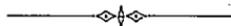


preliminary votes have been taken has a clear majority of votes of both clergy and laity, his name only is submitted to the Synod, and if he then receives two-thirds of the votes of each order he is declared elected. If two have approximately equal votes, the selection as between them is left to the bench of Bishops (Constitution, cap. vi.). For the first few years of disestablishment the choice was usually made as from the whole body of Irish clergy. The present Bishops of Cashel, of Cork, of Ossory, and the late Bishop Reeves of Down, together with both the Archbishops, were called from other dioceses. The tide has, however, lately, and apparently definitely, turned in favour of choosing a diocesan clergyman to rule over his brethren. The last elections to Killaloe, Kilmore, Down and Connor, Clogher, and Tuam all resulted thus.

There seems to be something to be said on both sides of the question as between these two modes of election. For the appointment of a clergyman of the diocese it may be urged that he knows the diocese better than a stranger could, that he will be probably the man who on the whole has best made his mark there, and that when a piece of patronage is given to the Synod it is natural that they should use it to reward local merit. But, on the other hand, it must be felt that distinction for work, learning, devotion to the Church as a whole, should qualify a clergyman for election in any part of the land. Now the best man may have to wait for many years for election to the episcopate if he can look for appointment no where except in his own diocese. One motive in every election should be the strengthening of the Bench of Bishops by the introduction of the strongest and best men of the Church, which cannot be done by strictly diocesan elections. It will, as a general rule, be most for the interest of the diocese itself to be ruled by one who has gained experience in some wider sphere, who is free from all local party entanglements and prejudices, and who will have a ruling power and impartiality not easy to acquire when, from holding the position of a brother and an equal, he is constituted in one day a superior and a father in God.

A RURAL DEAN.



ART. III.—THE SERVANT OF CHRIST.

No. VIII.—UNWORLDLINESS.

IT was a cold night. It was a pleasant, roaring fire. Peter had gone through much in the chill scene in the garden. He was an elderly man, and it was hard upon him to have to

spend the whole night watching and waiting and shivering. Comfort was there before him in the servants' hall; what harm if he made himself as comfortable as circumstances would allow? So he stood there and made the best of it—while his Master was being insulted in the further room. Perhaps it would all come to nothing, like other plots which had before been made against the life of Jesus. Twice St. John tells us, in his simple and solemn language, how Peter enjoyed that fire. So does St. Mark, who was Peter's own reporter. "He sat with the servants and warmed himself at the fire." "Peter stood with them and warmed himself." "Simon Peter stood and warmed himself." A cheerful glow took possession of his weary limbs. He felt like a man who has had a hot bath after a long day's hunting. He was refreshed like the man in Isaiah, who said, "Aha! I am warm, I have seen the fire." He was ready for anything. He was quite happy with the servants. All the impetuous heroism which had seemed very well in the romantic exaltation of the garden looked now far off and foolish. It had died away in the blaze of that comfortable fire. A maid came and stared at him. "And you also were with Jesus of Nazareth," she said positively. What nonsense! Another maid, zealous against those whom her master hated, was equally certain: "This is one of them." What an absurd idea! Certainly not. But he went on talking, and then there could be no longer any doubt. The little group round the fire became quite sure as the night wore on; his odd Galilean accent proved what the maids had said. Then he began to curse and to swear. Why could they not leave him alone? Why would they not believe what he said? Unhappy Peter! If he could have denied himself that fire, what a life-long memory of anguish would he have been spared!

There was a learned Scottish Bishop who died a few years ago. He was one of the lights of his age, and all his people regarded him with love and veneration. His house was some distance from the great town where most of his work lay. So his people built him a beautiful library in the town, at considerable expense and in the most approved taste. He said he would accept it on one condition. There was a Gothic stone fireplace, high and massive. Let them carve conspicuously on it, in letters which all could read: "Simon Peter stood and warmed himself." It would be to him and to his successors an un failing warning against the luxury and self-indulgence and sloth which would otherwise be the natural result of that beautiful chamber which they had prepared for him.

And many as are the enemies of our spiritual life, I ask whether there is any which is more subtle, or to which we

more readily fall victims, than the doctrine of material comfort? I do not say that in all cases it absolutely ruins the spiritual life, but it has the dismal effect of stunting it and maiming it amongst the countless myriads of those who say that they are Christians. It is not, perhaps, except in a few notorious cases, that it lures on into deliberate deadly sin; but it works ill enough in robbing so many of anything which deserves the name of faith and peace and love.

How many are there who understand in any practical sense what is meant by denying themselves, and taking up their cross daily and following Christ? The words have been so familiar to us since our childhood, that they leave no impression behind when we hear them. We have, perhaps, a vague idea that they mean that we must keep the Ten Commandments, and refuse to do anything which the Ten Commandments forbid, however earnestly we may long for it. Such a supposition does not convey even a faint shadow of what is intended by these words which we all profess to be carrying out. They mean that we have a natural personality in the world, our name, our rank, our pedigree, our tastes, our fortunes—all that the people of the world would think of when they speak of us—and that, with regard to all that, we are to be as if it did not exist at all; that we are to strip ourselves in spirit of all our natural advantages and inclinations, and sacrifice them entirely to the doing of active intentional good for Christ; that we are to go about with as little tie to this world as if we were carrying a beam of wood on our shoulders on the very last day of our lives, to be crucified beside our Master; that by accepting the redemption of Jesus Christ we became His bondsmen. Everything that we had, whether it was much or little, was to be given up to Him and to His service. We were to retain it all in our own hands, so that we might have both the responsibility and the delight of employing it for that service.

But all of it—name and fortune, house and lands, energies and abilities, health and strength, time, tastes and inclinations—all were to be His. The world was to have none of it. Every fraction of it all that was spent upon the world and the passing fading employments of the world would be stolen and robbed from Christ. Medals, decorations, Privy Councillorships, titles, estates, fortunes, all social ambitions, every social limit and distinction, every phase of mere amusement and worldly pleasure, every kind of place-hunting and every thought of worldly power—these the bondsman of Jesus would thankfully give up wholly and absolutely, glad to have done with them altogether, for he knew them to be so many snares set for him by the devil against the perfect loyalty of

his self-surrender. They would be to him as the comfortable fire which made Peter fall. The whole of his forces, the whole of his powers and personality, he would devote to the establishing of good and the conquering of evil, and the relief of suffering and distress. If he was a minister of the Word he would have no thought except constantly to speak the truth, boldly to rebuke vice, and patiently suffer for the truth's sake. The dignities of the Church would seem to him only so much additional responsibility for which he was unfitted and from which he shrank. If he was a politician, his only ambition would be to make his public acts and votes accord strictly and unflinchingly, and at all hazards, with his deliberate convictions and his private speech. If he was a soldier, he would refuse all other reward except the privilege of doing his duty. If he was invited to dinner, he would say: "Ask the poor and needy; do not ask me. They need it; I do not." His faith would be the faith which removes mountains; his life would be one long act of beneficence; and when he was called to his reward and his rest and his home, innumerable toilers and strugglers who had been strengthened by his example and influence would rise up and call him blessed. All that is the result when a man believes Christ, and denies himself, and takes up his cross daily and follows Him.

The contrast between the Gospel of Christ and the gospel of material comfort and compromise with the world—the gospel, that is, of serving God and Mammon—is very considerable indeed. Like Peter on that one fatal occasion, our favourite spiritual attitude is that of standing and warming ourselves. The terms of our disastrous compromise with the world are the result of a most unhappy mistake. They are that, if you give a tenth of your income to what men are pleased to call charity, you shall give the rest to the world. Indeed, those who give a tenth are often thought to be doing something particularly splendid and noble. If you give a tenth, it is thought that Jesus has no sort of claim upon the rest. I have called it a disastrous compromise and an unhappy mistake, because it is the flattest and boldest contradiction which His teaching has ever received. The mistake arises from the old Judaizing tendencies of the dark days of Christendom. Because the Jews were ordered to give a tenth merely to support the priests and Levites in the service of the temple, therefore these Judaizing heretics jumped to the conclusion that when our Lord said, "Sell that ye have, and give alms," and when He said, "Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth," and when He said, "Make to yourselves friends of the Mammon of unrighteousness," and when He said, "Ye cannot serve God and Mammon," what He really meant to say was,

"Give one-tenth to God, and give nine-tenths to the world." So we make the Word of God of none effect with our traditions, and we open the way for that gospel of material comfort which is so calamitous to our souls. We wallow daily in the enjoyments of the world, and then we wonder what St. John could have meant by the lust of the eyes and the pride of life. We delight in brilliant assemblies, in every kind of extravagance and luxury, in costly dresses and the flashing of diamonds, in expensive flowers, in splendid entertainments, in a competition of ostentation and display—everything that is most contrary to the spirit and the letter of the laws of the kingdom of God—and then we have the impudence to complain that our faith is weak, and that the times are out of joint. Or we pretend not to care for these things, and yet we are busy with them from morning till night for five months of the year. We live in an atmosphere of unreality, in which the spiritual lamp must necessarily burn low, and in which any honest and sincere attempt to carry out the teaching of Christ seems a contrast so harsh as to be impossible. We bring up our children to think of nothing but amusement, hour after hour and day after day, and then we wonder that they have grown up hard, cynical, selfish, and faithless; that their pulse never stirs to what is noble; that their heart never beats to what is great. Year by year, as the younger generations take the place of the old, the life of the English country house becomes more selfish and isolated. It is only one of the countless ways in which the god of this world, the god of comfort, selfishness, and self-indulgence, is worshipped. Simon Peter stood and warmed himself, and thought not of his Master and of all that He was suffering within earshot.

Yet in this age of universal cant we are not likely to leave ourselves without ingenious and plausible attempts to excuse ourselves for such conduct. We say that luxury employs the poor, and that giving away does more harm than good. What cruel hypocrisy! We speak as if luxury was the only thing which employed the poor; whereas this poor miserable, mean little fact, that it does give work, is only mentioned at all because there is nothing else to say for it. Does nothing else give employment? Is there nothing to be done which can raise the soul of the employer instead of poisoning it, or which, instead of embittering the employed, can ennoble them? Would the cultivation of the boundless lands of the colonies give no employment? Would it be so very harmful a thing if a working man, not able to find a place at home in the great struggle of life, should, by our Christian sympathy, be able to say, "I elect to go and work in Australia, or in New Zealand, or in Canada," and should be conveyed there without cost to himself? How

is he to find himself means for a voyage to the other side of the earth? Would it pauperize the young men of London if in every parish were provided for them by our superfluities a gymnasium and a club-house? Believe me that this talk with which they delude people about pauperization and the harm of doing good with all that we possess is nothing but cant and hypocrisy from beginning to end. It has nothing whatever to do with the glorious fellowship of the kingdom of God. God in His great mercy has provided in Christian self-sacrifice and Christian brotherhood and Christian sympathy a remedy for every evil—social, political, and economical—which can threaten us; and there is nothing but this false and heretical gospel of material comfort and of compromise with the world, this gospel of warming ourselves at the fire of the world's enjoyments, which is in the way to prevent us from applying His golden rule of love. Have we never thought how terrible it is to remember that the cost of one useless, extravagant, enervating entertainment, where we should think it out of place so much as to mention the name of Jesus, would make happy for ever in the more hopeful freedom of Great Britain some simple, earnest, despairing family of our brothers and sisters in Christ?

There is another aspect of unworldliness which we must not omit. And that is the absence of arrogance.

I wish we could get rid of that word "condescend," which we have in our English translation of Rom. xii. 16: "Mind not high things, but condescend to men of low estate." It does not in the least represent the meaning of the Greek. The literal translation is exactly this: "Being carried along with, going along with, things that are lowly." There is no idea of looking down from a higher place; on the contrary, the notion is mingling with things which have no mark of worldly distinction about them, being daily interested with them, standing on the same level with them, moving with them, being busied about them. Putting this mistranslation aside, there is no such word in the Bible as condescension; it is altogether an un-Christian idea. Those who praise great people for being condescending only show their own meanness, baseness, and servility. Amongst the fellow-citizens of the kingdom of Christ there is no such thing; nothing but feelings of sympathy, intelligent interest, the mutual respect which comes from having the same great objects in common—kind, friendly, brotherly regard.

In the world, of course, it is very different. The citizens of the world will always be on the look out for great people and great things, in the hope of having some of the lustre reflected back upon themselves. No matter how keenly they may be

satirized and ridiculed, they will always be at it. Every worldly hostess will never cease trying to get showy, distinguished people to her dinners and her parties. Every worldly man will be glad to mention casually the distinguished people whom he has met or with whom he has spoken. He will contrive, without offence if possible, to let people know if he is connected with distinguished families, or has done distinguished things. There are greater and less degrees of skill in imparting this knowledge. Flagrant want of taste is soon ridiculed, but a skilful performer will get the consideration which he expects without any very open breach of the understandings of society. The heartless law of climbing has become in a highly artificial condition of life a real science. Even from a worldly point of view it is very vulgar, and very far from beautiful. But as it is practised so universally in the world, the vulgarity and ugliness are only noticed when they present themselves with too great unskilfulness. The proficients in worldliness often salve their consciences by thinking that there is some particular form of minding high things of which they themselves are not guilty. Some of them do not think much of titled people, but rather of some other kind of social brilliance; some of them do not pay any reverence to the rich; some think very little of the successful. But such excuses are mere delusions. To all people who are imbued with the spirit of the world there is some form of distinction, some ideal of high things, on which they set their minds, and which corrupts their characters. For the results of it are false estimates of what is really good, false limits for the affections of the heart, false standards of right and wrong, a real and essential vulgarity and ignobleness of soul, a hardness and coolness towards those who perhaps have most claim on the sympathies, a widening of the lines of demarcation between different classes of society, a tendency to the disruption and dislocation of social life itself. It is only by the opposite conduct of those who are really wise and good that social institutions are held together. To the wise and good the children of this world owe in reality a debt of which they are little aware, and which they would be the last to acknowledge. Their social conduct is followed by disappointment, jealousies, heart-burnings, envyings, anger, discontent, and rage, which, if not mitigated by the Christian virtues of those who are better, would bring the calamities of ruin and upheaval.

The impartial love of our fellows which is the result of loyal faith in our Lord Jesus Christ sweeps away all these false ideals and unhealthy passions. None is so true a gentleman as the perfect Christian. His homage is aroused, not by titles, or splendours, or riches, or distinctions, or success of any kind

in any class of life, but by likeness to the example of the Word made flesh. I do not mean, of course, that those who have received from God the gift of a long and meritorious ancestry, or of refined and gentle birth, should despise such invaluable incentives to right feeling, good manners, and noble deeds. But the lust of the eyes and the pride of life may be found in every class, however unexalted; the Christian detects them wherever they show themselves, and has no share in their vanities. The enthusiastic worship of a prize-fighter, an athlete, a cricketer, an actor, is just as unchristian as servility to a duke or zeal for a millionaire. There are the high things of the pot-house and the street just as much as there are the high things of the Court or of the Drawing-room, or of Parliament, or of municipal life. St. Paul, in his care for the true health and happiness of our souls, will allow us to mind none of these things. "Set not your mind on high things, but go along with things that are lowly."

There are those who in their indiscretion outstrip St. Paul and wrongly apply his words. They do not understand him fully, and so they are led into an entirely false position, and jeopardize the interests of the kingdom of Christ. They jump at the conclusion that because we are not to set our minds on high things therefore there ought to be no high things at all. They think we ought at once to do away with all high things by law or by revolution. St. Paul was not so silly. He had, of course, nothing but Divine wisdom in his mind; but I speak by way of comparison with these foolish, hot-headed zealots. I have spoken of St. Paul's great practical wisdom. St. Paul was wise enough to see that until all the world was really converted, and had become genuinely and sincerely Christian, there would always be high things. In a society composed largely of worldly people, there would be always great distinctions of rank and fortune and personal advantages, no matter on what principles social life might be organized. St. Paul had no intention of beginning at the wrong end, and of making laws for the world on Christian principles which the world would be unable to bear, and which would do the world no good. He saw the futility of attempting to spread Christian practice and feeling by legislation. And, indeed, as a very large part of mankind will always remain untouched by the life and death of the Lord Jesus Christ, and as they will always be minding high things of one sort or another as long as they remain unconverted, I am not sure whether it is not better that they should worship a long line of distinguished and very often patriotic ancestors, or even wealth, with all its opportunities of usefulness, than that they should worship mere success, or bow themselves

down to the prize-fighter, the athlete, the dancer, or the actor. However that may be, St. Paul saw that we must begin at the other end, and he said to his individual converted Christian: "Take care that you do not set your mind on high things, whatever other people may do; but go along with things that are lowly."

What is this going along with things that are lowly? He who is by baptism and by personal loyalty one with the Lord Jesus Christ makes no distinction between class and class as such: he honours the King, he pays honour to whom honour is due, custom to whom custom, tribute to whom tribute, fear to whom fear. But, in spite of this sincere and faithful compliance with the ordinances of social life, he is just as ready to honour all men. He treats all alike with the same courtesy and deference. If he is in office or an employer, he expects obedience; but where that obedience is cheerfully paid he allows no sense of inferiority to be felt. He is, in fact, not only willing but anxious to be on friendly terms with Christian people of all classes. With those who are not really and sincerely citizens of the kingdom of heaven, he will, of course, be very largely on his guard, because otherwise they would take advantage of his kindness. But with those who are by their fruits and by their daily conduct conscious and loyal servants of the same Master he has no fear of being on terms of happy equality, no matter what may be their condition of life. Their interests are his interests, their sorrows his sorrows, their joys his joys, their welfare his concern. If he honours all men he loves the brotherhood.

While we remain here, mixed up as we are every day with the people of the world, it is very difficult for us to carry out this ideal. But if we have the true principle in our hearts, God's Holy Spirit will enable us to apply it as each occasion arises. Such reflections should urge us to abjure, with more vigorous purpose and decision than ever, the false lights, the foolish ambitions, the misleading, disappointing and corrupting motives of the world, and, following that Divine Pattern whose loveliness none can approach, who emptied Himself of His glory, and took upon Him the form of a servant, to wean ourselves from all temptations which we may have to this distorting and most unchristian habit of mind, and by taking to our hearts those who in their lives and conduct show that they have been with Jesus, to help to bind together in godly union, peace, and mutual confidence and understanding the widely different members and classes of our common fellowship in Christ Jesus.

WILLIAM SINCLAIR.

