

AN INTRODUCTION

TO THE

OFFICE FOR THE VISITATION OF THE SICK.

THE duty of visiting the sick is specially enjoined on the Curates of souls in the New Testament: "Is any sick among you? let him call for the elders of the Church; and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the Name of the Lord: and the prayer of faith shall save the sick, and the Lord shall raise him up; and if he have committed sins, they shall be forgiven him." [James v. 14, 15.] The Visitation of the Sick is not therefore in the minister of Christ a mere piece of civility or neighbourly kindness, but an act of religion. He comes in the Name of Christ to pray with and for the sick man; if necessary, to reconcile him to the Church by the blessing of absolution, and to communicate to him the Sacrament of our Lord's Body and Blood. That the primitive clergy of the Church made this visitation in time of sickness their special duty, is proved to us by many passages in early writers. Polycarp, the disciple of St. John, in his Epistle to the Philippians, gives it as advice to presbyters, *ἐπισκέπτεσθαι τοὺς ἀσθενοῦς*. Posidonius, in his Life of St. Augustine [cap. 27], relates that the Saint, as soon as he knew any man was sick, went unto him immediately. The decrees of various early Councils enjoined this duty on the Clergy whenever they were called for; and the Council of Milan goes even further than this, and orders "Etiamsi non vocati inuisant." Our own Provincial Constitutions require all Rectors and Vicars of Parishes to be diligent in their visitations to those who are sick, and warn them, "Ut quoties fuerint accessiti, celeriter accedant et hilariter ad aegrotos." [LYNDWOOD, *Prov. Const.* i. 2.] In our Post-Reformation system we find also that ample provision is made for the continuance of this ancient and laudable custom. Canon 67, "*Ministers to visit the Sick*," directs, "When any person is dangerously sick in any Parish, the Minister or Curate (having knowledge thereof) shall resort unto him or her (if the disease be not known or probably suspected to be infectious) to instruct and comfort them in their distress, according to the order of the Communion Book, if he be no Preacher, or if he be a Preacher, then as he shall think most needful and convenient." In the Ordination of Deacons it is also stated to be part of their duty to search out the sick and poor in the parish in which they are appointed to minister, and to give notice of such cases to the Incumbent: "And furthermore it is his office, where provision is so made, to search for the sick, poor and impotent people of the Parish, to intimate their estates, names and places where they dwell unto the Curate, that by his Exhortation they may be relieved with the alms of the Parishioners and others. Will you do this gladly and willingly?" This question, and the first parenthesis in the Canon (which speaks in general terms of the knowledge by the Minister of a case of sickness), imply that the Incumbent is expected to do something more than merely visit sick people who send for him. Whether he become acquainted with the case directly or indirectly, he is bound to visit, and even, if circumstances permit, he is to search for, or at any rate cause to be sought for, the sick and impotent, and to act up to the maxim quoted above, "*Etiamsi non vocatus*." For giving full force to this Visitation of the Sick, the English Ritual contains a formulary which has been used with slight alteration in our churches from the earliest times. Nearly all the Rubrics and prayers are to be found in the ancient Manuals of the Church of England, and some of the prayers can be traced to almost primitive times. Where some variation has been made from these originals (as, for example, in the Exhortation, and in the substitution of a Rubric directing the Minister to examine whether the Sick Man repent him truly of his sins, etc., for a somewhat lengthy form), the spirit of the original is still adhered to. The only portions which have been altogether omitted in our Prayer Book are the procession of the Priest and his Clerks to the house saying the seven penitential Psalms, and the Service of Extreme Unction. The original object of anointing with oil, as we see from the passage in St. James cited above, was to "save," or procure a miraculous recovery of the infirm, by remission of the temporal punishment which they had merited for their sins. Though it should also be added that Extreme Unction was used in very early times without any expectation of cure, *in extremis*: and

it seems probable that there was a primitive ordinance of this kind which was used for the dying, as well as that which was used with a view to recovery. The Reformers retained the practice in the first Prayer Book, but it was dropped out of the second in 1552. The Office then in use is given in a note at the end of this Service.

An Appendix of four Prayers was added to the Visitation Office in 1661, to meet particular cases; the first for a sick child, the second for a sick person when there appears little hope of recovery, the third a *Commendatio Animæ* for a dying person, and the fourth a Prayer for one troubled in mind or conscience. These have not as yet been traced to any ancient source.

§ *The Use of the Office.*

The structure of the Office for the Visitation of the Sick shews that it is intended as a formal rite, to be once used over the Sick Person, and not to be used as the customary prayers of the Clergyman in his ordinary and frequent visits to the sickrooms of his parishioners. It is a solemn recognition of the person over whom it is used as one who is in the fellowship of the Church, and for whom the Church, by its authorized Minister, offers prayer to God; and it is also a solemn recognition of the fact that the sicknesses and infirmities incident to human nature are a consequence of sin, a part of that heritage of death which came upon us through the Fall.

The promiscuous use of the Office would evidently be a departure from the intention with which it is put into the hands of her priests by the Church of England. Their duties towards the sick divide themselves, indeed, into two distinct general branches, the one consisting of ordinary pastoral instruction, consolation, and prayer; and the other of the use of the two services for Visitation and Communion; and every clergyman must find himself obliged to exercise his discretion as to those cases in which he can adopt the more solemn course which the Church has appointed for him and his parishioners in the latter branch of his duties.

Those who really have any religious convictions, and who have made religious principles the rule of their life, will either be consistent Church people or religious Dissenters. The former are well accustomed to the system and services of the Church, and have been trained, consciously or unconsciously, by means of it: the latter are in more or less ignorance about the principles of the Church, and have not ordinarily been under its training influence. In the case of the one the Visitation Service would be appropriate even if used on a sudden, supposing the case to be one of imminent danger; and no prayers could be used with so great advantage. To the other it would be like a strange language, if used without much preparation and instruction: and would not be applicable at all, except it were accompanied by an understanding that its use presupposed reconciliation to the Church.

In the case of other classes of persons, who have led irreligious and wicked lives, and who are ill instructed in the way of salvation, the Visitation Service can only be properly applicable after much instruction has been given, and much progress made towards penitence. An abrupt use of it might tend to bring into their view the comforts of the Office more prominently than would be advisable for those who do not fully appreciate the necessity of repentance towards the attainment of pardon and true peace.

It may be added, in conclusion, that the Visitation Office should be used with all the proper solemnity belonging to a formal rite of the Church. The first Rubric of the ancient Service was, "*In primis induat se sacerdos superpellicio cum stola . . .*" and the same rule should still be observed. Care should also be taken that there is some one present to say the responses. In his revised book Bishop Cosin provided for this by so far reviving the ancient practice as to direct the attendance of one lay Clerk with the Priest. But some members of the sick person's family, or a parish visitor, or other friend, can always be found ready to take this charitable duty on themselves.

THE ORDER FOR THE VISITATION OF THE SICK.

Ordo ad Visitandum Infirmum.

¶ When any person is sick, notice shall be given thereof to the Minister of the Parish; who, coming into the sick person's house, shall say,

PEACE be to this house, and to all that dwell in it.

¶ When he cometh into the sick man's presence he shall say, kneeling down,

REMEMBER not, LORD, our iniquities, nor the iniquities of our forefathers. Spare us, good LORD, spare Thy people whom Thou hast redeemed with Thy most precious blood, and be not angry with us for ever.

Answer.

¶ Spare us, good LORD.

¶ Then the Minister shall say,
Let us pray.

LORD, have mercy upon us.

CHRIST, have mercy upon us.

LORD, have mercy upon us.

OUR FATHER, Which art in heaven, Hallowed be Thy Name. Thy kingdom come. Thy

a "And the Priest with his Clerk, entering into." [Cosin's Book.] b S. 2

¶ Et cum intraverit domum dicat,

PAX huic domui et omnibus habitantibus in ea: pax ingredientibus et egredientibus.

NE reminiscaris, DOMINE, delicta nostra, vel parentum nostrorum: neque vindictam sumas de peccatis nostris: parce, DOMINE, parce famulo Tuo: quem redemisti precioso sanguine Tuo ne in æternum irascaris ei.

Et statim sequatur.

KYRIE eleison.

CHRISTE eleison.

KYRIE eleison.

PATER noster, Qui es in caelis; sanctificetur nomen Tuum: adveniat regnum Tuum:

THE SALUTATION.

The Priest, on entering the house, is ordered to use the salutation enjoined by our Lord upon His Apostles: "And into whatsoever house ye enter, first say, Peace be to this house." [Luke x. 5.] It is specially appropriate when thus pronounced by the Minister of God on entering a house of sickness. In a household so circumstanced there is often much of disquietude and anxiety. The relations are perplexed and agitated, inclined to forget, perhaps, that this sickness is of the Lord. The words of the Priest remind them of that peace which is to be found in resting in the Lord, and casting their cares on Him. But the Salutation has a special reference to the sick man, to whom the Priest comes as the Messenger of Peace. He is very probably under deep conviction of sin, longing for pardon and reconciliation; and the object of this visitation is to strengthen his faith, awaken his charity, move him to sincere confession and repentance, and on his sincere repentance and confession to give him the free and full forgiveness vouchsafed by the Saviour to all who truly turn to Him, and so to make the sinner at peace with God.

These words, too, used at the very entrance of the Priest into the house, help to remind those who hear them that he comes on no ordinary errand of condolence, but specially in his character as a representative of Him Who said to His ministers, "My peace I leave with you." They thus serve to bring about a tone of mind in unison with the Service that is to follow.

THE ANTHEM.

In the older Service-books the Priest and his Clerks were directed, on their way to the house of the sick man, to say the seven Penitential Psalms, with the Gloria Patri after each, and to conclude with the Antiphon, "Ne reminiscaris."

In the Prayer Book of 1549 one of the Penitential Psalms, the 143rd, was said by the Priest on entering the sick man's presence, followed by the Gloria Patri and this anthem, "Remember not," etc. Subsequently the Psalm was omitted, and the anthem, "Remember not," alone retained. The Respond, "Spare us, good Lord," was added at the last revision in 1661.

This Antiphon memorializes God of the redemption of His people by the most precious Blood of Christ. To those present in the sickroom, as well as to the sick person himself, it also gives the keynote of the Service at its very beginning: pointing out that sickness is a chastisement permitted by God; that sin has brought it into the world; and that our prayers for benefits to the body ought to be founded on the confession of God's undeserved mercy in Christ. The words are, of course, spoken to God, and are a kind of Litanic hymn; but they cannot fail to have a subjective side also in warning the sick of their true relation to His mercy, and of the worthlessness as well as impiety of self-reliance. They remind him that God's mercy must be sought; that His anger against sin is often shewn by bodily chastisement; and that temporal judgements are frequently sent by Him in mercy, that He may not be compelled to be "angry with us for ever."

THE LORD'S PRAYER.

The prayer of our Blessed Lord is used here, as elsewhere, at the beginning of the Service in token of its prevailing power with God, and as the gate by which all other prayer is to enter into Heaven, and be heard by Him. The structure of the Service suggests that it should be said by all present as well as by the Priest, and "with" him, as in the end of the Litany. It should also be said with a special intention directed towards the subsequent portion of the Service, remembering that God is Our Father to chastise and Our

will be done in earth, As it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our trespasses, As we forgive them that trespass against us. And lead us not into temptation; But deliver us from evil. Amen.

¶ Minister.

“O LORD, save Thy servant;

¶ Answer.

Which putteth *his* trust in Thee.

¶ Minister.

“Send *him* help from Thy holy place,

¶ Answer.

And evermore mightily defend *him*.

¶ Minister.

“Let the enemy have no advantage of *him*;

¶ Answer.

Nor the wicked approach to hurt *him*.

¶ Minister.

“Be unto *him*, O LORD, a strong tower,

¶ Answer.

“From the face of *his* enemy.

¶ Minister.

“O LORD, hear our prayers.

¶ Answer.

“And let our cry come unto Thee.

α Ps. 86. 2.

δ Ps. 20. 1, 2; 79. 9.

ε Ps. 89. 22, 23.

δ Ps. 61. 3.

ε Prov. 18. 10.

ψ Ps. 61. 1.

ζ Ps. 102. 1.

fiat voluntas Tua, sicut in cœlo, et in terra. Panem nostrum quotidianum da nobis hodie: et dimitte nobis debita nostra, sicut et nos dimittimus debitoribus nostris: et ne nos inducas in tentationem: sed libera nos a malo. Amen.

℣. *Salvum fac servum Tuum vel ancillam Tuam.*

℞. *DEUS meus sperantem in Te.*

℣. *Mitte ei, DOMINE, auxilium de sancto.*

℞. *Et de Syon tuere eum.*

℣. *Nihil proficiat inimicus in eo.*

℞. *Et filius iniquitatis non apponat nocere ei.*

℣. *Esto ei, DOMINE, turris fortitudinis.*

℞. *A facie inimici.*

℣. *DOMINE, exaudi orationem meam.*

℞. *Et clamor meus ad Te veniat.*

Father to heal; that “He woundeth, and His hands make whole;” and that the first prayer of the sick and of those who love them should be in the tone of His Whose holy example teaches us to say, “Thy will be done.”

The lesser Litany precedes the Lord's Prayer in this place with a special emphasis, for it is the very language of those who came to Jesus to be healed of their infirmities in the days of His earthly life. Thus the two blind men mentioned in St. Matthew ix. came to Christ, “crying and saying, Thou Son of David, have mercy upon us;” and in like manner the two mentioned in St. Matthew xx. “cried out, saying, Have mercy on us, O Lord, Thou Son of David.” In almost the same terms the father prayed for his lunatic son, “saying, Lord, have mercy on my son” [Matt. xvii. 15]; and the woman of Syro-Phœnicia, who came to Jesus on behalf of her sick daughter, “cried unto Him, saying, Have mercy on me, O Lord.”

THE VERSICLES.

These suffrages are the same which are used throughout the Occasional Offices, slight variations being made in them according to the nature of the Service in which they are introduced. They are taken from the 20th, the 61st, the 86th, and the 89th Psalms, and represent a strain of responsive supplication which has been ascending to the Throne of God for the sick during as many ages as the Service itself can be traced back.

THE PRAYERS.

In the Sarum Manual, immediately after the responses follow nine collects, two of which only have been translated, and retained in our present Service. The collect now standing first was the last of this series. In the original, mention is made of God's blessing on Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and it is prayed that God in like manner will visit and bless His servant. This clause has been omitted in translation. The sentence which opens the collect is doubtless originally derived from Deut. xxvi. 15, “Look down from Thy holy habitation, from heaven, and bless Thy people Israel;” a form which, if we may judge from Isa. lxiii. 15, was long in use

in the Jewish Church: “Look down from heaven, and behold from the habitation of Thy holiness and of Thy glory.” Solomon in like manner prayed at the Dedication of the Temple: “Whatsoever sickness there be . . . then hear Thou in heaven Thy dwelling-place, and forgive . . .”

The object of the prayer is to beg God's help on behalf of the sick man. It asks that the Lord would look on him in mercy, not remembering his sins, but considering his weakness; that He would be pleased to comfort him under his trial, and enable him to have firm faith in God. Not only does it ask that the Almighty will remember him for good, but that He will defend him from the evil, specially that He will guard him against the assaults of the Devil, that He will grant him perpetual peace, and ever keep him in safety.

If we compare this prayer and the preceding versicles, we shall see how naturally the collect re-echoes what has been already prayed for. It gathers up into a connected whole all the previous petitions, and again lays them before God. This is no idle repetition: the blessings sought are of so great value, and so deeply needed, that the Church purposely enables us here to set them once and again before God, according to the example of our Blessed Lord, Who in the hour of His distress prayed three times, using the same words: “If it be possible, let this cup pass from Me; yet not My will, but Thine.”

The next prayer is the third of the group of collects in the Sarum Manual. In the original prayer mention is made of the miraculous cure of Peter's wife's mother and of the centurion's servant, of Tobias and of Sara, which allusions were all omitted at the last revision in 1661. The former prayer is directed to seeking comfort and help for the sick man from God in the time of his affliction; this second collect sets forth sickness as an instrument in the hand of the Almighty for good, and prays that the present trial may be sanctified to the sufferer. The “accustomed goodness” of God is here invoked, not for the recovery of the patient, or even for support under trial, but that the fatherly correction may work the end God has intended in sending it. If sickness is to answer any good end, it must be viewed as Fatherly correction; and if it comes from our Father, to Him we may go for help and comfort under it, and we may be persuaded that it comes for some good purpose. Looking to God as

¶ Minister.

“O LORD, look down from heaven, behold, visit and relieve this Thy servant. Look upon *him* with the eyes of Thy mercy, give *him* comfort and sure confidence in Thee, defend *him* from the danger of the enemy, and keep *him* in perpetual peace and safety, through JESUS CHRIST our LORD. Amen.

α Ps. 80. 14; 106. 4.

HEAR us, Almighty and most merciful GOD and SAVIOUR; extend Thy accustomed goodness to this Thy servant who is grieved with sickness. Sanctify, we beseech Thee, this Thy fatherly correction to *him*; that the sense of *his* weakness may add strength to *his* faith, and seriousness to *his* repentance. That, if it shall be Thy good pleasure to restore *him* to *his* former health, *he* may lead the residue of *his* life in Thy fear, and to Thy glory: or else give *him* grace so to take Thy visitation, that after this painful life ended *he* may dwell with Thee in life everlasting, through JESUS CHRIST our LORD. Amen.

¶ Then shall the Minister exhort the sick person after this form, or other like.

DEARLY beloved, know this, that Almighty GOD is the LORD of life and death, and of all things to them pertaining, as youth, strength,

Father, our own weakness will lead us more to Him, will make us feel our dependence on Him more; in short, will strengthen our faith. The sense of weakness will force on us the uncertainty of life, will make us remember how short our time is, and bring us to more earnest repentance for all we have done amiss, as remembering the account we may soon have to give before our God. The prayer, too, reminds those who hear it, that the repentance and sorrow are not to be limited simply to a sickbed, but that in case of recovery the good work begun in time of affliction must be carried out. How necessary to pray, “If it shall be Thy good pleasure to restore him to his former health, he may lead the residue of his life in Thy fear!” How many are there who promise well when God’s hand is upon them, who seem full of godly sorrow for sin, and Christian hatred of it, who yet on recovery forget all, and fall back into old sins, and form new evil habits!

And since the issues of life and death are with the Lord, and we know not what the event may be, recovery or death, the collect prays, not only that in case of restoration the sick man may be enabled to live to God, but that in case his illness prove fatal, he may, through the grave and gate of death, pass to a joyful resurrection, and, this life ended, dwell for ever with God in life everlasting.

THE EXHORTATIONS.

The use of Exhortation after Prayer has long formed part of the Service in the Western Church. The principal heads of the Exhortation as given in our Prayer Book are prescribed by an ancient Canon, in which the Priest is ordered, after he hath prayed for the sick, “to speak comfortably and mildly to him, exhorting him to place all his hope in God, and to bear his scourging patiently; to believe it is designed for his purifying and amendment, and also to confess his sins, and promise reformation if God grant him life, and that he engage to do acts of Penance for his faults; also that he dispose of his estate while his reason and senses remain entire; that he break off his iniquities by Almsdeeds; that he forgive all that have offended him; that he hold a right Faith and Belief, and never despair of God’s mercy.” [Concil. Nannetens. cap. 4, ap. Binium tom. 3, p. 2, pag. 131.] In the

Oremus.

RESPICE, DOMINE, de caelo, et vide et visita hunc famulum Tuum N. et benedic eum sicut benedicere dignatus es Abraham, Isaac, et Jacob. Respice super eum, DOMINE, oculis misericordiae Tuæ: et reple eum omni gaudio et lætitia et timore Tuo. Expelle ab eo omnes inimici insidias: et mitte Angelum pacis qui eum custodiat, et domum istam in pace perpetua. Per DOMINUM nostrum.

Oremus.

EXAUDI nos, omnipotens et misericors DEUS, et visitationem Tuam conferre digneris super hunc famulum Tuum N. quem diversa vexat infirmitas. Visita eum, DOMINE, sicut visitare dignatus es socrum Petri, puerumque centurionis, et Tobiam, et Saram, per sanctum angelum Tuum, Raphaellem. Restitue in eo, DOMINE, pristinam sanitatem: ut mereatur in atrio domus Tuæ dicere, castigans castigavit me DOMINUS, et morti non tradidit me: Salvator mundi. Qui cum DEO PATRE, et SPIRITU SANCTO vivis et regnas DEUS: per omnia sæcula sæculorum. Amen.

health, age, weakness, and sickness. Wherefore, whatsoever your sickness is, know you certainly that it is God’s visitation. And for what cause soever this sickness is sent unto you, whether it be to try your patience for the

Sarum Manual the first form of Exhortation, which probably in some measure suggested the two Exhortations here set forth, is but short: “Frater charissime, gratias age omnipotenti Deo pro universis beneficiis suis: patienter et benigne suscipiens infirmitatem corporis quam tibi Deus immisit: nam si ipsam humiliter sine murmure toleraveris, infert animæ tuæ maximum præmium et salutem. Et frater charissime quia viam universæ carnis ingressurus es; esto firmus in fide. Qui enim non est firmus in fide infidelis est: et sine fide impossibile est placere Deo. Et ideo si salvus esse volueris: ante omnia opus est ut teneas catholicam fidem: quam nisi integram inviolatamque servaveris: absque dubio in æternum peribis.”

Some traces of similarity with our own form may also be found in a mediæval Exhortation of early date, given by Maskell. It is taken from an ancient MS., *De Visitatione Infermorum*, in the Library of St. John’s College, Oxford:—

“How thou shalt comfort a man that he grucche nouȝt when he is seke.

“Sone loueste thou thi Lord God? he will sai, ȝe. Than thus, ȝf thou loue God, thou louest that He doith, and He skorgeth the, and therfor thou shalt gladli suffre it. Here of spekit Salamon, and seith, Sone speke nouȝt aȝen the chastising of thi fader, for it is no sone whom the fadir chastisith nouȝt, and it accordith with commine maner of speche. For if a man see anotheris child do schreudedeli in his fader presence, and the fader chastised him nouȝt, than wold that othir man seie, it is nouȝt his sone, or ellis he loueth him nouȝt, for if he were his child or ellis loued him, he wold chastise him: and therfor be nouȝt evil afraid of thi Faders chastising of heuene; for he seith himself; whom I loue, him I chastise. Also sekene of bodi makith soule hele, and soule hele is nouȝt but of God; therfor despice nouȝt Godis scorge, but when God ponissche the, thanke him and loue him, that he emendith the, and undernemith the, and blameth the, and ponissche the nouȝt in his wrath ne in his wodnes, but in his grete mercy . . .” [MASKELL’S Mon. Rit. iii. 354.]

The Exhortation, as set forth in our Service, is divided into two portions, whereof the second part may be omitted if the person visited be very sick. The first part is devoted to instruction regarding the cause of sickness, and the purpose of it as concerns the sufferer. The second portion is purely

example of others, and that your faith may be found in the day of the LORD laudable, glorious, and honourable, to the increase of glory and endless felicity; or else it be sent unto you to correct and amend in you whatsoever doth offend the eyes of your heavenly FATHER; know you certainly that if you truly repent you of your sins, and bear your sickness patiently, trusting in GOD's mercy, for His dear SON JESUS CHRIST's sake, and render unto Him humble thanks for His Fatherly visitation, submitting yourself wholly unto His will, it shall turn to your profit, and help you forward in the right way that leadeth unto everlasting life.

¶ If the person visited be very sick, then the Curate may end his exhortation in this place, or else proceed.

“TAKE therefore in good part the chastisement of the LORD: For (as Saint Paul saith in the twelfth Chapter to the Hebrews) whom the LORD loveth He chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom He receiveth. If ye endure chastening, GOD dealeth with you as with sons; for what son is he whom the father chasteneth not? But if ye be without chastisement, whereof all are partakers, then are ye bastards, and not sons. Furthermore, we have had fathers of our flesh, which corrected us, and we gave them reverence: shall we not much rather be in subjection unto the FATHER of spirits, and live? For they verily for a few days chastened us after their own pleasure; but He for our profit, that we might be

α Heb. 12. 6-10.

partakers of His holiness. These words, good brother, are written in holy Scripture for our comfort and instruction, that we should patiently, and with thanksgiving bear our heavenly FATHER's correction, whensoever by any manner of adversity it shall please His gracious goodness to visit us. And there should be no greater comfort to Christian persons, than to be made like unto CHRIST, by suffering patiently adversities, troubles, and sicknesses. For He Himself went not up to joy, but first He suffered pain; He entered not into His glory before He was crucified. So, truly, our way to eternal joy is to suffer here with CHRIST; and our door to enter into eternal life is gladly to die with CHRIST; that we may rise again from death, and dwell with Him in everlasting life. Now therefore taking your sickness, which is thus profitable for you, patiently, I exhort you in the Name of GOD, to remember the profession which you made unto GOD in your baptism. And forasmuch as after this life there is an account to be given unto the righteous Judge, by Whom all must be judged without respect of persons; I require you to examine yourself and your estate, both toward GOD and man; so that accusing and condemning yourself for your own faults, you may find mercy at our heavenly FATHER's hand for CHRIST's sake, and not be accused and condemned in that fearful judgement. Therefore I shall rehearse to you the Articles of our Faith, that you may know whether you do believe as a Christian man should, or no.

hortatory, exhorting to patience, self-examination, and faith. In the earlier portion the sick man is reminded that all things are of God, as life, death, health, and sickness. Whatever his trial may be, it is God's visitation. If from the Lord, it comes with some definite end and purpose, for the Almighty does not work at random. The object may be the trial of his patience for the example of others, that they may see in the sick man visible proof of God's sustaining grace, and be brought to seek it for themselves; or that his faith may be tried, to see of what sort it is, whether it will endure in the furnace of affliction; or that he may be moved to see his sins, and the need of repentance and amendment of life. One or other of these, or a combination of all, may be the end purposed by God; but although we may not be able to see clearly the cause for which the sickness is sent, one thing is certain, that if it be accepted in a right spirit, it will turn to the good of the sufferer. If he truly repent him of his sins, if he bear his sickness patiently, trusting in God's mercy through Christ,—nay more, if, strong in faith, he is able to see goodness in this fatherly visitation, and to thank God for it; then, whether he recover or whether he die, the sickness shall turn to his profit. If he recover, health will find him strengthened, established in the faith, earnest to run his Christian race, to press forward toward the mark of the prize of his high calling in Christ Jesus, with deeper love to his Lord and firmer faith. If he die, there will be ministered unto him, through the grace of God, an entrance into life eternal.

The second part is founded, as far as the earlier portion of it is concerned, on Heb. xii. 6-10. These words are set before the sick man as an argument for patience under the chastening hand of God. He is reminded, too, of the example of Christ. The Christian before all things should long to be as His Master, Who going through sorrow and pain on earth, entered not into His glory until after His agonizing Death on the cross. They who would share the blessedness of Christ must be willing to take up the cross when it is set before them, and follow Him in the path of suffering.

It is also observable that the continued obligation of the vows made in Baptism is set before the sick person; and that these vows are spoken of as the substantial matter on which that

Judgement will be founded which mortal sickness so vividly brings into view. Thus the Christian system is shewn to us, consistent with itself in all its parts, as is the Christian revelation: and when a person is lying on a sickbed in expectation of death, he is forcibly reminded by the ministrations of the Church to him that the life of this world is, in its spiritual reality, a preparation for a life to come with which it is intimately associated.

THE PROFESSION OF FAITH.

In the ancient English Office the Priest is directed to recite to the sick man the fourteen articles of the faith, of which the seven first relate to the mystery of the Trinity, and the seven others to the humanity of Christ. After these articles it is, however, added, “And if the sick man be a laic or simply a literate, then the priest may question him generally on the articles of the faith under this form.” The form prescribed in this case is simply the Creed slightly paraphrased.

Maskell cites a form of examination from the MS. *De Visitatione Infirmorum*, already quoted. Part of it is: “Whan thou hast told him alle this, or ellis ʒif thou haue no time to sai alle for hast of deth, begin here, and speke to him on this maner, whan thou seest that he neieth the deth. Brother, art thou glad that thou shalt die in Christin feith? Resp. ʒe. Knowleche that thou hast nouzt wel liued as thou shuldest? Resp. ʒe. Art thou sori therfor? Resp. ʒe. Hast thou wil to amende the, ʒif thou haddist space of lif? Resp. ʒe. Leuist thou in God, Fader Almighty, Maker of heuene and erthe? Resp. ʒe. Leuist thou in the Fader and the Sone and the Holi Gost thre persons and on God? Resp. ʒe. Leuist thou that oure Lord Jesus Crist Godis Sone of heuene was conceiuid of the Holi Gost, and toke flesche and blode of oure ladi seint Marie, and was borne of hir, she being moder and mayde? Resp. ʒe. Leuist thou that he suffrid pine and deth, for oure trespas, and nouzt for his gilt under Pounce Pilate, and that he was don on the cros, and died for the on god Fridai, and was buried? Resp. ʒe. Thankest thou him therfor? Resp. ʒe. Leuist thou that thou may nouzt be sauid but throw his deth? Resp. ʒe.” [MASKELL'S *Mon. Rit.* iii. 357.]

¶ Here the Minister shall rehearse the Articles of the Faith, saying thus,

¶ Sar.

DOST thou believe in GOD the FATHER Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth?

And in JESUS CHRIST His only begotten SON our LORD? and that He was conceived by the HOLY GHOST, born of the Virgin Mary; that He suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, dead, and buried; that He went down into hell, and also did rise again the third day; that He ascended into heaven, and sitteth at the right hand of GOD the FATHER Almighty, and from thence shall come again at the end of the world, to judge the quick and the dead?

And dost thou believe in the HOLY GHOST, the holy Catholick Church, the Communion of Saints, the Remission of sins, the Resurrection of the flesh, and everlasting life after death?

¶ The sick person shall answer,
All this I stedfastly believe.

¶ Then shall the Minister examine whether he repent him truly of his sins, and be in charity with all the world; exhorting him to forgive from the bottom of his heart all persons that have offended him, and if he hath offended any other, to ask them forgiveness; and where he hath done injury or wrong to any man, that he make amends to the uttermost of his power. And if he hath not before disposed of his goods, let him then be admonished

¶ Sar.

¶ "Et si infirmus laicus vel simpliciter literatus fuerit: tunc potest sacerdos articulos fidei in generali ab eo inquirere, sub hac forma.

CARISSIME frater: credis PATREM et FILIUM et SPIRITUM SANCTUM, esse Tres Personas et Unum DEUM, et ipsam benedictam atque indivisibilem Trinitatem creasse omnia creata visibilia et invisibilia. Et solum FILIUM, de SPIRITU SANCTO conceptum, incarnatum fuisse ex Maria Virgine: passum et mortuum pro nobis in cruce sub Pontio Pilato: sepultum descendisse ad inferna: die tertia resurrexisse a mortuis: ad cœlos ascendisse: iterumque venturum ad iudicandum vivos et mortuos, omnesque homines tunc in corpore et anima resurrecturos, bona et mala secundum merita sua recepturos. Et remissionem peccatorum per sacramentorum ecclesiæ perceptionem. Et sanctorum communionem: id est, omnes homines in caritate existentes, esse participes omnium honorum gratiæ quæ fiunt in ecclesia: et omnes qui communicant cum justis hic in gratia, communicare cum eis in gloria?

¶ Deinde respondeat infirmus,
Credo firmiter in omnibus . . .

¶ Deinde dicat sacerdos.

CARISSIME frater: quia sine caritate nihil proderit tibi fides, testante Apostolo qui dicit: Si habuero omnem fidem ita ut montes transferam, caritatem autem non habuero, nihil sum: Ideo oportet te diligere DOMINUM DEUM tuum super omnia ex toto corde tuo, et ex tota

This form of Exhortation appears to belong to a type commonly used in the Middle Ages. Mr. Maskell's form is taken from a MS. in St. John's College Library, Oxford; the following is from a MS. in the Bodleian [Rawlinson, c. 587, ff. 53, 54.] In the same collection [Rawlinson, c. 103, 90] there is a Latin form apparently drawn up for the use of priests in the diocese of Laudun, in the fifteenth century, which begins in a similar manner.

"Antequam communicetur infirmus et ante unccionem:—
"Brother, be ye gladde y^t ye shall dye in Chrysten beleve? Re. Ye, syr.

"Knowe ye well y^t ye have not so well lyved as ye shulde? Ye, syr.

"Haue ye wille to amende yow if ye had space to lyve? Ye, syr.

"Beleve ye that o^r Lorde Christ Jhu goddys soon of heaven was born of the blessyd vyrgyne ou^r ladie saynt Mary? Ye, syr.

"Beleve ye that our Lorde Christ Jhu dyed vpon the crosse to bye mans sowle upō the good ffrydaie? Ye, syr.

"Thancke ye him entierly therof? Ye, syr.
"Beleve ye y^t ye may not be saved but by his precious death? Ye, syr.

"Tunc dicat sacerdos.

"Therfor, Brother, while yo^r sowle is in yo^r bodye, thancke ye god of his death, and haue ye hole truste, to be saved, through his precyouse death, and thyncke ye on non other worldly goode, but onely in Christe Jhus deathe, and on his pytefull passyon, and saye after me, My swete Lorde Christ Jhu, I put thy precyous passion betwene the and my evill werke and betwene me and thy wrathe.

"Et dicat infirmus ter.

"In manus tuas Domine, etc. *Vel sic*:—
"Lorde Christ Jhu, in to thy handes I betake my sowle and as thow boughtest me, bodye and soule I betake to the."

The beautiful words, "I put Thy precious Passion," etc., are taken from St. Anselm; unless indeed the reverse be the

case, and St. Anselm quoted them from a form familiar in his time.

In our Prayer Book the Creed simply has been retained as containing all things necessary to be believed by a Christian man, and on account of its great conciseness, an important point to be considered in selecting or composing a form for use in time of sickness and consequent weakness. In the case of ignorant persons there should be some previous instruction in the doctrines of the Creed before the Visitation Office is used, and this profession of faith thus solemnly made. A concise exposition of it will be found in the Notes to Morning Prayer, p. 197.

[Then shall the Minister examine] In the Sarum Manual, after the patient's confession of faith, there follows a long exhortation to charity (grounded on 1 Cor. xiii.), to make amends for injuries done, to forgive injuries received, to love of enemies, to firm hope and faith in God, to confession of sin; and after the special confession the priest is directed to use an exhortation to almsgiving and good deeds and to works of penance in case of recovery. The Exhortation directed by the various Rubrics that follow the confession of faith in our Service is to be similar in its general character. In addition, however, to moving the sick man to repent him truly of his sins, to be in love and charity with all men, and to make amends to the uttermost of his power if he have wronged any, the priest is directed to admonish him, if he hath not before disposed of his property, to make his will. This may seem at first sight to be too purely a secular matter to find place in a deathbed Exhortation. Yet when we reflect what heartburning and jealousy is often caused by the fact of no disposition of property having been made, and when we remember that from this very cause families are often broken up and relations estranged, we can see at once that it is a part of the duty of the minister of Christ to do his utmost to prevent such a state of things. After having counselled the sick man to make a just and equitable provision for his family or relations, the priest is directed earnestly to move him to be liberal to the poor. First, he is exhorted to consider how his affairs stand, then to be charitable, that in his giving there may be no injustice to those who have prior claims upon him either by debt or relationship. It has

