

PASTORAL LETTER OF HIS LORDSHIP BISHOP WALSH.

(Continued from 1st Page.)

earnest pleading, to supplications, aided by the silent but irresistible eloquence of tears, our Lord replied in words of tenderest sympathy and hopefulness that can never be forgotten, and that have shone ever since like a rainbow of promise over christian tombs:—"Your brother shall rise again. I am the resurrection and the life; everyone that believeth in me, though he be dead, shall live, and everyone that liveth and believeth in me shall not taste death for ever." And Jesus, seeing the grief of the disconsolate sisters, groaned in spirit and wept, and going to the tomb wherein Lazarus was laid, he cried with a loud voice: "Lazarus, come forth." And presently, he that had been dead, came forth from the tomb, a living man, and went home with his sisters." John xi. How touchingly these instances of our Saviour's tender compassion speak to the bereaved and stricken heart! What rays of blessed hope have they not ministered to those who have been widowed or orphaned by death! But whilst they are calculated to console all weepers, they have a special significance for those whom death has bereaved of their dear ones. Henceforward, if Christians mourn for the departed ones, they mourn not without hope. They know that Jesus is "the resurrection and the life," and that those who die in his holy church, and at friendship with him, will one day rise again to live for ever in the Kingdom of God. Death, therefore, has not absolute dominion over their departed friends. These may sleep away for ages in their forgotten graves, but in the spring-time of the resurrection they will rise again in honour, in power and glory, to live with Christ in his eternal kingdom. This hope is laid up in the bosom of Christian mourners, and in every age and clime, has served to reconcile them to the death of their nearest and most beloved. It is thus that our blessed Lord has sublimated and sanctified sorrow and suffering. He became himself a man of sorrows; he bore those sorrows without plaint or murmur, for "as a sheep before the shearers, so opened he not his mouth." In his agony in the garden, when his soul was sorrowful even unto death, he besought his heavenly Father that the chalice might pass away from him, but he added, "nevertheless, let not my will, but Thine, be done." He has thus taught us, by his holy example, how to bear with patience and resignation the trials of life, and, by uniting them to his sufferings, how to make them expiatory and meritorious in the sight of his eternal Father. Thus, sorrow and suffering in the Christian system, become a source of merit and of sanctification, and, though our hearts may break with uncontrollable grief, we may offer them to God, all wounded and bleeding though they be, and when thus offered, in union with the sorrows and the agonized heart of Jesus, they become most acceptable offerings in the sight of heaven. But the example of our Lord, on this point, has not only instructed us how to bear our own trials and crosses with patience, but it has also taught us to be kind and compassionate to those who are in sorrow and affliction. He has given us an example that, as he has done, so also we might do. And this blessed and merciful example has been followed during the whole life of his holy church. Wherever sorrows were to be comforted, wherever tears were to be dried, wherever pain was to be assuaged, wherever wounded and broken hearts were to be healed and bound up, there, men and women, consecrated to Christ and animated by his spirit and example, were to be found as ministering angels, happy to suffer and to die if only they could bring comfort and consolation to the suffering and sorrowing members of the crucified Redeemer. God alone can tell how much this sad world owes, in this respect, to the teachings and example of its Saviour.

There is another class for which our Lord entertained a special compassion and mercy, namely, sinners. In a spiritual sense they are blind and deaf, and lame, and sick, and leprous. In the language of inspiration, they may consider themselves rich and made wealthy, and as having need of nothing; but they are wretched and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked." (Apocalypse iii. 17.) They are poor for they have lost their eternal inheritance. They are slaves for they have lost the liberty of the children of God, and are bound by the servitude of Satan. "Amen, I say to you," said Christ, "that whosoever committeth sin is the slave of sin." (John viii. 34.) They are spiritually dead, for they have lost the life of their souls. O! more wretched and more pitiable far than the blind, the lame and the deaf, are sinners who have lost the treasures of God's friendship, have forfeited their rights to heaven, and have wrecked their innocence and destroyed the very life of their souls. Our Lord came primarily for the salvation of sinners, to seek and save that which was lost. The primary object of his coming was not to heal the diseases of the body, but to heal the diseases of the soul, and to restore the life of the soul. If, then, our Saviour wrought miracles for the healing of bodily diseases and the restoration of the dead to life, what miracles of mercy will he not work for the salvation of the imperishable soul, for the happiness, the endless bliss of this living image of God, this immortal being, the salvation of which is a greater work and a greater good than the creation of the material world, than the glory of the stars and all the beauties of the universe. Hence we find that his whole life was one divine effort for the conversion and salvation of the sinner. This was so markedly the case that the Pharisees reproached him for it and stigmatised him as the friend of publicans and sinners. Whereupon our Lord replied: "Those that are well have no need of a physician, but those that are sick; going therefore, learn what this meaneth. I wish mercy and not sacrifice, for I am come to call, not the just, but sinners to repentance." (Luke xv. 12-13.) He likens himself to the good shepherd who leaveth ninety-nine sheep in the desert and goes in search of the one that is lost, and declares "that there is joy in heaven before the angels of God upon one sinner that doth penance more than ninety-nine just who need not penance." (Luke xv. 7.) He is the father of the prodigal. A certain man, says our Lord, had two sons, and one was a prodigal, and the prodigal taking his share of the father's substance, went into a foreign country, and there wasted his fortune on riotous living. That country was scourged by a wasting famine and the prodigal was reduced to the necessity of feeding on the husks of swine. So far the prodigal was but the type and exemplification of the base ingratitude and degradation of the sinner. The poor prodigal entering into himself called to mind the home of his father, its pure and innocent joys and the plenty that abounded therein, and he said, "I will arise and go home to my father, and I will say to him, father, I have sinned against heaven and before thee; I am no more worthy to be called thy son, make me one of thy servants." And when the poor prodigal returned, the father no longer remembered the injury that had been done him nor the base ingratitude of his erring son, but he received him with open arms and the heart of a father went out in pity and forgiveness to his poor returned child, all tattered and torn and travel-stained, but repentant, he restored him to the protection and the privileges of his home, and caused rejoicings to be made because his son that had been dead was come to life again, had been lost and was found." (Luke xv.) It is thus our Saviour treats repentant sinners. No matter how base and black their ingratitude, no matter how numerous and enormous their offenses, though their sins were as red as scarlet and as deep as crimson, though they were as numberless as the leaves of Autumn, or as the sands of the sea-shore, the Father of the prodigal—Jesus Christ—will receive the returning and repentant sinners with open arms, and will restore them their lost privileges and the friendship of God. His precious blood will blot out their sins from the book of God's recollection, and the tide of his infinite mercies will rise above their wickedest transgressions and drown them in eternal oblivion.

It would be too tedious to dwell on other instances of our Saviour's mercy to sinners as related in the Gospel, such as the forgiveness of Magdalen and of the woman taken in adultery. We may well say with St. John, that if all that our Lord said and did and suffered for the salvation of sinners were written, the world itself

would not be able to contain the books that should be written. (John xxi. 25.) We shall only call attention to the last dread scene on Calvary. We know that our Saviour is there offered up as a victim for our sins. The Lord, said the prophet, hath laid upon him the iniquity of us all. He was wounded for our iniquities and bruised for our sins; the chastisement of our peace was upon him and by his bruises we have been healed. Let us now ascend in spirit to the hill of Calvary to witness the scene that is there transpiring, to assist at the bloody but all-atoning sacrifice of Jesus on the Cross. He has already hung nearly three long hours on the ignominious gibbet, a spectacle to angels and to men. His life-blood is ebbing fast through the five wounds until the fountains of the heart are well nigh exhausted. An awful darkness is stealing over Calvary's hill and wrapping it in its pitchy folds; the graves are being stirred with a strange life, for the dead are awaking from their sleep of ages, startled into life by the divine tragedy, and are about to walk through the streets of the holy city. At this awful moment the Jews cease not to mock and deride our dying Saviour and to scoff at his untold sorrows and abandonment. One would expect that our Lord in his justice would summon his angels to destroy those guilty wretches and rid the world of deicides, no longer worthy to live. But no; our blessed Saviour, summoning his remaining energies, and turning up towards heaven his eyes that were swimming in tears of agony and dim with the shadows of approaching death, made a last appeal for mercy, saying: "O Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do." And bowing his head he expired. His last prayer offered up with his dying breath upon the cross was for pardon and forgiveness for the greatest sinners, the most guilty criminals that ever profaned God's creation.

One drop of the precious blood of Jesus shed upon the cross would have been sufficient to redeem a thousand guilty worlds, and yet he poured it all out to the very last drop to prove to us the infinitude of his love. His precious blood atoned fully to the justice of God for the sins of mankind, it blotted out the handwriting of death that was against us and purchased us with a great price. His blood was shed for all the children of men from fallen Adam down to the last that will be born of woman. It ascended in its redeeming effects up through the centuries to the beginning of time, and will descend in a tide of mercies to the consummation of the world. The victim, it is true, was offered only on Calvary, but the blood of that victim bathed the world in its saving tide, and washed the shores of all the ages. It gave infinite honor and glory to God, made full atonement to the Divine justice, lifted up a fallen world and placed it once more on the plane of its immortal destinies; it redeemed mankind from the curse of the fall, liberated them from the bondage of Satan and restored them to the glorious freedom of the sons of God and to the heirship of the kingdom of heaven. We may, therefore, truly and in deepest gratitude say with the Church: "O certe necessarium ad peccatum quod Christi morte deletum est." "O felix culpa qualem et tantum meruit habere Redemptorem." "O truly necessary sin of Adam which the death of Christ has blotted out." "O happy fault that merited such and so great a Redeemer."

But here we must conclude. Were we to speak with the tongues of men and of angels we could not convey an adequate idea of all the graces, mercies, and blessings conferred upon mankind by our Blessed Redeemer. We can only say with the Psalmist, that since His advent "the earth is filled with the mercy of the Lord." Jesus is indeed our God and our all, the life of our life and the treasure of our hearts; the Sovereign truth and the Supreme good. He is the author and finisher of our faith, the immutable anchor of our hope, the divine object of our charity: He is our life, our sweetness, and our hope here, and will, we humbly trust, be our exceeding great reward hereafter. He is everything to us, "for it would have profited us nothing," says the Church, "to be born if we had not been redeemed." O let us give him the whole homage and service of our being; let us love him with our whole heart and soul, and mind, and strength. He is our God, let us adore and worship him in spirit and in truth; he is our Redeemer; let us never cease to thank and praise him, "for the Lamb that was slain is worthy to receive power and divinity, and strength, and honor, and glory, and benediction." (Apoc. v. 11); he is our Father, let us give him the obedience of dutiful children. Let us give ourselves entirely to him as he has given himself entirely for us. Let us often say to him in all sincerity with St. Augustine, "O beauty ever ancient and always new, too late have I known thee, too late have I loved thee"; and with St. Paul, "who shall separate us from the love of Christ? shall tribulation, or distress, or famine, or nakedness, or danger, or persecution, or the sword? . . . I am sure that neither death nor life, . . . nor any other creature shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord." (Rom. viii. 35-39.) There is but one thing, dearly beloved brethren, that can separate us from the love of Christ, and that is sin. This is the supreme evil, as God is the Supreme good. Between God and sin there is an infinite distance, an invincible contradiction, an absolute opposition. Sin is the great enemy of God and man, it has filled heaven with mourning, hell with wailings and lamentations, and the earth with untold miseries and calamities. It has brought pestilence, famine, sorrow and death into the world. It has caused all the afflictions that have fallen on mankind, all the sighs that have ever been heaved from the human bosom, all the tears that have ever fallen from the eyes of men, it has wrung tears even from the sacred eyes of Jesus himself, for if he wept over the grave of Lazarus and over the city of Jerusalem, it was because they symbolized souls ruined and lost by sin. It was sin which nailed Jesus to the cross and put him to an ignominious death. And so enormous is sin in its intrinsic malice, and so injurious to God, that St. Paul does not hesitate to say that they who commit it "crucify against the Son of God and make a mockery of him." (Hebrews, vi. 6.) Since, therefore, sin is the supreme evil, since it alone can separate us from Christ, and render all that he has done and suffered for us vain and fruitless, we should detest it with our whole heart and soul, we should sincerely repent of having ever committed it, and during our whole lives, but especially during the holy season of Lent we should do our utmost by sincere repentance and penitential works, and the worthy reception of the Sacrament of Penance, to repair the injury done to God by our sins, to obtain forgiveness of them, and to obtain the grace of serving our Lord and Master in holiness and justice all our days.

The conclusions to be drawn from all that we have said are briefly as follows:

1st. We should love our Lord Jesus Christ with our whole heart and soul, for he first loved us and delivered himself for us, and with St. Paul we should count all things as valueless and vile, provided we gain Christ and abide in his love and friendship.

2nd. We should value the salvation of our immortal souls above all things, and as the great end and object of our existence here, since Christ so prized them as to lay down his life for them, and to purchase them even by the shedding of his precious blood; and in order to urge ourselves to labor every day for our salvation, we should frequently put to our hearts and consciences the momentous question of our Lord: "What doth it profit a man to gain the whole world if he lose his soul, or what exchange shall a man give for his soul?" (Math. xvi. 26.)

3rd. Instructed by the teachings and example of our blessed Lord, we should embrace poverty, toil, sorrows and afflictions as coming from the hand of God. We should accept them with humble and patient resignation to the Divine will, and should make use of them, in union with the merits of Christ, as occasions of merit and means of sanctification, "for Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example that we should follow his steps." (1 Peter, ii. 21.)

4th. After the example of Christ we should be charitable to the poor, tender and compassionate towards the sorrowing and afflicted, kind and attentive to the sick, and forgiving and merciful to those who have injured us. "Blessed are the merciful, for they shall obtain mercy." "I was hungry and you gave me to eat, I was a stranger and you took me in, naked and you covered me, sick and you visited me." (Math. xv. 35.)

5th. We should detest and abhor sin with all the energy of our being, as it is the supreme evil, the great enemy of God and man, the cause of all the calamities that have scourged the earth, the fountain of all the bitter tears that have fallen drop by drop from the eyes of man, and the crucifier of the Son of God himself. We should heartily repent of our past sins and firmly resolve, with the assistance of God's grace, never again to fall into this dreadful evil. And in order to avoid this evil of sin and to be able to do the good and to practise the virtues that God requires of us, we should make use of the means of grace that Christ in his mercy has instituted for this purpose, viz: fervent and constant prayer, the frequent and worthy reception of the Sacraments, and pious and regular attendance at the holy sacrifice of the Mass. We should also avoid the occasions of sin, for they who love danger shall perish in it.

May God in his mercy grant you the grace to practise these salutary lessons and to carry them out in your daily life and conduct. And we should make a special effort to do so during the holy season of Lent. During this time also those who are able should faithfully observe the solemn fast prescribed by the Church, and those who are not bound to fast should observe the precept of abstinence and chastise their bodies and mortify their flesh by other penitential works.

"Behold now is the acceptable time, and now is the day of salvation." (2 Cor. vi. 2.) "Let the wicked man forsake his way, and the unjust man his thoughts, and let him return to the Lord, and then he will have mercy upon him." (Isaiah lv. 7.) "Let us cast off the works of darkness and put on the armor of light; let us walk honestly as in the day, not in rioting and drunkenness, not in chambering and impurities, not in contention and strife, but put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ." (Romans, xiii. 14.) Yes, we must join the great fast from sin with the fast of Lent, in order that the latter may be really acceptable to our heavenly Father, and beneficial to our poor souls. For of what avail will it be to us, if whilst we fast in the body, our souls fast not from sin and vice? The fast from sin and wicked pleasures is the perfect fast, without which the corporal fast will be of little benefit. God rejected the fast of the Jews because on the days of their fasting they continued to offend him by their customary sins (Isaiah lviii.), and will he be better satisfied with us if we, in pretending to fast, are guilty of the like inconsistency and folly? We must, therefore, fast from all dishonesty, calumny and detraction; from immodest words and acts; from reading bad books and journals; from drunkenness and rioting; in fine, from every thought, word and action that would offend God and transgress his Divine law. And whilst fasting from all such wickedness, we must apply ourselves to good works and acts of mercy. "Is not this," saith the Lord, "the fast that I have chosen? . . . Loose the bands of wickedness and break asunder every burden. Deal thy bread to the hungry, and bring the needy and harborless into thine house; when thou shalt see one naked, cover him, and despise not thine own flesh. Then shall thy light break forth as the morning, and thy health shall speedily arise, and thy justice shall go before thy face. Then shalt thou call and the Lord shall hear." (Isaiah lviii.)

Let us, therefore, spend this holy and penitential season of Lent in accordance with the spirit and requirements of the Church. Let all perform their Easter duty by worthily receiving the Sacraments of Penance and the Blessed Eucharist, as we are commanded to do by the Church, under the gravest penalties. Let us sincerely repent of our sins, bewailing them in the bitterness of our souls; let our cry ascend daily to God for mercy and forgiveness, beseeching him to look upon the face of his Christ, and for the sake of his bitter passion and death to have compassion on us whom he has redeemed in his precious blood. Let family prayers and the Rosary be punctually said in every household; let the passion and death of Christ be the subject of frequent thought and reflection; and in this way we shall spend Lent in a manner pleasing to God, and fruitful in blessings to ourselves; and we shall emerge from the gloom of Lent into Easter joys, happy in the consciousness of having honestly endeavored to promote God's glory, and the salvation of our souls.

We request the Revd. Clergy to visit their flocks during this holy season, especially the lukewarm and the sinful, with the view of inducing them to give up the evil of their ways and return to God and the observance of their religious duties. We also request the Revd. pastors to hold public devotions in their churches at least twice a week, said devotions to consist of the recitation of the Rosary, or the performance of the Way of the Cross, an appropriate instruction, and the Benediction of the Blessed Sacrament, which we authorize to be given on those occasions.

The Grace of our Lord Jesus Christ and the charity of God, and the communication of the Holy Ghost be with you all. (11 Cor., xiii. 13.)

This pastoral shall be read in all the churches of the Diocese at the earliest convenience of the clergy.

Given at St. Peter's Palace, London, on this the Feast of St. Matthias, Apostle, 24th February, A.D., 1881.

JOHN WALSH,

Bishop of London.

By order of His Lordship,
WILLIAM O'MAHONY, Secretary.

SOUTH AFRICA.

Terrible Slaughter of British Troops.

Mount Prospect, Natal, Feb. 27.—Gen. Colley, with six companies, took possession of Spitzkop, a position to the left of Langensberg. Firing has been heard all morning.

Newcastle, Natal, Feb. 27.—A severe engagement took place today between the Boers and Colley's forces. The latter was driven from his position at Spitzkop. There were many British officers killed and wounded. A later telegram from Colley's camp says all the wounded are in good condition, and that Colley has been killed, and that only one hundred of the British escaped. The Boers charged up the hill four times, and were about to retreat, when the British were forced to retire because the reserve ammunition had not been taken to the extreme summit.

Durban, Feb. 27.—Two companies of the Highlanders remained on the summit of Spitzkop after the retreat and began throwing stones down on the advancing Boers, and subsequently received them with the bayonet. The guns from Mount Prospect greatly checked pursuit of the British.

Mount Prospect, Feb. 27.—It has been ascertained that the enemy has been largely reinforced by Boers from the Orange Free State.

London, Feb. 27.—Another account of the fight at Spitzkop says that when the ammunition failed the slaughter was fearful, small, the British made a desperate but unsuccessful rush. The Sixteenth Foot fought their way back to the camp. It is stated that only seven men of the 28th survive. The camp is being fortified at every point.

London, midnight, Feb. 27.—Colley in a despatch sent previous to the engagement to-day says:—"We occupied Magela Mountain Saturday night. It immediately overlooks the Boers' position. The Boers are fighting us from below."

The War Office has received the following from Col. Bond, commanding at Mount Prospect:—"Gen. Colley, with 22 officers and 627 men, consisting of infan-

try and a naval brigade, proceeded on Saturday night to occupy Magela Mountain. The Boers attacked him at 7 p.m. Sunday morning, and at 1 p.m. the firing increased. At 2.20 it became evident from camp that we had lost the hill and that our men were retiring under heavy fire. There is no doubt that Colley is killed."

Gen. Wood telegraphs corroborating the above, and says he will return to Newcastle on Monday.

An instance of the manner in which outrages are easily manufactured and multiplied in Ireland by the officials of the British Government appears in a recent number of the Dublin *Freeman's Journal*. A magistrate who was obstructing on personal grounds to the people of the district in which he lived, on his return home one evening, was greeted at by a crowd of seventy or eighty persons through which he passed. This awful "outrage" could not of course be endured. Warrants were issued for the arrest of sixteen or eighteen persons whose names were discovered, on a charge of contempt of Magisterial authority. At the preliminary hearing, however, it so happened that the Magistrate, in whose person "the majesty of the law" had been trampled upon, was in another part of Ireland, detained there, it was alleged, by a violent snow storm. On this account, and for want of other sufficient evidence, and for still other reasons enforced by the lawyer who appeared for the defendants, the case was dismissed. Yet still the occurrence goes down in the Irish police statistics of "outrages against persons and property." And as there were seventy or eighty offenders, so, too, it will figure up on the British Government's list as that number of "Irish outrages."—*Philadelphia Standard*.

OBITUARY.—Mrs. Mary Scully, beloved wife of Daniel Scully, of Windham, and daughter of Patrick Jordan, of this village, died on the 22nd February, leaving her sorrowing friends to mourn for a fond wife and dutiful daughter. She was within one month of being twenty-eight years of age, and her untimely death has cast a gloom over the parish in which her early years were spent.