The Church.

VOLUME VI.—No. 48.] TORONTO, CANADA, FRIDAY, JUNE 2, 1843. [WHOLE NUMBER, CCCVIII.

Poetry.

WHY DON'T YOU GO TO MEETING.

The Mother's Answer.

I.

You may tell me of the meeting where you Dissenters go;
You may tell me of the liberty that you Dissenters know;
I am little of a scholar, but the question is not long,—
For he who stays away from church, I know, is going wrong;
THERE IS A WAY THAT SEEMETH RIGHT, the holy Scripture saith,
IN A MAN'S OWN EYES, as yours does now, BUT THE END THEREOF IS DEATH.

II.

The fine old church! I love it well, with its tower so tall and grey!
There it has stood, where now it stands, five hundred years, they say:
The greatest joys that I have known, or griefs I've had to bear,
The warmest feelings of my heart, they have every one been there:
Shall I leave it and my Prayer-book now, to go with you and look
At the preacher whom you tell me of, that prays without a book?

III.

My father and my mother in yonder church-yard lie;
And as they brought me up, I mean, by GOD'S good help, to die:
I think 'twould almost grieve their souls, though I hope they are in bliss,
After all their teaching and their prayers, if I could come to this:
Their fathers too, before them, were Churchmen all their days;
I'll never be the first to turn to your new-fangled ways.

IV.

It was in church, that happy day, the happiest of my life,
That my husband said, "I TAKE THEE TO BE MY WEDDED WIFE,—
TO HAVE AND HOLD, FROM THIS DAY FORTH, IN SICKNESS AND IN HEALTH,
FOR BETTER AND FOR WORSE, AND IN WANT AS WELL AS WEALTH."
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V.

My baby too! my darling one! you know not what I felt,
When with godfathers and godmother beside the Font I knelt;
And the Parson took him in his arms, and the Church's prayers were said,
And the water sprinkled on his brow, and the Holy Cross was made;
And all the congregation seem'd to welcome me again,
Giving thanks to GOD WHO brought me through my peril and my pain.

VI.

And when my precious baby died, I followed while they bore
His little coffin to the church, and then I wept no more;
How *could* I but take comfort, when I heard from God's own word,
The text that calls them BLESSED WHO ARE SLEEPING IN THE LORD?
No! I will keep the good old paths that all good men have trod;
And I never can forget my Church, till I forget my God!

J. M. N.

THE EXECUTION OF THE EARL OF STRAFFORD.

(From The British Critic.)

The inevitable downward course only now remained, which rude power could dictate to the semblance of a government and a constitution. The bill of attainder passed the Commons, and went up to the Lords, accompanied with the formidable hint which fifty-six names of Straffordian members who voted against the bill, posted up and cursed by infuriate mobs, would suggest to a poor frightened upper house. A melancholy humble visit of Charles to the Lords, begging only for Strafford's life, offering perpetual banishment, imprisonment, any thing to purchase simple existence—the feeblest tone that monarch ever had assumed before a country, brought a storm about their ears that quite overwhelmed them: boisterous crowds besieged the House, and dogged every peer in the streets with the cry of Justice, justice, justice! Strafford's friends stayed away because they could do him no good, the bishops stayed away because they would not vote on a question of blood—the bill passed the Lords, and went up to the King. He received it on the Saturday evening, all Sunday he was in agonizing suspense. A note from Strafford in the Tower arrived—set your conscience at liberty, it said, remove this unfortunate thing out of the way, my consent shall more acquit you, than all the world can do besides. So generous an offer it was shocking to think of making use of, still it showed that Strafford saw his difficulties. *Could* he save him? was it *possible?* Would his *veto* be of any *use?* Charles said not; Strafford himself seemed to say not, would he not forgive him, nay feel for, pity him, in his extremity. Still though a *veto* would do Strafford no good, was he not bound to give it on *his own* account, and to free his own conscience. He summoned the judges—was the bill law? yes, an act of parliament was law, that they *could* say, the *facts* of the case were out of their province. He consulted the bishops present on the point of casuistry, and was told by Williams that he had two consciences, a public and a private one: one man only at the council-board, who did honour to the patronage of Laud, told him plainly what he should do. "Sir," said Juxon, "if your conscience is against it, do not consent." It was the voice of truth, though it spoke alone, and had Charles listened to it, could he have made the venture, faced a raging country, leapt at once down the monstrous jaws wide open to devour him—it would have been far better than what he did certainly, but it was a terrific thing to do. Poor Charles, after struggling through the long long day, at last breathless and spent, yielded to importunity; at 9 o'clock in the evening he called for the warrant for Strafford's execution, and moistened the parchment with his tears as he wrote his signature. Strafford was told to prepare himself for death on the following Wednesday.

All was now over—the statesman's life, with its troubles, conflicts, commotions—the magnificent storm was spent, and Strafford had one brief awful pause before the world closed upon him for ever. Year after year, and hour after hour, to the last, the intensity and excitement of his career had increased, had within and around him quickened, like tropical nature, into a glowing multiplied life, an overflowing luxuriance, brilliancy and play of mind; and now in a moment every thought had its quietus, and all was midnight stillness within the prison walls. But the same high temper and finish of character, which had ever made him see and bend to his position whatever it was, bore him through his last short stage, as nobly as it had borne him to it: now that he could work no more, he reposed, and, life over, addressed himself to death. Do we not mistake indeed the temper of great minds all along, when we imagine that because they devoted themselves to the business of life, they are therefore devoted to life? Rather should we not say that they adopt that mode of *getting through it?* Some trial meets all men, adversity the pampered, neglect the proud, occupation the indolent, and life itself the great. The big ardent mind must be doing something, or it pines and dies, must be filling up the awkward void, storing time with acts, and making life substantial. But take away life, and the worldly principle is over; they are no longer bound to it, than they exist in it, they do not regret the loss of that which they only spent because they had, or love the rude unsightly material which their skill and labour moulded. Life, the simple animal or passive, they never knew, or felt, or had; nature gave them not the sense or organ which relishes the mere pleasure of being alive; they never thought of life itself, but only of its opportunities; and death will occupy, absorb, content them, if death is all they have to think of.

From the first moment, resigned and at home with his fate, Strafford experienced in full all that inward strength which had grown up with the unconscious religion of a noble life; a career of high motives and great ends told; essential heroism passed by a natural transition from its active to its passive state, and the mind which had pushed and strained, and schemed and battled while it could, melted into tenderness when the strife was over. He was no man to delude himself into a superficial and unreal frame of mind, or fancy religious feeling which he had not: his old chaplain Dr. Carr said, he was the most rigid self-examiner and scrutinizer of his own motives he ever knew: yet the entire freedom with which he felt himself forgive his enemies, destroyers, and all the world—that power of all others the test of the spiritual, and so defined in Gospel law, now comforted him greatly, showing that God had not left him to his own strength when he could solidly do that which was above it. He lifted a natural upward eye heavenwards, and occupied himself during the time, which his family affairs left him, in religious exercises with his chaplain and Archbishop Usher. Usher told Laud that, for a layman, he was the best instructed person in divinity he ever knew.

Earthly trials however had not quite ended; and even this short interval was interrupted by the sad intelligence of Wandesford, who had languished and died broken-hearted in consequence of the recent events;—a mournful testimonial of his affection to send to cheer his patron's prison. Strafford shed tears over his old friend, whom he was just going to follow. He was pre-eminently a fascinating person to those he was intimate with; they were affected almost like lovers over his loss, and grieved and sickened as if some mysterious fibre of their own life were broken. Radcliffe suffered a great change after Strafford's death. He was asked to write his life when he died, and excused himself with great simplicity on this score. He had been a different man ever since that event, was "grown lazy and idle, and his mind much enfeebled." "When I lost my lord, I lost a friend—such a friend as I do not think any man hath, perhaps never man had the like—a treasure which no earthly thing can countervail, so excellent a friend, and so much mine; he never had any thing in his possession and power which he thought too good for his friends; he was never weary to take pains for his friends."

Some private and family business was settled with his characteristic coolness and dispatch, parting instruction sent to his children, and farewells to friends. A beautiful pathetic note from Radcliffe, brought in answer many thanks for the comfort of it—all freely granted (a blessing for Radcliffe's son;) and God deliver you out of the wicked world, according to the innocence that is in you. And to his young boy he wrote:

"My dearest Will,—These are the last lines you are to receive from a father that tenderly loves you.

"Sweet Will,—Be careful to take the advice of those friends which are by me desired to advise you for your education. Serve God diligently morning and evening, and recommend yourself unto Him, and have him before your eyes in all your ways. With patience hear the instructions of those friends I leave with you, and diligently follow their counsel: for, till the time that you come to have experience in the world, it will be far more safe to trust to their judgments than your own.

"Lose not the time of your youth; but gather those seeds of virtue and knowledge which may be of use to yourself and comfort to your friends for the rest of your life. And that this may be the better effected, attend thereunto with patience, and be sure to correct and refrain yourself from anger. Suffer not sorrow to cast you down; but with cheerfulness and good courage, go on the race you have to run in all sobriety and truth. Be sure, with an hallowed care, to have respect unto all the commandments of God, and give not yourself to neglect them in the least things, lest by degrees you come to forget them in the greatest: for the heart of man is deceitful above all things. And in all your duties and devotions towards God, rather perform them joyfully than pensively; for God loves a cheerful giver. For your religion, let it be directed according to that which shall be taught those, which are in God's Church the proper teachers; rather than that you should ever either fancy one to yourself, or be led by men that are singular in their opinions, and delight to go ways of their own finding out."

One remarkable instruction, which he left behind him, should be mentioned—"that he foresaw that ruin was like to come upon the revenues of the Church; and that, perhaps, they might be shared amongst the nobility and gentry; but I charge you never to meddle with any of it; for the curse of God will follow all those that meddle with such a thing." He had an opportunity of showing his love for the Church more solidly than by words. A mysterious visit from his brother-in-law Mr. Denzil Hollis, one of the leading men in the Commons, intimated to him authoritatively that he was yet safe, if he would but pledge himself to advise the King to give up episcopacy. From what parties this offer really came, does not exactly appear. It may have come from the middle party in the house. It may have been only an attempt on Hollis's own part to save a relation by extracting some concession which might be urged to his advantage. It may have been a trick of his enemies to disgrace him, of which Hollis was made the unwitting medium. Whatever it was, Strafford met it with an answer worthy of him, that "he would not buy his life at so dear a rate;" and the incident comes in curiously, as a last mark connecting his fate with the cause of religion and the church.

The evening of Tuesday suggested thoughts for his passage to the scaffold the following morning. Archbishop Laud had been his fellow prisoner in the Tower all along, and was now waiting in his cell to receive the same sentence: travellers on the same road, they had come to the same journey's end; the fast friends, the sympathizing statesmen, fellow champions of the church, reformers, enthusiasts, master spirits, holy man and hero, ghostly father and obedient son—they had held firm to one another in life, and in death they were not divided. They were come to a poor earthly reward of their labours—a sad end of all those letters so full of life, hope, buoyancy and animation—those halloos that flew across the Channel, those spirit-stirring thoughts which doubled the warmth in each breast by the communication—sad end of a policy which had in view the restoration of a Church and kingdom, sad end indeed of "Thorough." Strafford wanted to see Laud just once more, to take a last farewell, and asked leave of the lieutenant of the Tower for a short interview with his fellow-prisoner. The lieutenant said it was impossible without the leave of parliament "You shall hear all that passes," said Strafford with playful sarcasm; "it is too late for him to plot heresie, or me to plot treason." The lieutenant repeated his refusal, but wished Strafford to send to parliament for leave. Strafford would not hear of that—no; parliament had done with him, and he had done with parliament. "I have gotten my despatch from them, and will trouble them no more. But, my lord," he added, turning to Usher, who was by, "What I should have spoken to my Lord's Grace of Canterbury is this: you shall desire the Archbishop to lend me his prayers this night, and to give me his blessing when I go abroad to-morrow, and to be at his window, that by my last farewell I may give him thanks for this and all other his former favours." The message was delivered to Laud—he replied he would do the first, he could not answer for the second.

All London was out the next morning (12th May, 1641), and a hundred thousand people lined the avenues to the Tower, eager to witness the once dreaded minister, on the scaffold. Strafford left his room accompanied by the lieutenant and officers of the Tower, and set out on the funeral march. As he passed under Laud's window he stopped—no Laud appeared; he turned to the lieutenant,—might he be allowed to make his reverence at any rate to the dead wall which hid the Archbishop from his eyes. Meantime Laud, apprised of his approach, showed himself at the window; Strafford bowed to the earth—*My lord, your prayers, and your blessing:* the outstretched arms of the aged prelate bestowed both, but, overcome by grief, his utterance failed, and he fell backward in a swoon.

Strafford himself, to the last, showed the genuine characteristics of his nature: as leaving the Tower gates, he encountered the mob with wild staring eyes concentrated upon him. The lieutenant of the Tower instantly portending mischief from their looks and numbers, desired Strafford to enter a coach, "for fear they should rush in upon him and tear him in pieces." But Strafford had all his life looked people in the face, and he would not shrink from the encounter now—he would not hear of a coach. "No," he said, "master lieutenant, I dare look death in the face, and I hope the people too; have you a care that I do not escape, and I care not how I die, whether by the hand of the executioner or the madness and fury of the people—if that may give them better content, it is all one to me." And so singular and incomprehensible is the power of the mind over the body in great emergencies—that morning dissipated the illness of a life, producing one of those sudden lightings up of the animal frame, which are not altogether strange to medical science in the case of those who have suffered from long infirmity. The hour of death, which has the mysterious power sometimes of restoring even the lost faculty of reason, transformed Strafford all at once into a strong, healthy man: and now, full master of himself, wound up to the highest tone of body and mind, and Strafford all over and complete, he acted on his way to the scaffold the epitome of his life. There was no sullenness or defiance any more than timidity in his behaviour, as he marched, a spectator says, like a general at the head of his army, and with open countenance and lofty courtesy bowed to the gazing crowds as he passed along. Was it not a tacit mode of saying, "People, misled, mistaken, I acquit you; I blame not you; you are not responsible for this scene: I have never had any quarrel with you, nor would you have had with me, had not deeper, subtler heads than yours, been at work. All my life I have been your friend; I have had your good in my eye: the poor have been my favourites, and I have stood up for them against the rich oppressor: my arm has been lifted up against the noble and the great, but never against you; and not you, but your betters have now conspired against me." The mob behaved with respectful silence, and not a word was spoken, or a finger raised against him as he passed along.

Having mounted the scaffold, where Archbishop Usher, the Earl of Cleveland, his brother Sir George Wentworth, and other friends, were present to receive him, he begged the people to listen while he spoke a few words.

"My Lord Primate of Ireland, and all my Lords, and the rest of these noble gentlemen, it is a great comfort to me to have your Lordships by me this day, because I have been known to you a long time, and I now desire to be heard a few words.

"I come here, my Lords, to pay my last debt to sin, which is death, and, through the mercies of God, to rise again to eternal glory.

"My Lords, if I may use a few words, I shall take it as a great courtesy from you. I come here to submit to the judgment that is passed against me; I do it with a very quiet and contented mind: I do freely forgive all the world; a forgiveness not from the teeth outward, but from my heart; I speak it in the presence of Almighty God, before whom I stand, that there is not a displeasing thought that ariseth in me against any man. I thank God, I say truly, my conscience bears me witness, that in all the honour I had to serve his Majesty, I had not any intention in my heart but what did aim at the joint and individual prosperity of the king and his people, although it be my ill lot to be misconstrued. I am not the first man that hath suffered in this kind; it is a common portion that befalls men in this life. Righteous judgment shall be hereafter: here we are subject to error and misjudging one another."

And after answering the charges of despotism and popery, he concluded—"I desire heartily to be forgiven if any rude or unadvised words or deeds have passed from me, and desire all your prayers; and so my Lord, farewell, and farewell, all things in this world. The Lord strengthen my faith and give me confidence and assurance in the merits of Jesus Christ. I trust in God we shall all meet to live eternally in heaven, and receive the accomplishment of all happiness; where every tear shall be wiped from our eyes, and sad thoughts from our hearts. And so God bless this kingdom, and Jesus have mercy on my soul."

"Then turning himself about he saluted all the noblemen, and took a solemn leave of all considerable persons on the scaffold, giving them his hand.

"And after that he said—'Gentlemen, I would say my prayers, and I entreat you all to pray with me and for me.' Then his chaplain, Dr. Carr, laid the Book of Common Prayer upon the chair before him, as he kneeled down; on which he prayed almost a quarter of an hour, and repeated the twenty-fifth psalm; then he prayed as long or longer without a book, and ended with the Lord's Prayer. Then standing up he spied his brother, Sir George Wentworth, and called him to him, and said, 'Brother we must part: remember me to my sister and to my wife, and carry my blessing to my eldest son, and charge him from me that he fear God, and continue an obedient son of the Church of England, and that he approve himself a faithful subject to the king; and tell him that he should not have any private grudge or revenge towards any concerning me; and bid him beware not to meddle with Church livings, for that will prove a moth and canker to him in his estate; and wish him to content himself to be a servant to his country, as a justice of peace in his county, not aiming at higher preferments. Convey my blessing also to my daughters Anne and Arabella: charge them to fear and serve God, and He will bless them: not forgetting my little infant, that knows neither good nor evil, and cannot speak for itself: God speak for it, and bless it.' Then said he, 'I have done; one stroke will make my wife husbandless, my dear children fatherless, and my poor servants masterless, and separate me from my dear brother and all my friends: but let God be to you and them all in all.'

"After that, going to take off his doublet, and make himself ready, he said, 'I thank God I am no more afraid of death, nor daunted with any discouragements arising from my fears, but do as cheerfully put off my doublet at this time as ever I did when I went to bed.' Then he put off his doublet, and wound up his hair with his hands, and put on a white cap.

"Then he called, 'Where is the man that should do this last office?' meaning the executioner: 'call him to me.' When he came, and asked him forgiveness, he told him he forgave him and all the world. Then kneeling down by the block, he went to prayer again himself, the Archbishop of Armagh kneeling on one side, the minister on the other. After prayer, he turned himself to the minister, and spoke some few words softly, with his hands lifted up. The minister closed his hands in his. Then bowing himself to the earth, to lay down his head on his block, he told the executioner that he should first lay down his head to try the fitness of the block, and take it up again before he laid it down for good and all; and this he did. And before he laid it down again, he told the executioner that he would give him warning when to strike by stretching forth his hands: and then he laid his neck on the block, stretching forth his hands: the executioner struck off his head at one blow, then took the head up in his hands and showed it to all the people, and said, 'God save the king!'"

Thus perished a victim to political and religious violence, the malevolence of an oligarchy, and, we must add, the weakness of a king;—as great a statesman and as noble a man as ever England produced.

THE OFFERTORY.

(From a Correspondent of The Irish Ecclesiastical Journal.)

SIR,—The subject upon which I desire to offer a few brief remarks in my present letter, is one which has for some time occupied my thoughts, and I may add prayers; and I trust it will not be thought presumptuous in one, who possesses neither claims from age or station, to come forward and address his fathers and brethren in the ministry. My sole desire is to be permitted, in any degree, however humble, to serve that portion of Christ's Holy Catholic Church to which it is my privilege to belong.

The substance of this letter has already been addressed to my respected Diocesan, in one entitled "a Plan for Church Extension," but, as much of the matter referred merely to our own diocese, it is my wish, in a measure, to drop those topics which are chiefly ones of local interest, and to advert to those which may relate to the Church at large. I then also stated, that I did not pretend to any new views upon the subject, but felt deeply indebted to the writings of Mr. Palmer, and a charge delivered by the Archdeacon of Chichester, in the course of last summer, and would recommend any of your readers, who take an interest in the matter, to refer to these publications. My plan was merely directed to the consideration of means for providing for Church Accommodation and Church Endowment. But *now* I would suggest, that there should be added to these purposes, the support of our Church Education Society, and, if possible, *all our Societies.*

The Episcopalian population of Ireland, in 1834, according to the returns made by the Commissioners appointed to inquire into the state of religious and other instruction in Ireland, was 852,064, and, as it would appear, that in this country population doubles itself in about forty-three years (see *Sharon Turner's Sacred History*, vol. iii.), if, then, we add twenty per cent. for the increase during the last eight years, which would not, perhaps, be found to exceed the truth, it will now amount to about 1,022,464; while, I believe, there is just church accommodation for 393,310, leaving a deficiency of 629,154 wholly unprovided for. In the united diocese of Down and Connor, and Dromore, we have an Episcopalian population of about 163,500, and church accommodation for 44,170, thus leaving 119,330 without any provision for hearing the joyful sound of the everlasting Gospel of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.

Within the last four years our Diocesan Association has raised, comparatively speaking, a large sum, amounting to about £17,000; but this is now expended, and, although the most has been made of it, yet what is our present position? In this diocese alone, we require, upon the most moderate computation, about fifty more clergy, and accommodation for 40,000, which would then only give church room to about one half of our Episcopalian population, while, if I do not mistake, it has been computed that there should be accommodation for *at least* three-fifths of our people. But church accommodation is not now our only, but perhaps our chief want, we require *church endowment too.* With respect to the new churches built, or those which hereafter may be erected, there is no provision for the minister whatever. Can it be right, that men who have received the education, and have to support the rank of gentlemen, should be allowed to starve on £20, £30, £40, or £50 a year? and yet how many of our ministers are little better off. I am acquainted with one who has been upwards of five years in Holy Orders, during which time he has received just £150, or £30 a year. This may perhaps do for one or two who possess an independence of their own, but is it a situation in which any one should be placed? Have not they "who minister about holy things," a divine right "to live of the things of the temple," and what will become of the churches when they are removed? England, it has been computed by Mr. Palmer, requires 6,400 more clergy. She is making a continual effort to supply the wants of her destitute population; she can also afford to pay her ministers; and the consequence is, that our valuable men have been, and will be drained off to that country, while we are left to grieve over the loss of those services we could not retain. But again, we not only need some plan to be devised for church extension, but also for the efficient working of that noble institution, the Church Education Society.

It must be obvious to every one, from the reply which government has given to his Grace the Lord Primate, that we are now thrown wholly upon our own resources; our present circumstances seem to call us imperatively to a practical view of the subject. If the obligations of the State in reference to religion are solemn, those of the Church herself are not less so. The irregular efforts of private charity may do some little to mitigate the evils by which we are surrounded, but nothing compared with what might be done by a combined exertion. The work, I believe, will never be done as it should be, until Christians are taught, in obedience to the divine command, to lay up weekly a portion of their substance, *as an act of worship*, and a sacrifice of a sweet savour unto God; nor until this is done will they ever learn *to deny themselves* for the purposes of Christian charity.

The plan is both Scriptural and sanctioned by the Church, *it is the use of the offertory;* "on the first day of the week let each one lay by him in store, as God hath prospered him." Let it be a weekly part of our religious duty to "honour the Lord with the first fruits of all our increase." Should not this form a part of Sunday's duty, as well as prayer and praise, the celebration of the Sacraments, and attending upon the preaching of God's word?

In this country we have no new practice to introduce, no obsolete one to revive; we would only have to set apart the Sunday collections for a different purpose, from that to which they are at present devoted. In many places only a small part is now allocated to the poor, and the remainder spent in purchasing requisites, &c., which might be procured in some more legitimate way.

As an instance of what might be done, I am acquainted with a small country parish in England, by no means a rich one, in which it never had been customary to have a Sunday collection. The clergyman intimated his intention of reviving the practice, and distributing the proceeds between three or four of the Church Societies. At first the parishioners did not understand or like this: on the first Sunday, several got up and left the church as soon as the collection commenced; on the second, they sat in their places; but, with few exceptions, would not contribute. Quietly he pursued his plan; the prejudices of the people wore away, and at the end of the first year the proceeds of the offertory amounted to £100, and the second year, which is just concluded, has yielded £140.

It has been, I imagine, estimated that each church in Ireland contributes on an average every Sunday five shillings; but I believe, that if this great project were taken up, that with very little effort, this sum might at least be doubled, and made ten shillings. Could not many who now give a half-penny give a penny? — six-pence — a shilling? Say in Ireland there are about 1,500 churches and chapels of ease, at only five shillings a Sunday, this would amount to £19,500 a year; and if ten shillings, to £39,000; and if in process of trial it should average £1, to £78,000. Would this be too large a sum to hope to realize? What would it be for one individual, say the landlord in each parish, to give £1 each Sunday, himself?

There is also another source from which it has been suggested an increase of revenue might be obtained, viz. by the gradual suppression of the office of parish clerk. In every instance this might not be practicable; but I would submit, that in most cases that functionary, instead of being an assistance, is rather a *hindrance* to the due celebration of divine service. It is computed that in England this body receives £80,000 per annum! and say in Ireland that each had an average salary of £10, here a saving might be effected to the amount of £15,000 a year; and although this sum would go to the Ecclesiastical Commissioners, still a saving for church building would be effected. If these plans were to meet with the sanction of those "who have the rule over us," (and without their approval and recommendation there can be but little hope of their succeeding to any large extent) in a short time there would be a valuable and increasing fund to meet the present urgent and daily-growing wants of our land. It is the feeling of many tender and pious minds, that there are grave objections to our present mode of stimulating and soliciting contributions to sacred purposes.

"Of our present popular mode of gathering funds by subscription lists, &c., it is enough to say that it is partial, not general, and that it has detached itself from the highest acts of personal devotion, with which the Church has from the beginning most closely connected it."

And after all our platform meetings, &c., I venture to affirm that the funds contributed in Ireland of any six of our most popular societies, if added together, would not amount to the smallest sum mentioned, namely, £19,500.

It may be objected that many poor widows, &c., are relieved now, whom we should be sorry to see forced into the poor-houses. To which I say, still reserve an ample portion for this purpose, and yet there will be a large surplus, especially if our people are instructed in this great, but, alas! much neglected duty of *self-denying liberality.*

"Do what we may, we can no longer subsist upon the self-denial of our forefathers, nay, they would not have done us so great a hurt; they bequeathed to us, not more their endowments than their examples."

I would conclude this letter, already I fear too long, in the words of that eloquent living writer, the Archdeacon of Chichester:

"This is no season of controversy; it is a time for deeds not words; we must *do*, not *talk* great things.—The time is come, not for self-vaunting, nor for self-aggrandisement, nor for worldly-greatness, nor for enrichment, nor for ease, nor for security, nor for settling down again, nor for dwelling at peace; for Christ's Church in England, it may be in the world, these things are passed away. It is now time for great toils, and greater masteries, for severe denials of self, and higher tokens of our Master's cross; for trials and for triumphs, for sacrifices and for successes, for unfolding of energies we have never known, and for the endurance of a warfare never stemmed before. Men are asking for controversial reasons to prove that our spiritual mother is a true and life-giving branch of the Catholic Vine; but our arguments will prove nothing if our lives be equivocal. Let them give no uncertain sound, and we may hold our peace. Let us give something better than reasons. Let us show unto them the fruits of the Spirit, and exhibit the note of devotedness and sanctity, which is the broad 'seal of the living God.'"

I remain your obedient servant,

A. O.

NO SINS EXCUSABLE.

(By the Rev. John Kettlewell.)

A third pretence, whereby men justify to their own souls the indulged transgression of several laws, whilst they obey in others, is, because those transgressions wherein they allow themselves are only such as are sins of temper and complexion, age, or way of life.

Sometimes men's place and way of life is a continual temptation to particular sin; and if they may but have leave to indulge that, they will abandon every other. The courtier takes himself obliged by the fashion of his place to lies and dissimulation, ostentation and vanity, to sinful compliances and faithless engagements—to promise all but to perform nothing. The merchant in pursuit of his gain, serves the end of his trade, by fraud and dishonesty: he accounts it a piece of his art to over-reach, to defraud customs, to vend false wares, and set exacting prices. The lawyer thinks it a part of his profession to encourage strife, and foment differences; and the malice and revenge, the wrath and bitterness, the slanders and evil-speakings, the strife and contentions, which are other men's sins, are his livelihood. These sins being ever before them, are always a snare to them: for they are continually importuned by them, and it must be a toilsome pain and an uninterrupted watchfulness which can preserve them from being either won or wearied into the commission of them. And since obedience in these instances is a thing which they can so very hardly spare, they hope that God in mercy will not exact it, but will graciously accept them upon their service in other particulars, although here they continue to disobey him.

Other sins men are invited and importunately tempted to, by their age and condition, their particular temper and complexion. Lust and rashness are the vices of youth, as craft and covetousness are of the gray hairs. Some sins are rooted in men's very natures: for some are naturally inclined to be passionate and hasty, some to be peevish, and others to be malicious and revengeful. The temper of their bodies hurries on to some lust and intemperance, some to turbulency and fierceness, and others to slavish fears and sinful compliances. Nay, a sharp and long affliction will sometimes embiter even a good nature, and make it habitually sour and fretful, peevish and morose. So that men's very natural temper, their age and condition, prove many times an uninterrupted solicitation to some sin or other; and they always fall by being always under the power of their temptation.

Now when men find that some sins have got thus near to them, and have taken such deep root in their way of life, nay, in their very nature, since they will not be at the pains to reform and amend, they expect that God should be so gracious as to dispense with them. As for all the instances of this kind he must abate them, seeing they will not perform them; and his pardoning goodness must supply all the defects of their sloth; for God and they must still be agreed, and therefore because they cannot well abandon some of their darling lusts and bosom sins for his sake, the compliance must fall on his side, and he must desert and cancel all those severe and grating laws to serve and pleasure them. And him they will do any thing else for, which doth not contradict their beloved sin, and never displease him, but when they cannot otherwise fulfil and pleasure it.

Thus, for instance, the covetous man will obey in keeping back from drunkenness and uncleanness, from ambition and profuseness, and all other sins which are expensive: but as for those other duties, of suffering loss ourselves rather than defrauding and overreaching others, of a contented mind and contempt of the world, of alms and beneficence, and all the chargeable expressions of an active love and an operative charity: here he stands upon his points and chuses to dispute rather than to perform, to article rather than to obey.

The peevish and angry man will readily keep the commands of justice, especially in all its great instances, and of temperance; he will neither spoil his neighbour's goods, nor wrong his bed, nor pamper and defile his own body; and will do any thing which either ministers to his reigning lust, or which doth not contradict and make against it. But then as for the commands of meekness and patience, of long-suffering and forgiveness, of speaking well and doing good to enemies, of passing over provocations, and peaceableness, and all other instances of pardoning and forgetting injuries; in these God must excuse him, for his dear lust opposes them, and he cannot, he will not serve him in the practice of them.

Some who are of a tractable and submissive, of a soft and governable temper, will observe readily all those duties, which their constitution has made easy, and which their natural genius inclines them to. They will be constant performers of all the cheap, because agreeable duties of submission to governors, and obedience to public constitutions, of uniformity in worship, of honour and observance of the laws and establishments, and of all things belonging to the church's unity and outward peace: but as for the severities of an inward and hearty religion, in mortification and self-denial, in paring off all sinful lusts, and exorbitant desires, in patience, and taking up the cross, and in all other hard instances of duty and a holy life: here they withdraw their service, because they must contradict their natures, and go against their ease; and set themselves not to obey these laws, but to evacuate or evade them.

Whereas others, who are of a temper more severe, but withal of a querulous and restless, a busy and ungovernable spirit, will keep off from atheism and profaneness, from idolatry and witchcraft, and other heinous impieties; from drunkenness and revellings, from fornication and adultery, from oppression and fraud, and other alike gross and notorious instances of injustice and immorality. For all these, their strict temper can easily avoid; they have no great temptation to them, and are therefore able without much pains to abstain from them. But then as for those other sins, which agree with the bent and inclination of their busy and ungovernable humour, they will still indulge themselves in the practice of them, for all they are of an equal guilt, although indeed of a more spiritual and refined nature. For they will strive to weary laws, to vilify and contemn, to undervalue and disparage governors; they will permit themselves to be overswayed by spite and malice, by wrath and bitterness, by envy and emulation, by strife and sidings; to be drawn aside into censoriousness, and evil-speakings, into the raising and spreading of uncharitable and envious, yea, false and slanderous reports; they will be forward to magnify themselves, to publish their own praise, and to boast of their own actions and attainments; but withal to detract and lessen, to shame and disparage others.

Thus will even these men, who make the fairest appearance of abominating all impious and ungodly, all immoral and debauched actions, halt still in their obedience, and think to please God, not by a perfect and entire, but a partial and a maimed service. For their conversion goes but half way; not from sin to righteousness, but from some sorts of sin to some others. All the alteration that their religion has wrought in them is not a forsaking of sin, but an exchange of it,—a turn from what is more easily left, to a more liberal practice of that which they find it hard to part with; a remove from grosser, and more scandalously fleshly sins, to other more spiritual and refined, but still as deadly and damnable transgressions.

And thus by all these instances it appears, that when men have got some sins which are close and pleasing, such as their temper and complexion, their age or condition, or way of life, has endeared to them so far, as that even for God's sake they will not part with them; their recourse is presently to some more cheap and easy instances of obedience, that they may atone for them. And the same might be shown in all other instances of a partial and a maimed service. In all things they will obey God no further than their beloved sins will suffer them; but as they yield to the law in other things, so must the law yield to them in these: for neither God nor their sin shall rule alone, but the service shall be shared between them, and both shall enjoy a divided empire.

But this is a most damnably delusive and a desperately false pretence. For whatsoever fond conceits men who love, and are resolved not to let go their sins, may please themselves withal; yet God, when he comes to judge us will accept of nothing less than an entire obedience. All his laws are established under the pains of death, and at that day he will exact all that he has required, whatever our concern be in it. For he comes not then as a corrupted party, to judge for us, to make his own laws bend and bow to serve our interests, and to cancel and disannul all such among them, as make against us. But he comes as an upright and even judge, to execute all his laws but not to destroy any of them: he comes to inflict what his gospel threatens, and his sentence will then be what it says, not what we can bear. So that if we have wilfully disobeyed, and have not repented, whether in one instance or in many, we must undergo the punishment of our disobedience. For God is a friend to no vice, neither one nor other, but he always forbids, and he will most severely punish every one. And as for all these pretences, whether that of our age or our way of life, or of our very natural temper or inclination itself; there will be no shelter or excuse in any of them, to bear us out in any.

There is no protection to any sin, from our age, for no young man may pursue lusts because they are youthful, but is bound to fly and avoid them, as those things which war against, and would destroy his soul, 2 *Tim.* ii. 22. God's laws make no distinction of young or old, but the same duties are the rules for both their practices; and the same rewards or punishments will be returned indifferently to them both upon their obedience or transgressions.

There is no justifiable plea for any sin, from our way of life; for a constant practice or trade of sin, as St. John says, can be no man's employment, but his who is born of the devil, and must inherit under him, 1 *John* iii. 8. But the way of life whereunto God calls us, is a way of piety and obedience. He has given us his own laws for the way which we are to walk in; and in that alone it is that we can escape death and obtain salvation.

Nay, so far is any thing in the world from sheltering us under the service of any one sin, that even that, which may have the highest pretence to it of all things else whatsoever, viz., our very natural temper and inclination, is no excuse to us, if it makes us continue in any disobedience. If any thing in the world could be a just defence for the practice of any sin, surely this must. For our nature is not of our chusing, and therefore its effects ought least of all to be charged on us, seeing they least of all proceed from us, but are in great degrees determined to our hands, before we have any power either to will or to refuse them. But such is the purity and strictness of Christ's Gospel, that it indispensably requires us to conquer sin, not only where it makes no oppo-