

THE CHRISTIAN SENTINEL.

THREE-RIVERS, FRIDAY 22nd OCTOBER, 1850.

(Remarks on the "Martyrdom of Polycarp" continued.)

Irenæus, who was born in 97, says that he had seen Polycarp, who was not only taught by the apostles, and conversed with many of those who had seen our Lord, but was likewise appointed by the apostles Bishop in the Church which is at Smyrna in Asia. The same Irenæus writes that the Roman Bishops succeeded one by one in the government, one Bishop only at a time being in the Church in this immense capital of the civilised world: that Paul and Peter themselves delivered the government of the Church to Linus, (Sec. 2 Tim. iv. 21.) the first of the series; and that this is given as an example of what took place in every Church which was in all respects faithful: the Apostles having appointed Bishops in all the Churches. See Cook's Essay, p. 142.

It is said that Polycarp is "the Angel of the Church in Smyrna," to whom the Epistle in Rev. ii. 8, is addressed. This is highly probable; for, the Book of Revelation was written about the year 96; and the 80 years of his Episcopate being deducted from 166, the year in which they say he suffered martyrdom, it leaves the year 86 for its commencement; which shews that he had been Bishop of Smyrna ten years when St. John wrote the revelation. It is moreover worthy of remark, that the epistle "to the angel of the Church in Smyrna," alludes both to the death of Christ, and to the martyrdom of "the angel."—"These things saith he which was dead and is alive:—Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life:"—(See Rev. ii. 8, 10.) terms of expression peculiar to this epistle among the seven. This establishes the credit of the history which records the martyrdom of St. Polycarp, (which no one denies,) and by consequence affixes the seal of truth to the same history when it declares that he was made Diocesan Bishop of Smyrna by the apostles, and for more than eighty years exercised the Episcopal functions over the Smyrnan Church.—It must also be borne in mind, that those who cut up at pleasure the writings of the primitive fathers, deprive themselves of the right to quote them as authority in any case; though some do it both against the Socinians and the Romanists.—"A liar is not to be believed, though he speak the truth," says the fable. Yet to those fathers will they appeal as undoubted evidence in one case; but yet again when their evidence does not suit the times, it must be rejected!

There is another mention of Polycarp which we must not pass by.—When St. Ignatius was on his way to Rome to suffer martyrdom by command of the Emperor Trajan in the year 108, he thus addressed one of his epistles: "Ignatius, who is also called Theophorus, to Polycarp Bishop of the Church which is at Smyrna; their overseer, but rather himself overlooked by God the Father, and the Lord Jesus Christ; all happiness." In that epistle occurs the following language: "Let nothing be done without thy knowledge and consent."—"If any desire to be taken more notice of than the Bishop, he is corrupted."—"Hearken unto the Bishop, that God may also hearken unto you. My soul be security for them that submit to their Bishop, with their presbyters and deacons."—In his epistle to the people of Smyrna, over whom Polycarp was Bishop, he writes thus: "See that ye all follow your Bishop, as Jesus Christ the Father; and the Presbytery, as the apostles. And reverence the deacons, as the command of God. Let no man do any thing of what belongs to the Church separately from the Bishop. Let that eucharist be looked upon as well established, which is either offered by the Bishop, or by him to whom the Bishop has given his consent. Whosoever the Bishop shall appear, there let the people also be: as where Jesus Christ is, there is the Catholic Church. It is not lawful without the Bishop, neither to baptize, nor to celebrate the holy communion: but whatsoever he shall approve of that is also pleasing unto God; that so whatever is done, may be sure and well done."—"It is a good thing to have a due regard both to God and to the Bishop: he that honours the Bishop, shall be honoured of God. But he that does any thing without his knowledge, ministers unto the devil."—Let it be here remembered, that these are the words of an aged apostolic Bishop, who had lived the greater part of his life with the Apostle John; and that they were a part of his advice to the Church, which he gave on the eve of laying down his life as the last and highest test of his faith in Christ; and at a time when, if ever, a man will "speak the words of truth and soberness." To say that he declared concerning the ministry of the Church what he knew to be false, is too much for any one; and to assert that his words have been wrongly reported and are not worthy of respect, is but equivalent to surrendering all confidence in the veracity of historic record.

We are not ignorant that these remarks may be unacceptable to some. We regret, but cannot help it. We are certainly justifiable in drawing these weapons of defence from the armory of divine and historic truth. Primitive truth and order can never be subjects of indifference to any who truly value their faith in the Redeemer; much less to the Christian ministry whose duty it is to set forth all things that pertain to the Church of God. None of them are to be disposed of with a contumelious smile or a sneer as things of no value: no; they are of great importance to the Christian world; and they demand the serious attention and sober investigation of every Christian believer. They are as it were the out-posts and the bulwarks of the gospel—the watch-towers on which the Christian soldier should plant his feet, and from which he should lift his voice betimes; and because they are such they must be defended for the security of that precious deposit which lies entrenched behind them.

THE SEASON.—The present Autumn has been particularly fine. The weather for the most part has been soft and mild; the sky serene and beautiful, and many times splendidly illuminated at night with the Aurora Borealis; and but little of the stormy equinoctial gales has been experienced. The fruits of the earth common to this part of the Province are abundant, and the fineness of the season has afforded the farmers ample opportunity for their security.—It is truly cause of thankfulness to the giver of all good, that His blessings pursue us through the circle of each revolving year; that "seed-time and harvest, and cold and heat, and summer and winter, and day and night shall not cease" to make their annual and diurnal returns, and minister each its portion to the comforts of our frail existence. Though in a world of toil and vexation, the cultivators of "the ground which the Lord hath cursed," and forced in the sweat of our face to eat our bread, yet he has so far made us the creatures of circumstances that we can accommodate ourselves to our situation with a tolerable grace, and derive good from a thousand surrounding objects.

The forest has, however, nearly cast away its full green robe, the gift of the sun of Summer, and surrendered its leafy honors to the claims of Autumn, and flung its withered verdure upon the passing gale, to be scattered over the earth from which it sprung, or strewn upon the silent waves of the mighty stream, and perhaps be wafted even to the bosom of the briny ocean. The season of decay is the season of plaintive sadness and melancholy musing—of sober moralizing on the vanity of all mere worldly things—the silent monitor, that all flesh is grass, and, like the fading flower and the falling leaf, must soon pass away from this stage of being. Ah! how soon! "The time is at hand."—Time that never yet delayed for mortal man.—But stay—once he arrested his rapid flight—once he paused on his swift career—once he folded his raven wing at the command of the leader of Israel, and perched upon the Sun, he look'd down from high heaven in amaze, and wondered at the vengeance of an angry God upon his rebellious foes!—And once again, when the voice of the ARCHANGEL shall summon the sleepers of ten thousand years, and the thunder of His trumpet shall shatter his glass, and dash it from his hand—then shall Time fold his pinions for ever,—or scatter their plumes upon the ocean of eternity: and once again shall he pause and wonder to see the LEADER, the HOLY ONE of Israel seated on his Throne of Justice in the midst of the shining armies of heaven, and saying to the whole multitude of his enemies: "Depart, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the Devil and his angels!"

At the desire of the Lord Bishop, who is now in Upper-Canada, the price of the SENTINEL is reduced, with a view of extending its circulation. It is therefore set at THREE DOLLARS PER ANNUM, if paid within six months after subscribing; but if afterwards, FOUR DOLLARS, postage in both cases included, which is Four Shillings, Currency, or 80 cents.

FOR THE CHRISTIAN SENTINEL.

THOUGHTS ON THE FITNESS FOR THE DISCHARGE OF THE DUTIES OF THE MINISTRY.

THE true example of the Christian Minister in the discharge of his duty is, doubtless, as far as the imitation of his example can be necessary, the great Shepherd and Bishop of souls. "He knew what was in man." So should the Minister of Christ. He should understand the corruption of human nature, and the deceivableness of sinful affections. He should know the devious ways of that evasive principle