

relies daily, to have a conscience void of offence towards God and man, and study and strive to walk in all the ordinances and commandments of the Lord blameless: yet these observances are not to be trusted in, except as they are evidences of a heart right towards God. We must be willing to be saved by His free grace, and to surrender all to Him; and the temper and settled purpose of our hearts must be, first to know the will of God, and to follow it fearlessly and without wavering. This world is nothing. We must disregard its scoffs and its smiles. It is not true, however, that a young person is less esteemed for being religious, but the reverse. But Satan always suggests the contempt of the world as the sure consequence of coming to Christ, and in this way destroys many a weak and deluded soul. But remember if you lose one friend for Christ's sake, you gain two more of far greater value. Did you ever hear of a single person, however young or previously happy, who repented of the choice? On the contrary, it has been the united testimony of all, in all ages, that the whole world could not induce them to retract. Christ himself has declared that all who lose friends for his sake, shall in this world receive a hundred fold, and in the world to come life everlasting. This promise all His people have found verified. Will you not trust it?

My dear Daughter, let me affectionately entreat you to make religion your daily and great concern. Let it be your absorbing work to which all others must give place. And cease not to seek and to pray, till God has touched your heart by his Holy Spirit. You will then, and never till then, know that peace which passeth understanding. Then the prospect before you, instead of being dark and uncertain, will be bright and sure. Though the way be crowded with trials and obscured with clouds, there will always be seen a golden gleam in the distance, the glorious and certain harbinger of eternal day. O may you discern it!

FOR THE CHRISTIAN SENTINEL.

Such an event as the coming of our Lord, in human nature, suggests of itself reasons, why it must necessarily have been attended with extraordinary circumstances. His birth, his life, and death were all subjects of prophecy, so largely insisted upon through a succession of ages, and so distinctly and minutely traced; as to produce in our minds astonishment, how it could have happened that, with the Law and the Prophets in their hands, the men of that generation did not, on his appearance among them, recognize him as the promised Messiah. It is true, that, notwithstanding the lowliness of his birth, and the humble sphere which he chose to occupy, a very great excitement was produced, because they saw in him virtues, and powers, and self-possession of a more perfect character than they had ever beheld; but because he was destitute of the glitter and pomp which usually are the concomitants of wealth, he was to them "as a root sprung out of dry ground," void of qualifications capable of attracting their love and regard.

John the Baptist had also been an object of prophecy, and appointed to act as the herald of our Saviour to introduce him in his official character to the world.

The parents of the two were intimate friends, but it was so ordered, in the course of Divine Providence, that our Saviour and John were not brought up together. At the persecution which Herod raised at the birth of our Lord, after the fact was made public, by the coming of the wise men from the East, the holy families were obliged to change the places of their abode, so that we have no reason to believe that any kind of intercourse was kept up between them. John had no acquaintance with the Virgin's son, until he came to his baptism at the River Jordan. Had the circumstances of the times permitted the two families to remain within the reach and practicability of friendly intercourse, it would have furnished a pretext for cavillers to object, that Jesus and the Baptist had between them contrived and matured a deep scheme of raising to themselves a party and a name. But as they were not brought up together, nor within the reach of personal acquaintance, John is left to come forward, in his office of preparing the way of the Lord, without having had any communications with the man Christ Jesus, whom he was to proclaim as "the Lamb of God that taketh away the sins of the world." When he appeared in the wilderness

of Judea, preaching repentance, and declaring that the Kingdom of heaven was approaching, the people were confounded with a variety of conjectures respecting who he was. Finding that he had not been educated in the schools of their Doctors, and utterly unknown to all their men of note; and yet appearing to be better acquainted with divine learning, and precepts of piety than any of them, they were so stricken with veneration for his character, as a man evidently, in their estimation, sent by the Almighty himself that no teacher was ever attended, and more readily obeyed than he was for some time. No doubt, wonder and curiosity moved many, that they might see the man that fame reported as so much mortified and austere in his mode of living; but on coming within the reach of his voice, they soon found his discourses to be of a deeply solemn character, and delivered with such pathos, inspiration and unction from the Holy One as made a deep impression on their minds. The burden of his preaching was, "Repent ye, for the Kingdom of Heaven is at hand," and he spared not the vices of any great or small. Those that repented, he baptized, confessing their sins. Many persons, when they read what is recorded of John's Baptism, and thinking there is but one Baptism in all the Bible, confound what he did under that name, with the Sacrament of Christian Baptism. But it is certain that it could not have been Christian Baptism, because he attempted no change in the Dispensation, which was then in force, and because the Messiah was not manifested to Israel, nor the Holy Ghost as yet given. Wondering who he might be, whether he was one newly raised from the Sepulchres of the Prophets, and sent by the God of their fathers, for their consolation after the lapse of a long period of darkness, the great Council sent to him Priests and Levites, no doubt men of information and sagacity, to learn from his own mouth, what his claims and pretensions were. In the whole of this interview, his great modesty and piety are conspicuous. A report had been spread amongst the multitude that he certainly was either one of the old Prophets, or the Messiah himself. Had he been a deceiver, and wished to avail himself of the prepossessions existing in the minds of the people in his favour, he would have instantly seized the opportunity which circumstances offered, and imposed on their credulity, by giving himself out as one of the Prophets restored to life. But he assumed no fictitious honours—he laid no tax on their warm imaginations; and when the question was put direct, he said, "I am the voice of one crying in the wilderness, make straight the way of the Lord, as said the Prophet Esaias." The Messengers, finding that the rumours prevalent among the people, respecting his real character, were entirely groundless, they said unto him, "Why baptizest thou then, if thou be not the Christ, nor Elias, nor one of the Prophets?" Would this have been their language, if the baptism which he was then administering had been an innovation on their ritual? In such a case, their language would not apply, nor at all touch the point. They would have asked him, what do you mean by this new rite, which you presume to engraft on our religion? Shew us by what authority you are acting, and produce your commission, otherwise take heed that you be not found an innovator, and an enemy to the law. But there is not in their inquiry a single expression that implies any such thing. The reason is obvious, because he did nothing but what was common as a part of their ritual, ever since the days of Moses, and with which every one, man, woman and child, throughout all the Tribes of Israel, were well acquainted; and their language obviously bears on its face, that if he had confessed himself one of the Prophets, they would have allowed his baptism as belonging to his office. Their question then respects not the thing he was doing, but his right to perform it; and it differs very widely from Christian Baptism which is to be performed in the name of the Father, and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost, and may be administered only once, but the Jewish Baptism was a purification, which circumstances rendered necessary to be frequently repeated. A certain Baptism, or purification was an indispensable part of their religion previous to their engaging in any great religious solemnity. Previous to the giving of the Law on the Mount, it was enjoined on all the people. As often as a person was under any ceremonial uncleanness, or had touched a dead body, he was not permitted to enter the Tabernacle, or lay hand on holy things, until he was purified or baptized by the priest. On the same ground, and for the same reason, John administered Baptism