

Reviews.

SERMONS IN PROOF, DEVELOPMENT, AND ILLUSTRATION OF THE EVANGELICAL DOCTRINES OF THE CHURCH, HOLY, CATHOLIC, AND APOSTOLIC,—WITH AN APPENDIX AND NOTES, ON THE EVANGELICAL AND APOSTOLICAL CHARACTERISTICS OF THE UNITED CHURCH OF ENGLAND AND IRELAND. By the Rev. Tresham James Gregg, M. A., Chaplain of St. Nicholas-within. Dublin: William Curry, Junr., and Company.

This volume we have perused with much pleasure. The sermons which it contains are at once argumentative and practical; and what is not frequently the case with such compositions, exceedingly readable. There is a freedom of style, and freshness of illustration about them, which render their perusal attractive in the closet, as their delivery was doubtless engaging in the pulpit. We can honestly recommend Mr. Gregg's discourses as models of composition to the young clergyman, who is desirous to make his public teaching popular, and to avoid at the same time an undignified degree of familiarity.

Generally speaking, we coincide with the author's views of Divine truth, though, occasionally, his Churchmanship is pitched upon too low a key

SCENES IN OUR PARISH.

NO. XIV.

ONE PAGE IN MY LIFE.

(Concluded.)

We were sitting thus in feverish and anxious expectation, when a little after one the bell was rung violently, and the door shaken as if it would be broken down. We sprang from our seats. "There they are! come!" It had before been agreed, that no resistance should be attempted—what could half a dozen unarmed men do against a mob? If money would satisfy them, money they were to have; and if they resolved to come in, they must come; and the will of the Lord be done! At that moment when those we loved best went down the dark steps into the garden to face we knew not what fearful dangers—when the pleasant home we loved so well, was perhaps to be ours no longer, in the expected wreck of all most dear, most holy to us, how did we feel? I cannot tell what effect sudden terror may have on most minds. For myself it is stunning and stupifying, like that I suppose to be produced by a violent blow. I tried to realize my situation, my own danger, and the danger of my dearest relatives and friends, but could not.—I tried to lift up my heart in prayer; but, in anything like connected prayer; in vain. I endeavoured to repeat some verse, some psalm, but my mind seemed a blank. At that moment, one single text filled my soul, elevated my spirit, strengthened my heart. I repeated it to myself over and over, and over again, and had the rioters entered that moment, I believe should have questioned them with it. "In the Lord put I my trust, how say ye then to my soul, that she should flee as a bird unto the hill?" And whoever did trust in him and was confounded? Refuge and strength thou hast been to us, O God, and a present help in time of trouble. The alarm was past. Whoever they were that, at such a moment, thought it worth their while to add to the terrors of an almost defenceless family, we know not. We have asked few questions, and we have forgiven them. They were gone on, before the door was opened; our own party returned, and we sprang to meet them. That deeper injury was intended for the ensuing night, and yet deadlier evil meditated against us, we know well. However, the alarm was over for the moment, and our spirits rose with the feeling of safety; so by way of changing the scene, we walked round the garden. It was Monday morning, wearing on toward two o'clock, quite dark and cloudy, and a little rain fell at intervals. We could scarcely distinguish the outlines, not at all the colors of tree, shrub and autumn flower; but we knew them all very well. They were like friends, companions to us, whose life had been spent amongst them.

We had played at paying visits to each other under these circumstances, and we had hung wreaths of jessamine against the thick privet edge, which then formed the fancied wall of our house. We have run races down this broad path, and with companions whose feet shall never bound here any more. Here was the rude seat under the laurels, where the robin, already tamed by the approach of winter, comes so duly to be fed.

Nothing but thoughts of peace were brought to our minds; but at that instant, just as we passed the shadow of the first chestnut tree, where it waves over the grey tomb of the last inhabitant of what we for the present are permitted to call our dear home, the increasing light from the burning city flared upon us. We went silently into the church-yard, because from thence no trees would intercept our view. O, in what place the dead are laid to rest around us! Under the first little mound that we passed, sleeps a child, whose death I remember at the time to have thought very melancholy. She drank laudanum, which had been inadvertently left in her way, and having been long asleep, a cock and did. There were those whose hearts ached at her untimely death; but

now, whilst sounds of fear are coming nearer and nearer, whilst this awful and unwonted light glares across her low bed, and she sleeps well, who would have the little one awakened? There too, just taken in good time, out of evil in which so many of his age will ruin body and soul, worn out with lingering consumption, which for six months he bore with uncomplaining patience, young James has been lying a few weeks. Here sleep the little twins, and there blind Samuel and his infant sons; and yonder, safe from the scene of wickedness which would have so grieved his spirit, pious old John. We looked from the dark, damp mounds, amongst which our feet stumbled, toward the blazing city.

The broad mass of yellow flame cast a strong light through the thick atmosphere, and then suddenly assumed a redder and more terrific appearance, as if some warehouse containing peculiarly combustible materials just then caught fire. Even then, through the deep stillness of the scene around us we seemed to hear the shouting of the inflamed and guilty people. The terrors of the scene presented themselves to the distressed imagination. The dismay and grief of those, whose lives and whose children's lives were in danger, and whose property was thus wantonly sacrificed,—the evil actions on which the pure eye of God looked that night, and the words of sin which he registered. We shuddered at what we could see of the spectacle, but the multitude around us were still. We looked up at the church, to-morrow it may be a heap of smoking ruins; but in these graves, at least, the wicked cease from troubling, and the weary are at rest. O blessed! blessed are the dead that die in the Lord! We left the wet churchyard, and returned sadly into the garden, and after prolonging our walk, we re-entered the house. My story would be too long if I attempted to describe all the feelings of that lingering and well-remembered night. In order to pass the time, some of us took to our work, and some of the party endeavoured to amuse the rest by singing. It must have required not a little self-denial, I think, at such a moment; but there are those, whose feelings never interfere when the wishes of others are to be consulted. It was sweet music, yet so little in unison with our agitated thoughts, that it almost failed to please; and as the richly-toned and melodious voices mingled, our heads involuntarily turned, as if our ears expected to catch other and less gentle sounds. But thank God the terror was over for that night, and at four o'clock we parted. Yet it was only trust in an Almighty guardian's protection, that allowed us to lie down even then; and before we did so, anxious looks gazed out towards the east, longing for the dawn.

Morning came, sleep had refreshed us all, and I ran down stairs with a lightened heart, believing that the worst was passed, and resolving to credit only half the bad news I should hear. All were assembled earlier than usual, but my first glance round the circle made my heart sink. They had heard news which I did not know; and if they believed only half, it was evidently of evil import enough to sadden the most cheerful amongst them. I asked no question, but my look, I suppose, was one of inquiry, and it was instantly answered: "They intend burning the ships and all the churches, and this church is to be down before night. The Mayor's chapel is on the ground, and the cathedral is now burning." "The cathedral!" echoed two or three terrified voices at once. At that moment, a message came that some one would speak to us. It was poor Hannah, old John's daughter. I told her what I had just heard, hoping she would say something that might alleviate our fears; but she was more agitated than we were. All I said of ill news, she knew, and by her manner much more. "They have threatened to burn the church to-night," I said in a tone which I believe almost implored her to tell me there was no such fear.

But there was no earthly hope in her voice as she answered, "I know they have, but the Lord God of your fathers deliver you!"

She continued in a broken and agitated tone to commend us all to the mercy of God our Saviour, in an earnest and solemn manner, which showed she thought we had no secondary ground of confidence.

I was afraid to trust myself with her, for all the calmness we could command was needed, and her simple affection was very touching. I made an excuse to leave her, saying, that it was prayer time, and shook hands with her, thinking that perhaps it was for the last time—and she is one of my oldest friends, and had been kind to me, making me cakes and giving me pears when I was quite a child. I turned to go away, but again she took my hand and kissed it affectionately, and said in a voice trembling with emotion, whilst the tears ran down her cheeks, "Comfort yourself, my dear lady! remember there is a new heaven and a new earth wherein dwelleth righteousness." Dear,

* It may be necessary to remark, that the latter part of this information was incorrect. The attempt to burn the cathedral was frustrated, and the Mayor's chapel, I believe not attacked. Yet at the time the report reached us, we had no reason whatever to doubt its truth. The smoke concealed the cathedral tower, and for hours the news rested on our minds as tremendous certainty.

kind Hannah! God make me worthy to meet you there. I must not linger on the separate and well-remembered hours. "We sought the Lord, and he heard us, and has delivered us, for the present at least, from all our fear." There were some people in the vestry who had been accustomed to pay a few pence at a time, for the purchase of clothes, blankets, &c.

As it was near the end of the year, we had now almost twenty pound of this money by us, too large a sum to be risked in the event of our being obliged to leave the house; so I paid those who were present, and sent word that I was doing so, as speedily as I could, by them to their neighbours. Employment is generally desirable in times of distress, yet to have to arrange money matters at that moment, was painful in the extreme; and whilst I sat waiting for one and another, and looked through the open door into the church, as the tremendous thought weighed down my mind, "They will burn it to-night!" I could not restrain my tears. I felt as if my heart would break. The people looked compassionate and civil enough; but I felt too miserable to talk, and I was grateful to them for not troubling me with commiseration.

My duty there was ended, and I thought I would once more walk round the church. I passed the lowly altar, where I have knelt in peace so often—and with such comfort only the day before—O how long ago it seemed! I looked into the seat, where I have sat Sunday after Sunday, in the midst of my little brothers and sisters in my early childhood: where I had first heard the message of salvation, and first learnt, "How amiable are thy dwellings, O Lord of Hosts." I looked up to the pulpit. Some whom I had seen stand there, were gone to give an account of their stewardship; but those, the dearest, the most highly honored, whose right it is to deliver, as ambassadors for Christ, the message of my hope and salvation—who shall dare to take that right from them?

My heart bounded, but sunk again almost in despair. I passed the poor children's seats, and the pretty font, and turned to the north aisle. I looked down on a grey unlettered stone. "This time to-morrow, the heap of ruins may lie here. Those who clear them away, may not trouble themselves to distinguish this grave—there is no marble to mark it—not one word, no name; but we shall never forget it. Trouble and dismay shall never erase from our hearts the memory of the sleepers there. Dear pious grandmother! resting after the toils of three score years and ten—dear sister! of whom I remember little, but whom I humbly trust to know better in heaven—and you, with the remembrance of whose loss our hearts yet ache—you, whom we missed whilst the song of your dear voice was ringing in our ears, and whilst we watched the bounding of your glad steps—you our youngest, our most light-hearted, darling and pride, brought home to your grave on the very day you had bidden us expect your return with joy. O my brother! my brother! from what evil has God seen fit to snatch you! 'He calls them earliest whom he loves best!' O, at such a moment, how natural it is that our hearts should long to hear, and to obey the call also; and yet shame on us! how they sink again, how they cling to earth again, the moment the storm passes. The quiet of that melancholy hour was too deep to last long; a friendly hand was laid on my arm, and a kind voice breathed a prayer for us—so simple, so passionate—and it has been answered. We returned home. But I did not then, nor could I, sufficiently realize the terrors of our situation. It seemed but a dream to me, when I met the different members of our household, busied in packing up, and removing such articles of clothes, &c. as could be disposed of in haste. "I hope we are taking labor in vain," said our clerk, kindly endeavouring to comfort me; "but anything you'd like, you'll please to bring directly—we want to fill up this pit as soon as we can." How strange it seemed to see the bundles of clothes and handsome books, piled into the wet pit in the dirty fowls' court. O of how little value anything in the world seemed then! I thought, I shall not give myself any trouble about it. Yet there are a few even inanimate things to which we find the heart clings. One puts on at such a time the little ring, or brooch, less valuable for its pearls and gold, than for the love which gave it, or the lock of hair which it encircles, and which, it may be, clustered on some fair brow, long hidden in the dust. Another looked with tears on the speaking miniature, so carefully guarded till then, and hesitated long before trusting it to that unsafe hiding-place. And you my poor manuscript, bear on the very page on which I am writing, a soiled mark to tell of your adventure, for you found a picturesque and appropriate place of refuge in the hollow bank under the foot of the old cross. It was just whilst we were all so very busy, that we parted with a dear friend. She did not leave us, because she does not know how to comfort those who are in trouble, but her own family were anxious for her safety, and for us, it was uncertain how long we might have a home to share with her. So we bid her farewell, and told her to hope for better times, and one of us gathered her the last spray of jessamine, sweet, but faint and pale, like the smile that tried to come as we parted. It was after she left

us, under the escort of our faithful collier Isaac and his wife, that the reports as to the number and intention of the rioters were again and again brought.

We traced every quarter of a mile of their approach by messengers arriving all the morning long. Yet we could do nothing—what could the assistance of a few unarmed men, faithful and steady as they were, avail us against a mob? We wandered from one room to another, looking at every well-known article, and certainly more astounded than terrified. There were the pictures whose progress we had watched,—the handywork of a skilful and beloved hand—the plants which we had reared—the Narcissus roots that blossomed so splendidly last spring, and are just now putting forth the green leaf—and there by the parlor fire, which has been his place for ten years and a half, lay my father's favorite, poor grey tabby, in a state of most enviable unconcern; but I felt the tears in my eyes when I stroked him at parting, and told him he would never have a better master. At length our last informant, one who had been brought up at our school, and whom we felt pleasure to see, had not forgotten us in our distress, came to urge our leaving the house; and the noise at the door told us that for the female part of the family it was time. So we went down through the lower garden, not knowing whither we went; and another of our former school-boys, married last Christmas, ran after us to say that Betsy "had put every thing in order and would make us as comfortable as she could." We shall never forget all the kindness we met with on that trying day.

So not knowing how or when we might return, and leaving our faithful friends to do the best that circumstances permitted, we wandered mournfully down the field—stopping often and looking back. For myself I am sure I speak truth in saying, expecting every moment to see the windows filled with ruffian forms, and the fire blazing round our dear home. And why was it that the shout which rung in our ears the instant after, did not tell us that their frightful work was begun? Why was it that, maddened as they were, they did not accomplish the worst of what those who had incited them could have desired? It is true they were in number not above a fifth part that we had been told to expect; their party had thinned at the very numerous public houses on their way, and those who remained were incapable of acting on any regulated scheme. Yet enough remained to work us irreparable mischief. It is not to secondary causes that we will attribute our preservation from that dreadful calamity. If, not knowing their own strength, they feared the resistance that our small party could have offered—we will recollect who alone can make one man to chase a thousand. If their misguided rage was changed into a foolish mirth, which made it easy to manage them with money, we will remember who turned the counsel of Abithophel into foolishness, and who restrains the remainder of wrath. And when the door was once more secured after them, and we returned to the home lent us yet for a little while—if it was with peculiar gratitude for our renewed mercies, and yet of deep feeling of their uncertain tenure, we will pray that such impressions may be abiding, even if we should live to a state of things less awfully reminding us of the fact, than at present seems possible. Hannah came a few minutes after our return. She had been home to put her neat house in yet neater order for us, had arranged her clean bed-furniture, and came to offer us all she had, and with all her heart. She said she would do any thing for us, and we are sure she would; and whilst acknowledging our gratitude to the God of all consolation, we will also with thankful hearts, remember not the wide ocean only, but the pure streams also.

One word I think it a duty to say with regard to the colliers, of whom I observe people in general form a very false opinion. To the present time, 17th December, they have been quite peaceable—I pray God to keep them so. I do not mean to say that no individual collier joined the rioters—I know of none who did; and as a body of men, the colliers of this parish did not on those two days leave their work at all.

And now, my dear reader, I cannot but feel that an apology is due to you for detaining you so long over this melancholy page. I will not weary you with an account of another weary night of watching, and two long days more of fear. But it was a remarkable passage in our lives, and this record is the only testimony I have to offer of gratitude to our Almighty Preserver for his interposition on our behalf. May he give us grateful hearts! Joyful ones they cannot be at present. The last words of Pitt ring for ever in our ears, "O, my country, my country!"—and we can in some small degree understand the feelings of a greater patriot than Pitt, who wept over the coming desolation of his own Jerusalem. "A great country in ruins," says the most interesting of letter writers, "will not be beheld with eyes of indifference, even by those who have a better country to look to. Well, all will be over soon! The time is at hand, when an empire will be established, that shall fill the earth. Neither statesmen nor generals will lay the foundation of it: but it shall rise at the sound of trumpets!" Dear reader! do not lay aside my chapter till you have answered the question, "Will that trumpet be a sound of joy to me?"