

# The Church.

THEREFORE I WILL NOT BE NEGLIGENT TO PUT YOU ALWAYS IN REMEMBRANCE OF THESE THINGS, THOUGH YE KNOW THEM AND BE ESTABLISHED IN THE PRESENT TRUTH.—2 PETER, I, 12.

VOL. I.]

COBOURG, U. C., SATURDAY, MARCH 24, 1838.

[NO. XLI.]

## Poetry.

### THE GRAVE.

Thou art a mournful thing,  
O Grave! thy shadow over all is thrown.  
Man builds bright bowers in life's delightful spring,  
But thou canst throw them down.

The child in infancy—  
Ere the heart knows to grieve, the eye to weep—  
On thy low bosom resting peacefully,  
Slumbers a calm, still sleep.

The happy dreams of youth;  
The heart's warm impulses; the fresh, the free,  
The bosom's joy, and the clear tones of truth,  
All perish deep in thee.

And he in manhood's prime—  
Skill'd in the arts of gain, or learning's lore—  
To thee, mid all the freshness of his time,  
Goes, and returns no more.

The old grey-headed sire,  
Bow'd with the weight of febleness and woes,  
Longs to behold life's flickering lamp expire,  
And hail thy deep repose.

The matron and the maid,  
Woman's deep feeling—woman's fervent love—  
Each throbbing heart, in clay-cold stillness laid,  
To thy dark realms remove.

The mourner weeps no more—  
The sorrows of his aching bosom cease,  
When his tost bark within thy friendly shore  
Is safely moor'd in peace.

The evil and the good  
Alike lie hid beneath thy sombre shade:  
The rich man, and the bare of daily food,  
By thee are equal made.

There ne'er hath passed an hour  
Since earth was peopled with her numerous race,  
In which her children have not felt thy power,  
Thou gloomy dwelling-place!

Such is our mortal life!  
All that have been, are now, and still may be,  
Must drop the burthen of their human strife,  
And find their end in thee!

Yet, on Time's fleeting wings  
A day shall come, whose penetrating light  
Shall bare the deepest of thy hidden things  
To universal sight!

And—thanks to golden faith!—  
There is a land, far hence, amid the sky,  
Where a Deliverer has conquer'd Death,  
Where Death and Thou shall die.

'Tis there that we would go.  
Oh! is it not a glory-beaming shore;  
Where flowers unsullied by earth's breathings blow,  
And graves are dark no more!

Christian Observer.

### THE ENGLISH LAYMAN.

No. X.

#### A VINDICATION OF ARCHBISHOP LAUD.\*

Prejudged by foes determined not to spare. WORDSWORTH.

A calumny is uttered or recorded in a moment, but the lapse of centuries is required to efface its impression. There is such a natural love of truth in mankind, that whenever an historian, whose impartiality there seems no just cause to impeach, advances a fact, however adverse to our preconceived notions, we yield him a reluctant belief, because, lovers of truth ourselves, we accord to him the possession of a similar moral instinct. Hence when the characters of great and conspicuous men are handed down to us by their contemporaries, we are inclined to regard them as faithful and living portraits. We picture the historian in his silent chamber, his thoughts attuned into a grave and solemn impartiality by the stillness of night, weighing every word before it has irrevocably sped, and impressed with an awful sense of the responsibility that rests on him who undertakes to register for future ages the deeds, and the motives that prompted them, of the master-spirits of his day. But alas! the page of history is rarely traced in characters of candour and deliberation. The historian of his own times burns with the passions of his own times; the upholder of ancient institutions stigmatizes the daring innovator as a pest and a firebrand; the innovator paints his antagonist, as the enslaver of mind, and a check to the growing perfectibility of human nature. Such a spirit, it is to be feared, breathes through almost every page but that of the incorruptible Thuanus! When eager and unbiassed in the pursuit of truth, we consult the volumes of Milton, we find the rancorous Latin Secretary recording in his imperishable and magnificent language the accusation against the first Charles, stated as a positive fact, that "he murdered both his prince, and his father, and that by poison." Turn we from this picture to the volumes of the stately Chancellor, and amid the gallery of worthies who act and speak in the page of Clarendon, and breathe and gaze on us from the canvass of Vandyke, the parricide tyrant is painted in colours equally vivid and far more true, as "the worthiest gentleman, the best master, the best friend, the best husband, the best father, and the best Christian, that the age in which he lived produced." The bulk of mankind

\* Read before 'The Toronto Literary Club,' on the 18th November 1837.

must necessarily derive their opinions from others, for they have neither the time, nor the means, nor the inclination to trace history up to its source, to weigh statement against statement, and to sum up a controversy with judge-like accuracy and impartiality. Accident, if there be no peculiar mental conformation, most frequently determines their estimate of the man of by-gone days. The youth who has only had access to Hume, will probably grow up a friend of Monarchy and Tory principles; the student, whose reading has been confined to Hallam, a Whig; and the reader of Godwin and Macaulay, a root-and-branch Republican.

No personage in English history has suffered more severely from this one-sided view of character, than Archbishop Laud. His earliest biographers, Heylyn and Wharton, it is true, did justice to his virtues; but their ponderous and obsolete tomes have long reposed, 'neath undisturbed dust, in the collections of the curious and antiquarian, and are only occasionally opened by the professed historical compiler: to the general reader they have long been a dead letter. Hume, I believe, was the first author of eminence, who ventured to shed "a generous tear," not only for Strafford, but for the calumniated Laud, and on the first appearance of his inimitable work, he was "assailed by one cry of reproach, disapprobation, and even detestation," from every point of the political compass; the two Primates of the United Church alone spoke the language of encouragement. But the faint defence of Hume, who was never very earnest where a Churchman was concerned, does not seem to have diverted the current of popular opinion. Succeeding explorers of the munitments of history felt conscious that the memory of the Archbishop had met with harsh treatment, "yet," says Lord Hailes, "what historian dares defend him?" And even in our own day Wordsworth exclaims, in a tone of regretful disappointment, "In this age a word cannot be said in praise of Laud, or even in compassion for his fate, without incurring a charge of bigotry."

Times however are at last altered, and it will no longer be thought equally paradoxical to extenuate the enormities of Richard III., and to vindicate the fair fame of Archbishop Laud. In this momentous and stormy crisis, when the universal human mind glooms like an ocean heaving with the incipient tempest, many old and long received falsehoods are shattered into fragments, and many a truth, that lay buried fathoms deep, emerges to the surface of the troubled waters. The defenders of the Church of England have burst their trance, and aroused by the knockings at her everlasting gates, have opened the artillery of the press upon her foes, and girded themselves for the intellectual fight. Too long have they reposed securely, confident of the invincible justice of their cause—but, at last, the danger so closely impends over their beloved Establishment—"the Gau!" approaches so nigh unto "her gates,"—that they have aroused themselves to the rescue. Publications in defence of the National Church—from the newly-established and expensive Church of England Quarterly Review overflowing with learning, to the cheap halfpenny-priced Journal, all stamped with true Christianity, and breathing the most devoted attachment to the ecclesiastical institutions of the land,—are penetrating into every suburb and hamlet. The Christian-Conservative Press, bettering the instruction of the distributors of unstamped blasphemy and sedition, are disabusing the public mind of many inveterate traditional errors,—and no speck alights upon the Establishment, but what some pious hand is instantly stretched out to remove it—no harpy descends upon its hallowed altars, but some armed champion, issuing from cathedral or village-fane, drives back the obscene Celæno to those congenial retreats the woods of Melbourne Castle, the shores of Derrynane, or the purlieus of London University.

In the publications to which I have alluded, the name of many a Churchman has been rescued from unmerited obloquy, and invested with its appropriate honours. In a recent volume of the *Theological Library*, the Rev. C. W. Le Bas, one of the most powerful and elegant writers of the age, has rolled away the clouds that obscured the character of Laud,—and the author of a few brief incidental notices in the *Church of England Quarterly Review*, has followed in the same track. A perusal of these publications suggested the present Essay, and to them, and to Clarendon and Hume, as well as to the Puritan Neal, Hallam, and the republican continuator of Sir James Mackintosh's *History*, I am principally indebted for the following facts.

I shall view the Archbishop in three different characters—as a prelate and a statesman conjointly—a scholar and a patron of literature,—and a private individual. I have chosen to unite the two characters of prelate and statesman, because it would be impossible to separate the political from the ecclesiastical acts of Laud. Religion, in that troubled period, was the watchword of either party; and every civil occurrence is more or less intermixed with matters of church-polity, or theological doctrine.

The principal charges urged against Laud on his trial may be resolved into two;—an attempt to introduce Popery,—and an endeavour to render the King independent of Parliaments.

The real *gravamen*, however, of the 24 articles of impeachment, original and supplementary, was the devotion of the Archbishop to the Episcopal Church of England. The *odium theologicum*, the bitter rancour of the Presbyterians, burning to revenge his impugning of the divine authority of their ecclesiastical platform, and not the cruelties of the Star-Chamber, or the advice tendered to the King in the Privy Council, brought the prelate, at the age of seventy-two, to the merciless block. Almost all historians concur in stating that he fell a victim to sectarian animosity. Hume alludes to those *religious* opinions for which he suffered; Hallam, after censuring "the remorseless

and indiscriminate bigotry of Presbyterianism," affirms that "the most unjustifiable act of these zealots, and one of the greatest reproaches of the Long Parliament, was the death of Archbishop Laud." Dr. Lingard is "of opinion that it was *religious*, and *not political* rancour, which led him to the block;" the republican, who has continued Sir James Mackintosh's history, ascribes his death "to the *persecuting spirit of the Presbyterians*, including the particular hatred of the Scotch covenanters: even Neal himself divulges the fact, that "as soon as the Parliament had united with the Scots, it was resolved to *gratify that nation* by bringing the Archbishop to the bar;" and Mrs. Macaulay observes that "he fell a sacrifice to the *intolerant principles of the Presbyterians*, a sect who breathed as fiery a spirit of persecution as himself." And whence arose this thirst for his blood? He had, they alleged, attempted to bring back Popery. It was in vain he urged in reply, that he had converted twenty-two persons, and among them the immortal Chillingworth, from Romanism to Protestantism—equally in vain did he point to his able work against Fisher the Jesuit. The gentle refusal which he gave to the offer of a Cardinal's hat was adduced as another proof of his leaning to Rome. On this I will but remark that very frequently, even in the last and present century, persons who have ventured to look upon the Church of Rome as a Christian church have fallen under a similar accusation. John Wesley, and his followers, the Methodists, from some unaccountable popular caprice, at one time were designated by the name of Papias.—Samuel Pepys, the patriotic and intelligent Secretary of the Navy, because it was falsely reported in the House of Commons that a crucifix had been seen in his house,—and the learned Bishop Butler, the author of the "Analogy," because he erected a cross in his chapel at Bristol—both fell under the charge of a desertion of the Protestant faith. Strange that Archbishop Wake, who pursued for some time a project of uniting the Gallican and Anglican churches, should have escaped the imputation so gratuitously fastened upon Laud. Were there no other evidence, the rejoicings of the Jesuits at Rome when they heard of his execution, would be amply sufficient to disprove the charge, that the Archbishop was popishly affected.

It would be too tedious and uninteresting to notice even cursorily every accusation, on the score of religion, advanced against the Archbishop. His love of order, and attempt to introduce decent ceremonies; his styling the communion-table an "altar," and removing it from the middle to the east end of the Church; his enforcing obedience to the Book of Sports, and his endeavours to correct the irregularities committed by the improper persons, whom Abbott, his lax and unfaithful predecessor, had ordained; these, and every other minute action, were made to bear an ill construction, and were marshalled against him with a wicked ingenuity by the revengeful industry of Prynne.

The deeds of the Star-Chamber are not so easily answered, as the charge of Popery. Stripped of certain exaggerations, the statements made against the Archbishop on this head are based upon substantial truth—it would be equally dishonest and absurd to deny this. Let it, however, be borne in mind, that while we of the present day are justified in reproaching the cruelties and oppressions of the Star-Chamber, the cotemporaries of Laud ought to have blushed with shame, when they hazarded an accusation of this description. "Laud," says the republican author, whom I have previously cited, "Laud only mutilated, while his Presbyterian adversaries decapitated." To this I add that, under the Commonwealth, Lilburne, who had only been whipped and pilloried under the Monarchy, would have been executed could a Jury have been found base enough to convict him; and that under the *tolerant* sway of Cromwell, the Quaker Naylor was pilloried, whipped, burned in the face, and had his tongue bored through with a red-hot iron. These instances are adduced, not as a direct exculpation of Laud, but as showing that he merely acted in accordance with the spirit of the age. Even Prynne, the chief sufferer by the Archbishop's Star Chamber proceedings, acknowledged in soberer years, when time and reflection had softened his turbulent temper, that had his head, as well as his ears, been taken off, it would have been better for the kingdom.

As a statesman, Laud certainly was guilty of many arbitrary acts, and held the doctrine, in obedience to which he sometimes conformed his practice, that a dispensing power resides with the King. But that he committed treason, or attempted to subvert the essential rights of Parliament, is a charge utterly untenable. It is a remarkable coincidence, and shows in both cases, how gnats were magnified into camels, that a single word was urged with much ingenuity and force against Strafford and Laud. The atrocious wresting of the monosyllable 'this' into a treasonable construction on the trial of Strafford is well known; but it is not so notorious that the epithet 'peevish,' applied by Laud in his private diary to the contumacious Parliament,—was brought against him on his trial with a blood-thirsty bitterness, which evinced how deeply the word had sunk into the bosoms of his relentless persecutors. As in Strafford's case also, Sir Henry Vane was cited as a witness to prove treasonable language uttered by the Archbishop at the table of the Privy Council. The testimony of such a man was vitiated by his previous perjury, and violation of a Councillor's oath! Neither on this occasion ought it to pass without notice, that, while republican and Whig historians have condemned in the severest terms of reprobation the ransacking of the closet of Algernon Sidney, the pensioner of France, and the production of his own undivulged manuscripts as evidence against him; they have never stooped from their bold and lofty soarings into the regions of liberty, to utter one note of censure on the managers of Laud's trial, who let loose upon him his vindictive personal enemy Prynne with "the