

THE CLOISTERS,
GORDON SQUARE, LONDON.
6th February, 1901.

MY DEAR BRETHREN,

On Sunday, the 3rd instant, it pleased God to take to His rest the aged Apostle, Mr. Francis Valentine Woodhouse, who had all but completed his 96th year.

This is an event of great moment, not only for us, who have been in the more immediate fellowship of the Apostles in these days, but for the whole Church throughout the world. Its significance is emphasized by its occurrence within a few days of the death of the Sovereign of this realm, Queen Victoria, during whose long and blessed reign, and under whose protection, the work of the Lord by His Apostles has been carried on in peace and without hindrance.

These two actings of God constitute a very striking sign to the Church and to the world; and we may expect that they will be followed by great and unmistakable evidences of their importance.

The removal of the last survivor of the Twelve Apostles necessarily affects the mode of the Lord's work in His Church. Of the changes it must involve, it is too early to speak in particular. It may, however, be assumed that some modifications in the form of the services of worship will necessarily have to be made in consequence of the altered circumstances.

But you need not anticipate any violent or radical changes. The Angels whom the Apostles have set in charge of the several churches and congregations of the faithful, will continue to fulfil their charge, taking oversight of the people committed to their pastoral care, fostering the gifts of the Spirit, and with the help of the priests and deacons serving under them, fulfilling the work of the ministry, and continuing to offer the holy sacrifice of the Eucharist, "shewing the Lord's death till He come."

It is clearly the duty of us, each and all, whether in places of ministry, or as lay members of the congregation, to abide in our places; to hold fast that which we have received and heard, to strengthen the things that remain. The removal of the ministry on earth of the Apostles cannot abrogate or affect our duty to wait upon God, to offer daily worship and prayer in His house, and to support the services of the Church by our personal attendance and by our offerings—to maintain the church buildings—to provide for the necessities of the poor, and for the preaching of the Gospel. The Tithe is still, as it has always been, the Lord's: and the obligation which lies not only upon all Christian people, but upon all men, to render to Him the tenth of their increase can in no way be affected by that which has taken place. On the contrary, the solemn and significant sign which the Lord has given to us, should serve to stir us all up to greater diligence and faithfulness in the discharge of every duty. This, I am confident, will be the case with you, dear brethren, and I pray, with myself also. I am equally confident that you will all help to uphold me by your faithfulness and by your prayers in the responsible position—now more responsible than ever—in which I am placed.

The removal from our sight of the Apostleship, while we who have been gathered to them remain, is not that for which we once

hoped; and no provision for such a condition of things has been made, neither could have been, unless it had pleased the Lord to give to His Apostles some light by which to instruct us how to act in such a case. On the other hand, many words of prophecy spoken during later years have intimated more or less clearly, that what has now happened was to be expected. And now that this has come to pass, let us not be troubled or shaken in mind. It is *the Lord's* work, not *our* work. He who began it, and He only, knows how He will finish it: and He has given us some clear indications of the character and order of His actings in the Book of the Revelation. It would appear that the time has now come which is prefigured in that vision wherein is seen the Lamb in the midst of the four living creatures, and of the four and twenty crowned elders, opening the last of the seven seals. "And when He had opened the seventh seal, there was silence in heaven about the space of half an hour," a time of standing still; a time of waiting to hear what God the Lord will speak—a time of trial and of temptation, but a time also of patient confidence in Him who has guided us all our days, and will not now forsake us. Let us be quiet, let us be willing to endure scorn and mockery, to be accounted fools for Christ's sake. Only hold fast your confidence, and the rejoicing of your hope firm unto the end. Though the vision tarry, wait for it; in the end it shall speak, and shall not lie; it will surely come; it will not tarry.

Your faithful and affectionate servant,

HENRY S. HUME,

Angel of the Central Church in London.

*The Service of Commemoration will take place on Saturday, Feb. 9th,
at 10 o'clock.*