

THE
CHRISTIAN INSTRUCTOR.

JULY, 1860.

THAT THE SOUL BE WITHOUT KNOWLEDGE, IT IS NOT GOOD."—Prov xix. 1.

SERMON

PREACHED AT THE OPENING OF THE SYNOD OF THE PRESBYTERIAN
CHURCH OF NOVA SCOTIA, ON THE 20TH JUNE 1860, BY THE
REV. JAMES SMITH D. D.

COLOSSIANS I 18.—He is the Head of the body, the Church.

Correct opinions respecting the nature and organization of the christian church, and of Christ's relation to that church, are usually regarded as points of co-ordinate importance with orthodox views of theology. It is not enough that we entertain sound, evangelical and calvinistic sentiments respecting the great doctrines of the gospel. It is equally necessary that we hold correct and scriptural opinions respecting Christ's person and headship over his church. It would as certainly rob the Saviour of that honour which he claims, common with the Father, if we were to admit the creature to be any part of his regal authority, as it would do to divide the power of his grace, or the merit of his death with helpless sinfulness. Whilst, then, we labour to strengthen the bulwarks of sound orthodoxy, it is equally right to guard the honour and prerogatives of Christ in another direction: namely, to unfold the character and constitution of his church, to set forth her sacred rights, her spiritual power and discipline, her entire distinction from every secular society on earth; and at the same time, to vindicate the Saviour's exclusive authority and dominion over his church, and his exclusive prerogative to regulate the whole course of his spiritual administration. It is something of this kind that I propose to undertake in the present course; and with this view I shall endeavour

To delineate the true character of the church.

I. Consider the import of the Apostle's statement, "Christ is the Head of the church."

II. Review some practical bearings arising from the subject.

I am first to delineate the true character of the church.

The Church of God is a holy society gathered out of the world by the gospel call, and organized for high and holy purposes, in the