

FAMILY DEPARTMENT.

THE MODERN VICAR OF BRAY.

(Written for the Church Guardian.)

If souls e'er revisit our clay,
Who once have from earth pass'd away,
It seems very clear
That we have, down here,
Him who once was the Vicar of Bray.

If he visits a parish call'd High
His pitch is tun'd up to the sky,
Choral service he'll lead,
Or intone, if there's need,
In a way to cause envy to sigh.

Or if with the Broad he is found,
He the 'difficult' texts goes around,
And the sinner he cheers,
Whilst hell disappears,
And dogma falls flat to the ground.

Or if he should happen to go,
As of late, to a parish call'd Low,
His hearers will find
That 'advance' is consign'd
To shame, lamentation and woe.

We, of late, learn'd from him that the three
Orders found in an Anglican See,
Namely, bishop, priest, deacon,
To one order weaken,
Before with the Truth they agree.

And that bishops were presbyters first,
Till, with an ambition accurs'd,
When the rest were asleep,
They took a high leap,
And the form of Church government burst.

The Eucharist, too, he proclaim'd,
In the Bible is so seldom nam'd,
That its prominence now,
As all must allow,
Is a novelty much to be blam'd.

The lay-pope, Privy Council Decrees,
He quotes as the whim may him please.
He tells simple souls
They condemn colour'd stoles (!)
Where he thinks to find hatred of these.

By him we are taught to besmirch,
All who use the phrase 'our Mother Church,'
As Rome-ward inclin'd,
Using this as a blind,
When in Mariolatry's search!

But let this good Vicar of Bray,
Pursue his ambiguous way,
We shall "keep the old path,"
Nor heed the world's wrath,
Nor its praise, in this dangerous day.

PERSONAL MINISTRY FOR CHRIST.

The stones of a Cathedral differ in size, in shape, in beauty, in position. Some are set in places of honor, where they are seen of all men; others in less conspicuous places, where they may not attract attention, or in fact be seen at all. But each has its right place, and each has its appointed part in realizing the ideal of the master-builder; and the roughest block in the foundation of the massive pile, or the smallest stone in the interior of the wall, where it is not and cannot be seen, or the lowliest tile, in the tessellated pavement of the vestibule, helps to make the Cathedral—contributes its share to the fulfillment of the idea of the Cathedral.

So in that grandest cathedral of the ages, the Church of the living God, each stone, however lowly its place, helps to make up the glorious whole, contributes to the realization of the ideal of the Divine Architect; and the smallest and the

most obscure in all the vast building shares with the most conspicuous and the greatest the one exalted privilege of showing forth the glory of God. The poor widow whose dwelling is in some almost inaccessible garret, the lowly artisan whose sphere of life and labor lies in some obscure back street, the little child whose life of prayer and faith and self-sacrifice is unnoticed among men—these are builded together into the one great temple of Jehovah, with kings and heroes and martyrs of the faith who have stood, as "polished corners of the temple," or as lofty pinnacles, conspicuous before the whole world. All are integral parts of the one temple, and upon each is laid a *portion* of the same duty, the same responsibility.

It is of the laity we would speak, And we desire to express the conviction that the great and high and holy work of ministering the saving grace of God to sinful men belongs to them as to the clergy. The responsibility for representing Christ and His Gospel to the world, and of leavening and sanctifying humanity by its influence, rests upon the shoulders of the rank and file of the Christian host, and not upon its officers alone. The clergy have no monopoly of the work and privilege of saving souls. God help the world indeed if none but the clergy are to labor for the salvation of men.

To us it appears that a realization of the duty of *personal ministry for Christ* is the greatest need of the Church in our day.—And this personal ministry must fulfill the idea of the "royal priesthood," not only by offering fervent prayer for men and by bearing zealous witness to the truth of the gospel, but by deeds of love and pity done for Christ's sake to the poor and the needy and the afflicted in this sorrowful world. The incense of prayer must be followed by the incense of work. "Prayer requires work," says one; and "work requires prayer. Work must be the outward and visible form of prayer; prayer must be the soul of work." "*Ora et labora*" is the motto which befits the Christian life.—What says St. James on this subject? Pure religion and undefiled before God and the Father is this, to visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction, and to keep himself unspotted from the world.' What says St. Paul? "To do good and to communicate forget not, for with such sacrifices God is well pleased." What says St. John? "Whoso hath this world's goods, and seeth his brother have need, and shutteth up his compassion from him, how dwelleth the love of God in him?"—Nay, what says our Lord from the throne of His judgment? To whom does He address the gracious welcome in His Father's kingdom? To those who in His name and for His sake have fed the hungry, and given drink to the thirsty, and lodged the stranger, and clothed the naked, and visited the sick and the prisoner. "Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto Me." Mark it. It is not the mere giving of money that the Lord commends. No, it is *personal ministrations*. "I was sick and ye visited Me. I was in prison and ye came unto Me." Nothing can take the place of this personal ministry. The hand, the eye, the voice, "constrained by the love of Christ" and carrying to the suffering, the sick, the sorrowful, something of the very spirit and presence of Christ Himself—this is the ministry that a sick and sinful world is wearily waiting for. We give them instead the cold charity of hired almoners and great soulless "*institutions*" which we call "homes," and "asylums," and "refuges," and what not, and we go our way thinking we have done our duty to Christ and our brother man because we have *subscribed* to the charitable enterprises of our great metropolis.—Ah, methinks the Master would say, "Ye have omitted the *weightier* matters.—These ought ye to have done and not to leave the other undone."—*Rev. R. H. McKim, D. D.*

THE CHRISTIAN'S HOME.

THERE is a wide, wide Channel. It divides two lands. On one side lies Beulah, the Land of Beauty; over it the many mansions of the King of kings are spread, each one more glorious than

the other. Their battlemented towers rise higher and higher, and the loveliest of all is yet more beautiful than the richest palaces of the wealthiest emperors and kings who reign upon the other side of the Great Channel. The conqueror who rides forth with the armies of the skies is yet mighty to save. His standards bear the motto, "Come unto Me," and over the whole realm, upon either side of the rolling waters, he holds sway. Around Him are the swift winged angel messengers, clothed in light, but his subjects are on the other side. Over His kingdoms there are placed the monarchs of the earth, but before Him they are only dust and ashes; and if they obey not His will, they are struck away from the roll of His children, with a mighty sweep, a sweep that carries all who love Him not, down, down, to an unfathomable abyss. But potentates and commoners, yea, and little children, who walk by the rule of His word are the objects of His tender care. Over them he spreads the banners of an everlasting protection. To each, he gives a mission. Some are to govern, others to submit. Some are to do His work in the great places of the earth, others to serve Him in quiet resting spots and in daily tasks. Some are to bear His colors far and wide, some are to suffer for Him, that they may receive a crown. Others are to mourn that He may teach them to rejoice. All must wear a token of their allegiance to Him, and that token is, a *cross*. But he does not leave them without help. In their midst He places His Bride, the Church. As babes, she marks them with His sign. She cleanses them in crystal waters, she guards them by her tender fostering; she lays hands upon them, and blesses them; she feeds them with the Bread of Life, and then puts them gently down upon the grassy banks, opposite the Beulah Land. She takes them there, *one by one*. Each, as his feet touch the icy waves, starts back in dread, but he looks *over the Channel*. There are the fair white cliffs of His mother country, and from the highest point a Hand holds out the Beacon Light of Love, and he knows that he is safe.

"Oh! sweet and blessed country,
The home of God's elect;
Oh! sweet and blessed country,
That eager hearts expect!
Jesus, in mercy bring us
To that dear land of rest,
Who art with God the Father
And Spirit, ever blest."

HOW TO LOOK AT THINGS.

I WENT to see a lady once who was in deep trouble and in much darkness on account of the great afflictions which had come to her from the Lord. She had fallen into deep melancholy. When I went in she was working a bit of embroidery, and as I talked with her she dropped the wrong side of it, and there it lay in a mass of crude work, tangled; everything seemed to be out of order.

"Well, said I, 'what is this you are engaged at?'"
"Oh," she replied, "it's a pillow for a lounge. I'm making it for a Christmas gift."

I said, "I should not think you would waste your time on that. It looks tangled, without design and meaning," and I went on abusing the whole bit of hand-work, and belittling the combination of colors, and so on.

"Why, Mr. P.," she said, surprised at the sudden and abrupt change of the subject on which we had before been talking, and the persistency with which I had opposed her work—"why, Mr. P., you are looking at the wrong side. Turn it over."

Then I said, "That's just your case; you are looking at the wrong side of God's working with you. Down here we are looking at the tangled side of God's providence; but He has a plan—here a stitch, there a movement of the shuttle, and in the end a beautiful work. Be not afraid; but be believing. Believe Him in the darkness; believe Him in the mysteries.—Let him that walketh in the darkness, and seeth not the light, yet trust in the Lord."—*Christian Observer*.