

claws and fangs of a tiger," and allowed him to surprise the Archbishop in bed at the Tower,—to take from him the papers necessary to his defence,—to seize his private Diary, and print it in a garbled state,—and then to furnish each of the Peers, who were his judges, with a copy.

But enough of this part of my subject,—a part which, even at this distance of time, cannot be discussed without kindling the blood, and awakening the most fearful passions of human nature. I will now take a rapid glance at the services rendered to Christian literature by the munificent Mæcenæ of the reign of Charles I.

Archbishop Laud was a man eminent for learning himself, and first rose into notice on the strength of his academical reputation. His book against Fisher the Jesuit is pronounced "a matchless specimen of theological disputation" by Archdeacon Todd; and the historian L'Estrange commends it as "the exactest masterpiece of divinity extant at that time." During the period in which he flourished, there is scarcely a name of eminence in ecclesiastical annals, whose genius he did not foster by his encouragement, and reward with his patronage. "Who," asks the eloquent Church-Reviewer, "brought the generous Juxon or the excellent Sanderson into the prelate: who fostered the industry and erudition of Selden and Whitelocke, of Chillingworth and Hales, of Vossius and Casaubon? Who was the chief instrument of sending the pious, the learned, the beloved Bishop Bedell into Ireland? Who was the first to discover, protect, and reward the youthful genius of Jeremy Taylor, the glory of his country and religion? who performed all these services to his country, but the proscribed, the insulted Laud?" And prolonging this flight, though on a feebler wing, let me ask in continuation, who was the great reviewer of Oriental learning, and the princely donor of Greek and Arabic manuscripts to the University of Oxford? Who engaged the illustrious and grateful Pocock as Professor of the Arabic language? Who, by his influence with the King, caused a Canon of Christ Church to be permanently annexed to the Professorship of Hebrew? Who, when his own misfortunes were gathering around him with an ominous blackness, from his sorrowful chamber in the Tower, sent treasures of Eastern learning to his beloved University? Who was the correspondent, and who received the homage in prosperity, and the sympathy in adversity, of the renowned Grotius? Who, but William Laud, Archbishop of Canterbury, the butt of sectarian and republican malevolence from the times of William Prynne to those of Catharine Macaulay.

The little we know of the Archbishop in his private character redounds to his honour, and embitters our regret for his unworthy fate. He was plain in his manners, frugal in his meals, unostentatious in his apparel, and beloved by his dependents, who grew grey-headed in his service. Though never married he had several relations, yet never promoted them beyond their merits. Nepotism was a fault not even alleged against him by his enemies. Wherever he moved, we are told that his path was tracked by the charities and blessings which he showered with an unsparring and never-tiring hand. When he took his final departure from Lambeth, hundreds of his poor neighbours thronged around his barge, and prayed for the deliverance and safe return of him, whose bounty had so often gladdened the lonely dwellings of the destitute, the fatherless, and the widow. The sneer of ridicule has been frequently pointed at his superstitious belief in dreams and omens. But if he is to be blamed for not drawing an accurate and exact line between the visible and invisible, the material and immaterial world, the good and great Sir Matthew Hale, and the learned Sir Thomas Browne must participate in the ridicule thrown upon him. That a tinge of credulity and superstition not unfrequently casts its shadow over a strong mind, Cardinal Wolsey in more remote, and Dr. Johnson in later days, yield sufficient proof. And who will say that it is not better to believe too much than too little; or who can affirm that man, while in the body, is permitted to hold no sort of converse, by way of anticipation, with that spiritual home, in which we most of us hope to dwell for everlasting?

Such was Laud, the second and last Archbishop of the apostolic Church of England, who died a martyr for Protestant Episcopacy! If we except some few infirmities and acerbities of temper, his faults, as has been said with reference to another individual, were those of his age, his virtues were his own. The sons of the Church of England, at this present moment, little think that the decent ceremonies of their worship were objected to Laud as so many proofs of his Romanism. Yes, even in our own enlightened century, the sacrament-table is called an altar—the sacred elements are received in a kneeling posture, and every head bows in adoration at the name of Jesus—the ministering priest is clad in seemly and decorous vestments—the dim religious light, shed through the painted windows of our Cathedrals, and the solemn peals of the organ, combine to elevate our souls to pious contemplation—the newly-built church is dedicated to the service of God by an appropriate formulary—the bigot no longer sits within the sacred edifice, with his hat kept on in scorn—and the itinerant Lecturer in holy orders, no longer perambulates our dioceses interfering with the regular minister of the parish. Yet on the enforcement of those, and on the prevention of these points of church discipline, was gounded much of the persecution and obloquy that assailed the intrepid Archbishop. Sir Francis Bardon has recently remarked that the present struggle in Britain is but a continuation of that of 1688, but may we not go farther back, and say, of 1641? The church is again beleaguered by the confederate forces of Geneva and Maynooth, and Episcopacy is attacked, as the strongest outwork of Monarchy. Of the result of such a warfare I cannot permit myself to doubt. The boundless munificence, the solid worth, and the devoted zeal of a Laud, chastened and tempered by the dove-like meekness of a Cranmer, and guided aright by the guileless prudence of a Seeker,—these precious jewels shine bright in the mitres of many of England's prelates. The storm has arisen; but the ark of our forefathers is destined to rest on Mount Ararat at last. The rains of infidelity, the winds of superstition, and the flood of the fierce democracy's worst passions let loose, may fall on the rock-built house of the Reformation, may howl around its walls, and shake it to its very centre—yet still it shall stand, for its foundations are the Holy Scriptures. I never can believe then an over-

seeing Providence will suffer the brightest light of Christendom to be eclipsed, and the nations of Europe, together with the heathen world, on which the first dawn of the gospel-light has just risen, to be buried again in palpable spiritual darkness.

Long be our Fathers' temple ours,—
Wee to the hand by which it falls!
A thousand spirits watch its towers;
A cloud of angels guard its walls.

ALAN FAIRFORD.

WEEK DAY CONGREGATIONS.

Sir—Among my small congregation on the Wednesday and Friday at the parish church, (for though the parish is very extensive, and the church is very well filled on Sunday, there is still but a sprinkling on the week days.) I have remarked, for a length of time, the exemplary and regular attendance of an old and respectable parishioner. Whatever might be the state of the weather, there he was always to be found, audibly and fervently joining in the devotions of the church. Overtaking him a short time since on my way to perform my morning service, as usual on one or other of the week days, I accosted him and accompanied him to the church. "We had a better congregation last Friday," he remarked, which had accidentally been the case, through a circumstance rather of rare occurrence. Upon my congratulating him on his so regularly forming one of my little week-day flock, he informed me that this had been his constant custom for many years past, and that, please God, it should be his custom to the last. "When I gave up business," he added, "some years since, I made a resolution that I would regularly attend the stated services of the church, and devote the remainder of my time upon earth to preparing to join the society of the church triumphant above. From this course I have never as yet had occasion to swerve, and from this regular compliance with the directions of that holy catholic church, of which I am a humble, though unworthy member, I have derived, blessed be God, unspeakable advantage in my declining years. Permit me to add, sir, that it is my constant wonder and regret that so few, particularly the rich, who have more leisure, and who, I cannot but think, ought to set an example to others, should deem it necessary to join their devotions with God's appointed minister at the times and places appointed by the church, knowing such prayers would find more acceptance when addressed in God's house, by God's own servant, on behalf of himself and God's obedient people; and forgive me, sir, for adding, that this practice should be so little attended to by the old people, who are so numerous in this immediate neighbourhood, and who, being incapacitated for work, have more time to attend to the care of their souls, the one thing needful." Such were the sentiments expressed by my aged companion; and I confess they deeply impressed me. As it will appear from this strain, he was a better sort of person, a retired tradesman. I forgot to mention that in the course of his remarks he stated that the great superiority which London in his opinion possessed over the country, was the frequency with which the churches were opened for divine service during the week. In conclusion, I would beg, sir, that if you can call some attention to this crying evil, this non-compliance with the wishes of the Church, you will, I think, confer a lasting benefit on the community at large. For, if the churches are to be opened at all in the week day for the worship of God, assuredly it is deeply insulting to the Majesty of heaven and earth to witness such systematic neglect to his holy institutions, which, by an adherence to the Church, we virtually recognise as proper and useful ordinances, (why otherwise appointed?) and are accordingly bound to venerate and regard.

I am, sir, your ob'd't serv't,
L.
British Magazine.

THE CHURCH.

COBOURG, SATURDAY, MARCH 24, 1838.

Our attention is drawn, by articles which appear in a subsequent column, to a subject upon which we have long desired to offer our humble remarks,—we mean the Christian obligation of SYSTEMATIC CHARITY. We use the latter word, on the present occasion, in its limited sense of free-will offerings for the benefit of the poor, or for the furtherance of the cause of religion. In this sense it is but one of the many branches of the great Christian duty of charity,—one of the adjuncts of that holy and consistent character which, in the thirteenth chapter of his first epistle to the Corinthians, St. Paul so beautifully portrays.

It is not to be denied that this is a duty, even amongst Christian professors, either not very generally understood, or not very carefully regarded. It is, unhappily, often the case that many who are justly esteemed very worthy members of society, and who are perhaps exemplary in their general Christian deportment, do not practise this duty of liberality to the poor, or of beneficence to the cause of the Gospel, as if it were a Christian obligation at all. They may contribute, it is true—and that not sparingly—to such objects, as chance may throw them in their way; but that the mass of professing Christians are uniformly guided by a correct feeling or by a becoming temper in such donations, or that they usually include these claims upon their benevolence in their calculations of necessary annual disbursement, there is too much reason to doubt. It often happens, indeed, that the charitable contribution, for whatever object, is reluctantly bestowed;—not given because of the benefit to the individual or the cause on whose behalf it is solicited, but because its denial would have the appearance of singularity, or expose perhaps to the imputation of penuriousness. So far, in short, from regarding such donations in the light of the payment of a debt, by which Christian principle assures us that we are bound, there is reason to fear that they are sometimes adverted to with regret, and that, in the estimation of annual loss or gain, they are even considered as so much thrown away!

In contradiction to such a sentiment, wherever entertained, we are bound to assert that every Christian is under a solemn and positive obligation to give to all just claims upon his benevolence, "according as God hath prospered him"—in proportion

to those resources which by a merciful Providence he is permitted to possess. The rules of his Christian faith explicitly inform him that he is to consider himself not as the absolute master of those possessions which may be allotted to him, but as a steward entrusted by the Giver of all things with their present management;—that he is not to regard such goods as unconditionally bestowed, not as designed merely for his own present comforts and gratification, but out of which it is expected that he will, according as their temporal or spiritual necessities require, assist his poorer brethren. The following sentiments of the present Bishop of London upon this subject place the duty in a correct and impressive point of view:—

"All Christians ought to consider their worldly goods, in a certain sense, as the common property of their brethren. A certain part they may and ought to appropriate to the support and convenience of themselves and theirs, and even, it may be, to the maintenance of that rank which the subordination of society makes it expedient that they should fill: but there is a part, which, by the laws of God and nature, belongs to their brethren; who, if they cannot implead them for its wrongful detention before any earthly tribunal, have their right and title to it written by the finger of God himself in the records of the Gospel, and will see it established at the judgment-day."

Admitting, then, this principle—and who can deny its correctness?—we contend that such contributions of benevolence ought to be directed by some rule, and not left, in their practical application, to caprice or chance. Apostolic direction, as well as early Christian practice, requires that the followers of our self-denying Lord, "lay by them in store" for such objects;—in other words, that they should provide before-hand—that they should make a reservation out of the means with which God has furnished them, for the supply of the necessities, temporal or spiritual, of their poorer brethren. The annual resources of Christians, according to this rule, should be considered as always chargeable with a certain amount for purposes of benevolence; and it is not perhaps too much to say, that to this amount of annual income, appropriations for benevolent objects should bear some stated and regulated proportion.

In every country and in every community, there will always be objects of local interest or compassion, demanding the first consideration of the benevolent Christian; but independent of these, there are claims of a more general and extended character, the force of which is never to be disregarded. There are in every land, systematized plans,—for the amelioration of some public distress or for the supply of some public religious necessity,—to the furtherance of which the Christian cannot conscientiously refuse his aid. The communications to which we referred at the commencement of this article direct us to at least one important object for the exercise of the enjoined benevolence,—the spiritual destitution which prevails throughout these Provinces, and the mode which has been adopted for at least its partial amelioration by the employment of ITINERANT MISSIONARIES. It is needless to dwell upon the vast amount of good achieved by these laborious heralds of the gospel; and when we say that upon the liberality of their better-provided Christian brethren depends mainly, under God, the maintenance and the diffusion of these blessings, we cannot be too earnest in urging upon all the duty of aiding bountifully in this cause.

Besides these zealous proclaimers of the Gospel message, there are other teachers of heavenly truth, silent but powerful, which it is the duty of the Christian to assist in multiplying,—namely, the Word of God, and we may add the auxiliaries to that best of books circulated by our venerable Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge. While the Christian preacher declares the glad tidings of salvation, it is right to furnish to his hearers the means of searching and ascertaining "whether these things be so;" and while for this important object the volume of Inspiration should be circulated freely and widely, those associated books and tracts are not to be overlooked, which, while they improve the taste for spiritual things, may to some extent supersede those loose, frivolous, and demoralizing publications which are spread, like a moral mildew, over the land.

We might prosecute this subject, and enter into further details as to the various channels in which the bounty of Christians might be made profitably to flow, but we content ourselves with these few suggestions; backed by a renewed appeal to the duty which rests upon every Christian of doing something—of doing all that his means and opportunities allow. And while we would remind the rich that on them a corresponding "necessity is laid," we must assure those who are comparatively in humbler circumstances, that "according to their ability," they also must be contributors to the general cause of Christian charity. While the rich pour into the Lord's treasury their costly offerings, the poor have the consolation of knowing that the contribution even of the "two mites which make a farthing," will not be overlooked by the heavenly Benefactor of us all.

The intelligence from England which has crowded upon us within a few days is of great interest to every loyal subject of our gracious Queen. As a consequence of the rebellion, in which it is to be feared a large majority of the inhabitants of Lower Canada—in heart and intent at least—have joined, the Constitution of that Province is, for a time, to be suspended, and the administration of affairs confided, in the interval, to the Governor-in-Chief and a Commission. It is true that, at the latest dates, the "Canada Bill," involving this important arrangement, had not finally passed; but there is little reason to doubt that, perhaps with some modifications, it has by this time become a law.

It appears that the highly responsible office of Governor-in-Chief has been conferred upon the Right Honourable the Earl of Durham, son-in-law of the venerable Earl Grey;—a nobleman of talent and firmness, high-minded and of an honest and straight-forward disposition. But whether it be from the prejudices of our conservative education, or from historical knowledge of the general unfitness of those who are imbued with what are termed 'liberal principles,' for the important trust of guarding from violation the throne and altars of our unrivalled country, we contemplate with not a little distrust the probable result of the mission which has been undertaken by the Earl of Durham.—