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BIOGRAPHY.

LEGH RICHMOND.

[CONTINUED.]

Mr. Richmond's connexion with the Lock chapel was not of very long duration. A few weeks after he had been exercising his ministry in this place, the rectory of Turvey, in Bedfordshire, became vacant by the death of the late Rev. Erasmus Middleton, author of "*Biographia Evangelica*." Mrs. Fuller, an eminently pious lady, was at that period in possession of the patronage of this benefice; and being desirous of conscientiously fulfilling the important and sacred trust committed to her, she wrote to the late Ambrase Serle, Esq., one of the commissioners of the Transport Office, author of "*Horæ Solitariae*," and many other valuable works, stating that as she was much indebted to him for the benefit she had received from his writings, she would present the rectory of Turvey to any clergyman, of similar sentiments with himself, whom he might choose to recommend. Mr. Serle who at that time attended the Lock Chapel as his constant place of worship, immediately fixed on Mr. Richmond, as the fittest person among his clerical friends and connexions to fill this situation. It is, however, a fact, highly honourable to him, and a proof of the purity of his motives, that Mr. Richmond could with difficulty be persuaded to accept the nomination. To use the words of another truly pious and excellent clergyman, who has refused to exchange a small curacy for three livings successively offered to him, and who, probably from this circumstance, will be recognised by many of the clerical readers of this memoir, "What can a man want who is useful and happy?" And, to cite the remark of another, upon this truly Christian sentiment, "What can he want, who has Christ in his ministrations, and Christ's love in his heart?"

The objection which Mr. Richmond made to his acceptance of this benefice, was, the apprehension that he should enter a sphere of much less usefulness than that in which he was then engaged. An extensive field now lay open before him, and a competency was pledged to him; but the tenure was uncertain. He dreaded, however, to be limited in his exertions to a small village: not being aware at that time, that the population of Turvey consisted of eight or nine hundred souls.

At length, he yielded to the judgment of his friends, and entered on his labours at Turvey. He was inducted into the church by his friend Mr. Fry, on the 30th of July; and, with his family, went to reside at the parsonage, in the month of October following. At the time of his induction, he wrote the following letter to Mrs. Richmond:—

"Emberton, July 30, 1805.

"I arrived safely, under divine blessing, at this good man's house, to dinner, yesterday. I have but a few minutes, for a few lines; but I must send that few. I went to Turvey this morning. I like the place—I like the house; and I feel disposed to be well pleased, in spite of casement windows, which are very good in their kind. I was inducted amidst the ringing of bells and congregation of people, who assembled in troops, to peep at the new rector, and witness the ceremony. The church is very handsome and commodious. The day is delightful, and every thing appeared to advantage. There are several conveniences about the premises. I shall reserve all further particulars, for conversation on Thursday evening, when I hope to see you. To-morrow I go to Mr. Higgins, and to make various inquiries at the rectory; and in the evening, I preach for Mr. Fry. A vast many discussions, references, and settlements must be made; and I see, that in the opinion of all concerned, several things must be allowed to the Miss Middletons; but others also must be conceded to me. A very gracious interview took place between us. We went to Bedford, for the necessary papers for induction.

"My first impression of all the premises at Turvey, was a favourable one; and I am persuaded all may

be comfortable, with a blessing on a contented and satisfied heart.

"So pray for
"Your affectionate husband,
"THE RECTOR OF TURVEY."

"Kiss little ones."

Mr. Richmond commenced his residence at Turvey, in October, 1805. But before we enter on the detail of his ministerial labours there, it may be proper to advert to the state and circumstances of the parish, previous to his appointment to it as rector.

The village of Turvey is situated between the two towns of Bedford and Olney; being eight miles distant from the former, and four from the latter. It was anciently the residence of a noble family, some of whose warlike ancestors repose beneath the beautiful and splendid marble monuments which adorn the chancel of the church. What was once the mansion, is now converted into a farm-house. Having long ceased to retain its original magnificence, it seems, in its present form, to announce the transitory character of human grandeur. The family of the Mordaunts, subsequently Earls of Peterborough, illustrious as it once was in British history, and celebrated for its achievements in arms, now no longer exists, having become extinct in the year 1814. How justly may we apply to these instances of the instability of all earthly dignities, the impressive exclamation of a distinguished judge of former days:—"And yet Time hath his revolutions; there must be a period and an end to all temporal things—an end of names and dignities, and of whatsoever is terrene. For where is Bohun!—where is Mowbray!—where is Mortimer? Nay, which is more, and west of all, where is Plantagenet? They are entombed in the urns and sepulchres of mortality!"

Previous to Mr. Richmond's incumbency, the village of Turvey appears to have been greatly neglected. The duties of the church were irregularly performed; nor was there ever more than one service on the Sabbath-day, in a population of at least 200 inhabitants. The ordinances of religion were not respected; the minds of the people were grossly ignorant, and their morals and manners rude and disorderly. The Rev. Erasmus Middleton was Mr. Richmond's immediate predecessor; a man distinguished both for his learning and piety. By him, the services of the church were increased; and the work of reformation was gradually, though slowly, advancing, when this faithful minister was prematurely cut off, in the midst of his exertions, having retained his office only for the short period of one year.

Mr. Richmond succeeded Mr. Middleton; and entered on his new appointment with a reputation for talents and piety, which excited a great interest in the neighbourhood, and an expectation of extensive usefulness among his parishioners. The text of his first sermon was taken from 1 Cor. ii. 2: "For I determined not to know anything among you, save Jesus Christ, and him crucified." From these words, he uniformly preached on every returning anniversary of his incumbency, and continued to do so till the last year of his life.

To those who overlook the comprehensive meaning of this passage of holy Scripture, the text may seem to be too limited in its view, and to restrict the whole summary of divine truth to the doctrine of the Atonement, without a due regard to other important branches of Christian faith and practice.—But let it be remembered, that the same Apostle, who "determined to know nothing but Jesus Christ, and him crucified," avoweth, also, that he had "not shunned to declare all the counsel of God," (Acts xx. 27;) and, consequently, the passage must be supposed to comprise, within its ample range, the full extent and substance of every thing that is needful to the faith and practice of the Christian; nor is there a subject, of doctrine or of morals, which is not essentially identified with the doctrine of the Cross. It is there that we best learn the malignity of sin, the nature and duty of repentance, the character of

holiness, the motives and means for its attainment, and the dutiful obligation to "glorify God with our bodies and our spirits, which are his."

The following account of Mr. Richmond's proceeding at Turvey, will convey to the reader a just notion of his zeal and judgment, in promoting the welfare of his parish.

On the Sabbath-day, there were two regular full services; and, in the evening, a lecture, more especially designed for the young. His weekly labours consisted of what he called his Tuesday-night cottage lecture from its being held successively in the cottages of the poor, whom he assembled in small groups, for the purpose of more familiar and interior instruction than could be usefully or suitably delivered in public. On Friday evening, a lecture was delivered in the church, the prayer for the evening service being previously read; and, once a month, he met the communicants, on the Saturday preceding the sacrament. He had, also, a weekly service at the work-house. His labours were not confined to public instructions: like his divine Master, "he went about doing good." At the cottages of the poor, he was a frequent visitor; fulfilling the apostolic injunction, of going from "house to house," scattering the precious seed, making himself acquainted with their spiritual state, and gathering, from their answers, useful hints and reflections for the services of the succeeding Sabbath.

A Sunday-school has been established at Turvey for many years, endowed by Charles Higgins, Esq. who bequeathed £300 in support of the charity.—John Higgins, Esq. of Turvey Abbey, his nephew and successor, has generously paid an interest for the bequest of £20 a year. The School, though well attended before, had its numbers considerably increased, and its regulations greatly improved by the new rector. He appointed a master of real piety; justly considering, that on the principles and character of the teacher, the efficiency and usefulness of these institutions materially depend. Mr. Richmond was accustomed to visit the school previous to divine service; and, for the children's benefit chiefly, he engaged in a third service in the church, on the Sunday evening. Here the first fruits of his ministry appeared. The conversion of two young people, who afterward died in the faith, followed his introductory address to children. Mr. Richmond, indeed, was peculiarly happy on these occasions, and no part of his labours was attended with a more striking effect.

Shortly afterward, he established a Friendly Society. Objections have not unfrequently been made to societies of this description, and a preference given to savings-banks. It must be admitted, that some of these objections are not without foundation. It has been said, "that the usual subscription of the members is insufficient to furnish a fund for the support of the aged—an insufficiency greatly increased by gross mismanagement. That ordinary friendly societies are republics of the worst kind; in which are found no men of talent or judgment to control the disorders of their meetings, which too often present scenes of drunkenness, contention, and misapplication of their funds;—evils which, sooner or later, never fail to issue in bankruptcy. That a fifth part of the funds is regularly allowed for liquor, under the idea of encouraging the landlord, at whose house the subscriptions are usually paid. That the system is productive of much immorality. That the poor man is alienated from his home, and long for the excitement of company. That associations and habits are formed, which bring on a train of serious evils. That, to the sum allowed from the club, the poor man often adds a large part of his weekly earnings, and, instead of exercising prudence and economy, he wastes his money in intemperate indulgence. Those abuses of benefit societies have disgusted many persons, and induced them to give a preference to savings banks, unaccompanied with annual dinners and monthly resorts to the public house. Admitting, however, the existence of these evils, and without detracting from the great public