

## COMMUNICATIONS.

For the Colonial Churchman.

## THE FAITHFUL PASTOR AND HIS HUMBLE FLOCK.

How beautiful are the feet of those who bear  
 Mercy to men, glad tidings to despair;  
 Far from the mountain's top they lovelier seem,  
 Than moonlight's dews, or morning's rosy beam;  
 Sweeter the voice, than spell or hymning sphere—  
 And hark! 'ning angels hush their harps to hear.  
 Bishop Heber.

Messrs. EDITORS,

Through the medium of your journal, I am about, with your kind indulgence, to present to its readers, a summary account of the labours and ministry of the French pastor "Oberlin." I observe that in the United States, an abridgment of the memoirs of the Rev. Felix Neff, pastor of the High Alps, has been published, but I am not aware of any brief life of Oberlin, (whom Neff so loved to follow as his pattern) having been put forth. Of those two admirable men, it may be difficult to decide which is more worthy of being placed prominently before the christian reader, for each in his own sphere realized that admirable picture of a parish priest, as drawn by Chaucer, 440 years ago.

"Each bore his great commission in his look,  
 But sweetly tempered awe, and softened all he spoke;  
 Each preached the joys of Heaven; the pains of Hell,  
 And warned the sinner with becoming zeal—  
 But on Eternal Mercy loved to dwell:  
 Each taught the Gospel rather than the law,  
 And forced himself to drive, but loved to draw;  
 And forced himself to draw, but loved to draw;  
 For, letting down the golden chain from high,  
 Each drew his audience upward to the sky—  
 His preaching much, but more his practice wrought—  
 A living sermon of the truths he taught."

It would be delightful to trace the features of character—the similarity of employments and situation, which alike were conspicuous in Neff and Oberlin; and to compare the process by which each enabled himself to lead his people through the wilderness of sin and sorrow, 'like a flock'; the skill by which each of them eminently succeeded in applying even his worldly learning and acquirements to the benefit of the mountaineers, relieving them in their temporal as well as spiritual difficulties, by assistance, counsel and apparently self-taught knowledge, thus adding the stability and energy of the man, to the zeal and piety of the devoted pastor. But an acquaintance with the holy and most useful life of either of those worthies, may, with the divine blessing, foster the desire to imitate those qualities, by the exercise of which each effected so much enviable benefit to the Church of Christ, and to these within their blessed influence.

The scene of Oberlin's labours was in that mountainous canton in the North-west of France, called by the French, 'Ban de la Roche'; the valley of stone, and by the Germans, 'Steinthal.' It lies between Alsace and Lorraine, and comprises two parishes—Rothau, and another which includes three churches, and Walbach, and four other hamlets, inhabited chiefly by Lutherans. This district had several times been laid waste by desolating wars: but when it was incorporated with France, entire liberty of conscience, was by a solemn decree, granted to its inhabitants; and in succeeding years they enjoyed enviable immunity from the fierce and unsparing persecutions to which less favoured protestants were exposed in other parts of France.

Oberlin had been preceded in his labours by the pastor Stouber, who in 1750, relinquishing bright offers of ecclesiastical ease and preferment, became a willing exile among the poor people of the Ban. Six years after he removed from them, but in 1760, the impulses of his benevolent heart induced him to return: but after seven years unremitting exertions, he left them, in this world, for ever. But a kindred spirit, the hand of an ever-presiding providence soon led to the dreary and retired spot, and its humble inhabitants were not long left comfortless.

In a humble attic, in Strasbourg, pursuing his studies, was a young man who

At Religion's pure and sacred flame,  
 His torch had kindled."

The furniture and general appearance of the room indicated austerity seldom found in a young man of twenty-five years, with talents well calculated to raise

him to public notice and regard. Stouber, anxious for a self-denying successor, introduced himself, and proposed to the student, that he should dedicate himself to God and the villagers. Refusing the appointment of military chaplain, then urged upon him, he at once gladly accepted the offer. This student was Oberlin. In an affecting and solemn pledge of self-dedication, on the plan recommended by Doddridge, (Rise and Progress of Religion in the Soul, chapter 17th) he had six years before resigned himself to God. 'Je te consacre, tout ce que je suis, et tout ce que j'ai, les facultés de mon ame; les membres de mon corps, ma fortune et mon temps.' 'I consecrate, this was one of the expressions of his pious soul, 'to Thee all that I have; the faculties of my mind, the members of my body, my fortune and my time.'

It will be for succeeding letters to endeavour to shew how thoroughly these faculties of the soul, how unreservedly those powers of the body were indeed consecrated to holy purposes. The path he trod, was indeed hallowed by that grace which he so earnestly sought. I humbly trust, Messrs. Editors, that the subject on which we have entered, may

"Elevate each reader's heart,  
 To themes of purer and of holier birth,  
 Than the low pleasures and pursuits of earth."

Yours, &amp;c.

O.

November, 1835.

TO THE EDITORS OF THE COLONIAL CHURCHMAN.

Gentlemen,

The first part of the following article on CHRISTMAS DAY is taken from the Encyclopedia Britannica, 7th ed.—a work which is in possession of very few persons in this province, and the latter part from the Episcopal Watchman, 19th Dec. 1829.

## CHRISTMAS DAY.

A FESTIVAL of the christian church, observed on the 25th of December, in memory of the nativity of Jesus Christ. As to the antiquity of this festival, the first traces we find of it are in the second century about the time of the Emperor Commodus. The decretal epistles indeed carry it a little higher, and state that Telesphorus, who lived in the reign of Antoninus Pius, ordered divine service to be celebrated, and an evangelical hymn to be sung, the night before the nativity of our Saviour. But we have a melancholy proof that it was observed before the times of Constantine; for whilst the persecution raged under Diocletian, who then kept his court at Nicomedia, that Prince, among his many acts of cruelty, finding multitudes of christians assembled together to celebrate Christ's nativity, commanded the church doors where they were met to be shut, and fire to be put to it, which, in a short time, reduced the church, and all within it, to ashes. The anniversary of the Saviour's birth, should, with christians, be a season of fervent gratitude and pious joy. In consequence of the incarnation of the Son of God, they have been translated into his kingdom, his spirit has been sent into their hearts, and they have been accepted in the Beloved. Although degraded by apostasy and odious for their guilt, Christ is not ashamed to call them his friends, and to make them heirs of God, and joint heirs with himself. How imperfectly do they appreciate the privileges and blessings conferred upon them by the advent of the Saviour! The terrific reign of superstition and crime now enslaves millions of wretched men, and rests with an iron hand and withering touch upon heathen countries.—Why does not superstition deep and gross, now envelope us? Why, instead of being allowed, as on this day, to join our song of love and praise to that of angels, are we not, with the madness of fiends, and the frenzy of demons, celebrating the debasing rites, and disgusting orgies of some pagan divinity? Why are we not now endeavouring to drown by our infuriated shrieks, the agonizing cries of some expiring infant, as it consumes in the arms of a burning Moloch, or reddening our hands in its innocent blood? Because the Son of God hath destroyed the works of the devil, and caused him to fall like lightning from heaven—because the day-spring from on high hath visited our benighted and unhappy world—and because

by the kind providence and rich mercy of God, christianity has been extended even to us. What, then, do we not owe to the Son of God? We are sinners of the most aggravated character. He will wash away our sins, in his most precious blood. We are oppressed with conscious guilt. He will dispel the terrific uncertainty, and the appalling fears which afflict our minds. We are in mental wretchedness. He will impart the joy of spiritual consolation, and the grace of God, 'which passeth all understanding.' We are ready to perish. He will confer upon us everlasting life. What heart can refuse its gratitude? what voice can withhold its praise, or refuse to render thanks to God, for his unspeakable gift? When God brought his first-begotten into the world, He commanded his angels to worship him. And shall angels worship and rejoice, while men, redeemed, pardoned, privileged and blessed, no anthem raise? Loud and high may the notes of joy and love ascend, and wide o'er this world, of sin, of misery and guilt, may the sacred chorus spread, till every heart shall catch the holy feeling, and every tongue take up the song, "Unto Him that hath loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood, and hath made us kings and priests unto God, and his Father—to Him be glory and dominion for ever and ever."

The following lines are from a work, the title of which is "Remember me—a token of christian affection, consisting of entirely original pieces."

## THE SECOND ADVENT.

By Mrs. Moodie, (late Susannah Strickland) Author of "Enthusiasm," &c.

Hark, hark! the cry is heard without;  
 The bridegroom comes—arise and greet him:  
 Hear'st thou the 'trump!—the angel's shout!  
 High songs of joy, go forth and meet him!  
 The hills are moved—the mountains smoke—  
 The earth to her foundation reels;  
 Death bows beneath the victor's yoke,  
 A captive at his chariot wheels.  
 He comes—the grave's stern portals yield;  
 He calls—the heaving dust replies;  
 And spirits by the Godhead sealed,  
 To meet their great Redeemer rise.  
 All space returns the thrilling cry,  
 Hosannah to the Prince of Peace!  
 His arm hath won the victory;  
 He reigns—and sin and sorrow cease.  
 Hosannah to the King of Heaven,  
 Resounds from all the ransom'd host;  
 To whom be praise and glory given—  
 To Father, Son, and Holy Ghost!

## HYMN FOR CHRISTMAS DAY.

By Bishop Heber.

Oh Saviour, whom this holy morn  
 Gave to our world below;  
 To mortal want and labour born,  
 And more than mortal woe!  
 Incarnate Word! by every grief,  
 By each temptation tried,  
 Who lived to yield our ills relief,  
 And to redeem us died!  
 If gaily clothed and proudly fed,  
 In dangerous wealth we dwell;  
 Remind us of thy manger bed,  
 And lowly cottage cell!  
 If prest by poverty severe,  
 In envious want we pine,  
 Oh may thy spirit whisper near,  
 How poor a lot was thine!  
 Through fickle fortune's various scene  
 From sin preserve us free!  
 Like us thou hast a mourner been,  
 May we rejoice with Thee!