

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, DECEMBER 9, 1837.

[NO. XXVI.]

Poetry.

THE CHRISTIAN'S RACE.

I.
He stood beside a dying bed:
The lamp burnt pale and low,
And, dimly seen, an old grey head
Was battling its last foe.
It was a father that lay there,
That gazer was a son;
I whisper'd, "There is help in prayer,"—
He said, "God's will be done!"

II.
He stood amid a glittering crowd
Within the chancel wide,
And gracefully the ring bestowed
Upon a blooming bride.
"Rejoice, for love is round thee spread,
And life is in its prime!"—
His smile was solemn, as he said,
"It is a holy time!"

III.
He stood beside a healing spring,
Whence drops of mercy fell;
And lovely was the new-born thing,
Bath'd in that holy well.
It was his eldest born: I said,
"Rejoice, my friend, rejoice!"
"I do!" he cried, with stooping head,
And with a trembling voice.

IV.
He stood beside an open grave—
The funeral rite was done;
He had returned to Him who gave,
His lov'd, his only son!
"Do not despair, my friend," I cried,
As all around were weeping;
He smil'd upon me, and replied—
"He is not dead, but sleeping."

V.
I stood beside a dying bed—
'Twas HE HIMSELF lay there!
A smile of holy light o'erspread
His countenance of prayer.
He said,—"In sorrow, faith was mine;
In joy, a holy fear;
Now both are lost in hope divine—
Still, Saviour, thou art near!"

VI.
Such was his life! In joy and woe
His heart was fix'd above;
Faith was his only strength below,
His only food was love.
Teach me, O Lord, his life to live;
Teach me his death to die;
May I to thee time's moments give—
Thou me Eternity.

R. P.

British Magazine.

THE ENGLISH LAYMAN.

No. VI.

THE ENGLISH VILLAGE CHURCH.*

The great charm of English scenery is the moral feeling that seems to pervade it. It is associated in the mind with ideas of order, of quiet, of sober, well-established principles, of hoary usage and reverend custom. Every thing seems to be the growth of ages, of regular and peaceful existence. The old church of remote architecture, with its low massive portal; its gothic tower; its windows rich with tracery and painted glass; its stately monuments of warriors and worthies of the olden time, ancestors of the present lords of the soil; its tombstones, recording successive generations of sturdy yeomanry, whose progeny still plough the same fields, and kneel at the same altar * * * all these common features of English landscape evince a calm and settled security, an hereditary transmission of homebred virtues and local attachments, that speak deeply and touchingly for the moral character of the nation.—*Washington Irving.*

Time, the universal destroyer, is, nevertheless, the universal beautifier. He confers the ripeness of manhood, before bringing on the chilly winter of age, and sheds the mellow tranquillity and repose of centuries on the lofty tower, which ere long he will level in the dust. Like the cannibal who fattens, before he feasts upon, his victim, time only scatters beauty, that he may have the malignant pleasure of trampling upon it—the gratification of destruction is enhanced by the beauty of the object destroyed.

Were reality to be reversed, and could modern times boast of architects superior to those of past ages,—the pile of to-day, though unequalled in every point on which human ingenuity could be exerted, would still be unable to cope with its more aged brother, in impressing the mind of the beholder with that train of deep and retrospective thought into which he is naturally led, while gazing on some heavy ruin sanctified by time, and pregnant with recollections of romance and chivalry. The newly erected church has an appearance of freshness which seems to insinuate the novelty of the religion it is dedicated to promote. The venerable tower of an ancient village-church speaks in a far different language. The stillness of age is upon it—the green youth of the ivy is forcibly contrasted with the gray sombreness of the mouldering stone—he who died yesterday reposes by the side of him who died centuries before,—and the past and the present are strangely interwoven. On viewing the newly-erected house of God we certainly must rejoice in the structure, as a proof of the spreading influence of the Gospel, and of a consequent increase of civilization. But the shrine hallowed by age, stands, like an ancient landmark, to tell us that, despite the

wrath of man, the deluded fanatic, or the attacks of infidelity, our religion still overshadows the land, and claims our affection for the perils it has braved.

The appendages of the old village church add greatly to the beautiful associations which invest it. The bell, that early offspring of music, is indispensable in almost every stage of life. We can tell by its gay and lively pealing that hands, and, we hope, hearts, have been united. Its slow murmur utters a tale not to be mistaken—a warning differing from the former, inasmuch as the event which the latter proclaims must inevitably overtake us all. To borrow the feeling words of Southey, the bell is "a music hallowed by all circumstances—which, according equally with social exultation and with solitary pensiveness, though it falls upon many an unheeding ear, never fails to find some hearts which it exhilarates, some which it softens." Bonaparte, walking upon the terrace at Malmaison, heard the evening chimes of Ruel. His ambitious thoughts assumed a momentary tinge of sadness, and a recollection of less troubled and more innocent days rushed across his mind. "If such," he ejaculated, "is their effect upon me, what must it be with others?" Did not his conscience say to him, if such is their effect upon you, so deeply stained with crime, so deaf to every voice human and divine, how beneficial must the effect be when these sounds fall upon an ear that has never been barred to the voice of mercy and peace? Such reflections might have flitted across his brain for a moment, but they were too pure there to take up their resting place! The bell is an instrument breathing a rude melody, but, in spite of civilization, it loses not a single charm. The camel and the mule refuse to proceed when their bell is removed and the tinkling ceases, and many of us could with difficulty believe we were going to church, if not invited by the sacred and accustomed summons. We live in days when it no longer reminds us of slavery—no curfew quenches the cheerful blaze in the hearth, or robs a winter evening of its social happiness. The half-merry, half-melancholy peals—which "toll the knell of parting day,"—glide gently over the tranquilized senses, and leave us, like Garrick between tragedy and comedy, doubting whether we will yield to sadness, or resign ourselves to mirth.

Another adjunct of the old village church is the venerable-looking dial,—a stone in which there is a sermon indeed, or at least a subject for one, namely, some Scripture-text rudely carved. The motionless index of revolving time, it looks with seriousness upon all around it, and, though wanting the tone of the bell to give utterance to its speechless admonition, the silent shadow that it casts expresses a language, "a visible rhetoric," that the poorest peasant can understand. It is true, that it will not go ten degrees backwards for us; but, if properly applied, it may enable us by its warning to live a life, though short in years, yet long in deeds of goodness and christian charity.

And can we forget the favourite old seat in the porch? Here the rustic pilgrim, before he enters the house of God, rests his toil-strung limbs. Here the villagers congregate in a knot, and discuss the politics and news of the hamlet,—the last wedding, or the freshest grave, their main topics of discourse. Here the ancient dames, with prayer-books neatly folded in glazed handkerchiefs, and attired in their black silk scarfs refreshed by a week's repose, are busily engaged in canvassing the merits of the parson's wife, or reproaching the vanity which induces some Cicely or Phœbe, to deck her body in the attractions of an unprofitable gaudiness! Alas! did not they, in their spring-tide, love to bask in the sunshine of village admiration, and to heighten their charms by a gay riband, or an envy-exciting lace!—Observation will find an ample field to roam over in the church-porch; and the benevolent Christian will rejoice in contemplating the unpolished throng, approaching the altar of their God, with countenances clad in the smites of Sabbath peace! He will anticipate the sweet repose of that everlasting Sabbath, when we shall all rest from our labours in the presence of our Heavenly Father.

Opposite the church, and in a sheltered corner, stands the Rectory,—a house such as Hooker would have chosen for a retreat in which he could eat his bread in privacy and peace. Fit inmate too resides within,—a pastor unwearied and hospitable as Gilpin, learned and judicious as Hooker, meek and devotional as Herbert. He is not a dumb dog, that does not bark. He is the physician of his flock, spiritual and bodily—to the foolish, a counsellor without fee—to the wicked, a reprover without harshness—to the lowly and meek-hearted, an encourager, without the pride that apes humility—a father to the fatherless—a comforter to the widow—a prop to the aged, and a guide to the young. He meddles but little in matters of state, but when he does, he supports his King, and proves himself a zealous defender of the Church. "Our minister lives sermons—he is ever as hospitable as his estate will permit, and makes every alm's two by his cheerful giving it. He loveth to live in a well-repaired house, that he may serve God therein more cheerfully, and lying on his death-bed he bequeaths to each of his parishioners his precepts and examples for a legacy, and they in requital erect every one a monument for him in their hearts." These are the words of the estimable Fuller, and in these has he written his own character. Many villages in England have such a pastor—would that every one had! Let a blind guide depart, and be succeeded by a faithful minister, and the change will fully prove that the bulk of mankind is not indisposed to obey the truth when it is inculcated by one who practices what he preaches.

ALAN FAIRFORD.

April, 1831.

THE SATURDAY PREACHER.

No. VII.

TRUST IN THE LORD.

LUKE v. 5. Master, we have toiled all the night, and have taken nothing: nevertheless at thy word I will let down the net.

Our Lord, on the occasion to which these words refer, happened to be in the ship, or small vessel, of Simon Peter on lake Gennesaret;—to which he had been obliged to have recourse, because, as the sacred writer informs us, "the people pressed upon him." The reason of this throng around the person of Jesus, as given in the present narrative, is one which awakens many humiliating, but improving thoughts: they "pressed upon him to hear the word of God." It is painful and humbling to think how seldom that spirit pervades the present multitude even of believing people;—how comparatively few there are who manifest the eagerness and anxiety to hear the word of God which is ascribed to these listeners of Jesus on the shores of Lake Gennesaret. It is true, the word of God is not now spoken by those hallowed lips whose persuasive preaching allured so many earnest and attentive crowds;—but still it is his message which is delivered; it is even he who yet speaks by the mouth of his accredited ambassadors. They tell of his mercy and his love; of the pains he suffered, and of the victory he achieved for a lost and fallen world: they point to the way of salvation which his blood has opened; to the means of reconciliation, of pardon, and of bliss eternal, which his all sufficient ransom has procured. Surely this is a "word" which men should love to hear;—attractive enough to engage their attention and to win their regard; one which they might well press forward to be informed of; and the loss of which should be accounted amongst the deprivations most seriously to be lamented.

"Now when he had left speaking, he said unto Simon, Launch out into the deep, and let down your net for a draught." The benevolent and obliging temper which this humble fisherman had manifested in permitting the recent use of his vessel to Jesus, was not to go unrewarded; the Lord knew that their previous attempts had been unsuccessful; and as their livelihood depended on the successful prosecution of their present employment, it was altogether consistent with his character of mercy and love to exercise his miraculous powers on their behalf. Simon, in reply to the exhortation of Jesus, alludes earnestly to his previous ill-success; but, at the same time, he has that respect for, that confidence in the advice of this remarkable person, which induces him to renew his often-frustrated attempts.—"Master," was his reply, "we have toiled all the night and taken nothing: nevertheless, at thy word I will let down the net."

How seasonable an instruction is this to every servant of the Lord Jesus, not to despond upon any unsuccessful trials in his Master's business; not to allow his spirits or his confidence to sink from any disappointments in the way of his ordinary calling! Here let him contemplate, with gratitude and hope, the remarkable evidence of heavenly blessing upon those who are ready to labour at that Master's call, and the bountiful amends which are, in a moment, made for so many fruitless experiments before.

The disciples of Christ, exalted as are their privileges, have always their share of temptation and trial to endure. While they have an hourly contest to maintain with a perverse and depraved nature, and the enticements of a wicked world continually to struggle against, there is another more powerful tempter still who never ceases in his efforts to wear them from the "good part" they have chosen, and from the high and blessed hopes which it is their peculiar joy to cherish. Through the force of these manifold temptations, they may often feel their progress in holiness to be slow: they may find themselves weak in faith and wavering in hope; almost ready, indeed, to despair of reaching the high standard which the precepts and the example of their Lord have proposed. The narrative before us forbids us to sink under such discouragements, but rather that we should renew our efforts, and, with an humble confidence in the aiding arm of Christ, should persevere unto the end in the way he has directed. Perhaps, at last, we shall feel this mighty power in the inner man; perhaps, in the end, be enabled to "bring into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ."

And how applicable, too, is the present encouragement to those who are called to minister in holy things, and to "declare the counsel of God!" For often, we know, do these feelings of discouragement overtake the ministers of the Lord Jesus, "we have toiled all the night, and have taken nothing." Often do they feel tempted to give up what seems to them a hopeless labour; to pronounce their people's hearing, and their own imperfect "preaching, vain." So heedless and so hardened is unconverted man; so coldly and carelessly are the words of truth and grace received; so little impression seems often to be made upon the conscience, the temper, and the life; so faintly do the operative principles of the Gospel seem to evince their workings in the general conduct of their hearers: so few souls, in short, seem to be won indeed to Christ,—that they are subjected to many an hour of almost "sorrow without hope;" to the pain and fear that all their toil and struggle in the vineyard of their Lord has been attended with no fruit to gladden the eye or revive the heart! But let the present passage of Scripture, all of which is written for our comfort and hope, check any such feeling of temporary despondency. "Let down your nets for a draught," is an exhortation, the successful result of which may remove the anxiety of many previous hopeless trials; the issue of which may perhaps be correspondent to the unlooked-for success of Simon: "And when they had this done, they enclosed a great multi-

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