

For the Colonial Churchman.

November 11, 1777.

## VENN'S CORRESPONDENCE.

Messrs. Editors,

It is some time since your paper has been embellished by excerpts from the correspondence of the pious Venn. To be sure, it has not been without much that is particularly interesting to churchmen, especially the proceedings during the Diocesan visitation at Halifax; but as there may be nothing more on that subject just now, allow me to request a place for the enclosed extracts from letters to his son, which will be highly valued by those who know the peculiar dangers which beset the entrance into life of a young man of religious education. To those also, an additional interest will be attached, whilst they are regarded as the instructions of a zealous minister of Christ, in training up a son for the service which has long been his own delight and glory; and whilst it is borne in mind, that these instructions were not given in vain.

Yours, truly,

PASTOR.

October 30, 1777.

I have now to congratulate my dear son, on his new room, and entrance on his college studies; a most important period in your life—a seed time, from which, duly improved, yourself, and many immortal souls, for whom Christ died, will receive everlasting advantage.

Now is put into your hands an admirable opportunity of improving your mental faculties—of acquiring a fund of human learning, which will be of great use to you as long as you live—of habituating yourself to study and meditation, and much retirement, the fit preparation for the high and spiritual office for which you are designed.—You have heard so many lessons from me (and I thank my gracious God! not without effect), that I can only repeat in writing what you have received viva voce.

Exert as you did at Lancaster, resolution; and rise early: so will you have an opportunity to perform much every day, and with care give to your studies and your devotions a just proportion of your time. Be ashamed of giving place to sloth and love of sleep.

Continue as you have done for near these two years, to read the Book of books; and read it always with prayer; and before you open it, recollect what excellent things are said in its praise—what good has been received from it by millions now in glory. Beg it may work upon your mind, and be written on your heart. Shun, as poison, all disputes and controversies. Infinite hurt has been done by them; and very little good to any one.

I am very glad that you, with the three friends you mention, intend to meet on Sundays—I suppose, by turns, at each other's room.

But I would not have you increase your number on several accounts. Your knowledge of each other, and confidence of friendship, will enable you to speak without fear and freely: but more would be a bar to that freedom, and prove a snare, by tempting you to speak for commendation.

More would draw upon you the eyes of each college, and expose you to needless ridicule, and prove an offence, which few young people are able to bear.

It would have the appearance of making a party, and lead to several disagreeable consequences. There is no occasion that you should mention your meeting to any one: and if there should be other serious young men desirous of such improvement on the Sunday, they should make another party.

When you are together, your great temptation will be levity of mind, when you should be conversing, with all your attention, upon subjects of infinite moment.

But if you are honest, meekly to reprove the first appearance of that spirit, you will succeed; and the Lord Jesus will, according to His promise, be in the midst of you. Happy shall we be to hear you testify He is so; and that you find yourselves strengthened and animated to live, in all sobriety, vigilance and self-denial, as becometh christians.

H. VENN.

Figure to yourself a miser, glorying in his riches; or the child of ambition, exalted to the pinnacle of worldly honour; the pleasure cannot exceed what your letters, received this day, give to me; and it is neither so pure, nor so well founded.

My joy arises from the glorious hope of your immortal happiness, and of your proving the highly favoured instrument of spreading the knowledge of a Saviour amongst ignorant, guilty, perishing creatures.

My joy arises from the delightful consideration, that you, in your early youth, instead of indulging base appetites, sensual or mental, to fill you with bitter remembrance of your ways and doings at college, are desirous to improve a liberal and learned education to qualify yourself for the noblest office entrusted to men—the office of preaching the Gospel, and watching over souls in love to them, and to God their maker.

I immediately, therefore, take my pen, and comply with your acceptable request in sending you the largest sheet I have, of advice from the most affectionate heart of a parent, who has received so much comfort from you, ever since you were my son.

My first advice is, that you would beware of the device Satan too successfully practises against novices in religion. When he perceives they are no longer to be kept asleep in profaneness or formality—no longer to be debauched with the pleasures of gross sin, or the love of fame or wealth—when he sees they are determined to come out from the world—he alters his method of seeking to destroy them. “Be more separate,” he suggests; “distinguish yourself;” immediately assume the preacher's office; neglect the peculiar duties of your age and station, and intrude into what does by no means belong to you:—force your statements upon others; and consider yourself (without experience, without knowledge observe!) to be a reformer, authorized to despise your elders, to be impatient of submission, to be heady, high minded, and then to complete the whole, abuse learning, and be confident you have an impulse from heaven, and a Divine call to justify all you do!!!

Thus have I seen religious young men perverted, and made insufferably disagreeable by their false ideas of religion, and a stumbling block in the way of others—they themselves seldom recovering from the proud spirit. Under the influence of this proud spirit they are always for over doing, and for needless, nay absurd, singularities.—They will even court persecution; and then sink with the idea that they are treated for Christ's sake, as the prophets and martyrs were of old.

Take knowledge, therefore, of the important boundary between separation from the world and the offensive self-sufficient excess, in things which our God does not require.

My second advice is, that you dwell much upon the substantial part of a christian's life; and be assured, if you are not ashamed of this, the fear of the world is not your master. The substantial part is, modesty and chastity in opposition to pertness and impurity, confronting the surfeit or drunkenness of Epicurus—humility and meekness, in opposition to natural haughtiness and angry pride—guarded cheerfulness, under a sense both of the Divine presence and the mischief of noisy mirth—love to God and his word expressed by a stern look when scoffers pour out foolishness—love of diligent study, serious acquaintance, useful conversation—with secret prayer and meditation on the word of Christ. Conscious that you are living thus, and that this is your earnest purpose and your daily prayer, you need have no fear that you are making a compromise with the world, or want that zeal for the Lord which true faith inspires.

Whilst thus you lay the stress upon matters of utmost moment, you will receive the blessing of the Lord; you will win and attract both esteem and affection from ma-

ny: you will put to silence the ignorance of foolish men, by well doing.

Their idea of your religion is, that it puffs you up—makes you think yourself better than all beside;—that you are a compound of ignorance, enthusiasm, and spiritual pride. Nothing can convince them of their gross mistake, or conquer their prejudices but humility, meekness, wisdom, and soundness of mind, which those who are really in Christ possess and manifest: at the same time their conscientious attention to their duty, so striking, gives them no overweening conceit of themselves; abased as they are from heartfelt conviction, how much the Lord has done and suffered for them—how much they have received from His bounty and grace—how infinitely worthy He is of all adoration and love: a very small part of which they return to Him, at best.

I will conclude with advising you to study, with much attention and exactness, their characters who have obtained the immortal honour, that they pleased God—such as Enoch, Noah, Abraham, Moses, Joshua, Job. There will be much of entertainment, as well as instruction in this method.

You may be sure nothing is misrepresented here. You will see what manner of persons the spirit of God does form. You will perceive that supreme love to Him, and undaunted valour in his cause, and resignation to His will, fully possessed them.

Then, lifting up your eyes and heart to their God and your God, beg that, under a much more luminous dispensation, and richer helps for spiritual life and godliness, you may be a follower of them, who are set before you for example.

There is a great beauty in scripture characters; which you are always to consider as exemplifications of scripture doctrines, and animating proofs how much we, by diligent seeking, may receive from our most gracious and bountiful God.

## HOLY COMMUNION.

We extract from a recent number of the *Missionary*, the following remarks of the late Bishop White on that passage in the 1st Epistle to the Corinthians, to which an erroneous interpretation is not unfrequently given:

“He that eateth and drinketh unworthily, eateth and drinketh damnation to himself.” There are frequently misunderstood the two words as used in this place, ‘unworthily’ and ‘damnation;’ which however may be made clear, by other expressions in the passage. The ‘eating and drinking unworthily;’ or in a manner unworthy of the occasion, was the eating and drinking as at an ordinary meal. And this is what is called, the not discerning of the Lord's body, that is the not noting of the difference between the appointed sign of it and common food.

It is the more surprising, that there should be so often mistaken the sense of the word ‘unworthily;’ as it is utterly inconsistent with humility in the best of Christians, to suppose themselves worthy of the benefits assured to them in the Lord's Supper. But let the idea of worthiness be transferred from the person, to the demeanour during the celebration; and understood as expressing no more than its suitability to the occasion; and immediately a different sense is visible on the passage. That this is the true sense the connexion shows. The ‘damnation;’ that is the condemnation or judgment spoken of, is the being subjected to certain temporal punishment, by which God, in the infancy of his Church, vindicated the sanctity of this sacred rite. For that reference is had, not to judgment in another world, but to temporal punishment in this, appears from what is said, ‘for this cause many are weak and sickly among you, and many sleep;’ And ‘we are chastened of the Lord that we should not be condemned with the world.’ In short the precise fault of the Corinthians is avoided, by the merely recollecting with reverence, that the bread and wine which are the objects of our senses, are representations of the body and blood of Christ, which were offered as a sacrifice for our sins. Doubtless in addition to such recollections the occasion should be an excitement of pious affections and holy