

# The Church.

"HER FOUNDATIONS ARE UPON THE HOLY HILLS."

STAND YE IN THE WAYS, AND SEE, AND ASK FOR THE OLD PATHS, WHERE IS THE GOOD WAY, AND WALK THEREIN, AND YE SHALL FIND REST FOR YOUR SOULS.—JEREMIAH VI. 16.

COBOURG, UPPER CANADA, SATURDAY, APRIL 4, 1840.

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## Poetry.

### THE QUEEN'S DEATH, AND THE CHILD'S.

BY MISS L. HOOPER.

[When the Queen of Austria was on her dying bed, she forsook the ladies in waiting to allow her to sleep, saying that she wished to meet death awake; but when a little daughter of Charles the First died, she told her attendants that she could not pray her long prayer—but clasping her hands, and laying her head tranquilly upon her pillow, she prayed with her last breath, "Lord, lighten my darkness, and suffer me not to sleep the sleep of death."]

A queen lay on her dying couch, the shades were falling fast  
O'er cheek and brow, when from her lip the royal mandate passed,  
And sadly every listener's heart thrilled at its import high—  
Let me not sleep, let me not sleep, I feel that death is nigh.

Let me not sleep, let me not sleep, for O! it may not be  
That one as I have been should pass away unconsciously:  
I would awake—my former life comes thronging on my view,  
With all its proud and early dreams; its hopes of sunny hours!

I would awake; my spirit now would gather all its powers,  
And the firm strength that never failed in life's most stormy hours:  
So would I meet my latest foe, so yield my royal crown,  
And at a mightier monarch's feet lay royal sceptre down.

Let me not sleep, let me not sleep; before my closing eye  
Float dimly now and faintly earth's scenes of pageantry;  
No more for me a regal throne; I yield my signet ring,  
Yet, yet awake I meet thee now, O Death, the mighty king!

And the hushed lip no longer moved, the eye no more was bright,  
And earthy gleamed o'er pallid brow rich folds of golden light;  
But earthy pride had left its seat upon that forehead fair:  
Midst all its calm and still repose, Death was the conqueror there!

A scene of softer, purer light upon my vision shone,  
And yet a dying couch beside, and near a Kingly throne:  
A fair, fair child, but all too bright to rest in earthly bowers,  
Called to a better world away, like spring's first early flowers!

O softly on her pure meek brow were golden ringlets shining,  
And closely round that gentle heart were many hopes entwining;  
But the fair hands were clasped in prayer, and vainly she essayed  
To pray in dying hour as once in hope and health she prayed.

It might not be, the silver tones were all too faint and low,  
Death's icy hand was stealing fast upon the polish'd brow;  
But peacefully she smiled at last, and prayed with faltering breath,  
O, lighten all my darkness, Lord!—let me not sleep in death!

O, lighten all my darkness, Lord!—the prayer of childish faith,  
The sweet low tones had gained for her the victory o'er death;  
And like a pure bright flower she lay, as if untouched by sin,  
Meet only for that perfect world where she had entered in!  
Brooklyn, November 22, 1839.

## SACRILEGE.\*

Theft and sacrilege are evil brethren, but sacrilege is the more sinful of the two. Theft is mere robbery of our fellow-creature; but sacrilege is robbery of God, and is committed by perverting holy and ecclesiastical things to profane and secular purposes. What has been at any time solemnly dedicated or consecrated to God or to his Church, which is the same, can never be again taken away and applied to worldly uses with impunity or safety. All churches, buildings, tithes, lands, or other property that have been devoted to God, are his; and he will not be robbed, as we shall hereafter see, without punishing the robbers. To rob the Church of her tithes or other property is direct robbery of God; as we discover from Malachi, iii. 8. "Will a man rob God? ye yet have robbed me. But ye say wherein have we robbed thee? In tithes and offerings. Ye are cursed with a curse, for ye have robbed me, even this whole nation." If this language means anything, it means that to rob the Church of tithes is to rob God; and as God is the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever, we must believe that he will punish sin the same now as ever, though perhaps not always in the same manner.

Now, it is very clear, that this nation has robbed God to a very great extent, not only in past ages, but in the very time in which we live. It is only lately that the Church of Christ in Ireland was robbed of above one-fourth of all her tithes at one stroke; and we have no doubt that the tithes will follow, and that the landlords will lose more in the way of rent than they have gained from the robbery of God. Besides, the Irish Church Temporalities Act, by which ten Bishops were cut off from the Church, and their money applied to improper purposes, the nation, through its representatives in Parliament, has, in England too, robbed God of a great deal of his right by the Tithe Commutation Act; although the nation is now suffering, and is likely to suffer still more severely as the natural consequence of past robberies of God. The New Poor Law is creating great excitement through the country, and it is in a fair way of producing bad consequences, and of becoming, as many declare it to be, a curse to the country. Now, it may not be amiss to observe, that if God had never been robbed, no poor laws at all would have been made. The poor were chiefly supported by property which belonged to God, and until after sacrilege had been committed, and that property confiscated and applied to secular and profane uses, no poor law existed in the country. The first poor law was passed in the reign of Queen Elizabeth, when it was found, that in consequence of the very great extent of the robbery of God and the Church, the poor could not find maintenance as formerly, at the numerous abbeys and hospitals which studied the country. We are not about to advocate the monastic systems, which we have little doubt was great indeed; but what we do contend for is, that the property had been dedicated to ecclesiastical uses, and it was direct robbery of God to convert it to secular purposes, as Henry VIII. profanely did. If the parties who used the property abused it, the abuse should have been corrected, but the use retained. The persons who consecrated the property to God, and those who used it, might be as wicked as Korah himself, but as the censures of Korah were, and were not to be perverted to profane purposes, consecrated to abbeys and such like places was consecrated, but all abuses reformed, and the property strictly retained and applied to spiritual purposes. Ananias and Sapphira were struck dead for sacrilege, in robbing God of a part of that which they had given to him; and it will be well if this nation does not suffer grievously for the crying sin of which it is guilty in robbing God of his "tithes and offerings." As the nation by its Parliament has committed the sin, so by the same means let restore that which it has taken away. Let it give compensation to the present holders of Church property, as it did to the slave owners to obtain the liberty of the slaves, and return the property to the Church; and we doubt not that God would fulfil to us the promise im-

plied in the language delivered by the prophet to the Jews:—"Bring ye all the tithes into the storehouse, that there may be meat in mine house, and prove me now herewith, saith the Lord of Hosts, if I will not open you the windows of heaven, and pour you out a blessing that there shall not be room enough to receive it." May God grant us faith to trust him for the fulfilment of his word!

We cannot enter at length into this subject now; but as the Parliament are about to interfere with Church property which belongs to God, we have thought it not unseasonable to give a few facts, showing how sacrilegious persons have been punished for their wickedness. We are indebted for them to the preface to Sir Henry Spelman's work, *De Temerandis Ecclesiis*, and shall merely put them into a more modern dress.

We begin with William the Conqueror. In the first year of his reign he ordered his Normans to set fire to St. Peter's Church, York (the cathedral or minster). In the fourth year he plundered the monasteries, and about fourteen years afterwards he destroyed thirty-six churches in Hampshire, to make way for his New Forest; taking all their plate and treasure, and even their sacrament vessels. Well, and how did he prosper? In the thirteenth year of his reign, his own son, Robert of Normandy, rebelled against him, and in battle beat his father from his horse, wounded his person and his honour.—About the nineteenth year, Richard, his second, but most beloved son, while sporting in his father's New Forest, where he had destroyed the churches, was there strangely killed by the goring of a stag. In the twentieth year of his reign William burnt the city of Mautz and church of St. Mary's, with two anchorites; and coming too near the flame the heat of the fire and his arms attracted a disease; and his horse leaping with him, so injured him that he died, and his body, forsaken by his nobles and servants, lay three days entirely neglected; afterwards, by the courtesy of a country gentleman, his corpse was brought to St. Stephen's Church, in Caen in Normandy; but while on the way the town took fire, and the bearers left the body and ran to quench the fire. So that even after he was dead, he did not go quietly to his grave; and at last, when he got there he was denied burial by one who claimed the ground as his inheritance, forced from him by the king. All ceremonies were delayed until a composition was made, and an annual rent paid for his grave. And before it could be buried his body swelled and burst, to the annoyance of all, and thus he was offensive both dead and living. Afterwards the town being taken by the enemy, his bones, unworthy of consecrated ground, were dug up and scattered like chaff before the wind, even death denying him rest.

His eldest son, Robert of Normandy, was disinherited by his father, and taken prisoner by his brother Henry the First, who put out both his eyes; and after twenty-six years of imprisonment, Robert died, starved in the castle of Cardiff.

The grandchild of the Conqueror, Henry, the son of Robert duke of Normandy, while hunting in his grandfather's New Forest, was struck through the jaws with the bough of a tree, and like Absalom, was found hanging in the thicket of an oak. The Conqueror's grandchild William, second son of Robert, was made earl of Flanders; and in a war against his uncle Henry the First, received a small wound in his hand, and died of the wound; and thus perished, the last of the Conqueror's grandchildren, by his eldest son.

William Rufus succeeded his father (William the Conqueror) in his crown and in his curse. In the first year of his reign, his nobles rebelled; in the sixth, a great famine raged, and such a mortality that the living could scarcely bury the dead. About the tenth year, he filled his treasury by robbing churches, and selling their plate. In the thirteenth year of his reign, Sir Walter Tyrril, shooting at a deer in the New Forest, by accident killed the King, who died like a beast, without speaking a word; and in the same place where stood one of the six and thirty churches which his father had destroyed, to make way for his New Forest. As in the case of his father, his followers left his body and fled. It was afterwards laid in a collier's cart, drawn by "one silly lean beast." In the journey the cart broke down in a bad road, and the body was left a miserable spectacle covered with mud. So like his father, he went not quietly to his grave; at last, however, he was brought to Winchester, and there buried unlamented. His bones were afterwards taken up and deposited with those of Canute, in one of the coffers wherein the bones of many of our ancient kings were preserved, but there he rests not; for in December 1642, when Winchester was entered by the dissenting rebels, the organs, windows, and coffers, were broken by the fury of the dissenting soldiers, and with others, his bones were scattered upon the face of the earth just as were his father's. This William Rufus was the third of the conqueror's issue which was killed in the very New Forest to make which the churches had been destroyed. Where the dogs licked the blood of Naboth, there must they also lick the blood of Ahab. Where the sacrilege was committed, there also must the punishment be inflicted.

While this William Rufus was commanding against the Welshmen in Anglesey, Hugh, earl of Shrewsbury, kennelled his dogs in the church of St. Fridence, where in the morning they were found mad. The earl shortly after fighting with the enemy, was shot dead with an arrow in the eye.

Henry the First, the Conqueror's fourth son, succeeds his brother Rufus. He had several children, of whom his eldest son William, with his brother Richard, and sister Mary, were drowned on a calm day close by the English shore. Another daughter betook herself to a nunnery, and died childless. Himself died of a surfeit, in eating too many lampreys. The offensiveness of his body on being opened poisoned his physicians; and in the next generation his name was forgotten. Plantagenet takes the crown.

Now it is very remarkable that unless we consider the death of Henry by the lamprey surfeit a natural death, the sacrilegious conqueror and all his sons, and all their sons, died untimely deaths. And "what the author notes of Nebuchadnezzar, and Henry the Eighth, is also true of William the Conqueror; for in the sixty-eighth year after his destroying York Minster, his name becomes extinct, and his kingdom is departed from him, and given to another nation. And upon search it will be found that very few families among the many thousands in England, enjoy their sacrilegious possessions beyond three-score and ten years; and many hold them not half that time; and scarcely one dies, but with some remarkable misfortune.

The sacrilege and punishment of King John is very

signal. In the seventeenth year of his reign, besides other churches, he plundered the abbeys and churches of Peterborough, and Croyland; and afterwards, he attempted to carry his sacrilegious plunder from Lynn to Lincoln; but in passing the Wash, the earth in the midst of the waters opened her mouth, as for Korah and his company, and at once swallowed up carts, carriages, and horses, and all his treasures, and all his regalities, all his Church spoil, and all the Church spoil,—not one escaping. The king himself passed the Wash at another place, and reached Swineshead abbey that night. The news afterwards reached him, which together with a sickness which befell him, ended his days and his unhappy reign. Some say, that one of the old monks poisoned him.

We shall furnish in our succeeding numbers other remarkable instances of the punishments of sacrilege.

## ON THE LENGTH OF THE CHURCH SERVICE.

From Hooker's Ecclesiastical Polity.

Two faults there are which our Lord and Saviour himself especially reproveth in prayer, the one, when ostentation did cause it to be open, the other, when superstition made it long. As therefore prayers the one way are faulty, not whensoever they be openly made, but when hypocrisy is the cause of open praying; so the length of prayer is likewise a fault, howbeit not simply, but where error and superstition causeth more than convenient repetition or continuation of speech to be used. It is not, as some do imagine, (saith St. Augustine,) that long praying is that fault of much speaking in prayer, which our Saviour did reprove; for then would not he himself in prayer have continued whole nights. Use in prayer no vain superfluity of words as the heathens do, for they imagine that their much speaking will cause them to be heard; whereas in truth the thing which God doth regard is how virtuous their minds are, and not how copious their tongues in prayer; how well they think, and not how long they talk who come to present their supplications before him. Notwithstanding, inasmuch as in public prayer we are not only to consider what is needful in respect of God, but there is also in men that which we must regard; we somewhat the rather incline to length, lest over-quick despatch of a duty so important should give the world occasion to deem that the thing itself is but little accounted of, whereas but little time is bestowed. Length thereof is a thing which the gravity and weight of such actions doth require. Beside, this benefit also it hath, that they whom earnest lists and impediments do often hinder from being partakers of the whole, have yet, through the length of divine service, opportunity left them, at the least, for access unto some reasonable part thereof. Again, it should be considered, how it doth come to pass that we are so long. For if that very service of God in the Jewish synagogues, which our Lord did approve and sanctify with the presence of his own person, had so large portions of the Law and the Prophets, together with a manner of psalms and psalms read day by day, as do equal in a manner the length of ours, and yet in that respect was never thought to deserve blame, is it now an offence that the like measure of time is bestowed in the like manner? Peradventure the church hath not now the leisure which it had then, or else those things whereupon so much time was then well spent have sithence that lost their dignity and worth. If the reading of the Law, the Prophets, and Psalms, be a part of the service of God, as needful under Christ as before, and the adding of the New Testament as profitable as the ordaining of the Old to be read; if therewith, instead of Jewish prayers, it be also for the good of the Church to annex that variety which the apostle doth commend, seeing that the time which we spend is no more than the orderly performance of these things necessarily required, why are we thought to exceed in length? Words, they never so few, are too many when they benefit not the hearer. But he which speaketh no more than edified, is undeservedly reprehended for much speaking. That as the Devil under the colour of long prayer drove preaching out of the Church heretofore, so we, in appointing so long prayers and readings, whereby the less can be spent in preaching, maintain an unpreaching ministry, is neither advisedly nor truly spoken. They reprove long prayer, and yet acknowledge it to be in itself a thing commendable, for so it must needs be, if the devil have used it as a colour to hide his malicious practices. When malice would work that which is evil, and in working avoid the suspicion of any evil intent, the colour wherewith it overstretcheth itself is always a fair and plausible pretence of seeking to further that which is good. So that if we both retain that good which Satan hath pretended to seek, and avoid the evil which his purpose was to effect, have we not better presented his malice, than if, as he hath under colour of long prayer driven preaching out of the Church, so we should take the colour of sermons in hand, and revenge their cause by requital, thrusting prayer in a manner out of doors, under colour of long preaching? In case our prayers being made at their full length, did necessarily enforce sermons to be the shorter, yet neither were this to uphold and maintain an unpreaching ministry, unless we will say that those ancient fathers, Chrysostom, Augustine, Leo, and the rest whose homilies in that consideration were shorter for the most part than our sermons are, did then not preach when the speeches were not long. The necessity of shortness causeth men to cut off impertinent discourses, and to comprise much matter in few words. But neither did it maintain inability, nor at all prevent opportunity of preaching, as long as a competent time is granted for that purpose. An hour and an half is, they say, in reformed churches ordinarily thought reasonable, for their whole Liturgy or Service. Do we then continue, as Ezra did, in reading the Law from morning till mid-day? or, as the Apostle St. Paul did, in prayer and preaching, till men through weariness be taken up dead at our feet? The huge length wherewith they make such complaint is but this, that if our whole form of prayer be read, and besides an hour allowed for a sermon, we spend ordinarily in both more time than they do by half an hour. Which half-hour being such a matter as the age of some, and the infirmity of other some, are not able to bear; if we have any sense of the common infirmity, if any care to preserve men's wits from being broken with the very heat of so long attention, if any love or desire to provide that things most holy be not with hazard of men's souls abhorred and loathed, this half-hour's tediousness must be remedied, and that only by cutting off the greatest part of our Common Prayer. For no other remedy will serve to help so dangerous an inconvenience.

## IZAACK WALTON'S DESCRIPTION OF THE TIMES AT THE ACCESSION OF QUEEN ELIZABETH.

In this character of the times, I shall, by the reader's favour, and for his information, look so far back as to the beginning of the reign of Queen Elizabeth; a time in which the many pretended titles to the crown, &c. were fresh in the memory of all men, and the apprehension of these dangers begat a heart's desire of a settlement in the Church and State. \* \* \* But time, and peace, and plenty begat self-ends; and these begat animosities, envy, opposition, and unthankfulness for those very blessings for which they lately thirsted, being then the very utmost of their desires, and even beyond their hopes.

This was the temper of the times in the beginning of her reign; and thus it continued too long; for those very people that had enjoyed the desire of their hearts in a reformation from the church of Rome, became at last so like the grave, as never to be satisfied, but were still thirsting for more and more; neglecting

to pay that obedience and perform those vows, which they made in the days of adversity and fear: so that in a short time, there appeared three several interests, each of them fearless and restless in the prosecution of their designs: they may, for distinction, be called, the 'active Romanists,' the 'senseless nonconformists,' (of which there were many sorts,) and the 'passive, peaceable Protestant.' The counsels of the first considered and resolved on in Rome: the second both in Scotland, in Geneva, and in divers selected, secret, dangerous conventicles, both there and within the bosom of our nation: the third pleaded and defended their cause by established laws, both ecclesiastical and civil; and if they were active, it was to prevent the other two from destroying what was by those known laws happily established to them and their posterity.

I shall forbear to mention the very many and dangerous plots of the Romanists against the Church and State; because what is principally intended in this digression, is on account of the opinions and activity of the nonconformists; against whose judgment and practice Mr. Hooker became at last, but most unwillingly, to be engaged in a book war; a war which he maintained not as against an enemy, but with the spirit of meekness and reason.

In which number of nonconformists, though some might be sincere, well-meaning men, whose indiscreet zeal might be so like charity, as thereby to cover a multitude of their errors; yet of this party there were many that were possessed with a high degree of spiritual wickedness; I mean with an innate restless pride and malice: I do not mean the visible carnal sins of gluttony and drunkenness, and the like, (from which, good Lord deliver us!); but sins of a higher nature, because they are more unlike God, who is the God of love and mercy, and order and peace; and more like the devil, who is not a glutton, nor can be drunk, and yet is a devil: but I mean those spiritual wickednesses of malice and revenge, and an opposition to the government: men that joyed to be the authors of misery, which is properly his work; that is, the enemy and disturber of mankind; and thereby greater sinner than the glutton or drunkard, though some will not believe it. And of this party, there were also many, whose prejudice and opinions zeal had so blinded, as to make them neither to hear reason, nor adhere to the ways of peace; men that were the very dregs and pest of mankind; men, whose pride and self-conceit had made it to over value their own crooked wisdom so much as not to be ashamed to hold foolish and unmanly disputes against those men, whom they ought to reverence, and those laws which they ought to obey; men, that laboured and joyed first to find out the faults, and then speak evil of government, and to be the authors of confusion; men, whom company, and conversation, and custom had at last so blinded, and made so insensible, that these were sins, that like those that perished in the gainsaying of Core, so these died without repenting of these spiritual wickednesses; of which the practices of Coppinger and Hacket in their lives, and the death of them and their adherents, are, God knows, too good examples, and ought to be cautious to those men that are inclined to the like spiritual wickedness.

And in these times which tended thus to confusion, there were also many of those scrupulous, that pretended a tenderness of conscience, refusing to take an oath before a lawful magistrate: and yet these very men, in their secret conventicles, did covenant and swear to each other, to be assiduous and faithful in using their best endeavours to set up the presbyterian doctrine and discipline; and both in such a manner as they themselves had not yet agreed on; but, up that government must. To which end there were many that wandered up and down, and were active in sowing discontents and sedition, by venomous and secret murmurings, and a dispersion of scurrilous pamphlets and libels against the Church and State, but especially against the Bishops; by which means, together with venomous and indiscreet sermons, the common people became so fanatic, as to believe the Bishops to be Antichrist, and the only obstructors of God's discipline; and at last some of them were given over to so bloody a zeal, and such other desperate delusions, as to find out a text in the Revelation of St. John, that Antichrist was to be overcome by the sword. So that those very men, that began with tender and meek petitions, proceeded to admonitions; then to satirical remonstrances; and at last (having like Absalom, numbered by their means, and the only obstructors of God's discipline, as to procure an alienation on their lands, and a large proportion of them for himself; which avaricious desire had at last so blinded his reason, that his ambitious and greedy hopes seemed to put him into a present possession of Lambeth House.

\*\*\*\*\* These errors and animosities were so remarkable, that they begot wonder in our ingenious Italian, who being about this time come newly into this nation, and considering them, writ scoffingly to a friend in his own country to this purpose: 'That the common people of England were wiser than the wisest of his nation; for here the very women and shopkeepers were able to judge of predestination, and to determine what laws were fit to be made concerning Church government; and that they were fit to be obeyed or abolished. That they were more able (or at least thought so) to raise and determine perplexed cases of conscience, than the wisest of the most learned colleges of Italy. That men of the slightest learning, and the most ignorant of the common people, were mad for a new or deeper reformation of religion; and that in this they appeared like that man, who would never cease to whet and whet his knife, till there was no steel left to make it useful.' And he concluded his letter with this observation, 'That those very men that were most busy in oppositions, and disputations, and controversies, and finding out the faults of their governors, had usually the least of humility and mortification, or of the power of godliness.'

And to heighten all these discontents and dangers, there was also sprung up a generation of godless men; men that had so long given away to their own lusts and delusions, and so highly opposed the blessed motions of God's Spirit, and the inward light of their own consciences, that they became the very slaves of vice, and had thereby sinned themselves into a belief of that which they would, but could not believe, into a belief which is repugnant even to human nature; for the Heathens believe that there are many gods; but these had sinned themselves into a belief that there was no God; and so finding nothing in themselves but what was worse than nothing, began to wish what they were not able to hope for, namely, that they might be like the beasts that perish; and in wicked company (which is the Atheists' sanctuary) even so bold as to say so! Though the worst of mankind, when he is left alone at midnight, may wish, but is not then able to think it, even into a belief that there is no God. Into this wretched, this reprobate condition, many had then sinned themselves.

## CHAPTER AND VERSE.

From Dr. J. Wallis's "Curiosities of Literature," Second Series.

The proverbial expression of *Chapter and Verse* seems peculiar to ourselves, and I suspect, originated in the puritanic period, probably just before the civil war under Charles the First, from the frequent use of appealing to the Bible on the most frivolous

occasions, practised by those whom South calls 'those mighty men at *Chapter and Verse*.' With a sort of religious coquetry, they perked them up with such self-sufficiency and perfect ignorance of the original, that the learned Selden found considerable amusement in going to their assembly of divines, and puzzling or confounding them. \* \* A ludicrous anecdote on one of these occasions is given by a contemporary, which shews how admirably that learned man amused himself with this 'assembly of divines.' They were discussing the distance between Jerusalem and Jericho, with a perfect ignorance of sacred or of ancient geography; one said it was twenty miles, another ten, and at last it was concluded to be only seven, for this strange reason, that fish was brought from Jericho to Jerusalem market! Selden observed, that 'possibly the fish in question was salted,' and silenced these acute disputants.—It would probably have greatly discomfited these 'chapter and verse' men, to have informed them that the Scriptures had neither chapter nor verse! It is by no means clear how the holy writings were anciently divided, and still less how quoted or referred to. The honour of the invention of the present arrangement of the Scriptures is ascribed to Robert Stephens, by his son, in the preface to his Concordance, a task which he performed during a journey on horseback from Paris to London, in 1551.

## THE SANCTITY OF MARRIAGE.\*

Divesting the marriage-contract of the sacred character hitherto associated with it in the minds of the people will, there is too much reason to apprehend, have a pernicious influence on national morals. Not only is it made lawful to register for the solemnisation of marriages buildings certified according to law as places of religious worship—a provision which, when we consider the facilities afforded for obtaining such certificates, might appear sufficiently ample to comprehend every case of marriage between Christians,—not only in the form of words to be used by the parties entering into the contract is all reference to the sanction of Him by whom marriage was instituted studiously avoided;—but power is given to celebrate marriage in the office, and in the presence of the superintendent registrar. Thus marriage may henceforward, at the option of the contracting parties, be degraded into a mere civil contract. I may be told, and high legal authority may be quoted in support of the assertion, that marriage has always been so considered by the law of England. But in no period of our history, up to the passing of the act of 1836, not even, as has been justly remarked, in the days of the Great Rebellion, was the ceremony altogether divested of a religious character. The parties, in plighting their faith, were always required to use words by which they called God to witness the engagement. I may be referred also to the example of Scotland, in which, though marriage is regarded in the light of a civil contract, yet the obligations of the marriage-tie are as religiously observed as in any country in Christendom. I believe, however, that even in Scotland, though marriages solemnised without the intervention of the minister of religion are valid in law, yet they are regarded as irregular, and subject the parties to ecclesiastical censures. Be this as it may, we shall not be warranted to reason from one case to the other—to infer that no evil consequences will result from treating marriage as a mere civil contract in this country, because none have occurred in the northern part of the island. The Scotch reformers were enabled to accomplish that which a variety of causes concurred to prevent our reformers from accomplishing. They were enabled to establish an efficient system of ecclesiastical discipline; and thus to exercise a strict, or as it would be deemed in modern times, an inquisitorial control over the moral conduct of the lay members of their communion. Increasing wealth, and its constant attendant, increasing luxury, have doubtless weakened this control; but its effects on the habits of the people are still clearly discernible—public opinion still follows the impulse given to it at the Reformation, and supplies, as the corrector of public morals, the place of the censures of the Church. But in England the case is otherwise; here the inviolability of the marriage-union has been secured by the deeply rooted persuasion in the minds of the people that it is of Divine institution, and by the religious ceremonies with which it is contracted; by the pledge of mutual fidelity which God is called to witness, and the blessing pronounced in his name by the minister. Remove the religious sanction, and there is too much reason to fear that the engagement will soon cease to be regarded with the same feeling of reverence, and that men will learn to treat its violation as a comparatively venial offence.

To unsettle principles which have acquired a sort of prescriptive influence over the conduct of the community, is at all times a rash and perilous experiment. The marriage-union is the source of all the domestic charities; and in proportion as it is held in reverence will those charities be diligently cultivated, and a pure and elevated tone be given to the general intercourse of society. We may therefore be excused for looking forward with some degree of anxiety and apprehension to the consequences of a measure which, by divesting the marriage-union of its sacred character, will too probably impair that reverence for it which is the best safeguard of national morals. Seeing, however, that it has pleased the legislature to enact that the sanction of a religious ceremony shall no longer be necessary, it is doubly incumbent upon the ministers of the established Church frequently to remind their congregations that marriage is a divine institution; to tell them that, whatever the light in which it is viewed by the law of the land, by the Church of Christ it has always been regarded as a holy ordinance; and that, in the first ages of Christianity, before the state became Christian, the consent of the Church was always obtained previously to the celebration of marriage between Christians, and the benediction of the minister was always pronounced upon the parties. Above all, it is incumbent upon us to point out to the female portion of our flocks, how deeply they are interested in the continued observance of the solemn forms with which marriage has hitherto been contracted. It is to the silent but powerful influence of the Gospel over the manners of society, and to the clear light which it has shed upon the relative duties of husband and wife, that the latter is indebted for the station which she fills in Christian countries; and she ought, consequently, to watch with jealous vigilance any change tending to disconnect marriage with those hallowed rites which impart to it what may be termed its Christian character.

## THE WIFE IN SICKNESS.

\*\*\*\*\* Beyond these seasons of intercourse, however, and of far deeper value, are those in which the burdened soul of him who feels himself to be fast hastening to the confines of eternity, will sometimes seek a human ear for the utterance of his anxieties and fears, and appeal to a human heart for counsel in its hours of need.

It may be that the individual has never been accustomed to converse on these subjects,—knows not how to begin,—and is ashamed to condemn, as he feels he must do, the whole of his past life. Who then, but the friend who has been near him in all his recent humiliations and trials, who has shared them both to her very utmost, and thus obtained his confidence,—who but his patient and untiring nurse can mark and understand the struggle of his feelings, and lead them forth by partial anticipations, so gently,

\* From a Charge delivered at his Triennial Visitation in 1837, by the Lord Bishop of Lincoln.

\* From the Church Magazine.