

The Church.

VOLUME VII.—No. 16.]

COBourg, CANADA, FRIDAY, OCTOBER 27, 1843.

[WHOLE NUMBER, CCCXXVII.]

Poetry.

THE CHURCH.

The World asks oft: How shall we know the Church,
Amid the tumult of sectarian storms;
While each day shows, without especial search,
Opposing temples, worship, faith, and forms?
—Not vain the question, CHRISTIAN, if we deem
They wish, all near by early Truth to gleam?
The test is easy: Each true Church conforms,
In least things to her Master's patterning:
Where'er are gaily men who, worshipping
The FATHER, SON and HOLY GHOST, do guide
Themselves by God's pure Word, and humbly tend
CHRIST'S mystic Sacraments, with ministering
Apostolic.—With such as these, abide
CHRIST'S Promise and His Church till Time shall end!

CHARGE OF THE BISHOP OF PETERBOROUGH.

DELIVERED IN ST. MARTIN'S CHURCH, LEICESTER,
JULY 31, 1843.
(From the Leicester Journal.)

My Reverend Brethren—Since last we met together on an occasion like the present, the rapid flight of time has brought us three years nearer that great day when we shall be called upon to render an account of the charge committed to us. With this reflection on his mind, even the most diligent minister, on looking back, will see reason to lament his many deficiencies. But, blessed is he, who can say, that he has humbly sought to serve his Heavenly Master; that, through God's grace, it has been his great desire to fulfil the solemn engagement by which he has bound himself, to feed the flock over which the Holy Ghost has made him overseer. In my last Address, I could not help expressing my sense of the improved feeling I believed to exist amongst the ministers of the Church, as to the nature and obligation of their calling. I trust that this feeling is increasing. It is indeed impossible for a minister to estimate too highly the importance of his office, or to feel too deeply the obligations by which he is bound. He has undertaken a charge which requires his most watchful care, and his most deep and devout prayers that he may receive that grace which alone can make him sufficient for the faithful discharge of his sacred trust. Without a holy devotedness of heart, the work of a minister can never prosper, and no one ought to engage in so weighty an undertaking, unless he can believe that God has implanted in his heart an earnest desire to perform it faithfully. To enter, indeed, on the sacred office without a humble and devout resolve to fulfil the solemn duties which he binds himself to nothing less than a contempt of the common principles of truth and honesty. The minister is the dispenser of those holy rites which God has appointed as a means of bringing souls to salvation. He is to be an instructor of the people and their example.

Great and many are the benefits to a country from an established ministry. We may, indeed, believe that without this, there would be good and holy men who would at times come forth with their pious and zealous exertions, seeking to call sinners to repentance. But an established religion brings within the reach of every one, opportunities of public worship. The great benefit of having a ministry is both for the private and public services of religion. An established religion, however, seems to imply a connexion with property; and we cannot deny that there will be instances where this operates as a temptation to enter into the ministry from worldly motives. But I do trust, that in these days, the greater number of those who now enter upon the ministry are impressed with the sacredness of their charge. I see much of encouragement in the improved feeling in the minds of the candidates for ordination, and it will be a consolation to every devout minister of Christ to be able to believe that when his own work is drawing to a close, he shall be followed by one who will earnestly seek to carry on God's gracious design of bringing souls to Christ, and through Christ to salvation. And what can we, the elders of the ministry, wish for more than that a race may succeed, whose power for good shall be greater than his own. Where this right feeling exists, there will be a friendly and profitable intercourse between the elder and the younger clergy, and much good may be expected to result from this Christian communication. It must be a great encouragement, and a great help to a young minister, who comes as a stranger into a new land, to feel that he is within the reach of the counsel of an able and experienced Christian brother, whom he may follow as he has followed Christ, and so far only, for true wisdom must come from above, and we must be taught of God before we can ever be the safe guides and teachers of others. The wise Christian teacher will not seek his satisfaction in making converts to party opinions, or in drawing men from one party to another, or even from bodies of Christians to his own Church—if that be all. His aim will be to bring them nearer to God.—It will be the spiritual progress, the growth in grace, the increased and still increasing holiness of his people; but there will be no desire to honour God, and this will be seen in all that is connected with God's worship and service. On a former occasion I did not consider it a departure from the spiritual purposes of our meeting together to call your attention to the state of your churches (I mean considered merely as the fabrics and edifices for worship), and that all should be decent and suited to its purposes. It is not a matter in which the desires and feelings of the minister are the chief reasons for urging a regard for these things. It is for the benefit and advantage of the congregation, and the consideration of the subject therefore belongs particularly to the lay members of our Church, and will ensure the diligent and generous care of those, who know what holy regard is due in all things relating to God and his services.

A strong feeling has indeed prevailed, and is increasing, that our churches should be rescued from the unseemly condition which has for a long time disgraced us. The churchwardens have now, however, in many instances, endeavoured to make themselves acquainted with the subjects connected with their office, and have shown a desire to discharge the duties of their office, and to carry out the recommendations of the Archdeacons and Rural Deans, as to providing for the proper state of their churches, and restoring them when they require it. And we are greatly encouraged to hope that, ere long, the house of prayer in every parish will be such as to show that we will not dishonour God by the meanness of the house, which we profess to dedicate to him. If the neglected state of some of our churches arise from a poor and pitiful desire of adding something to the savings of our worldly store, this is a saving God will never bless.—But if it arise from an opposite spirit, from an ostentation which spares nothing that can gratify selfish pride and vanity, which is extravagant in the adornment of the person, and the private dwellings, as if nothing were too costly for ourselves, and anything were good enough for God, we cannot contemplate a state of mind like this without the deepest pain and grief. The feeling should be the very reverse of this. We should seek for that Christian contentedness of mind which is satisfied with little for personal gratification, but which sees nothing too good for God and his service.

You will not mistake me, my Reverend Brethren, and I trust we shall none of us fall into the error of believing that religion consists in these external things.

They are, however, signs of religion, and, we may hope, helps to it. It is gratifying, therefore, to see what has been done, and is still in progress, in building and repairing, and even in many cases, in adorning our churches. And we have much need of devout prayer and humble and holy minds; but too much of our thoughts should not rest on these outward marks of respect for sacred things. It is the heart that God requires; it is the humble and contrite spirit that he regards, and we run a risk of doing a grievous injury to our flock, if by drawing their thoughts towards these outward things, we turn them from that which ought to be the constant object of their deepest anxiety—their spiritual preparation for eternity. We are to come to God in penitence, in faith, and in an obedient heart. All that tends to promote this humble and holy state of mind, will be used and encouraged by every faithful servant of God; but all the outward circumstances and ceremonies of religion will lay a dangerous snare in our path, and retard our spiritual progress, if we give them a wrong place, or magnify them beyond their real importance. The same danger may, indeed, await us in all our religious observances. A devout worshipper, for instance, desires to offer to God the service of the body as well as of the soul.—The rubric directs as to the proper attitude of prayer and praise. In prayer, we are directed to place ourselves in the humblest attitude, bending on our knees to the earth, from whence we were taken.—In praise, when we would lift up our hearts to God, we are directed to offer this service in a corresponding position of the body; we properly raise ourselves on our feet during this part of the service. But how grievously shall we err, if we give undue prominence to these outward properties, or attach importance to the direction in which the worshippers turn their bodies, and other matters relating to places, postures, and positions, and thus lead our people to believe that they are more accepted in the sight of God for these forms and ceremonies, when there may in truth be in them much more of superstition than of that which marks the real Christian, and the inward spirit and devotedness of the soul; and it is in that disposition alone that we can ever offer a sacrifice acceptable to God.

I doubt not the sincerity of those who have adopted, and who are encouraging these practices, believing them to be, and, perhaps, finding them to be helps to devotion. But all those things are easily adopted, and they will be adopted by many who will be satisfied with these outward marks, and will lead others to be satisfied with them, whilst they know nothing of that spiritual worship which breathes through all our prayers, and which it is the great object of our Church to promote and to foster. We have need, indeed, to be watchful as to the spirit in which we receive all the ordinances of our religion. Religion cannot thrive in the soul without God's blessing; and his help and his presence are promised in the use of his own means; and where he has appointed services, and ordinances, and sacraments, if we neglect them, or think lightly of them, we are setting up our own judgment against the commands of Him who cannot err.

Now, if any one should ask why we baptize, and why we use water in the Sacrament of Baptism, and what we expect from it, our simple answer is, that we do this because Christ hath commanded it; and, practically speaking, we expect his blessing on it, because he has promised his blessing to those, and to those only, who seek to obey his commands. In the other sacrament we use bread and wine, for the same reasons, simply because Christ has commanded us to do this. Great and precious promises are annexed to obedience. We cannot be too full in our expectations of God's favour, while in sincere faith, we trust in his mercies and love, and on his promises, and habitually seek to be guided by his will.

The minister who is devoutly seeking the spiritual good of his people, will desire to see them all partakers of the means of grace. He will make it the great subject of his labours and his prayers, that, by God's Spirit working in them, they may be brought to a right state of mind to receive all the benefits which are promised to the faithful.

The Gospel calls us to come unto Christ, and to come with a deep confession of humble and of contrite hearts, and in earnest prayer for that renewal of the soul to godliness, which alone can show that we are in a state of acceptance with God, in that state which the apostle contemplates, when he speaks of converts to the Gospel being new creatures in Christ Jesus, washed and sanctified by his Spirit.

The object of all our services is, to lead us to this state of mind, and they are valuable only as they tend to this, but as God has appointed them, we may be sure that they tend to this, if humbly and rightly received, we may join in them not for the better, but for the worse. If we trust in them, instead of trusting in Christ, we shall receive them not to our salvation, but to our condemnation.

Nothing, indeed, is more tempting to the natural man than to rest on the outward ordinances, instead of resting on him who hath appointed them. We may profess to honour the Church, and so trust, like the Jews of old, in the Temple, and cry like them, "The temple of the Lord," instead of looking to the great Head of the Church, and seeking to be living temples to his glory. In truth, you have neither in the Old Testament nor the New, any error against which the Divine indignation is so powerfully and so strongly directed, as that which leads the people to rest on outward observances instead of giving their hearts to God, and trusting in him. Our blessed Saviour's awful denunciations were directed against none more strongly than against those who were most scrupulous in the form and observances of religion, whilst they rested on that for acceptance, and knew nothing of that humble state of the soul which marks the really penitent, and calls forth the deep confession of the heart, "God be merciful to me, a sinner."

We would still seek by every outward mark of reverence to show our desire to give the Lord "the honour due unto his name." It is always needful, and perhaps never more than at the present time, to show that the sanctification of the soul is the great object of all our public services, and that which must prepare the redeemed in Christ to stand before his judgment-seat. And to lead to this state of the heart, this preparation for judgment, the great doctrines of the Gospel must be plainly and fully set before the people; and in our own Church, where the great doctrine of the atonement has been the most fully set forth, there have been found the greatest number of hearers, and what is far more than this, there we believe there has been an increase among the people in holy zeal, devotedness to spiritual things, and watchfulness in Christian duty; there has been in truth a marked revival in our Church, since this and other great doctrines connected with it have been made the subject of the teaching of our ministers. Where the mercy of God and sufferings of Christ are preached, and by faith received, there is the right motive, and consequently the best security for right conduct, "we love him because he first loved us."

My Rev. Brethren, you must expect but little good from your instructions, if you fail to set before your hearers that great doctrine of the Gospel and of our Protestant Church, the justification by Christ, through faith in him.

There are questions on which good and faithful men may differ, but those are generally questions which we believe, do not involve the essential and vital doctrines of the Gospel, and on which, therefore, a difference of opinion may and will exist. But this need not make any breach in Christian unity. Nay, rather give exercise to Christian humility as to our own opinion, and Christian forbearance towards those who differ from us. There may still be that union of mind which marked the character of the Christians in past days; yes, even when many different rules and forms prevailed in different Churches. But justification by faith, this great doctrine of the Gospel and of our Church, justification by Christ's merits alone, is at the very foundation of our religion, the ground and pillar of a Christian Church. If this be lost, all is lost; if this be suppressed, all our power for good is gone. You must not allow yourselves, my brethren, to be kept back from preaching this, however you may be tempted by the writing and by the example of men of name and character in past days, or by the opinions upon this subject which are advocated in our own days. Christ crucified was the first great object of the teaching of the first ministers of the Gospel, forgiveness of sins through him was the message committed to them—it was their message of salvation; the gracious influence of the Spirit accompanied the word, and prepared the souls of the converts for their eternal inheritance. The preacher must still show the same way of salvation; there is no other. And in our preaching there must be, I repeat, a full and faithful statement of this great truth of the Gospel; there must be no reserve in clearly and fully delivering the message, as it has been delivered to us.

I should say the same, even if we had heard nothing of that teaching which has even of late been openly advised, of reserve in communicating religious knowledge, for there has long been this reserve. It has been many years weakening our Church. There is nothing new in this, I lament to say, although no precept had, till of late, been set forth openly to recommend it. It was, I believe, this reserve in proclaiming the great doctrine of the atonement, which, in years not long gone by, thinned, or almost emptied our churches; yet, emptied them of their most devoted worshippers; and those few who remained, received but little spiritual benefit, as far as the Church's instructions were concerned. And even then, many a talented and highly educated man, and one who was speaking the truth too, but suppressing the chief truth, saw the number of his hearers diminishing, for there was little in his teaching which could in any way interest the minds of those who were in any way interested in the salvation of their souls, and were hungering after the bread of life. There was still less to raise a holy anxiety in those who were slumbering in a spiritual indifference. And it was even so, when to the learning and to the moral character of the minister there was added, much that could give grace and decorum to his ministrations. Whilst the humblest of Christ's ministers, the humblest in situation, and the humblest in worldly accomplishments, and what is called worldly influence, for bearing with their Christ's message, armed with the power which Christ gives to his faithful ministers—those men were blessed by seeing multitudes assembled to hear the word. They were men, we devoutly believe, instruments in God's hands, of turning many to righteousness. And this town, and this church, may bear me faithful witness to this great truth. And I trust that many of the inhabitants of this town can respond from their own hearts to the truth of these words,—that Christ crucified is preached unto them, and is shown to them as the way of salvation, and that they are led to seek that, the only way of salvation. And, in truth, it is not often that hearers are wanting, where the great truths of the Gospel are set forth by a minister who feels all the power of them in his own soul; for that is the first great requisite. Though the number of hearers is not the true test of a minister's success, for many will hear, and hear in vain, yet among the many there will be always some who will receive the word to their spiritual comfort, and to the salvation of their souls. And, indeed, if the declaration of God's love in Christ will not draw the hearts of the hearers to holy love and obedience, you may be well assured, my Reverend Brethren, that no other teaching can do it.

A faithful minister knows that he must deliver his message of mercy, he dare not reserve it, although he knows and is willing to declare that its benefits belong only to those who receive it rightly; the responsibility of receiving it is with them, but by no means does that diminish the responsibility of the minister who is to deliver it. "Go," says our blessed Lord, "and preach the Gospel to every creature." Now he who committed to us this message knew what was in man, and what means and methods were most fitted to effect his own gracious purposes in the salvation of a soul, and the preaching of the atonement for sin through Christ has always been to some, as to the Jews, a stumbling-block, and to others, as to the learned Greeks, it appeared foolishness. Yet to those who have rightly received it, it has fully proved itself to be the power of God, and the wisdom of God.—There have always been opposers to this teaching.—The same objections were made to the Apostle Paul himself, while he preached this doctrine, and to the other apostles. They were accused of giving encouragement to sin, and teaching that men might continue in their sins, that God's grace might abound in the forgiveness of them. St. Paul himself was called upon to answer that objection, for he showed them that this preaching of the Gospel, of God's forgiving mercy through Christ, did not mean without the law, yea, he said, they establish the law, and the same objection has been constantly put forth against the same truths. The offence of the cross has never ceased. The real cause of man's unwillingness to receive this doctrine of grace, is not that it leads to carelessness of living, but on the contrary, that it is connected with that holiness of living which never pleases the world, since it preaches repentance and faith, and devotedness of the soul to God.

Happily the number has been, of late years, increasing in our Church, of those who are preaching the great truths of the Gospel to their hearers, and what was, not many years ago, spoken of as enthusiasm and fanaticism, is now confessed and felt to be the very words of truth and soberness. Many of us are old enough to remember the days, when in these very pulpits where Christ is now preached as the Way, the Truth, and the Life, this doctrine was contemptuously held forth as a sort of new light, and called uncharitable, unchristian-like, and dangerous. The rule of private conversation was in the same course. The fear was, that men would be righteous over much, and, by a profane perversion of the Gospel message, the whole spirit, truth, and law of the Gospel was opposed. But you, my Reverend Brethren, know that there is no degree of holiness that can go beyond the requirements of Scripture. And when, as Churchmen, we look at our book of prayer, we shall most of us be compelled to feel that we fall far short of its heavenly devotion. The most exalted saints and servants of the Lord will be the most ready to confess, that they are unprofitable servants, and to bless God, who has allowed them to plead for pardon, and to plead through Christ.

We cannot too thankfully praise God that, through his grace, that disposition seems to be departing, which seemed to lower the standard of obedience and ministerial responsibility. A watchful minister knows the difficulty of raising the minds of his hearers to a serious concern for their everlasting interests; he knows this too well to allow a word to drop from him, which might by the most remote possibility check the religious anxiety of one of the humblest of his hearers, or lower his desires after God and heaven. The great enemy of their salvation will be ready enough to do this, and to draw them downwards. The world, with

its temptations, will be ever at hand to lend its aid to this. You, my Reverend Brethren, I trust, desire to raise the minds of your hearers upwards, to show them the right way, watching your flocks, as they that must give account when the chief Shepherd shall appear.

If this watchful care be increasing, and if I continue, we have no need to fear that our Church shall lose her power for good. That Church will never fail which is fulfilling the objects for which she was appointed. Our Church has had many a trial, no doubt; but she was in the greatest danger when her danger was least apparent to her ministers, and when the ministers and the people were slumbering in fancied security, and were showing a grievous forgetfulness of the spiritual work for which the Church was set apart. There seemed to be, indeed, amongst us, a willingness to let the Church sink down, as it were, to accommodate its teaching to the careless manners of an ungodly age; we well know that the knowledge of the requirements of the Gospel was grievously low and defective. There was a backwardness in setting forth the great doctrines of the Gospel, and in showing the need of that high practical holiness which is always connected with the reception of right doctrine. And the character of our Church was lowered in the estimation of the people. This endeavour to suit the Church to the world, saddened the minds of those who were devoutly seeking to be the subjects of that kingdom which is not of this world. There were many noble and honourable exceptions. But there were in the ministry and in the people—I repeat it—a defective view of doctrine and of practice. Neglect of public worship was the natural result of this; and though we might have been well content to see those from our congregations, whose levity of mind and careless and ungodly manner of living, made their outward conformity of little benefit to themselves, and no honour at all to our Church,—yet, it was a cause of grief to see the devout members of our Church deserting us; and still more when, in many instances, they were able to allege a cause which seemed sufficient to account for their separation, though it might not justify it.

But I believe even in those days there was little ground for the accusations put forth against our clergy in general, of their being a selfish, miserly, and grasping priesthood. That was not their character; their habits and education did not tend to draw them that way. A spirit of generous liberality, rather than of grasping selfishness, has in truth, been the character of the clergy of our land. But then there was a want of that sacredness of character, and that deep sense of spiritual responsibility, which ever mark the manner and conduct of those who feel the awful nature of the message with which they are charged, of those who are sent to beseech the people in Christ's stead, to be reconciled to God, to stand between the living and the dead, that the plague of ungodliness may be staid. But a reference to times past can be profitable to us only, inasmuch as it shows us what we are to avoid, and what it will be our wisdom to imitate.

In seeking to further the great work for which we are set apart, our own parochial system gives the best opportunity. The minister according to that system, is placed in the midst of his flock. He has the spiritual charge of the fold. If this had been felt and fully acted upon, and every parish had its resident minister, either as Incumbent or Curate, a watchful, diligent, holy man giving to his people, besides his own, other pastoral care, the opportunity of worshipping twice on every Sabbath, we might then have reasonably expected, that the people in every parish would have shown those marks of spiritual progress, which many of you, my Reverend Brethren, I trust, have already found, where you have so fulfilled the requirements of our Church.

The watchful care of the pastor begins with his flock from their tender years. He feeds the lambs of his fold, bringing them up in the nurture of the Lord. I am aware of the difficulties, which in many cases prevent you from fully carrying out the system of our Church, and there are many cases which must form reasonable exceptions.

The law as it now stands, binds upon the Incumbent, indeed, to comply with that demand of our Church, which ensures residence. This may fall hard upon those who are entering upon very small preferments. But where the charge is undertaken with a previous knowledge of all those circumstances, no one can reasonably complain. I trust, however, that there is no disposition to complain on the part of the greater number of the Incumbents, who have lately entered upon their charge. There is no need to speak to them of the law, for their willing minds have given them a law better than the law of man. There are many happy examples in the cases of those older Incumbents who are not bound by the present law, yet have shown themselves ready with all their power, to give their energies and strength to the holy work to which they feel that God has appointed them. Laws, have, in truth, no operation upon the faithful minister of Christ. He who feels that Christ is his Master, and to him he must give account, does not want for human laws to bind him; he feels, indeed, that he is bound by the love of Christ that constraineth him, and his labour becomes a labour of love. And where there is not this Divine law written in the heart, very little spiritual good will be done by the intervention of human laws. Where this law of love is in the heart, no other law is wanting.

The work of education, and the training up of the children of the poor to godliness, is, perhaps, the first and most important work committed into the hands of a Christian minister. All attempts to accomplish this by legal enactments would be, sure, if not to fail, at least to fall far short of their object. But the parochial system of our Church does, in fact, in many cases, leave the work of education in the hands of the parish minister, and very little permanent good will be effected without his help; and we cannot in any way see how we can be relieved from this responsibility. If he be an able and discreet, and above all, a devout minister, the work will not fail in his hands. The regular habit of Sabbath-teaching, which implies public worship twice every Sunday, and with the children under the eye of the minister, and under his instruction, must be productive of good. But where this requirement of our Church is not fulfilled, where there is not a resident minister and full double service, any failure must not be attributed to a defect in the system; the failure will be because the system is not in operation.

But an earnest minister will not be content merely with his Sabbath ministrations, or with having the children before him on the Sunday. The work of education is going on during the week; and until this part of the ministerial system is in full operation, the requirement of our Church is not satisfied. In large parishes this work is difficult; in small ones it is apt to be overlooked. But, however large your parishes, do not be discouraged from endeavouring to bring the work of Christian education into as full operation as circumstances will admit of. However small your little flock, do not think that it can be safely neglected.

Every year is bringing into more complete operation that provision of the law, the object of which is to place resident ministers in every parish, that all the inhabitants may have an opportunity of worshipping both at morning and evening service. I am most anxious to see this even now, wherever it can be accomplished, and feel most thankful that there are so

many of the clergy of this diocese who are so anxious, with myself, to see the full application of our Church's rule. And I cannot help being gratified at having before me the people themselves, expressing their most earnest desire that their ministers should give them double service, that they may have the full advantages of their ministrations, advantages which they are in most cases so willing to confess and acknowledge.

I need not repeat to you, my Reverend Brethren, that it is not merely having a resident minister that will effectually further the objects of an Established Church; the great question is, what sort of minister he is, for the instructions of a worldly minister will be ineffectual, and his example will be dangerous. But I trust that we shall have few such cases; I feel that we have much to encourage us, much of the presence of God, and much that we may look forward to with cheering hope. Many an able minister is earnestly labouring in his holy calling from his love to the work in which he is engaged; with love to the souls of his people; with a loss instead of a gain as to worldly recompense, and encouraged by no worldly prospect, but upheld by the desire of approving himself in the sight of God, and winning souls to him. And we may, I trust, be allowed to hope, that God is adding to the number of those who shall be effectually called by him to be the stewards of his mysteries, and to whom he will give grace and power so to fulfil their sacred duties, that at the great day, when he shall call upon them to give their account, they may be able to do it with joy, and not with grief.

THE CHOICE OF BOOKS AND THE RIGHT USE OF THEM.

(From the Nottingham Journal.)

Most persons will agree with us, that there is nothing which poisons men's minds so much as unwholesome reading. The health of the mind depends upon the food it receives, just as much as the health of the body; and reading much cannot make the mind sound, any more than eating much can make the body healthy. There must be choice in the kind of food, and there must be prudence and wisdom in the use of it.

Often does it grieve us to hear a mother say of her child, even in his hearing—He is a good boy, he loves his book, and is always reading, &c. She might as well say, he is hungry, and loves his dinner, and is always eating. Many a fond mother has built her best hopes upon her child's love of reading, and has never dreamt of guiding him in the choice of his reading.

The truth is, the love of reading is just as much a natural bent or desire, as any other appetite or lust that belongs to our bodies; and, like all of them, may be turned into a temptation and a snare to evil. The mind may be poisoned as easily as the body; but with this difference, that it is not so easily cured. Now the chances are, that a man will meet with much more bad reading than good reading; and therefore parents, instead of feeling safe of their children because they are fond of reading, ought rather to fear the danger of it, and to take great pains to guide them in their choice of books.

In the first place, all the common every-day reading that falls into a young man's hands is quite sure to be bad; for this very plain reason, that it is written by men who have not the least thought for the welfare of their readers, and only write what will amuse most and sell best. I mean, all the common prints of the day,—newspapers and periodicals, reviews, cheap novels and romances, and comic books with comic engravings. They are all bad food for the mind, at least if they are read to them at all; but if we do, we must read them in due measure and in due place. If we read a newspaper, we may read it without harm, if we look at it only to learn what is going on in our country, and in the rest of the world. If a man loves his Church and country, he must feel an interest to know what his rulers are doing, and he may fairly look at a newspaper for this purpose; but let him not get his opinions of any men or any measures from those newspapers. They are, they must be, unsafe guides, because they are written for the most unrighteous purposes, to condemn one party, and defend another, without caring for right or wrong. Many of them set themselves against the Government (which in itself must be wrong), and they set down to the worst motives all the efforts of the Queen and her Ministers for the people's good.

Every Churchman knows that he ought to give his rulers credit for doing the best for their subjects, far as they can see; and we ought to receive their measures accordingly. Still more must every Churchman be grieved at seeing the acts of his Bishops and Clergy so brought forward, and so hardly judged. It were better if those matters were not canvassed at all; in newspapers, even by those who do it in a friendly way; for neither the authors nor the readers are likely to be free from party spirit, and no one can help seeing that it has already brought the doctrines and discipline of the Church to be a matter of common talk and debate in reading-rooms and taverns.

We must beware, therefore, that we do not allow ourselves to debate on such subjects, nor hardly to answer an assailant (unless in the shortest way) if the time and place be unsuitable; and it would be much better if we would avoid (as a habit) the reading of discussions and judgments upon doctrines of our religion, or of the government of the Church. Whether those judgments be for or against, we must refuse to acknowledge their right of judging in such matters at all. As Churchmen we may not. And sure enough if we get into the habit of reading these matters at improper times and places, we shall soon get into the way of speaking and thinking lightly of them.

Much the same remarks will apply to novels and romances, and comic prints: they are written only to amuse, they are not written by men who have the least regard or interest in their readers. They generally put forward all the strong lusts and passions of mankind, as if they were the fine parts of a man, and most to be admired and copied. The wealthy and noble, and the beautiful and the powerful, are those whom they hold up as most to be envied and admired; and they cloak all the worst passions of our flesh under the fair names of manliness or gallantry, courage, honour, gentleman-like feeling, and so forth. It is very true that we may learn a great deal from the actions of bad men; but then they must be read under the right names. Tales, and made-stories, and plays, may be read with great benefit, if we are fully prepared to refuse the evil and choose the good. We may then learn as much as we do from the faults of our neighbours, which, when we cannot help seeing, we regret and avoid.

If we are constantly reading of things under their wrong names, and of the worst characters under the most flattering titles (bitter put for sweet, and sweet for bitter) we doubt if any mind whatever can help being by degrees perverted. At least, if a man can eat poison without its killing him, he may feed his mind on poison and be none the worse.

A few years ago, there really was nothing that a Churchman could read (we mean, nothing that he could read as a pastime or amusement) which would not really poison his mind. There were no books which could lead him to better knowledge of the history of his own country and of his own Church, or that could furnish such information about holy places and holy things, so as to enable him to understand the historical part of his Bible better. There were

very few tales of fiction which represented men and men's doings in their proper light. There were very few books of poetry, that were not either too sacred for common use, or too profane and indecent for any use at all.

One rule which we ought to keep in mind, never to read merely to pass away the time. Such reading is little more than idle gazing at a book. Always read with a view of learning something. And again, always learn with a view of doing something; i.e. with a view of applying to your own life and conduct what you learn. This is the great value of history, that we learn by example of men and things that have gone before; we learn to avoid their faults, and follow their virtues. We, of course, must pick out those persons whose circumstances most resemble our own; and we may find great guidance from studying their lives.

To a Churchman, the lives of the early Christians will claim the highest interest, and will serve to quicken his zeal and endeavours to live worthily of his fellowship. Let him only feel that he is a member of the same body in which the early Christians lived and died, and he will never grudge any little effort that he can make to advance the Church abroad, or to strengthen her at home.

Again, a Churchman must be eager to know the whole history of the Church, who planted it, who maintained it. He professes his belief in a Catholic Apostolic Church, and he trusts that he is a member of it; but how can he know it without going to history? Let him learn how the succession has always been maintained from the Apostles downwards; Bishop from Bishop receiving and giving the holy but mysterious powers which their Master left to his first servants for a never-ending ministry. He will find the history of the Church at large most carefully related by Mr. Palmer, and there he will learn to know how the Church in this country is a branch of the Church Catholic; and of this he will satisfy his mind, by reading Mr. Churton's account of the Early English Church. These works should be read most carefully, and they cannot fail to raise in every heart the greatest thankfulness for all the blessings which we enjoy as a Church and people. It is in vain that we read in God's Word of all the high privileges granted to the Church and body of Christ, unless we can assure ourselves that they are called to be members of that body. It would be in vain to thank God for our redemption through the Gospel, unless that Gospel had been preserved and brought down to us by his constant mercy and watchfulness over his Church. And in this land He has maintained his Church with special mercy. The first Church of the ancient Britons, we know, was overwhelmed by the heathen Saxons for 150 years. This He again restored to fresh life in the days of St. Augustine; and here it has stood, sometimes more rigorous, sometimes less; sometimes attacked grievously from without, sometimes grievously corrupted within; yet always supported from above.

The knowledge of these facts does encourage us to believe, that all its present trials are ordained by the same merciful hand for its chastening, for its purging, for its future strengthening and refreshing; and makes each born to bear a hand in the work. And each may help in his own degree; I mean, not only by contributing his time or money to her needs, but by living humbly in his own calling, and showing that Church-membership is not a name only. To live brotherly among our own members, and to bear ourselves meekly towards those who withdraw themselves from the Church's fellowship, will do more to convince the gainsayer than the stoutest arguments, or the cleverest wrangling, or the most exclusive dealing.

In this way we may make our reading not only amusement for the time, and a means of learning and storing our minds; but of also improving our lives, of strengthening our faith, and warming our love. We shall then return to the study of God's own book which every one, of course, must study daily, at more solemn and retired times, with a better understanding of its words, and greater thankfulness for its promises. We ought, indeed, to look upon all reading as more or less an handmaid to this one book, as indeed all books ought to be written more or less after the sacred model; and it speaks well, both for a book and for its reader, when reading carries our minds back to the Bible.

ADVANTAGES OF RELIGIOUS RETIREMENT AND MEDITATION.

(From the Letters of St. Basil, Archbishop of Caesarea, A. D. 370.)

What we have often taken pleasure in picturing together in imagination, is at length granted me to see in reality. Imagine to yourself a high mountain clothed with a thick forest, watered on the north by fresh and limpid streams; at the foot of this mountain is spread a plain perpetually fertilized by the waters which fall from the surrounding heights, whilst the forest, encircling it with trees of every variety, self-planted, in all the wildness of nature, serves it at once as a boundary and a defence. The island of Calypso would appear nothing after it, though Homer did admire it above all others, for its beauty. The place is divided into two deep valleys; on one side the river, which precipitates itself from the peak of the mountain, forms a long barrier in its course, difficult to surmount, and on the other the wide ridge of the mountains, which communicates with the valley only by a few winding intricate paths, shuts out all passage,—there is but one means of access, and that we are the masters. My dwelling is built on one of the slopes of the mountain, the extremity of which juts out like a promontory. From it survey the opening plain, and follow the course of the river, the delightful meadows, the still and lazy waters of the Strymon, indeed, scarcely deserve the name of a river; but this, the most rapid I have ever seen, breaks against the rocks, and, thrown back again by them, falls headlong into foaming waves, and precipitates itself into the deep gulch below; affording at once a most delightful spectacle, and an abundant supply of fish in its waters. I speak of the fragrant dew of the earth, the freshness which exhales from the rivers? Another would describe the variety of the flowers, and the songs of the birds, but to these I have no leisure to pay attention. What I have to say is the best of all, and that, along with the abundance of every thing, it affords likewise, what is to me the sweetest of all,—and that is tranquillity. It is not only far removed from the noise of cities, but it is not even visited by travellers, except sometimes by a few hunters who come among us; for we also have our wild beasts: not the bears and wolves of your mountains, but troops of stags, herds of wild goats, hares, and other animals as inoffensive. Pardon me, then, for having flown to this asylum; Alceon himself stopped when he came to the islands of the Echinades.

I recognise in the sentiments of your letter the hand which has traced them, as in looking at a child, we are reminded of its parents by a family likeness.—You write to me that the place I have chosen for my retreat makes no difference to you; that all you desire is to know my mode of life, that you may come and join me in it. Such a thought is every way worthy of one like yourself, who annexes no importance to the things of this world, in comparison with the beatitudes which are promised us in the next. "How do I pass," you ask, "my days and nights in the retirement in