

ART. II.—THE SERVANT OF CHRIST.

No. IV.—DUTY.

IF I were asked what was the most striking characteristic of the best kind of Englishmen, I should reply, without hesitation, that it is the faculty of doing their duty. I do not for a moment mean that the idea is peculiar to them. Wherever the faith of our Lord Jesus Christ is at all understood, there implicit obedience to an enlightened conscience has grown as naturally as the flowers spring from the earth. And I do not forget that in the third century before our era there flourished at Athens the celebrated philosophers of the Porch, who taught the noble and Christian doctrine that the supreme end of life, or the highest good of all for man is virtue, and that virtue is a life conformed to the true ideal of nature—the agreement of a man's conduct with the all-controlling law of his being, of the human will with the Divine. There is much to admire, to study and to imitate in the moral teaching of the philosophers of the Porch. The names of Zeno and Cleanthes, of Seneca, Epictetus, and the Emperor Marcus Aurelius, are justly immortal. But these high and pure thinkers had to discover for themselves what was this desirable agreement between a man's conduct and the all-controlling law of his being of which they spoke; and about that they were not always united. They had to decide for themselves what was the will of God, and their ideas were frequently hard, austere and impracticable. And the motives which they could offer to men as a reason for following the exalted ideal which they had framed were sometimes not enough to convince even themselves. They never largely influenced mankind. The later of their teachers had to make the lamentable confession that no individual corresponded fully with their ideal, and that in fact it was only possible to discriminate between fools and those who were advancing towards wisdom.

Altogether different is the position of the servant of Christ in the field of morals. He has not only revealed to him by the will of God a set of precepts and instructions which are at once the sublimest and the simplest which ever were given to man, containing in themselves the wisdom of all times and all good men, but he has the complete picture of how they can be practised and brought to perfection in the human life of the Son of God. He has, further, the true motive for following them, and the power of Divine grace, such as never before was given to mortal men, to carry them out into daily life. He has not to ask from whence it is that he obtains his idea of obligation, nor whether it has grown up in him as a hereditary influence through the progressive moral training of

his ancestors, nor what are its limits, its extent, its sanction, its authority, its general principles or its particular laws. "The righteousness which is of faith speaketh in this wise: Say not in thine heart, 'Who shall ascend into heaven?' that is, to bring Christ down from above: or, 'Who shall descend into the deep?' that is, to bring up Christ again from the dead. But what saith it? The word is nigh thee, even in thy mouth, and in thy heart: that is, the word of faith, which we preach." In becoming a Christian he has acknowledged once for all that there is a Divine Lawgiver, that He has revealed His law, that he is not merely bound to follow that law, but that by a living faith in the Son of God that law becomes implanted in his very heart of hearts, and is made actually his second nature. It is not enough for him to wish well, but he feels that by God's grace and by earnestly and humbly walking with Him, he can and will be led so far that not only will he be able to do what is right, but he will be unable willingly to do what is wrong.

Stern daughter of the voice of God!
O Duty! if that name thou love,
Who art a light to guide, a rod
To check the erring, and reprove;
Thou, who art victory and law
When empty terrors overawe;
From vain temptations dost set free,
And calmst the weary strife of frail humanity!

Never was the absolute imperative of the moral law obeyed and illustrated with such completeness and perfection as in the life of our Lord Jesus Christ. "Wist ye not that I must be about My Father's business?" is the first recorded saying of the child of twelve years. The reason why He witnessed in His own person to the baptism of John was the same ideal: thus it becometh us to fulfil all righteousness. In the early days of His ministry, when the people wished Him to stay with them, the unceasing impulse of duty would allow Him to take no rest: "I must preach the kingdom of God to other cities also: for therefore am I sent." "I must work the works of Him that sent Me": that was the absorbing spirit of His whole ministry. "The Son of Man must suffer many things, and be rejected of the elders, and of the chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and after three days rise again." That was the prospect which He had always before His eyes, and from which He never flinched. "I say unto you that this that is written must be accomplished in Me"; He was utterly prepared to bear in His own person all the awful signs of the Son of Man. "As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of Man be lifted up." It was before Him from the very beginning.

“Other sheep I have, them also I must bring.” That was His view of the whole human race. His whole life was one long sacrifice for their good. “Behold I cast out devils, and I do cures to-day and to-morrow, and the third day I shall be perfected: nevertheless, I must work to-day and to-morrow, and the day following.” That was the Divine beauty which, when He was lifted up, drew all men unto Him; “Who, in the days of His flesh, when He had offered up prayers and supplications with strong crying and tears unto Him that was able to save Him from death, and was heard in that He feared; though He were a Son, yet learned He obedience by the things which He suffered; and being made perfect He became the author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey Him.”

It is because for three hundred years the revelation of God's will has been the chief education of our people in England and Scotland, nigh them, in their hands and hearts, that Duty has become so thoroughly an English idea, almost a characteristic English word. I do not believe that in any country of the world, up to the last twenty-two years, has the sense of glad, spontaneous and immediate obedience to an enlightened conscience, that noblest spur to the best seat of action, been so habitual and familiar as amongst our own countrymen. And never has the revealed will of God been so admirably and concisely summed up for plain practical simple men as in that priceless inheritance of the Reformation, the National Catechism, which until twenty-two years ago it was the birth-right of every English boy to learn. We should like to know the names of those fathers of the Church whose work has been such an inestimable blessing to their fellow-countrymen; but we can only guess. Bishop Goodrich, of Ely, was one of the Committee of Convocation by whom the first Prayer-Book of King Edward VI., in 1549 was prepared; and in his palace at Ely he placed two stone tablets, one inscribed with the “Duty to God,” the other with the “Duty to our Neighbour.” Of this part, therefore, it is not at all unlikely that Bishop Goodrich was the author. The names of Nowell, then a master in Westminster School, and of Poinet, afterwards Bishop of Rochester, have been associated with the name of Bishop Goodrich. At any rate, whoever the authors were, they were men formed by that glorious outpouring of the Spirit of God which passed, like a Divine gale, over Europe and Britain at the time of the Reformation, and filled them with its temper and wisdom. Happy the country of Scotland, which still maintains its own National Catechism undisturbed in its supremacy over the consciences of the people! Happy, until two and twenty years ago, the nation of the English also,

where, until the apple of discord was thrown amongst them in the irony of fate by one of the most well-meaning of statesmen, the vast and overwhelming majority of the children learned in their day-schools, as the very basis of all their other education, these noble and invaluable words, which remained with them to the very close of their lives, and which entered into their very being as an element of moral life never altogether to be overlaid: "What dost thou chiefly learn by these commandments? I learn two things: my duty towards God and my duty towards my neighbour. What is thy duty towards God? My duty towards God is to believe in Him, to fear Him, to love Him with all my heart, with all my mind, with all my soul, and with all my strength; to worship Him, to give Him thanks, to put my whole trust in Him, to call upon Him, to honour His holy Name and His word, and to serve Him truly all the days of my life. What is thy duty towards thy neighbour? My duty towards my neighbour is to love him as myself, and to do to all men as I would that they should do unto me; to honour and obey the Queen, and all that are put in authority under her; to submit myself to all my governors, teachers, spiritual pastors and masters; to order myself lowly and reverently to all my betters; to hurt nobody by word or deed; to be true and just in all my dealing; to bear no malice nor hatred in my heart; to keep my hands from picking and stealing, and my tongue from evil speaking, lying and slandering; to keep my body in temperance, soberness and chastity; not to covet nor desire other men's goods, but to learn and labour truly to get my own living, and to do my duty in that state of life *unto which it shall please God to call me.*"¹ Wretched indeed the religious jealousy which could make a Christian nation discard these sublime and beautiful sentences from the public teaching of their children! Miserable indeed the quarrel which permits the Bible certainly to be read, but allows no summary of its inspiring lessons to be stored in the minds of our restless, bright-eyed boys and girls, to be their safeguard against all the moral perplexities and dangers of modern life! Never were words put together better calculated to unite the citizens of a commonwealth in one healthy organism, or to secure the personal peace and prosperity of each individual of its members. Those who should follow out in their fullest meaning these wise counsels will be in the best sense of the word gentlemen. They are a faithful and extended echo of the vigorous epitome given by King Solomon in the days of

¹ I have placed these words in italics, because they are so constantly misquoted by the political enemies of the Church, as if they ran "unto which it *hath* pleased God to call me."

inspiration, after his survey of human life; "Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter: fear God and keep His commandments, for this is the whole duty of man." Alas! that to nearly half the children of England, and more than 400,000 of the children of London, the privilege is now denied of learning those duties in this inimitable language; and that unless they chance to gain that knowledge in Sunday-schools, which we have reason to fear are, for the most part, a very poor substitute, it lies at the discretion of their teachers whether they become acquainted at all with the virtues and obligations of the Christian life, or are baldly taught the mere facts and narratives of Holy Scripture! Can we wonder that during the last twenty years the sense of duty amongst the younger generation of Englishmen seems weakened in all classes, and that more than ever now devote themselves instead to the pursuit of pleasure and of self-aggrandisement? "There are persons," wrote Thomas Hood, "who have so far outgrown their catechism as to believe that their only duty is to themselves." By how many do you think that he would have to multiply his estimate at the present day? We can but hope that some of them at least may be as those described by the charitable spirit of Wordsworth:

There are who ask not if Thine eye
Be on them; who, in love and truth
Where no misgiving is, rely
Upon the genial sense of youth:
Glad hearts! without reproach or blot,
Who do Thy work, and know it not:
Oh! if, through confidence misplaced,
They fail, Thy saving arms, dread Power, around them cast!

It is with the moral welfare of our own country that we are chiefly concerned, and we are not called upon to criticise our neighbours. But we cannot but notice, as perhaps the dawn of a new day for France, the name of the newspaper published by the Familistère of Guise, that great co-operative society in which 450 families of workmen are banded together in the pursuits of peaceful industry, living in a magnificent building, which is named, and rightly, the Palais Social, and, under the direction of their great-hearted employer, Monsieur Godin, building up a grand industrial commonwealth, all of which will probably, in the course of three years, be their own property. What is the name of this little newspaper? What is the signal of this brotherly union which would abolish the struggle between capital and labour? They call it *Le Devoir*—Duty. That is the master-word of the enterprise and of the civilization of which it is the herald. That is the word which we long to hear "above all the strife and fury of these stormy days; a word at whose bidding, when once it is clearly

spoken," and conscientiously and intelligently understood, "the angry waves of social strife will sink to a great calm." That is the feeling of our greatest British writers, trained in the good old school which made Britain at one time the noblest of nations. "Duty is the same thing as happiness," said a learned Scottish physician. "Perish discretion whenever it interferes with duty," was the fine saying of Hannah More, the English poetess and moralist. "Duty is the sublimest word in the English language," said the famous American confederate commander, General Lee. And it was the English humourist, Douglas Jerrold, who said, in words that multitudes have found true without being able to express the truth, that our duty, though it is set about with thorns, may still be made a staff, supporting even while it torments.

Each day its duty brings. The undone task
Of yesterday cannot be now fulfilled
Without some current work's displacement. Time
And tide will wait for none. Then let us act
So that they need not wait, and keep abreast
With them by the discharge of each day's claim ;
For each new dawn, like a prolific tree,
Blossoms with blessings and with duties, which
So interwoven grow, that he who shirks
The latter, fails the first. You cannot pick
The dainty, and refuse the task. To win
The smile of Him who did His Father's will
In the great work assigned Him while 'twas day,
With love self-sacrificing, His high course
We must, with prayerful footsteps, imitate ;
And, knowing not what one day may bring forth,
Live so that death, come when he may, shall find
Us not defaulters in arrears with Time,
Mourning like Titus : I have lost a day !
But busily engaged on something which
Shall cast a blessing on the world, rebound
With one to our own breasts, and tend to give
To man some benefit, to God some praise.

The servant of Christ is not called upon, perhaps, to do heroic things. But, if we wish to regenerate England, the best way is to begin in our own hearts, in our own homes. It is wonderful how eager many people are in the present day to make other people do their duty. It is the fashion of the hour. We have whole armies of inspectors, and regenerators, and officials, and authorities, the business of each of whom it is to look after their neighbours in this point or in that. But it is not every man who quietly goes about to do his own work as thoroughly as it can be done. If each one of us ourselves were to be content to do the duty that lies nearest to us, and were punctual and careful at any cost to fulfil it, for no conceivable enticements of friends or pleasures to let

it pass, that would go far to make our place and day a praise in the earth. "It is an impressive truth," said a wise and acute writer, De Quincey, "that sometimes in the very lowest forms of duty there is the sublimest accent of self-sacrifice; to do less would class you as an object of eternal scorn; to do so much presumes the grandeur of heroism." "Let him," says our uncompromising Scottish moralist, Carlyle, "who gropes painfully in darkness or in uncertain light, and prays vehemently that the dawn may ripen into day, lay this precept well to heart: Do the duty which lies nearest thee, which thou knowest to be a duty; thy second duty will already have become clearer." "The true hero," says another, "is the great wise man of duty; he whose soul is armed by truth, and supported by the smile of God; he who meets life's perils with a cautious but tranquil spirit, gathers strength by facing its storms, and dies, if he is called to die, as a Christian victor at the post of duty."

I sought to do some mighty act of good
 That I might prove how well my soul had striven.
 I waited, while the days and hours passed by,
 Yet bore no incense of my deed to heaven.
 Sad, without hope, I watched the falling rain:
 One drop alone could not refresh the tree,
 But drop on drop, till from its deepest root
 The giant oak drank life and liberty.
 Refreshed, like nature, I arose to try
 And do the duty which should nearest lie:—
 And, 'ere I knew my work was half begun,
 The noble deed I sought in vain was done!

Ah! what difficulties and sorrows should we all spare ourselves if we could determine once for all never to neglect the present duty for one which is perhaps after all nothing of the kind, but only some pleasant task or occupation delightful to our own taste or ambition, and chosen by ourselves. Weary we may often grow of our obligations, but they are ours, and with them nothing else can legitimately compete. I think very little of the man who undertakes a duty, shirks it, cools in his ardour, and leaves it to others. For such there is no excuse. For such there can be no respect. "In every profession the daily and common duties are the most useful, the most important, the only duties which really press." "Let this day's performance of the meanest duty be thy religion."

There are some to whom life seems empty and purposeless; who wake nerveless in the morning, and saunter through the golden hours, and sink to sleep at night with no consciousness of a design accomplished, or a deed achieved; but merely with the burdensome deadening sense of time killed and amusements pursued which ever flit away in tantalizing unreality.

Ah! what an aching heart is often theirs! What mischiefs and sins have made their way into their life because its energies were unoccupied with healthy useful aims! What a future of remorse are they preparing for themselves when some day the clouds shall be rolled away from their past history, and with eyes hot with shame and anguish they will see all that they might have done, and all that they have neglected! If they would but turn with all their heart to their Father in heaven, and cry to Him to strengthen their faith, and kindle their conscience, and give them the firm resolve, and the quick unflinching performance, and the steady perseverance that flags not, and the calm brave eye that looks fervently and with unswerving directness to the goal of glory, the experiment would bring its own proof.

Serene will be our days and bright
 And happy will our nature be,
 When love is an unerring light,
 And joy its own security.

And they a blissful course may hold
 Even now, who, not unwisely bold,
 Live in the spirit of this creed ;

Yet seek Thy firm support, according to their need.

I, loving freedom, and untried,
 No sport of every random gust,
 Yet being to myself a guide,
 Too blindly have reposed my trust :
 And oft, when in my heart was heard
 Thy timely mandate, I deferred
 The task, in smoother walks to stray,

But Thee I now would serve more strictly, if I may.

Through no disturbance in my soul,
 Or strong compunction in me wrought,
 I supplicate for Thy control,

But in the quietness of thought.

Me this unchartered freedom tires,
 I feel the weight of chance desires :
 My hopes no more must change their name,

I long for a repose that ever is the same.

Stern Lawgiver ! yet Thou dost wear
 The Godhead's most benignant grace ;
 Nor know we anything so fair

As is the smile upon Thy face ;
 Flowers laugh before Thee on their beds,
 And fragrance in Thy footing treads ;
 Thou dost preserve the stars from wrong,

And the most ancient heavens through Thee are fresh and strong !

To humbler functions, awful Power,
 I call Thee : I myself commend
 Unto Thy guidance from this hour ;
 Oh, let my weakness have an end !

Give unto me—made lowly, wise—
 The spirit of self-sacrifice ;
 The confidence of reason give,
 And in the light of truth Thy bondman let me live !

WILLIAM SINCLAIR.

ART. III.—DIFFICULTIES IN ACCEPTING THE NEW
 PENTATEUCHAL THEORY.

THE position combated in the following remarks is that which assigns "the Middle Pentateuch," including most of Exodus after chap. xxiii, with nearly all Leviticus and Numbers, to the authorship of a committee of Jewish priests during the Captivity, and the first promulgation of this Babylonian novel matter to the "priest and scribe" Ezra in 444 B.C.

The first and most obvious comment upon such a theory is that the entire directions for the construction of the Tabernacle and its furniture, and the narrative of their fulfilment in Exod. xxv.-xxxi., and xxxv.-xl., would be, according to this theory, drawn up (450 to 500 B.C.) about 500 years *after* any realization of those objects had become impossible by the completion of Solomon's Temple, dedicated *circa* 1005 B.C. These directions and their fulfilment are given with such precision of plan and minuteness of detail that various schemes of the area, elevation, and sections recorded have been drawn by measurement. According to our critics, the "Tent of Meeting" either never existed at all, or was something far more rude and simple. *The* Tabernacle as described in Exod. xxxv.-xl. none of them will allow. It had by their verdict no place in the past; it was *ex-hypothesi* impossible in the future, when the council of priests in Babylon took in hand to design what it *should* have been. It had been impossible, not only ever since Solomon's time, but probably ever since Joshua's settlement set up the Tabernacle at Shiloh, converting what had been movable into a permanent erection, with probably such modifications as the case required.¹

That any tradition of such preciseness in details as would enable the priests to adjust according to it every board, pillar, socket, curtain, and pin, could have descended orally through all the ages from the time of Joshua to that of the exile—a thousand years in round numbers—is more than the most

¹ In 1 Chron. i. 3 we read that at Gibeon "was the tent of meeting of God, which Moses the servant of Jehovah had made in the wilderness." No doubt this may have been in some effectually representative sense true, as by incorporation of the more solid and stable materials of the older structure in some later one, or the like.