

"HER FOUNDATIONS ARE UPON THE HOLY HILLS."

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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Original Poetry.

For the Church.
THE NATIVITY.

Saviour of man, Earth had no pomp for thee,—
No glorious pageant at thy hallowed birth
Circled her countless myriads, no display
Of gold and gems around thy cradle shone,
Nor shouts of joy from prostrate nations rose,
Nor princely hands poured treasures at thy feet;
But, thou of woman born, a virgin's heart
Was thine anointed pillow, and the breath
Of thy first life did from a manger spring!

Heaven had no thunders then; no shafts of death
Swept dazzlingly along from sky to sky,
Nor curtained darkness veiled the fair expanse,
Nor the bright lamps high in the azure set,
The watchers of a world, shed from their spheres
Rich floods of light to fill the perfumed air,—
But one pale star, a beacon ray, looked down,
And like the fiery pillar of the past,
Gave life to hope, and wandering silent on,
Led forth the Eastern sages to the goal,
Where they might lay their off'rings at thy feet,
And age could worship at the shrine of youth!

Nature gave forth no melody; the ocean waves
Broke not in sounds of song, nor harmony
Swept o'er the orange groves, nor did the voice
Of music spring among the flowers and streams;
The hosts of heaven rejoicing came not on,
The angel choirs touched not their golden harps,
Nor glorious strains from all the stary world,
Did float above the new-found gem of Earth;—
But one bright band the sweet Hosanna sang,
And the low music stealing on the breeze,
Fell not on kingly hall, or gilded roof,
Nor broke the slumbers of proud cities up,
But gently wafted to the shepherds' ear,
Invoked the humblest to the praise of God.

Saviour, so cam'st thou once,—but when again
The Earth shall know thee, then shall thunders roll,
And fork lightnings dart amid the clouds,
And earthquakes crush the pillars of the earth,
And hurl her quivering from her ancient throne.
The whirlwind's wing shall be thy mighty seat,
And voices shall be round thee stern and deep,
Like those that shook the seer at Sinai's mount,
And millions on thy right hand and thy left
Around, about thy throne, shall hymn thy praise;—
And the loud trumpet blown at thy command
Shall rouse the sleeping dead, and earth and sea
Shall give their victims up, and thou shalt set
Thy stamp upon thine own, and man shall know
How sweet the rescue made, the fearful doom
That thou didst banish by thy priceless blood.

J. C.

WILBERFORCE AND THE ABOLITION OF THE
SLAVE TRADE.

From the Church of England Quarterly Review.

This year (1787) gave the decisive colour to his future existence. "God Almighty," he said, "has set before me two great objects—the suppression of the slave-trade and the reformation of manners." There was something sublime and inspiring in the spectacle of the youthful soldier preaching a new crusade. But he did not rush into the contest without premeditation. Pitt, with whom he conversed upon the subject, recommended to him the conduct of the great enterprise of abolishing slavery, as peculiarly suited to his character and talents. It was at the table of Bennet Langton that he first made the public avowal of his intentions. To follow him through all the difficulties he encountered in the prosecution of his labours would require an abridgment of the five volumes dedicated to his Memoirs. The life of Wilberforce and the decline and fall of slavery are inseparably linked and associated together; upon this achievement all the energies of his soul were concentrated; to it his eloquence, his industry, his fortune were generously devoted; it formed a part of his religion, mingling with his prayers to God and his hopes of heaven. The historian may have celebrated with burning lips the victorious agonies of martyrs translated into glory; the poet may have peopled the chambers of sorrow with Olympian pageantry, or cheered the eye with the gardens of fiction; the philosopher may have built up, in the silent recesses of the intellect, the beautiful domes of his visionary architecture; the patriot may have stood firm against the malignity of popular hatred, or the thunder of political faction; but Wilberforce occupied a nobler position than them all; he rose up the advocate of the human race, daring, with almost unaided arm, to oppose the overwhelming torrent of contumely, and open the gates of mercy to mankind. There was nothing hyperbolic in the eulogy of his friend Mackintosh, that he had conferred upon the world a greater benefit than any other individual. His enthusiasm was unquenchable. He was neither daunted by opposition, nor depressed by defeat. However exhausted he might be by the unceasing attacks of his adversaries, if he touched, in imagination at least, the ground on which the ashes of the persecuted Africans reposed, his strength returned to him. The cry of blood ascended from the earth. But though he pursued his object with the determination of an avenger of antiquity, he owned no allegiance to the fiercer spirits of controversy. He demanded immunity for the future, not retribution for the past. Nor did he enter upon the warfare in his own strength; he went out, indeed, against the giant only with a sling, but the power of God went with him. He turned aside the darts of the enemy with the shield of faith; he broke down the breastwork of the foe with the sword of the Spirit. The fire of the orator might have scattered the sophistry of falsehood, but the meekness of the Christian alone could awaken a disposition of repentance.

Wilberforce was naturally an ambitious man;—that last infirmity of noble minds he confesses to have haunted and occasionally bewildered him. Even upon the lower ground of temporal celebrity, although we entirely acquit him of

having been actuated by any motive of the kind, Pitt's advice, respecting the dedication of all his energies to the abolition of slavery, was full of wisdom and acuteness. The advocate of these victims of rapacity was the only character unappropriated in the drama of public life. The stage was crowded with men of the highest intellect, the most elaborate accomplishments, and the most extensive reputation. In the general combats of the House of Commons, Wilberforce, during his long and honorable career, would have found many dangerous and victorious opponents. Pitt excelled him in the sustained dignity and impression of his manner, Burke in the gorgeous fluency of his declamation, and Fox in the natural vehemence of his rugged, but commanding invective. The brilliancy of Sheridan, the sarcasm of Tierney, the elegant irony of Canning, might have dimmed his most successful efforts.

Let the difficulties of his position and the perils of his enterprise be fully comprehended. Warriors have been found, who, from the passion for glory and the love of their country, have advanced to the battlements of invincible strongholds, and in the very storm of fire, and while the charge of a blazing host shook the ground, have gazed calmly in the face of death, and fallen with the word of defiance upon their lips: what they attempted in the war of arms, Wilberforce dared to do in the deadlier war of opinion. With unshaken courage he attacked the bulwarks with which avarice had fortified the cruelties of slavery; and when, by repeated assaults, he had battered down their defences, and driven a gap into those barricades of iniquity, he never yielded a foot of the ground he had won. Day and night the struggle was continued; hour by hour was his physical and mental strength devoted to what we may venture to call the siege of Rapine and of Murder. Sophistry exhausted her arts in painting the happiness of the negroes. Witnesses were produced, who declared the convulsions of the captives to be dances, the hold of the slave-ship a perfect Elysium, and his landing in the colonies only an introduction to his friends. Thurlow supported the Planters with all the interpenetration of his character; and it was with difficulty that Fox could restrain the vehement hostility of Erskine. "These Utopian schemes of liberty in the Slave-trade," wrote Parr, "alarm serious men." The season itself was adverse to the inquiry, when a spiritual eclipse darkened one of the fairest countries of Europe, and the pillars of our own constitution trembled under the shock of blind and revolutionary madness. But the champion of humanity did not faint; he had consecrated himself to the enterprise, and from Heaven he looked for succour and support. Nor was the consolation of good men upon earth entirely wanting: a voice, inspiring hope, came to him from the death-bed of the venerable Wesley. "Unless God has raised you up," he said, "for this very thing, you will be worn out by the opposition of men and devils; but if God be for you, who can be against you? are all of them together stronger than God? go on in the name of God, and in the power of his might, till even American slavery, the vilest that ever saw the sun, shall vanish away before it." These were among the last words that dropped from the pen of the departing Christian. They were not written in vain; Wilberforce did go on. He had, indeed, as Wordsworth said of his friend and fellow-labourer, Clarkson, "an arduous hill to climb;" but his feet were shod with the preparation of the Gospel; and during the perilous ascent his eyes and heart were continually refreshed by glimpses of a happier and fairer landscape. His mind appeared to dilate with the majesty of his subject. His speech in 1789 gained the applause of every one who heard it. He addressed himself, as we are informed by his sons, to the feelings as well as the reason of the House; and we can still shudder at his description of the middle passage, when "so much misery was crowded into so little room; where the aggregate of suffering must be multiplied by every individual tale of sorrow" or at the still more striking energy of that appeal, which, after detailing with irresistible evidence the sufferings of the miserable victims, summoned "Death, as his last witness, whose infallible testimony to their unutterable wrongs can neither be purchased, nor repelled." Burke describes this address as "most masterly, impressive, and eloquent." Fox and Pitt joined in the eulogy; and Bishop Porteus assured the poet Mason that it was one of the most able and eloquent speeches ever heard in that, or any other place. It was when he spoke the language of the heart, when his lip was kindled with the flame from the altar of holy truth, that the stream flowed from his tongue with enchanting harmony. The speech which he delivered at the meeting of the Brighton Auxiliary Bible Society, in 1815, was of this description. He came from the chamber of death to declare the efficacy of that Book in the closing hours of existence.

In the August of 1789 Wilberforce visited Hannah More at Cowslip Green, which he calls a sweet place, and her sister, "a worthy, pleasant-seeming woman." Upon a former visit, two or three years before, he had met Charles Wesley, "who rose," he says, "from the table, round which a numerous party sat at tea, and coming forward to me, gave me solemnly his blessing. I was scarcely ever more affected. Such was the effect of his manner and appearance, that I burst into tears, unable to restrain myself."

Our readers will not be sorry to be conducted to that glorious epoch in the history of Wilberforce, when his anxious and unremitting labours in the cause of humanity were crowned with success, and the Abolition Bill was carried by a majority of two hundred and eighty-three to sixteen. "Never, surely," he wrote in his Journal before the second reading, "had I more cause for gratitude than now, when carrying the great object of my life, to which a gracious Providence directed my thoughts twenty-six or twenty-seven years ago, and led my endeavours in 1787 or 1788." With these feelings he entered the House on the following day (February 23). His own account of the proceedings is too interesting to be omitted:—

"Busy for Lord Howick in the morning. Friends dined before house. Slave-trade debate. Lord Howick opened, embarrassed, and not at ease, but argued ably. Astonishing eagerness of House; six or eight starting up to speak at once, young noblemen &c., asserting high principles of rectitude. Fawkes finish, but too much cut and dried. Solicitor-General excellent; and at length contrasted my feelings, returning to my private roof, and receiving the congratulations of my friends and laying my head on my pillow, with Buonaparte, encircled with kings, his relatives. It quite overcame me."

The speech of Sir Samuel Romilly was scarcely less affecting. The House responded to this appeal to the heart, and hailed the conqueror of Slavery with such a tribute of applause as had rarely, if ever, rewarded the exertions of the soldier, or the statesman. When his friends inquired the particulars of him, he replied, "I can only say, that I was myself so completely overpowered by my feelings, when he (the Solicitor-General) touched so beautifully on my domestic reception, that I was insensible to all that was passing around me." And here, though he continued for some years to purify the atmosphere of political life with the influences of a christian temper, we shall leave Mr. Wilberforce in the most imposing and beautiful attitude in which a patriot can be represented.

THE SATURDAY PREACHER.

No. XI.

CHRISTIAN LOYALTY.

PROVERBS XXIV. 21, 22.—"My son, fear thou the Lord and the King; and meddle not with them that are given to change; for their calamity shall rise suddenly; and who knoweth the ruin of them both."

This is the advice of Solomon to subjects, teaching obedience to God, and to his representative, the King; and to avoid those who are ever anxious for change,—innovators; and this he urges by considering the danger of neglecting it,—incurring ruin, suddenly, and in a manner not suspected.

In the first part of the wise man's advice,—obedience to God and the King,—a mutual connection exists; mutual action is done by each to each. The fear, reverential, filial fear of God, leading to obedience to his laws, begets similar sentiments towards the King; and the principle of submission to temporal authority naturally extends itself, when rightly directed, up to the great source of all power.

This is a proposition, whose truth it will be my endeavour to prove.

Consider its first part:—the fear of God, leading to obedience to his laws, begets similar sentiments towards the King.

Reason admits the supremacy of God. It teaches fear of such a nature as leads to obedience to his laws; because, as Creator, he is proprietor of the world, and must remain so, unless his right has been transferred to another, by some subsequent act. Consequently, all authority and power, to be legitimate, must flow from him; and that which cannot be traced up to him is not lawful, but usurped.

Revelation confirms what reason only suggests:—The Bible, which is God's will made known to man, describes him in the beginning creating the heaven and the earth; creating man, male and female, in his own image (Gen. i. 1, 27, 28). Of this it reminds us (Ps. c. 3.) "Know ye the Lord he is God, &c." Repeatedly he speaks of himself as vested with all power:—"See, now, that I, even I, am he, and there is no God with me: I kill and I make alive; I wound, and I heal: neither is there any that can deliver out of my hand," is his language, in one of the earliest of his revelations to man. "I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the ending, saith the Lord, which is, which was, and which is to come, the Almighty," are still the titles, by which he makes himself known. Whilst that incommunicable word, JEHOVAH, which describes his self-existence, is that ever used when directly addressing his creature man, as if to remind him ever of his own power and man's dependence.

Jehovah's title to omnipotence is, then, not to be questioned; and by virtue of this it is, that he has deeded and granted that authority to man which he possesses. To man, in general, has He given "dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over every living thing that moveth upon the earth." At first giving every "herb bearing seed which is upon the face of all the earth, and every tree in the which is the fruit of a tree yielding seed for meat;" and after the flood, when renewing the grant to Noah, and through him to all posterity, extending it to the beast: "every moving thing that liveth shall be meat for you; even as the green herb have I given you all things."

But to individuals of mankind bearing a certain description of office, designated by himself, has God deeded a portion of his authority over man. The name of the office-bearer has varied with the proportion of power given; and this again, has been regulated by the peculiar wants of the age in which such office has been created.

At first, when men were few, comprising families only, simple in their mode of life, engaged in cultivating the earth, or feeding cattle; then the term Patriarch, designated the government of a Father. When men began to multiply on the face of the earth, and iniquity to abound; when that original family affection, which had hitherto cemented society together, had grown less and less effective; when that brotherly esteem which had induced them to regard the interest of each as the interest of the whole, had all but vanished; then a government, which should make up by constraint what had hitherto been supplied by affection,—so far at least as to keep the different members of society from separation,—was called forth in the increased authority of Magistrates and Judges.

And lastly, when all remembrance had vanished from the mind (or at most had ceased to influence the conduct,) that though now scattered over a wide surface of earth, and dis-

tinct as societies, living under different rulers, yet that, originally, they had one and the same origin; when violence had to be put down, either internal—if within each separate government,—or external, as when it arose from a neighbour state; in a word, when the meek and peaceable were to be protected, and happiness and prosperity conferred and secured to the greatest possible portion; then the largest quantity of power must be brought to bear in the greatest possible manner. With this view, it had to be taken away from the many and separate depositories, and to be concentrated in one. Hence, by God's permissive providence, if not by command, arose Kings.

Having seen, both from reason and revelation, that all power is in Jehovah, and that thence it has flown, both in manner and degree, according as the circumstances of the world have required it, to restrain vice, and to promote virtue and happiness,—we shall at once perceive the connection between fearing God and honouring the King, on the principle, that obedience to the greater authority will naturally produce respect for the lesser:—he who admits the government of God will, of course, acknowledge that of his deputy, and such, we have already seen the King to be; and if the King, then all who are put in authority under him.

Before dismissing this part of my subject, allow me to refer you to a few texts where the same mutual relation is found, the same authority is enforced.

The Saviour enjoins, "Render, therefore, to all their dues, to Caesar the things which are Caesar's, and to God the things which are God's;" and he enforced it by his own practice, paying tribute for himself and Peter. Look, again, at the instructions of Saint Paul, "Let every soul be subject unto the higher powers—Put them in mind to be subject to principalities and powers, to obey magistrates &c." St. Peter uses similar language, "As free, and not using your liberty for a cloak of maliciousness, but as the servants of God. Honor all men. Love the Brotherhood. Fear God. Honor the King." Let it be remembered that the force of these precepts can be appreciated as it deserves, only by considering, that Nero was then on the throne of the Roman empire,—the detestable tyrant by whom both Peter and Paul were put to death. With these few verses before us, can it be denied, that the Spirit of wisdom has pointed out, for our admonition, the truth of the first part of my proposition, viz., the fear of God, leading to obedience to his laws, begets similar sentiments towards the King. It should be remembered yet further that these quotations from the Apostles, extend the practice of this principle, by inference, to all kings,—to kings, in their character of the "powers that be;" since, if obedience to a Nero may be enjoined on "the servants of God," surely, then, to all others; because proving that personal character of the constituted authority is not to be considered in the question of obedience or disobedience.

Our attention should now be turned to

The second part of the proposition, viz., That the principle of submission to temporal authority naturally extends itself, when rightly directed, up to the great source of all power: in other words, the obedient subject properly taught, becomes the obedient christian. Early taught loyalty, he drinks in unwittingly one of the great fundamentals of christianity. In the act of honouring the King, his mind is prepared for rendering fear to God.

The foregoing considerations enable us to account for the fact, that disloyalty and infidelity, practical infidelity, I mean,—are all but inseparable tenants of the same bosom. Indeed, I know not how it can be otherwise; since a christian rebel is a practical impossibility, and must ever remain so, if my proposition be true; or if that mutually acting and re-acting command of holy writ, "fear God: honor the king," be obeyed.

We are now brought to

The second part of Solomon's advice, "Meddle not with them that are given to change;" in other words, Avoid innovators.

Observe their origin.—The mind of man is a busy restless principle, showing its divine nature by a ceaseless pursuit of perfection. Its watchword is, "who will shew us any good?"

To the mind taught of God, the object, and the manner of pursuit, are clearly marked out, steadily and perseveringly followed, and finally obtained. But with the man of this world, the object is ideal,—the creature of his brain only; because not existing where alone he seeks for it,—in this world. Consequently his search is the chase of a mere phantom, conjured up by a heated imagination,—ever before the eye, yet ever eluding the grasp. Ignorant that a perfect state is no where below the skies, he finds fault with what, in its very nature, cannot be otherwise than faulty. Discontented, because not godly, he spends his time in inquiring for, and planning some new thing; vainly hoping, like the seekers of old for the philosopher's stone, that every invention is to be the alchymy,—the secret power which, by its touch, is to change the very nature of evil into good.

Mark the folly of such.—They enjoy not the measure of good which their present condition affords. This bewitching something a-head, like an ignis fatuus, induces them to pass over the many blessings with which their path is strown. Their mind's eye is so full of some imaginary good, as to have no capacity for what around it may be really worth possessing.

But their folly appears again in this,—that they seek a change, without any reasonable expectation of obtaining a better order of things.

I will not scruple to avow frankly my own opinion, that before an individual proceeds unwarrantably to disturb the unity of the church, he should be prepared to reply to these two questions.—Is he to subvert altogether the existing establishment of church-polity? And has he a fair probability of substituting for it another decisively better? Because the subversion of any church would universally follow, if every individual were to act after his example, which, so