

RELIGIOUS MISCELLANY.

ON THE DUTY OF SUPPORTING CLERGYMEN AND SCHOOLMASTERS.*

As American authorities seem to be in favour with such persons, I will quote a passage from an address by the Chief Justice of the state of Massachusetts:—"It is objected that when a man disapproves of any religion, or of any supposed doctrines of any religion, to compel him by law to contribute money for public instruction in such religion or doctrine, is an infraction of his liberty of conscience. But when it is remembered that no man is compellable to attend on any religious instruction which he conscientiously disapproves, and that he is absolutely protected in the most perfect freedom of conscience in his religious opinions and worship, this objection seems to mistake a man's conscience for his money, and to deny the state a right of levying and of appropriating the money of the citizens at the will of the Legislature, in which they are all represented. But, as every citizen derives the security of his property, and the fruits of his industry, from the power of the state, so, as the price of his protection, he is bound to contribute, in common with his fellow-citizens, for the public use, so much of his property, and for such public uses, as the state shall direct. The great error lies in not distinguishing between liberty of conscience in religious opinions and worship, and the right of appropriating money by the state.—The former is an inalienable right; the latter is surrendered to the state as the price of protection. It is further objected, that 'to compel a man to pay for public religious instruction on which he does not attend, and from which he can, therefore, derive no benefit, is unreasonable and intolerant.' This objection is founded wholly in mistake. The object of public religious instruction is to teach, and to enforce by suitable arguments, the practice of a system of correct morals among the people, and to form and cultivate reasonable and just habits and manners, by which every man's person and property are protected from outrage, and his personal and social enjoyments promoted and multiplied. From these effects every man derives the most important benefits; and whether he be or be not an auditor of any public teacher, he receives more solid and permanent advantages from this public instruction than the administration of justice in courts of law can give him. The like objection may be made by any man to the support of public schools, if he have no family to attend; and any man who has no lawsuit may object to the support of judges and jurors on the same ground, when, if there were no courts of law, he would unfortunately find that causes for lawsuits would sufficiently abound." The weight of this argument depends upon the general benefit derived to the community as such, including Dissenters, from an ecclesiastical establishment. And, beyond all doubt, unless that benefit be real, unless it be obvious, unless it be of a character to arrest attention and compel even reluctant assent to that fact, the argument will not have its due weight, and our establishment will not retain its hold upon the judgments and affections of the nation. There is a mighty movement in society at this time. It is worse than folly to deny it, and worse than madness to ridicule it. The mischiefs to which it tends are not yet seen. There exists a vain hope that abuses hitherto inseparable from all human institutions may be wholly avoided. Existing abuses are keenly contrasted with this delusive but animating hope; and if they be fostered, palliated, screened, continued, it is as certain as that water runs down the hill that the institution, so spotted and not honestly cleansed, however ancient and venerable, and valuable in itself, must go before the giant force of opinion like chaff before the wind, to make way for some new and theoretically improved experiment.—It is vain to plead the sure promises of holy Scripture for the continued and infallible safety of the church of God. The church of God shall indeed be safe, as it was when the church of Jerusalem was destroyed by her Pagan conquerors, when the church of Antioch and the church of Carthage were swept away before the desolating cymeters of the Saracens

when the church of Rome apostatized into heathenish superstitions, still the church of God was safe, and will be safe, when the Church of England should relapse into Popery, or disappear before the revolutionary madness and blighting scowl of atheism.—The church of God, chosen in Christ, like the Jewish nation, beloved for the father's sake, survives all these temporal and ecclesiastical commotions and changes, and presents, as it has been beautifully expressed, "a sublime antithesis to national decay." If, however, we desire to perpetuate our established mode of carrying out the ordinances of Christianity among the people, that so we may instrumentally add to the church of God daily such as shall be saved—if we desire to commend to the judgment of the nation, and endear to the affections of the nation, our existing national arrangements for the attainment of this best and holiest object, that so we may have their cordial suffrages for the continued support and progressive enlargement of these means—if we desire to do this (and I believe this is the only medium through which our establishment can be preserved); we must show ourselves in earnest—in good practical earnest—in cleansing our national arrangements from all known and acknowledged abuses. If we desire to prove successful church extenders, we must show ourselves sincere and zealous church reformers. To palliate abuses is to supply our assailants with ramparts on which they may erect their works of demolition. I am well aware of the malicious anxiety with which an acknowledgment of abuses is watched, and the foul advantages taken of it to swell the cry against the church; but such cries can do no real mischief; they recoil on those who raise them. The real mischief arises from an exposure of unwillingness to reform. If we can be held up to public scorn as the aiders and abettors, the apologists, or even the silent connivers at what we cannot justify, then indeed there is mischief. If we silently connive at the continuance of pluralities and non-residence—then it is that in apparent neutrality, and moderation, and silence, we are really fostering the worm in the ground, we are giving men cause to fear that we have no wish and no intention to amend, and thereby supplying them with an excuse for withholding from us their cordial and liberal support. (Cheers.) There is nothing the political Dissenters in this country so touch dread as the general adoption of the tone in which I am now speaking. (Hear.) Church abuses are their delight, the themes of the most effective eloquence. Church reform, boldly, honestly, thoroughly, kindly conducted, would prove a gag to their most dangerous orators. The difficulty is great, undoubtedly, but the object in view is paramount.—Instead of sinking gradually into ruins before the progressively successful assaults of her enemies, it were a glorious sight to see our venerable establishment, in the vigour of youth combined with the experience and strength of maturity, advance upon fresh ground, shaking off all the weeds and rubbish which had, for a season, marred the fair beauty of her foundations, and presenting before her delighted children and her discomfited adversaries a cleansed and new-manned battlement, "Bright as the sun, fair as the moon, and strong as an army with banners" (Loud cheering.)

EXTRACTS FROM MRS. MORE'S INSTRUCTIONS TO THE CHILDREN OF THE BLAGDON SCHOOL.*

The last thing I shall call your attention to is the observance of the Sabbath-day; and however "the fool, who hath said in his heart there is no God," may pollute and profane it, pray do you observe it as a day holy unto the Lord. How particularly solemn is the fourth commandment! "Remember the Sabbath-day to keep it holy." That is, at your peril day, be the neglect of this day! Therefore, when you hear the morning bell sound forth, consider it as speaking aloud to the whole parish, "O be joyful Jesus Christ our Lord, in whose words I conclude in the Lord, all ye people; serve the Lord with gladness, and come before his presence with a song! O go your way into his gates with thanksgiving, and into his courts with praise!" Take up then your prayer-book, and read over carefully the psalms

of the day, that you may commit no mistake in your responses at church. This done, you may walk in the garden, and observe the flowers or productions of the season; a thousand things will awake in your mind edifying thoughts, if you attend to them.... The bell tolls. Take with you as many brothers and sisters, if you have any, as are of years of discretion to behave decent. Proceed slow and grave towards the church, and think thus: "I am now going to pay my public devotion to the great God; let me consider the dignity of the Creator, lest I offer the oblation of sinners, which is an abomination unto the Lord, rather than the prayer of the upright, which is his delight." "Keep," therefore, not only "thy foot," but thy heart also, "when thou goest to the house of God, and be more ready to hear than to give the sacrifice of fools, who consider not that they do evil."

As you enter the churchyard, you may say to yourself, "Blessed are the dead that die in the Lord. Grant, O Lord, that I may die the death of the righteous, and that my latter end may be like his."—Don't stay long loitering about the churchyard (as is too much the custom), but proceed directly into the church. Kneel down and say slowly, "Lord, be merciful unto me a sinner; cleanse my soul from the contamination of sin, and grant, good Lord, that the words which I hear this day with my outward ears, may be so grafted in my heart, that they may bring forth the fruit of holiness in my life."

When the prayers begin, observe what is printed in small letters above every portion of the service. It is called the rubrick, which means red, because it was formerly, for distinction's sake, printed in red letters. You will find here every direction necessary for your instruction, in respect to attitude and responding. As, for instance, over the sentences which begin the service, you read, "The minister shall read one or more of these sentences." That is, the minister only shall read; the congregation are to hear. —This continues to the general confession, over which you find, "To be said of the whole congregation, after the minister, all kneeling." For want of noticing these directions, we sometimes see people rise up when they should continue kneeling, and continue kneeling when they should stand up; thus perverting the beauty of the service into unseemly disorder. When it is your part to make answer, do it distinctly, and with a solemn tone of voice. While the minister is reading the lesson, or any part of the Litany, in which you are not required to respond, look up steadfastly at him, and consider the weight and value of the words he delivers. Service being ended, return home directly, and read the Scriptures, or walk in the garden, till your meat is prepared. Partake of it with innocent cheerfulness, and put on your best behaviour; this will be a heartfelt comfort to your parents, and a very pleasing and instructive lesson to the little ones of the family. After evening service and catechising are over, you may amuse yourself till bedtime in walking about home, or with your parents or friends, conversing freely with them, asking questions of such things as you observe, but cannot well understand; this will give you an insight into matters, and will both please and profit. When you retire to rest, kneel before you undress yourself at your bedside, and offer this prayer:—"Receive, O my God, the humble gratitude of thy creature for the numerous blessings and mercies of the day past. Extend thy accustomed goodness this night, O merciful Creator, unto all my relations and benefactors, and unto me also, O my Father. Guard our slumbers; let no evil thoughts pollute our souls, nor accident approach to hurt our bodies; but bring us in health, happiness, and prosperity, to the beginning of the next day, and grant that we may all be truly thankful for it. But if I awake no more in this world, receive, O God, into thy everlasting kingdom, through my prayers, my Father," &c.

This, my dear little friends, is the pleasant, rational, and comfortable life of a Christian, who lives in the fear of God, and dies in the Lord. "As for the wicked, it is not so with them, but they are like the troubled sea when it cannot rest, whose waves cast up mire and dirt; there is no peace, saith my God, to the wicked."

*Abridged from a Speech of Rev. H. McNeile.

*From Appendix to Thompson's Life of Mrs. Hannah More.