

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 ASPEN.

[There is a tradition that our Saviour's cross was made of the wood of this tree, and that its leaves have thrilled and quivered ever since.]

Daylight is closing, but the west
Still with the pomp of sunset glows,
And crimson cloud on mountain's breast,
And tower, and spire, its radiance throws,
While one by one in eastern skies
"The stars which usher evening rise."

How deep, how holy is the calm!
Each sound seems hush'd by magic spell,
As if sweet Peace her honied balm
Blent with each dew-drop as it fell.
Would that the cares which man pursues
A pause like this of nature knew!

Yet in this deep tranquillity,
When e'en the thistle's down is still,
Trembles yon towering aspen tree,
Like one whose by-gone deeds of ill,
At hush of night, before him sweep,
To scare his dreams and "murder sleep."

Far off in Highland wilds 'tis said,
(But truth now laughs at fancy's lore)
That of this tree the cross was made
Which erst the Lord of Glory bore,
And of that deed its leaves confess
E'er since a troubled consciousness.

We boast of clearer light; but say,
Hath science, in her lofty pride,
For every legend swept away
Some better, holier truth supplied?
What hath she to the wanderer given
To help him on his road to heaven?

Say, who hath gazed upon this tree
With that strange legend in his mind,
But inward turn'd his eye to see
If answering feeling he could find,
A trembling for that guilt which gave
His Saviour to the cross and grave?

And who such glance did inward bend,
But scorn'd the apathy and pride
Which make him slight that more than friend,
For him who bled, for him who died;
Nor pray'd his callous heart might prove
What 'tis to tremble, weep, and love?

THE SPIRIT OF THE WOODS.

RICHARD HOOKER.

(Concluded from our last.)

Mr. Sandys, on his return to London, applied to his father in behalf of Hooker, and soon after, the mastership of the Temple becoming vacant, the bishop so powerfully recommended Hooker, that the Society sent for him to London. This piece of preferment offered him an exemption from many cares, better society, and a more liberal income; yet he was with difficulty persuaded to accept of it. His wish was a better country living, where he might, as he expressed himself, "be free from noise, and eat that bread, which he might more properly call his own, in privacy and quietness."

The reign of Elizabeth was a time of unusual dissensions, arising from various parties, who with peculiar warmth agitated their different opinions. Besides the two great divisions of the Protestants and Romanists, the former were split into many sects; and all that violence of discussion which set the whole kingdom in a flame, and tore it in pieces in the days of Charles the First, had begun even then to be formed, and to destroy much of the peace of private life. Some of this evil of the times fell to Hooker's lot, and he was engaged in an open controversy even in his own pulpit, with Mr. Walter Travers, a violent non-conformist of those days. Hooker had found this person an evening lecturer at the Temple, when he obtained the mastership, and as his character was very good both for learning and probity, it is not likely that Hooker should ever wish to displace him. But, unfortunately, Mr. Travers had imbibed all his opinions of a right government both in Church and State, and upon the other points in dispute in those days, at Geneva, where he had been ordained. His desire was to change the things in England after their pattern; and he greatly wished to new model the Society of the Temple upon this plan. Hooker would not consent to these alterations; and this led Travers to speak on openly against the Master's sentiments in the pulpit. Hooker on his part openly vindicated them: so that it was observed—"The forenoon sermons speak Canterbury, and the afternoon Geneva." It is however highly gratifying to find that in these sermons there was little of bitterness, though each party brought forward all the reasons of which he was master, in order to prove that his adversary's opinions were erroneous. The dispute turned upon the doctrine, discipline, and ceremonies, of the English Church. But the opposition and consequent division at length running very high, the archbishop thought it prudent to forbid Mr. Travers preaching any more. He appealed to the queen and council against this prohibition; but obtaining no redress, he then laid his cause before the public by means of the press. Hooker thought he was obliged to reply to this attack upon himself and the archbishop; and he entered into the lists with so much strength of reason, and mildness of spirit, that his Grace, delighted with his answer, disdained not to seek even an intimate familiar friendship with a man possessed of so much learning and humility. Painful, exceedingly painful, as this dispute and its consequences must have been to

Hooker's uncommonly mild and gentle spirit, yet we see how mercifully God overruled it both for his own good, and that of thousands, not only of his contemporaries, but of succeeding generations. His own graces were tried and strengthened; his acute mind was drawn to a deep consideration and thorough investigation of the points in debate; the result was given to the world; and in consequence we are now in possession of his admirable sermons, especially that upon justification, and his most celebrated work upon Ecclesiastical Polity.

While the benchers and the chief men of the Temple highly praised their Master, and treated him with great reverence, there were yet so many members of Mr. Travers's sentiments and party, that the situation became very irksome to Hooker, and he solicited some other preferment from his friend the Archbishop. "My Lord, when I lost the freedom of my will, which was my college, yet I found some degree of it in my quiet country parsonage, but I am weary of the noise and oppositions of this place; and indeed, God and nature did not intend me for contention, but for study and quietness. And, my Lord, I shall never be able to finish the work which I have begun, unless I be removed into some quiet country parsonage, where I may see God's blessings spring out of my mother earth, and eat my own bread in peace and privacy; a place where I may, without disturbance, meditate my approaching mortality, and that great account which all flesh must give at the last great day to the God of all spirits."

The first removal of Hooker, in consequence of his earnest desire to seek for more peace and leisure in retirement, was to the rectory of Boscomb, near Salisbury, and he was also made a minor prebendary of that cathedral. He remained at Boscomb till he had completed four books of his Ecclesiastical Polity, at which period he was in the thirty-ninth year of his age. From Boscomb he was removed to the living of Bishop's-Bourne in Kent. He was presented to this good piece of preferment by the Queen herself, who greatly esteemed him; and here he remained till his death, with no addition of dignity or profit.

The remaining five years of his life which he spent in Bishop's-Bourne, were passed in study, the completion of the great work which has rendered his name so illustrious, and in the most exemplary discharge of his parochial duties. He was a great friend to mortification and self-denial; he fasted often, and devoted much of his time to meditation and prayer. He preached only once on the Sunday, but he or his curate always catechised after the second lesson in the evening service. His sermons were neither long nor earnest, but uttered with a grave zeal and a humble voice; his eyes always fixed on one place, to prevent his imagination from wandering, so that he seemed to study as he spoke. His aim in his discourse was to shew the reasons for what he advanced; and rather to endeavour to convince and persuade, than to terrify men into piety: always master of his subject, he sought for apt illustrations, that he might teach his unlearned hearer by familiar examples. On the Sunday before every Ember Week, he always gave public notice of it, exhorting the people to pray much for a learned and pious clergy; often saying, "that the life of a pious clergyman was visible rhetoric, and so convincing, that the most godless men (though they would not deny themselves the enjoyment of their present lusts) did yet secretly wish themselves like those of the strictest lives." At these times he used to retire every day for a considerable time into the church for prayer.

He was diligent in seeking out and attending all who were sick or in any way distressed in his parish, and would visit them unasked, because he conceived that these were favourable seasons for producing serious impressions. He was also very assiduous in trying to prevent law-suits, ever urging his parishioners and neighbours to bear with each other's infirmities, and live in love; for, as St. John declares, *he that lives in love, lives in God; for God is love.* At his entrance into or departure from any house, he would usually speak to the whole family, and bless them by name.

As the parsonage of Bourne was only three miles from Canterbury, and near the great Dover road, we cannot wonder that many travellers should turn aside to visit a man whose fame for learning and piety was so great and so widely extended. Adopting our Lord's question, we may ask, "What went they out to see? a man clothed in purple and fine linen?" No, indeed, but a man in poor clothes; usually habited in a coarse canonical coat, of a mean stature, and stooping, and yet more lowly in the thoughts of his soul; his body worn out, not indeed with age, but with studious and self-denying habits. He was so remarkably bashful, that he never willingly looked any one in the face; and so affable, that he and his poor parish-clerk always conversed together with both their hats on or both off at the same time.

This clerk survived his honoured master till the beginning of the Long Parliament. He was accustomed to shew the grave where his body was deposited, and to hear with delight the commendations bestowed upon his character; and used to talk largely in praise of his humility and holiness.

We have seen that Hooker's guileless disposition led him into an unhappy marriage: the same characteristic, united with an entire want of that quality which is denominated *spirit*, gave occasion to the heaviest trial of his advanced age. Some women of a loose character were in the habit of extorting money from him, by the threat, that if their demand were not granted, they would accuse him of immoral conduct. This circumstance very naturally laid his character under great suspicion, and the anxiety occasioned by it pressed most heavily on his mind. He

kept it to himself for many months, and would probably have continued to bear the burden in secret, had it not been providentially discovered by his former pupils and faithful friends, Messrs. Sandys and Cranmer; who so effectually exerted themselves in his behalf, that they brought the whole of this iniquitous transaction to light, and cleared the hitherto unblemished fame of their worthy tutor.

When Hooker was told that his accusers had confessed their slander, he replied, "The Lord forgive them; and the Lord bless you for these comfortable news. Now I may say with Solomon, *'Friends are born for the day of adversity'*, and such you have proved to me." This forgiving, benevolent man, however, seems to have been much distressed that his slanderers were openly punished for their infamous conduct; having previously used every endeavour to procure their pardon. After this affair, he would often say to an intimate friend, "O with what quietness did I enjoy my soul, after I was free from the fears of my slander! and how much more after a conflict and victory over my desires of revenge!"

The incidents of Hooker's life remarkably confirm the character given of him, of eminent gentleness and patience. He never seems to have sought redress for himself; but, where his own interests alone were concerned, meekly to have bent to the stream, and left his cause singly with his God. While it may appear extraordinary that such a man should have been engaged in controversy, and that his great and long preserved fame as an author should even have arisen from a book which owed its origin to the religious contentions of those unsettled times, we cannot but admire the pure zeal for that cause which Hooker conceived to be the truth, which could thus make him act in this respect so contrary to his natural temper and to all the habits of his life. Nor perhaps could we fix on a more decided proof of the love of God being the predominant principle of his mind, and the actuating motive of his conduct, than that afforded by this circumstance.

In 1600, when he was only forty-six, he caught a violent cold in going from Gravesend to London, which occasioned him so severe an illness, that he never recovered from its consequences. He was oppressed during the day, and restless by night; but his inward peace, from submission to the will of God, rendered even this state of languishing comfortable and easy to him. He expressed no wish for life, except to be permitted to finish his three remaining books of the Polity. His desire was in a great measure granted; though whether they afterwards appeared exactly as he had composed them, has long been a matter of dispute. He did not during this indisposition intermit his studious labours, and it is probable, hastened his end by this persevering attention to his favourite object.

A few days before his death the house was robbed, and upon his inquiry whether his books and papers were safe, and being told they were, he said, "Then it matters not, for no other loss can trouble me." The day before he died, he received from a dear and intimate friend, who knew the very secrets of his soul, the absolution of the Church; and, after a short time of retirement, he returned to a few friends, with whom he received the sacrament. For a little while he appeared filled with joy and a holy animation; but his bodily infirmities soon returned; and with such violence, that his end was thought immediately approaching. He revived however again for a few hours, and the next morning he appeared better, very deep in contemplation, and not much disposed to converse. Upon being asked what subject so engaged his thoughts, he replied, "That he was meditating on the number and nature of angels, and their blessed obedience and order, without which, peace could not be in heaven: and O! that it might be so on earth." After which he added,—"I have lived to see this world made up of perturbations, and have been long preparing to leave it. And though, by the grace of God, I have loved him in my youth, and feared him in mine age, and laboured to have a conscience void of offence towards him and towards all men, yet, if thou, O Lord, be extreme to mark what I have done amiss, who can abide it? And therefore where I have failed, Lord, shew mercy to me; for I plead not my righteousness, but the forgiveness of my unrighteousness, for His merits who died to purchase a pardon for penitent sinners. And since I owe thee a death, Lord, let it not be terrible, and then take thine own time; I submit to it: Let not mine, O Lord, but let thy will be done." He then fell asleep, but revived to say these few words more: "God hath heard my daily petitions, for I am at peace with all men, and he is at peace with me; and from which blessed assurance I feel that inward joy which this world can neither give nor take from me." He seemed desirous of saying more, but speech failed; a short struggle ensued, and he then with a gentle sigh yielded his last breath.

To the Editor of the Church.

Sir;—As neither my time very conveniently permits, nor does your space seem to justify, an immediate fulfilment of my pledge to furnish you with a continuation of my essays entitled *VIEWS OF OUR ZION*, I have, in the mean time, selected from a work,—to which, as I have already apprized you, I am indebted for the title adopted for my communications, viz. Clark's "Walk about Zion,"—an extract that seems very admirably adapted as a sequel to the articles which you permitted me to introduce into your columns on the subject of EPISCOPACY. The Letters from a convert to Episcopacy,—one who, like Colton, knows how to give a reason for his change,—which I submit to you for

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