

The Church.

THEREFORE I WILL NOT BE NEGLIGENT TO PUT YOU ALWAYS IN REMEMBRANCE OF THESE THINGS, THOUGH YE KNOW THEM AND BE ESTABLISHED IN THE PRESENT TRUTH.—2 PETER, 1, 12.

VOL. I.]

COBOURG, U. C., SATURDAY, AUGUST 26, 1837.

[NO. XI.]

Poetry.

To the Editor of the Church.

Rev. Sir:—I send you a Poem, for insertion in your valuable and widely read paper, adapted as a subject of pious meditation to SMOKERS OF TOBACCO. The second part was written by that eminent man of God, Ralph Erskine, minister in Dumferline, Scotland. A. S.

PART I.

This Indian weed, now wither'd quite,
Though green at noon, cut down at night,
Shews thy decay;
All flesh is hay:—
Thus think, and smoke tobacco!

The pipe, so lily-like and weak
Does thus thy mortal state bespeak.
Thou art even such,
Gone with a touch:—
Thus think, and smoke tobacco!

And when the smoke ascends on high,
Then thou behold'st the vanity
Of worldly stuff,
Gone with a puff:—
Thus think, and smoke tobacco!

And when the pipe grows foul within,
Think on thy soul defil'd with sin;
For then the fire
It does require:—
Thus think, and smoke tobacco!

And see'st the ashes cast away?—
Then to thyself thou mayest say,
That to the dust
Return thou must:—
Thus think, and smoke tobacco!

PART II.

Was this small plant for thee cut down?—
So was the plant of great renown,
Which mercy sends
For nobler ends:—
Thus think, and smoke tobacco!

Doth juice medicinal proceed
From such a naughty foreign weed?—
Then what's the power
Of Jesse's flower?—
Thus think, and smoke tobacco!

The promise, like the pipe, inlays,
And by the mouth of faith conveys
What virtue flows
From Sharon's rose:—
Thus think, and smoke tobacco!

In vain th' unlighted pipe you blow;—
Your pains in outward means are so,
'Till heavenly fire
Your hearts inspire:—
Thus think, and smoke tobacco!

The smoke, like burning incense, towers;—
So should a praying heart of yours,
With ardent cries,
Surmount the skies:—
Thus think, and smoke tobacco!

BISHOP VAN MILDERT.

So far from its being detrimental to the interests of religion in general, or the stability of our own Church, in particular, that her ministers should be composed of persons taken from very different grades in society, we conceive that this circumstance has been productive of the greatest advantage. It has endeared the church more, we conceive, to persons of all classes. She shuts her gates, in fact, against none; she opens her preferments to persons of every rank. The son of the peer, and the son of the peasant, may be found alike ministering at her altars; and if the former is sometimes labouring in the humble sphere of a village pastor, content with an income barely sufficient to meet the demands of a family, and the many calls connected with his profession, the extent of which is seldom taken into consideration by the opponents of the Church,—the latter may not unfrequently be found adorning the Episcopal bench, and by the profundity of his learning, the superiority of his acquirements, and the depth of his piety, casting a lustre on his profession.

We have indeed been delighted to behold, in more than one sequestered village of England, the zealous, devoted, self-denying pastor, of a noble stock, willingly relinquishing worldly grandeur for the sake of his Redeemer. We have witnessed such men labouring in conjunction with others infinitely below them in rank, and parentage, and worldly connexion, but meeting on the equal footing of fellow-labourers in the vineyard of the Lord, equally anxious for the salvation of the flocks entrusted to their care, and forgetting all earthly distinctions in their devoted zeal to win many souls to Christ, and to obtain a more lasting emblem of greatness than the earthly coronet—the crown of eternal glory, which fades not away—the crown which the great Shepherd shall bestow at his appearing upon every subordinate shepherd who can render his account with joy.

A late biographical memoir contained a brief history of one of a noble family, justly raised to the Episcopal bench, though family interest may have been instrumental to his elevation. The distinguished prelate of whom we shall now give a sketch, owed his elevation simply to his own acquirements as a theologian; and his translation to the see of Durham, reflected honour alike upon himself, and the patron who was ever anxious to encourage merit.

Dr. William Van Mildert, who died on the 21st of February last, was born in London in the year 1765, of respectable parents; and after remaining some years at Merchant Tailors' School, was entered at Queen's College, Oxford. Having in due course taken his degree, been ordained in 1788, and served as curate for some years, and afterwards as incumbent of the living of Bradden in Northamptonshire, he was presented in the year 1796, to the Rectory of St. Mary le-Bow, Cheapside, London. He also, in process of time, obtained the vicarage of Farningham in Kent, from the late Archbishop of Canterbury, Sutton. In 1812, he was elected preacher of Lincoln's Inn; in 1813, he was appointed Regius Professor of Divinity in Oxford, on the elevation of Dr. Howley to the see of London; in March 1819, on the translation of Dr. Herbert Marsh to Peterborough, he was consecrated Bishop of Llandaff; in 1820, he was appointed Dean of St. Paul's, on the resignation of Dr. Tomline; and in March 1826, was translated to Durham, on the death of Dr. Shute Barrington.

The bishop was distinguished for his theological writings.—His Boyle Lectures, preached in the years 1802—1805; his Bampton Lectures in 1814; his edition of the writings of Dr. Waterland; and his sermons preached at Lincoln's Inn, and published in two volumes; besides smaller works; shew that his was no flimsy theology, but that he had entered deeply into its study.

Bishop Van Mildert may be regarded as one of the school of Waterland. Though not entertaining precisely the same views as Bishop Ryder, Bishop Van Mildert was the uncompromising champion of "the faith once delivered to the saints." He was a profound theological scholar, and he was ever ready to shew the absurdity of scepticism,—to demonstrate the truth of holy Scripture. The Church of England is not the only branch of Christ's church which is under deep obligations to his lordship; the Christian world at large has felt, and will continue to feel, the value of his writings; and not a few of our most eminent lawyers have acknowledged the powerful effect produced upon their minds by his sermons.

Bishop Van Mildert was a munificent benefactor to every institution which he could conscientiously patronize. And there is no greater mistake, than to suppose that he was of a bigoted or contracted spirit; the reverse was the case. His benefits were not bestowed on those of his own communion alone; and although the diocese of Durham will benefit greatly by his acts of unbounded generosity, and its university will tell in future generations of his zeal in its foundation, the Dissenter can record no small kindness shewn to those of his own body. The bishop was an episcopalian in principle, from sound and rational conviction; but he did not on that account despise the conscientious members of other communions, neither did he withhold his aid from promoting the spiritual interests of those who could not conform to the Church of England. In the northern part of the Diocese of Durham there are many congregations of Presbyterians, not at all mixed up with those who were members of the three denominations in London, of whom the great majority have become Socinians,—but connected with the established church of Scotland, or with the Secession church, and holding the fundamental doctrines of the Gospel. We believe we are warranted in affirming, that both the ministers and people connected with these congregations received many marks of favour from his lordship; and that although, of course, he would have been delighted to have witnessed a perfect union in all respects with the Established church, yet he regarded them with an eye of brotherly affection.

It is, perhaps, well for the prosperity of the Church of England, and for religion in the country at large, that those who are exalted to her high places should be men of different characters in non-essentials: it is well that there should be upon the episcopal bench the deep theologian, the profound scholar, those whose life has been spent in academical pursuits, as well as the man whose early manhood has been passed in the field of pastoral labour. We only pray, that all those who are in authority over us in ecclesiastical matters, may be men of sound scriptural views, of deep personal piety, and of an ardent zeal in the cause of the Redeemer. The Church of England is conceived by some to be now in a dangerous state; we confess that we have no fears for her safety. We acknowledge that her enemies are active, but we perceive that her friends are active also. Never, perhaps, was she more distinguished for zeal in her members, lay and clerical; for devotedness in her pastors, whether bishops, priests, or deacons. But our help cometh not from man. We desire to look for safety to the arm of that Jehovah, who is able to cast down all enemies under our feet. We rest on the conviction that God is in the midst of her; therefore she shall not be removed: God shall help her, and that right early.—"The Lord of Hosts is with us, the God of Jacob is our refuge." If the billows of persecution rage around her, and the storm causes her to be afraid, let her not merit the rebuke, "Why art thou fearful, O thou of little faith?" Let her recollect, that there is One that sitteth above the water flood, and that One, the Omnipotent Jehovah, who remaineth a King for evermore, even through all generations.

"Mercy is like the rainbow; we must never look for it after night. It shines not in the other world. If we refuse mercy here we must have justice in eternity."—*Le Bas.*

"Satan will seldom come to a Christian with a gross temptation; a green log and a candle may be safely left together; but bring a few shavings, then some small sticks, and then larger, and you may soon bring the green log to ashes."—*J. Newton.*

VIEWS OF OUR ZION.

No. VI.

THE MINISTRY—(Concluded.)

Recapitulation of Evidence in behalf of Episcopacy.—Collateral testimony from modern discoveries.—Conclusion.

My former Essays—designed to represent to Churchmen one of the strongest bulwarks of our Zion—were employed in advancing proofs that the three orders of Bishops, Priests and Deacons, as maintained in the Church of England, possessed in their favour the testimony of Scripture and of all ecclesiastical History. It was shewn that even in our Saviour's time, a presidency similar in spirit and purport to that which the Episcopal system includes, existed over his Church, and that even then three orders in the ministry of that Church were to be discerned. It was proved that, immediately or certainly very soon after our blessed Lord's ascension, three orders undeniably existed in the Church; and farther it was shewn,—incontrovertibly we may boldly assert,—that no instance can be adduced from Scripture which affords the slightest countenance to the position sometimes attempted to be maintained, that the offices of Bishops and Presbyters were, in the primitive Church, the same; or that the grade of Presbyters, strictly so called, ever exercised what constitutes the distinctive function of Episcopacy, the *power of ordination*. It was also clearly shewn, from a few but most convincing testimonies, that all the primitive Fathers unequivocally bear witness to the same form of ecclesiastical government; and that no instance of *dissent* from that mode of government is to be found in the Church History of the first and purest ages:—moreover, that many eminent and learned Christians who, from peculiarity of circumstances, were in a manner compelled to adopt the Presbyterian form of government, stated it unequivocally as their conviction that Episcopacy was the apostolic and primitive constitution of the Christian Church. A mass of testimony this which, as has been again and again observed, must lead to this conclusion;—either that Episcopacy was the original constitution of Church government, or that some sudden and universal revolution, occurring at a time unknown and unnoticed, even by the slightest allusion, by any contemporary writer, must have arisen which transformed Presbyterianism into Episcopacy;—that, should any such mysterious revolution have taken place, the whole body of Presbyters must have been simple, credulous and yielding beyond belief to have submitted to an unlawful and unscriptural presidency such as the Episcopate would imply, and that such a revolution being credible, it argued a disposition equally strange and unaccountable on the part of the Bishops who, in seeking for unlawful advancement, necessarily exposed themselves, like a city on a hill, more conspicuously than ever to the assaults and persecutions of their adversaries:—that, Episcopacy being an usurpation, all the records of ancient ecclesiastical History must be false, and consequently, as no credit would be given them for any thing else, we must remain in utter uncertainty, even as to the genuineness of our Scriptural canon, and doubt whether the Bible be the Book which prophets and Apostles wrote!

Now, if none of these positions, resulting from the supposed falsity of the Episcopal claims, be tenable, the arguments in its behalf must stand forth in all the majesty of unadulterated truth. But we have more to say, in defence of this bulwark of our Zion:—we have a testimony to add, in support of our system, which must seal the lips of every adversary, and establish every advocate more firmly than ever in the soundness and justice of his cause.

"Waiving," says an eloquent writer,* "for the present, the testimony of the fathers; let us imagine it possible to resort to some other tribunal, with the view of determining our conflicting opinions. Let us imagine that, preserved by some inscrutable providence of God, a Christian church could be found in some sequestered corner of the globe, which from remotest time had enjoyed no intercourse whatever with their brethren professing the same faith. We know that the twelve were despatched on their errands of mercy into far distant lands, and of most of them, that no authentic memorials have been transmitted to us. Imagine, then, that a church of their planting could be found. Would not the character of the ministry, if possessed be considered a safe guide, in enabling us to decide upon that, which was instituted by the Apostles, whose labours are known, although we contrive to interpret them differently? If, for example, presbyters alone were to be discovered in such a Church, would it not furnish our friends of that exclusive order with abundant cause of congratulation and triumph? If bishops, with presbyters and deacons in reverent subjection to them, would it not be equally the source of joy and exultation with us? Upon such a statement, it would be next to impossible to avoid either conclusion, or to object to the providential character of the discovery itself, provided it could be effected."

Now we have the satisfaction of declaring that this very testimony has been afforded:—churches were discovered in India, in the year 1503, by the celebrated navigator, Vasco de Gama, answering precisely to the description required for substantiating our argument. "When the Portuguese arrived," says Dr. Claudius Buchanan, in his *Christian Researches*, "they were agreeably surprised to find upwards of a hundred christian churches on the coast of Malabar. But when they became acquainted with the purity and simplicity of their worship, they were offended. These churches, said the Portuguese, belong to the

* The Rev. G. T. Chapman, *Sermons upon the Ministry, Worship, and Doctrine of the Protestant Episcopal church*, p. p. 93, 94, 2nd Edit.