

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, SEPTEMBER 2, 1837.

[NO. XII.]

Original Poetry.

For the Church.

CHRIST WALKING ON THE WATER.

Christ stood alone by night—
A bark drove on the billows 'mid the foam
Of whirling waters, and the proud heart quailed
Before the rushing blast, and the strong arm
From toil grew nerveless, and the sinking eye
And parching lip proclaim'd the wearied frame
Enfeebled as the mind,—when lo! the storm
Grew hushed and silent as a slumbering babe—
The streaming flag fell waveless to the mast,
The straining cordage seemed no more to rend,
The tortured oar lay listless in the spray,
And not a breath play'd round the fevered brow
Whose swelling veins spoke loud the fearful toil
'Neath which the soul gave way. And why the change?
CHRIST WALKED UPON THE WATERS: as a gale
From Araby, as music from the spheres,
As fragrance breathing in the summer morn,—
A tale of coming land, and chasing back
All sadd'ning thoughts from those who long for shore,—
So sunk that calm upon the sea; yet not to those
Who mann'd that fragile bark brought it repose,
Their hearts were hardened, and the Saviour came,
It seemed to them, a spirit to destroy.
They knew him not; the light around him shed,
The glory blazing o'er that midnight sea,
Spoke not to them of God,—or spoke a God,
A fallen angel, mighty in his power
To blast and overthrow.—Their souls bowed down,
Down to a nameless depth which seems to mark
A point, where from the body they're divorced,
Their thoughts were crushed, their reason overturned,
And dark despair sat frowning on their hopes.—
HE came still gliding on the watery waste,
And not a wave rose up to strike his foot,
Not e'en a ripple dared to kiss the spot
His step had touched, yet left no trace behind.—
Their hearts were troubled, but the Saviour's voice
Fell like a balm upon their wounded souls,
Speaking of peace and lenity and love;
"Be of good cheer; 'Tis I, be not afraid."
Oh! when the storm of dark adversity
Comes like a whirlwind rushing through the sky,
And blights and ruins all our cherish'd hopes
And darling pleasures, and the fine-wrought mind
Stands tottering on the brink of dark despair,
As though the silver chord would loose its chain,—
Then let us pray to Him whose footsteps swept
Like evening breezes o'er that troubled sea,
Lulling the waves to rest, and he will hear,
And through the raging storm his voice will come
Breathing again in soul enlivening tones
Those words thrice bless'd, "TIS I, BE NOT AFRAID."
J. C.

"I will be merciful to their unrighteousness, and their sins and their iniquities will I remember no more." HER. VIII. 12.

Mercy—Great God! and can it be
Wilt thou be merciful to me—
To me, whose sins have slain thy Son,
Thy "well beloved"—thine "only one?"

Yes! 'twas for me the Saviour died;
For me became "the crucified":—
For sinners he was pleased to die—
Was ever sinner great as I?

J. P. H.

Faith to the guilty conscience cries
Thy sins are all forgiven:—
Faith makes the promises our own,
And realizes Heaven.

J. P. H.

THE ENGLISH LAYMAN.

No. III.

THE EMIGRANT'S SABBATH IN THE BACK-WOODS.

How many blessed groups this hour are bending
Through England's primrose-meadow paths their way,
Toward spire and tower, 'midst shadowy elms ascending,
Whence the sweet chimes proclaim the hallowed day.

MRS. HEMANS.

But the sound of the church-going bell
These vallies and rocks never heard;
Never sigh'd at the sound of a knell,
Or smil'd when a Sabbath appear'd.

COWPER.

The English Emigrant, who settles in the back-woods of Upper Canada, suffers many a pang, and is frequently brought to the verge of despair, before he ultimately achieves a rough and a hard-earned independence. Of the various privations which it is his lot to endure, the one perhaps that most sours him, the one that, if supplied, would most soften him, and reconcile him to expatriation, is the want of spiritual instruction after the usage and the faith of his Fathers. Accustomed from earliest infancy to attend his Parish church on each revolving Sabbath, baptized at its font, and married within its walls, he has parted from a friend, which, though speechless and inanimate, is associated with the most touching events that have chequered the "simple annals" of his life. How often, when a Canadian Sabbath dawns, must the contrast be forced upon his regretful mind, between the day as he has been wont to keep it holy, and the present unhonoured and unscriptural manner in which it lazily drags out its protracted wearisome hours! The sweet peal of the village bells, a music that melted even Napoleon's heart of flint, no longer awakens devotional thoughts with its holy music, mellowed by being wafted over intervening waters. The old spire, venerable with moss, and mantled with ivy,—the quaintly-carved porch, thronged with familiar faces,

—the dial, silently eloquent,—the yew-tree overshadowing the humble graves of his forefathers—the sheltered vicarage, with the beloved form of the faithful pastor emerging from its shady avenue,—these, and a hundred other objects, the balmy influence of which in filling the mind with quiet and thankful meditation, every attendant on a village church in England must often have experienced, are all wanting. The emigrant feels a void, an aching at the heart, and seeks to turn the melancholy current of his thoughts, by anticipating brighter days, and Sabbaths more resembling those of his own green native land.

Any one who has spent a Sunday in the midst of a newly-formed settlement in the back-woods of Upper Canada, will bear witness to the secular and unhallowed manner in which it passes. Here and there a pious family may serve the Lord in household worship; but the voice of prayer, or the echo of thanksgiving is far less frequently heard than the shout of the huntsman, or the crash of the discharged gun. "It is deeply to be regretted," says the Rev. T. Greene, the travelling Missionary in the London District, "that in many places there is a total disregard of the Sabbath; but this may be traced entirely to the total want of stated services and Sunday Schools, and I think, ere long, it will be otherwise. Having one day visited a family from Cumberland, the mother remarked to me—"Oh, Sir, we are now differently situated from what we were accustomed to be in England! the children did not then ask, 'Mother, will to-morrow be Sunday?' which they now only know when I wash them on Saturday night." In another case, the mother of a family from a place near Bristol said to me—"Sir, this place is not like the old country; there we had a church, and nice Sunday Schools for the children." "And in many places it is observable that, from the total want of sound and evangelical teaching, the most fanciful and extravagant theories in religion readily find disciples, and thus the seeds of Socinianism and Universalism are disseminated and cherished."

I have often reflected on this state of things, but could never devise a feasible plan for remedying the evil. The other day, however, when reading *The Original*, a periodical work, which was solely written by that acute thinker, the late Mr. Walker, one of the Police Magistrates of London, I met with his Letter on the "Observance of the Sabbath," addressed to the Bishop of London in 1833. The scheme he proposed for evangelizing the inhabitants of the lanes and courts of a crowded city, is, I think, with a few adaptations, equally applicable to a straggling settlement in the woods of Upper Canada. Having thus acknowledged the source from which my plan is chiefly derived, I proceed to unfold it.

It is utterly impossible, that the Established Church of this Colony, in its present impoverished state, can furnish spiritual instruction to the extent required. Indeed to many parts her ministrations can never penetrate, and the people must entirely depend upon themselves for the dissemination of true principles of religion, and the rearing of their children in the doctrines of the Church. In those parts, therefore, where members of the church of England are settled, without clergymen or place of worship, the most respectable and intelligent layman might be selected "to read in sufficient and convenient places, prayers, and a short sermon to be chosen each week by the Clergyman;" the singing of Psalms, from the authorized version, might also be added. "If any objection is made to rooms, or officiators not in orders, my answer is, that in the earliest ages of Christianity rooms preceded churches, and would now lead to them, and that if respectable laymen may not officiate to the extent proposed, a large mass must be left destitute, or fall into less desirable hands." No prayers but those contained in the Book of Common Prayer, and no Sermons, but such as are sanctioned by the Society for promoting Christian Knowledge, should be used on these occasions; and thus any objections, chargeable on extemporaneous preaching or prayer, would be obviated. It might be expedient, that the layman officiating should receive an annual or quarterly sum, to be paid by our present church Societies, or by an Association to be formed for this express purpose, on its being certified by three respectable persons, that he had duly conformed to the regulations prescribed by the ecclesiastical authorities for his guidance. In many instances I should think, that gentlemen of education, in whose discretion confidence might be reposed, would, upon being solicited by the Bishop or clergy, willingly and gratuitously undertake the task; while, in those instances, where the officiating layman, although of sufficient education and respectable character, might require more vigilant superintendence and control,—the remuneration for his trouble, would ensure conformity to the directions of his ecclesiastical superior.

In the Fifth Report of the Society for propagating the Gospel among destitute settlers, in U. C., a circumstance is related by that zealous and judicious missionary, the Rev. Adam Elliot, which strongly confirms the feasibility and efficiency of the plan suggested. "While travelling through the township of Mulmur," he writes, "I heard a very favourable report of a Mr. Bromley, from England, who occasionally read prayers in Mulmur and other adjacent townships during the summer months. I have not the honour of being acquainted with him, but several persons have informed me, that he gave very valuable instruction and advice to the people, and especially to the Episcopalians."

The Reports of the same Society abound in allusions to the gradual abandonment by Episcopalians of their Mother-Church, and their attaching themselves to other denominations, rather

* Church of England Magazine. II. 76.

han remain utterly destitute of religious instruction. The scheme proposed, would have the effect of assembling and binding together the members of our communion, and,—while it in some measure supplied their spiritual wants,—of keeping alive their attachment to the rites and formularies of the Church. Frequently meeting together, they would be encouraged in a firm adherence to the form of religion handed down to them by the fathers and the martyrs of the Reformation, and, as they increased in numbers and worldly wealth, would, from their previous organization, and custom of acting in unison, be better prepared to contribute towards the erection of a place of worship, and the maintenance of a resident, or occasional minister. The principle of employing Laymen as subordinate auxiliaries to the clergy has been recognized, if I mistake not, by a Church Society in Lower Canada, and in England by the *Church Pastoral Aid Society*, an association countenanced by six Bishops and several dignitaries, and eminent clergymen of the Establishment. Strong objections not visible to me may be brought to prove the impracticability of my suggestions; but no one will deny the necessity of adopting some vigorous measures for the purpose of keeping the scattered sheep of our Church within the fold, and supplying them with spiritual food.

ALAN FAIRFORD.

Toronto, 10th August, 1837.

HOME BIBLICAL.

No. VI.

THE PATHETIC—CONTINUED,
ST. PAUL AT MILETUS.

Passing over a great number of pathetic passages which occur in the histories and prophecies of the old Testament, and leaving, at least for the present, those events in the life of Jesus Christ which awakened the sympathies of created nature, as well as those touching parables and narrations by which he often moved the hearts of the most hardened of his opposers to momentary tenderness; I request the attention of my readers to one remarkable passage in the life of St. Paul, which appears to me replete with feelings the most exquisitely affecting.

In the twentieth chapter of the Acts of the Apostles and at the seventeenth verse, we find St. Paul at Miletus, from which place he sent for the elders of the Ephesian church, that he might speak to them for the last time, on subjects which lay the nearest to his heart.

The foundation of the Ephesian church had been laid by the Apostle's own hand. It had arisen, beneath his vigilant superintendence, a holy temple unto the LORD. He felt deeply interested in all its concerns. In order to promote its prosperity he wrote an epistle equally remarkable for its affection and piety. He there speaks of the members of this church, as greatly advanced in the knowledge and experience of divine things—he rejoices over them, as quickened from a death in trespasses and sins—as being saved by grace—and as being no more strangers and foreigners, but fellow-citizens with the saints, and of the household of God. He then shews the strength of his affection by the earnestness of his prayers on their behalf, and pours out, from a heart overflowing with apostolic zeal and love, one of the most comprehensive, fervent, and impressive supplications that ever human lips have uttered. (Ephes. iii. 14—21)

But he now visits the church, or rather receives their elders, under very different circumstances. A scene of very severe trial was approaching both to himself and them. He was going to Jerusalem to suffer bonds and imprisonments, and therefore could no longer watch over them. They were about to be exposed to grievous wolves, who should attack them from without; and also to more dangerous enemies, who should arise among themselves, and should lay waste the heritage of the LORD. With all this danger full in view, with what painful emotions would he address them: and with what anxiety would he labour, if possible, to avert the evil which he saw approaching!

He begins his discourse by reminding them how faithfully he had laboured among them from the first, with many tears, exposed to many temptations, and to great personal danger. This display of his own feelings was doubtless made to excite theirs, and to open their minds to receive the instructions he was about to give. He then informs them, that as he had experienced nothing but suffering in the discharge of his solemn duties, so he expected to meet with nothing else. He was going to Jerusalem, and knew of no other result of his journey, than that bonds and imprisonments awaited him. He thus prepared the way for exhorting them to patience and perseverance in their sufferings; for he who is himself in deep affliction can most successfully direct those who are likewise afflicted. He then, with an energy peculiarly his own, exclaims, "But none of these things move me, neither count I my life dear unto myself, so that I might finish my course with joy, and the ministry which I have received of the Lord Jesus, to testify the Gospel of the grace of God." Having avowed a resolution, and manifested a spirit of fortitude, which was enough to inspire the faintest heart with courage, he takes advantage of the elevated feeling which he had produced upon the minds of his hearers, to introduce immediately a subject which would call for all their firmness and decision: "And now I know that ye all shall see my face no more." But lest the communication of tidings so distressing should at once overwhelm them with inconsolable grief; he solemnly gives the subject a direction which was calculated to divert their minds from all present objects, whether painful or pleasant, by fixing their thoughts on the eternal consequences which were connected with his ministry: "I take you to record this day, that I am