

The Church

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Poetry.

MAY YOU DIE AMONG YOUR KINDRED.

By Mrs. ARDY.
(From the Church of England Magazine.)

"How much is expressed by the form of oriental benediction, 'May you die among your kindred!'—GROSVENOR.

"May you die among your kindred!" may you rest your parting gaze

On the loved familiar faces of your young and happy days:

May the voices whose kind greeting to your infancy was dear

Still ring in your ears, while life declines, their music in your ear.

"May you die among your kindred!" may the friends you love

The last of your parting gaze

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You are to them God's minister of mercy; and, on their acceptance or rejection of God's offer of mercy—

—ay, it may be their acceptance or rejection of it on this very day, (for some may never hear it more,) depends the character of their eternal destiny. But what is the expression of feeling which you observe among them? Do they appear solemnly interested, as if they felt the deep importance of the business in hand? Alas! no. Instead of appearing humbly and anxiously desirous of instruction, observe many of them sitting in careless attitudes, and with countenances expressive of little interest in the subject brought before them,—a subject which ought to be, in itself, and apart from all consideration of the character and ability of the preacher, of deepest interest. How few are there who show signs of humble teachableness! How few are there who are hungering and thirsting after heavenly food! And these are the souls you have to "win to Christ." You have to rouse the slumberer to attention, to awe the supercilious critic and make him learn humility, to convince the giddy sons and daughters of the world of the peril in which they stand, to infuse a spirit of heavenly-mindedness into the breast of the cold formalist; in short, your task is to subdue the various evil propensities of your hearers' corrupt natures, and to lead them to that which is to you no indifferent matter on which you address them, but an affair of life and death—of happiness or woe eternal.

What adds still more to the arduous nature of your task is, that it is necessary to create, not merely a powerful, but a permanent effect; you must not barly cause a transient qualm of conscience, a momentary ebullition of feeling, but you have to make a lasting impression on the heart, and effect a corresponding change of conduct. This point is essential. If you have not done this, you have done nothing. And, if we look at this point only, how far easier is the task of every other speaker. The advocate has gained his point when he has obtained a verdict for his client. It matters little to him what may be the opinion of the jury to-morrow. The speaker at the election, the convivial party, or public meeting, has generally little more to do than to ingratiate himself with his partisans, by expressing sentiments congenial with their own. When the last cheer has died away, his task is done. Even the seater speaks principally for present effect. But with the Christian preacher a permanent impression is every thing; if he fails in this, his labour is thrown away.

Again, you will find, that though, in reality, the subject of your address is the most momentous business in which any human being can be employed, it is next to impossible to give it that character of reality, which at other times so greatly assists the speaker. Your message, though it be from heaven, is an old-told tale; the sound of the Gospel falls like lead on the ear; the same persons have heard the same truths discussed week after week; and the utmost you can accomplish is, by some variety of argument or illustration, to prepare the same heavenly food in a more palatable shape; and even then they will listen to you rather as to one playing on "a pleasant instrument," than as if you were speaking on a matter of important business. On all other occasions of public speaking men come, with eager looks and anxious minds, to hear something in which they really have a personal interest; but, strange to say, it requires your whole power of persuasion to give this business-like character to a sermon. One cause of this apathy is because you speak of things, not persons. There is no personal collision; you miss the excitement of conversation; and many of the most effective instruments of oratory are forbidden. You may not rouse the more easily-excited passions of your hearers, nor flatter their vanity, nor give in to their prejudices. There is no place for cutting sarcasm, nor fierce invective, nor cool and dignified irony; all these spirit-stirring topics, all that is most agreeable to the natural man, must be avoided, and you must confine yourself to the plain words of soberness and truth.

Another disadvantage is, that you have to provide a sermon, or perhaps more, every Sunday. You are obliged to husband your resources, and confine your subject closely to the subject; which though profitable for all parties in the long run, yet certainly curtails the flights of your eloquence. Then you have to preach in the same place, and before the same congregation. No man is a prophet in his own country; no preacher an apostle in his own pulpit. A new preacher, with half his talent, would be more attended to, till the novelty was worn off. So let me tell you here for your comfort—for it is time to give you some comfort—that you need not be alarmed, nor mortified, if an itinerant preacher or lecturer comes into your parish, and draws away half your congregation. Take no notice, do nothing to obstruct him, only let him have his own way, and be diligent in your own duty; and in two or three Sundays most of your stray sheep will find their way back.

The fast difficulty to which I shall allude, is the circumstance of your having to address an assembly composed of so great a variety of persons. An ordinary church congregation is, of all audiences, the most promiscuous. High and low, rich and poor, old and young, one with another, all must be instructed, convinced, persuaded. The preacher has to adapt his arguments, and language, to the comprehension and edification of every class; and not only every class as to external circumstances, but also in spiritual attainments. "It is no easy matter to excite and awaken drowsy souls without terrifying and disturbing some tender conscience, to bear home the conviction of sin without the appearance of personal reflection."

All these things are against the preacher; and, if he looks only to this side of the question, he may be inclined to say—"who is sufficient for these things?" and either give up his office in despair, or content himself with reading the compositions of others. But remember, my dear friend, that the preacher of the Gospel has placed himself in the situation of God's ambassador, and is acknowledged as such; he has put his hand to the plough, and may not look back. "To preach the Gospel," says Mr. Benson, "is a burden which they have laid upon their own shoulders; to bear it for life is a task which they have assumed, and we be unto them if they preach not the Gospel daily and duly, and in all their ways, and words, and works."

It is indeed a difficult task—not less than to say to the dead, arise! to bid the blind open their eyes, the deaf hear, and the lepers be cleansed—but remember that you speak in the name of God. You stand as the representative of the Apostolic ministry, bearing God's commission and credentials. "It is not you that speak, but the Spirit of your Father which speaketh in you."—(Matt. x. 20.) "We are labourers together with God."—(1 Cor. iii. 9.) Remember that He is with you who is able to smooth all difficulties, to make the crooked paths straight, and out of the mouths of babes and sucklings to ordain strength, and He will give His blessing to faith, and prayer, and earnestness,—not to human ability. The office of a preacher may indeed furnish ample scope for the application of first-rate talent; still first-rate talent is not essential; prayer and faithfulness are far more real value.

Consider this also,—that the subject which you handle is the most sublime imaginable; so sublime as to make the most illiterate preacher eloquent, if he be earnest. It is fraught with the deepest interest; and though men are wont to be insensible to its call, yet others have been able to rouse them, and who should not you? Think of the results of God's blessing on the labours of many. How many notorious sinners have been converted! how many parishes visibly improved! besides the unseen working of that silent stream, which flows, and purifies the hearts of many in secret, whose disease and cure have been alike unknown to men.

Persuade yourself then with a holy confidence, that God intends to accomplish His work, even by "the foolishness of your preaching." When making your preparation, believe that what you are at that moment doing, under the power of God, be the blessed means of awakening some sinner, who is slumbering on the brink of ruin; or confirming some one who is wavering; that it may have considerable influence on many who hear you, may, through God's grace, may be the means of saving some immortal soul. With such a feeling as this, you will pursue your course with an arduous and steadiness, very different from the cold and feeble attempts of those who expect no such results.

And why should you not, with humble confidence in God, hope and expect that success may attend even your feeble endeavours? Surely, with the education which you have received, and the external advantages which you possess, it will be your own fault—since God has promised his blessing to the faithful and diligent labourer.—(1 Thess. ii. 13.)—It is to be too much to expect, that they, who take upon themselves the office of a Christian minister, should have piety, earnestness, and diligence? If you are possessed of these requisites, great talents and eloquence may be dispensed with. There is no need, as in other situations, of much quickness or promptness of intellect; for you always have ample time to make preparation; and though you may be "slow of speech," yet "the word of God is quick and powerful." It is good sound sense,—the good sense of a good man,—which is, humanly speaking, the main requisite for an effective preacher. "If a minister feel, let him aim at great power of imagination, good sense," and, the clear forcible manner of serious good sense," and, acting in the integrity of his heart, and putting his trust in God, he need not despair of being a valuable and useful minister of the Gospel of Jesus Christ; and doing as much good in the cause of truth, as if he were endowed with more brilliant talents.

One thing I would beg you to bear in mind—that popularity is no sure test of a preacher's excellence, nor the want of it, of his deficiency. Though your sermons should not be much talked of, nor applauded, you are not to conclude, that they have made no impression. "There is a great deal of difference between people admiring a preacher, and being edified by his sermons." You should not look so much for brilliant success, as for frequent improvement in your parish, Church or congregation; more communicants, more attention, less formality; all which cannot be effected by a few sermons, however powerful, but require years of earnest preaching." You must persevere with diligence, and work cheerfully with faith, waiting for the return of your labours in God's good time. The seed which you have sown may be silently springing up, even though you be not permitted to reap the crop. Act and preach with this spirit, "and thy word shall not return unto thee void, but shall accomplish that whereto it was sent."—(Isaiah, lv. 2.)

contributed—at the same time assuring them that I desired only whatsoever they were respectively able, and quite willing to give; and (I will say it to their honour) my people did not forsake or neglect me in my most threatening situations, even when their very personal safety seemed to require a very different kind of conduct.

"Nothing but an opinion that it would be expected of me could have induced me to trouble the Society with my personal concerns. I shall therefore take but little of their time with it.

"For some time after I went to live at Fairfield, I lived in tolerable quiet, owing to the indecisive measures of that period, though always known to disapprove the public conduct, and strangely suspected of endeavouring to counteract it. But this repose was soon interrupted by a public order for disarming the loyalists. Upon this occasion my house was beset by more than two hundred horsemen, whose design was to demand my arms; but they were, for that time, diverted from their purpose by the violent agitation they saw the terror of their appearance had thrown my wife into; and which, considering her being sick, and in the latter stages of her illness, even in the arms of her friends, was a most distressing sight. After this, I was confined for some days to my house and garden, by order of the person who commanded the militia of the town; for which time I was pointed out by the leaders of the people as an object of their hatred and detestation, and very few of my neighbours (who were chiefly dissenters) would hold any kind of society with me, or even with my family; and my sons were frequently insulted, and personally abused for carrying provision to the jail from my house, when some of my parishioners were confined therein, as well as on other occasions. After this, I was advertised as an enemy to my country, (by an order of the committee,) for refusing to sign an association which obliged its subscribers to oppose the king with life and fortune, and to withdraw all offices of even justice, humanity, and charity, from every recusant. In consequence of this advertisement, all persons were forbidden to hold any kind of correspondence, or to have any manner of dealing with me, on pain of bringing themselves under the same predicament. This order was posted in every store, mill, mechanical shop, and public house, in the county, and was repeatedly published in the newspapers; but through the goodness of the Lord we waited for nothing, our people, under cover of the night, and, as it were, by stealth, supplying us with plenty of the comforts and necessities of life. These measures proving insufficient to shake my attachment to his majesty's person and government, I was at length banished (upon the false and malicious report of my being an enemy to the good of my country) to a place called New Britain, in Farmington, about sixty or seventy miles from Fairfield, where I was entirely unknown, except to one poor man, the inhabitants differing from me both in religious and political principles; however, the family in which I lived shewed me such marks of kindness as they could, and I was treated with civility by the neighbours.

"In this exile I remained about seven months, after which I was permitted to return home, to be confined to the parish of Fairfield, which is about four miles in diameter, my people having given security in large sums that I should not transgress that limitation, and in that situation I remained about eighteen months.

"After this, my bounds were made co-extensive with those of Fairfield county, which was a great satisfaction to me, as it allowed me to visit the congregations of my parish, and to be more conversant with so long deprived of my ministry; and so I remained, (officiating two Sundays of four at Fairfield, dividing the other two equally between the two other parishes,) until I came away. We did not use any part of the liturgy lately, for I could not make it agreeable, either to my inclination or conscience, to mutilate it, especially in so material a part as that, wherein our duties as subjects are recognised. We met at the usual hours every Sunday, read parts of the Old and New Testaments and some psalms. All these were selected in such a manner as to convey such instructions and sentiments as were suited to our situation. We sung psalms with the same view. On the Sunday mornings I expounded either parts of the catechism, or some other passages of holy scripture as seemed adapted to our case in particular, or to the public calamities in general. By this method we enjoyed one of the two general designs of public religious meetings—I mean public instruction; the other, to wit, public worship, it is easy to believe was inadmissible in our circumstances without taking such liberties with the service as I confess I should blame even a superior in the church for assuming.

"Resolved to adhere to those principles and public professions which, upon very mature deliberation and clear conviction, I had adopted and made, I yielded not a tithe to those who opposed them, and had determined to remain with my people to see the end, but was compelled to alter this resolution by that sudden vicissitude which I must now, with painful reflection relate to the Society.

"On the seventh day of July last, Major-General Tryon landed at Fairfield with a body of his majesty's troops, and took possession of the town and its environs, the greater part of the inhabitants having fled their teams and removed what they could on his approach. This cut off all hope from the few loyalists of saving any part of their effects if they should be burnt, every carriage being taken away.—The general was so kind, however, as to order me a guard to protect my house and some others in its vicinity, when he had resolved to commit the rest of the town to the flames; for, as I have already hinted, I had determined to remain at home. But the unfortunate flames soon extended to them, and in a few minutes left me with a family, consisting of my wife, and eight children, destitute of food, house, and raiment.

"Thus reduced, I could not think of remaining in a place where it would have been impossible to have clothed and re-furnished my family; therefore, availing myself of the protection offered by the present opportunity, I retired with them within the king's lines.

"As it was impossible (through want of carriage) to save anything out of the house, the valuable little library given by the Society was burnt, together with my own; and the plate belonging to Trinity Church, at Fairfield, was lost, as well as that of my family; and the handsome church itself was entirely consumed.

"The people of that mission have met with a heavy stroke in the loss of their church, parsonage-house, plate, books, &c., not to mention myself, their unworthy minister.

"My loss includes my little all; but what I most regret is my absence from my flock, to which my heart was, and still is, most tenderly attached. I trust, however, that the Great Shepherd will keep them in his own tuition and care.

"I bless the Lord for that, through all my trials, I have endeavoured to keep a conscience void of offence towards God and towards men; continually striving to discharge my duties to my master, my King, and my people; and an bound to thank the Lord daily for that divine protection, that tranquillity of mind, and that peace of conscience which, through his grace, I have all along enjoyed. Be assured, however, that I am nevertheless, Rev. Sir, your affectionate brother,

"JOSEPH SAYRE.

"Flushing, Long Island, Nov. 8, 1779."

We have already given some account of the venerable John Beach. No name is better known in the annals of the New England clergy. The extracts from his letters which follow will convey some notion of his long and laborious service; and the latter, to his sufferings in the cause of loyalty.

"Newtown, May 6, 1772.

"As it is now forty years since I have had the advantage of being the venerable Society's missionary in this place, I suppose it will not be improper to give a brief account how I have spent my time, and improved their charity. Every Sunday I have performed divine service, and preached twice, at Newtown and Reading alternately. And in these forty years I have lost only two Sundays through sickness; although in all that time I have been afflicted with a constant colic, which has not allowed me one day's ease or freedom from pain. The distance between the churches at Newtown and Reading is between eight and nine miles, and a very good road, yet have I never failed one time to attend each place according to custom, through the badness of the weather, but have rode it in the severest rains and snow storms, and have never been seen to stop, and my horse this good effect on my parishioners, that—besides having been ashamed to stay from church on account of bad weather, so that they are remarkably forward to attend the public worship. As to my labours without my parish, I have formerly performed divine service in many towns where the common-prayer had never been heard, nor the Scriptures read in public; and where now are flourishing congregations of the Church of England, and in some places where there never had been any public worship at all, or any sermon preached by any preacher of any denomination.

"In my travelling to preach the gospel, once was my life remarkably preserved in passing a deep and rapid river. The retrospect on my fatigues, as lying on straw, &c., gives me pleasure, while I flatter myself that my labour has not been quite in vain, for the Church of England people are increased much more than twenty to one; and what is infinitely more pleasing, many of them are remarkable for piety and virtue; and the independents here are more knowing in matters of religion than they who live at a great distance from our church. We live in harmony and peace with each other, and the rising generation of the independents seem to be entirely free from every prejudice and prejudice against the church, &c. &c.

"JOHN BEACH.

"New Town, October 31, 1781.

"It is a long time since I have done my duty in writing to the venerable Society, not owing to my carelessness, but to the impossibility of conveyance from here, and now do it sparingly. A narrative of my troubles I dare not now give. My two congregations are growing; that of Reading being commonly about 300 and at New Town about 600. I baptize about 130 children in one year, and lately two adults. New Town and the Church of England part of Reading are (I believe) the only parts of New England that have refused to comply with the doings of the congress, and for that reason have been the butt of general hatred; but God has delivered us from entire destruction.

"I am now in the eighty-second year of my age, yet do constantly alternate perform and preach at New Town and Reading. I have been sixty years a public preacher, and, after conviction, in the Church of England fifty years; but had I been sensible of my insufficiency, I should not have undertaken it. But now I rejoice in that I think I have done more good towards men's eternal happiness than I should have done in any other calling. I do most heartily thank the venerable Society for their liberal support, and beg that they will accept of this, which is, I believe, my last bill, £324, which, according to former custom, is due.

"At this age I cannot well hope for it, but I pray God I may have an opportunity to explain myself with safety; but must conclude now with Job's expression—'Have pity upon me, have pity upon me, O ye friends.'"

Ecclesiastical Intelligence.

ENGLAND.

ST. JAMES'S CHURCH, NORWICH, NOTTING-HILL.—The new Church of St. James's, Notting-hill, was consecrated on Thursday last by the Bishop of London, assisted by Archbishop Sinclair, and many of the clergy of the diocese. After the usual ceremonies and prayers, the bishop delivered a lengthened and appropriate discourse from St. Luke, xiv. v. 28. On the conclusion of the sermon, a collection took place in aid of the building-fund, and amounted to 757. 8s. 8d. The style in which the Church is built is a mixture of the Norman and Gothic. The seats, which are constructed very low, will accommodate seven hundred and fifty persons, and one half of them are free.

ILGON.—The corner-stone of a new Church at Ilgon, Cornwall, has just been laid, by the Right Rev. the Lord Bishop of the Diocese.

LIVERPOOL.—On the 11th instant the foundation-stone of a new Church about to be erected at West Derby, was laid with the accustomed ceremonies, in the presence of a large number of the clergy and gentry of the neighbourhood.

THE CHURCH OF LEVERINGTON, near Wisbeach, was opened last week, after undergoing a thorough restoration, at a cost of near 1,500l., towards which the Rev. J. H. Sparke, the rector, contributed 500l. A new open roof has been put up, and the old pews have been replaced by open seats.

MIDDLETON.—The family and friends of the late Mr. Smith, Middleton Hall, late Steward for Lord Suffolk, have presented to Middleton Church, a new and valuable oak reading-desk. It bears the following inscription in old Roman letters carved on it, viz.—"Theophilus Smith departed this life, aged XXXI, in September, and Agnes, his daughter, aged XXXI, in January, MDCCLXXII, in memory of whom this latter is given to the Church of St. Leonard's, Middleton."

OPENING OF LEAMINGTON CHURCH.—On the 17th instant, the re-opening of the new Church of Leamington, on the completion of the choir, took place with considerable solemnity. At about eleven o'clock a procession of more than fifty clergymen left the vicarage, and passed round the east and south side of the church to the western entrance. The procession, which was conducted by the Rev. E. Fortescue, entered the church at the western door, and proceeded to the altar, within the rails of which the Rural Deans and distinguished Ecclesiastics from distant parts were accommodated; the rest of the clergy sat in the choir on either side. The sermon was preached by the Rev. R. Parkinson, Canon of Manchester. The Prayer of Consecration was read by the Rev. J. Craig, the Vicar. There were about 200 communicants of all ranks; and the offerings amounted to more than £200. The church now consists of a gorgeous choir and a nave, with aisles, the transepts remain for the present in their original state; and the interstices, over which will be raised the tower and spire, is temporarily roofed in. The works will be proceeded with, without much delay, and when completed, the parish-church will be one of the noblest temples erected to the honour and service of God in this country since the Reformation.—Oxford Herald.

ST. ASAPH.—The bodily condition of the venerable Bishop of St. Asaph is so impaired as to render it unlikely that he will again be able to visit the episcopal residence, the physicians having prohibited his removal from London in his present state of health.

PEWS AND SELFISHNESS.—A Correspondent of the Times writes thus to that paper.—An accident last Sunday morning caused me to attend our established worship of the new church in Wilton-place. Aware of the generally crowded state of the congregation at this season, I went quite prepared, if necessary, to stand during the service, being fortunately blessed with ability to do so without inconvenience. After the first lesson, many of the empty places were filled up, but one pew (No. 65) remained nearly full empty. At the suggestion of the pew-opener, a lady near me moved towards it, and stood piteously for some time at the door, but in vain, till

another person took pity on her, and she got a place further on. Coming towards me the pew-opener said, "There is plenty of room there, but I dare not put you there. I thought you would prefer to stand, and remain during the service a 'standing reproach' to this church, and pew. Having stood a considerable time near the door, she, or pity, or courtesy induced a young lady to apply apparently for permission to let me in; but an audible snuff-taking indicated a refusal, and she resumed her seat. The sermon came, and again permission appeared to be applied for; but a rough and audible 'sit still' conveyed a second refusal, and I stood throughout the sermon, with at least two places unoccupied at my elbow.—I asked, but not heard, but observed that the occupants of the pew remained to attend the following extract:—'I feel the verger for their name, but be refused to give it, saying, 'I know what you mean; it is cruel; but it is always the same.' For my part, Sir, I think the newspaper press has now become almost the only road by which persons can be made to hear the truth, that selfishness is un-Christian for the sermon I heard confirmed my impression, that fashionable elegants are wanting in straightforward honest desire to tell honestly truths to their fashionable congregations. Such conduct, if unnoticed, is a disease likely to spread in an atmosphere, as that of Pimlico, and therefore you may perhaps think it a proper subject for remark. The lesson we heard read contained the warning story of him who said,—'God, I thank thee that I am not as other men are.'"

RECIPE TO MAKE A CHURCH RATE MARTYR.—A correspondent of the Church Chronicle thus addresses that at the late annual meeting of the Church of England, Wildcombe Parish, reminded me of a witty speech delivered some years ago, on the same subject, and from which I will here venture to extract the following extract:—"First purchase property subject to the payment of a church-rate; be sure to have a deduction made from its value on account of future payments; as soon as you have got it, immediately have consultations scrupled, keep the money for yourself, refuse payment, and get into gaoler. As soon as you are there, let another church-rate martyr read an address to you, at the head of a deputation; whilst it is reading, listen with feelings that no effort can express to the feelings of every man full of fortitude, for the whole scene be the most touching that can be imagined; then offer supplications in a manner so simple, in a tone so touching, in a strain so fitting the occasion, and in a speech of meekness and kindness so lovely, as to subdue the feelings of every man present, and to make every man weeping; at the next public meeting (if sufficiently recovered from his powerful emotions) proclaim that he had actually seen you in prison, and that he had the pleasure of knowing that you were not laid in that place as a murderer, or a thief, or as an out-law, but through the contrivance of the law, and the conduct of some of the spiritual Priests of the Church of England. This done, you will have become a genuine Church-rate Martyr; and subscriptions to soothe your unwarmed woes will be poured in accordingly."

THE MAYOR'S REPORT.—The actual number of petitions presented against the endowment of Maynooth was 10,243, and the signatures to them amounted to the unprecedented number of 1,288,165.

REV. B. W. NOEL ON "THE CATHOLIC CLAIMS." A new assailant of the Irish Church has just appeared in the person of the Rev. B. W. Noel, who has addressed a paper to the Lord Bishop of Cashel, entitled "The Catholic Claims," the object of which is to recommend an offering to the Romanists for the injuries which have been from time to time inflicted on them by the English Government, and a sop to lull their present discontent, and that offering is the disavowal of the whole property of the Irish Church and its separation from the State; the extinction of the Church as an establishment in Ireland.

As we have not yet been able to procure this publication, we shall abstain for the present from any comment of our own upon the extracts