

of course, individual interests cannot operate so strongly, because those interests, being different, neutralise one another.

How appointments to cures of souls are made will be seen by canon 8, page 39, which we will quote :—

When a vacancy in a Cure of Souls shall occur, the Committee of Patronage of the Diocese, with the Parochial Nominators of the Cure so vacant, shall form a Board of Nomination, presided over, *ex-officio*, by the Bishop, if present, who shall have an independent vote, and also a casting vote. Provided that no person shall act, or be capable of acting, as Diocesan Nominator with respect to any parish of which he shall be at the time a Parochial Nominator. But the Bishop shall summon in his place, to act as Diocesan Nominator, for filling such vacancy, the person whose name stands first on the Supplemental List.

Such, then, are some of the advantages which lead us to be hopeful as regards the future of the Irish Church. There are, probably, to counterbalance them, disadvantages, some of them arising out of the new system there. If we were on the spot, we should perhaps have the opportunity of observing. Some disadvantages there are, also, incident to disestablishment and disendowment, and for which, of course, the Irish Synod is not responsible. Some of these we could mention, but had rather take the hopeful side of the subject, the more especially as the last-mentioned evils are irremediable. In every case, however, all true Christians in the Irish Church ought to have this topic of consolation, in that God, who works good out of evil, will certainly not desert His own people, and that the depression and adversity of their beloved Church may be the means of purifying her. Her position, in a worldly point of view, is certainly lowered by the disestablishment, and her funds by the disendowment, but her spiritual condition may eventually be raised and purified by these reverses.

We cannot conclude without bearing testimony to the able and skilful manner in which Mr. Brooke has accomplished his difficult task, by which he has rendered valuable service both to his own Church and her friends and sympathisers in England.

E. W. WHATELY.



ART. IX.—THE CHILDLIKE SPIRIT.

Thoughts suggested by St. Mark x. 13, 16.

WE can hardly have failed to notice the touching patience which our Lord manifested in His treatment of the disciples. Stupid men these disciples were not—on the contrary, all

of them were gifted with considerable intellectual power, and one of them was certainly a man of genius ; but yet, what with ingrained prejudices that could only be gradually removed, and what with the natural slowness of the human soul to rise to any height of spiritual thought, they were perpetually misunderstanding Christ's meaning, and needing perpetual correction. Indeed, they blundered where it seems to us almost inconceivable that misapprehension could have existed at all ; and yet in the sweetest and tenderest way in the world, though sometimes, it is true, with a sort of sadness in His manner, the Divine Teacher took up the weary task of reiterated explanation when these misapprehensions occurred, and set quietly to work to put all right and straight again.

Once or twice, however, He spoke in a sterner tone ; not that His patience was exhausted, for that was inexhaustible, but because, as it seems, something more than spiritual dulness lay at the root of the mistake. There was a *wrongness* in His followers' hearts ; and He was obliged to censure it.

An instance may be found in the passage referred to at the head of the present paper. Some mothers, it appears, were pressing forward into the presence of the Saviour, anxious that He should bestow His blessing on their little ones. It was a good human feeling that prompted the attempt, though, of course, the women did not understand the true nature of the incarnate Son of God, though all that they knew was that, in some dim way, He represented to them the love and tenderness of the Father in Heaven ; and it ought to have met with more consideration from men who—some of them, at least—had wives and children of their own. But they were repulsed. The disciples stood between the Christ and them, and ordered them off. Women had no business, they said, to interrupt the grave business of the Prophet of Galilee with their weak and foolish fancies about their children. How could they, in reason, expect Him to have leisure to attend to such matters ? This we suppose they said, and probably more than this ; for, as the Evangelist tells us, they "rebuked" them. But how did Christ take their attempts to protect Him, as they thought, from annoyance ? When Jesus saw it, He was "*much displeased*." In fact, He was indignant at the behaviour of the disciples, and addressed them with a sharpness and severity which were quite unusual to Him, and for which, we cannot doubt, they, on their part, were quite unprepared.

Now, why did He do so ?

For this reason, amongst others—because their behaviour indicated a total misapprehension of the nature of His mission upon earth, and manifested a spirit altogether at variance with His own. The disciples imagined that Christ could properly

interest Himself only in great matters, and that the little, feeble, insignificant phenomena of human existence were beneath His regard. He was too grand, they thought, to attend to such things. But what a mistake this was! What a complete misinterpretation of the object Christ had in view—of the purpose for which He came! He came to be the especial friend and patron of the weak and small and helpless; and all feebleness constituted in itself a claim to His attention and His care. The cruel spirit of heathenism would stamp the sick and the cripple out of life, as being obstructions to the well-being of the community; it would relentlessly “improve from off the face of the earth” those who, through weakness of any kind, were unable to take their part in the struggle for existence—that is, it despised the weak; but Christianity—only Christianity—cares for the crushed and maimed and withered, in body and soul; it seeks that which is lost; it rears its refuges for the houseless and aged; its shelter for the foundling; its hospitals for the sick; its asylums for the idiot; its penitentiaries for the fallen; its innumerable associations for the protection of all who are unable to protect themselves—down even to a home for those poor decayed friends of man, the race of lost and wandering dogs. Christ has a special interest in the weak; and these good but blundering disciples would have limited His mission to the encouragement and assistance and patronage of the strong.

But notice how the Saviour, so to speak, turns the tables against His disciples. They thought that the children must become like them before Christ would interest Himself about them. He tells them that they must become like children before they can enter into the Kingdom of God.

This language suggests the obvious inquiry, “*In what respects are true Christians childlike?*”

Let us endeavour to answer the question.

First, in children there is an absence of self-assertion—I suppose I ought to say “a comparative absence,” for the Self is there, only not developed into formidable proportions—and this absence of self-assertion is the primary characteristic of all true discipleship. When our first parents fell, in that beautiful garden, where nothing was denied them but absolute ownership, the bait that snared them was the promise of independence—“Ye shall be as gods.” *That* clenched the matter. The fruit was alluring enough, the scent delicious—it *was* good for food; but to be one’s own master, and to know no law but one’s own will! Ah, there lay the force of the temptation! And our blessed Master, Who came to undo, to destroy the work of the devil, aims in His Gospel as the first step to life—at the restoring of the true relation between God and man by the sacrifice of our independence. And, as a matter of fact, every true Christian

begins his career by that surrender of will to the will of One Who has a right to claim the submission, which we are accustomed to call "faith;" by accepting as the ground of confidence before God something which is altogether outside of himself; by reposing upon the strength of another. And the continuous aim of every true Christian life is to carry out in the whole of our being, in the very minutiae of our daily, hourly existence, the idea of self-consecration which follows upon the fact of self-surrender.

We may take for a second point of resemblance a feeling of self-distrust, and a consequent inclination to have recourse for help to a superior power. The child in alarm or in danger runs to its parent; the disciple in similar circumstances clings to Christ. And this *because his eyes have been opened to see the facts of the case*. A man ignorant of his real position may be bold and reckless. Show him where he is and what he is, and his feeling alters at once. And a childlike disposition is soon engendered within us when we are made acquainted with the thousand baneful influences which surround us, and with our own utter inability, through inexperience and other want of power, to protect ourselves from them in our passage from time into eternity.

Again—in simplicity, in being without those folds of character which keep something disagreeable concealed, there is a likeness between the child and the Christian disciple. A child's feelings, motives, designs, lie on the surface. His heart is transparent. Were it not so, he would be a revolting, because an unnatural, creature. He is angry or he is pleased, as the case may be; or perhaps he is greedy and selfish—and he shows it. All his petty whims and caprices and tempers, you can see through them at once; you know what he means, and what he wishes, and what he aims at. He is sincere and simple. And just so with the Christian. He is, in proportion to the strength of his Christianity, genuine and true. He affects nothing he does not mean; he wears no disguises; he is straightforward and honest; and he has no *arrière pensée*—no thought in the background, which, if you were aware of it, would give a different colour to manner or to language. I once heard it said of a lady, "She never crosses the street to shake hands with you without having a purpose to serve." The remark was intended as praise of her cleverness, and we may suppose her to have been clever; but, to my mind, it spoke very little in favour of her Christianity.

And then, in the last place, the child and the Christian resemble each other in the *freshness of enjoyment* with which they accept the bounties of God. The Lord Jesus, we venture to think, was eminently a man of simple and unvitiated tastes. The common occupations, the ordinary enjoyments of life, had

each of them a charm for Him. He took pleasure in the simple delights of the poor, in the gaiety of the rustic wedding, in the sports of children, in the observation of the flowers of the field, and of the ever-shifting beauties of the earth and the sky. And was He not in all this pre-eminently childlike? The same may be said of His disciples. Purity of heart makes simple enjoyments palatable. The glow of internal peace, the consciousness of the presence and the favour of God, casts a radiance like that of the sun upon an ordinary landscape, brightening even homely objects with a touch of the unseen glory. And may we not say that the heart of the Christian becomes more childlike in the freshness of his pleasure as well as in other respects, as his experience grows? I think so. "The oldest angels," it has been said, "are the youngest." And if a man becomes as a little child when he enters the spiritual kingdom on earth, we may depend upon it he is never more like a child in heart, than just as he is about to enter the presence of his God and Father in Heaven.

GORDON CALTHROP.

PRAYER.

"Men ought always to pray, and not to faint." Luke xviii. 1.

Tune: "Pax tecum," No. 32 *Hymnal Companion*.

1.

Pray, always pray: the Holy Spirit pleads
With thee and for thee: tell Him all thy needs.

2.

Pray, always pray: beneath sin's heaviest load
Prayer sees the blood from Jesus' side that flow'd.

3.

Pray, always pray: though weary, faint, and lone,
Prayer nestles by the Father's sheltering Throne.

4.

Pray, always pray: amid the world's turmoil
Prayer keeps the heart at rest, and nerves for toil.

5.

Pray, always pray: if joys thy pathway throng,
Prayer strikes the harp and sings the angels' song.

6.

Pray, always pray: if loved ones pass the veil,
Prayer drinks with them of springs that cannot fail.

7.

All earthly things with earth shall fade away:
Prayer grasps eternity: pray, always pray.

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E. H. BICKERSTETH.

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