

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, I, 12.

VOL. I.]

COBOURG, U.C., SATURDAY, AUGUST 5, 1837.

[NO. VIII.]

The following beautiful poem is stated to have been found written on the first page of a folio edition of *Hooker's Ecclesiastical Polity*, belonging to a deceased Vicar.

THE VILLAGE CHURCH.

I.
And is our Country's father* fled,
His car of fire can none recall?
Be—here his sacred spirit shed,
Here—may his prophet mantle fall.
Fain would I fill the vacant breach,
Stand where he stood the plague to stay;
In his prophetic spirit preach,
And in his hallowed accents pray.

II.
It is not that on Seraph's wing,
I hope to soar where he has soar'd;
This, this the lowly claim I bring,
I love his church, I love his Lord.
I love the altar of my sires,
Old as my country's rocks of steel,
And as I feel its sacred fires,
The present deity I feel.

III.
I love to know that, not alone
I meet the battle's angry tide;
That sainted myriads from their throne
Descend to combat at my side.
Mine is no solitary choice,
See here the seal of saints impress'd;
The prayer of millions swells my voice,
The mind of ages fills my breast.

IV.
I love the ivy-mantled tower,
Rock'd by the storms of thousand years;
The grave whose melancholy flower
Was nourished by a martyr's tears.
The sacred yew, so feared in war,
Which, like the sword to David given,
Inflicted more than human scar,
And lent to man the arms of heaven.

V.
I love the organ's joyous swell,
Sweet echo of the heavenly ode;
I love the cheerful village bell,
Faint emblem of the call of God.
Waked by the sound, I bend my feet,
I bid my swelling sorrows cease:
I do but touch the mercy seat,
And hear the still small voice of peace.

VI.
And, as the ray of evening fades,
I love amidst the dead to stand;
Where, in the altar's deepening shades,
I seem to meet the ghostly band.
One comes—Oh! mark his sparkling eye,
The light of glory kindles there;
Another—hear his deep-drawn sigh—
O—'tis the sigh of dumb despair.

VII.
Long be our Father's temple ours,
Woe to the hand by which it falls;
A thousand spirits watch its towers,
A cloud of angels guard its walls,
And be their shield by us possess'd,
Lord, rear around thy blest abode,
The buttress of a holy breast,
The rampart of a present God.

*Hooker

REV. J. W. CUNNINGHAM.

THE REV. J. W. FLETCHER.

To the Editor of the Church.

The Life of the Rev. J. W. Fletcher of Madeley, by the Rev. Robert Cox, has, I perceived, been very recently republished in the States;* and if we may judge by the copious extracts which are found in so many of their papers, must have produced a most favorable impression on the members of our sister church.

It was my privilege to labour, for upwards of ten years, in the Parish of Madeley, and the name of Fletcher must of course be peculiarly venerated by me. The Editor also of this edition of his life was one of my earliest and most intimate friends; and it was with no small pleasure, that I witnessed the reception which the life of the "Sainted Fletcher" met with in England, previous to my leaving that country. In this Province, however, his name seems hitherto to have been little known; but I trust that as we now have a paper connected with our Church; and which even at its very commencement has obtained so extensive a circulation, the character of this extraordinary man will soon become better known among us; and will be duly appreciated by us. You will perhaps, indulge me, by suffering to appear in your columns a few testimonials from the most unquestionable quarters, as well as a few anecdotes illustrative of his spirit and conduct.

I commence with the testimony of the *Quarterly Reviewer*; and who is generally supposed to have been the late Bishop Heber, who was then resident in England. "Fletcher was a man of a heavenly temper; a saint in the ancient and high sense of the term, whose enthusiasm was entirely unmingled with bitterness, and whose life and death were alike edifying."—"No age or country has ever produced a man (observes Mr. Southey) of more fervent piety, or more perfect charity; no church has ever possessed a more apostolic minister."—the testimony of the Rev. Mr. Venn formerly vicar of Huddersfield and Yelling, is highly gratifying; and must be considered the more impartial, as he maintained some of the controverted tenets which Mr. Fletcher had thought it his duty in his writings to oppose.

*THE LIFE OF THE REV. JOHN WM. FLETCHER, Vicar of Madeley, by the Rev. Robert Cox A. M., First American Edition, with an introduction and a selection from the correspondence of Mr. Fletcher, by the Rev. George N. Smith M. A.—1 Vol. 12mo. Published by William Stoveley No 12 Pear Street, Philadelphia.

"Fletcher," he says, "was a luminary;—a luminary, did I say? he was a sun. I have known all the great men of these fifty years, but I have known none like him: I was intimately acquainted with him, and was once under the same roof with him for six weeks together: during which time I never heard him say a single word which was not proper to be spoken, and which had not a tendency to minister grace to the hearers."—The celebrated D. Price, though an Arian, and of course without sympathy for the theological creed of Mr Fletcher, or for the warmth and animation of his religious feelings, is said to have expressed his satisfaction at being introduced "to the company of one whose air and countenance bespoke him fitted rather for the society of angels, than for the conversation of men."

A clergyman in his advanced age, recalling to mind the intercourse which, when a youth, he had with Mr. Fletcher, observes:—"On all these visits I derived the highest pleasure and edification. I not only had the opportunity of hearing many excellent sermons, but of seeing him in the privacies of life; and I know not which most to venerate, his public or private character. Grave and dignified in his deportment and manners, he yet excelled in all the courtesies and attentions of the accomplished gentleman. In every company he appeared as the least, the last, and the servant of all. From head to foot he was clothed with humility, while the heavenly mindedness of an angel shone from his countenance, and sparkled in his eyes. His religion was without labour, and without effort; for Christianity was not only his great business, but his very element and nature.—As a mortal man he doubtless had his errors and failings; but what they were, they who knew him best would find it difficult to say, for he appeared as an instrument of heavenly minstrelsy, always attuned to the masters' touch."—"In no one point was he observedly defective. But what above all endeared him to my esteem, love, and veneration, was his personal and private conduct. He most excelled in that in which other Christians are most defective; and this, I conceive to be the reason why his friends speak of him with an ardour of affection; with a degree of veneration almost bordering on adoration; with a feeling which I can compare only to that which we entertain for patriarchs, prophets, and apostles. In every view he was a great man, and entitled to rank in the very first class of ministers; but it was his goodness, which, even in the ever blessed God, is the acme of moral greatness, that raised him above all the ministers of his day. Never can we forget the sweet spirit and fire of piety his conversation kindled in our breasts, and which is re-kindled and raised into a flame at every recollection or mention of his virtues."

Mr Gilpin, one of his biographers, remarks as follows:—"They who saw him only at a distance revered him as a man of God, while they who enjoyed a nearer acquaintance with him were held in a state of constant admiration of his attainments in the divine life. He appeared to enjoy an uninterrupted fellowship with the Father and with his son Jesus Christ. Every day was with him a day of solemn self dedication, and every hour an hour of praise or prayer. Naturally formed for pre-eminence, no common degrees of grace were sufficient to satisfy his unbounded desires. While others are content to taste the living stream, he traced that stream to its source, and lived at the fountain head of blessedness. To those who were much conversant with him, he appeared as an inhabitant of a better world: so perfectly dead was he to the enjoyments of the present life, and so wholly detached from its anxious cares.—Wherever he was called by the providence of God, he was acknowledged as a burning and a shining light. The candle of the Lord eminently shone upon his head, and the secret of God was on his tabernacle. When he went through the city, or took his seat in the company of the righteous, he was saluted with unusual reverence, and received as an angel of God. The young men saw him, and hid themselves: and the aged arose, and stood up. Even those who were honored as princes among the people of God, refrained talking, and laid their hands upon their mouths. When the ear heard him, then it blessed him; and when the eye saw him, it gave witness unto him. His character was free from those inconsistencies which are too generally observable among the professors of Christianity; whether he sat in the house, or whether he walked by the way; in his hours of retirement, and in his public labours, he was constantly actuated by the same spirit. When he spoke his conversation was in heaven; and when he was silent, his very air and countenance bespoke an angelic mind, absorbed in the contemplation of God. In all the changing circumstances of life, he looked and acted like a man whose treasure was laid up in heaven. There his affections were immovably fixed, and thitherward he was continually tending, with all the power of his soul. He spoke of heaven as the subject of his constant meditation, and looked to it as travellers to their appointed home."

If any one enquires for the secret of such a life (as is observed in one of the recent critiques published in the States,) the following account will in part reveal it.—"But his attention to secret prayer was, if possible, still more memorable. His closet was the favorite retirement to which he constantly retreated, whenever his public duties allowed him a season of leisure—here he was privily hidden, as in the presence of God; here he would either patiently wait for, or joyfully triumph in the loving kindness of the Lord; here he would plunge himself into the depths of humiliation; and from hence at other seasons, or from another Pisgah, he would take a large survey of the vast inheritance which is reserved for the saints. Here he would ratify his solemn engagements to God; and here, like the good

king Hezekiah he would spread the various circumstances of his people at the feet of their common Lord. In all cases of difficulty he would retire to the consecrated place to ask counsel of the Most High: and here in times of uncommon distress, he has continued during whole nights in prayer before God.

"Very closely connected with this, his habit and spirit of prayer was the power which he so pre-eminently possessed, of living as in the presence of God by habitual recollection. It was this which shed such a peculiar lustre around the whole of his actions, that his intercourse with his fellow men seemed almost like that of some angelic being, who for a season was sojourning among them. Whether he prayed or preached, or conversed, or transacted the most trivial concerns of common life, there seemed to be no suspension of his intercourse with the skies. All was done as in the presence of his God and Saviour: all with an evident reference to that important truth, 'Thou God seest me!'" M. T.

To be concluded in our next.

SCRIPTURAL ILLUSTRATIONS.

No. 5.

PREDICTED DESOLATION OF BABYLON.

ISAIAH xliii. 21—"But wild beasts of the desert shall lie there."

"In my second visit to Birs Nimrod, while passing rapidly over the last tracks of the ruin-spread ground, at some little distance from the outer bank of its quadrangular boundary, my party suddenly halted, having descried several dark objects moving along the summit of the hill, which they construed into dismounted Arabs on the look out, while their armed brethren must be lying concealed under the southern brow of the mound. Thinking this very probable, I took out my glass to examine, and soon distinguished, that the causes of our alarm were two or three majestic lions taking the air upon the heights of the pyramid. Perhaps I never had beheld so sublime a picture to the mind as well as the eye. These were a species of enemy which my party were accustomed to dread without any panic fear; and while we continued to advance, though slowly, the hallooing of the people made the noble beasts gradually change their position, till in the course of twenty minutes they totally disappeared. We then rode close up to the ruins, and I had once more the gratification of ascending the awful sides of the Tower of Babel. In my progress I stopped several times to look at the broad prints of the feet of the lions, left plainly in the clayey soil; and by the track I saw that if we had chosen to rouse such royal game, we need not go far to find their lair.—But while thus actually contemplating these savage tenants, wandering amidst the towers of Babylon, and bedding themselves within the deep cavities of her once magnificent temple, I could not help reflecting how faithfully the various promises had been fulfilled which relate in the Scriptures to the utter fall of Babylon, and abandonment of the place—verifying in fact the very words of Isaiah, *wild beasts of the desert shall lie there.*—*Sir Robert Kar Porter.*

EXPOSED STATE OF THE JEWS AS PREDICTED BY MOSES

DEUT. xxviii. 65, 66.—"And among these nations shalt thou find no ease; and thou shalt fear day and night; and shalt have none assurance of thy life."

"A gentleman who was for some years a British Consul at Tripoli, mentioned some circumstances which set in a striking light the state of fear and degradation in which the Jews there live. The life of a man seems to be valued there no more than the life of a moth. If the Bey has a fear or jealousy of any man, he sends some one to put a pistol to his head and shoot him. If it happen to be a Christian, remonstrance is made by the Consul of his nation. The Bey is quite ready to give satisfaction; he sends some one to shoot the agent of his cruelty; and then with an air of great regret, asks the Consul if he is satisfied. If not, he is ready to give him still further satisfaction.—But if the object of his wrath be a Jew, no one would think of demanding satisfaction for his death. This people feel the curse in full, that among the nations where they are scattered, 'they should find no ease, and have none assurance of their life.' They are known by their being compelled to wear a particular dress; and the Moors exercise the privilege of free ingress at any time into their houses.—*Jewell's Christian Researches.*

CUSTOM OF MAKING PRESENTS.

I. SAMUEL ix. 7.—"Then said Saul to his servants, but, behold, if we go, what shall we bring the man? for the bread is spent in our vessels, and there is not a present to bring the man of God; what have we?"

"We all dined at the Consul Hastings' house, and after dinner went to wait upon Ostan, the Bassa of Tripoli having sent our presents, as the manner is among the Turks, to procure a propitious reception. It is counted uncivil to visit in this country without an offering in hand. All great men expect it as a kind of tribute due to their character and authority, and look upon themselves as affronted, and indeed defrauded, when the compliment is omitted. Even in familiar visits among inferior people, you shall seldom have them come without bringing a flower, or an orange, or some such token of their respect to the person visited.—*Maunderell.*

Bruce, after noticing some insignificant present which he had received from an individual who wished to obtain a favour from him, remarks, "I mention this trifling circumstance, to shew how essential to civil intercourse presents are considered to be in the East; whether they be dates or whether they be diamonds, they are so much a part of their manners, that without them an inferior will never be at peace in his own mind, or think that he has hold of his superior for protection. But superiors give no presents to their inferiors."