

The Church.

"Her foundations are upon the holy hills."

"Stand ye in the ways and see, and ask for the Old Paths, where is the good way, and walk therein, and ye shall find rest for your souls."

Vol. XVI.]

TORONTO, CANADA, JUNE 30, 1853.

[No. 48.]

Poetry.

COME SOON! COME SOON!

THE DYING CHILD'S ASPIRATIONS.

(From the Church of England Magazine.)
(Suggested by hearing the following account from his Mother.)

"On hearing his voice, I went to his bedside; and the sweet child seemed rapt into a sort of joyous expression, whilst with a beaming countenance he exclaimed, 'Come soon! Come soon!' I thought a sweet vision, of some sort of foretaste of heaven had been vouchsafed to him (and why not for he was a pious, God-fearing boy) to cheer his parting spirit; and that he was answering their summons. Then turning to me, and repeating, 'Come soon!' he laid his head on his pillow; and soon after departed in peace."

"Come soon! Come soon!" 'Twas thus he spoke,
That little suffering one,
"Ere yet his silver cord had broke,"
Or his gentle spirit gone.

"Come soon! Come soon!" A vision bright
Seemed round his couch to press;
Sweet angel-forms in radiant light,
His dying eyes to bless.

Whilst rapt with holy joy, he gazed,
That glorious band to see;
Implying his prayer he raised,
"Ere long with them to be."

"Come soon! Come soon!" Their call he heard,
Their invitation sweet;
To die, ere the sound was barred,
Nor did their senses meet.

But on his dying ear it fell,
Like music from above,
That charmed his heart with holy spell,
And traced his soul with love.

"Come soon! Come soon!" with echoing strain
And fluttering heart, he cried;
Soon, soon, I come, to join your train,
A spirit glorified."

Then to his mother, as he gazed
In breathless, mute surprise,
With fond endearing look he raised
His lustrous heaven-light eyes.

And once again he cries, "Come soon!"
In whispered tones of love,
As if he prayed her soon to join
Him in the realms above.

Then on his pillow sunk his head—
That heaven-accepted one;
Released, the gentle spirit fled,
The stainless soul was gone.

And, tho' the mother poured her grief,
And wept her darling boy,
That vision gave her heart relief,
And turned her grief to joy.

And oft with holy ecstasy
She dwells upon the hour,
When parted from his angelic shade,
She still sees with loved one's face
Midst splendour of eternity,
When time shall be no more.

Maria Rectory, Dec. 7, 1851. J. B. S.

The Common-Place Book.

BISHOP KEN AND CHARLES II.

At this period Charles II. was building in Winchester a costly palace, and on one occasion asked apartments in Ken's residence, for his sinful favourite Nell Gwyn. With the holy courage of the Baptist, Ken reproved adultery in the palace, and absolutely refused her admittance, declaring that a woman of ill repute ought not to be enured in the house of a clergyman. Soon afterwards, he accompanied Admiral Sir William Legge in his expedition against the fortress of Tangier, "receiving the summons to this duty as an indication of God's will," and knowing, that in the midst of tumult and war, and in the recesses of solitude, the true minister of Christ may equally bear the divine commission.

In the mean time the Bishopric of Bath and Wells fell vacant. When the King was to decide on the appointment of a new Bishop, he enquired in his own characteristic way, "Where is the good little man that refused his lodging to poor Nell?" Thus, at the age of 45, Ken was raised to the most responsible office in the Church, which he filled with the increased exercise of the lovely graces of charity, self-denial, and prayer, that had distinguished his former life. One of his first duties was to attend the death-bed of his royal patron. For three nights and three days he ceased not his watch, suggesting at proper intervals pious thoughts, and calling the King to repentance. He drove away the partners of Charles's sins, brought back the forgiving injured Queen, and to the last "applied himself intently to the awakening of the King's conscience."

From close attendance at Charles's death-bed, Bishop Ken passed to the duties of his See. His own words describe the feelings that were in his heart, as he seated himself in the pastoral chair:

Among the herdsmen, I, a common mate,
Lied a plebeian with my flocks on the plain;
Till, up like Aeneas, on a sudden caught,
To the Purtil chair was trembling brought.

—Penny Post.

Affliction is both a medicine if we sin, and a preparation that we sin not.—Hooker.

It was the excellent advice of St. Chrysostom, "Have but one enemy, the devil; to him never be reconciled."

THE OBT FORGIVEN.

Yes, I'll believe thee, though thou art
A dream forever fading;

I'll take thee to my ruined heap,
Without one weak upbraiding.

How oft have I to God returned,
And he still turned to me;

He never yet my sorrow spurn'd,—
Oh! how could I spurn thee?

—Hinds.

THE QUEEN.

Her court was pure; her life serene;
God gave her peace; her land reposed;

A thousand claims to reverence closed;
In her as mother, wife, and queen.

—Tennison.

Mr. Skelton, once arguing with a Nonconformist, said to him, "Do you advise dissenters from the Church to go to meetings, and Church-people to go to Church?" "Yes," answered the dissentist,—"Well then," said Skelton, "your religion is not the same as St. Paul's," he says, "Be ye all of one mind, one with another!"

I await, O God, for that everlasting rest, which I want to present, but shall not want long. I am ready when thou, my God, callest me: yet, can stay with patience till thou pleasest. For thy time is the best

time; and thy pleasure the best pleasure.—Kettell's Dying Prayer.

To every man the day of his death is virtually the day of judgment. Not, indeed, that there is no intermediate state; nor that we would insulate the cold and emotionless doctrine of a sleep of the soul; but that our condition in the disembodied, intermediate state, no less than our condition for eternity, must be decided in the condition in which we shall die.—Ry. Jess.

THE FINGER OF GOD.

The late Sir Evan Nepean, when under-secretary of state, related to a friend of his, that one night he had the most unaccountable wakefulness that could be imagined. He was in perfect health, had dined early and moderately, had no care, nothing to brood over, and was perfectly self-possessed. Still he could not sleep, and dawn, eleven till two in the morning had never closed on his eyes. It was summer, and twilight was far advanced; and to dissipate the enour of his wakefulness, he resolved to rise and breathe the morning air in the park. There he saw nothing but sleepy sentinels, whom he rather envied. He passed the Home-office several times, and at last, without any particular object, resolved to let himself in with his pass key. The book of entries of the day before lay open on the table, and in sheer listlessness he began to read. The first thing appalled him—

"A reprieve to be sent to York for the coroners ordered for execution the next day." It struck him that he had no return to his order to send the reprieve; and he searched the minutes, but could not find it. In alarm he went to the house of the chief clerk, who lived in Downing-street, knocked him up (it was then past three), and asked him if he knew anything of the reprieve being sent. In greater alarm, the chief clerk could not remember. "You are scarcely awake," said Sir Evan; "collect yourself; it must have been sent."

The chief clerk said he did not recollect he had sent it to the clerk of the crown, whose business it was to forward it.

"Good," said Sir E.; "but have you his receipt and certificate that it is gone?"—"No!"

"Then come with me to his house; we must find him, though it is so early." It was now four, and the clerk of the crown lived in Chancery-lane. There was no hackney-coach, and they almost ran. The clerk of the crown had a country house, and meaning to have a long holiday, he was at that moment stepping into his gig to go to his villa. Astonished at the visit of the under-secretary at such an hour, he still more so at his business.

With an exclamation of horror, cried the chief clerk of the crown, "The reprieve is locked up in my desk!" It was brought. Sir Evan sent it to the post-office for the trustiest and fleetest express, and the reprieve reached York at the moment the unhappy people were ascending the cart.—*Leisure Hour.*

EXTEMPORAL PRAYER, OR PRAYER WITHOUT A BOOK.

(From the Penny Post.)

As the Rev. Dr. Dowell was, one fine morning, sauntering on his way to the cottage of Matty Biggills whom was sick of a fever, who should he see coming towards him but James Waver.

Now James Waver was a person whom the Doctor wished to see; but the Doctor was the last person whom James wished to meet. Not, that he did not respect the Doctor; on the contrary he sincerely esteemed him, and well he might; for during the bad trade he had almost supported James and his family. But the truth was James had of late fallen in with the Methodists, and had been induced by them at different times to attend their meeting-house. The consequence was that he had been less punctual in his attendance at Church than usual, and his children had not been so regular at the Sunday School. James did not therefore like meeting Dr. Dowell, because he felt conscious that he had not done that which was right, and he felt ashamed of himself in the presence of his benefactor. However there was no help for it; so putting on a bold look he approached the Doctor, respectfully bidding him good morning, and observing at the same time that it was a very fine day.

Dr. Dowell. "Good morning, James: it is indeed a very fine morning, and we cannot be too thankful to the bounty of God for this as well as for all His other mercies."

James. "Why, that is true, sir; and yet a great many people, who talk about religion, are apt to forget that goodness by which they are nourished."

Dr. "More's the pity, James: we are all too apt to praise God 'at our lips only, and not with our lives.' But that puts me in mind that I did not see you at Church on Sunday last: and in fact your attendance lately has been any thing but regular."

J. "Well, I can't say that I have attended quite so regular lately as I used to do."

Dr. "I am sorry to say you have not: but where were you on Sunday last?"

J. (Hesitating.) "Why to speak plain truth, sir, I went with my neighbour Ebenezer Clark, (he who has lately come to Syke Top Farm) to the new Wesleyan Chapel."

Dr. "What induced you to go there?"

J. "Ebenezer wanted me to go and hear one of their crack preachers, the Rev. Mr. Holdforth, who was preaching there last Sunday."

Dr. "And did you think it worth to go, James?"

J. "Why you see, sir, what made me rather inclined to go was that Mr. Holdforth was preaching about the Church Prayer-book: and I wanted to know what he would say."

Dr. "And what did he say about the Prayer-book?"

J. "It was rather about the prayers he was preaching to go was that Mr. Holdforth was preaching about the Church Prayer-book: and I wanted to know what he would say."

Dr. "And what objections could he make to set people pray from the heart, and not from a book?"

Dr. "But does it follow, because men pray from a book, that they do not pray from the heart?"

J. "No, sir, I don't see how it could."

Dr. "And how does Mr. Holdforth know when a

man prays from his heart, whether he prays with book or without book?"

J. "I cannot tell."

Dr. "God alone sees the heart; and therefore to say that a man prays from his heart because he prays without book; or that a man does not pray from his heart because he prays with book, seems to me to be assuming to ourselves a power belonging only to the Almighty."

J. "It does seem so, certainly."

Dr. "Well James: how did Mr. Holdforth prove that set forms of prayer, or prayer with book, were wrong?"

J. "I cannot remember all he said, but I recollect his concluding a sentence by saying 'show me a passage in the new Testament which distinctly says we are to use precomposed forms of prayer'—and I could not help thinking there was a deal in it."

Dr. "I am surprised you should: for you might as well have asked him to show you any passage where it says you are not to use them; for if he maintains that prayer with book, i.e. precomposed prayer was wrong, he ought surely to have proved it so. But now I think I can show you that Scripture instead of being against us in this matter, is certainly for us."

J. "I should feel much obliged if you could."

Dr. "Well then to begin with the Jewish Church. You know that many of the Psalms were composed for the express purpose of Divine worship in that Church: and for the expiation of an uncertain murder a form of prayer was composed by the authority of God Himself, as you may see in Deut. c. xxxi."

J. "O yes, sir; but that was under the Mosaic dispensation; and as Mr. Holdforth observed 'old things are passed away;' we live now under the New Testament dispensation, and have therefore nothing to do with the old."

Dr. "Indeed! I thought St. Paul said 'these things were for our examples;' and are written for our admonition." But let us come then to the times of the New Testament. It cannot be denied that our Lord and His Apostles constantly attended the Temple of the Jews and their Synagogues; and consequently joined in the prayers there which we know were precomposed. If they had not done so, we may be sure, their enemies, the Pharisees and Scribes, would soon have reproached them for being despisers of the Temple-worship."

J. "That is all very true, sir; but then, as Mr. Holdforth again observed, they did so as Jews, and therefore their example could not be binding upon us Christians."

Dr. "Why I thought St. Peter had said that Christ 'had left us an example that we should follow his steps;' and if our blessed Lord and His Apostles thought it right to join in set forms of prayer, how can it be wrong for us? In fact is the same yesterday, to-day, and forever."

J. "That certainly seems reasonable."

Dr. "But let us continue. You know our Saviour gave us a set form of prayer, called 'the Lord's Prayer'?"

J. "Yes sir; but then being God as well as Man, He could give prayers in a moment, when and as He liked."

Dr. "Just so, James: but what if I could show you, that our Lord did not compose that prayer, but made it out of one already precomposed: would it not go a great way in proving that our Lord did not consider Prayer with book wrong, although Mr. Holdforth and his party do?"

J. "It would indeed, sir; and I should very much like to see it."

Dr. "Well, I will call upon you shortly and bring a copy of it with me: for I find that my time is nearly gone that I promised to be at Matty's. So good day James: and think about what I have said."

J. "I will sir; and thank you for the trouble you have taken."

(To be continued.)

CHURCH SERVICES.

(From the English Churchman.)

LORD STAFFORDSBURY'S ADVICE TO THE CLERGY.

In concluding our article on this subject last week, we suggested that the Clergy should enlist the services of a few earnest and practical members of their flocks for the purpose of uniting with them in discovering and remedying the hindrances and neglects with regard to audible and reverent responding and kneeling, which so generally prevail among our congregations, and especially among the poor. There must be few towns, or even villages, of any size, where a Clergyman did not obtain some co-operation in this good work. When looking over the Reports of our Ecclesiastical and Architectural Societies, and observing the time and pains often bestowed upon the investigation and discussion of more theoretical topics, or antiquarian objects having little or no practical bearing upon the Church's Work in the present day, it has often struck us that it was to be regretted that the members of those Societies did not look somewhat less at the Past, and more at the Present—that they did not as zealously, systematically, and unitedly, investigate and point out the means whereby God's glory might be promoted in connection with the "living," as well as the material "stones" of His Temple.

It may, perhaps, be urged that they who are suited to the one task are not suited to the other; but, however this may be, it surely cannot be denied that the very practical objects which we are contemplating are worthy of, and that they demand, an equal amount of zealous devotion, and of systematic and united exertion. A single Clergyman, and two or three male or female members of his flock, well placed, and with a vigilant eye and attentive ear, specially devoted to the object, will speedily detect a large proportion of the errors of omission and commission in regard to the posture, and the responding of the Congregation, particularly of the School children. A kind word of affectionate counsel, and earnest entreaty from the Clergyman, in private, added to a public exposition of the duty, will often prove effectual. Mere preaching, alone, will do it. We have known one of the most solemn and earnest exhortations on this subject delivered by one of the most eloquent and impressive of our Bishops, listened to with breathless attention and avowed admiration, on the Saturday, followed by no improvement whatever on the Sunday. The evil is so deep and habitual,

that it must be dealt with individually as well as congregationally. If there were in every pew, one person who knelt honestly—not simply bowing the knee while sitting—and if every alternate, or third, pew there were even one person who responded audibly and reverently, in a firm uniform tone, and measured time—in unison with the Choir or School-children, the example would be followed by many, especially if care were taken not to annoy others, by a too loud or abrupt tone, or by any prolixity, especially of a pompous or "phantastical" character.

We cannot dismiss this part of our subject without turning upon the upper classes the powerful influence of their example, for good or evil in this matter. And upon young ladies, especially, we would urge the duty of audibly responding. From a false notion of modesty, or of "gentility," they very seldom allow anything above a whisper, or beyond a more hesitating sound, to be heard from their lips, in the Responses. Yet, from the knowledge of music which they possess, they have great facilities for keeping in good time and tone, in repeating the Responses, and in chanting the Canticles, whereby they might be of essential service, especially where there is no Choir.

It is less modest to use their voices in God's House, and in His Service, as the Church enjoins, than in their own houses, for their own pleasure, or the pleasure of others! We entreat them to set to work earnestly, and perseveringly, to remove the scandal from our Worship, and the sin from their own souls, which their closed lips and silent tongues have done so much to produce. Hitherto they may have been afraid of their own voices; henceforth let them be far more afraid of their own silence. Shall they who have received from God the gift of speech and hearing, be content to offer to Him the silent homage of the deaf and dumb. "Freely ye have received, freely give."

(From the "Evangelical Catholic.")

We make the following extract from the *Christian Intelligencer*, (Dutch Reformist,) being very glad to see such prayers in such a quarter.

THE LORD'S PRAYER IN PUBLIC WORSHIP.

One of the early peculiarities of our fathers, was their habitual use of this perfect model of prayer as the conclusion of all their joint devotions in the family and in the sanctuary. In occasional instances this custom is retained, but as a general thing, it has died out from our denomination. There are not a few churches where the Lord's Prayer is never from the beginning to the end of the year, once employed as a part of public devotion.

There is, of course, a reason for this, though certainly not a sufficient one. It is a reaction against the abuse made of this prayer, as when it is absurdly made to furnish an argument for the imposition of an iron-bound liturgy on a church, as if such an argument did not by proving too much, prove nothing. Or when it is turned into an *idolo servation*, as in the Roman Antichrist, which requires the repetition of the Pater-noster, in some cases seven, in others fifteen times, together with numerous Ave Marias, seemingly as if the more rehearsal of so excellent a form of words insured saving grace. Well says the venerable canon, (Pastoral Theology, p. 75) "when 'the best,' maddened through power, slung round her tail, reason, Scripture, and common sense, were carried away in its sweeping process." Far less, therefore, of being confounded with formalists or Romanists, and through apprehension of turning the Scriptures to an idle, superstitious, and therefore injurious use, many seem to go out of their way to avoid using the most perfect prayer that ever was taken on human lips.

We think it would not be difficult to give good and substantial reasons for incorporating this form of sound words in our public devotions so that it should be used at least once during every service on the Lord's day.

1. It is inspired Scripture, and Scripture can never be inappropriate on the lips of suppliants.

2. It is a Scripture prayer, and as such cannot be preferred too often, provided it is done intelligently.

3. It has been regarded by all the Reformed Churches, and especially our own, with great affection, by most of them being put in their liturgies, and by the others made the basis of extended exposition in their catechisms. The excellent forms of devotion appended to our standards, invariably conclude with "Our Father," &c., as any one may see at a glance.

4. The terms of the Lord's prayer are so plain and simple, so concise and comprehensive, as to furnish an admirable recapitulation of all that the most gifted minister may have uttered in leaving the devotions of others. Whatever has been omitted they supply; whatever has been mentioned they reiterate in the Saviour's own words.

5. If by any cause, such as hereditary or speech-povety of thought, unfortunate early habits, or an unhappy frame of mind at the time, he who is the mouth of the congregation has failed to perform the service fittingly, he may yet be sure, by the use of this prayer, of enabling his fellow-worshippers, so far at least, heartily to unite in one series of acceptable petitions. And as for strangers, no man who in any sense whatever a Christian, can hesitate to make the prayer of Christ his own.

We take leave to add a few words from Dr. Dick's Theology (Lecture XCV.) on the subject: "It is not a little surprising to find some persons anxious to prove that we should cautiously avoid the words which were dictated by the Son of God himself, and should apply them to no other purpose, but as a guide in prayer of our own composition. It has the appearance of impiety, or to use a softer term, of very great folly; and it can be accounted for only on the principle of guarding against one extreme by running into another. They imagine that they cannot remove to too great a distance from anything which they conceive to be wrong; and if their antagonists should go to the east, they know no better way of testifying their disapprobation than by walking in all haste to the west."

SOMETHING WORTH REMEMBERING.—It should be our main business in this world to secure a happy eternity for the next. Speak of peoples' virtues; conceal their infirmities; if you can say no good, say no ill of them.

Ecclesiastical Intelligence.

ENGLAND.

ONE OF THE SOLEMN SERVICES which had the hearts of the enemies of our Church with malicious joy, while the hearts of her faithful sons are made sad, was conducted at York on Wednesday last. The Archbishop of that province, and the Clergy of his Province, to the great sorrow of the people, and to the great indignation of the highest powers of deliberating on the affairs of the Church; and when they had assembled in obedience to his command, he read two Commissions, with his Secretary for prompter, to inform them that they must not open their lips, the errand on which they had come being simply to hear the service of excommunication against all absentees, local, and to be summoned for another day of the same kind, what shall we call it?—errand. From the correspondence which preceded this disgraceful scene, it appears that his Grace's inability to comprehend the nature of his duties as Metropolitan, presiding over the Convocation of his Province, and despoiling his Grace's water course of all that would be to his disadvantage, was a man who has risen from obscure beginnings to the eminent station of Archbishop of the Northern Province, and Primate of England, pleads incapacity, it is not for such as he to contradict him. We may venture to suggest, however, and we wish to do so with all possible deference, that his Grace must be obtuse, even beyond what he himself represents, if he imagines that this is a system upon which, under the evinces of the present day, the Church of England can be governed. If Dr. Macgregor is really incapable of understanding the nature, the responsibilities, and the duties of his office, the suggestion of this hypothesis is not ours, there is an obvious way for him to relieve himself of the difficulty, which is to resign an office for which he feels himself incompetent.

But we hope better things of his Grace. We look forward, fully, to the day when he will bring his obedient and vigorous mind to bear upon this branch of his official obligations, and give his Province the benefit of the discoveries he may make as to the nature and intentions of the Church's system, in his position in regard to the same. Until then, we cannot but advise his Grace's discretion in not bringing himself face to face with his Clergy, in proceedings so ungracious and absurd as those of Wednesday last. The task of smothering the assembled Convocation of the province, beyond all question, more appropriately pertained to the Archbishop of the same province, under the tutelage of an Archbishop of the North, who, tell it not in Gath!—is not a Churchman at all, but a Dissenter disabused with the vanities of an ecclesiastical office.—*John Bull.*

CHALLENGE TO DR. M'NEEL.—A Mr. J. Macdonald, a Baptist, has addressed a challenge to the Rev. Dr. M'Neel, to take the platform, at two meetings proposed to be held in the "Tabernacle," Liverpool, for the purpose, 1. of praying with set form the Gospel, and his authority for styling himself a Catholic Priest; 2. of disproving or vindicating certain abuses, errors and corruptions of the Church of England, as set forth in the challenge. Dr. M'Neel has declined to appear at the meetings, on the ground that letters are preferable to discussions at public meetings. On the first point proposed, Dr. M'Neel is understood to reply as follows:—

I was ordained to the form by a Bishop, who was consecrated in unbroken and unblemished communion with our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. It is true that in the course of the succession some of the Bishops who formed links in the chain were not, in their opinions or practices, orthodox Catholics. They had, in a greater or less degree, fallen into error, and were, in the estimation of Rome, at the dictation of Pope Pius IV., and in defiance of the decrees of oecumenical councils, straggled into a creed, an imposed upon her Clergy for subscription in the year 1552.

But though in error as individuals, they were in unbroken succession as Bishops.

The errors I refer to, both in doctrine and practice, were exposed and reformed in England previous to the imposition of the new Creed of the Church of Rome. In consequence of the unbroken and unblemished succession of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. It is true that in the course of the succession some of the Bishops who formed links in the chain were not, in their opinions or practices, orthodox Catholics. They had, in a greater or less degree, fallen into error, and were, in the estimation of Rome, at the dictation of Pope Pius IV., and in defiance of the decrees of oecumenical councils, straggled into a creed, an imposed upon her Clergy for subscription in the year 1552.

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