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*B Powell*  
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A C H A R G E

DELIVERED TO

THE CLERGY OF THE DIOCESES

OF

DUBLIN AND GLANDALAGH,

AT THE

VISITATION IN JULY MDCCCXL.

BY

RICHARD WHATELY, D.D.

ARCHBISHOP OF DUBLIN.

MDCCCXL.

(11)



# A C H A R G E,

&c. &c.

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ON every one of the several occasions on which I have addressed you, my Reverend Brethren, since the existing connexion between us first began, I have always been led to survey attentively the past, and the future, and to reflect with the most intense interest on both: comparing the present state of things, (as far as our great work is concerned) with what has existed before, and with what may be looked for hereafter; and considering whether any, and what, advancement has been made, hitherto, and in what way a further advancement may be best promoted.

And I trust that you will not fail to recommend, from time to time, similar reflexions, to the persons committed to your care: impressing on them, not only by exhortation, but also by your own example, that we must never think of standing still in our christian course, nor be satisfied without a continual progress,—and, I may add, a continually accelerated progress—throughout the whole of this our brief state of trial. You should set before them both the precept and the example, of not only watchfully detecting and remedying whatever is faulty, and supplying whatever is deficient, but also of making still better whatever is good,—of seeking continual progress and improvement,—of regarding each step that is made in advance, as an encouragement to fresh and fresh exertion,—and, in short, of unceasing efforts to “grow” (as the Apostle expresses it) “in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.”

I am the more anxious to remind you of this, my Reverend Brethren, and to urge you to impress it on your People, for this reason among others; that it is so natural and common:

a mistake (a mistake it certainly is) to regard all exhortations to improvement as implying something of dissatisfaction and censure ;—as conveying (according to the familiar phrase) a bad compliment to the persons so addressed. But there is no just ground for this notion. On the contrary, not only is it impossible we should ever attain, in this life, such a state as to need no improvement, but every step made in real improvement tends to make our efforts after a still further advance both easier and more efficient. New aspirations,—fresh hopes—additional exertions,—are the natural result.

We know this to be the case in respect of worldly objects. That men's *desire* of wealth, of glory, of power, increase by gratification, is proverbial. And as to the *acquisition* of the objects of these desires, the remark cited by Lord Bacon of some person who had amassed a vast estate, "that he had with great difficulty attained to a little wealth, and with ease, to great wealth,"—this holds good by analogy, with many and various pursuits. In one most important point however the analogy

of worldly pursuits does not hold good in respect of the one I am now speaking of. Of wealth—of power—of worldly glory—men may have, (as far as their real welfare is concerned) enough, and too much. They need continually to be warned against inordinate desire of such objects, and to be reminded that even a successful pursuit of them is far from insuring an increase of happiness. But on the other hand, men need no less to be reminded that in “laying up for themselves treasure in heaven,” they are to set no bounds to their desires;—that “those who by patient continuance in well-doing seek for glory, honour, and immortality” in a better world, should be insatiable in their ambition.

The maxims which are so often wise as applied to worldly affairs,—to be easily content when matters go on smoothly,—to “let well alone,”—to reflect with satisfaction how much worse things might have been, instead of restlessly craving after perfection,—all these are very opposite to true wisdom in him who is seeking, and bringing others “to seek, the



kingdom of God and his righteousness." And yet though all would acknowledge this when distinctly stated, the statement of it is not to be cast aside as a vapid and useless truism.—For, the approbation felt (and justly felt) for moderation of desires,—for contented acceptance of what is tolerable,—for cheerful and quiet endurance of imperfection,—is continually tending, though imperceptibly, and without our consciousness, to influence, more or less, our habitual sentiments and conduct in respect of the things pertaining to another world,—the privileges, and duties, and hopes, of the Christian. The more narrowly you examine both your own hearts, and the People committed to you, and the christian World in general, the more you will be convinced of the importance, and the difficulty of keeping this truism,—if it be such,—before your own mind and that of your hearers. And you will even find the truism sometimes regarded by them as a paradox.

“What, is the Christian then” (you will perhaps find some of them object) “to be always

grieving,—always dissatisfied ?” No, you may reply ; not necessarily *dissatisfied*, but always *unsatisfied* : for these are very different things. He indeed who is living in sin, or religious ignorance, or who is not “growing in grace and Christian knowledge,” or who is falling back, has reason enough for grief and dissatisfaction ; and all the more, if he actually feel nothing of the kind, but is cheerfully contented with such a state of mind. But he who is truly advancing, will rejoice, though with anxious and trembling joy, and will be at once both cheered, and incited to fresh advances, by every step that his Master shall have strengthened him to make. “Brethren, I count not myself” (says the Apostle Paul) “to have apprehended ; but this one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before, I press towards the mark, for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus.” And again, you will refer the inquirer to the same Apostle at one time telling us to “work out our salvation with fear and trembling,” and at another, expressing himself, “*confident* of this very thing, that He

who had *begun* a good work in the disciples, would perform the same, unto the day of the Lord Jesus Christ."

It is needful for us therefore to be especially on our guard against being misunderstood as to this point; against being understood, I mean, as conveying censure, rebuke, or discouragement, when we are cautioning men not to sit down satisfied, but to "abound" (as the Apostle expresses it) "more and more," and to regard every step of improvement they may have made as only an incitement to cheerful and persevering efforts after still further improvement.

And I will here remark, that I wish *you*, my Reverend Brethren, thus to understand what I have said, and may hereafter say, from time to time, on such occasions as the present. I mean that you must not, on the one hand, construe as blame, as complaint, as disapprobation, any suggestions for improvement that may be offered, or any, the most earnest, call for increased exertions in your heavenly office; nor,

again, on the other hand, must you interpret any commendation, any expressions of satisfaction,—as implying that enough has been done; or even that a continuance of all things in the same condition, year after year, without any effort towards advancement, will necessarily merit the same approbation. The promise given by a favourable spring, is not fulfilled, if the summer exhibit no advance beyond the spring, or the autumn beyond the summer.

When I say that you must be careful not to dishearten those you wish to encourage, by their construing as a censure, your exhortations to further advancement, of course I do not mean that we should, through false tenderness, shrink from reproving what may really call for reproof. Alarm, and remorse, and shame, will, in some cases, be the very feelings which it will be the truest kindness in us to excite.

But in many cases, again, these very feelings may best and most effectually be excited *indirectly*, rather than by direct *reproof*. You will not unfrequently meet with some individual in

whom there is much that is really deserving of censure, but who would be indignant at that censure and unconscious of its justness. And of such a man, some spiritual guides are apt too hastily to despair, because they cannot at once produce in him that conviction of sin, which, according to their system, is always to be the first point aimed at. But he would be an unskilful physician who should make it a rule always to administer the same remedies in the same order, without any regard to the constitutions of his patients: and he would be a bad general who should invariably assault every fortress on the same side. A man of the description I have been speaking of may sometimes not be incapable of being stimulated to efforts after spiritual improvement. He may be brought to contemplate more earnestly than he had done, the example of Him, our great Master, who is "gone to prepare a place for us;" and to fix his thoughts more intently on that place. Now "every one" (says the beloved Disciple) "that hath this hope in him, purifieth himself, even as He is pure." And if a man is *thus* brought really and practically

to “have this hope in him,”—that is, to “set his *affections* on things above, and to regard this life as a period of preparation for a far higher and better state of existence, this will elevate his whole character,—will refine his judgment, and clear his views: and he will *then* come to regard with shame and dismay many things which before were overlooked, or regarded with indifference; and while absolutely improved, and improving, in his Christian character, he will, by referring to a higher standard, be less satisfied with himself than before; and the more he has attained, will be the less disposed to sit down contented with his attainments.

Whatever may be argued in behalf of any theoretical system, it will often be found in practice, that a conviction of sin will rather follow, than precede, efforts after increased holiness.

Some persons, again, you may meet with, who are ready enough to acknowledge the necessity, and to cherish the expectation, of a

continued Christian progress, but who consider that God's people have only to wait for, and to rejoice in, this progress, (even as we wait for the ripening of the fruit of a tree, by the nourishment drawn from the ground, and by the sun-beams from heaven,) without any call for vigilance and exertion on man's part.

If you meet with any one who has been misled into such notions by erroneous or by injudicious teachers, having paid *more* heed to *them* than to the Oracles of divine instruction, him, by a reference to those Oracles, you may hope to rescue from his delusion. From these you may explain to him that though, in a certain sense, *we* can do nothing towards our own salvation,—taking “we” as man *independent* of divine grace, yet “we” as endued with that grace,—that is, as God's People, (for “as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God”) are exhorted to *give diligence* to make our calling and election sure,” and to “work out our own salvation, with fear and trembling,” on the very ground that “it is God that worketh in us.” Citations to the

same effect I need not multiply before an audience to whom they must be so familiar.—Scripture, in its general tone, quite as much as in detached passages, will abundantly supply the requisite admonitions in such a case, to those who will listen to Scripture. But if there are any who shut their eyes to the plain, unsophisticated general sense of the Scriptures, and deliberately adopt some human system, of high pretensions, which they garble Scripture to support,—for them I can really suggest nothing. Any stronger arguments against their error,—or even stronger denunciations of it,—than meet the eye of every plain man who reads his Bible with a candid mind, I am at a loss even to conceive.

When I speak of unceasing progress,—of continual improvement in all that pertains to the Christian life,—as what we ought to aim at, both in ourselves, and in those with whom we have influence, it may perhaps be proper to add, though I trust it is, to most of you, nearly superfluous,—that this does not imply any attempt “to be wise above that which is written,”



—any expectation of a new and additional revelation, or of the discovery of new doctrines, —any pretensions to inspiration,—or hopes of a fresh out-pouring of that, or of any other miraculous gifts. It seemed needful to make this remark, because such hopes have been cherished,—such pretensions put forth, (as you must be well aware)—from time to time, in various ages of the Church, and not least in the present.

I have coupled together these two things,—miraculous gifts, and a new revelation, because I conceive them to be in reality inseparable.—Miracles are the only sufficient credentials on which any one can reasonably demand assent to doctrines not clearly revealed (*to the understanding of his hearers*) in Scripture. The promulgation of new articles of faith, or of articles which though not avowedly new, are yet not obviously contained in Scripture, is most presumptuous, unless so authenticated. And again, pretensions to miraculous powers such as those of Moses and the Prophets,—of Christ and the Apostles, seem to imply some

such object to be furthered by them. At any rate, those who shall have thus established their claim to be considered as messengers from Heaven, *may* evidently demand assent to whatever they may, in that character, promulgate. If any persons therefore pretend to such a mark of a divine commission as the gift of tongues, or any such power, no one who admits their pretensions can consistently withhold assent from any thing they may declare themselves commissioned to teach.

And, again, if any persons claim for any traditions of the Church an authority either paramount to Scripture, or equal to Scripture, or concurrent with it,—or, which comes to the very same thing, *decisive as to the interpretation of Scripture*,—taking on themselves to decide what is “the Church,” and *what* tradition is to be thus received,—these persons are plainly called on to establish by miraculous evidence the claims they advance. And if they make their appeal \*not to miracles wrought

\* See Prof. Powell's “Tradition Unveiled,” Sup. to 2nd Edit.

by themselves, but to those which originally formed the evidence of the Gospel, they are bound to shew by some decisive proof, that that evidence can fairly be brought to bear upon and authenticate their pretension ;—that they are, by Christ's decree, the rightful depositories of the power they claim.

But to such as reject and protest against all such groundless claims, an interminable field is still open for the application of all the faculties, intellectual and moral, with which God has endowed us, for the fuller understanding and development of the truths revealed in his written Word. To learn and to teach what is there to be found ;—to develop more and more fully to your own minds and to those of your hearers, what the Evangelists and Apostles have conveyed to us, will be enough and more than enough, to occupy even a longer life than any of us can expect.

The Mosaic Dispensation was the dawn of “the dayspring from on high,” not yet arrived,—of a Sun only about to rise. It was a

Revelation in itself imperfect. The Sun of the Gospel arose; “the true Light, which lighteth every one that cometh into the world” appeared: but it was partially hidden, and is so, still, by a veil of clouds;—by prejudices of various kinds,—by the passions and infirmities and ignorance of mankind. We may advance, and we may lead others to advance, indefinitely, in the full development of Gospel-truth,—of the real character and meaning and design of Christ’s religion; not by seeking to *superadd* something to the Gospel-revelation; but by a more correct and fuller comprehension of it;—not by increasing, absolutely, the light of the noonday-sun, but by clearing away the mists which obscure our view of it. Christianity itself cannot be improved; but men’s views, and estimate, and comprehension of Christianity may be indefinitely improved.

Vigilant discretion however is no less needful than zeal and perseverance, if we would really advance in the Christian course. The most active and patient traveller, if he be not also watchfully careful to keep in the right

road, may, after having once diverged from it into some other track, be expending his energies in going further and further astray, while he fancies himself making progress in his journey.

In various ways is the Christian, and not least, the Christian Minister, liable to this kind of self-deception. I am not now, you will observe, adverting chiefly to the danger of mistaking what is absolutely false, for true, or wrong for right; but rather to that of mistaking the real character of some description of truth or of valuable knowledge. We have to guard against mistake for instance, as to what is or is not a part of the *Christian-Revelation*;—a truth *belonging to* the Gospel, and resting, properly, on divine authority. While advancing in the attainment of what may be in itself very valuable and important knowledge, we may be in fact going further and further in error, if we confound together the inspired and the uninspired,—the sacred text, with the human comment.

There are persons (such as I have above alluded to) who in their zeal—in itself laudable—to advance towards a full comprehension of the Gospel-revelation, have conceived that they are to seek for this by diligent research into the tenets and practices of what is called the Primitive Church ; i. e. the christian world during the first three or first four Ages ; and some have even gone so far as to represent the revelation of the Christian-scheme contained in the New Testament as a mere imperfect and uncompleted outline, which was to be filled up by the Church in the succeeding three centuries ;—as a mere beginning of that which the early Fathers were empowered and commissioned to finish : though on what grounds any kind of authority is claimed for the Church *then*, which does not equally belong to it at this day, or at any intermediate period, no one, as far as I know, has even attempted to make out.

Now, to learn what has been said and done by eminent men in every Age of the church, is, of course interesting and valuable to a theolo-

gical student. And a man of modesty and candour will not fail to pay great attention to their opinions, in whatever period they may have lived. He will also inquire with peculiar interest into the belief and the practices of those who had been instructed by the immediate disciples and other contemporaries of the Apostles themselves. But the mistake is, to assume, on the ground of presumptuous conjecture (for of proof, there is not even a shadow) that these men were infallible interpreters of the Apostles, and had received from them by tradition something not contained, or not plainly set forth, in their writings, but which yet were designed by those very Apostles as a necessary portion of Christianity.

Not only are all these assumptions utterly groundless and unwarrantable, but, on the contrary, even if there is any thing which we can be morally certain *was* practised in the time of the Apostles, and with their sanction (as is the case for instance with the Agapæ or Lovefeasts) we must yet consider it as not designed by them to be of universal and perpetual obliga-

tion, where they have not distinctly laid it down as such in their writings. By omitting, in any case, thus to record certain of their practices or directions, they have given us as clear an indication as we could have looked for, of their design to leave these to the free choice and decision of each Church in each Age and country. And there seems every reason to think that it was on purpose to avoid misapprehensions of this kind that they did leave unrecorded so much of what we cannot but be sure they must have practised, and said, and established, in the Churches under their own immediate care.\*

And it should be remembered that what some persons consider as the *safe* side in respect of such points,—as the extreme of scrupulous and cautious veneration—is in truth the reverse. A wise and right-minded reverence for divine authority will render us doubly scrupulous of reckoning any thing as a divine precept or

\* I have treated more fully on this subject in an Essay (VI. of the First Series, and also published separate) on the omission of Creeds, Liturgies, and Catechisms in Scripture.



institution, without sufficient warrant. Yet, at the first glance, a readiness to bestow religious veneration, with or without good grounds (which is the very characteristic of superstition) is apt to be mistaken for a sign of pre-eminent piety. Besides those who hold the “double doctrine”—the “*disciplina arcani*”—and concerning whom therefore it would be rash to pronounce whether any particular tenet taught by them, is one which they inwardly believe, or is one of the exoteric instructions deemed expedient for the multitude,—besides these persons, there are, no doubt, men of sincere though mistaken piety, who, as has been just intimated, consider it as the safe side in all doubtful cases, to adhere with unhesitating confidence to every thing that *may possibly* have been introduced or practised by the Apostles;—to make every thing an article of Christian faith that could have been implied in any thing they may have taught. But such persons would perceive on more careful and sober reflection, that a rightly-scrupulous piety consists, as has been said, in drawing the line as distinctly as we are able, between what is,

and what is not *designed* by our divine Instructors as a portion of their authoritative precepts and directions. It is by this careful anxiety to *comply with their intention with respect to us*, that we are to manifest a true veneration for them.

Any thing that does not fall within this rule, we may believe, but not as a part of the *Christian revelation*;—we may practise, but not as a portion of the *divine institutions essential to a Christian Church*, and binding on all men in all Ages: not, in short, as something placed beyond the bounds of that “binding and loosing” power which belongs to *every* Church, in reference to things neither enjoined in Scripture nor at variance with it. Otherwise, even though what we believe should be, really, and in itself, true, and though what we practise, should chance to be in fact what the Apostles did practise, we should be not honoring, but dishonoring God, by taking upon ourselves to give the sanction of his authority to that from which He has thought fit to withhold that sanction. When the Apostle Paul gave his

advice on matters respecting which he “had no commandment from the Lord,” he of course thought that what he was recommending was good ; but so far was he from presuming to put it forth as a divine command, that he expressly notified the contrary. Let us not think to manifest our pious humility by reversing the Apostle’s procedure !

I have thought it needful, in these times especially, to insert this caution against such mistaken efforts after advancement in christian knowledge and practice ; against the delusions of those who, while they exult in their imagined progress in the christian course, are, in reality straying into other paths, and following a bewildering meteor.

There is one other caution, so needful to be habitually inculcated, in every age, and on men of all classes, that I may be allowed here to remind you of it. I mean, that men should be warned, not of the *inutility* only, but of the *danger*, of every advancement in religious knowledge—of every religious sentiment,—re-

flexion,—or emotion,—that is not accompanied by an effort after a corresponding improvement in practical habits.

One of the soundest, and most important, and most extensively applicable remarks ever made by Bishop Butler (and that is saying not a little) goes to this point. I will cite the passage, because though probably familiar to most of you, I have always found those who are the best-acquainted with it, to value it the most highly, and to be more and more impressed, each time it is recalled to their minds, with the variety of applications that may be made of it, and with the importance of assiduously inculcating it on every one whom they have to instruct.

“Going over,” says he, “the theory of virtue in one’s thoughts, talking well, and drawing fine pictures of it; this is so far from necessarily or certainly conducing to form a habit of it in him who thus employs himself, that it may harden the mind in a contrary course, and render it gradually more insensible, i. e. form

an habit of insensibility to all moral considerations. For, from our very faculty of habits, passive impressions, by being repeated, grow weaker; thoughts by often passing through the mind, are felt less sensibly. Being accustomed to danger, begets intrepidity, i. e. lessens fear; to distress, lessens the passion of pity; to instances of other's mortality, the sensible apprehension of our own. And from these two observations together; that practical habits are formed and strengthened by repeated acts, and that passive impressions grow weaker by being repeated upon us; it must follow that active habits may be gradually forming and strengthening, by a course of acting upon such and such motives and excitements, while these motives and excitements themselves are by proportionable degrees growing less sensible; i. e. are continually less and less sensibly felt, even as the active habits strengthen. And experience confirms this: for active principles, at the very same time that they are less lively in perception than they were, are found to be somehow wrought more thoroughly into the temper and character, and become more effec-

tual in influencing our practice. The three things just mentioned may afford instances of it. Perception of danger is a natural excitement of passive fear, and active caution ; and by being inured to danger, habits of the latter are gradually wrought, at the same time, that the former gradually lessens. Perception of distress in others is a natural excitement, passively to pity, and actively to relieve it : but let a man set himself to attend to, inquire out, and relieve distressed persons, and he cannot but grow less and less sensibly affected with the various miseries of life with which he must become acquainted ; when yet at the same time, benevolence, considered not as a passion, but as a practical principle of action, will strengthen : and whilst he passively compassionates the distressed less, he will acquire a greater aptitude actively to assist and befriend them. So also at the same time that the daily instances of men's dying around us, gives us daily a less sensible passive feeling or apprehension of our own mortality, such instances greatly contribute to the strengthening a practical regard to it in serious men ; i. e. to forming a habit

of acting with a constant view to it. And this seems again further to shew, that, passive impressions made upon our minds by admonition, experience, example, though they may have a remote efficacy, and a very great one, towards forming active habits, yet can have this efficacy no otherwise than by inducing us to such a course of *action*: and that it is not being *affected* so and so, but *acting*, which forms those habits: only it must always be remembered, that real endeavours to enforce good impressions upon ourselves are a species of virtuous action.”\*

That moral habits can only be acquired by practical efforts, was long since remarked by Aristotle;† who ridicules those that attended philosophical discourses with an expectation of improvement, while they contented themselves with listening, understanding, and approving; comparing them to a patient who should hope to regain health by listening to his physician’s directions, without following them. But he

\* “Analogy,” Part I. Chap. 5.

† Eth. Nic. B. ii.

omitted to add, as Bishop Butler has done, that such a procedure is much *worse* than useless ; being positively dangerous.

I need hardly remark, that what the Author says of Virtue, is at least equally applicable to Religion ; and that consequently, no one is so incurably and hopelessly hardened in practical irreligion as one who has the most perfect *familiarity* with religious subjects and religious feelings, without having cultivated corresponding active principles. It is he that is, emphatically, “the barren fig-tree,” which has “no fruit on it, but leaves only :” not, a tree standing torpid, and destitute of all vegetation, during the winter’s frost or summer’s drought, and capable of being called into life and productiveness, by rain and sunshine ; but, a tree in full vigour of life and growth, whose sap is all *diverted* from the formation of fruit, and is expended in flourishing boughs that bear only barren leaves.

To the neglect of the principle set forth by Bishop Butler—the neglect, I mean, of ear-



nestly, perpetually, and vigilantly applying it,—I am disposed to attribute, in a great degree, many of those lamentable failures—which we have all heard of occasionally, and which several of us have witnessed,—in persons on whom, as children, or as adults, the most assiduous care has been bestowed in respect of their religious improvement; and apparently not without some effect;—the effect (to pursue the metaphor) of bringing forth an encouraging produce of leaves;—but who ultimately exhibit in their lives something very different from the “fruits of the Spirit.”

Such failures are often attributed to the particular kind of religious views that have been in each case imparted. And doubtless such an explanation is often well-founded. If the religion of the head only, and not of the heart, be inculcated, and while either abstract speculations, or calculations of expediency are laid before the understanding, the affections be left untouched and unappealed to; or if again, an antinomian system be taught, or one which is

understood and adopted as such ; i. e. if men are taught, not indeed that moral conduct is unnecessary, but that it requires no sedulous attention on our part ;—if these, or other equally unsound views of religion be communicated, the lamentable consequences may be easily explained.

But there are cases, and but too many, to which no such explanation will apply, and yet in which I am convinced a very great error in respect of religious training has led to the sad result ;—the error, I mean, now under consideration, of allowing passive impressions to become familiar to the mind, without taking due care to make the exercise of active principles keep pace with these impressions. I take this to be one of the most common, and perhaps the most fatal, because the least retrievable, of all errors in religious training. It is one therefore which we should not only watch against in ourselves, but carefully point out to our hearers, and incessantly warn them against.

It is not enough to warn them that they who “hear Christ’s words, and do them not,” are building (according to his own parable) “on the sand:” this is true, but it is not enough: it is not enough to teach them that religious studies and meditations without a continual effort after holiness of heart and life, are useless; they are much more than useless; being, for the reason Bishop Butler has given, highly pernicious, by tending to harden the mind against the moral effects of religion. On the other hand, he who does make this continual effort, will not only find strength given to his active principles, but will also keep alive his sensibility to religious impressions and religious convictions; because fresh and fresh ones will be continually arising, in proportion to his improvement in the Christian character. “If any man,” says our Lord, “is willing to do ( $\theta\epsilon\lambda\epsilon\iota$ ) the will of my Father, he shall know of the doctrine:” and in proportion as that good-will is practically increased in him, he will know more and more of the doctrine; he will “grow” both “in

grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour.” \*

Wherefore “ giving *all diligence*, add to your faith, virtue, and to virtue, knowledge ; and to knowledge, temperance ; and to temperance, patience ; and to patience, godliness ; and to godliness, brotherly kindness ; and to brotherly kindness, charity.” †

And the more we accomplish in this growth in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour, and

\* A KING for earthly wisdom prayed,  
God gave the boon he sought ;  
That king God’s law still disobeyed,  
He knew, and did it not.

Ask thou, my child, a better boon,  
The wisdom from above,  
Nor think thy morn of life too soon  
To learn a Saviour’s love.

But ask not skill to understand  
The deep and curious lore,  
With which too many a reckless hand  
Hath gloss’d these pages o’er.

Pray for what passeth human skill,  
The power God’s will to do ;  
Read thou, that thou may’st do his will,  
And thou shalt know it too.

*Hinds’s Poems, p. 67.*

† 2 Pet. i. 5.

in leading our people onwards in the same path, the more room we shall see for fresh advancement: the horizon will continually extend before us in proportion to our own elevation, and is bounded only by our imperfections.

But in these your endeavours (I would remind you in conclusion) to advance your People to a fuller comprehension of the Gospel, you must always be prepared,—I will not say for disappointment, but—for failure, or inadequate success.

Besides those on whom you will fail to make any impression, or any lasting impression,—besides those whose backslidings you will have to deplore, or whose hostility you will encounter, you will find many, and probably always the majority, falling far short of the point to which you will have been endeavouring to bring them.

I have remarked in a former Address to you, that I cannot even *wish* you to *fail in none* of your endeavours to do good; because I am con-

vinced *that* could only be from your not *making* such endeavours as you ought. The truly enlightened and public-spirited man,—more especially that most enlightened and most public-spirited of all characters, a sincere and judiciously-zealous Christian minister—will always be considerably ahead of the age he lives in. He will probably be contemned by some ; he will be opposed and thwarted by others ; and will be inadequately appreciated, and imperfectly seconded, by a great proportion of the rest.

But let him “not be weary in well-doing ; for in due season we shall reap, if we faint not.” A harvest for *us* at least, if we are not wanting in our own exertions, will be secured to us by Him, “the Lord of the harvest,” whatever may be the immediate success of our attempts to benefit others. And it will contribute to secure us from mortifying disappointment, to make such, and so many, and so great, attempts of this kind,—so clearly beyond all reasonable prospect of uniform and complete success in all,—that we shall regard failure, or partial

failure, as the general rule, and success as the exception ;—that we shall gratefully exult in whatever good we do succeed in effecting, without wondering or repining at not being able to accomplish all we aim at.

And often will he who acts on these principles have to bless God for instances of success where he could have least reckoned upon it. After having “toiled all night” in vain, our Master’s “word” will sometimes fill the net with an unexpected draught. And such a one will be secured from the danger of sitting down to contemplate, in indolent contentment, what he has already accomplished, instead of going on to do “the work of Him who hath sent us, while it is day ;” remembering that “the night cometh, in which no man can work.”

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## P O S T S C R I P T.

AT the close of another general Confirmation, being the fifth since I came to the diocese, I have again to express my satisfaction at the orderly and decorous manner in which every thing connected with the ordinance was conducted.

The number confirmed in the last month was upwards of 1360; and reckoning also those confirmed in the City of Dublin last October, the total, since the preceding general Confirmation, amounts to very nearly 1800.

As nearly as I can compute, the whole number confirmed in the course of the last eight years, must be about thirteen thousand. Among these persons, and also among those immediately connected with them, I have every reason to hope that, by the Divine blessing,



great good has been effected through the means of this Ordinance.

Impressed as I have always been, with a strong sense of the benefits that result from the due celebration of it, and, I may add, of the positive mischief done by a careless or injudicious administration, I drew up, in the first instance, with the most anxious care and deliberation, all the regulations pertaining to it; deeming nothing undeserving of the most minute and studious attention, that could contribute, even in the smallest degree, to produce and keep up, in the congregation generally, and especially in the candidates, a suitable, strong, and permanently salutary impression. And I have since introduced such improvements in some minor points of detail, as attentive observation and careful reflection suggested. It is most important that every thing connected with the Service should be solemn without being either dull, or bewildering to the mind; should strongly impress the youthful congregation, without over-agitating their feelings,

or exhausting their attention ;—should be familiar to their understanding, without deficiency in reverential sentiment,—and should be such as they may distinctly and permanently retain, both in the head and the heart. And I have every reason to hope, from all that I hear from various quarters, that our endeavours have not been vain, and that not only great, but continually increasing benefits have been the result. In particular, one regulation which was not introduced generally till the last Confirmation, seems to have fully answered expectations. The distribution to the persons admitted, of tickets signed by the Minister and by myself, as certificates and memorandums of their Confirmation and attendance at the Eucharist, appears to have afforded them, generally, such satisfaction as would, even alone, be more than a repayment to you and me for this small addition to our labour. But the satisfaction evinced by them is the more gratifying to us, inasmuch as it indicates both the importance they attach to the Service, and their present intention at least, of not suffering

the feelings now awakened to die away from their memory, but of recording, and from time to time recalling them.

You will be able to second their good intentions, by taking occasion to remind them, from year to year, of the anniversary of their Confirmation; and to recall to their recollection what was said to them, by you and by me, on the occasion, and what, it is to be hoped, was passing in their minds at the time.

The celebration of the Eucharist immediately after the Confirmation, besides its intrinsic suitableness, and the increased solemnity of the impression thus produced by the whole Service, and besides also its good effect in deferring the presentation of some candidates who are not really well-prepared, but whom, on erroneous grounds, their friends might otherwise bring forward,—has also the advantage of uniting the rest of the congregation with their young friends, and making them not mere *spectators* of a ceremony, but participators in the most

solemn part of the Service. It has given me accordingly the highest satisfaction to observe the great and increasing number of communicants among those who attend to witness the Confirmations. On the recent occasions I think the total number of communicants exceeded, by more than one half, that of the persons confirmed. The increase of labour thus imposed on us, we shall always, I am persuaded, be ready to welcome with gratitude and joy.

I have only to exhort you, in conclusion, assiduously to impress on the minds of the young persons who have been confirmed (conformably with what I have said in the foregoing pages;) that they must not consider their *religious education as at an end*, as soon as they have received this Rite, and have ceased to attend the catechetical lectures. You must warn them that the Christian's education comes to an end only at the end of this *life*; and that they, after having completed this first stage in their training as Christ's soldiers, are now sent

forth as it were into the field of war, to be tried in more serious combats, in which they will either lose all they have already gained, or else improve more and more in their holy warfare, and gain, daily, fresh victories, till the appointed time, when, having “fought a good fight and finished their course,” they shall be called to receive the “crown of glory laid up for all them that love the appearing of the Lord, the righteous Judge.”

Palace, 12th August, 1840.

THE END.



