

peated in obedience to an enthusiastic encore. Madame Sontag's celebrated Polka Song, with variations, was sung by Miss Paige in a manner worthy of comparison with that fair cantatrice herself, and elicited warm applause. Mr. Jules Hecht in the performance of Lindpainter's "Standard Bearer," exhibited the powers of his fine voice to great advantage. In our opinion the gem of the evening was the famous Terzetto a canone, "Vanne a colei," which was encored and very nearly re-encored. "The Last Rose of Summer" called forth a similar token of applause, to which the fair singer, Miss Paige, came forward and bowed her acknowledgments.

The next Concert of the series will take place in Lent, and will be devoted to sacred music. No doubt the event will be looked for with equal anticipations as this last, and will equally fulfil all expectations.

**FIRE AND DESTRUCTION OF PROPERTY AT PORT CREDIT.**—About half-past two o'clock on Sunday morning, the barn and other out-buildings on the farm of Mr. McGrath, were discovered to be in flames; the barn containing a large quantity of hay, oats and wheat; nineteen head horned cattle, a span of fine horses, pigs, poultry, fanning-mill and other implements; a very fine bull of the Durham breed, were all consumed. A few of the sheep which were pent up in a corner were all that was saved, and the wool completely singed to a black crisp. The loss is extensive and severely felt at this inclement season. Insurance we understand, was very trifling. There is no doubt whatever of its being the work of an incendiary. Footmarks were traced to the woods in the rear of the house.—*North American.*

**ERRATUM.**—In our article on "The Confessional," in last week's impression, about the middle of the second column, for "But in fact we admit," read "But in fact, once admit, &c."

## Canadian Churchman.

THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 3, 1853.

### "LITURGICAL REFORM IN THE CHURCH OF ENGLAND."

ARTICLE III, IN THE "NORTH BRITISH REVIEW;" AUGUST, 1852.

The "North British Review" is, as many of our readers are aware, the organ of the Scottish Free Kirk denomination, its sympathies are consequently very strongly and patronizingly with the so called movement party, unhappily existing within the Church of England.

Nevertheless, the article above noted, opens with a very manly and able eulogy upon the book of common prayer, which we have transferred to the columns of the sixth page of our paper of the 13th, inst, in the hope that it would receive a careful perusal, because coming as it does from a publication that emanates from one of the most able sections of the Church's opponents, it is a really valuable testimony.

We have undertaken to review, or rather to attempt to answer this article, because, while it manifests a respectful and somewhat tolerant spirit, it embodies with no little ability, perhaps all that can be said in defence of the principles and conduct of the movement, or to use the popular phrase, the low Church party in the Church of England, in their attempts to alter and yet their subscription to and constant use of the prayer book. It is also the more worthy of attention as coming from the pen of a looker-on. One, who being a member of another religious communion is not personally engaged in the struggle now going on within the Church, whose judgment therefore is cool, and his honest understanding of the literal meaning of the Prayer Book less likely to be warped by personal interest. In one class of prejudices, however, the writer is deeply involved, namely, that, common to all schismatics, an earnest desire to rob the Church of England of her Apostolic and Catholic character.

In reading this and similar articles, two things have forcibly struck us. The first is, how very singularly, and, as we trust, providentially, the controversy between the Catholic and Genevan parties in the Church is being narrowed, by the all but universal consent that the literal grammatical construction of the language of the Prayer Book is in strict accordance with the principles of the former; thus undeniably proving that those who are commonly called High Churchmen, Tractarians or Puseyites, according to the taste and fairness of the speaker, are at least whatever else they may be, the only consistent and rigidly honest sons of the Anglican Church. To the truth of this, the infidel democratic "Westminster," the Free Kirk "North British" the American Methodist, the host of Schismatics from the Church with the alone exception of the Romish pre-

verts, all bear one common witness. The other fact to which we allude, is the more painful one, that in order to vindicate a Genevan subscription of the Prayer Book or a so called evangelical use of its services, the high tone of gentlemanly honour, and christian integrity has to be lowered in a manner equally humiliating and distressing. We have seldom felt this more painfully than when reading a remark in the sneering "Westminster" to the effect, that a certain class of the Clergy were the last men to whom any one would think of applying for an honest and literal exposition of their theological opinions! And much we fear that the article under an examination will not tend to remove the stigma unless our low Church brethren (we hope they will excuse the term, we use it out of no disrespect but for the sake of distinctness) have some better method, and truly we know of none, of reconciling their peculiar teaching with their relations to the Prayer Book, than that which their Scottish advocate has offered for them.

We regret that the brevity necessary in the "leader" of a newspaper will compel us to adopt an undesirable curtness in our remarks upon the objectionable passages in the Review; we will however endeavour to notice and reply to its errors, with as much clearness as possible, in the order in which they occur.

1. The reviewer after speaking, as we have stated, in very laudatory terms of the liturgy, proceeds to account for what he considers its errors, as follows. "The manner of its construction has exposed it to inevitable detriment. It was impossible that the effusions of a long series of worshippers should not be tinged by the colour of thought of the ages in which they lived.—The philosophy and doctrinal views of each passing century could not fail to imprint their stamp on the language even of prayer, much more on that of creeds and declarations of doctrine." Now the fallacy of this objection, as applied to our liturgy, lies here; in not considering that its compilers, in their selections of its devotions, took no one era of the Church, nor any one peculiar class of its divines, but selected the holiest breathings of its holiest men, and then tested their doctrinal correctness by catholic consent, so that had any error crept into the devotions of these ancient fathers, that our reformers detecting by the really infallible test, would reject. And as to the Creeds and other doctrinal expositions contained in the Prayer Book, these were based upon Holy Scripture, as it had ever been interpreted by Christ's Holy Catholic Church; consequently, if, under such circumstances, they are erroneous, much we fear that the Church of God has no possible method of securing the truth, and then the promise of her Head must have failed. One thing is certain, that in calm patient research, the popular divines of this bustling age may not presume to compare with learned martyrs and scholars of the 16th & 17th centuries.

2. The next error of the Reviewer which we notice, is his attempt to prove that the Church of England is a religio-politico compromise, born at the Reformation. The spasmodic efforts which the schismatical foes of the Church, whether in or out of her pale, are making at the present time, to prove that she is simply a state establishment is one of the striking characteristics of that life struggle in which the Church is now engaged. Well do her opponents and her mistaken children know, that if they can prove that her origin is human, they have very strong ground upon which to base their right to remodel her so as to suit the licentious liberalism, the rationalizing unbelief, or the self-exalting puritanism of the age. The "North British" thus writes: "Moreover the Church of England is a Church of compromise; she shares the peculiar characteristic of all English institutions. Her constitution was framed with the express design of embracing adverse and antagonistic elements."—Now, to a certain extent this is correct, but simply, because the Church Catholic ever since she received the command from her Divine Head, to "preach repentance and remission of sins in His name among all nations" has endeavoured to include all within her fold whose desires after purity, and believing obedient use of her sacraments and ordinances, render it possible to do so, even though many of their doctrinal views may be very crude or even erroneous, inasmuch, as she is instituted to save, not to destroy men's lives. Herein she differs from the sects, who, by their formularies and tests, seem rather to delight to exclude men from the blessings of the Gospel than otherwise. But this easiness of admission on the part of the Catholic Church into the fold of the Redeemer, has respect only to private membership; from her priesthood she has ever exacted a full confession of every article in her Most Holy faith. And reason good. An individual whose ignorance or pre-

judice—not wilful perverseness, prevents his receiving the full truth of Christ, may not be refused the membership of Christ through union with His Bride—the Church; because his full salvation, as an elect child of God, depends upon that membership. It is however, very different with the office of the Christian Priesthood. That is not necessary in order to personal salvation, and, as no part of the truth of Christ can be omitted or mistaken without endangering serious spiritual loss, it is evident that no one ought to be suffered to minister at our Christian altars, and thus become one of the teachers, guides, and priests of the flock of Christ, unless he be himself earnestly sound in all the faith as it was "once delivered to the saints," both in doctrine and discipline. Hence it is that in her Priesthood, the Holy Catholic Church of Christ has never admitted any compromise. We speak of course of her acknowledged principles, not of those infractions of them which may from time to time have taken place through corrupt administrators.

Now just such, and no other, is the "compromise" which the Church of England sanctions. Sharing her Lord's pitiful tenderness, she opens her doors to all who are obedient; but being also constituted by Him "the pillar and ground of truth," she admits no compromise with the doctrinal principles of those whom she institutes as the guides of her people. The opposite assertion now so frequently made by her enemies, is simply one of those audacious perversions which unscrupulous controversialists sometimes make, and which their partisans, wilfully avoiding any examination into their truth, repeat in terms so vehement and in manner so boisterous, that at length they begin themselves to think they are undoubted verities!

It is amongst the most painful evidences of human infirmity, that the prejudices of education and party should so frequently blind clever, and as we trust, sincere men to the necessary consequences of their own principles, and even to the contradictory character of their own statements. Thus, after repeated assertions that the "founders," he means the Reformers, of the English Church, "built her communion upon compromise," he yet, when examining the grounds of the controversy so unhappily existing at the present time in the Church, at once charges the difficulty upon the distinctive Catholicism of her liturgy. His language is, "the eyes of all were opened to the really Romanistic nature of the Church's formularies." And again; "thus the liturgy was placed in the van of the battle, a rampart behind which sectarianism defended itself, an object of assault to protestant wrath." (It is scarcely necessary to remind our readers that the Presbyterian Reviewer supposes many things to be exclusively "Romanistic," and "Tractarian," which in fact so far from being popish, are simply primitive Christianity.) These extracts themselves prove, the *North British* being witness, that the Anglican Church makes no "compromise" with ultra-Protestant or Genevan error at least. And that she is equally distinctive in her opposition to what is really Romish error, we will again quote our Reviewer himself to prove. He says, "the ablest and most earnest of the Tractarians struggled with desperate energy and unrivalled resources of talent and knowledge, to render Catholicism universally and exclusively triumphant, and when foiled in the attempt, they evinced the sincerity of their conviction by abandoning the Church whose protestantism they admitted and disowned." Again, "the Anglicans extracted passages from the liturgy which were of Catholic descent, and required the whole liturgy to be remodelled upon that standing." Here then is a clear admission of our second defence that while our liturgy contains so much of pure Catholic truth as deeply to offend the ultra-Protestant, it also contains so prominently those Evangelical truths and practices which the blessed Reformation revived, that the unhappy men who were seduced by the awful witcheries of Rome, could no longer be content within the truly Catholic and Evangelical fold of the Anglican Church.

We characterized the assertion that the Anglican Church has "compromised" Holy Scriptural truth and Catholic practice for the sake of filling her borders, as "an audacious pretension," we might have used stronger language; for if there be a Church upon earth that has jealously guarded the entrance to her priesthood and the training of her youth, that Church is the Church of England. Would the Protestants, Baines, Gerrard, and Frome, or the Romanists, Abel Fetherstone, and Powell, when in accordance with the unhappy maxims of the age, they were burned at the same stakes for their opposite opinions, have called the Church of England a Church of compromise? So also how astonished would the thirteen Romish bishops deprived in the reign of Queen Elizabeth, for their refusal to conform to the

reformed liturgy, or the worsted puritans of the Hampton Court Conference of James Ist., have been, had they been told by some Reviewer of that age, if indeed such sages then existed, that the principle of the Church of England was one of compromise, ever ready to sacrifice truth for the sake of securing members! Or we can imagine the look of indignant scorn, with which the two thousand nonconformist ministers of the reign of Charles II, who forsook the Church, and forfeited their livings because she admitted of no compromise, would have met such assertions as made by our Reviewer, in common indeed with political dissenters generally. But the utter recklessness of such an accusation is but more shamefully apparent from the fact, that its untruth is almost daily proved before the eyes of those who make it, by painful ministerial defections from the Church of England to Rome on the one hand, and to the various Protestant sects on the other, which are so frequently occurring. But in truth we are almost ashamed of the pains we have taken to rebut so palpable a slander. Has not Protestant dissent for ages been accusing the Church for her bigotted exclusiveness, her tyrannical tests, &c. And now that very same dissent turns round, and coolly tells us, "the Church of England has ever since her birth, manifested herself as a broad and comprehensive Church, chequered by a wide variety of opinions!" The miserable contradiction of such conduct we could forgive, did we not, as we believe, discern the unholy motive by which it is prompted. They hope, as we before stated, by such assertions to make it be supposed that the Anglican Church is a mere creature of the state, first founded in the 16th century, and then there will no longer remain any valid reason why they should not treat it like any other human platform, and destroy or modify it at their pleasure.

But the utterly baseless character of the assertion that the reformed Anglican Church has "compromised" Scriptural truth, and Catholic usage, is equally apparent, if we consider the agents in her reformation. We are not going to assert the perfection of the reformers—that Cranmer was a man of unyielding nerve, or that Latimer was profound—but we do assert that, take them as a whole, they were men marvellously suited to their work, deeply learned, most patient in investigation, and profoundly sincere. Their entire history proves that their earnest effort was to bring back the Church to the "pure word of God" and the "godly and decent order of the ancient Fathers," and so far from sacrificing principle for the sake of conciliating either Rome or Geneva, by their rigid adherence to scriptural truth and Ancient Catholic doctrine and usage, they deeply offended both. Indeed the men who from a supposed necessity of rigidly maintaining the doctrines of the Church against all corrupters, would in the reign of Edward II, burn a poor ignorant woman, and in the next reign suffer martyrdom themselves, sooner than retract their principles, were not exactly the men to endeavour to reform the Church in the pseudo-liberal, compromising spirit of the 19th century. Nor were the reigning Tudor Princes of the lukewarm character necessary to favour such a reformation. The very idea is either foolishly or wickedly absurd.

And yet perhaps this charge of compromising, may be traced to the holy simplicity of the Church herself. Her reformers received with thankfulness the almost newly revived doctrines of grace, and of anti-papal freedom. Herein she greatly agreed with the Continental Protestants. But she also retained with an equally firm grasp, her Apostolic descent and order, and also her trust in sacramental grace and Priestly efficacy, as channels of redeeming mercy. Herein she still was one with the rest of the Catholic Church. Hence, it is perhaps possible that the very weak and the very careless, looking only at her points of agreement with her foes on either hand, may have been deluded into the foolish error of supposing that it was popularity not truth which she sought; but surely intelligent men cannot persist in so transparent a fallacy as this.

Doubtless also this accusation, finds great apology, and we deeply regret to have to confess it, in the almost diametrically opposite doctrinal views openly avowed by clergymen who yet continue to minister at our Church's altars! But for this we can scarcely see a remedy, so long as men will subscribe to the Book of Common Prayer, and yet positively deny the doctrines which all unprejudiced men whether in or out of the Church, unhesitatingly declare that that Prayer Book most plainly and absolutely teaches. To the Church it is only allowed to judge men by their words, not their thoughts; hence while men subscribe to, and use formalities which they believe to be a perversion of the truth of God, in such wise it will often happen that the Church will be pow-