

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THE CHURCH AND THE WORLD.

A SERMON,

PREACHED AT

ST. THOMAS'S, SARUM, ON SUNDAY, APRIL 21st, 1833,

BY THE

REV. PETER HALL, M. A.,

LATE CURATE OF ST. EDMUND'S, IN THAT CITY.

WITH

A PREFACE,

CONTAINING

SOME ACCOUNT OF THE AUTHOR'S DISMISSAL
FROM HIS CURACY;

AND

COPIOUS TESTIMONIALS,

FROM

THE REFORMERS AND OTHER EMINENT DIVINES

OF THE

Church of England,

TO THE

FUNDAMENTAL DOCTRINES OF CHRISTIANITY.

"Let us hold fast the profession of our faith without wavering."

Heb. x. 25.

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CONTENTS OF THE PREFACE;

SHewing THE AUTHORITIES QUOTED UNDER THE RESPECTIVE
HEADS OF DOCTRINE.

- I. 1.—CORRUPTION OF HUMAN NATURE.—Nowell's Catechism. Hooker. Beveridge. (p. viii to xiii.)
- 2.—FREE-WILL.—Nowell. Jewell. Scougal. (p. xiii to xv.)
- II. 1.—JUSTIFICATION THROUGH FAITH.—Jewell. Martyrs' Confession. Nowell. Hooker. Usher. Reynolds. Barlow. Burnet. (p. xv. to xxi.)
- 2.—WORKS BEFORE JUSTIFICATION.—Luther. Tindal. Fox. Nowell. Usher. Barlow. Hopkins. Leighton. Beveridge. (p. xxi to xxix.)
- 3.—FRUITS OF FAITH.—Nowell. (p. xxix to xxx.)
- 4.—CHRIST ALL IN ALL.—Reynolds. (p. xxx to xxxi.)
- III. 1.—OPERATION OF THE HOLY GHOST.—Bartow. (p. xxxi to xxxii.)
- 2.—ORDER OF SALVATION.—Tindal. (p. xxxii to xxxiii.)
- 3.—REGENERATION.—Usher. Barlow. Hopkins. Leighton. Beveridge. Tillotson. Wilson. Pearson. (p. xxxiii to xlii.)
- 5.—BAPTISMAL REGENERATION.—Cranmer. Frith. Beza. Hooker. Andrews. Pearson. Burnet. S. Bradford. Arnold. (p. xlviii to lv.)
- 6.—REQUISITES FOR REGENERATION.—Latimer. Jewell. Beza. Musculus. Nowell. Heidelberg, or Palatine, Catechism. Diodati. Usher. Hammond. Charnock. Leighton. Burnet. (p. lv to lxiv.)

CONTENTS OF THE PREFACE.

- 7.—SEALING OF THE SPIRIT.—Usher. (p. lxiv to lxvi.)
- 8.—INFANT BAPTISM.—Hooper. Hopkins. Burnet. (p. lxvi to lxvii.)
- 9.—PROSPECTIVE REGENERATION.—Barrow. Tillotson. Blackall. Wake. Secker. (p. lxvii to lxxiii.)
- 10.—OTHER MEANS OF REGENERATION.—Hopkins. S. Bradford. Paley. (p. lxxiii to lxxv.)
- 11.—SENSIBLE OPERATION OF THE SPIRIT.—Taylor. Paley. (p. lxxv to lxxvii.)
- 12.—SUDDEN OPERATION OF THE SPIRIT.—Hooker. Scougal. (Appendix.) Hopkins. Tillotson. Horne. Paley. (p. lxxvii to lxxxi.)
- 14.—ASSURANCE OF FAITH.—Luther. Bucer. Melancthon. Latimer. Hooper. Fox. Bradford. Jewell. French Confession. Genevese Confession. Scotch Confession. Palatine Catechism. Dutch Catechism. Nowell. Hooker. Andrews. Hall. Taylor. Usher. Hopkins. Copleston. Blomfield. Davys. Kay. (p. lxxxiv to cx.)
- 15.—ASSURANCE OF HOPE.—Coverdale. Jewell. Heidelberg Catechism. Hall. Taylor. Usher. Scougal. Pearson. (p. cx to cxiv.)
- 16.—ASSURANCE OF UNDERSTANDING.—Philpot. Westminster Confession. Heidelberg Catechism. Scougal. Appendix to Scougal. (p. cxiv to cxvi.)
- 17.—ASSURANCE OF LOVE.—Luther. Wicliff. Hall. Taylor. Barrow. Pearson. Butler. (p. cxvi to cxxii.)
- 18.—PERFECT TRUST AND CONFIDENCE.—Tindal. Bradford. Ridley. Hooker. Leighton. Horne. (p. cxxii to cxxx.)

PREFACE.

IT is not usually considered necessary for a Preacher of the Word of God to recommend his labours to the world by an introductory apology. But when the annexed Discourse is known to have been delivered in a Church, with which the author had no immediate connexion, though officially attached to another in the same city; and when its unusual length,—occupying, with the utmost efforts at compression, nearly two hours in the delivery, and upwards of sixty pages in print,—is found to comprise an extent of subject, enough for a moderate series; some account may not unreasonably be required of the circumstances to which the performance in question owes its rise. They shall be stated in as few and simple words as possible.

For several years past, the writer has held the situation of Curate, to the important Parish of St. Edmund, Salisbury. Till within the last twelvemonth, he is not aware that his ministry, either in or out of the pulpit, has been disapproved. But of late, he freely and joyfully confesses that a great alteration has taken place in his own views and sentiments upon the subject of religion. Many have been since offended; and among the rest, he regrets to add, his benevolent and venerable Rector. The consequence has been his dismissal from the Curacy, on the charge of inculcating doctrines inconsistent with the Bible, and with the public interpretations of the Church of England.

To this removal from his office, conducted in a manner perfectly legal, he can have nothing to object: but where no specific accusation has been preferred against any thing which he

has taught, but only a general assertion of his disagreement with those authorities, a departure from which is at all events a departure from that communion, to which he was solemnly devoted in ordination; it appeared a most desirable course, if not a necessary act of self-defence, that he should both preach and publish, in one uninterrupted form, a summary of his tenets on those three topics, which constitute the distinctive characteristics of vital religion, and within which he believes that the main objections to all spiritual instruction are invariably comprehended. And having for some months past been removed from the pulpit of his own Parish, though he ceases only on this day to take some share in the other offices of public ministration, he was compelled to ask permission to address his brethren within the walls of a neighbouring Church. The result appears in the ensuing pages. The author neither asks nor expects indulgence, wherever he may have spoken unwelcome truths. Having ceased alike either to value the applause, or to shun the reproaches, of the world, he now desires nothing but the glory of God, in the promotion of His gospel, and the salvation of His creatures. If these are not objects to gratify his utmost hopes and wishes, he has yet to learn the mournful lesson, that the principles he teaches to others have hitherto wrought no practical effect on his own character and prospects.

Disagreements of this kind among professors of the same creed, are doubtless melancholy enough: melancholy, as indications of some unhealthy organ in the constitution of the Church; and still more melancholy, as tending to shake the confidence of weaker brethren, and overrun the face of Christianity with doubt, distraction, and error. Into the causes of their perpetual recurrence, there can be no occasion in this place to inquire: those who take a hearty interest in the religious advancement of mankind, can feel but little hesitation in assigning them to their proper origin. An occupation more appropriate to the present posture of his affairs, the writer has ventured to adopt, in attempting what he deems the most

effectual method, under Almighty providence, to restore the general tone of instruction in the Established Church to its original standard of purity; by directing an increased attention, first and foremost, to the oracles of divine revelation; next, to the interpretations authorised by the Church itself; and, finally, to the writings of those holy men, by whom the British Reformation was conducted, and who sealed with their blood the testimony they bore to the stability and efficacy of the Gospel. Of this design, the two former particulars are carried into execution throughout the following Sermon; where the authority of Scripture is shewn to have dictated, with uniform accuracy, the Articles, Liturgy, and Homilies, to which, at one time, the information of the common people was almost literally confined. The others are exhibited in the present Preface; imperfectly indeed, but as amply as the form and price of a common pamphlet would allow; and with especial reference to those points, where the acknowledged guides of our Church are less explicit. To these have been subjoined a variety of quotations from Divines of standard excellence; designed to shew, that such as impugn the true and lively doctrines of Christ and His Apostles, must expect no support from those whom they are themselves accustomed to recognise as the ablest champions of their Church; and that if all who maintain those tenets unimpaired are to be ejected from the number of her friends, they will at least be found in such company as would confer authority as well as honour upon any other than the cause of Heaven.

In the sight of many it may be thought an evil symptom, when the authority of God is made apparently to depend, in any degree, on the zeal and fidelity of man. But who that ever takes up the works of our early theologians, and remembers the blessing that attended both their preaching and their living, can lay them down again without a humble but deep persuasion, that the Spirit of truth directed their exertions, and sanctioned the bequest to their posterity? These were the instruments em-

ployed, by the blessing of Almighty God, three hundred years ago, to reflect the light of knowledge on the superstitions of Popery; and it is by a return to these luminaries we shall be most likely, through the same blessing, to disperse that concentrated darkness of Popery and Socinianism, of Pharisaism and Infidelity, by which the Church of England has been so long and so dismally obscured.

I. 1.—The first topic of controversy introduced to the reader of the annexed Sermon, is *the total Corruption of the Nature of Man*. It is a doctrine of extreme importance to all who would sincerely set to work at the great task of their salvation. But, happily, it is one so plainly declared in our Articles, so forcibly urged in our Homilies, and so faithfully carried out into the confessional devotions of our Liturgy, that a very few quotations may be thought sufficient for its further illustration and enforcement. The first of these shall be taken from the Catechism of Poinet, Bishop of Winchester, enlarged and reprinted by Dr. Alexander Nowell, Dean of St. Paul's, in the reign of Queen Elizabeth; approved by the same Synod which subscribed and warranted the Book of Articles; recommended by the King's letters patent, and enjoined by the privy council; and twice republished during the last half-century,—first by Bishop Cleaver, and afterwards by Bishop Randolph:—

“Adam was the first parent of mankind: therefore God eudued him with those ornaments, to have them or lose them, for him and his, that is, for all mankind. So soon as he, therefore, was spoiled of them, his whole nature was left naked, in penury, and destitute of all good things. So soon as he was defiled with that spot of sin, out of the root and stock corrupted there sprung forth corrupted branches, that conveyed also their corruption into the other twigs springing out of them. . . . Thence came the horrible blindness of our minds, and perverseness of our hearts. Thence came that crookedness and corruptness of all our affections and desires.