

THE COLONIAL CHURCHMAN.

"BUILT UPON THE FOUNDATION OF THE APOSTLES AND PROPHETS, JESUS CHRIST HIMSELF BEING THE CHIEF CORNER STONE."

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To the Editors of the Colonial Churchman,
Gentlemen,
I herewith submit to your approval, an article called "Village Church," from Drake's Evenings in Autumn, which I think cannot fail to be interesting to the readers of the "C. C." If you think it worthy a place in your column, its insertion will oblige

A SUBSCRIBER.

EVENINGS IN AUTUMN.

I love the altar of my Sires,
Old as my country's rocks of steel;
And as I join its sacred fires,
The present Deity I feel.—
Mine is no solitary choice,
See here the seal of saints impress'd;
The prayer of millions swells my voice,
The mind of ages fills my breast.

C. W. Ingham.

SOCIAL WORSHIP.

There cannot be a spectacle more productive of light to the heart of a good man, than to witness fellow-creatures assembled in the act of social worship; to see them, from a conscious sense of their mutual wants and infirmities, and of their joint dependence on Him who made them all, confessing their many transgressions, deprecating the just indignation of their God, imploring his assistance, and offering their grateful thanks for the numerous blessings which have already been vouchsafed them. He who best knows how to appreciate the value of solitary supplication, who has felt how soothing and consolatory it is, how essential to his happiness and well-being, both here and hereafter, that he should, under the privacy of his own roof, frequently be in the presence of that Almighty Being who has promised to relieve the wants, and succour the distresses of those who draw near to him through the mediation of his blessed Son, is, at the same time, best prepared, from the knowledge of his own relation to Deity, to enter with ardour into all those feelings which, when mingling with his brethren in the temple of their mutual Father, should bind us not only to our Creator, but to each other, uniting with ties never to be separated, the love of God and man.

It would seem scarcely possible, indeed, for any man being, when forming part of a public congregation, to commence the prayer which has been left for a model by our Saviour, without feeling from the opening words, from the emphatic and endearing expression "Our Father," all that devotional fervour, glowing philanthropy, that love, and charity, and humility, which social worship was intended to

produce. In fact, whilst thus surrounded by those who like himself, engaged in the adoration and supplication of the Author of all things, that the Christian, whatever be his station in this life, may imbibe the most delightful, satisfactory, and correct views of the paternal goodness of the Deity, and of the principles which should regulate his own conduct, and that of his fellow-worshippers, with regard to each

other. Assembled together as the children of one common parent, and in the act of imploring his forgiveness and protection, of which we all alike stand in need; conscious that in a few years all that now distinguishes us, to mark the distinctions of rank, and wealth, and power, will be no more; that before Him from whom all is issued, and who made us what we are, we are to be called, stripped of every thing adventitious, and with no claim save that which faith and love can prefer; how, on considerations such as these, must all the emotions of pride and envy, of ambition and ambition, sink within us! We look

around and behold the young and old, the rich and poor, the strong and weak, alike prostrate before the throne of Him who views his offspring with an equal eye; who formed us from the same dust, who breathed into our nostrils the same breath of life, and who receives us as the children of the same redemption. Is it possible that, believing this, and engaged, as we must then be, in mutually praying for the temporal and eternal welfare of each other, we can suffer any emotions but those which spring from love and gratitude, to enter within our breasts?

Can the lowly man who reflects on these things, and who feels that, here at least, in the house of prayer, and in the presence of Him who descended to preach the Gospel to the poor, he is on a level with the rich and lordly of the earth, can he any longer repine at distinctions thus transient in their nature, and which, while necessary here for the very trial of his faith and love, are to vanish with the world which gave them birth? Or can he, the associate in his petitions, the man of wealth and title, who is kneeling at the same altar, and preferring the same form of supplication, and who must, therefore, be conscious of the same truths, any longer look down with fastidiousness and pride upon one who, though bowed to the very earth by want, may shortly be his companion before the judgment-seat of God, and with claims to mercy far transcending those, perhaps, which he shall ever offer?

No: it is here, if any where, that that humility of spirit to which the kingdom of Heaven has been promised, is to be found and cherished; it is amid the assembly of persons of all ranks and conditions, prostrate before the throne of Grace, with one common sense of their mutual wants and infirmities, and kneeling together as "fellow-servants of the Lord," that it is felt in all its purity and power; and it is of the blessed effects of prayer thus meekly, and with the united fervour of thousands, presented through Him who has promised to be "where two or three are gathered together," that we may say, in the beautiful enthusiasm of the poet, and in the heart-felt conviction of every humble partaker of social worship:

Oh Prayer! thou mine of things unknown,
Who can be poor possessing thee?
Thou wert a fount of joy alone.
Better than worlds of gold could be:
Were I bereft of all beside,
That bears the form or name of bliss,
I yet were rich, what will betide,
If God in mercy leave me this!

Edmeston.

Such, indeed, are the unspeakable comforts which have been felt to flow from rightly participating in the spirit of public worship, that, in the best and purest ages of Christianity, he who would not rather lose life itself than relinquish the blessings of this communion, was held to have forfeited the very name of a disciple. "Even in the sharpest persecutions," says Archbishop Potter, "whoever did not chuse to endure the most cruel death rather than preserve his life by absenting himself (from public worship,) was thought unworthy to be called a Christian."

Nor even in the present times, stained as they are with a wide-spreading deluge of scepticism and impiety, are there wanting thousands, nay, I would fain hope millions, who, having habitually enjoyed the hallowed sympathies and consolations which attend on public prayer, would consider the deprivation of its rites as the greatest misfortune which could occur to them on this side the grave; who, in allusion to that resigned tone and temper of mind, and that sweet influence of devotional gratitude and unswerving faith, which they have so often experienced in the temple of their Saviour, may truly and from heart-felt conviction say,—

There is a calm, the poor in spirit know,
That softens sorrow, and that sweetens woe;
There is a peace, that dwells within the breast,
When all without is stormy and distrest;
There is a light that gilds the darkest hour,
When dangers thicken, and when troubles low'r:
That calm to faith, and hope, and love is given;
That peace remains, when all beside is riven;
That light shines down to man, direct from Heaven.

Edmeston.

To him who has in early life been taught to value and to feel the innumerable blessings which take their source from social worship, but whom vice and guilt have long separated from the communion of the good; to him who has thus deviated from the path of peace, and who, having experienced the futility of all worldly enjoyments, has been led by sorrow and contrition to re-seek the altar of his sires, how delightful must be the return to the bosom of his church! It is a transit, in fact, from all that can perturb and agonize the soul, to associations breathing but of joy and love, it is a re-access to the Lord of life, more refreshing to the burthened mind than "fountains to the thirsty in a parched land."

Of the return of such a wanderer from the congregation of the faithful, and of the feelings which may be supposed to have glowed within his bosom on re-entering the church of his fathers; we have an admirable picture in the following lovely and pathetic lines.

People of the living God!
I have sought the world around,
Paths of sin and sorrow trod,
Peace and comfort nowhere found:
Now to you my spirit turns,
Turns—a fugitive unblest,
Brethren! where your altar burns,
O receive me to your rest.

Lonely I no longer roam
Like the cloud, the wind, the wave;
Where you dwell shall be my home,
Where you die shall be my grave.
Mine the God whom you adore,
Your Redeemer shall be mine;
Earth can fill my soul no more,
Every idol I resign.

Tell me not of gain and loss,
Ease, enjoyment, pomp, and power;
Welcome poverty and cross,
Shame, reproach, affliction's hour!
—"Follow me!"—I know thy voice,
Jesus, Lord! thy steps I see;
Now I take thy yoke by choice,
Light thy burthen now to me.

Montgomery.

To be continued.

WILBERFORCE.

His Diary abounds with entries which indicate his attachment to the Church of England. Thus, when on one occasion, he accompanied a friend whom he dearly loved, and whose Christian character he held in the highest estimation, to a dissenting place of worship, he comments on the manner in which it was conducted on his return, specifying the absence of "Scripture reading and Common Prayer" as reasons for the thankfulness he expresses that he did not belong to their communion; and frequently he remarks in his Diary on the self-denial he exercised in abstaining from frequenting other places of worship, lest his example might weaken the attachment of any to that portion of the church of Jesus which he esteemed most nearly conformed to the model of primitive Christianity in the doctrine, discipline, and form of prayer.—*Epis. Rec.*