

The Church.

THEREFORE I WILL NOT BE NEGLIGENT TO PUT YOU ALWAYS IN REMEMBRANCE OF THESE THINGS, THOUGH YE KNOW THEM AND BE ESTABLISHED IN THE PRESENT TRUTH.—2 PETER, 1, 12.

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Poetry.

THE GREENWOOD SHRIFT;*

OR, KING GEORGE III. AND THE DYING GIPSY.

Outstretched beneath the leafy shade
Of Windsor forest's deepest glade,
A dying woman lay;
Three little children round her stood,
And there went up from the green wood
A woful wail that day.

"O mother!" was the mingled cry,
"O mother, mother! do not die,
And leave us all alone."
"My blessed babes!" she tried to say,
But the faint accents died away
In a low sobbing moan.

And then life struggled hard with death,
And fast and strong she drew her breath,
And up she raised her head;
And peering through the deep wood maze
With a long, sharp, unearthly gaze,
"Will he not come?" she said.

Just then, the parting boughs between,
A little maid's light form was seen,
All breathless with her speed;
And following close, a man came on,
(A portly man to look upon,
Who led a panting steed.

"Mother!" the little maiden cried,
Or, e'er she reached the woman's side,
And kissed her clay-cold cheek—
"I have not idled in the town,
But long went wandering up and down,
The minister to seek.

"They told me here—they told me there—
I think they mocked me everywhere;
And when I found his home,
And begg'd him on my bended knee
To bring his book and come with me,
Mother! he would not come.

"I told him how you dying lay,
And could not go in peace away,
Without the minister;
I begg'd him for dear Christ his sake,
But oh! my heart was fit to break—
Mother! he would not stir.

"So though my tears were blinding me,
I ran back, fast as fast could be,
To come again to you;
And here—close by—this squire I met,
Who asked (so mild!) what made me fret;
And when I told him true,

"'I will go with you, child,' he said,
God sends me to this dying bed.'
Mother, he's here, hard by."
While thus the little maiden spoke,
The man, his back against an oak,
Look'd on with glistening eye.

The bridle on his neck flung free,
With quivering flank and trembling knee,
Press'd close his bonny bay;
A statelier man,—a statelier steed,
Never on greensward paced I rede,
Than those that stood there that day.

So while the little maiden spoke,
The man, his back against an oak,
Look'd on with glistening eye
And folded arms; and in his look,
Something that like a sermon book,
Preached—"All is vanity."

But when the dying woman's face
Turned toward him with a wishful gaze,
He stepp'd to where she lay;
And kneeling down, bent over her,
Saying—"I am a minister—
My sister! let us pray."

And well without even book or stole,
(God's words were printed on his soul,
Into the dying ear
He breathed, as 'twere, an angel's strain,
The things that unto life pertain,
And death's dark shadows clear.

He spoke of sinners' lost estate,
In Christ renewed—regenerate—
Of God's most blest decree,
That not a single soul should die,
Who turns repentant, with the cry,
"Be merciful to me."

He spoke of trouble, pain and toil,
Endured but for a little while
In patience, faith, and love—
Sure in God's own good time to be
Exchanged for an eternity
Of happiness above.

Then—as the spirit ebb'd away—
He raised his hands and eyes to pray
That peaceful it might pass;
And then—the orphan's sobs alone
Were heard as they knelt every one
Close round on the green grass.

Such was the sight their wondering eyes
Beheld in heart-struck, mute surprise,
Who rein'd their coursers back,
Just as they found the long astray,
Who, in the heat of chase that day,
Had wander'd from their track.

But each man rein'd his pawing steed,
And lighted down, as if agreed,
In silence at his side;
And there, uncovered all, they stood—
It was a wholesome sight and good—
That day for mortal pride.

For of the noblest of the land
Was that deep hush'd, bare headed band;
And central in the ring,
By that dead pauper on the ground,
Her ragged orphans clinging round,
KNELT THEIR ANOINTED KING.

Blackwood's Magazine.

SINS OF THE TIMES.

BY THE REV. DR. COOKE.

(Concluded from our last.)

We cannot afford space to quote the admirable and discriminating remarks which Dr. Cooke makes on clergymen interfering in political matters. He shows that ministers of God must have nothing to do with the contests of mere partisanship or political faction. He reprobates the abuse of the office of the spiritual instructor or comforter to such low purposes.

"We do," he says "with equal readiness interdict the ministers of religion from prostituting their peculiar opportunities of access to men's minds,—it may be in hours of bodily weakness, or of mental anxiety. And, if any man do turn those sacred seasons to subserve any of the purposes of this world, let him lie under the heaviest anathema due to delinquency in duty, and perversion of office. And no less do we repudiate the conduct of those—and such there are—who, on the eve of a general election, can employ the pulpit and the Lord's day, not to inculcate Scripture principles, by which rational beings are to act, but to canvass for individuals whom slaves are commanded to support. But, above all, must we denounce that interference wherein the sacred rites of religion—whether they be rites really appointed by Christ, or wilfully ordained by men—are converted into instruments of worldly partisanship, and bestowed, or withheld, not as spiritual privileges, or signs and seals of the grace of God, but as the rewards of subserviency, or the scourges of political resistance. If men there be—and such men it is well known there are—who can first inculcate the absolute necessity of their presence at the sick bed, before the enfeebled sufferer can die in peace with God; and if these men threaten, or refuse to attend on the last sad hour of a political recusant; and, if stretching beyond the limits of all temporal things, they claim ghostly supremacy in the regions of the dead, and wielding the lash of unshriven sins, torture affrighted souls into political subserviency to their own selfish purposes, and the breach of every earthly obligation; then let such deeds of darkness be exposed to the light of day; let such perversions of a spiritual office to worldly purposes be denounced; let such tyranny over the bodies and souls of men be resisted and overthrown; and let all such political interferences of the ministers of religion be sternly interdicted, in the name of freedom and of God. But if any one shall conclude that the ministers of religion are bound to abstain from entering the political field, whilst secular men are free to expatiate and occupy as they will, he doth greatly underrate the extent of the ministerial commission, and attempt to establish a limit which the word of God not only permits, but commands it to overpass."

The following observations on the allegation that the people are the only legitimate source of power, will be read with pleasure:—

"The highest of all examples must be that of Christ our Lord, and to his political institutes (Matt. xxii. 21.) we have already referred. Let us pass, then, to the practice of the apostles, and see whether they, by self-imposed silence or courteous avoidance, give any indications that they were not to intermeddle with political topics. Instead of any such indications, we find Paul (Rom. xiii. 1, 4, 5, 7) lay at once the solid foundation of all political power and the only abiding obligation of obedience. 'Let every soul be subject to the higher powers. For there is no power but of God: the powers that be are ordained of God;' whilst, at the same time, he prescribes the limits of all legitimate power, by the true definition of its object.—'For he is the minister of God to thee for good; the minister of God, a revenger to execute wrath upon him that doeth evil. Wherefore ye must needs be subject, not only for wrath, but also for conscience sake. Render, therefore, to all their dues; tribute to whom tribute is due; custom to whom custom; fear to whom fear; honour to whom honour.' Does this plain speaking, does this expatiating on the subject, indicate in the apostle any shyness of entering upon a political question? Does the firmness with which he speaks indicate any timidity, lest he were found invading a foreign and forbidden territory? No; he stands as a man conscious of no intrusion; he speaks with all the ease of familiarity, and the confidence of established right. Nor is it to be pretermitted, how, in passing, he rebukes the favourite doctrine of the infidel politics of the day, that 'the people are the legitimate source of all power,'—a doctrine which, though applauded on platforms or propounded in the senate; which, though cheered by bacchanalians, and circulated from the press, yet stands equally under the ban of the Old and the New Testaments.—For thus speaks David in the Old Testament (Ps. lxxii. 11); 'God hath spoken once; twice have I heard this: that power belongeth unto God.' And thus speaks Paul in the New, 'There is no power but of God.' Never was there a political doctrine

so fraught with absurdity and horror as the assertion, that 'the people are the only legitimate source of power.' Deliberate upon it, ye sages, who fondly doat upon it as a sentiment—ye orators, who enforce it as a principle of legislation—and ye crowds, that applaud it as an acknowledgment of your dignity! Can ye, with all your sagacity, discover no flaw in this jewel of your crown, no deformity in this object of your affection, no mortal infirmity in this goddess of your adoration? None! Hear ye, then. If the people be the only legitimate source of political power, is there, or is there not, any limit to it or control over it? If there be limit or control, they are not the only source: for whatever limits or controls their power is below the foundation, or above the highest pinnacle, of their asserted supremacy. If, therefore, it be said, 'There is any other power to limit or control the power of the people,' the assertion of their being 'the only source of power,' is surrendered at once. But if, on the contrary, it be asserted, that 'there is neither limit nor control,' then does the horrible consequence follow, that if 'the people' assert that 'Esaal is God,' and that his worship must be observed; then, as the mandate flows from 'the only legitimate source of power,' we are bound to submit, 'not only for wrath, but for conscience sake.' Nay, if 'the people,' without control, are 'the only legitimate source of power,' then was Pilate justified, when he delivered up our Lord; for the multitude cried, 'Away with him, away with him! crucify him, crucify him!'

"Yet, whilst we thus affirm and thus prove our affirmation, that God, and not the people, is the only legitimate source of power, God forbid that we should be understood to teach that the people have no voice to utter, no rights to maintain, and that rulers are under no control but the counsel of their own will.—On the contrary, the doctrine that all political power is derived from God, lays the only foundation of universal freedom, by establishing the doctrine of the accountability of power, and thereby strictly limiting the power to concurring with the will of God, or punishing its infraction."

We would willingly give circulation to every paragraph contained in this admirable discourse, but we must draw to a conclusion, and without going into the other important and interesting topics of discussion, we shall close this imperfect sketch of Dr. Cooke's discourse with the following passage, with which he shuts up this branch of his subject:—

"We have contended, not for any secular purpose, to establish the right and duty of Christian ministers to study and expound political principles and doctrines; we contend for it, because it is both a spiritual right with which they are endowed, and a spiritual function to which they are appointed. We contend for it, however, not because we would monopolize it, but because we would resist the monopoly which the liberal politicians of a liberal age are endeavouring to establish in their favour. We contend for this right, not because we would transfer to the pulpit the functions of the public press, but because we would not yield to the usurpation of the public press, one legitimate and hereditary right of the pulpit. We contend for it, because, without meaning any offence, beyond what an unwelcome truth may perchance convey, we do believe, that the public press is, of all tyrants, the most to be resisted, and, of all teachers, least to be trusted. Yes; it is to be resisted, just because it is generally a secret tribunal—an irresponsible inquisition, where the accuser seldom dares to confront the accused; where the tutored witness is submitted to no cross-examination; where the accuser often concentrates in his own person the various and irreconcilable functions of the accuser, the witness, the jury, and the judge—and adds, not unfrequently, that of the relentless and hardened executioner, gloating over the tortures of his victim, and feeding on the price of his venality and his injustice. And, it is not to be trusted; for who are they who would arrogate to themselves the sole and undivided censorship of private and political morals? Assuredly, whatever scourge the public press hath applied to private or public vices, and whatever reformation it hath attempted in the morals of the age,—still have these efforts been so shamefully neutralized by the contemporaneous patronage of its follies and its vices, that we dare not place any public cause in the hands of such uncertain advocacy—an advocacy so often more than lukewarm, to the cause of Scripture doctrine and morality, and ready to desert to any party, or be purchased for any cause, on the first presentation of a plausible opportunity or sufficient price. That this description is not universally applicable to the public press, is cause of great thankfulness to Almighty God. Yet, a public journal that dares to be distinctly religious in its news—that knows no party but Christ, and no politics but those of the Bible,—still remains a rare phenomenon amidst its local companionship—at once the 'glory and the shame' of the land.

"We have another reason for arguing forth this point. The ministers of the Gospel are right when they stand utterly aloof from the secular interests and jarrings of the world. If their affections be set on the earth, and not upon things above, in vain will they pretend to show that way to heaven they have not themselves discovered. But it is one thing to 'stand aloof from secular interests and jarrings of the world,' and another thing to look on carelessly whilst 'the enemy is coming in like a flood' to overwhelm and destroy it. Our object, therefore, is, first to ascertain and establish the right of ministers of the Gospel in relation to political principles; and then to persuade them of the duty of legitimate interference, and the danger of apathy or neglect. Let the pulpit do its duty, in developing the unchanging principles of scriptural policy; let the stores of the English Puritans, and the Scottish Covenanters, be opened and displayed in

* See 'The Gipsy' by Charlotte Elizabeth, on the last page.