

Poetry.

ECCLESIASTICAL SONNETS.

WALTON'S BOOK OF LIVES.

There are no colours in the fairest sky
So fair as these. The feather, whence the pen
Was shaped that traced the lives of these good men...

PLACES OF WORSHIP.

As star that shines dependent upon star
Is to the sky while we look up in love;
As to the deep fair ships which though they more
Seem fixed, to eyes that watch them from afar...

LEO THE TENTH.

(From Roscoe's Lorenzo de Medici.)

Giovanni, the second son of Lorenzo, was destined
from his infancy to the church. Early brought
forward into public view, and strongly impressed with
a sense of the necessity of a grave department, he seems
never to have been a child.

It seems that although the Pope had complied with
the pressing instances of Lorenzo, in bestowing on his
son the dignity of a cardinal, he was not insensible of
the indecorum of such a measure, for he expressly
prohibited him from assuming the insignia of his rank
for three years, requesting that he would apply that
interval to the diligent prosecution of his studies.

Lorenzo de' Medici,
To Giovanni de' Medici, Cardinal.
You, and all of us who are interested in your
welfare, ought to esteem ourselves highly favoured by
Providence, not only for the many honours and benefits
bestowed on our house, but more particularly for having
conferred upon us, in your person, the greatest dignity
we have ever enjoyed.

The influence of example is itself prevalent; but you
will probably meet with those who will particularly
endeavour to corrupt and incite you to vice; because,
as you may yourself perceive, your early attainment
to so great a dignity is not observed without envy, and
those who could not prevent your receiving that honour
will secretly endeavour to diminish it, by inducing you
to forfeit the good estimation of the public; thereby
precipitating you into that gulf into which they had
themselves fallen; in which attempt, the consideration
of your youth will give them a confidence of success.

You are not unacquainted with the great importance
of the character which you have to sustain, for you
well know that all the Christian world would prosper
if the cardinals were what they ought to be; because
in such a case there would always be a good pope,
upon which the tranquillity of Christendom so materially
depends. Endeavour then to render yourself such, that
if all the rest resembled you, we might expect this
universal blessing.

You are now devoted to God and the Church: on
which account you ought to aim at being a good ecclesiastic,
and to show that you prefer the honour and state of
the Church and of the apostolic see to every other consideration.

You are not only the youngest cardinal in the college,
but the youngest person that ever was raised to that rank;
and you ought therefore to be the most vigilant and unassuming,
not giving others occasion to wait for you, either in the chapel,
the consistory, or upon deputations. You will soon get a sufficient
insight into the manners of your brethren. With those
of less respectable character converse not with too much intimacy;
not merely on account of the circumstance in itself, but for
the sake of public opinion.

Another very necessary precaution, particularly on
your entrance into public life, is to deliberate every evening
on what you may have to perform the following day;
that you may not be unprepared for whatever may happen.

The elevation of Leo X. to the pontificate established
the fortunes of the Medici on a permanent foundation.
Naturally munificent to all, Leo was lavish in bestowing upon
the different branches of his own family, the highest honours
and most lucrative preferments of the church.

At the time when he assumed the chair, the calamities
of Italy were at their highest pitch; that country being the
theatre of a war, in which not only all its governments
were engaged, but which was rendered yet more sanguinary
by the introduction of the French, Helvetian, and Spanish troops.

Leo was not however aware, that whilst he was
composing the troubles which the ambition of his neighbours,
or the misconduct of his predecessors, had occasioned,
he was exciting a still more formidable adversary, that was
destined, by a slow but certain progress, to sap the foundations
of the papal power, and to alienate that spiritual allegiance
which the Christian world had hitherto yielded for so many centuries.

But turning from the advantages which the world
has derived from the errors of Leo X., we may be allowed
for a moment to inquire what it owes to his talents and
to his virtues. No sooner was he raised to the papal chair,
than Rome assumed once more its ancient character, and
became the seat of genius, magnificence, letters, and arts.

CHURCHWARDENS AND THEIR DUTY.

Before many years, the office of Churchwarden,
which has been sometimes so much slighted, and not seldom
blameably undertaken only as a neglected duty, will be
sought after as one that brings a man into relation with
holier things than the toils and trades of this world, and
will be discharged, I trust and believe, in a spirit of gladness
and piety.

will possess various degrees of intelligence, ability,
conscientiousness, and religion; and they will vary in the
fulfillment of their office in proportion as they are various
in their qualifications for its discharge. I have had to deal
with some who are qualified in a high degree for their duties;
with others who had thought little of the declaration and promise
you are going to make here to-day.

The day will come again, I firmly believe it, when
the Parish Church shall once more bear its witness to village
piety; when its old hallowed walls shall tell, by any token,
the religious care of pastor and flock for their Father's
House; and the solemn decorations 'twill shall bespeak
the diligent tendance, and grateful offerings of devout and
thankful hands.

CHRISTIANITY AND HEATHENISM CONTRASTED.

Let us compare the world, as it now is, with what it
was before the appearance of our Saviour. We shall find,
if I mistake not, that the effect of Christianity in improving
the manners of mankind, though as yet far less than may
be ultimately hoped, is already however far from inconsiderable.

Comparing the world as it now is with what it was
before the promulgation of the gospel, we shall find the
manners of mankind in this respect at least improved,—
that they are softened. Our vices are of a more tame
and gentle kind than those of the ancient heathen world;
they are disarmed of much of their malignity, by the general
influence of a spirit of philanthropy, which, if it be not the
same thing in principle with Christian charity (and it may
indeed be different), is certainly nearly allied to it, and makes
a considerable part of it in practice.

fury of wild beasts for a show of amusement and recreation
to the populace, nor engaged in mortal combat with each
other upon a public stage. Such bloody sports, were they
exhibited, would not draw crowds of spectators to our theatres,
of every rank, and sex, and age. Our women of condition
would have no relish for the sight; they would not be able
to behold it with so much composure as to observe and admire
the skill and agility of the champions, and interest themselves
in the issue of the combat.

From that time forward the cruelty of war has gradually
declined, till, in the present age, not only captives among
Christians are treated with humanity, and conquered provinces
governed with equity, but in the actual prosecution of a war
it is become a maxim to abstain from all unnecessary violence:
Wanton depredations are rarely committed upon private property;
and the individual is screened as much as possible from the
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READING.

The reading of books, what is it, but conversing with
the wisest men of all ages and all countries, who thereby
communicate to us their most deliberate thoughts, choicest
notions, and best inventions, couched in good expression,
and digested in exact method? And as to the particular matters
or objects of study, all have their use and pleasure. I shall
only touch them.

of the world in due season protecteth, prospereth,
blesseth, rewardeth innocence and integrity; how he
crosseth, defeateth, blasphemeth, curseth, punisheth iniquity
and outrage; managing things with admirable temper of wisdom,
to the good of mankind, and advancement of his own glory!

Natural philosophy, the contemplation of this great
theatre, or visible system presented before us; observing
the various appearances therein, and inquiring into their causes;
reflecting on the order, connection, and harmony of things;
considering their original sources, and their final design:
how doth it enlarge our minds, and advance them above vulgar
amusements, and the admiration of those petty things, about which
men cark and bicker! How may it serve to work in us
pious affections of admiration, reverence, and love toward
our great Creator, whose eternal divinity is clearly seen,
whose glory is declared, whose transcendent perfections
and attributes of immense power, wisdom, and goodness
are conspicuously displayed, whose particular kindness toward
us men doth evidently shine in those his works of nature!

But especially the study of theology, how numberless,
inexpressible advantages doth it yield! For, it enlighteneth
our minds with the best knowledge concerning the most high
and worthy objects, in order to the most happy end, with
the firmest assurance. It certainly and perfectly doth inform
us concerning the nature and attributes, the will and intentions,
the works and providence of God.

It fully declareth to us our own nature, our original
our designed end, our whole duty, our certain way of
attaining eternal life and felicity. It exactly teacheth us
how we should demean ourselves in all respects piously
toward God, justly and charitably toward our neighbour,
soberly toward ourselves; without blame in the world,
with satisfaction of our conscience, with assured hope of
blessed rewards.

It discovereth those sublime mysteries and stupendous
wonders of grace, whereby God hath demonstrated an
incomprehensible kindness to mankind, and our obligation
to correspondent gratitude. It representeth manifold arguments
and incentives to love God with most intense affection,
to confide in him with most firm assurance, to delight in him
continually with joy unspokeable; which are the noblest,
the sweetest, the happiest operations of our soul.

It engathens us to study the book of God, the book
of books, the richest mine, of most excellent knowledge,
containing innumerable oracles of truth, and heavenly
rules of life; which are able to make us wise to salvation,
and perfect to every good work. And how can we otherwise
be so well employed, as in meditation about such things?
What occupation doth nearer approach to that of the blessed
angels? What heaven is there upon earth like to that of
constantly feasting our minds and hearts in the contemplation
of such objects? Especially considering that this study doth
not only yield private benefit to ourselves in forwarding
our own salvation, but enable us by our guidance and
encouragement to promote the eternal welfare of others,
and by our endeavours for the public heaven, according
to that exhortation of St. Paul pressing on Timothy this
study with diligence; Meditate upon these things; give
thyself wholly to them; that thy profiting may appear to all.
Take heed unto thyself, and unto the doctrine; continue
in them: for in doing this thou shalt both save thyself,
and them that hear thee.

So considerable is each part of learning, so extremely
profitable are some parts of it. Indeed the skill of any
liberal art is valuable, as a handsome ornament, as an
harmless diversion, as a useful instrument upon occasions;
as preferable to all other accomplishments and advantages
of person or fortune, (beauty, strength, wealth, power,
or the like); for who would not purchase any kind of
such knowledge at any rate; who would sell it for any price;
who would not choose rather to be deformed or impotent
in his body, than to have a misshapen and weak mind;
to have rather a lank purse, than an empty brain; to have
no title at all, than no worth to bear it out; if any would,
he is not of Solomon's mind; for of wisdom (by which
he meant a comprehension of all knowledge, divine and
human; into which the knowledge of natural things,
of mathematics, of poetry, are reckoned ingredients)
he saith, The merchandise of silver, and the gain thereof
thou findest gold; she is more precious than rubies, and
all the things thou canst desire are not to be compared
unto her. Her fruit is better than gold, yea than fine gold;
and her revenue than choice silver.

MAKING THE RESPONSES.

I have often seen it remarked, by those who write
either in defence or eulogy of our church, that the people
are not only allowed but required to take a vocal part
in the public devotions. And yet, it is surprising in
how few churches this is done. For my own part,
being bred up from childhood in a parish, in which so
full a body of voice rose throughout the church that
the voice of the clerk was barely distinguishable, and
having always felt how cheerful a thing it was to attend
divine worship in my parish church, I cannot describe
the damp and chill it cast over me, when I first
attended divine worship in a church in which that
practice was not observed. It appeared like being
debarred from a rightful privilege, for I durst not raise
my voice amidst a general silence. I was, however,
told by my tutor, that it was my duty to conquer what
he called a false shame, and give the Almighty the
public honour which the church ordained, whatever
others might do. I accordingly did so, and have con-