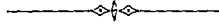


The attentive mind,
 By this harmonious action on her powers,
 Becomes herself harmonious : wont so oft
 In outward things to meditate the charm
 Of sacred order, soon she seeks at home
 To find a kindred order, to exert
 Within herself this elegance of love,
 This fair-inspired delight ; her tempered powers
 Refine at length, and every passion wears
 A chaster, milder, more attractive mien.

WILLIAM SINCLAIR.



ART. VII.—THE HOLY COAT OF TREVES.

I AM familiar with the subject of pilgrimages, relics, and modern miracles, both among Christians of the Greek and Roman persuasions and the non-Christian world of Mahometans and pagans. There was something so startlingly unique about the appearance of the Seamless Coat of our Blessed Lord, shown to the public only after long intervals, that I took the opportunity of a spare day betwixt the Geographical Congress at Berne, in Switzerland, on August 8th, and the Congress of the Romish Church of Belgium at Malines, on September 8th, to make a pilgrimage to Treves, join in one of the numerous processions, and be an eye-witness of the relic. I made two visits on two successive days. According to my practice I bought a copy of the authorized account of the Holy Robe, published under the sanction of the Archbishop of Treves in the French language, and I had the advantage of procuring a copy of the account in English by an English Romish priest, who performed the pilgrimage and communicated his views to the *Month*, a Romish monthly, under the initials of R. F. C., and has since published a separate volume, under the name of Richard F. Clarke, of the Society of Jesus, Farm Street, Berkeley Square.

Pilgrimages are the peculiar weakness of all false religions and the degraded forms of the true religion. Jerome, in his letter to Paulinus, about A.D. 416, denounced the growing weakness of the early Christians. I quote his famous passage : —“Et de Jerosolomis, et de Britannia æqualiter patet aula cœlestis.” However the practice grew, we may be thankful that no Protestant Church accepts the idea of pilgrimage. I have watched the great pilgrimages of the Hindu people to the Ganges, or the Mahometan to some local shrine, and of Christians to Jerusalem, and Loretto, and Lourdes, and Saragossa; no doubt they are all survivals of old paganism, and cling to the skirts of even a spiritual religion.

The motive of pilgrimages seems to be threefold: 1. To visit spots of which the sacred interest is undoubted, such as Jerusalem and Palestine. 2. To visit spots where visions of the Virgin Mary are credited, such as Lourdes and Saragossa. 3. To visit spots in some way connected with our Lord's earthly sojourn, such as the Holy House of Loretto, the Sacred Stairs and the Sudarium, or Pocket-handkerchief of Veronica at Rome, and the burial-sheet, in which the Body of our Lord was deposited at Turin, the Wood of the Cross, the Nails, the Spear, the Crown of Thorns, and the Holy Coats at Rome, at Argenteuil and Treves. The pilgrimage to Treves belongs to the last-named class, and Protestants should regard the motive with pity rather than aversion. With the first class of pilgrimages they would naturally sympathize as regards the motive, and no doubt there is a spiritual advantage, or at least joy, in visiting the scenes of our Lord's earthly sojourn. As to the second class, I have in late years visited both Lourdes and Saragossa, purchased authorised descriptions of both in French and Spanish respectively, and no censure seems sufficient for those who, knowing better, lend countenance to such palpable impostures. But as regards the third class, I feel more pity and sorrow than indignation; the details are so like those with which I am familiar in Hindu and Mahometan countries. It is well said that their existence is the response of priests, whether Christian or non-Christian, to that craving of poor, weak man for something *at once tangible and super-human*, and this feeling has led professors of debased forms of faith to cling to relics as remedies against the evils and dangers that surround us. The feeling is excusable in an African and South Sea Islander; it may be tolerated in the professors of the non-Christian Book-religions; but deplored when practised by churches calling themselves Christians. It is, in very fact, fetish-worship, for it is not a personage that is being adored for the exercise of miraculous power, but it is merely a perishable article, the work of men's hands, and something akin to the shapeless idol of the savage. It is true that the Archbishop of Treves, in his opening address, remarked, "Our veneration of the sacred relic is *not* due to the fact that it is the Coat of Christ, but it is intended for Him who wore it." So learned Brahmins have explained to me the motive of the worship of idols in India; so, no doubt, the augurs of the pagan worship in ancient Rome would have expressed themselves; but the fact remains that the ignorant rural priests, and their still more ignorant flocks, take a more obvious view of the subject; that they see a coat; that they adore a coat; that the touch of that coat gives sight to the blind; that veneration of that coat gives ecclesiastical privileges and spiritual blessings of the highest order.

It is just to state that the belief in any particular relic is not an article of faith; scepticism is allowed as to individual objects; to deny the duty of venerating real relics, as all Protestants do, is heresy. I quote the actual words of the Pastoral of the Archbishop:

“Perhaps you will ask me, my brethren, whether the veneration of the holy relic which our cathedral possesses be founded on fact, whether we must acknowledge it to be the Coat without seam which our Lord Jesus Christ wore on earth. I think it is my pastoral duty to answer this question to the best of my knowledge and conscience. First of all, we must remember that in this case there is no question at all of an article of faith. It is true that a Catholic—unless his faith has suffered shipwreck—must not doubt in the least that we owe veneration to the relics of our Saviour and of the saints, and that we justly venerate these relics. But when there is a question about the authenticity of a certain relic in particular, then everybody is perfectly free to form his opinion on sound and reasonable arguments. A Catholic, who wantonly or without grave reasons doubts or rejects the authenticity of a certain relic, may appear arrogant and irreverent, but he is not for that to be considered erring in faith. The authenticity of a relic, like any other historical fact, is founded and proved on the testimony of man. The authenticity of no relic, be it the most eminent of the oldest church in Christendom, falls under any precept of Catholic faith.

“According to a decree of the Council of Trent, the Bishops are bound, before sanctioning the public exhibition of relics, to hear the opinion of pious and learned men, and then to give that decision which shall be dictated by truth and piety. Truth demands of us that we confide in the venerable and constant tradition of our diocese, that we never accuse our ancestors of credulity or fraud unless there be very grave reasons for doing so. Such reasons have never been put forward.”

This places a papist in his right to doubt the authenticity of this Coat for reasons given lower down. Perhaps some day the Church of Rome will outgrow the fetish idea and follow the example of King Hezekiah (2 Kings xviii. 4), “who brake in pieces the brazen serpent that Moses had made, for unto those days the children of Israel did burn incense to it.” The worship of any object or personage is a derogation from the honour due to God alone.

Let us first consider the facts. St. Cyprian in one of his writings to Donatus remarks, “When our speech is concerning the Lord God, let us rely on facts” (Extracts from “The Fathers,” p. 148). The Coat was displayed for six weeks

ending Sunday October 4th, 1891. It had been displayed for a similar period in 1844. The number of pilgrims in 1844 was 1,100,000; in 1891 it rose to 1,925,130. This is not a gauge of faith, but of facility of access arranged for convenient purposes by a Protestant Government. Besides, as would be expected, a great number of Protestant tourists swelled the total. I myself with my wife and daughter passed before the Coat one day, and I and my daughter on the second day, and the residing priest ticked us off by his counting machine each day. It is in this way that railways in India pay good dividends, for every facility is given to Hindus and Mahometans by special train to get to their place of pilgrimage.

We arrived at Treves at night, and had rooms in the hotel, secured by telegraph, and found no unusual crowd, for, in fact, the great majority of pilgrims did not frequent first-class hotels. Under our windows, well in the night, processions were passing to and from the cathedral, singing hymns and carrying torches. There was no difference between this and the usual processions of Roman, Greek, Mahometan and Hindu votaries; in the night air the voices of men and women sound melodious, whether the utterance is "Ram Ran," or "Wah Guruji," or "Hasan Hosein," "Kyrle Eleison," or "Ave Maria;" there is not much religious worship, or union of the soul with God, in either one or the other. Next morning we were early in the field, and joined one of the two great parallel lines, which advanced slowly in ambient half-circles, like the writhing of a great snake, up to the cathedral door. The scene was interesting, and such as has in all ages and all climes been witnessed, at the Ephesian Temple of Diana, at Athens during the annual Panathenaic festival; in Egypt, round all the grand old temples, and at many an old pagan shrine in Italy; for it is a mere function of filing by a dead object in the same way as soldier's file by a living sovereign or general. The good behaviour of the crowds, counting by thousands, was remarkable. The Germans are a stolid, obedient people. In an Irish procession there would have been rows and fighting; here there was not a murmur. Each parish was headed by its own priest, and I was struck by the marvellous coarseness and obesity of these priests—great red faces, stupid expressions, and inflamed noses, showing that they compensated themselves for enforced celibacy by abundant eating and drinking. The countenances of the male pilgrims were bovine, as meaningless as their oxen. There were abundance of old women, and plenty of young people enjoying the excursion. There was a warning against pickpockets on the cathedral door. There was a repetition of a hymn to the Virgin, but no

shoutings. The bloated priests strutted along with Falstaff abdominal projections, while sometimes a younger priest looked out on the crowd with a thoughtful expression of countenance, expressing some misgiving as to the reality of this devotion. There were shops selling models and relics, and rosaries, and driving a brisk business, just like the silversmiths at Ephesus, who cried out, "Great is Artemis!" What did the pilgrims know or care! All the eighteen centuries since the Crucifixion was as nothing to them. Had anyone substituted the toga of Cæsar, through which Brutus' dagger went, or the poisoned robe of Hercules, it would have been all the same. It was shocking to think that the whole affair consisted of pagan elements clinging to the skirts of Christianity. What good could the Coat do? Could it influence these poor rustics so as to encourage them to virtue, or hold them back from sin? Can they be sustained in the duties of a holy life by an article of dress, even admitting it to be genuine? There was a marked absence of the better and more educated classes, not to speak of the gentry. This clearly was a cultus of the uneducated villagers, the Pagani of modern times. They came from the neighbourhood and from the adjacent provinces, showing that they were devoted to their *local* Deity. The worshippers of the Coat at Argenteuil, in France, were clearly jealous of their German rival, and the Coat at Rome would no doubt think poorly of these provincial relics. Still, as we paced round and round in our half-circles, it was difficult to imagine any influence of soul or scene in the most enthusiastic of these worshippers. To the ordinary agriculturist the standing in a "queue" to get access to the pit-door of a theatre partook as much, or as little, of the elements of worship as this senseless meandering in front of the cathedral door. The crowded ghâts of Banâras, the courts of the sepulchre at Jerusalem, the road to Eleusis, were more cheering or suggestive of worship. For once in my life I appreciated the effect of the corybantic antics of the Salvation Army, their music, and noise, and the pirouettes of the Salvation lasses. They may be more ridiculous, but the actors seemed more in earnest.

We got into the cathedral at last, and passed along the nave in Indian file. As we passed a table covered with objects, a civil priest volunteered to draw my attention to a Nail of the Cross (I think that I must have seen in different places at least a dozen Nails of the Cross); the skull of Helena, the mother of the Emperor Constantine; a tooth of St. Peter the Apostle, and the body of St. Matthew. The Coat was now in sight, far up above the chief altar, and we ascended the flight of stairs on the right hand, and at length came in face

of it behind a glass, but an old priest obligingly took crosses and rosaries, etc., from the hands of pilgrims, touched the Coat with them, and returned them. I did not trouble him, but as I looked with a feeling of shame for him, I thought of the augurs described by Cicero, and the sleek, half-naked priests in a Hindu Temple, who did very much the same thing. It was only by an effort that I could convince myself that I was in the nineteenth century, and in Europe. The follies and degradation of the human race are so similar in all ages and all climes.

The Coat itself (and I write with a print before my eyes) would not be called by that name in Europe; it is, in fact, a short shirt with short sleeves. The materials, whatever they may be, seem to be of a character superior to what would be worn by the son of a carpenter, the leader of a band of wandering preachers and healers, who lived upon alms. But this matters not, and I sweep away at once the additional legend prepared for the deception of poor credulous souls, that this article of dress was fashioned and made for her Divine Son by the Blessed Virgin, *when He was a child, and that it grew with His growth*—He increased in wisdom and stature, and His coat grew with Him; and that this was the garment the touching of which healed the woman of the issue of blood.

I now pass to the second class of facts. Truth may be (1) positive, such as the fact that the sun rises; (2) founded on universal experience, such as the fact that contact with a person suffering from a contagious disease will probably convey the disease; (3) founded on trustworthy testimony. The existence of the Coat, and its being worshipped by thousands, is a fact of the first class; the testimony on which it is attempted to connect this poor perishable article of human dress with our Divine Lord belongs to the third class of positive truth.

Father Clarke writes as follows: "We know nothing of the early history of the relic; but, if we believe in Christian relics at all, we may assume that none of the memorials of the Passion were more carefully preserved than this. The absence of any documentary evidence for its possession by the Christian community in those early days is no more an argument against its authenticity than is the absence of any writ of transfer, and proof of purchase, any argument against the right of some family to the lands that they have held as an inheritance from remote antiquity. The mere fact that they are in possession, and that there is no ground for disputing their right, and that an unbroken tradition proclaims the land to be theirs, is quite sufficient."

I thank the Father for this illustration. I know a family which has held lands near Boston, in Lincolnshire, for five hundred years, since the reign of Edward III. Here is a fact which no one can gainsay, but the Peerage states that the family moved into Lincolnshire from Yorkshire, where they had resided in the reigns previous to Edward III.; of this there is no proof whatever, and no one with his senses would give it any credence. Let us assume (and as will be shown further on it is a mere assumption) that the Coat had been in the Cathedral of Treves since Helena presented the relic in the fourth century, we have still a gap of nearly three hundred years, and a geographical area of thousands of miles from Jerusalem to Treves to get over; and there is not a tittle of evidence to show what the soldier did with the seamless robe, which fell to him by lot on the afternoon of that mournful day. A perishable article of clothing passed in the usual way at the execution of criminals into the hands of a rough soldier, probably not an Italian, but a member of one of the many nations which made up the Roman army, and it disappeared. When our Lord rose from the grave upon the third day clothes were miraculously provided for Him, and of the seamless robe nothing is heard in the early centuries.

But it may be argued that it is impossible that there can be better evidence, that the necessities of human existence place a barrier against the perpetuation of evidence. Be it so. This argument cuts both ways; it shows the absence of proof of genuineness of this pretended relic. But as a fact, every traveller in Egypt has looked upon the face of Rameses II.—the Pharaoh who persecuted the Hebrews—in his garments, which are fifteen hundred years before the Christian era; if he visits the great museums of Europe he will come face to face with inscriptions which tell their own tale; the lines to record the valour of those who fell at Potidæa, B.C. 432; the Moabite stone B.C. 900; the sarcophagus of Esmunazar B.C. 400; and the Latin lines inscribed by the Emperor Adrian upon the colossal vocal statue of Memnon at Egyptian Thebes: "Ego Hadrianus divinam vocem audivi." The rocks in India in several places faithfully record the inscriptions of Asoka in the second century B.C., calling for mercy and toleration. If it had been the Divine will that the relics of the Passion should be preserved to future ages for the saving of souls of generations yet unborn, they might have been placed away in a sealed tomb, such as that of the Egyptians and Etruscans, and been brought forth to the light of day, not on the evidence of a fond, foolish and lying tradition, but surrounded by external and internal evidence, and an environment of human weaknesses and human strength. We have not to go far to find an

example, for the mutual hatreds of different nations and churches have combined under the grace of God to place the text of the Old and New Testaments beyond, outside and above, the arena of controversy.

With this Coat this has not been the case. I proceed to trace its history back from the year 1891 up to that century when we lose all trace of its existence. In the year 1844, forty-seven years ago, there was the first really great Exhibition, the means of communication having improved, and the great European Peace having commenced. There is no doubt whatever of the identity; the Coat had been safely stowed away in the cathedral, and the seals of the casket were found in 1891 unviolated. In 1810, or thirty-four years previously, it was exhibited, and there is no doubt whatever of the identity; but previous to this exhibition, during the troublous times of the Napoleonic wars, the Coat had been removed, in 1794, into Germany, to Ehrenbreitsten, Bamberg, and Augsburg, whence it was brought back. Considering that its dimensions are so small that, folded up, it would be only a light parcel, there might reasonably be raised questions of identity, especially as it had not been seen by mortal eye for 155 years, or five generations of men; for the fact must be recorded that from A.D. 1655 to A.D. 1810 it had never been exhibited. During the 140 years preceding it had been exhibited, but not on the modern scale of publicity, about eight times. The Pope had, indeed, by a bull dated A.D. 1515, ordered that it should be shown every seven years, but the troublous times that accompanied the Reformation had prevented the order being fully carried out. Three years previous to the above date, in 1512, it had been exhibited to the Emperor Maximilian, and this appears to have been the first public exhibition that ever took place; it had never been seen during the previous 316 years, or nine generations of men, since the year 1196, when Archbishop Jeane had placed it away and locked it up out of sight, and it was with fear and misgiving that the Archbishop of the time complied with the request of the Emperor Maximilian to show it to him, A.D. 1512.

These facts are not taken from hostile statements, but from the authorized books sold on the spot in 1891, and purchased by me in September. Now, if the object of a relic is to rouse a pious and moral feeling; if the pilgrimage, the sight of this relic, and the contact of rosaries and crosses with its decaying fragment, are means of grace, what shall be thought of the fact that opportunity of availing themselves of this grace had only been offered twelve times in seven centuries?

Beyond this date it is not pretended to trace the existence

of the Coat at Treves, except by mere tradition. In the "Gesta Trevirorum," the work of an anonymous author, it is mentioned, and the Empress Helena, a woman of obscure birth, in Bithynia, in Asia Minor, who at the age of eighty visited Palestine in search of relics, is said to have presented this Coat, with other relics of the same kind, to the Cathedral of Treves, a city in which her late husband, Constantius Chlorus, had held his court, when, as associated with the Emperor Diocletian, he had ruled over the provinces of Britain, Gaul, and Spain. In the absence of positive testimony for the very existence of the Coat, we have the negative testimony that Eusebius, in his sermon before the Emperor Constantine on the site of the Holy Sepulchre, in 332, never alludes to it. The anonymous pilgrim who went to Palestine in 333, and left in his diary a description of the holy places, never alludes to it. The deed of Pope Sylvester, 314-355, has not survived the criticism of its contemporary genuineness, though quoted in the "Gesta Trevirorum" 700 years later. It cannot be asserted, with any degree of certainty, or even probability, that this Coat came across the sea from Palestine, and even if this were proved, we vainly ask through whose hands it passed during the 300 years which elapsed between the Crucifixion, A.D. 33-34, and the visit of the Empress Helena to Jerusalem. It is amazing to reflect how the reason of man is darkened by fanatical prejudices and dogmatic errors.

Here comes in the necessity of supporting a weak cause by further fond inventions calculated to deceive weak minds. It is admitted that in 1810 there were no bonâ-fide miracles; in 1844 there were many; in 1891, in September, I heard of none at Treves, though I made inquiry, but the newspapers were full of them. No doubt in due time a document will be issued with religious and medical certificates of miraculous cures. This is the only form which modern miracles can assume. In the Old and New Testaments there is some variety in the manifold evolution of the Divine Power—the dead were raised, bread and wine were created, the tongues of the dumb were loosened, lunatics were restored to their senses, money was produced to pay taxes, miraculous draughts of fish took place. At places like Treves, Lourdes, or Loretto, the miraculous power shrinks to the curing of a paralytic, the staying of a running sore, the clarifying of imperfect vision, in fact, *medical* miracles, as opposed to *surgical*. At Saragossa alone I found notice of a case of a leg cut off by a scythe, and fastened on so neatly as to leave only a red ring round the injured limb. We find no mention of barren women becoming mothers: this often happens after a Hindu pilgrimage; no instance of cruel wrongs of oppression being righted; none of

the manifold sorrows and sufferings of life being assuaged. Nothing beyond the healing of a certain class of corporeal ills, and precisely those with which the modern faith-healer is so successful. In fact, the pilgrimage, the excitement, the elevation of the heart to God, the magnetic influence of hope and faith, effect the cure.

The Bishop feels this also. In 1844 in his closing sermon the good man remarked that many sick came to Treves and returned to their homes, as far as their physical ailments were concerned, none the better; but there were miracles not visible to the naked eye which in the sight of God were much more precious, the healing of the soul, the tears of pious emotion coming from a contrite heart, one single act of Christian faith, hope, and love coming from a notorious sinner, one soul converted: *these are the real miracles*. We thank the good Bishop for these words, and stretch out our hands to him across the abyss which separates a religion of Spirit and Truth from a mere empty ceremonial surrounded by a high wall of lying traditions, and downright impositions, and pray that light may be vouchsafed to the souls of his successors.

Every part of our Lord's dress seems to have been found, though really it is not clear from what source information has been derived of the kind of dress worn by the people of Judæa at that period. We read of the garments divided at the foot of the cross, the seamless robe, the purple robe, the sandals, the embalming sheet, the swaddling clothes. The seamless robe is pressed into use, an evidence of an indivisible Church. History tells us that the Church of Christ has from the earliest days been divided by hopeless schisms; the whole argument is a mere structure of hypotheses, guesses, wild assertions, and vague assumptions. One assumption is that Nicodemus, or Joseph of Arimathea, bought this coat of the soldier. The following is a fair specimen of the mode in which a theological argument may be developed:

"Just as Christ is actually the Victim offered for our sins in the mass, so we may say that Christ still virtually wears the Sacred Robe."

A Latin hymn is given by the same writer, Father Clarke, p. 323, addressed to the Coat:

O vestis inconsutilis
Pro dulci nato virgine
Arte parata textili:
Quis te sat ornat laudibus?

I am informed, but I did not myself hear it, that some of the pilgrims exclaimed, "Heilige Rock, bitte for uns."

Great stress is laid upon the opinion of a committee called to

examine and report upon the robe; it consisted chiefly of Cathedral authorities and devoted religionists. They would have been more than men if they had said a word against this relic: it would be hard to ask the ecclesiastics of Cologne to report upon the skulls of the three kings, or the bones of the eleven thousand virgin martyrs, for which that city is famous.

Let us think out the matter philosophically, for, after all, this is a question of reason, not of faith. Our Lord's words, something better than His coat or sandals, or even His crown of thorns, have come down to us, thanks to Jerome, as fresh and full of life as if uttered yesterday, thoughts that breathe, words that burn, warnings that terrify, consolations that comfort and sustain. "Never man spake as this man spake." Familiar as some among us may be with the words of the Hindu sages, the deep thoughts of the Egyptian "Book of the Dead," the sublime utterances of Buddha, Confucius, Socrates, and Zoroaster, no words that have echoed through the corridors of time and been blown round the world, warning, soothing, and correcting, are like His words. Is not that enough for the conversion of souls? To the Jew it was replied, "They have Moses and the prophets;" but the Christian has something more — "the everlasting Gospel." Shall a misguided hierarchy of blind worshippers of a dim and remote past with one hand withhold this Gospel from the people, and with the other hold up a perishing garment, such as the moth frets and the fire consumes, and the thief steals, and man puts to the miserable use of his daily life, and sing hymns to it, and offer prayers to it, and have rosaries and crosses brought into contact with it, and paralyzed arms stretched out to it, as if it contained a living virtue, derived from Him who is supposed to have worn it eighteen and a half centuries ago, and able to work a limited power of healing certain complaints, like the quack medicines which in these days are so freely advertised as working instantaneous cures?

The garments, the spear, the crown of thorns, and the nails, the knife used at the last supper, the clean linen cloth of Joseph of Arimathea, the pocket-handkerchief of Veronica, are but the mean surroundings of His mortal life, when He condescended to live among men in the form of a servant.

If Christians are to hold their own in these days against the rising tide of Scepticism, Agnosticism, and Atheism, the outcome not only of mediæval ignorance, but of nineteenth century intellectual enlightenment, they must keep clear of these germs of polytheism which are contained in the worship of the good men and women of past ages, and that form of fetichism which creates a cultus of hair, skulls, teeth, bones, and articles

of dress. If we wish to guard the belief of the miracles of the Bible, we must refuse to give credence to any of a date later than the closing book of the New Testament.

ROBERT CUST.

January, 1892.

Correspondence.

LAYMEN OFFICIATING IN CHURCH.

To the Editor of the CHURCHMAN.

DEAR SIR,—There is a short paragraph about myself in the last page of your valuable Magazine for this month, to which I feel obliged to take exception. You inform your readers that I have “issued directions forbidding laymen to deliver addresses in the churches of my diocese.” Allow me to say that this is a very imperfect representation of what I have done. I ask you in justice to myself to accept and insert the following explanatory statement :

I have recently refused, and still refuse, to allow any layman to conduct the regular morning or evening services in church on Sundays instead of a clergyman, and to read the prayers or preach a sermon as the clergyman’s substitute. I refuse to allow this, because it appears to me to contradict the spirit of the 23rd Article, and to nullify the ministerial office. I have no objection whatever to a layman reading the lessons in church, because custom has long sanctioned it. Yet the strict legality of even this practice is somewhat doubtful.

Whether at *any other times* than the two I have mentioned a layman, authorized and requested by the incumbent or curate, may hold a Bible-class or teach a Sunday-school class in a church, or give an address on missions, or evidences, or church history, or a revival of religion, or any kindred subject ; whether, I say, a layman may legally do any of *these things* in a church is a totally different question, and one about which I have certainly given no directions to my diocese. Whether such use of a church is strictly legal or not is a point which I shall leave others to settle. But I am certain that most of our churches might be made far more useful than they are. Of course, all liberty is liable to abuse. But I cannot forget the old Latin saying, “*Summa lex summa injuria.*”—I remain, yours faithfully,

J. C. LIVERPOOL.

January 5, 1892,

PALACE, LIVERPOOL.

The Bishop’s letter, by a mischance for which we cannot account, did not come before us until the February CHURCHMAN was printed. We at once expressed to his Lordship our regret. Upon a most interesting subject, this letter, which we gladly print, has a significance and value of its own.—ED. CHURCHMAN.