

# 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.—3 PETER 1, 13.

VOLUME II.]

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## Original Poetry.

For the Church.

### LINES ON A SKULL

Supposed to have been dug up after lying in the earth for a thousand years.

A thousand years, O Skull, have pass'd away  
Since first thou mad'st thy bed with kindred clay;  
A thousand years, since an immortal mind  
Within thy narrow limits dwelt confin'd;  
A thousand years, since first thy lustrous eye  
Look'd out in gladness on the azure sky;  
A thousand years, since this dark cavern rung  
With the soft accents of a tuneful tongue;  
Since first thy list'ning ear drank in a sound,  
Since first thy owner felt his life-blood bound:  
No trace of him, save thee, is left behind,  
Which seemest all immortal of thy kind.

O! say, will thou disclose a secret now?  
Thy owner, when he liv'd, and where, and how?  
—Was he a dreaming bard who follow'd fame,  
The mock'd pursuer of a fleeting name?  
—Was he a soldier, whose well-temper'd fire  
Could melt to friendship now—now mount to ire,  
Just as the brazen trumpet chan'd to blow.  
A friendly note, or hostile to the foe?  
—Was he a statesman whom the Protean crew  
Now crown with laurels, now with hate pursue?  
Did faction's darts round him idly fly,  
Or quail'd he 'neath the rabble's godless cry?  
—Was he religion's child, supremely blest  
With all the easiness of a guileless priest,  
Mid the seraphic music of his soul,  
Advancing onward to the heavenly goal?  
—If so, O Skull, thy owner long has trod  
The star-pav'd city of his Saviour's God.

Peterboro', September, 1838.

### THE IVY.

Why love the Ivy? hast thou seen,  
As winter's day fell chill and drear,  
Its glossy robe of richest green  
Hang graceful 'mid the forest bare?  
—Emblem of Hope, which still can bless  
When all around is comfortless.

Why love the Ivy? take thy stand  
In grandeur's desolated hall,  
And o'er the work of Time's rude hand  
How decently its dark wreaths fall—  
Emblem of Pity's mantle laid  
Over some wreck by sorrow made.

Why love the Ivy? mark you oak,  
Leafless and bleached by rain and wind,  
How Ivy lends a sheltering cloak,  
Around its old limbs closely twin'd—  
Emblem of earthly comforts gone,  
And heaven's own robe of peace put on.

The star which lights life's dreariest waste,  
The balm which soothes its darkest woes,  
And life's dim cheerless evening grace'd  
By the calm hope a Christian knows—  
These in their emblem joined approve  
The Ivy's claim on human love.

The Spare Minutes of a Minister.

### "HOLINESS TO THE LORD,"

### THE BADGE OF THE CHRISTIAN MINISTRY.

A SERMON, CONCLUDED FROM OUR LAST.

Yet further, not only must we exhibit the beauty of holiness in all its distinctive features of excellence—not only must we bear about with us "the marks of the Lord Jesus," but must carry the inscription, "Holiness to the Lord," engraven as it were on a pure crown of gold, to be seen and read of all men. The chosen of a peculiar people—the holy Priesthood of a holy nation, it is not enough that there be assigned to us a station among the followers of the Lord; our most be an eminent, a conspicuous station! Cities set upon a hill, our conduct cannot but be seen from every side, and must court enquiry and challenge observation. The light of the world, not only must we be as beacons to guide them that are afar off into the paths of righteousness, but burning and shining lights to gladden those that are enlightened, and to speed them on their way rejoicing.—The welfare of the Church of God, "over which the Holy Ghost hath made us overseers," requires this at our hands. Nay, the children of the world will expect it from us; even their standard of clerical responsibilities is higher, far higher than might be imagined; and men who regard the yoke of Christ as heavy, and would not themselves touch it with one of their fingers, will consider no burden too grievous to be imposed on the shoulders of their ministers. Unmindful of their own broken pledges, they demand consistency in those appointed and paid to watch over the flock of Christ; and be assured, my brethren of the Ministry,—should you need this assurance,—that in no way will you more effectually secure the contempt and derision of the ungodly, than by yielding to their solicitations, and partaking of those things in which they freely allow themselves.

Alas! after all our best endeavours, how much of inconsistency will yet remain to vex and perplex our souls! and how frequently will the sin that doth so easily beset us, show that we are but earthen vessels, and, like our brethren, the creatures of frailty and imperfection! Still let us beware how we take shelter from the higher claims of our calling, and bring ourselves down to the level of others, under a plea of common infirmities. Charitable towards all beside, let us be rigid censors when sitting in judgment on ourselves. "Sirs, we are men of like passions," is a language which may be employed, when our fellows would do us reverence, but can never justify us in descending from our rightful position as ensamples to the flock. Oh! rather let it be our confident boasting, when men would see us into questionable compliances: "The temple of the Lord, the temple of the Lord, the temple of the Lord are we." True, we do experience the common weaknesses and wants of a fallen nature, but what then? Have we not

professed our belief that we have received no common measure of grace to support and to sustain us under them? Else wherefore did we promise to be for an example to believers, "in word, in conversation, in charity, in spirit, in faith, in purity," and "in all things" to approve ourselves "patterns of good works?"—Examples to others, we must ourselves excel; and appointed to lead, must not be content to follow.

And now as it respects our own peculiar case: my brethren of the Ministry, we certainly do labor under many local difficulties of position, and in good truth the land in which we live is an ungenial soil; and godliness the stunted plant of a sickly growth. The very climate is made to conspire against it. A summer, how transient! grasps all the energies of our trading population, and concentrates them into one focus of intense exertion—while a protracted winter, closing up the ordinary channels of commerce, furnishes a convenient pretext for the not less engrossing pursuit of a laborious dissipation. And if we examine the materials of which the community is composed; here we see the many fast bound in the trammels of a strong delusion, worshipping they scarcely know what; yet careless to seek, or fearful to enquire what "the truth as it is in Jesus" may mean. In the palpable obscurities of their religious system, what wonder that we find a corresponding vagueness of moral duty, while they, whose conduct ought to stand out in bright relief, alas! how have they suffered in their estimate of "things honest, just and of good report," from the influence of surrounding darkness! In another division of the community, we see the wholesome restraints of discipline almost set at naught; a free trade in religion proclaimed; sect obtruding sect in the mart of popularity; and religious novelties freely administered to itching ears by teachers, who fit about too often but to unsettle those whom they know not, or care not, to build up. What wonder, then, if here the most complete indifference prevail as to decency and order: and what wonder that men, if they think it necessary to make any profession at all, unite themselves to Religious Societies, as the term is, with much of the same feeling with which they would choose any one of the prevailing trades and callings of life, and regard the Sacrament of Baptism itself, as of somewhat the same importance as the Temperance pledge, or subscription to the rules of a charitable association? Now those things may well cause us pain, who do attach a value to the pure doctrines of the Cross, and the claims of primitive order, and would fain see them go hand in hand together; but how we may so contend for "the faith once delivered to the Saints," as at once to preserve a discreet moderation, and to eschew every thing which may savor of accommodation to error, is a point on which I ask not, and seek not to prescribe; this only would I again repeat, that we may all, under whatever difficulties of situation, bring forward one intelligible argument which shall be read and approved of all men,—the witness of our own lives, that a purer faith does beget a higher tone of morals, that a steadier discipline does ensure a more equable and uniform consistency of conduct.

Nor, among our peculiar discouragements, must it be forgotten, that we are a little band, scattered hither and thither over the surface of a country thinly settled, and not to be traversed but with extreme difficulty; and thus can enjoy but scant opportunities of strengthening each other's hands, and taking sweet counsel together in seasons of need—while some of our number conceive themselves obliged, from the slender pittance of a Missionary's income, to eke out a modest livelihood by the secular pursuits of farming, or the instruction of youth;—occupations, which do seriously trench upon our Master's time, and in which he who is jealous for the cause of God, can hardly engage but with fear and trembling, and under the constraint of the clearest necessity.

But yet, Oh yet, if the discouragements of the Ministers of Christ in general, and our own, in particular, are many and great,—how more than consoling the encouragement, that "in due season we shall reap if we faint not"! Though all things may seem to be against us, assuredly the Lord is not unfaithful to His promise; and if, for a time, he withhold His blessing, either that He may quicken us to greater diligence, or that he may humble us in the dust, on account of our own unworthiness, and show us how utterly vain are all efforts unless he give the increase, yet will He not withhold it altogether; if the priesthood be holy, the people shall be peculiar; and "a covenant shall be with them of life and peace," for "the mouth of the Lord hath spoken it." Then let us, even under our manifold discouragements, both seek and expect great things; and without presuming to dictate to Him the fitting times and seasons, let us "tarry His leisure," in the devout posture of those servants who "are up and doing;" who with loins girded, and with lamps burning, wait for their Lord, and with an implicit confidence that He will prosper the work of our hands, and at his coming receive us to Himself with exceeding joy.

My brethren of the Ministry, I have yet many things to say, but I forbear. My own so recent admission to the service of the sanctuary, and my limited experience in it, alike warn me of my slender claim to admonish you on the one hand, and of the slight probability that I could do so with effect on the other; yet, as one who wishes you well from the bottom of his soul; as one whose interests are closely blended with your own; and further, as one who trusts that he could listen in a spirit of meekness to your godly counsel and advice; I do entreat you to hold me excused if I again venture to remind you, that our's is a solemn and a sacred calling. Faithful to our trust,—and how great, how transcendent the dignity to which we are raised! Honors are now within our reach, which the world can neither give nor take away! and then that promise beyond the skies, that we shall shine like stars in the firmament of heaven! Uprate to our yow,—and how are we fallen! Oh, to have presented the false credentials of a heartless profession, and thus to have obtained the privilege of ministering at the altar, and living of the things of the altar,—what is this but to have compassed the wages of unrighteous-

ness! What is this but to eat the bread of dishonesty, and to be clothed upon with a cloak of covetousness! Surely such a situation were worse than contemptible! and surely no pit in the nichestometh bell were too low for such presumptuous enemies of the Cross of Christ. Forbid it, that we be found faithless! Forbid it, that influence for good which we may exercise on those around us! Forbid it, the awful result of our deficiencies to our brethren and the Church of God! Forbid it, that wrath of a despised Saviour! Forbid it, each hope of a blessed immortality! Nay, forbid it, every feeling of honesty—every demand of plighted truth! It may not, it must not, and the Lord being our helper, it shall not be. No, from henceforth we devote ourselves—body, soul, and spirit—to Him who hath loved us and bought us with a price; and counted worthy of this Ministry, are determined to know nothing but Christ and "him crucified"—to esteem it our privilege to be servants of all for His sake—and to glory in this as the badge of our service, "Holiness to the Lord."

### HORÆ LITURGICÆ.

#### No. VI. THE GENERAL CONFSSION.

After the Exhortation to the acknowledgment of our manifold sins and wickedness in the presence of an all-seeing and heart-searching God, the Church proceeds to furnish us, in our invaluable Liturgy, with the terms in which this confession should be made. And in addressing our God, we are not allowed to be forgetful of his majesty and might; we are taught to consider him, and we are instructed to address him, as ALMIGHTY. This recollection of his glorious attributes—his sense of his unspeakable power, may increase the sinner's "fear and trembling," when he bends the knee and raises the voice of supplication before him. But while it serves to augment his fear, it enkindles also his hope: while it shows him to be Almighty to punish, it represents him also as Omnipotent to save. The terror of his attributes is not all that we are taught to look upon: we are instructed to regard him as most merciful, even while we approach him as Almighty. More than this; we are privileged to consider him, and to address him as our FATHER, as one who encourages and invites his children to a throne of mercy—calling upon them to lay open unreservedly before him all their fears, and wants, and sorrows.

WE HAVE ERRED AND STRAYED FROM HIS WAYS LIKE LOST SHEEP, are the first words which, in our humiliation, we are instructed to utter; and what more striking, what more true than this confession! What more true than that we are thus prone to wander—to leave our heavenly Shepherd's guardianship, to forsake the "green pastures and still waters" of religion, and stray away into the wilderness where there is not for the soul either food or shelter, and where fearful enemies lie in wait to devour! And what more striking than this similitude of the erring sinner to the straying and lost sheep! For what can there be conceived more helpless than the poor lost lamb which has left his Shepherd's side, and whose bleatings in the wilderness there is no friend's voice to recognize! Ignorant of his way—not knowing whither to turn, unless the kindness of the shepherd prompts a search for the wanderer, his recovery is hopeless, his destruction is certain.

But why is man so prone to wander? why is there this infirmity in him? The language of our General Confession traces up this frail propensity to the proper source, to the corruption of human nature:—WE HAVE FOLLOWED TOO MUCH THE DEVICES AND DESIRES OF OUR OWN HEARTS.—And who will deny that of such evil devices and desires the human heart is full? Who will deny that the fountain from which they flow is impure, and therefore the streams are polluted;—that the tree is unsound, and therefore the fruit is evil?—"I was born in sin and conceived in iniquity," is the confession of the Psalmist in which all may join. And it is right that we should have this unwrought conviction of the natural corruption of our hearts. Without it, our contrition would be imperfect—our confession the language of dissimulation. Without it, we should not feel our need either of the atoning Saviour, or of the sanctifying Spirit. We should be devising unavailing remedies of our own, instead of applying to the "Physician" who alone has power to heal: we should be "going about to establish our own righteousness," instead of applying to him who is "our wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption."

"Who can tell how oft he offendeth?" is the language of the word of God, to the truth of which a very little scrutiny of our hearts will enable us to bear the most abundant testimony: justly, therefore, are we instructed to add in the language of the Church, WE HAVE OFFENDED AGAINST THY HOLY LAWS. The laws of God require us to love Him with the fullest sincerity of the heart, to serve Him with the completest devotion of the soul; but who, in looking to these requirements of his law,—who, upon comparing his practice with them all, can deny that we have LEFT undone THOSE THINGS WHICH WE OUGHT TO HAVE DONE? But sins of omission alas! are not all which will grieve and afflict us in the retrospect of the past—much positive guilt will meet us in that review; transgressions innumerable in thought, word and deed; all of which we cannot more appropriately express than in this general acknowledgment, WE HAVE DONE THOSE THINGS WHICH WE OUGHT NOT TO HAVE DONE. Nor is this a casual, an incidental wickedness, which may awaken sorrow to-day, but to-morrow its burden need not be felt. Alas! not a day nor hour are we free from this propensity to offend: THERE IS NO HEALTH (no spiritual health) in us. A darkened understanding, a perverse will, carnal affections, a defiled conscience, all these exemplify the prophet's description, "From the sole of the feet even unto the head, there is no soundness in it; but wounds, and bruises, and putrifying sores."

\* Isaiah i. 6.

But wither, under this intolerable burden, shall we go for relief? Where, in our grief and sorrow, shall we turn for succour? Who but our merciful God can relieve us from such a load of guilt?—Well then is the sinner taught to pray, BUT THOU, O LORD, HAVE MERCY UPON US MISERABLE OFFENDERS. We should utterly despair, upon a discovery of our fallen, helpless state, unless with that discovery there was accompanied a revelation of the mercy of God in Christ Jesus. The knowledge of this precious Saviour awakens hope, and excites the supplicating cry, SPARE THOU THEM, O GOD, WHICH CONFESS THEIR FAULTS. But to the awakened mind there can be neither peace nor joy, unless there be also a restoration to the divine favour. When the storm of fierce wrath hath passed away, the sinner would fain discern the token of reconciliation atwart the receding cloud. "Let me see the king's face," was the language of Absalom when he grieved for his father's displeasure; and so does the awakened Christian pray to his Father in heaven, RECRETE THOU THEM THAT ARE PENITENT. But "the deeper our search into the unfathomable mine, the riches of the grace of God, the firmer the foundation appears on which we build our hopes."\* Christ has merited for us all that we want; for Christ's sake, God hath promised to bestow upon us all that we need; therefore, in petitioning for his mercy—in imploring reconciliation to his favour, we entreat him to hear us ACCORDING TO HIS PROMISES IN ONAGE JESU OUR LORD.

But while the Churchman disclaims the spirit of the Pelagian, in his approaches to the throne of grace, he equally repudiates the temper of the Antinomian. While he feels and confesses himself a sinner, and prays for deliverance from the punishment of his guilt, he implores release also from the dominion of those sins whose controul over him has been a "burden too heavy for him." All our confessions are insincere—our supplications a mere mockery of God, unless accompanied with an anxious desire after divine grace, that our lives for the time to come may be in better conformity to his law. We are, therefore, instructed to pray, GRANT, O MOST MERCIFUL FATHER, THAT WE MAY HERE-AFTER LIVE A GODLY, RIGHTOUS AND SOBER LIFE. Such, in the express words of St. Paul,† is the practical effect of the salvation which the grace of God bringeth; it "teacheth us, that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly in this present world." Who, then, will say that the doctrine of salvation by grace leads to licentiousness of conduct? Not the Scriptures of God which declare that although we "are saved not of works, lest any man should boast," yet we are "his work-manship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works." Not the Church of England which, after the deepest sense and humblest confession of guilt, directs us to pray, that we may, through grace, be enabled to "live a godly, righteous, and sober life": godly, as respects our duty to our great Creator; righteous, as implying every obligation to our neighbour; and sober, as relates to the duty we owe to ourselves. But the true penitent, according to our Lord's description, "loves much, because much has been forgiven him"; therefore he prays that he may spend his time and employ his talents to the GLORY OF GOD'S MOST MIGHTY NAME. Nor is he ever allowed to forget the great source of every spiritual, every temporal blessing; never must Jesus the Saviour be overlooked in his prayers: FOR HIS SAKE ALONE can a favourable answer be expected to our petitions. His death is the only ground of hope to the guilty sinner; through Jesus Christ our Lord alone, will an offended God show mercy.

Such is the tone of self-abasement—such is the language of contrition which is breathed throughout that beautiful prayer, styled in our Liturgy the "General Confession." And in this duty we imitate the conduct of the pious and devout in every period of "the old time before us." With Ezra; the Christian now exclaims, "I am ashamed and blush to lift up my face to thee, my God: for our iniquities are increased over our head, and our trespass is grown up unto the heavens"; with Daniel, he "prays unto the Lord and makes his confession."‡ And in performing this duty, we follow also the example of the primitive Christians. St. Basil, who flourished in the fourth century, says; "With us all the people come early in the morning, while it is yet dark, to the house of prayer, and with sorrow, and with affliction, and with profusion of tears, make confession of their sins to God."... "All in common, as it were with one voice and one heart; lift up the plaint of confession unto the Lord, each one expressing his own repentance with his own words."||

Nor do we neglect the manner, while we imitate the matter which the devout men of antiquity adopted in their acknowledgments of sin, and supplications for mercy. As the posture best suited to the humility expressed in those petitions, we are directed "weekly to kneel upon our knees." Thus Solomon, at the dedication of the temple, "kneeled upon his knees before all the congregation of Israel." Daniel "kneeled upon his knees three times a day, and prayed and gave thanks before his God." Our blessed Saviour, in his agony in the garden, "kneeled down and prayed" to his heavenly Father. St. Paul, after bidding the elders of Miletus farewell, "kneeled down and prayed with them all," and the same Apostle, in these words, expresses prayer itself by the attitude in which it should be made, "I bow my knees unto the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ."¶

And who, when exhorted to this penitent confession,—who, especially, with the oppressive consciousness of sin upon his soul, would deny to the majesty of God this posture of humility, and refuse to bend the knee in his presence? Who, conscience-stricken, distressed in spirit, and seeking forgiveness at the mercy-seat, would be mute when he is summoned to the act of confession? Who would deny a responding voice to the acknowledgment of sin which the

\* Biddulph.  
† Titus ii. 11, 12.  
‡ Ezra ix. 6. Dan. ix. 4. || S. Basil, Epist. 68. ¶ 2 Chron. vi. 18.—Dan. vi. 10.—Luke xxii. 41.—Acts xx. 36.—Eph. iii. 14.