

Poetry.

THE VOY AND THE BLESSING. (AT A CHILD'S BAPTISM.)

"We will go into the wilderness and sacrifice to the Lord our God, as He shall command us. . . We will go with our young and with our old, with our sons and with our daughters, with our flocks and with our herds. . . For we know not with what we must serve the Lord until we come thither."—Exodus.

Babel! go forth—for God hath sealed thee With the Spirit's living breath; Precious blood drops have anointed thee, Thou art Christ's in life and death. On thy brow is traced the token Of His awful love and we; Words of pow'r and blessing spoken, Bid thee follow him below. Soldier! gird thine armour on thee, Cuirass, helmet, shield, and sword; Vow of battle is upon thee— Be thou valiant in the Lord. Watch and pray—for those are round thee, Viewless in their strength and sleight; Yet that deep-sworn oath hath bound thee To the Lord of stronger might. Pilgrim, on thy road is dreary, And the storm-clouds gather fast, Pain thou oft wilt be, and weary, Ere the wilderness be past, Nor, until thou comest thither, Wilt thou know wherewith to serve; Joys that die—sweet hopes that wither, Learn to view with iron nerve. All that thou hast is nearest, Thou must bring and offer there; None—no, not thy best dearest, Thy retaining heart must spare. Dreams, bright as gayest hearts may cherish, Deck'd in lines that scarce can fade, All of earth in them must perish— All at Jesus' feet be laid. With thy youthful and strong aged, Treat the path thy Master trod; His were sorrows unimagined, Thine but lead thee nearer God. Heep not thou the vain earth's treasure, With thee bring thy flocks and herds; Offer in no stunted measure; Pay thy vow in deeds not words. Tame thy flesh with fast and vigils; Seek not self in ought to please; That dread sign, thy Master's sign, Marks thee for no life of ease. Yet no might of thine o'ercometh: Christ shall in thee will and do; When thy last account he summeth, Christ be all thou trustest to. And must it be? Must all be given Back to him who gave thee all? Must each chain of earth be broken, Ere thou follow Jesus' call? Even so: thy heart when breaking, Is the meeter for his shrine; Then earth's broken robes forsaking, Lean thou on his strength divine. Raise no bitter lamentation When thy loved one has slept; Weep, for dew of consecration, Hallow'd tears when "Jesus wept." Though beloved ones are taken, Thou hast still the Dearest Friend; Deem not thy lone way forsaken; He is with thee to the end. Hope not thou to pass untried Through the world's polluting breath; Ev'n the holiest have faint'd, In that atmosphere of death. Sin-sears, deep and foul, will stain thee, And thine evil heart betray; Fashions of vain pride enchain thee. Pow'rs of hell best thy way. Yet despair not! Blood Atoning Streams from thy Redeemer's side; Come, with penitential moaning, Live, through faith, in Him who died. Once, through that most holy laver, He hath rais'd thee from the dead; Seek thou his restoring favour, He will give thee rest, most dear. See thy cross: it lies before thee; Stoop, and bear it after Him. His thou art—His banner o'er thee Guards and lights through pathways dim. Be thine own the martyr's spirit, Though no life-blood from thee flow; If His we thou dost inherit, 'Tis His mercy-sign below. —British Magazine. F. M. H.

THE DOCTRINE OF CONVERSION. (Compiled chiefly from the "Christian Remembrances," by a Correspondent of "The Church.")

The incident related in Acts ix. 3-5, together with its subsequent effects, is called by the Church the conversion of St. Paul, and properly so; for it was, as the meaning of the word conversion has been justly defined, a turning of the will co-existent with the conviction of the understanding. Commonly, however, there is no word used among Christians, which professing to be a scriptural term, has been employed in senses more foreign from its scriptural sense, than this word conversion. From closely following human systems of theology, and from ignorance of the true meaning of Holy Scripture, as interpreted by the primitive Church,—from forgetfulness of this all-important fact, that the Old Testament was given to a chosen nation who were made God's people through the rite of circumcision, and the New Testament to regenerated men who had put on Christ Jesus in Baptism, this word conversion has come to stand not only for every other Christian grace, but even for salvation itself; for in a modern sense, he that has once been truly converted to God, is thus made incapable of any subsequent lapse, and is assured of his final salvation. It is unfortunate, when Scripture words are wrested from their original signification, and Scripture examples are misapplied. It is in this way that the cause of genuine and vital religion sustains the greatest injury; when, on the one hand, mankind are deceived as to what their religion does require from them; and on the other, the errors of Christian professors are set down by the enemies of our Holy Faith, as the delusions of the religion itself. It is doubtless from the carnal corruption of our nature, from an indolent disinclination to travel on the narrow road which leads from the Church militant to the Church above, from an extreme anxiety to avoid engaging in a struggle which seems so irksome and difficult,—so contrary to those worldly interests and gratifications in which we find ourselves intimately concerned,—that men are willing to be persuaded, that their baptismal obligations are by no means so strict, as they have at times been taught to regard them, and so are ready to trust to any impulses, however imaginary, and to rely on any assurances, however deceitful, which promise them a victory, without the toil and uncertainty of the conflict, and bring them at once to the goal of their Christian course without having to undergo the hardships and hazards of the intervening race. Salvation appears to them indeed desirable; but they cannot make up their minds to work out their salvation with fear and trembling; they would fain reach the promised land, but avoid travelling through the Red Sea to it; they would gladly sit about the cross, but yet are unwilling to carry the cross themselves, so that they may really learn this wondrous mystery. With tempers such as these (and every man must feel what a proneness there is within him to be thus easily minded and credulous in supposing that the way to heaven is not so straight and narrow as the Holy Gospels say that it is), the doctrine of an instantaneous and a sensible conversion, as it is taught in the writings of English nonconformists, and now commonly understood, will find a ready reception; a conversion, as it is called, brought about in an instant, and effected by

the irresistible operation of the Holy Ghost on the heart of man; a conversion which, at once, and without any trouble on his part, is supposed to place a man above all the severe and painful and mortifying conditions of repentance, and to give him an assurance of the forgiveness of his sins, of acceptance with God, and of an unflinching continuance in grace; a conversion of which no man who has really partaken of it, can entertain any doubts and misgivings, inasmuch as it is said to be ascertained to him, not indeed by the outward evidence of its subsequent fruits, which is our Lord's test of the reality of every Christian grace (He says, "by their fruits shall ye know them"), but by some simultaneous, inward and sensible token, communicated to the person himself. Those, who have never taken the trouble to examine the fact for themselves, but have received it on the traditional authority of the Religious Tract Society, and thus have been accustomed to hear this word conversion so frequently and confidently made use of, with a special and individual application, will no doubt be surprised when they learn how rarely, if ever, it is employed in Scripture, in any sense affording the remotest countenance to the use which is made of it in these days. Out of the very few times in which the word is found at all in the New Testament, we believe that there are but two instances where it is applied to persons who had been previously called to, or brought within the knowledge of the Gospel; the one in the 18th chapter of St. Matthew, where our blessed Lord says to his disciples, "Except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven;" the other in the 22nd chapter of St. Luke, where He admonishes St. Peter, after his own conversion, to be mindful "to strengthen his brethren." But if we consider how very imperfect was the conception which those disciples entertained of the nature of Christ's kingdom, when they eagerly vied with each other for the possession of that worldly distinction which, they imagined, it offered to their enjoyment; and how grievous was the apostasy of St. Peter, amounting almost to a total denial of his faith in his Lord and Saviour! we shall scarcely think that these cases are parallel with those of members of the Church in the present day; even if we were not told in the former instance, that conversion should consist in a return to the spiritual weakness and simplicity of an infant, nor even knew in the latter example, with what tears of penitence, contrition and sorrow, the revolting apostasy was restored. Repentance is the Scriptural and post baptismal term, by which men "who were once enlightened, and have tasted of the heavenly gift, and were made partakers of the Holy Ghost and have tasted the good word of God, and the powers of the world to come, if they shall fall away"—that is even in a case of total apostasy—are described as being renewed, if they be renewed; though the apostle argues that "it is impossible" for those who have thus entirely lapsed from the faith, to be again affected by any of the ordinary instruments of grace. And if men would have been content to adhere to Scripture language, and not have followed their own devices, and run after "another gospel" than that which has been preached, the false spirit of an instantaneous and sensible conversion would never have led astray those who have trusted to its guidance, nor have rendered others miserable, who have not been able to delude themselves into a belief that they have ever experienced its power. The absurdity of an instantaneous repentance, or of a sensible repentance,—sensible in any other way than that which we have before spoken, viz. by its subsequent fruits,—the absurdity of such notions as these would have been at once apparent to the very weakest understanding: for how could that be said to take place instantaneously, and to be at once sensibly effected, which is made up of many distinct and deliberate acts of the will, the affections, and the understanding; such as to be convinced of and be sorry for sin, to be desirous and earnest after amendment, to have actually renounced the one, and as actually to have commenced the other? But as the example of St. Paul has afforded no inconsiderable prevalence to the doctrine now under discussion, it may be well to shew several points of disparity, which must for ever preclude its being alleged as a precedent or authority at this day. In the first place, we cannot say that St. Paul had ever enjoyed the advantage of so much evidence as was necessary to overcome the strong persuasion of a Jew, brought up in the belief and certainty of the divine origin of the religion of his fathers. We cannot tell that he had heard our Lord preach, or seen Him perform any miracle; so that the whole force of the proof, which in this way had been gradually accumulating upon the other apostles during the course of our Saviour's ministry, was at once to be exerted for the conviction of this "chosen vessel." He was destined himself hereafter to afford, in this very conversion, one of the most remarkable arguments of the truth of that religion, of which he had hitherto been so violent an opposer, as well as to become the chief instrument of its propagation. The circumstances which attended this sudden change in the furious persecutor of the early Church, were made evident to others as well as to himself; "the men that journeyed with him stood speechless;" for they saw the light above the brightness of the eastern mid-day sun, and they heard the accompanying sounds. For three days did he remain in the house of Judas at Damascus, "without sight, and neither did eat nor drink;" so that in this respect one of the most confident advocates of the doctrine of instantaneous conversions, and the founder of that sect in whose creed it forms so conspicuous an article, is obliged himself to confess, that scarce any other was so slow as that of St. Paul, who was three days in the pangs of the new birth. And after all, God, willing to show in the midst of his most extraordinary visitations, his own respect for those ordinary channels of grace which he had himself appointed in his Church, sent Ananias, a devout Christian, to cure him of his blindness, that he might be baptized, and "wash away his sins," and be filled with the Holy Ghost. So that, upon the whole, we may rather consider this event in the light of a miraculous evidence, afforded to St. Paul, of the reality of that resurrection, the certain witness of which constituted so essential a part of the apostolic commission, than as the actual conferring of any spiritual grace, which can in no wise be said to have been given, until his receiving of the Holy Ghost in Baptism. And this is the account which St. Paul himself gives of the transaction, in his defence before Agrippa, where he represents the voice as having declared that He appeared unto him for that purpose, to make him a minister and a witness of the things which he had seen. Nor did St. Paul ever regard himself as a vessel chosen to any other purpose, or for any other end, than to bear the name of Christ before the Gentiles and Kings and children of Israel. He says of himself, that he was "chosen by the pleasure of God, separated from his mother's womb, and called by his grace to reveal his Son, and preach him among the heathen." But where does he describe himself, and as a consequence of the grace given unto him, as feeling an infallible assurance of everlasting salvation? On the contrary, in common with less favoured Christians, he represents himself as engaged "in a race," and "in a warfare;" as striving with the most earnest and unremitting assiduity against his natural appetites, lest he should be judged unmeet for the prize; as "following after," by any means he might attain unto the resurrection of the dead. "Brethren," says he, "I count not myself to have apprehended; but this one thing

I do, forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before, I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus." He even fears, "lest, by any means, having preached to others, he himself should be a castaway." This was St. Paul's language when he knew that he should abide longer in the flesh. When indeed it was revealed to him, that he was about "to put off his earthly tabernacle," when he was "now ready to be offered," and "the time of his departure was at hand," he breaks forth into a strain of more unqualified confidence, conscious that he had striven lawfully, temperately and zealously for the mastery; that he had persevered in "enduring hardness as a good soldier of Jesus Christ;" that he had "fought a good fight," that he had "finished his course," that he had "kept the faith." "Henceforth," he exclaims, "there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, shall give me in that day." He did not break into this exultation at the day of his conversion, but just before his martyrdom, having finished this life of trial, having done the work which had been given him to do. Who then shall presume on less grounds than the apostle, and boast himself marked out for salvation, by any special token which he may imagine to have been conveyed to him, at the instant, when the impressions of religion first began to make their appearance in his heart. So little countenance and support will the favourers of these doctrines find in the example or authority of St. Paul. It is because human nature is so corrupt, because men dislike to carry the cross, and live by faith and not by sight, that they have so greedily hearkened to, and have lived on the indulgences distributed by the divinity schools of Rome and Geneva, and have fallen from Catholic teaching. Our blessed Lord describes the way to life as a narrow way, and adds moreover, "few there be that find it." We believe one baptism for the remission of sins, and the condition of our baptism is that we live from earliest youth as baptized people. If we fall heavily after baptism, we may find mercy, as did David; but still it would appear that we must suffer the consequences in this life,—(though David was pardoned yet the sword never left his house.)—and suffer the penalty of past neglect. It is because so few really live from youth according to their baptism, that the Catholic faith has been overlaid with Roman and ultra Protestant indulgences. But though the advocates of the doctrine of an instantaneous conversion can find nothing to support their views from the example and authority of St. Paul, do we therefore deny, that the beginnings of a religious course are ever discernible? do we assert, that "the renewing of the Holy Ghost," to which, after baptism, we are not only indebted for our continuance and growth in grace, but also for our recovery, either from inveterate habits of depravity, or from occasional lapses into sin,—that the fresh dawn of light which breaks upon the darkness of our souls—is not to be perceived or to be marked by us? Far from it. Numberless are the dispensations by which God is continually visiting, and seeking us out; various are the instruments which he has at work to win us, and fashion us for himself. Fraught with messages of mercy, His holy angels are continually descending upon the Church beneath; for this purpose he hath established his holy days. He hath given us his Holy Word, and his Holy Sacraments; add two warnings and examples, which work in silence on us all; and sorrow, anguish and affliction, present attendants upon sin, in order to deter us from it; "blessings beforehand," earnest of greater blessings promised to the followers of righteousness, bonds of gratitude to tie us to himself, without us shame, within us conscience, eternal hopes and fears,—the hope of glory, the dread of condemnation, and of the worm that never dieth; these, and a thousand others, are the "pricks," the goads, which he is continually applying to us, against which it is hard for us to kick. Hard, truly; we feel it to be so. But it is not impossible, may how many of us are there, whose hearts too surely tell them, how successfully they have hitherto resisted, how long they have maintained the struggle against the Spirit of God, still inviting, entreating, and constraining them. But let them, ere it be too late, remember that He will not "always strive with man," that there is a time beyond which the goodness, the love, the long-suffering of God cannot be expected to endure; and that if His Spirit shall at length desert us, an irresistible spirit will indeed take possession of us, and hurry us "whither we would not."

ON THE EXISTING DIVERSITIES IN THE SERVICES OF THE CHURCH. (Concluded from the Cornwall Gazette.)

We have shown that of all the rubrics which apply to the performance of public worship not one is obsolete; but on the contrary, that all continue to be observed, in parish churches as well as in cathedrals.—We are therefore called, not to revive what has fallen into disuse, but only to correct unauthorised diversities. A certain license indeed is necessarily allowed.—Thus in singing; only the chant and anthem are appointed, and the Bishops in 1661 said, "singing of Psalms in metre is no part of the Liturgy;" yet, forasmuch as in most congregations skill was wanting to perform Church music, and perhaps also taste to appreciate it, metrical versions of the Psalms are "set forth and allowed to be sung." So with the Communion; the Church provides for its administration on every Sunday and holy-day, yet allows it to be far less frequent. Thus also with the Offertory; the minister may read one sentence, and it is to be presumed, omit the collection; or he may read several, and invite the alms of the people. These are matters in which the skill of the people in the one case, and their disposition in the others, are necessary to the accomplishment of what the Church desires. Setting aside these, we proceed to inquire how we may obtain the uniformity, confessedly so desirable? To what standard must the several parishes and dioceses be required to conform their practice? Not to the practice of cathedrals, for their peculiar arrangements are unattainable in most parish churches. Nor to the practice of particular parishes, for where all have more or less offended, why should the disorders of one be ratified and made an example for the rest? Certainly not to the views and practices of any particular party, for this were a reasonable ground of offence and strife. Nor, for the same reason, to the views of any bishops whom the public may identify with party. A meeting of the Bishops was talked of; but such a meeting could do no more than discuss doubtful Rubrics and usages, with an understanding that each would adopt the opinion of the majority.—Its decision would have no authority. It could not legislate, and the power to interpret what is doubtful resides, not in a Synod of Bishops, but in each individual taking order for his own diocese. Such a meeting therefore could do nothing. It is not likely that the concurrence of the Bishops themselves could be obtained, since any one might refuse to surrender his own lawful discretionary power in deference to the views of others; and it is certain that the orders of any Bishop would meet with little observance in his diocese, where they were not only opposed to the popular feeling, but also known or presumed to be at variance with his own wishes. After all, therefore, we can have no other safe or practicable standard than that which the law has already provided; namely, the Rubric itself, to be

obeyed literally, where its meaning is clear, and to be explained where it is doubtful by the Diocesan, whose decision in such case has the force of law. If the Rubric be anywhere objectionable, the course to be followed is the same as in civil law; it must be amended or repealed. Again, the question arises, by what authority may this be done? Not by a Royal mandate. To admit this would be to place the faith and order of the Church at the mercy and will of the Prime Minister, who might by a heretic or a profligate. Nor yet by an act of Parliament, which, even when it was composed wholly of Churchmen, never presumed itself competent to legislate on the spiritualities of the Church further than to annex the enforcement of the civil law to the decisions of Convocation; much less now, when it includes Romanists and sectarians of every name. Nor yet by the Bench of Bishops, whose business is individually to enforce and explain the law in their respective dioceses, but who have no power, individually or collectively, to alter, repeal, or amend it. There is only one competent authority, the Houses of Convocation; and if it should be thought necessary to revise the Rubric, the course adopted in 1661, and attempted in 1689, must be again resorted to. A commission would be appointed to examine and report; the two Houses of Convocation, the Lower composed of the Archdeacons, Deans, and representatives elected by the clergy of the several Dioceses—the Upper, of the Archbishop and Bishops, would legislate upon this report; and Parliament would then add its sanction, and make the amended Prayer-book part of the law of the land. There is little probability that anything of this kind will be attempted; and when calm examination shews that the evil we have to correct is diversity of practice, and not obsolete, disused, or unsuitable rubrics, it will be felt that such a revision is not needed. That which we require is a better general understanding among professed Churchmen of the laws and constitution of the Church, and to this we may look forward with reasonable confidence. The improving character of our schools, and the care more and more taken to make religion in accordance with the teaching of the Church the foundation of all instruction, will be a security hereafter against errors of ignorance; while the tendency of the present great movement in Society is to bring back the poor to the Church's fold. We saw this last year, in the meetings in the north on the subject of the ten hours' bill; and the confidence and affection of the poor is the best earthly strength and defence of the Church. The results of the late excitement will, we have no doubt, be most happy. It will lead to temperate discussion and serious consideration, and the cause of truth requires nothing more. The great difficulty hitherto has been, to make Society think at all upon the matter, but this difficulty is now removed. Those who thought seriously before will now feel more deeply, resolve more decidedly, and in some instances, perhaps, act more prudently. The evil has been transient; a mere blaze of crackling thorns already wellnigh burnt out; but the good will be great and permanent. One very valuable effect which will inevitably result from the late excitement will be the bringing to a better mind the more respectable and estimable persons, who were led by the best intention, but through mistaken views, to join in and promote it. They cannot but be ashamed of their allies—the ribaldry and bullying of the ever shifting Times, and the disgraceful outrages of the ruffian rioters of Exeter. They will distrust themselves when they find themselves acting with such unworthy coadjutors; and reflection will bring the conviction that the principles for which they have been contending are subversive of all law, all authority, all order; leading, in their natural tendency, to dissent in religion, and to anarchy in the State. On the other hand, the excesses and follies by which ill-judging zeal, or less pardonable vanity, have started and offended the community, have been effectually checked; while the revival of Rural-decans Synods will henceforth secure that harmony and unity of action which will tend to the extinction of party, and promote peace, strength, and prosperity. Did we not know how easily the most valuable services may be forgotten for a time under the influence of party excitement, we should be surprised that any one who calls himself a Protestant or a Churchman should forget even for a moment the labours of the Bishop of Exeter; who, upon every great question which involved, whether the claims of the poor, or the public morals, or the rights of the Church, or the aggressions of Rome, has always been the foremost champion in the cause of humanity, truth, and virtue. When the New Poor Law was brought on, he was its strenuous opponent, especially of those parts which cruelly interfere with the domestic affections and religious rights of the poor; and though his labours were unsuccessful then, yet they were not wholly in vain; for by Sir James Graham lately proposed to repeal the Bastardy clauses, he justified the measure by citing the very evils which the Bishop had foretold, and urging the very arguments which he had enforced. When Socialism was spreading through the land, and the Prime Minister had introduced its archfiend at Court, that he might present into the very hands of the young Queen his volume of unutterable abomination, it was the Bishop of Exeter, who, by a well-timed and effectual exposure, stayed the plague. It was the Bishop of Exeter who powerfully appealed on behalf of our brethren confined in Union Work-houses, who, denied the common right of worshipping with us in the House of God, are in very many cases denied also the privilege of religious worship within the walls which confined them—a privilege not withheld from the inmates of the Jail. It was the Bishop of Exeter also, who in the last Session of Parliament brought forward a measure to protect inexperienced young females from becoming the victims of fraud and violence, and to punish and effectually put down their destroyers—a measure postponed only in consequence of the pledge of Government that it will itself consider the subject without delay, and take the necessary steps to correct the evil. On every occasion where the Church has been attacked or vilified by men of rank and power, the Bishop of Exeter has stood forth her champion.—During the madness of the Reform Bill, he never shrank from withstanding Lord Grey whenever that proud minister of the movement dared to threaten or assail the Church; and when Lord John Russell ventured to publish in Devonshire a statement of alleged abuses, which he supported by alleged facts, the Bishop promptly met him with an exposure so complete and effectual, that the noble slanderer became the jest even of the populace; and years afterwards, when the member for North Devon brought on a motion to rescind the famous "appropriation" clause, Lord J. Russell shewed in his reply that he still severely smarted under the Bishop's deserved correction. For the present Church Discipline Bill, which brings substantial justice to the doors of every accused party as with little trouble, expense, and needless pain as the case will allow, admitting at the same time of ready appeal, when needful, to a superior Court, the Church and the country are indebted wholly to the Bishop of Exeter. A measure of a very different description, which would have inflicted most grievous hardships, had been prepared under such auspices, that it would have gone through Parliament unopposed; it seems, indeed, as if it had been determined on, and submitted to Parliament only for form's sake. But the Bishop of Exeter, though he received the bill only on the Sunday, and it was to be read the second time in the

House of Lords next evening, hastened immediately to town, and opposed it, single-handed, with such effect, that the measure was altogether dropped.—Before the next session, another measure, that which is now happily enforced, was prepared, with the advice and assistance of the Bishop. The shameful robbery of the Church in Canada by the late government, supported, unhappily, by the Conservative leaders, by which the endowments secured to that Church by Royal grant and charter were taken away, and divided with Romanists and Sectarians of every name, was opposed strenuously, it is to be lamented ineffectually, by the Bishop of Exeter.—With strange inconsistency, while the Church of England was thus robbed of what was its undoubted right, an immense property claimed by the Roman Catholics of Canada, but to which it was admitted by all their advocates they had no right, whether in law or equity, was secured to them by the British Parliament.—Against this needless endowment of the Romish Church, by which Parliament did its best to make Popery the dominant religion of Canada, the Bishop most earnestly, but ineffectually strove. He was the first to expose the evils, both in principle and practice, of the National System of Education in Ireland, against which, even in its mitigated form, the Crimate, and most of the Bishops of the Church in Ireland, have just again protested. We heard his admirable exposure in the House of Lords, and it then required but a vote of the Conservative peers present to have corrected all that was offensive in the system. But that support was withheld, and he was allowed by the party to bring on his motion for inquiry only on the understanding that he should not divide the House! His effort however was not in vain, for he made it impossible for very shame to continue the evils he laid bare. So effective was his exposure, and so severely was it felt, that the Commissioners thought it necessary to publish a report to excuse themselves, as far as they could, from the charges proved against them. The Irish Municipal Reform Bill, which transferred all the corporate power in the Irish boroughs to Roman Catholics, found in the Bishop of Exeter a powerful opponent. If these public services, with many more which space forbids to enumerate, had been performed at the expense of neglecting the duties of his diocese, they would have entitled him to little praise. But in no diocese has the reality of Episcopal rule been so constantly felt. The Bishop's first act, on his appointment, was to visit every parish under his charge, and to make himself personally acquainted with all his clergy; and the interest which he thus shewed at first, he has ever since displayed. No bishop more generally and fully enjoys the respect, the confidence, the affection of his clergy. Proud they naturally are of the surpassing talents of a ruler and spiritual father whose name will in all future ages be identified with the history of the Church; but their attachment is founded upon other grounds—upon his vigilant care, his considerate rule, his paternal kindness. To quote from a recent number of his late eulogist and present calumniator, the Times—"A bishop should be to his diocese what a clergyman is to his flock—the object of reference in all intricate and delicate matters, the comforter in trouble or difficulties, the anxious rewarder of the laborious, the vigilant censor of the indolent and vicious—his existence should be felt in every parish, and every one of his clergy should be made aware that his conduct is well known and justly estimated. This description most fully and strictly applies to the Bishop and the Diocese of Exeter. (From a Sermon by Dr. Waterland.) This is evident,—that what ought to be "doing the work of him that sent us, while our day lasts, and before our night cometh, when no man can work." And so our season for doing good, taken at large, is the whole time of our sojourning here in this world. But then as to some particular acts and kinds of it, there are some special seasons and opportunities proper for them; the well observing of which will be the best means to direct us as well what good to do, as in what manner, so as to answer the ends and designs of it. And in this sense it is, that I would here understand the words "as we have opportunity." Now these proper seasons or opportunities of doing good may be conceived to respect either the persons who are to do a kindness, or those it should be done to. In regard to the former, every advantage which accrues to them, every increase of their substance, power, or ability in any kind, affords a fresh occasion; and as, in it were, a new opportunity given them for doing good. Does any man abound in wealth, and riches flow in upon him?—This is the season, the opportunity which God hath put into his hands, that he may do good by his liberality and bounty towards his poorer brethren. Is he withal advanced to great honours, power and authority?—this must be looked upon as an opportunity given him of doing good, by protecting and encouraging virtue and piety, by discountenancing and restraining vice and immorality. Hath any man, by the blessing of God and his own industry, attained to a good degree of learning, or by years, thought, and experience, to more than ordinary measures of wisdom?—this, then, is the season and opportunity for his doing good, by instructing the ignorant and unlearned, or by advising and admonishing the unwise and unthinking. Or is he by his God's grace, prayer, and endeavour, arrived to a better sense of religion, and a more exalted piety, than his neighbours?—this likewise is another opportunity of doing good, that being himself converted, "he may then strengthen his brethren." And, that it may not be thought that only the rich, great and wise, learned, or eminently good, are blessed with opportunities, it must be observed, that all others, in different proportions, or in different ways, have their opportunities too, and are obliged in their respective capacities to do what can be. The offices of humanity, civility and courtesy, lie open and common to all; and the very meanest and lowest may do good by their honest industry in time of health, and at all times by humility, modesty, and peaceable carriage; by good advice, by prayer, or by example. Hitherto I have considered how a man may be said to have opportunity with respect to his own power and abilities of doing good. Next we may observe the like with respect to the wants and occasions of others whom we ought to do good to. These indeed are innumerable, and we can never want opportunities in this sense, of any sort or kind. "The poor we have always with us," and when we will "we may do them good." There will be always ignorance, weakness, folly, sin, and misery enough in the world, to furnish us with matter for our compassion and charity, and to exhaust all our services. But because our time is short, our talents few, and our abilities at the highest finite and limited, our business must be, out of so great variety, to choose such instances of doing good as we are best qualified for; and of those such as are most wanted, or by some peculiar circumstances come more particularly recommended to us. Some special times and occasions may require our service more than others; and some opportunities may be offered, which, if not presently laid hold on, may be lost forever. On this account the office of love and charity may reasonably be distinguished into two sorts, constant and occasional, from the matter or the objects of them. We are constantly obliged to be doing good, of some kind or other, in proportion to our abilities; and the ordinary standing

needs of mankind afford constant matter for it. But besides this, we are also occasionally obliged to exert ourselves with greater zeal, vigour and activity, upon some special emergencies, and very urgent and pressing engagements,—as, if a Church and Nation be in present danger of sinking into heresy and schism, profaneness, irreligion, or atheism: this is a special opportunity, calling for as special assistance; and at such a time, all who are capable of doing any good service, are obliged forthwith to employ their wits, tongues, pens, interest and authority, for prevention and cure of such a threatening mischief. In cases of inferior and private concern,—for instance, if any person or persons are nearly reduced to extremities, labouring under some heavy and severe pressures, and not being able to subsist, if not speedily relieved by kind neighbours;—such opportunities as these, are what no good Christian, who has any bowels of compassion,—no good heart,—would let slip from him. In this sense therefore, "as we have opportunity" offered, "let us do good unto all men," after the example of the good Samaritan, laid down for a rule of practice by our blessed Saviour in all cases of this nature. There is another limitation of this duty, and that is, to particular persons, as well as to times. Not that any persons, whom it may be in our power to serve, are to be excluded from our charity; only it may admit of different degrees, and is principally to be applied to some more than others; we may be allowed, both in our constant and occasional charities, to make a difference in regard to the quality and circumstances of the persons, and when all cannot be equally served, to prefer the most deserving. We are to "do good unto all men, but especially unto the household of faith;" that is, to Christ's Church or family, and those particularly whose labours and services most eminently deserve and require it,—to them especially, in whose support and welfare the interest of religion, the honour of God, and the good of souls, is so deeply concerned. Where other circumstances are equal, or but nearly equal, the value and character of the person, or the relation to us, ought to give them the preference in our charitable offices, and to entitle them to our first and best services. Indeed a stranger, or even an enemy in extremities, is to be relieved before a friend or a brother who is in no such want of us; for the offices of humanity seem equally due to them as men, and a bare convenience of one may reasonably be postponed, and give way to the extremities of the other. But where this is not the case, or where both seem to lie under almost equal necessities, then certainly a man may be allowed and even obliged more especially to assist his friends before his enemies, brethren before aliens, Christians before heathens, kindred before acquaintance, good and well-deserving before those who have less pretensions; and though we may be willing to assist all or any of them as we are able, and as we see proper occasions, yet towards some more especially we may give a loose to our affections, and be enlarged in our bowels of compassion; may open both our hearts and hands to receive and embrace them, and even overflow in our kindness and bounty towards them. To feed the hungry and clothe the naked, is kind and Christian, though the persons so relieved be strangers and aliens, and even useless or ill-deserving. But if such offices be done to Christians, and good Christians, and such as have deserved well by their pious and painful endeavours, then the charity is the greater as the design of it is nobler, and the good effect of it more diffusive, lasting, and beneficial than the other. The rule then which the voice of nature and reason, as well as the laws of God, have marked out for our charities, is this, that if at any time we can serve the honour of God and the interests of the public more by one sort of charity than another, or by relieving some persons before others, and in one particular manner beyond any else, we are always to choose that which may probably do most good, may spread the widest and last the longest. Thus to relieve any persons in necessity is an act of humanity and Christian charity; but more so, if they are persons of uncommon merit, or undesired sufferings; and relieving them in such a way as shall promote the welfare of their souls, makes it yet more excellent than if it concerned only their bodily wants; and if it be at the same time useful and beneficial to many more besides, it is then better than if it were confined to them only; and if the influence of it may reach to after ages, it is a nobler height of charity than if it should conclude with the present. HOT-HOUSE DISCIPLES. (By the Rev. Dr. Stowe.—Dissenter.) Such Christians demand reading that is racy and stimulating. The Bible, not high-spicied enough for their taste, is neglected for the more flavoured periodical. Preaching is dull. They know enough already, and wish not to be taught; but excited.—Their benevolence is too dependent on excitement—producing fruit only under the intense heat of a crowded meeting and electrifying speeches. One consequence of this state of things is, that the spirit and action of the ministry are vitiated. The temptation is strong to cater for this corrupt taste. Ministers, instead of feeding their people with knowledge and understanding, are too much disposed to furnish the desired stimulus. The bread of life is converted into something that intoxicates, rather than nourishes.—Churches after a season of excitement, uniformly sink into a condition of languor and debility, as disgraceful as it is uncomfortable. The result of all this, connected with the exciting tendency just described, is, that the piety of the age has very little stamina. It is of hot-house growth, and could endure no rough usage. Our brethren, instead of cultivating holiness, and pressing steadily towards the mark for the prize, become restless and variable. Instead of being steadfast and immovable, they are distracted and hurried from one new scheme to another. The spirit of hatred is too prevalent in the Christian ranks. Brethren give each other hard names, so that prejudices are excited. Trifling differences of sentiment are exaggerated, and made the occasion of strife and discord. Brethren get their feelings heated by collision; the passions are excited; contention becomes personal and bitter, and all this while the cause of Jesus lies mangled and bleeding. Ministers are too much engrossed in managing the machinery of enterprises, to the neglect of their closets, their Bibles, and the souls of the people. Private Christians are getting deeply interested in the details of benevolent operations, without cultivating the needful holiness to sustain and sanctify their activities. REBELLION. (By Bishop Hooper.) When I behold the evil and pestiferously-affected minds of Englishmen, and ponder and weigh the fruits of such corrupt minds—contempt, hatred, grudge and malice against their king, magistrates, laws, orders and policies—doubtless I cannot think but these men, as much as in them, conspire and work the destruction of this realm. For it can be no otherwise, but that as contempt of godly laws, and sedition among the people and subjects, of what degree soever they are, have wrought the destruction of other realms; so it must and can do no otherwise unto this realm. But what realm or kingdom soever will avoid these evils, let them promote the word of God to be truly and diligently preached and taught unto the subjects and members thereof. The want of it is the chief cause