

The Church.

TORONTO, CANADA, FRIDAY, AUGUST 28, 1846.

[WHOLE NUMBER, CCCCLXXV.]

VOLUME X.—No. 7.]

Poetry.

THE OUTWARD AND THE INNER LIFE.

Behold how fresh and fair the opening flowers,
In early spring-time o'er the meadows blowing,
Purple and yellow buds bestowing
In lovely showers;
The glad eye wanders o'er each scattered gem,
Bending in beauty from its fragile stem.
But there are blooming lovelier flowers than these,
Fair heavenly buds in earthy homes up-springing;
With them as joyous sunshine bringing
As flowers or trees;
Earth, treasure than these blossoms from on high,
And lead them onward to their native sky.
Gaze on the waters of the far-spread deep,
How grand, how awful are its billows swelling,
The beauty of its strength forthelling,
Even in its sleep;
We stand enraptured by that sounding sea,
Filled with a sense of its immensity.
But in ten thousand homes of earth, there lies
A strength more beautiful: 'tis the outpouring
Of the glad heart, with praise adoring
The ever-wise;
Oh, 'tis a holier, a more solemn song,
Than ever shall to rolling waves belong.
See where the sunny light of heaven shines down
From the mountains, azure glory shedding
And radiant tints entreprising
As a fair crown;
And as the day's bright lustre fades away,
New beauties linger 'mid the setting ray.
But there are greater things than these; for, lo!
The aged Christian, on whose hoary head
The blessed peace of heavenly hope is shed
While yet below;
How shall the mountains' fairest tints dispense
So sacred and so sweet an influence?
—Bristol Journal.

THE HISTORY OF THE PRAYER BOOK.

(By the Ven. Archdeacon Berens, M.A.)

CHAPTER VII.—CONTINUED.

17. In the next place the Presbyterians complained that the Liturgy is defective in the following instances:

(First), "That there is no preparatory prayer in the beginning of the Service, for God's assistance and acceptance; and yet many Collects in the middle of the Service have little or nothing else."

(2) "The Confession," as these Ministers continue, "is very defective. Original sin is not clearly expressed, nor the number of actual sins, with their aggravations, sufficiently enlarged on; the form goes too much upon generals."

(3) They complain of a great defect in the forms of public Thanksgiving. And

(4) They object that the whole body of Common Prayer is too much wrapt in generals; as, to be kept from all evil, from all enemies, from all adversity, that we may do God's will, &c., &c., without dilating upon particulars.

(5) They pretend that the Catechism is defective in many necessary doctrines, and that some of the essentials of Christianity are not mentioned, except in the Creed.

The Episcopalians replied, "That, whereas it was objected that there was no preparatory prayer in our Liturgy for God's assistance and acceptance, this they answer is a plain misreporting the Common Prayer. For besides a preparatory exhortation, there are several prayers upon the heads in which it is pretended they are deficient. The instances are these: "Despise not, O Lord, humble and contrite hearts; that these things may be done unto us."

As to the objection, "that the Confession is couched in too general terms," the Episcopalians Divines answer, "That this is rather a perfection than a disadvantage; that the Offices are intended for common use; that general services would cease to be such by descending to particulars. When confession of sins is general, all persons may and must join in it, because in many things we offend all. But if the enumeration of sins was particular, it would not be so well suited to the use of the congregation; for it may well be supposed to happen, that some persons may, by God's grace have been preserved from several of the sins recited; and therefore by confessing themselves guilty, they would lie to God Almighty, and thus stand in need of a new confession. As for original sin, they conceive it sufficiently acknowledged in the Church's confessing, that without God's help our frailty cannot fall; and that our mortal nature can do no good thing without Him."

As for the complaint, that the Liturgy goes too much upon generals, for instance, that we may do God's will, that we may be kept from evil, &c., &c., the Church Commissioners reply, that these are almost the very terms in the Lord's Prayer; so that they must reform that, before they can pretend to mend our Liturgy in these particulars.

18. The principal demand of the Presbyterians was, that the directions, which impose any ceremonies, especially the surplice, the sign of the cross, and kneeling at the Lord's Supper, might be abrogated.

In answer to the general principles on which this demand was grounded, the Church Commissioners reply, "That God has not only given a power, but likewise commanded the imposing whatever shall be truly decent and becoming his public service. That after St. Paul had laid down some particular rules for praying, thanksgiving, prophesying, &c., he concludes with this general precept, Let all things be done *chrystianly*, in a decent manner; and that there may be uniformity in these circumstances of decency, the Apostle adds, Let there be a *régle*, a rule or canon for that purpose." (1 Cor. xiv. 40.) They add, that "Superiors, not inferiors, must be judges of what is decent and convenient: those who have authority to order that every thing be done decently, must of necessity first judge what does not fall under that description.

After several judicious observations, the Episcopalians proceed, "Whereas the Nonconformists plead that they cannot obey the commands of the Church for fear of violating the precept which forbids adding to the word of God, (Deut. xii. 32.) we answer, those Ministers do not well command things for order and decency provided they are enjoined only as regulations of human authority. And under supposing some persons of the Church, and under supposing the Church may, notwithstanding, without sin, insist upon compliance with decent ceremonies; and all this without being guilty of offending our weak brother; for here the scandal is taken and not given. It is the prejudice and mistake of the scrupulous person that disturbs himself."

"Neither will the case of St. Paul's not eating flesh, if it offended his weak brother, give any support to the objection. For here it must be observed, the Apostle speaks of things not commanded by God or his Church; of matters which had nothing of decency or significance for religious purposes. And therefore in a case unconnected with Divine worship, St. Paul was willing to resign his liberty, rather than offend his brother. But if any man should venture to break a just law or custom of the Church, the Apostle marks him for a contentious person (1 Cor. xi. 16)."

"That these ceremonies have occasioned many divisions, as it is pretended, is no more their fault, than the misunderstandings between the nearest relations, accidentally consequent upon the preaching of the Gospel, (Luke xiii.) can be fairly charged on the Christian religion.

They justify the use of the surplice by alleging, "That both reason and experience may inform us that decency and propriety in ornament and habit strike the senses, and excite respect and regard; with this view particular habits are adopted in the equipage of princes, and in courts of justice. And why should the service of God be refused this advantage? With respect to the surplice, no habit is more suitable at holy ministrations than white linen; it is the emblem of purity. That this habit was anciently used in the Church we learn from St. Chrysostom."

"The sign of the cross," continue the Episcopal Divines, "was always used in *immortalis laboris*,—in the Sacrament of Baptism. We continue to use it to testify our communion with the Saints of former ages, and to signify that we are not ashamed of the Cross of Christ."

As to the posture of kneeling, they argue, "That it best becomes the solemnity of the Holy Eucharist, since the most valuable blessings ought to be received with the greatest marks of reverence and submission."

The Church Commissioners conclude their general answer by observing, that "there were ancient Liturgies in the Church, as appears plainly from St. Chrysostom's, St. Basil's, and others;" and the Greeks, say they, "mention St. James's much older than the rest. And though we cannot trace entire Liturgies through all the centuries of Christianity; yet that there were such in the earliest ages, may certainly be concluded from the fragments remaining, many of which have been adopted into our Liturgy."

With respect to the more particular exceptions made by the Presbyterians, they wished in the Litany the words "from all other deadly sin," to be altered to "from all other heinous sin;" and the words from sudden death to be changed to "unprepared dying suddenly." They objected to the Church's praying for all that travel, because many, as thieves and pirates, travel for bad purposes, and wished the expression to be "those that travel." In the Office for Visitation of the Sick, they objected to the form of Absolution, and pressed for declarative or conditional expressions, as, "I pronounce thee absolved if thou dost truly repent and believe." In the Office for the Churching of Women, they would have the prayer and reponse omitted, "O Lord save this woman thy servant; (Response) Which putteth her trust in thee;" because it may happen a woman may come to give thanks for a child born in adultery or fornication. To this the Episcopal Divines replied, that in such cases she is to do penance before she is churching.

Besides the exceptions already mentioned, additions to the Liturgy were proposed, and Baxter, to whom the work was committed by his colleagues, drew up an absolute form of his own, and styled it "The Reformed Liturgy," as if he had the modesty to think, says a very impartial writer, "that the old Liturgy, compiled by a number of very learned confessors and martyrs, must now give place to a new form composed by a single man." As the Commission merely authorized a review of the Common Prayer, comparing the same with the ancient Liturgies, and to make reasonable and necessary alterations, corrections, and amendments—this attempt of Baxter to substitute an entirely new Liturgy of his own composing, was certainly not a little presumptuous, and was little likely to draw censures from those to whom he was opposed.

Baxter had been regularly ordained by Thornborough, Bishop of Worcester. At that time he had satisfied himself that conformity was lawful, and the Synodical Declaration, however, he found cause to change his opinion. He was a man of ardent piety, of much self-control, of unwearied zeal and activity in his ministerial labours, and was gifted with a forcible popular eloquence. Perhaps no man in this country, up to the days of John Wesley, was ever instrumental in bringing so many persons to a deep sense of practical religion. This he effected by his preaching, by his private pastoral ministrations, and above all by his numerous practical writings. He was not, perhaps, exempt from that confidence in his own powers, and in his own opinions, from that love of ascendancy,—of being the head of a party,—which has formed a feature in the character of so many distinguished men,—for instance, in the character of Calvin, about a century before, and in that of Wesley, about a century after him. The account which Baxter gives of the increasing moderation of his sentiments in his later years, and of his greater readiness to make allowances for the opinions of other men when they differed from his own is very pleasing."

Baxter's presumption, however, on the present occasion, and the disposition of his colleagues to cavil and find fault with things of minor importance, probably rendered the Episcopalians less inclined to give way, and to consent to some verbal alterations which might have been really desirable.

About ten days before the Commission expired—(it was to continue in force four calendar months)—the Nonconformists desired a personal conference with the Bishops upon the subject of the papers exchanged. The Bishops, with some degree of reluctance, consented. Three of each party were appointed to manage the dispute, the Bishops choosing Drs. Pearson, Gunning, and Sparrow, and the Presbyterians selected Bates, Jacob, and Baxter. When they met, the conference, through want of order, frequent interruptions, and personal reflections, turned to no account.

At the close of the last day it was mutually agreed, that the report of the conference should be delivered to the King in writing; and that each party should give in this general account, "That the Church's welfare, that unity and peace, and his Majesty's satisfaction, were ends upon which they were all agreed; but as to the means, they could not come to any harmony."

Perhaps this result, however it may be lamented, is not to be wondered at when both parties, from the temper and circumstances of the times, were little disposed to make concessions. The Episcopalians, who had recently suffered so much in consequence of their attachment to the Liturgy, not unnaturally felt that attachment increased—even to its blemishes it had—and could not brook to have laws prescribed to them by that party, which they regarded as the primary cause of all their sufferings. The Presbyterians, who for some time had been the dominant party, felt, in point of honour, pledged to their avowed opponents, and relied upon the encouragement which they had received from the King, upon the assurances of some leading Members of Parliament, and upon the interest which they believed themselves to have with large numbers of the people. Some alterations, however, were assented to by the Episcopalians, which were afterwards adopted by the Convocation, and established by Act of Parliament.

Complete History of England, vol. iii. p. 253.
Life of Baxter.
The ascendancy acquired by Wesley was certainly employed by him for the purpose of widely spreading the knowledge and the influence of the Christian religion.
Life of Baxter, and that very useful book, Wordsworth's Ecclesiastical Biography.
Collier (vol. ii. p. 885.) from whom this account of the Savoy Conference is abridged. Collier's account is taken from Papers that passed between the Commissioners at the Savoy Conference.

For some very sensible and impartial observations upon the Savoy Conference, see the last Review of the Prayer Book, and its consequences, in the "Sketch of the History of the Church of England, by Dr. Short; a book well deserving the attention of all members of the Church of England, both lay and clerical."

THE LATE DR. SKAKEL.

(From the Montreal Courier.)

Alexander Skakel, L.L.D., the subject of the following notice, was born at Fochabers, in Banffshire, Scotland, on the 22nd January, 1776, and arrived in this country in the year 1798, after having taken the degree of A.M., at King's College, Aberdeen, the preceding year. After a residence of about a twelvemonth in the city of Quebec, at the request of a number of gentlemen, who soon early appreciated his talents as a teacher, he made this city his future residence, and has ever since that period occupied a prominent position in it, as one of its most successful classical teachers. His very long residence, coupled with the important nature of his services rendered to the community, would seem an ample apology for some more lengthened record of his labours of duty and love than is usually contained in a mere obituary notification.

Dr. Skakel was not long a resident of Montreal, before the school which he had been called upon to form, acquired a great and deserved popularity, and for its master a well merited reputation. Stern in the maintenance of discipline, he was most assiduous in, and devoted to, his duties, and success crowned his efforts. Without wishing to derogate from the merits of any of his contemporaries, it is not too much to state, that in consequence of the plan which he rigidly pursued, his scholars were made to acquire a more thorough and intimate knowledge of the classic languages, and of mathematics, than those of any other school in this city, a circumstance which arose from a more strict attention paid to them in the rudimentary departments of those branches of education, and which was most rigidly carried out. Dr. Skakel was himself a profound classic scholar and mathematician, and being himself passionately fond of these studies, the cultivation of them in his school became the chief feature by which it was distinguished. There are many who will bear his testimony to the truthfulness of these observations; many who, in the enjoyment of present prosperity, while they read to their recollection the events of more youthful periods of their lives, will remember the anxious solicitude with which their studies were conducted; and, in the harvest which they are now reaping, will not fail to recognize the careful hand which planted the thus fruitful seed, and watched it to maturity.

Dr. Skakel's success as a teacher had travelled far, and was recognized through his pupils, even at the University of Edinburgh. The remark of Dr. Thomson, Professor of Pathology at that celebrated seat of learning, himself a finished classic scholar, to a candidate for the degree of M.D., after the completion of his classical examination, that "he had seen many of Mr. Skakel's scholars, and had not met with a bad one," was as marked and spontaneous a tribute to his success and ability as a classic teacher, as was the Honourary degree of L.L.D., conferred upon him last year by that University, in which he had graduated in Arts, to his classical and philosophical attainments.

Dr. Skakel's pupils are now to be met with adorning the several walks of life. Many of them in the learned professions have obtained high eminence, and some of them are now gracing the senatorial seats—the foundation of their respective proficiencies is undoubtedly ascribable to his exertions, the superstructure is as undoubtedly their own; but it may be asked, what would the latter have been without the previous exertions of the former. In the year 1817, after the death of Mr. Leeds, Dr. Skakel obtained, from "the Royal Institution for the advancement of learning," the appointment of tutor in consequence of his services, and the duties which, in consequence of his enfeebled and declining health, he has, for the last three or four years, mainly performed through the able assistance of the Rev. W. Brown.

Dr. Skakel was a man whose generous and charitable feelings prompted him to deep sympathy with the sufferings of the poor and the destitute. To them, he "freely gave," nor were there any one institution in this city, "Mr. Skakel's duties which, in consequence of his enfeebled and declining health, he has, for the last three or four years, mainly performed through the able assistance of the Rev. W. Brown."

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ous morning,—the scorching noontide with its heat and burden,—the afternoon with its weariness and exhaustion,—each in turn have departed; and change, and chance, and sin, and sorrow have been companions of each. The hopes which we conceived in the brightness of our prime have shrunk and withered: the schemes which our maturer years were to have ripened, for the most part, ended like untimely fruit in rottenness and decay: yes, whether in the main, success or disappointment has been the result of our exertions, the closing day must elicit from every one of us the same confession, that "all is Vanity."—Pleasure, riches, power, rank, youth, strength, beauty, health, all perish in the using. "Vanity of vanities. All is vanity!"

"It is toward evening!" Hour after hour has passed away; and though we have laboured on to the last, not an hour has elapsed but some one of our fellow-labourers has been called from our side to go home, and receive his wages from the Master's hand. When we were children, the children whom we loved, and who were the companions of our merry games, died around us, and gave us, perhaps, the first taste of that sorrow, which has ever since been mingled in our cup.

In our youth we were called upon to undergo some sudden blow, and we mourned at the time with all the depth and emotion of young and feeling hearts. But we lived on; yes, we lived to manhood, still shocked and warned by the successive deaths of those contemporaries who seemed but as yesterday to have the same prospects of life with ourselves.

And now, as in increasing years we look back, and see, perhaps, not one in ten of those with whom we started on our career surviving; as we find our children ready to succeed us, and a new generation preparing to supply our place; and as we feel within ourselves the certain signs of decay and dissolution; what thought,—as year by year, Advent and Christmas, Lent and Passion Week, Easter and Whitsuntide return, (seasons sanctified each by its own associations of the past); what thought, I say, can come more naturally to our minds than this, that our remaining time must needs be short; that our opportunities of serving God in the course of His House are rapidly drawing to an end; that "it is toward evening, and the day is far spent?"

Amid such reflections as these (and I have named but a few of the most obvious of those which must find an answer in every heart), I know nothing but the thought of Christ's abiding presence, of His being in us, and with us, the Sharer of our trials, and the Companion of our pilgrimages, which can in any way fill up the aching void occasioned by bereavement; which can pluck out the stings of sorrow and disappointment, and change our despair and repinings at the vanity of things temporal, into grateful acknowledgments, and child-like trust, that He, Who in hitherto preserving us, has, at the same time, been gradually weaning us from this world, and therein has afforded us abundant grounds of hope that He, Who has hitherto delivered, will yet deliver.

It was the Psalmist's humble trust that the loving-kindness and mercy of God should follow him all the days of his life: and surely they who are conscious that they are endeavouring to walk in the Psalmist's steps, may repose themselves on the same comfortable hope.

Pilgrims along life's stern and dreary way, we have still, like the disciples on the road to Emmaus, a companion in our path, Who walks beside us, unseen, indeed, yet close at hand, Who sympathizes with us, and who is bold to say that we should not know Him as He is, knows us, and loves and pities us in spite of that knowledge, and Who is willing to tarry with us, and to be the Guide we so much need, or rather, Who hath already guided us, and hath talked with us in the way, even before our hearts began to burn within us.

How gracious have been His counsels to every one of us! Oh! how great has been the sum of them! For creation and preservation, for regeneration, and adoption,—for the blessings of this life, and the hopes of another; for Redemption purchased for us, and the Church, and the Sacraments, provided to apply it to us; for the mercies bestowed upon us every day, for the protection vouchsafed to us from hourly perils, what thanks do we owe Him, Who never slumbereth, nor sleepeth, whose eye is ever upon us for good, whose ear is ever open to our prayers? Can we doubt that the past is a guarantee for the future? Can we hesitate as to *Whose* presence should go with us, in order to secure us rest? Can we be uncertain as to the fittest prayer to Him Who alone can bring us our going out and our coming in from this time forth for evermore?

"Abide Thou with us: for it is toward evening, and the day is far spent." God our Father, our Redeemer, and our Sanctifier, has been with us hitherto, and that is the guarantee, that unless we grieve Him, resist Him, and drive Him from us, He is ready to continue with us to the end. "Why art thou, then," so vexed, O my soul; and why art thou so disquieted within me? O put thy trust in God: for I will yet thank Him, which is the help of my countenance, and my God."

So many are the sad effects of sin, with respect to our health, our reputation, and our fortune in the world, which always suffer, and often sink, under the oppression of vice, that the sinner who has no fear of God before his eyes, has reason enough to be sorry for his sins. But sorrow arising from these motives is mere worldly sorrow: one laments the decay of his health, another the loss of his reputation, and a third the ruin of his fortune, and often one laments the loss of all: and equally they would have lamented these losses, had they come from any other cause besides sin. He that is sorry for his sin because it has destroyed his health, would have been as sorry had a fever destroyed it; he that grieves for the loss of his fortune, would have grieved in the same manner if fire or the rage of the sea had been his undoing. From whence it is plain that in such sorrow as this no regard is had to God, whom we are principally to respect in our repentance, as being the person against whom we have offended, and whose mercy and pardon we labour to obtain.

In true sorrow that produces repentance, the sense of our guilt is a great ingredient, as well as the sense of our misery. The very hopes we have of obtaining pardon at the hand of God will fill our minds with indignation against ourselves for having offended so gracious a master. For if we can think him good to forgive us, we must needs think ourselves wicked, and we could to all sense of gratitude and goodness, that we lost off so kind and compassionate a Lord. From this sense of guilt will arise indignation, and fear, and zeal; and every passion will be roused to act its part in making us hate and abhor ourselves and our iniquities, and will never let us be at peace with our own hearts, till we have purged them of every evil lust, and consecrated them anew to the service of our Maker. And this is that blessed change which is true repentance—unto salvation never to be repented of.

Fear may sometimes prevail against the power of lust, and the wretch who hates to think of God may not be able to exclude the fear and dread of Him;

when the flames of hell play before the sinner's eyes, and guilt, conscious of its own deserts, fills the imagination with all the horrors of damnation; in this case there will never want sorrow, though perhaps there be no signs of repentance. Thus Judas grieved, in his grief he died, and in his death he found the pains of hell.

In the gospel there are no promises made to grief and sorrow: the mercies of God are offered on the condition of repentance; and though in the nature of the thing repentance must arise from sorrow, and therefore sorrow may be esteemed as a part of repentance; yet sorrow that produces not repentance, that is, a thorough change and reformation, is of no account in the sight of God. Such sorrow may be the sinner's due; if he suffers under it, he has but his reward; it is the just punishment of his iniquity, but can never be the condition of his pardon.

One would think this were too plain a case to be mistaken; yet so commonly it is mistaken, that repentance is grown almost into a form and method, and instead of reforming their sins, men set themselves so many days to be sorry for them. Alas! it is a fruitless grief they labor to affect themselves with; and they may assure themselves their hopes of pardon will be disappointed, if they are not truly sensible of their guilt, there would need no art to produce sorrow, you would want no rules to limit your grief by: nature would be your best instructor, and teach you to lament your misery and your guilt with unsought-for tears and groans: were you sincere, you would fly the viper that stung you, and not cherish and caress the beast, whilst with false tears you bathe the wound you have received.

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