

THE HARBINGER.

UNDER THE SANCTION OF THE CONGREGATIONAL CHURCHES.

In malice be ye children, but in understanding be men.—*St. Paul.*

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CONTENTS.—Importance of Early Piety—The Last Request of a Pious Mother—Visit to the Indian Lands—Church Music—Peace Convention in England—Historical Notices, No. III.—Potton—Unity of the Church in Montreal—Apostolical Succession—The Intolerance and Bigotry of "The Church" newspaper—Congregational Union of Eastern Canada—of Western Canada—The Institute—MISSIONARY INTELLIGENCE, The New Hebrides—Sandwich Islands—Missionary Labours in the Bechuana Country—MISCELLANEOUS ITEMS—Not ashamed of the Gospel—Unity of the Church—Dr. Chalmers and the Church of Scotland—Themes for Conversation—Reading and Learning not identical—College of Propaganda—Novel Pulpit Stairs Case—The Bible—Nonconformist Catechism—Poetry—Latest News.

IMPORTANCE OF EARLY PIETY.

In a recent communication, I called attention to "the claims of children on the Christian Church." I now wish to address children and young persons on the importance of early piety.

My dear young Friends,—Allow me for a few minutes to engage your serious attention with reference to your souls. You are objects of interest to the Saviour, to your parents, and to the ministers and friends of the Gospel. On these accounts, as well as others I shall mention, I wish to urge upon you the duty of yielding yourselves to God at once.

The life of Christ affords abundant proof of his tender regard for children. The prophet Isaiah represents him as a Shepherd, "gathering the lambs with his arms, and carrying them in his bosom." Hence, on one occasion we find him placing a child in the midst of his disciples, in order to enforce useful counsel; at another time we behold him taking up little children into his arms and blessing them, and from his gracious lips those encouraging words proceeded:—"Suffer little children to come unto me and forbid them not, for of such is the kingdom of God." In order further to evince his solicitude for the young, before he ascended into Heaven, he thus admonished the Apostle Peter to show his love to him—"Feed my lambs." Who then can doubt the tenderness of his heart, and his deep solicitude for your welfare? Surely this consideration should prompt you to consider the Saviour's claims to your heart, and at once to seek the Divine favour through Him.

Your parents also look upon you with tender

emotions and deep anxiety. Independent of their natural affection, peculiar to parents, they are, as *Christians*, (for I suppose them to be such,) particularly solicitous for your spiritual well-being. They know that your heart is depraved—that you are prone to sin—that you are exposed to danger, and that you are liable to suffer in a future state, unless your hearts are changed by the Holy Spirit, and you are brought to love and serve the Lord Jesus Christ. In the exercise of faith they have publicly dedicated you to God, (unless religious scruples have interfered). They pray on your behalf to the God of grace and salvation; they more or less converse with you on religion, and aim to instruct you in its principles; they exhibit before you some of the principal features of the Christian character; and thus, by the united influence of faith and prayer, instruction and example, they endeavour to draw your heart to the Saviour. Have you not sometimes observed their anxiety on your behalf? Should you not concur with their wishes? Would not such concurrence gladden their hearts, and produce in your mind the most delightful emotions?

Besides the Saviour and your parents, there are others who are anxious to do you good, and who would rejoice in the surrender of your heart to God. I refer to the ministers and friends of the Gospel. Among the latter are probably some of your *relations*. On that account, they experience much care about your spiritual welfare; but, independent of this, they, with others, will sympathise with your beloved parents, and rejoice in the promotion of your present and