

For the Colonial Churchman.

Messrs. Editors,

In the Wesleyan of November 18th, I read a kind of critique on part of the controversy between Mr. Shreve and Mr. McLeod. I am not intending to engage in the controversy at present, for on the side of Episcopacy there appears to be no need of assistance. If Mr. McLeod would forego prevarications, and deal fairly, he must yield. He could not assert without some mental reservations, that but two priestly offices in the Christian church are recognized in the New Testament. The fact is too plain to be denied, and it is only attempted by such as will bewilder their own minds or the minds of others by putting things for names at one time, and names for things at another.

After reading that assertion, I was in some degree prepared for the insinuation against the Syrian churches, and I cannot envy any man the possession of a heart that could dictate such language respecting the most interesting body of Christians in the known world—a body of faithful disciples of the Lord Jesus that has elicited the affection and sympathy of all the church of Christ except himself.—He speaks of them as if their very existence were uncertain, and all our knowledge depended on the doubtful authority of a certain traveller named Buchanan. It is sad to see people first adopting principles and then treating with contempt whatever militates against them. And this must be Mr. McLeod's reason for speaking so contemptuously of the Syrian churches; for if episcopacy had needed support, more effectual could scarcely have been found than in the discovery of a church in this remote portion of the globe, deriving its origin from the apostle Thomas—retaining the three offices, Bishop, Priest, and Deacon—having the same scriptures as of old in written characters, and nearly the same worship and even the same vestments as are used by the church of England. Our Church which looks to other apostles as its founders, surely had not contaminated these disciples of St. Thomas. And the discovering a church which could never have held communication with our own, retaining the same practices, so plainly shews them both to have apostolic authority that this circumstance has moved hundreds brought up dissenters to join the church of England.

I propose to add a short account of these Christians, though at present I must omit that portion of their history contained in Bishop Heber's journal.—However, as the matter is broached, I hope some one will publish in your next number that splendid letter of Heber to the Syrian bishop Dionysius, and the good man's reply.

Under the charge of this bishop, Dionysius, there are fifty five churches covering a district about two hundred miles in extent. The population being separated from the rest of the world is altogether Christian and amounts to upwards of sixty thousand souls, under the care of one hundred and fifty clergymen.

This statement, be it understood, does not depend on the veracity of Dr. Buchanan, for by order of the British government, General Macaulay visited them to do them good. Colonel Munro's report of his official visit, is well known,—Colonel Newal's also.—On these visits I shall make no comment but by a quotation from a letter of the Syrian bishop to the Church Missionary Society in London written in 1821. After some allusions to their poverty, he proceeds, "And as the Lord sent Moses and Aaron, and delivered the children of Israel from the house of bondage of Pharaoh, so the Lord beheld our sorrows and afflictions; and there have been sent to us an illustrious leader named Macaulay, and Mar Buchanan the illustrious priest: and when they came to us and saw our subjugation and sorrows and poverty, they brought us forth from the house of bondage, and consoled us with kind words, and assisted us with money.—After this another illustrious leader was sent to us, named Munro; and as Joshua, the son of Nun, brought Israel to the land of promise, and put them in possession of Canaan, so did this illustrious, prudent and discerning leader, bring back and save us poor people from the hand of violence: and he built a school and one church for us in the place called Cotym, which he did with great trouble, labour and expense, in order that our eyes, made dim by the

depth of our poverty, may be opened by the knowledge of the declarations of the holy and divine books. All the deacons moreover, and children who are taught in the school of our place are cherished by the assistance of this illustrious leader."

But the existence of this body of Christians does not depend on the reports of these four Englishmen and this Syrian bishop, which is fortunate, for perhaps Mr. McLeod might charge them with a conspiracy to uphold episcopacy, as one of them is a clergyman of the church of England. Facts indisputable are to be advanced. Four clergymen of the church of England, paid by our church societies, are now living at this Syrian college, to promote education and translate and print their previously written bible. Their names are Rev. Thomas Norton, Benjamin Lyle, Joseph Fenn, and Henry Baker. And two or three of their priests are also studying at Bishop's College at Calcutta, instituted and supported by the same church society that sends the clergy to this colony. I do not like to take up more of your paper on the present occasion, but so much interesting matter has been published respecting these Christians, that if you desire another article for your paper say so, and you shall have it on the condition that you first publish Heber's letter which I do not happen to have.

SYRIAN.

THE COLONIAL CHURCHMAN.

LUNENBURG, THURSDAY, DECEMBER 26, 1839.

CHRISTMAS DAY.—Another anniversary of the day of glad tidings of good things—the day on which angels and men beheld at Bethlehem the wonderful mystery of God incarnate for the salvation of a rebellious and ungrateful world—has just passed by.—May a thankful remembrance of its mercies remain indelibly engraven upon every heart, and may our praises be "shewn forth not only with our lips but in our lives," by giving up ourselves to the service of Him who came to seek and to save us in our lost estate, and by glorifying Him in our bodies and our spirits which are thus doubly His.—A retrospective glance at the services of the Church on this happy Festival, may not be amiss, and we therefore subjoin the following remarks from Wheatley on the Common Prayer:—

"That no one may want an opportunity to celebrate so great a festival with a suitable solemnity, the Church both excites and assists our devotion, by an admirable frame of office fitted to the day. In the first Lessons she reads to us the clearest prophecies of Christ's coming in the flesh; and in the second Lessons, Epistle, and Gospel, shews us the completion of these prophecies, by giving us the entire history of it. In the collect she teaches us to pray, that we may be partakers of the benefits of his Birth, and in the proper Psalms she sets us to our duty of praising and glorifying God for this incomprehensible mystery.

"The Psalms for the Morning are Psalms xix. xlv. lxxxv. The sixth was chiefly designed to give glory to God for all his works of power and excellence: the beginning of it, viz. *The heavens declare the glory of God,* &c. is extraordinarily applicable to the day: for at the birth of Christ a new star appeared, which declared his Glory of Deity so plainly, that it fetched wise men from the East to come and worship him. The following verses all set forth God's goodness, in giving so excellent a rule of life to men, and in warning us of the great danger of presumptuous sins. The sixth Psalm is thought to be an epitalamium, or marriage song, upon the nuptials of Solomon and the king of Egypt's daughter; but it is mystically, and in a most eminent sense, applicable to the union between Christ and his church. The lxxxvth Psalm was principally set for the birth of Christ; and so the primitive Christians understood it; and therefore chose it as a

part of their office for this day, as being proper and pertinent to the matter of the feast. The prophet indeed speaks of it as a thing past, but that is no more than what is usual in all prophecies: for by speaking of things after that manner, they signified their prophecies should as surely come to pass, as it what they had foretold had already happened.

"The Evening Psalms are Psalms lxxv. lxx. cxxxix. The lxxxixth is a commemoration of the mercies performed and promised to continue to David and his posterity to the end of the world. The greatest of which mercies viz. the Birth of the Messiah, the Church this day celebrates; and therefore appoints this Psalm, to excite us to thanksgiving for such an inestimable mercy, by shewing us how only the bare promise of it, so many ages since, wrought upon the saints of those times. The cxth Psalm is a prophecy of the exaltation of the Messiah to his regal and sacerdotal office; both which are by him exercised at the right hand of the Father, and settled on him as a reward of his humiliation and passion. The cxxxiv Psalm seems to have been at first composed by Solomon upon the building of the Temple, (part of it being used in his prayer at the dedication of it.) It recounts David's care of the Ark, and his desire to build God a temple, and God's promises thereupon made to him and his posterity, of setting his seed upon the throne till the coming of Christ."

CHRISTMAS DECORATIONS.—By the zeal and taste of several of the young ladies and gentlemen of the congregation, our Parish Church again presents the cheerful dress which it has worn in former years.—They have again gathered the "fir tree, the pine tree, and the box together, to beautify the place of the Lord's sanctuary." These blessed words—"A SAVIOUR, CHRIST THE LORD," so expressive of the rich mercies commemorated at this season, and which formed part of the message of the heavenly host on the plains of Bethlehem, stand forth in evergreen beauty, to gladden the eyes of the Christian worshipper as he enters the house of God to bless Him for having "visited and redeemed His people." And the whole appearance of the church's interior is in admirable keeping with the cheerful character of this festival.

SOCIETY FOR THE PROPAGATION OF THE GOSPEL IN FOREIGN PARTS.

In the Ecclesiastical Gazette we find the following notices:—

Presented the Bishop of Nova Scotia for the special service of his diocese:—

By a Clergyman at Witham.....	£50	0	0
By a Clergyman at Warboys.....	£50	0	0
Offerings from a Congregation in Oxford.....	£68	9	6
Two Ladies at Tottenham.....	£10	0	0

ORDINATION OF MISSIONARIES.

On Sunday, 22d Sept, Mr. Thomas Boone, Mr. J. Vicars, and Mr. G. A. Addison, nominated to missions in Newfoundland, by the bishop of that diocese were ordained Deacons by the Archbishop of Canterbury, at Lambeth. These gentlemen, together with the Rev. W. Bowman, have already sailed. The Bishop of Newfoundland set sail on the 1st inst., on his way back to Bermuda.

FROM THE FORTHCOMING REPORT OF THE SOCIETY.

"It is computed that 300 additional clergymen might be advantageously employed at the present time in the British colonies; and supposing that the Society allowed stipends, amounting on the average to 100l. a-year, to each of these clergymen, the increased expenditure for the colonies alone would be 30,000l. a-year. The demand for new missions and additional missionaries to the heathen must also be taken into consideration, and on the whole it may be said that three times the amount of the present annual subscriptions, or 60,000l. a-year, are required