

THE
CHRISTIAN INSTRUCTOR.

October, 1858.

“THAT THE SOUL BE WITHOUT KNOWLEDGE, IT IS NOT GOOD.”—Prov. xix. 2.

“EVERY MAN IN HIS OWN WATCH.”

NOTHING more clearly distinguishes an enlightened from a barbarous community than a “*division of labour*.” Among savage tribes every man is his own artizan. Each does for himself all that is done. There is no distinction—no recognized distribution of employments. Each Indian constructs his own wigwam and his own canoe. But as peoples emerge from a condition of barbarism, as civilization advances, men arrange themselves in bodies and professions. Every one selects for himself, according to taste or opportunity, and confining his labours mainly to his own department attains skill and eminence. This method of procedure has accomplished very marvellous results in these last days—results which in a previous age would have been deemed altogether incredible.

The Bible sanctions this mode of working. The state of the Church and of the world renders it necessary and obligatory. It accords with the nature of man, and its adoption is an earnest of success. There are duties indeed, as there is an experience, common to all Christians, but there are other duties and other phases of experience which are peculiar to the individual, and are modified by his special sphere and relations. It is of no little importance to ascertain what these are, that we may engage in the particular service to which we are called with distinctness of aim, and heartiness of effort. Every man in his own watch.

I. A minister's own watch is his own congregation. It is well for him to feel an interest in the Church at large. He must give a share of his attention to the general business. Still his special work lies among the people of his own charge. They must not be neglected. Public spirit is a good thing (one could wish that we had more of it), but, like every other virtue, it may be carried too far, and then it degenerates into a vice. To have one's time, or the chief part of it, engrossed with public affairs is not the mark of a true evangelist. There is a temptation here, and, when it is not resisted, congregational failure and confusion are the sure results. It may be said that the danger lies oftener in an opposite direction. Even granting this—both evils are to be guarded against, “*Every man in his own watch*.”

II. An elder's own watch is his own district. His eye glances over the