

# The Church.

"HER FOUNDATIONS ARE UPON THE HOLY HILLS."

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 1, 12.

VOLUME II.]

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## Poetry.

### THE QUIET AUTUMN.

Oh, now I see what beauties lay  
O'er summer's close,  
And Autumn's calm betrothing with decay,  
With her last dying rose,  
Sweeter than Spring.

'Tis that upon consumption's cheek,  
Blooming, though pale,  
Out of some brighter world doth gently break,  
And whisper a sweet tale  
Of better things.

A calm awaiting seems to be  
O'er leaf and wave;  
A calm undressing, all so silently,  
For calmness of the grave,  
Unrepining.

'Tis thus when, all its wanderings past,  
On the still tide  
The bark doth hang its idle sail at last,  
And, like a shadow, glide  
Into its rest.

The noiseless break its banks along  
Winds, like a lake,  
Save stilly heard a rippling under-song,  
Whose passing eddies make  
Silence more still.

If haply o'er the listening trees  
Wanders a sound,  
It seems a voice come from the distant seas,  
Upon a message bound  
Inland and far.

Upon the dread and dim serene,  
Each thought that breaks,  
And every breath that stirs the quiet scene,  
A mighty Being speaks,  
Whom we await.

Such is the awful calm they learn  
Beneath their crossing  
Who fain would sit, looking for thy return,  
And count the world but loss  
Thy love to gain.

British Magazine.

### THE CHRISTIAN SHEPHERD.

AN ORDINATION SERMON, preached in Christ Church, Montreal, on Sunday the 12th August, and in St. James's Church, Toronto, on Sunday the 7th October, by the Rev. A. N. Bethune, Rector of Cobourg.—Published by desire of the Lord Bishop of Montreal.

St. JOHN, xxi. 16.—"Feed my sheep."

He had a solemn charge addressed to Peter, soon after he had recognized his risen Lord. The circumstances of his case at this moment were peculiar. A few days before, in the garden of Gethsemane, when Jesus was in the hands of his enemies, Peter exhibited a melancholy evidence of the weakness—the fall of human nature. Divided betwixt fear and affection,—afraid to mingle with the maddened crowd who were bearing his Lord away to the judgment-seat and the cross, and yet unwilling to desert him,—he "followed afar off." But worse than this—in the very presence of his Master, he denied him; with oaths and curses, he affirmed that he "knew him not."

This, my Brethren, was a dark spot in the character of Peter. But through the efficacy of the Saviour's look of mild but powerful rebuke, that cloud upon the brightness of his Christian life was removed; that through the efficacy of his atoning blood, that stain was washed away. The Saviour's mute rebuke smote upon the guilty disciple's heart; and a fountain of repentant tears was opened, harbinging of a change so holy and complete, that not a moment of desertion from the Saviour's cause is told of Peter more; but from the hour when the Lord looked in mercy upon him to that dreadful day when upon the inverted cross he died in torture, never did Peter waver from his Master's cause—never did he shrink from preaching, even in the face of a persecuting world, that faith which Jesus died to establish.

Sad to the Apostle were the hours which followed this fearful and humiliating denial of his Lord. "The shepherd was smitten, and the sheep were scattered": Jesus was nailed to the cross, and his disciples, in concealment, in consternation, in despair, mourned over their deprivation. But after this thick darkness, the morning of the resurrection dawned. Jesus, in the strength of omnipotence, broke from the thrall of death, and re-appeared to his wondering followers. While toiling upon the sea of Tiberias in their fishermen's occupation, Peter and a few others of the disciples were blessed with a recognition of their risen Saviour. Warm-hearted always—attached to Jesus under every circumstance—shamed, after his temporary desertion, into renewed and purified fervency of love,—Peter, at the sound of his Master's voice, at the first recognition of his form, plunges with his fisher's coat into the sea, and hastens to the shore to greet him.

The great hour which Jesus partook with his disciples there, he turns to Peter with this inquiry—"Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou me more than I love thee?" No extravagant protestations from the humbled Apostle now! He could affirm of sincerity, and he could appeal to the Searcher of hearts for the truth of what he said, that he loved his Lord with an unfeigned affection; but after his late trial—after the proof which it revealed of his ignorance of the weakness and the deceitfulness of the human heart, he would not now venture to declare that he loved his Master "more than these." Humbled and changed, he was content with the simple affirmation, "Lord, thou knowest that I love thee";—willing now to rest the evidence of his attachment not upon his own protestations, but upon the omniscience of his Lord and Saviour. This, then, was the injunction of Jesus in reply, "Feed my lambs,"—my lambs,

the objects of your tender care, the purchase of my blood. But upon a subject so dear to the Saviour, another appeal is made to his disciple. He "saith to him again the second time, Yea, Lord, thou knowest that I love thee." Again the same humble reference to the omniscience of his Lord,—no bold or unqualified profession of his love. Again, then, the Saviour says to him,—testifying thus his deep concern for the precious flock for which he died,—"*Feed my sheep.*"

But this is not enough. He must try still further the faithfulness—he must test still more strongly the conversion of his lately fallen disciple. "He saith unto him the third time, Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou me?" It was distressing to Peter that, in this reiterated appeal, a doubt should be implied of the sincerity of his love: he "was grieved because he said unto him the third time, *Lovest thou me?*"—grieved, we can believe, that from his lovingly denied his Lord, that Lord should *thrice* have questioned him upon the truth of his affection. Again, then, in his humble reference to his Saviour's knowledge of the secrets of the heart, he says, "Lord, thou knowest all things; thou knowest that I love thee." And again the same regard is breathed for those on whose behalf the Saviour died,—"*Feed my sheep.*"

This, my Brethren, as a mere fact of history, were interesting and affording; but O how much is its interest heightened to those who, on the one hand, are comprehended in that flock for whose sake this thrice-repeated injunction was given,—to those who, on the other hand, are invested with the same charge which was thus solemnly and repeatedly enjoined upon St. Peter. You, the purchased flock of the Lord Jesus, for whom he died, for whom he is ever careful,—you, who come to the house of God to hear the message of his love, to pray for many to receive, it as you ought, to ask forgiveness for your many sins,—you, who have an interest in that message, must feel a joy of the soul, a heightened glow in the ardour of your devotion, as often as this evidence of the Saviour's regard is repeated in your ears. And we, the humble ministers of that crucified Lord,—how should we be affected in dwelling upon this record of his love for souls? Deeply to every bosom of the ambassadors of the Lord must come home the awful magnitude of the commission which he so unworthily bears; deeply must his heart be convinced of the preciousness of those souls on whose behalf the Saviour spoke so earnestly; powerfully must he be urged to the faithful execution of the charge, to "feed the church of God which he hath purchased with his own blood."

God forbid that we who, in the longer exercise of that responsible duty, may have become habituated to its solemnity and its weight, should lightly regard the high charge with which we are commissioned! God forbid that, with increased years, we should feel ought else than an increased sense of the magnitude of that trust! But we can understand the force and liveliness with which it will come to the hearts of those who to-day have knelt at that altar, and vowed fidelity to the banner of the cross under which they have been people and in the sight of God, declared, in the face of this people and in the sight of God, their solemn resolve—their vow registered in heaven—that they will be faithful to their Master's service, faithful to the truth, faithful to the souls committed to their charge. A few words, then, upon the importance and dignity of this sacred commission will not be inappropriate.

The very love which our Saviour bears to his ransomed flock, will best explain the necessity of a provision for *shepherds* of that flock,—of a few of men who should be invested with the charge so earnestly enjoined upon his Apostle of old, "*Feed my sheep—feed my lambs.*" But with the assurance that in the Church of Christ "all things are to be done decently and in order,"—that "his Church is to exhibit the model of a glorious temple, orderly in all its proportions,—it is impossible not to feel that order is especially to be preserved in every thing that relates to the authority and office of the ministry. If our Lord really intended to have a select and successive body of men, who should be the shepherds of his flock—the accredited ambassadors of his word—authorized to teach and to preach in his Name,—they must assuredly be furnished with becoming credentials to authenticate their message. And this, in the primitive Church, appears, as well from Scripture as from other early records, to have been carefully observed. None were permitted to preach without being sent—none were allowed to take this honour to themselves without being called.

It is true that, in a certain sense, all Christians are "kings and priests unto God": all may speak of the loving-kindness of the Lord—may invite others to taste and see that he is gracious—may remind their brethren of their Christian obligations—may exhort to repentance and every other Gospel duty; yet it is certain that the *ministry* of sacred things was never left to incidental zeal or individual inclination—that it was never communicated to all the disciples of the Lord indifferently. Some only are empowered to "speak with authority"—some only are actually "ambassadors"—only some are commissioned, "in Christ's stead," to declare his counsel and enforce his will.

Not every one who feels a loyal devotion to an earthly sovereign and rejoices to tell of his mercy, is the lawful ambassador of that Sovereign, but he alone who bears his seal and is entrusted with his warrant; so must the ambassador of Christ have some commission to point to—some title which can be recognized—some "epistle which may be known and read of all men." Even in the age of miracles, when the Divine Spirit was supernaturally bestowed, we find that an outward form of consecration was used, and that specified ceremonies were observed, in separating any of the disciples of the Lord to the work of the ministry. In referring to the practice of our Saviour himself, we perceive that, after a certain probationary trial, he selected from the whole number of his followers, first twelve Apostles, and afterwards seventy Disciples, to be the bearers of his message of love, and to instruct the world in the re-

quirements of his religion; and after his ascension into heaven, we discover that they to whom our Lord had entrusted the government of his Church, "ordained elders (or presbyters) in every city," with the laying on of hands—by a solemn ceremonial and a distinct commission. To certain others they entrusted the same authority which they were exercising themselves,—namely, to "commit the same to faithful men, who should be able to teach others also";—thus constituting a provision for the *continuance*, the *perpetuity* of that separated class of men whom Christ himself had first commissioned. And early ecclesiastical history furnishes us with abundant examples of the strictness with which, under all ordinary circumstances, the sacred order was preserved.

If, therefore, it be necessary that ordination should be conferred—if a commission must be regularly given before a man can rightly exercise his ministry—if no one of himself may lawfully assume any spiritual authority,—it follows that that authority cannot be derived from, or through, an unauthorized person. No lapse of time can render that valid which was at first invalid. And though God may choose, in some degree, and under certain circumstances, to use the services of such persons and overrule their doings to his own glory, yet this pleasure of His cannot be taken as sanctioning a departure from the order which he has given to have observed in his Church. The belief that the end may, in this way, justify the means, would bring us precisely into that position which the Word of God so pointedly condemns,—"*to do evil, that good may come.*"

Most grateful, my Brethren, should we be to God that, in our own venerated Church, the order of the Apostles is preserved; that the commission to teach and to preach is given by men amongst us who received it, according to ancient rule, from those who were themselves in turn similarly authorized; and that so, link by link, we hold an apostolic chain, and can trace the connexion upward, until we come to the only source of ecclesiastical dignity,—our blessed Saviour himself, acting by his apostles. If, then, the continuity of this chain be any where broken,—if at the head of any ministerial succession stand merely the congregation or the self-commissioned teacher,—it must, in fairness, be allowed that the order of things is inverted—that authority is conferred not by the superior, but by the inferior. It is true that, at the present day, this last may be no unpalatable doctrine, when it is a favourite maxim that "the powers that be are ordained" not of God, but of the people—that from their voice is to proceed all civil, all ecclesiastical authority. There are, however, not a few (and, praised be God, they are fast swelling into that great multitude which no man can number) who, as they believe with the Scriptures that by God and from God "kings reign and princes decree justice," so, by parity of reasoning and respect for that divine authority, do they trace up the ecclesiastical commission to the same heavenly source. It is not for us to determine the extent of injury inflicted by this failure in order—this flaw in the ministerial succession. In abundant charity towards those in whom this irregularity is to be discerned, let us be grateful to God for the principles which he has been pleased to confer upon ourselves.\*

Instead, too, of leading to arrogance and prompting to extravagance of pretension, let this consideration rather beget humility in the authorized holders of this fearfully responsible commission. To be an ambassador for Christ—to speak "in his stead" to fallen sinners in a fallen world—to be the dispenser of his refreshing and sanctifying ordinances,—is a high and ennobling privilege; but when the inquiry, "Who is sufficient for these things?" comes home in its power to the minister of Christ, self-abasement, fear and trembling, must take possession of his heart. Exalt himself he cannot—he dare not; but laying all the extent of his poor acquisitions at the feet of the cross—avowing his utter unfitness for this high charge—and confessing that it is in the strength of heaven alone that he can go forth to this duty,—he declares the testimony of God, as did the Apostles of old, "in weakness, and in fear, and in much trembling."

Alas, how should it be otherwise! How should a ministry feeling of presumption mingle with the thoughts which this high commission awakens,—the majesty of Him in whose cause it is borne, the preciousness of those on whose behalf it is exercised! "Were we permitted," says an excellent writer, "to descend into the bottomless pit, and be witness to the weeping, and wailing, and gnashing of teeth, with which its horrid caverns perpetually resound; were our ears to be wounded for a season with the bitter lamentations of the lost, and their earnest, but fruitless entreaties for a drop of water to cool their flaming tongues; nay, were we ourselves to taste that cup of trembling; were we, after a transition through this scene of overwhelming horror, permitted to enter for a season within the gates of the new Jerusalem which is above, and to be spectators or even participants of the pleasures which are at God's right hand; we should nevertheless be unable to form adequate conceptions of the human soul, unless we could at the same time comprehend universal duration." Such, then, being the unappreciable value of this treasure, how shall they lightly or thoughtlessly regard it, who are appointed to watch for its everlasting welfare! If, through a deficiency in knowledge, fidelity, or zeal, one such precious soul should be lost, may they not feel as felt the Babylonish monarch, when he described the miraculous hand-writing upon the wall,—his countenance changed, and his thoughts troubled him, so that the joints of his loins were loosed, and his knees smote one against another?"

Well has it been said, that "the difficulty which attends a conscientious discharge of the ministerial office is such, that the highest mountains which the traveller seeks with in other paths of life, when compared therewith, sink into mole-hills which the foot may surmount with the greatest ease."—And how are our peculiar difficulties to be surmounted? I feel, my Brethren, an unwillingness, because an incompetency to offer my counsel; but "without excellency of speech or wisdom," I may speak as becometh "a babe in the Gospel." O then, in our preaching, in our prayers, in our ministrations, let us never forget—let us never lose sight of the cross of Christ. And that we may value this cross\* as we should do,—that we may have a due regard to the sole-sufficiency and the all-sufficiency of that atonement which upon the cross was made,—let us never lose sight of the inherent depravity, the deceitfulness, the desperate wickedness of the human heart. To be "convinced of sin"—to know its "exceeding sinfulness"—to be sensible of our vast estrangement from the purity and the favour of God,—is a necessary preparation for the reception into our hearts of what has been termed the "mother-grace"† of Christianity,—JUSTIFICATION BY THE FAITH OF CHRIST ALONE. It is only thus that we can persuade the sheep of Christ's pasture that they are wanderers in a desolate and dangerous wilderness; secure the safety of souls watches continually for his prey; only thus that we can lure them, urge them, compel them to come to the rock of safety—to the "strong-hold" of defence. It is only by creating a distrust of human dependencies, that we can move a perishing world to rush for safety to the "everlasting arms,"—to plant their hopes where they cannot be shaken,—to fix their strength where it cannot be moved. Yes, brethren, it is by proving to you—by convincing you, that you are "wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked," that we, the ministers of Christ,—by hope as poor, and blind, and naked as yourselves—can dare to persuade you to go to that Saviour whose precious blood is the enriching "gold" which will supply all your wants,—whose righteousness is the spotless "raiment" which can cover the "shame of the nakedness" of the soul. You must be brought to the knowledge of your plague—you must be forced, in agony and tears, to the cry, "Is there no balm in Gilead? is there no physician there?"—And then, when you come, guilty and contrite, helpless and self-despairing, to the cross of the Saviour; when you prostrate yourselves there with an utter rejection of your self-righteousness and your self-dependence, then will you hear from the Redeemer of souls this encouraging call,—"*Look unto me and be saved.*"

Thus, my brethren, must we endeavour to proclaim the Gospel message: thus must we pray you, "in Christ's stead," to be "reconciled to God." I might dwell upon another important appendage of the ministerial character, to be examples to the flock "in word, in conversation, in charity, in spirit, in faith, in purity,"—that upon the commission which we bear there may stand broadly out to the world the super-scription of HOLINESS TO THE LORD; but upon this portion of the interesting subject before us the time will not permit me to enlarge.

It is in the consideration of this point, we should be brought, it is true, to a very humbling contemplation of the frailty of humanity; but while we deplore this weakness in ourselves, we might indulge in a word of complaint upon the difficulties with which the path-way of the Christian minister is beset in the apathy and hostility of a sin-enraged world. To the natural man, the "word of reconciliation" is no welcome theme: too often, "the counsel of God is declared" to listless ears and unconcerned hearts. The voice of the shepherd invites the wandering sheep of the Lord's pasture, but they hear it not; the bread of life is earnestly proffered, but it is rejected. Let not this, however, be a subject for discouragement, but for renewed exertion—for reiterated prayer. "In due time we shall reap, if we faint not." Let the abundance of the harvest, not the severity of the toil, engage our anxieties. Let the Lord's will, and not the oppositions of the world, employ our care. While the sheep are wandering hither and thither,—straying perhaps into the cold, dreary regions of infidelity, or caught perchance in the "strong delusions" which prevail too widely around us,—let our interest, our love, our labour be increased to reclaim them to the fold where, under the Redeemer's protection, they shall be safe. Short of this, my brethren, we must not relax in our efforts—we must not be wearied in our prayers. Whether they will hear, or whether they will forbear,—whether they will accept our care, or spurn our assidues,—whether they will receive the food of the Gospel, or prefer the "hunks" of a deceiving world,—let this injunction be remembered, let this command be obeyed, "*FEED MY SHEEP; FEED MY LAMBS.*"

\* "The cross of Christ does not signify that piece of wood which Christ did bear upon his shoulders, and to which he was afterwards nailed, but the doctrine of salvation by a crucified Redeemer."—Martin Luther.

† Archbishop Usher.

## NATIONAL RELIGION.

From Oser's Church and King.

He must have read the Bible to very little purpose, who does not see that God requires the nation, as such, to serve and honour Him; by reverently acknowledging Him in all its laws, institutions, and enterprises; restraining wickedness and vice, and promoting true religion and virtue. No cause and effect have a more close and certain connexion than national religion, and national prosperity. This truth is established on the equity of God's moral government. The good man may be severely tried in this life, for his reward is in heaven; and he may well endure the short sufferings which lead to eternal blessedness. But a Nation, which can exist as such, only in this world, is rewarded with temporal prosperity, or punished with temporal calamity.

Have we not the proof? England glories in the name of a Christian country. She has illustrated the character, abroad, by her lofty integrity, and her generous consideration for the weak; at home, by acknowledging in all her public proceedings her dependence upon God. Before Parliament proceeds to legislate, it implores his guidance,—

\* The substance of a few of the preceding paragraphs will be found in an article on "Ministerial Succession" in the third volume of the 'Church of England Magazine.'

† Rev. T. T. Bidulph.