

The Church.

THEREFORE I WILL NOT BE NEGLIGENT TO PUT YOU ALWAYS IN REMEMBRANCE OF THESE THINGS, THOUGH YE KNOW THEM AND BE ESTABLISHED IN THE PRESENT TRUTH.—2 PETER, 1, 12.

VOL. I.]

COBOURG, U. C., SATURDAY, MAY 26, 1838.

[NO. I.]

Original Poetry.

For the Church.

DEATH'S LAST VICTORY.

1.
Lo! I come from the shades of Hell,
On my pale horse mounted well;
On my warrior-steed to ride
O'er the earth in her peopled pride.

2.
Lo! I wander forth again,
To reap my final harvest of men;
I come the last of the living to slay,
And glut the grave with its destin'd prey.

3.
I must toil ere the day be past,
And pile of the dead a mountain vast,
Ere night looks down with startled eye,
And the broad moon blushes red on high.

4.
Countless ages have come and gone,
Since first I girded my keen sword on;
Numberless years have roll'd away,
Since first my arm was lifted to slay:

5.
But ne'er since the primal curse was sped,
Which peopled my gloomy realms with dead;
Came there such a day of doom,
To wither the flowers of mortal bloom.

6.
Lo! my banner-cloud in the sky,
Broadly it waves and blackens on high;
Lo! my standard o'er earth display'd,
Deeply it darkens the land with shade.

7.
Earth has often been scatter'd with blood,
But ne'er was she delug'd with such a flood,
As shall be pour'd to-day by me,
For this is Death's last victory!

8.
I saw him on his war-steed pale,
I saw him scatter his darts like hail;
His voice was thunder as he pass'd,
His breath the poisonous desert-blast.

9.
Onward he went with a gloomy frown,
I saw him smite the living down,
I saw him slay their hosts in fight,
And there was none to resist his might.

10.
There was none to cope with Death,
Thousands fell before his breath,
Millions sank beneath his feet,
Shrivell'd as grass in the furnace-heat.

11.
The lightning-bolt, where'er he went,
Gash'd the ground with a fearful rent;
The earth yawn'd deeply as he sped,
And closing swallow'd its millions of dead.

12.
The sea slept not upon the shore,
But rose on high with deaf'ning roar;
And swept his tracks with a broad'ning wave,
And buried the dead in a deeper grave.

13.
The vulture came with dismal shriek,
And plung'd in a corpse its rav'ning beak;
The grim wolf howl'd o'er its mangled prey,
And rent the flesh from the bones away.

14.
But a sulph'rous blast swept o'er the plain,
And the wolf lay stiff on the shrinking slain;
And hush'd were the cries of the rav'ning brood,
And a breathless calm o'er the earth ensued.

15.
Earth! the plumes of thy pride are rent,
Yet wake not the voice of thy last lament;
Nature! thy goodly fruits are strown,
Yet mute be the sound of thy tortur'd groan.

16.
Ocean! thy waves may widely sweep,
Yet dumb be the roar of thy waters deep;
For ocean and earth, the land, the sea,
Shall sink in thy gulph, eternally!

DEATH CONQUERED.

1.
Dreamer! hast thou with fancy's eye,
Beheld the dread destroyer nigh?
Didst fear the frown of his visage grim,
And was there none to cope with him?

2.
Dreamer! and didst thou ne'er hear tell,
Of Him who vanquish'd both Death and Hell;
Who took from Death both his dart and sting,
And made him a weak and a harmless thing?

3.
Come! and I'll shew thee a Royal sight,
The Lamb which bled on Calvary's height;
Come! and I'll shew thee His wondrous blood,
That conquers Hell with its healing flood.

4.
Come, bend thee before his mighty throne,
Where the highest seraph worships prone,
And down the crown of his glory flings,
For the Lamb is Lord and King of kings!

5.
He is thy Lord and serve Him, thou,
And fear the frown of His awful brow;
For he alone has power to slay,
And cast in the depths of hell away.

6.
But if thou love Him with all thy heart,
And lid all evil from thee depart,
He'll own thee and love thee, and make thee blest,
And bring thy soul to His own bright rest.

Loughboro', April 26, 1838.

J. H.

ON THE BENEFICIAL INFLUENCE OF THE CHRISTIAN RELIGION UPON LITERATURE AND SCIENCE.

A PRIZE ESSAY, READ BEFORE THE MONTREAL NATURAL HISTORY
SOCIETY IN MARCH 1835.

The character given by the celebrated Tacitus of the Christian Religion, was perhaps the most contemptuous which, in those days, a man of letters could bestow. He terms it, in his hasty notice of its origin and progress, a "pernicious, or destructive, superstition";—destructive no doubt, in his conception, not so much of the true principles of ethics and religion,—for in common with the sages of the day, he probably "cared for none of these things,"—as subversive of the refinements of learning and the polish of life. A similar imputation has often been made since the days of Tacitus; and modern infidels, in joining with their brethren of antiquity in expressing their scorn for divine revelation, rejoice in the appropriation of the contemptuous term "superstition" to the creed of Christians. Their cherished argument, in its general tenor, is that religion is contradictory to reason; that, in its operations, it is destructive of the free and profitable speculations of the mind; that its dogmas are opposed to the principles of sound philosophy, and to the advancement of legitimate science.

The object of the present treatise is to manifest the groundlessness and the falsity of such an imputation;—to shew that the Christian Religion, so far from having such a tendency, is essentially, and à priori, favourable to improvement in learning and science; and to demonstrate, à fortiori, that such is its natural working, from the experience of every age since Christianity has been established. This last assumption receives support, both positively and negatively;—positively, from the fact that a vast majority of men of learning, almost from the first propagation of christianity, have been professors of that creed, and even teachers of its doctrines;—and negatively, from the equally undeniable fact, that no corresponding advancement in science or learning has been made by nations which have not been converted to Christianity. In further corroboration of this branch of the argument, it can be shewn that the more pure, and consonant to its revealed tenets, the Christian Religion in any country is, the progress of that country in useful literature and science has always been proportionably greater. From all of which the conclusion is obvious, that christianity—apart from its influence upon moral principle and practice—has had the effect of leading men to more correct views of the natural world, and therefore of forwarding the real advancement of science in all its branches.

It is to be shewn, in the first place, that Christianity is, naturally and essentially, favourable to scientific inquiry and to literary cultivation.

1. With the Christian, the love of God is a grand and fundamental principle of action; and it is a feeling begotten solely by a conviction of his love to us. Did we view him, as theists do, merely as a Governor or Ruler, all powerful and all-wise, we should entertain no such feeling; at least it would be limited in its extent, and partake more of the character of veneration than of affection. But this more exalted and distinguishing affection rests exclusively upon Christian faith: "the love of God," says Bishop Porteus, "is a sentiment purely evangelical"; it could have no sufficient grounds for its existence or action, without a confidence in the truth of those divine revelations which are embodied in the Scriptures.

Yet here it is obvious that the persons who are influenced by such a feeling will not rest satisfied with a simple observation of the reasons for its existence, or be content with the general declaration and evidences of God's regard for his creatures, which are contained in his revealed word. A human benefactor is admired and loved for that particular kindness which first awakened gratitude and affection; but these reverential sentiments are best maintained by an observation of the general character of benevolence and goodness which he manifests to the world. And so the Christian feels his relation to God, not merely as the author of the religion by which his soul is saved, but as the disposer of ordinary events and the director of special providences.—Under this impulse, the Christian is naturally prompted to search minutely into the mysteries of the world of which God is the Architect; to trace his infallible and benevolent Providence in the operations of nature and the current of events, as well as in the dispensations of grace. Under the influence of this principle, he is incited to investigate the hidden mysteries of the world in which he lives; to direct his careful contemplations to past and passing events; to penetrate into the arcana of natural philosophy and science; to bestow a diligent examination upon civil and

* Exitiabilis superstitio. Annal. Lib. xv. c. 44.

† This effect is satisfactorily illustrated in that admirable work, the 'Natural Theology' of Archdeacon Paley.

ecclesiastical records; to study the philosophy of manners and mankind.

2 Love to man is another fundamental principle of action with the Christian. But he that is rightly and deeply imbued with this generous feeling, on the broad basis especially which Christianity recommends, will not be contented with the mere theory of philanthropy, but will apply himself to the means—to the active work, of ameliorating and improving the condition of his species. Idleness is inconsistent with his profession—inaction contradictory to the spirit of his faith: the dumb-show of charity, in short, meets with the keenest rebuke from the primitive teachers of the Gospel in which he believes.* The Christian therefore, will necessarily be induced, by the native incitements of his operative faith, to direct his inquiries to those branches of science or art, an acquaintance with which becomes needful in promoting the benefit of his fellow-men.

3 The volume of Revelation suggests many topics in itself for literary and scientific research. The very language in which those sacred records are written, require in the religious student an acquaintance with the tongues of antiquity. Nor is it enough that he can render into his vernacular tongue the volumes of inspiration, or that he possesses a competent acquaintance with the grammatical construction of the languages in which they were written: he must be able to apply to particular passages, the corroborative testimonies of profane writers, and to draw from contemporaneous authors an illustration of the peculiar bearing and relative signification of words and phrases. This, combined with the numerous allusions in Scripture to existing manners and events, enforces an acquaintance with the general literature of antiquity, and demands from the Christian student, who would successfully prosecute his inquiries into the text book of his faith, all the diversified accomplishments which constitute the scholar. Nor can we exclude from the catalogue of his needful acquirements, a due acquaintance with the more scientific departments of Natural History and Philosophy. In the ceremonial distinctions of unclean and clean animals in the Levitical dispensation, and the numerous allusions throughout the Scriptures generally to the vegetable kingdom, to animated nature, and even to the sublime department of astronomy, there are ample subjects for the curious inquiries of the theological student. To evince the importance of fully considering these subjects of scientific investigation in the sacred volume, it will be sufficient to refer to an ingenious argument for fixing the much disputed date of the book of Job from an astronomical allusion which it contains.† We may add that the expediency of corroborating the geographical details of Scripture, as well as of illustrating and proving the correctness of its allusions to oriental customs, has served to provoke a spirit of enterprise, and led to discoveries by missionary travel, which were it not for a religious impulse, might never have been made.

4 But granting that, in the mass of professing christians, there should exist that entire dependence upon the correctness of every record of Scripture which would remove all inducements, on that ground, to such inquiries and research, it is to be borne in mind that to every system—even to those which are best supported by reason and facts—adversaries will arise, and objections will be started. These the earnest Christian cannot regard with indifference; and, in the defence of his faith, he is necessarily compelled to adopt the same auxiliaries of human science which are brought into the contest against it. To provide, therefore, for the due exposition of the revelations of Scripture to those who rest their everlasting hopes upon it, and for their defence when they are assailed, not only does a systematic study of the whole subject become necessary, but the means must be resorted to of perpetuating a succession of defenders of the Christian faith. In this consideration the cultivation of learning in all its branches is necessarily involved; and the methods which it becomes imperative to employ for furnishing teachers as well as defenders of religion, constitute, at the same time, the most powerful means of forwarding and maintaining the cause of general literature. "A considerable knowledge of history, and sometimes of chronology and philosophy," says Dr. Knox, "was necessary in studying and defending the Scriptures, even in the earliest ages; and many Christians appeared well skilled in these parts of learning, at a time when they were generally neglected. Religion and conscience operated as a stimulus, when all other motives were insufficient to retard the mind in its swift progress down the declivity."

* See James ii. 15, 16.

† Hale's Chronology, vol. 11. pp. 58, 59, 60.

(To be concluded in our next.)

SCRIPTURAL ILLUSTRATIONS.

NO. XII.

EASTERN LAMENTATIONS.

GENESIS i. 10. "They mourned with a great and a very sore lamentation."

"This," observes M. CHARDIN, "is exactly the genius of the people of Asia, especially of the women. Their sentiments of joy and grief are properly transports, and their transports are ungoverned, excessive, and outrageous. When any one returns from a long journey, or dies, his family burst into cries that may be heard twenty doors off: and this is renewed at different times and continues many days, according to the strength of the passion. Especially are these cries long in the case of death, and frightful, for their mourning is downright despair and an image of hell. I was lodged, in the year 1676, at Ispahan, near the royal square. The mistress of the next house to mine died at that time. The moment she expired, all the family, to the number