

The Church.

"HER FOUNDATIONS ARE UPON THE HOLY HILLS."

THEREFORE I WILL NOT BE NEGLIGENT TO PUT YOU ALWAYS IN REMEMBRANCE OF THESE THINGS, THOUGH YE KNOW THEM AND BE ESTABLISHED IN THE PRESENT TRUTH.—2 PETER 1, 12.

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Poetry.

TO A CANDIDATE FOR ORDINATION.

There is a blessing on thee! go thy way,
Strong in the Lord and in his Spirit's power—
His shield be o'er thee in this evil day,
And his high name be thy defence and tower.

Rise, and go forward, warrior! though the fight
Gather around, and foes from earth and hell—
Upon thy brow descends the Spirit's might,
And hosts of heavenly legions guard thee well!

There is a holy shadow o'er thy head,
A pillar'd fire; that hath before thee gone—
Darkness and fear, amidst thy foes to spread,
But to give light to thee—arise, press on!

Grasp thy bright sword, young Warrior! Take thy shield,
Follow the road thy conquering Lord hath trod!
Stern contest waits thee in the battle field,
But go and prosper in the name of God!

Scenes in our Parish.

THE RIGHT REV. THOMAS WILSON, D. D., LORD BISHOP OF SODOR AND MAN.*

"The memory of the just is blessed." The records of men, in whom "pure and undefiled religion" has taken deep root downward, and brought much fruit upward, reflect honour on the past history of the Church, and encourage the servants of God in all after-times. Such, we believe, will be the effect of an acquaintance with the character of the subject of this memoir.

Thomas Wilson was of a respectable family, living at Burton, in Cheshire. He speaks of his parents as having been pious persons; and such we may reasonably suppose they were, so far as the existence of early piety in a child is any proof of the training exercised by the parents. At all events, the elements of godliness were found in this child at a very early period; no small evidence of which is the language of filial tenderness in which, when he was very young, he speaks of his father and mother. The favour of God, which so clearly rested on this youth, in his future life, may surely be conceived to have descended on him, in no small degree, from the dutiful spirit of his early childhood. Such was the character of him who, in the youthful days of his earthly sojourn, went down, and "was subject to his parents." Mr. Wilson received his early tuition from Mr. Harper, a school-master in the city of Chester; and, having laid a solid foundation under his care, entered at Trinity College, Dublin, with the intention of studying physic. But he who, at that time, had "called Luke the physician, whose praise was in the Gospel, to be an evangelist and physician of the soul," saw fit to divert the inclinations of Mr. Wilson into a different course. This change of purpose was the result of the persuasions of Archdeacon Hewetson, who afterwards gave him great assistance in his studies. Enough is not recorded of this period of his life to enable us to set it forth as an example to students: by its maturer fruits, however, we may decide, with tolerable certainty, that this period was well laid out. He was remarkable in after-life for the orderly distribution of his time; and, when we consider how many and important were his acquirements, we may feel sure that methodical arrangement formed a part of the discipline, as well as being the habit, of his earlier days. Whether Mr. Wilson experienced any marked change of sentiments at the time of his fixing upon the clerical office, does not appear. There are some whose views with regard to that office have been either so unworthy, or so undefined, that it is indispensable before men can put any confidence in them, or they in themselves, to find out what have been the motives that drew their steps towards the ministrations of the sanctuary. But to look for a change in all candidates for the sacred office, would be an impertinent demand. Some have been given to God from their mother's womb, and have "feared the Lord from their youth;" and these need only to have their principles deepened, and their minds farther enlightened. This was the case of Mr. Wilson, whose humility in the view of those qualifications which he undoubtedly possessed in a high degree, as well as his solemn approach to ordination, proved that the "preparation of his heart was of the Lord."

After finishing his studies at the University of Dublin, in the year 1686, he was ordained deacon by Dr. Moreton, bishop of Kildare. In a memorandum-book, given him on the day of his ordination by his friend Archdeacon Hewetson, he recorded the devotions of that interesting day.

"A more valuable gift (says one of his biographers) could scarcely have been bestowed on him than such a register, or a more useful plan suggested to him than that for the execution of which this gift was bestowed—the recording the principal events of his life. The advantages of this plan are numerous and important. It contributes, in a high degree, to intellectual, moral, and religious improvement, and to the effectual advancement of the temporal and spiritual interests of the writer. It constrains to self-observation, and leads to self-knowledge. A faithful diary discharges the office of a guardian and monitor. At the same time that it marks what has been already done in the great business of life, it discovers how much still remains to be done, and prompts to higher attainments and further proficiency. There is scarcely any book, which the writer himself will find more interesting or instructive, at a future period, than an exact diary of his past life. The journal should be uninterrupted. 'Nulla dies sine linea.' It should record every remarkable occurrence of the day, hints for improvements in knowledge and piety, an account of authors read, and occasional extracts of such passages as deserve particular notice. It should also register plans of study to be pursued, business to be transacted, resolutions to be performed, errors to be amended, and duties to be discharged."

Mr. Wilson speedily left Ireland for the curacy of Winwick, in Lancashire: here his stipend was extremely small;

* From the Church of England Magazine.

but, in being quite contented with it, he acted upon the belief of one of his favourite maxims, "Nature wants little, and grace wants less." His views were so far from mercenary, that the emoluments of the clerical office were never thought of by him; and out of a very small income, he set apart one-tenth for the poor. He fixed on a certain proportion of his income, which he would dedicate to the ends of charity; upon this fund he never infringed; and he strictly confined his personal wants within the limits of the remainder. And thus, what might be termed "deep poverty" (as far as regards his receipts from the Church of which he was a minister) abounded unto the riches of his liberality." The remarks of the same biographer on this head are well worthy of attention.

"To suppose that little good can be done without money is a gross error. The world is indebted to the instrumentality of men, who possessed neither silver nor gold, for the richest and noblest benefits that were ever conferred on mankind. The minister of the Gospel, however destitute of that 'trash which has been slave to thousands,' is entrusted with the true riches, and is constituted a dispenser of treasures which never fail. If he be faithful to his trust, if he 'walk worthy of the high vocation wherewith he is called,' he has no reason to envy the highest of the sons of men. No titles can be more honourable than those by which he is designated. He is styled 'the messenger of the Lord of Hosts,' an 'ambassador' from the King of kings, and 'a steward of the mysteries of God.' His employment is the noblest in the world. It is directed to the most important ends. It is designed to restore our fallen and depraved nature to its primitive purity and dignity, to reconcile sinners to their offended God, to proclaim 'the unsearchable riches of Christ,' and to convert this barren wilderness into a nursery for heaven. To the eyes of a prejudiced and unbelieving world, he may appear mean, destitute, and afflicted; but he shines gloriously in the eyes of his Lord and Master; and may justly be described in the language of the apostle, 'As poor, yet making many rich; as having nothing, and yet possessing all things.'

After being ordained priest, and renewing, in the most express manner, his vows of self-consecration to the sacred office, he recommended himself to the esteem of William, Earl of Derby, who, in 1692, made him his domestic chaplain, and tutor to his son, Lord Strange. His salary for this office, when added to another sum, which he received from the mastership of the almshouse at Latham, made him the possessor of £50 per annum; an amount which he looked upon as forming a superabundant fund for his private and official wants; and one-fifth of which he dedicated to holy uses.

Mr. Wilson soon had an opportunity of shewing that his sense of pastoral responsibility was not superficial. Lord Derby offered him the valuable living of Baddesworth, in Yorkshire, wishing him still to remain with him as chaplain and tutor to his son; but he refused the proposal, saying, that he should violate his conscience were he to take the living on such terms. He raised himself in the opinion of his patron by this conduct, and in due time received his reward; but he had first to go through an afflictive interval in his history. Soon after this he was nearly brought to the grave by a malignant fever; but God mercifully raised him up, that he might add to his life many years of usefulness and conscientious service.

An occasion soon presented itself, which threw great lustre on his character. Having witnessed, with sorrow, the embarrassed state of his noble patron's affairs, and seeing that his habits of extravagance would only involve him in deeper difficulty, Mr. Wilson resolved, at whatever hazard, to discharge his conscience by expostulating with his patron. Lord Derby received his remonstrance with attention, investigated his affairs, and, by the aid of his chaplain, arranged them. Mr. Wilson was no less faithful in the discharge of his office as a tutor, than he had been in that of chaplain. He strove to impress upon his noble pupil the duty of referring every particular of his conduct to conscience. An instance occurred, when the young lord was about to sign a paper he had not read: his tutor dropped some burning sealing-wax on his finger, the acute pain of which raised his anger at first; but it quickly subsided when Mr. Wilson explained the motive of what he had done. He might have evidenced the good fruits of this severe rebuke, had his life been spared; but he soon died: an event which was speedily followed by the removal of Mr. Wilson to a field of more important labour.

The bishopric of Sodor and Man, in the patronage of Lord Derby, had become vacant, and Mr. Wilson was pressed to accept it; but his extreme humility, and the sense of arduous responsibility which that office would entail upon him, concurred to produce a refusal. He is another instance of that purity of motive and unselfishness of spirit which (as we saw in another case—that of Cranmer) lead the true servants of God to decline offers of advancement, which, if accepted, would put them in an envied position of wealth and splendour. The see would have lapsed to the crown, had not the patron at last filled it up. In this emergency, he again impetunously his chaplain, who was thus, as he says, "forced into the bishopric," upon the duties of which he entered in 1697. The people were, in many respects, rude and uncivilized: his efforts were therefore directed to refine their manners, as well as to instruct their hearts. He moved about in every part of his diocese, enlightening the ignorant, counselling the inexperienced, and relieving the necessitous. "His life was singularly useful: it abounded in the labour of love, the work of faith, and the patience of hope." It united the benefits of the active and contemplative life. From his closet he daily came forth, clad "in the whole armour of God," prepared to fight the good fight of faith, and to obtain a complete conquest over his spiritual adversaries. In a life so holy and heavenly as his, the sweetest pleasures are intermingled, and "joys with which a stranger intermeddeth not."

His views of the qualifications for the episcopal office

were most sublime, drawn from the writings of the primitive Christians, out of whose sentiments he had collected that standard which he had adopted for himself. "In simplicity of manner and sanctity of life, he bore a near resemblance to Ignatius and Polycarp, Chrysostom and Basil. Like them, he was incessantly occupied in his Master's service, watching for souls, as one that must give an account." His *Sacra Privata* exhibit his views of the episcopal office, at the same time that they give a deep insight into the state of his own temper and spirit. The income of his see was small, not exceeding £300 per annum; but he was economical, and it was found amply sufficient for his family, as well as for the exercise of a liberal charity. He was a lover of hospitality towards the poor more than the rich: he turned to useful account the medical knowledge he had acquired in his youth, and "acted in a great measure as the physician of his diocese." He attended to the advancement of agriculture throughout the island, and was anxious to countenance all improvements in the useful arts of life. He was specially careful to provide for the instruction of the poor, urging the same upon his clergy in his charges. He founded a charity-school at Burton, the place of his birth, and assisted in establishing several others, paying minute attention to the details of the regulations of each school. Nor did he forget the ministerial in the midst of the episcopal office. It was said by one of the old martyr-bishops, when he stood at the stake, "Hell is filled with unpreaching prelates;" but such omission could not be charged on Bishop Wilson. He either preached, or exercised some public ministration, every Sunday during the fifty-eight years he resided in the Isle of Man, frequently riding on the Sunday morning to a distant part of his diocese, and unexpectedly presenting himself to the congregation. His private religion kept pace with his official energies. Secret prayer, self-examination and confession, as may be known from his *Sacra Privata* (already alluded to), formed the habit of his hours of retirement.

The Manks language (the mother-tongue of the natives of the Isle of Man) is a branch of the Celtic, which was once the universal language of Europe. The bishop took much pains to gain a knowledge of the Manks, and was thereby enabled to address the poorer people in the colloquial phrase which they best understood. In the year 1699, he published a book in English and Manks, called "The Principles and Duties of Christianity;" the first book ever printed in that tongue, and specially designed for the use of that diocese. He afterwards took measures for the accomplishment of a translation of the Four Gospels and Acts of the Apostles into Manks, and printed them mainly at his own cost. His conduct towards the clergy of his diocese was most exemplary; for a year before their ordination he took them to reside in his family, that they might be fitted for their work: he directed, and took part with, their studies. In his sermons and charges and pastoral letters he unceasingly held up to their view a high standard of ministerial character, and enjoined them, above all things, to prosecute their pastoral visits. "There are no parts of his ministry (says one of the bishop's biographers) which the pastor will recollect with greater comfort on his death-bed than the hours he has spent in pastoral visits; and no omissions of duty, of which the remembrance will be more grievous to him, at that awful period, than the omission of this momentous duty."

A memorable epoch in his life now approached. In consequence of the flagrant misconduct of an individual in his diocese, the bishop, in the exercise of his function as an ecclesiastical judge, had sentenced the offending party to a temporary banishment from the Lord's table until the fault should be confessed. A temporising clergyman of the diocese, meanwhile, admitted the offender to the sacrament: the bishop suspended him for canonical disobedience; upon which Captain Home (an arbitrary and tyrannical governor of the island at that time) sentenced the bishop and his two vicars-general to a fine, which they refused to pay. They were accordingly committed to Castle Rushen prison, closely confined there, and treated with every species of contempt. The mourning of the people was universal: they assembled around the prison, and listened to the addresses of the good bishop, who restrained that indignation which would have led them to demolish the governor's house, and besought them not to return "railing for railing, but, contrariwise, blessing." Like Paul, he wrote several circular letters during his imprisonment; and so far from losing his weight with them by his degradation, they gave him fresh tokens of affection, and followed up his plans with zeal. After his release, his cause having been heard by the king in council, the bishop's character was fully vindicated, and the whole weight of the disgrace turned on the head of his adversaries. The bishop visited Scotland in 1710, and London in 1711, and received the highest marks of love and reverence from the clergy, as well as the nobility and gentry, in both parts of the kingdom. In 1735, visiting England again for the last time, he was introduced to George II. and Queen Caroline. This queen, who well knew how to appreciate true piety, solicited him to reside in England for the remainder of his life: this he declined, saying, "I will not leave my wife in my old age because she is poor." The Isle of Man was now visited by two severe scourges—a general scarcity and an epidemic disease. To supply the wants arising from the former, he bought all the corn that could be procured, and sold it at a low price to the people; to arrest the latter evil, he put forth his medical knowledge, which proved most important.

As the life of this godly man drew to its close, his character shone with increased lustre. As the "outward man decayed, the inward man was renewed day by day." His countenance was more joyful, his behaviour more kind, his conversation more heavenly, and his prayers more fervent, as the time drew on when he was to put off his earthly tabernacle. A student (a candidate for the ministry) who slept in a room adjoining the bishop's chamber, often heard him at midnight occupied in prayer, and ascending on the

wings of matured devotion to that state on which he was ere long destined to enter. For a short time before his death, the powers of his mind (from his great age) were slightly obscured. He suffered an attack of delirium, which lasted some weeks before his departure: but though his intellect was eclipsed, his piety shone brightly; and the spirit of devout aspiration, which, almost more than any other, had been the distinctive feature of his personal religion, remained vivid to the last. He finished his career in the year 1755, having lived ninety-three years, the last fifty-eight of which were passed in his diocese. "Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord, and their works do follow them."

THE REIGN OF QUEEN ELIZABETH, AND HER EMPLOYMENT OF THE PRESS.

From Sir James Mackintosh's Speech on the trial of Peltier.

The reign of Queen Elizabeth may be considered as the opening of the modern history of England, especially in its connexion with the modern system of Europe, which began about that time to assume the form that it preserved till the French revolution. It was a very memorable period, of which the maxims ought to be engraven on the head and heart of every Englishman. Philip II. at the head of the greatest empire then in the world, was openly aiming at universal domination, and his project was so far from being thought chimerical by the wisest of his contemporaries, that in the opinion of the great *Duc de Sully* he must have been successful, "if by a most singular combination of circumstances, he had not at the same time been resisted by two such strong heads as those of Henry IV. and Queen Elizabeth." To the most extensive and opulent dominions, the most numerous and disciplined armies, the most renowned captains, the greatest revenue, he added also the most formidable power over opinion. He was the Chief of a religious faction, animated by the most atrocious fanaticism, prepared to second his ambition, by rebellion, anarchy, and regicide, in every Protestant State. Elizabeth was among the first objects of his hostility.—That wise and magnanimous Princess placed herself in the front of the battle for the liberties of Europe. Though she had to contend at home with his fanatical faction, which almost occupied Ireland, which divided Scotland, and was not of contemptible strength in England, she aided the oppressed inhabitants of the Netherlands, in their just and glorious resistance to his tyranny; she aided Henry the Great, in suppressing the abominable rebellion which anarchical principles had excited and Spanish arms had supported in France, and after a long reign of various fortune, in which she preserved her unconquered spirit through great calamities, and still greater dangers, she at length broke the strength of the enemy, and reduced his power within such limits as to be compatible with the safety of England, and of all Europe. Her only effectual ally was the spirit of her people, and her policy flowed from that magnanimous nature which, in the hour of peril, teaches better lessons than those of cold reason. Her great heart inspired her with a higher and a nobler wisdom,—which disdained to appeal to the low and sordid passions of her people even for the protection of their low and sordid interests, because she knew, or rather she felt, that these are effeminate, creeping, cowardly, short-sighted passions, which shrink from conflict even in defence of their own mean objects. In a righteous cause she roused those generous affections of her people which alone teach boldness, constancy, and foresight, and which are therefore the only safe guardians of the lowest as well as the highest interests of a nation. In her memorable address to her army, when the invasion of the kingdom was threatened by Spain, this woman, of heroic spirit, disdained to speak to them of their ease and their commerce, and their wealth and their safety. No! She touched another cord.—She spoke of their national honour, of their dignity as Englishmen, of "the foul scorn that Parma or Spain should dare to invade the bowels of her realms!" She breathed into them those grand and powerful sentiments which exalt vulgar men into heroes, which led them into the battle of their country armed with holy and irresistible enthusiasm, which even cover with their shield all the ignoble interests that base calculation and cowardly selfishness tremble to hazard, but shrink from defending. A sort of prophetic instinct, if I may so speak, seems to have revealed to her the importance of that great instrument for rousing and guiding the minds of men, of the effects of which she had no experience; which, since her time, has changed the condition of the world; but which few modern statesmen have thoroughly understood or wisely employed; which is, no doubt, connected with many ridiculous and degrading details, which has produced, and which may again produce, terrible mischiefs; but of which the influence must after all be considered as the most certain effect and the most efficacious cause of civilization, and which, whether it be a blessing or a curse, is the most powerful engine that a politician can move.—I mean the Press. It is a curious fact, that, in the year of the Armada, Queen Elizabeth caused to be printed the first Gazette that ever appeared in England; and I own when I consider that this mode of rousing a national spirit was then absolutely unexampled, that she could have no assurance of its efficacy from the precedents of former times, I am disposed to regard her having recourse to it as one of the most sagacious experiments, one of the greatest discoveries of political genius, one of the most striking anticipations of future experience, that we find in history. I mention it to you, to justify the opinion that I have ventured to state, of the close connexion of our national spirit with our Press, and even our periodical press.

PAROCHIAL VISITING.

From Nelson's Life of Bishop Bull.

This personal acquaintance of a minister with his parishioners will give him a great advantage in forwarding their