

THE QUEEN'S SERMON.

RELIGION IN COMMON LIFE.

A Sermon by the Rev. John Caird, M.A., Minister of Errol. Published by His Majesty's command.

OFERAS "by royal command," tragedies, comedies, and farces "by royal command," are common enough: but the publication of a sermon "by royal command" is a phenomenon of such rare occurrence, that the public is on the tip-toe of anxiety, to know something about the man whom the QUEEN "delighteth to honour." Astonishment is loudly expressed that it is neither archbishop nor bishop, neither archdeacon nor any of the great ecclesiastical hierarchy who is thus highly distinguished, but a simple country clergyman. And then the sermon itself. Is it doctrinal, or practical? Is it High Church, Low Church, Dry Church, or Latitudinarian? What manner of doctrine is it that is so acceptable to Royal ears as to induce the QUEEN to depart from usual custom? Mr. Caird is of those preachers who condescend to be plain and practical—we had nearly said, intelligible; and their number is so small that the present mark of Royal encouragement was much needed. Romans, xii. 11, "Not slothful in business; fervent in spirit, serving the Lord," applies him with a text, and his aim is to prove that religion may be blended with the work of common life—that, as God has made us dependent on work for our daily bread, so He has rendered it possible for us to live a life of fervent piety amid the most engrossing worldly pursuits. The preacher thus introduces his subject:—

"To combine business with religion, to keep up a spirit of serious piety amid the stir and distraction of a busy and active life—this is one of the most difficult parts of a Christian's trial in this world. It is comparatively easy to be religious in the church—to collect our thoughts and compose our feelings, and enter, with an appearance of propriety and decorum, into the offices of religious worship, amidst the quietude of the Sabbath and within the still and sacred precincts of the house of prayer. But to be religious in the world—to be pious and holy and earnest-minded in the counting-house, the manufactory, the market-place, the field, the farm—to carry out our good and solemn thoughts and feelings into the thoroughfare of daily life—this is the great difficulty of our Christian calling. The idea of religion which is set forth in the text, as elsewhere in Scripture, seems to imply that religion is not so much a duty, as a something that has to do with all duties. It suggests to us the idea that piety is not for Sundays only, but for all days; that spirituality of mind is not appropriate in one set of actions and an impertinence and intrusion with reference to others, but like the act of breathing, like the circulation of the blood, like the silent growth of the stature, a process that may be going on simultaneously with all our actions—when we are busiest, as when we are idlest—in the church, in the world; in our toil and in our rest; sleeping, waking; by day, by night—amid all the engagements and exigencies of life.

RELIGION IS DEFINED AS THE ART OF BEING, AND OF DOING, GOOD:—

"To be an adept in it is to become just, truthful, sincere, self-denying, gentle, forbearing, pure in word and thought and deed. And the school for learning this art is, not the closet, but the world—the coarse, profane, common world, with its cares and temptations, its rivalries and competitions, its hourly, ever recurring trials of temper and character. This is, therefore, an art which all can practice, and for which every profession and calling, the busiest and most absorbing, afford scope and discipline. When a child is learning to write, it matters not of what words the copy set to him is composed, the thing desired being that, whatever he writes, he learn to write well. When a man is learning to be a Christian, it matters not what his particular work in life may be; the work he does is but the copy-line set to him; the main thing to be considered is, that he learn to live well. The form is nothing, the execution is everything. It is true, indeed, that prayer, holy reading, meditation, the solemnities and services of the church, are necessary to religion, and that these can be practiced only apart from the work of secular life. But it is to be remembered, that all such holy exercises do not terminate in themselves. They are but steps in the ladder to heaven, good only as they help us to climb. No man can be a thorough proficient in navigation who has never been at sea, though he may learn the theory of it at home. No man can become a soldier by studying books on military tactics in his closet: he must in actual service acquire those habits of coolness, courage, discipline, address, rapid combination, without which the most learned in the theory of strategy or engineering will be but a schoolboy soldier after all. And, in the same way, a man in solitude and study may become a most learned theologian, or may train himself into the timid, effeminate piety of what is technically called 'the religious life.' But never, in the highest and holiest sense, can he become a religious man, until he has acquired those habits of daily self-denial, or resistance to temptation, of kindness, gentleness, humility, sympathy, active benevolence, which are to be acquired only in daily contact with mankind. Tell us not, then, that the man

of business, the bustling tradesman, the toil-worn labourer, has little or no time to attend to religion. As well tell us that the pilot, amid the winds and storms, has no leisure to attend to navigation, or the general, on the field of battle, to the art of war. Where will he attend to it? Religion is not a perpetual moping over good books; religion is not even prayer, praise, holy ordinances; these are necessary to religion—no man can be religious without them. But religion, I repeat, is, mainly and chiefly, the glorifying of God amid the duties and trials of the world—the guiding our course, amid the adverse winds and currents of temptation, by the starlight of duty and the compass of divine truth—the bearing us manfully, wisely, courageously, for the honour of Christ, our great Leader, in the conflict of life. A way, then, with the notion, that ministers and devotees may be religious, but that a religious and holy life is impracticable in the rough and busy world. Nay rather, believe me, that is the proper scene, the peculiar and appropriate field for religion—the place in which to prove that piety is not a dream of Sundays and solitary hours; that it can bear the light of day; that it can wear well amid the rough jostlings, the hard struggles, the coarse contact of common life—the place, in one word, to prove how possible it is, for a man to be at once 'not slothful in business,' and 'fervent in spirit, serving the Lord.'"

Religion (purposes Mr. Caird) consists not so much in doing spiritual or sacred acts as in doing secular acts from a sacred or spiritual motive. Holy work itself, it may be—and with multitudes who frequent our churches is—degraded into work most worldly, most unholy.

"But, on the other hand, carry holy principles with you into the world, and the world will become hallowed by their presence. A Christ-like spirit will Christianize everything it touches. A meek heart, in which the altar-fire of love to God is burning, will lay hold of the commonest, rudest things in life, and transmute them, like coals of fire, into the touch of fire, into a pure and holy flame. If you are a sincere Christian, it will be your great desire, by God's grace, to make every gift, talent, occupation of life, every word you speak, every action you do, subservient to Christian motive. Your conversation may not always—nay, may seldom, save with your intimate friends—consist of formally religious words; you may perhaps shrink from the introduction of religious topics in general society; but it demands a less amount of Christian effort occasionally to speak religious words, than to infuse the spirit of religion into all our words; and if the whole tenor of our common talk be pervaded by a spirit of piety, gentleness, earnestness, sincerity, it will be a Christian conversation not the less. If God has endowed you with intellectual gifts, it may be well, if you directly devote them to his service in the religious instruction of others; but a man may be a Christian thinker and writer as much when given to science, or history, or biography or poetry, as when writing hymns. To promote the cause of Christ directly, by furthering every religious and missionary enterprise at home and abroad, is undoubtedly your duty; but remember that your duty terminates, not when you have done all this, for you may promote Christ's cause even still more effectually, when in your daily demeanour—in the family, in society, in your business transactions, in all your common intercourse with the world, you are diffusing the influence of Christian principle around you by the silent eloquence of a holy life. Rise superior, in Christ's strength, to all equivocal practices and advantages in trade; shrink from every approach to meanness or dishonesty; let your eye be fixed on a reward before which earthly wealth grows dim beam with honour; let the thought of God make you self-restrained, temperate, watchful over speech and conduct; let the abiding sense of Christ's redeeming love to you make you gentle, self-denied, kind, and loving to all around you;—then indeed will your secular life become spiritualized, while, at the same time, your spiritual life will grow more fervent; then not only will your prayers become more devout, but when the knee bends not, and the lip is silent, the life in its heavenward tone will 'pray without ceasing'; then from amidst the roar and din of earthly toil the ear of God will hear the sweetest anthems rising; then, finally, will your daily experience prove, that it is no high and unattainable elevation of virtue, but a simple and natural thing, to which the text points, when it bids us be both 'diligent in business' and fervent in spirit, serving the Lord."

DEATH OF ROGERS THE POET.—On the morning of Tuesday, December 18th, Muel Rogers, the author of "Pleasures of Memory," and "Italy," died at his residence in St. James' Place, London. He had reached the great age of ninety-three years, having been born at Newington Green, a village now swallowed up in London, in the year 1763. His grandfather was a "gentleman;" that is to say, he lived at his ease, without profession or other business. His father, however, became a banker, and amassed a fortune, which, descending to his son, the poet, made him one of the richest commoners, and much the richest poet in England.

No!—We were all reformers. Mr. Gladstone reminds us that the late Cabinet was on the point of offering a scheme to Parliament for the entire abolition of patronage and the opening of public offices to universal merit. But this is no new language. Every statesman we have had, from Mr. Pitt to Lord John Russell, has described the miseries of the patron, and pronounced the sentence of 'vanity' upon political power. The truth is, this is a jobbing, canvassing, soliciting, and earwigging nation, and the very first intimation a man has is that he is to be asked for everything. We are not supposed to have much influence with Government—that is, nobody writes to us to intercede with Lord Palmerston for the bishopric of Baffin's Bay, or with Sir Cornwall Lewis for the letter-bags of the Shetland Isles. We are only asked to puff every book, every society, every performance, every invention, every tradesman in the country. It was a sensible man who said that a child ought to learn to say 'No.' That power is as important in the political relations as in the domestic and social. If we are ever to have a really national system of education, let every child be instructed at least one hour a-week in the practice of a kind and polite but most clear and peremptory negative. Let it be taught how to reply, when a bad companion asks it to do wrong, when a candidate asks for its vote, and when anybody asks for interest and patronage. At present few among us can say 'No,' and the affairs of the nation are consequently in the hands of men who have presumed on this weakness. This is the real object of all this desultory movement for Administrative Reform; it is to say 'No' to importunate incompetency, to intrusive folly, to exclusive rank, to obstructive stupidity, to aggressive arrogance, and the other numberless applicants that fill the great anteroom of the State, and keep out modest merit.—Times.

FAMILY GOVERNMENT.

There is, in some households, no family government, no order, no subordination. The children are kept under no restraint, but are allowed to do what they like; their faults are unnoticed and unpunished, and their tempers allowed to grow wild and headstrong; till in fact, the whole family becomes utterly lawless, rebelling against parental authority, and unamiable to all around them. How many have had to curse the over-indulgence of fond and foolish parents! How many as they have rummaged amidst the desolations of poverty, or the walls of a prison, have exclaimed "O my over-fond parents, had you exercised that authority with which God entrusted you over your own children, and had you checked my childish corruptions, and punished my boyish disobedience; had you subjected me to the salutary restraint of wholesome laws, I had not brought you with a broken heart to your grave, nor myself with a ruined character to the jail."

Over-indulgence is awfully common and continually making shocking ravages in human character. It is a system of great cruelty to the children, to the parents themselves, and to society. This practice proceeds from various causes, in some instances, from a perverted and systematic sentimentalism; in others, from absolute indolence, and a regard to present ease, which leads the silly mother to adopt any means of coaxing, and yielding, and bribing, to keep the young rebels quiet for the time; in others, from a mistake as to the time when restraint should begin, a spirit of procrastination, which leads parents to say, I shall take them in hand by and by; there is no time lost; when their reason is a little more matured, I shall lay upon them more restraint; and in some it is "mere animal affection," without the guidance of a particle of judgment, a mere in stinging, like that, which in the irrational tribes, leads to a blind and busy care. It is not uncommon for parents to treat the first acts of puerile rebellion, rather as freaks to be smiled at, than as faults to be reformed. "O," says the mother, "it is only play, 'he will know better soon.'" He does not mean "any harm, I cannot chide him," now; and if the father wiser than herself does, she cries, and perhaps, in the hearing

of the child reproves her husband for cruelty. From whatever cause it proceeds, it is in the highest degree injurious to the character of the children. Let those who are guilty of it read the fearful comment on this sin, which is furnished for their warning, in the history of Eli and his family.

REV. JOHN ANGEL JAMES.

HOW THEY VOTE FOR SPEAKER.

The Washington correspondent of the *Albany Evening Journal*, under date of Dec. 29, gives the following as the mode by which the House of Representatives vote for Speaker. The importance of the principle involved in the present struggle may be inferred from the patience with which the members day after day undergo the tedious process:—

Some of the telegraphic and other published reports give erroneous impressions of the mode of voting for Speaker, by speaking of it as "balloting." The process is this. A Deputy Clerk rises slowly and distinctly pronounces the full name of each member—"Mr. William Aiken," Mr. Charles J. Albright," repeating it three times if there is no response; and so in alphabetical order through the two hundred and thirty-four. As his name was called, the member answers aloud, "Banks," or "Richardson," or whoever he votes for. If he has any explanation or remark to make in reference to his vote, he makes it, at the same time.—After the roll has been got through with, those who were absent or did not vote when their names were called, (there are always ten or a dozen such,) rise and request their votes to be recorded which is accordingly done. A second Deputy has kept tally on a printed list, which he now passes over to the one who called the roll. He reads, "Those who voted for Mr. Richardson and Messrs. ———," &c., &c., and so on with reference to the others. This recapitulation occupies seven or eight minutes; calling the roll about twenty. A last opportunity is now afforded for any absentee to record his vote. Finally a third Deputy who has been counting up, hands the result in figures to the Clerk, which he announces, "Barks 108; Richardson, 67," &c., &c.

An idea may be formed from this, how tedious this process is. Six callings of the roll without any debate, occupy as much time as is usually spent in a daily session. Of course, every ten minutes the minority can waste in unnecessary talk, and every half hour they can compel to be wasted in calling the Yeas and Nays on frivolous motions, is so much towards postponing an election for another day.

The most of the Democrats and Southern Know Nothings sit on the right side of the House, the Republicans on the left, though there are of course, exceptions. All the long speeches, it will be noted, come from the right. All the charges of "sectionalism," threats of "disunion," nonsensical charges of "intrigue," "personal explanations," all the motions to "adjourn," to "take a recess," and calls for the "Yeas and Nays," come from the same quarter. The moment any one of these is disposed of, there begins on the left a murmur of "Call the Roll"—which increases in volume, until the roll is called. This persisted determination of the supporters of Banks, to sit and vote, and vote until an organization is effected, and the equally persistent determination on the other side to frustrate and prevent it, are the most noticeable things in the struggle.

Female Complaints.—Miss Edwards, of Yarmouth, Nova Scotia, aged 18, was for a long time in a very delicate state, the mother anxiously watched her daughter, and consulted many physicians in the hope of her being benefited, but she gradually grew worse, and was finally thrown on a bed of sickness. At this time, finding medical assistance unavailing, the mother, boldly determined to have recourse to Holloway's Pills, which she commenced using, after the first week, the improvement was so decided, that she determined to continue them, and by persevering for two months with the treatment laid down by Professor Holloway, the mother had the satisfaction of once more seeing her daughter restored to health, although her life had been previously despaired of. These celebrated Pills are a certain cure for dropsy, as well as stomach and liver complaints, and are sold by all the chemists and druggists in the Kingdom.