

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, NOVEMBER 11, 1837.

[NO. XXII.]

Poetry.

TO A CHILD IN PRAYER.

Fold thy little hands in prayer,
Bow down at thy mother's knee;
Now thy sunny face is fair,
Shining through thy golden hair,
Thine eyes are passion-free;
And pleasant thoughts like garlands, bind thee
Unto thy home, yet grief may find thee—
Then pray, child, pray!

Now thy young heart, like a bird,
Singeth in its summer-nest;
No evil thought, no unkind word,
No chilling Autumn-wind hath stirr'd
The beauty of thy rest:
But Winter cometh, and decay
Shall waste thy verdant home away—
Then pray, child, pray!

Thy bosom is a house of glee,
And gladness harpeth at the door;
While ever with a joyful shout,
Hope, the May-queen, danceth out,
Her lips with music running o'er:
But Time those strings of joy will sever,
And Hope will not dance on for ever—
Then pray, child, pray!

Now thy mother's voice abideth
Round thy pillow in the night;
And loving feet creep to thy bed,
And o'er thy quiet face is shed
The taper's shaded light:
But that sweet voice will fade away;
By thee no more those feet will stay—
Then pray, child, pray!

Conversations at Cambridge.

BEILBY PORTEUS, BISHOP OF LONDON.

BEILBY PORTEUS was one of the many distinguished prelates who have adorned the Episcopal Bench of our Church, who have risen to eminence from a very humble sphere of life; for his was no solitary instance of humbleness of birth being no bar to ecclesiastical promotion. He was a native of Ripon in Yorkshire. His father, a tradesman of no great business, sent him to the free grammar-school of that place, from whence he proceeded, at an earlier age than usual, to Cambridge, where he became a member of Christ's College. He obtained the degree of B. A. in 1752, his name appearing in the tripos as a wrangler, and also was one of the successful competitors for the medals, then just instituted as rewards for classical attainments, by the Duke of Newcastle, the chancellor of the University,—the other successful competitor being Francis Maseres, afterwards cursitor baron of the exchequer.

In 1754, Mr. Porteus was nominated one of the esquire beds, which office he retained for sixteen months. He took the degree of M. A. in 1755, was speedily afterwards appointed fellow of his college, and one of the preachers at Whitehall.

In 1759, he obtained the Seatonian prize-poem; the subject "DEATH," which, on its publication, attracted considerable notice. The poem is too well known to require any comment on its merits.

In 1761, Mr. Porteus preached his famous sermon before the University, which may fairly be regarded as the foundation of his future preferments. The subject was, "The Character of David, King of Israel, impartially stated." His reason for choosing this subject is thus stated by himself. "Some very open attacks having been lately made on the character of king David, and the authority of the sacred writers, in a pamphlet entitled, 'The History of the Man after God's own heart,' which, however contemptible in point of argument to men thoroughly acquainted with the language of Scripture, was yet, by the boldness of its assertions, the vivacity of its humour, and the freedom of its remarks, extremely well calculated to seize the imagination of the gay, and impose on the credulity of the inexperienced,—it seemed not improper or unseasonable, in a place of public education, to furnish the young mind with a few general truths and leading principles relative to the subject; to set the question in a proper point of view; to take off the disguise that buffoonery had thrown over it; and to prepare the way for a more accurate discussion of particulars, which there is reason to expect soon from a person (Dr. Chandler) well qualified for the undertaking." And he justly comments "on the cruelty of infusing suspicions into honest, unsuspecting hearts, of unfixing their principles, destroying their tranquillity, and perplexing them with doubts and difficulties, which, though really insignificant, yet, for want of proper helps, they are not able to surmount, and which often produce such distress and agony of mind, as is to be conceived only by those who have experienced it."

There is good reason to suppose that the perusal of this discourse more especially introduced Mr. Porteus to the notice of Archbishop Secker; for he was immediately afterwards appointed one of his grace's chaplains, and soon after presented in succession to two rectories, one in Kent, the other in Middlesex. A prebendal stall in the cathedral of Peterborough was added to his other preferments; and in 1765, he married Miss Hodgson, of Matlock, in Derbyshire. Two years afterwards he took the degree of D. D.; and, at length, through the influence of the Queen, as it is supposed, was, in January 1777, raised to the episcopal bench, on the translation of Dr. Markham from the see of Chester to that of York.

The observance of Good Friday had, before this period, nearly fallen into disuse, more especially in the metropolis and its vi-

city; and the Bishop of Chester now felt it his duty to publish an "Exhortation" on the subject, with the hope of strengthening the resolutions of those whom he perceived to be anxious to revive the strict observance of this solemn fast. This publication excited considerable opposition, and was replied to by Mr. Robert Robinson, a dissenting minister resident at or near Cambridge, who sent forth a work under the title of "The History and Mystery of Good Friday." To this the bishop did not think it right to publish any answer. He had the gratification of perceiving that his "Exhortation" had done much good, that the attention of thousands was attracted by it, and that there was a more general and serious observation of the "day" in question. The bishop, at this period, published several single sermons, and one or two volumes. In 1793, he published his sermon before the "Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts," and nobly advocated the cause of the wretched negroes, deprecating the slave-trade and all its horrors, which was, in fact, the disgrace of a Christian land.

Sunday schools were about this time beginning to attract attention; and the bishop, with a view of promoting their extension, published "A Letter to the Clergy of the Diocese of Chester concerning Sunday Schools." In 1787, on the death of Dr. Lowth, he was, with the universal approbation of men of all classes and sentiments, translated to the see of London. The decided opponent of slavery, under its most mitigated forms and least repulsive horrors, the bishop, in his first charge to the clergy of his new diocese, adverted to the subject. He was the instrument for forming the Society for the Conversion of Negroes, which was chartered in 1793; and of which the bishop indulged the hope "that the same beneficent spirit of the Gospel, which, by degrees, extinguished pagan slavery, would also gradually, and without injury to any one, relieve mankind from the pressure of this and every other species of personal and perpetual slavery." We desire to bless and to praise God that the day, which the good bishop desired to see, has dawned upon every portion of the British dominions.

The growth of infidel principles was now apparent on all sides. The French Revolution, with all its sanguinary deeds, had presented an awful spectacle of the deep depravity of the human heart, and the fearful excess of riot into which man will run when he casts off the fear of the Sovereign Jehovah; when he ridicules the notion of judgment and eternity, and closes his eyes against the blessed light of revealed truth. Infidelity was obviously gaining ground. Its advocates were at work, not merely lurking in secret places, but with unblushing front disseminating their noxious principles. A spirit of carelessness and indifference on religious subjects was apparent among persons of all ranks, and the seriously-minded were overwhelmed with grief, not only for the dishonour cast on the Majesty of heaven, but the incalculable misery into which they too plainly foresaw the country would be plunged by casting off the restraints of religion. The bishop of London felt himself called upon boldly to step forward at such a critical juncture, and commence a course of lectures. His motive cannot be better understood than from his own words in the preface to the volumes containing them. "At the time when the following lectures were first begun, the political, moral, and religious state of the kingdom wore a very unfavourable aspect, and excited no small degree of uneasiness and alarm in every serious and reflecting mind. The enemies of this country were almost every where abroad, and its still more formidable enemies were indefatigably active in their endeavours to diffuse the poison of disaffection, infidelity, and a contempt of the Holy Scriptures, through every part of the kingdom, more especially among the lower orders of the people, by the most offensive and impious publications; while, at the same time, it must be acknowledged, that among too many of the higher classes there prevailed, in the midst of all our distresses, a spirit of dissipation, profusion, and voluptuous gaiety, ill suited to the gloominess of our situation, and ill calculated to secure to us the protection of Heaven against the various dangers that menaced us on every side. Under these circumstances it seemed to be the duty of every friend to religion, morality, good order, and good government, and more especially of the ministers of the Gospel, to exert every power and every talent with which God had blessed them, in order to counteract the baneful effects of those pestilential writings which every day issued from the press; to give some check to the growing relaxation of public manners; to state plainly and forcibly the evidences of our faith, and the genuine doctrines of our religion, the true principles of submission to our lawful governors, the mode of conduct in every relation of life which the Gospel prescribes to us; and to vindicate the truth, dignity, and divine authority of the sacred writings. All this, after much deliberation, I conceived could in no other way be so effectually done as by having recourse to those writings themselves, by going back to the very fountain of truth and holiness, and by drawing from that same source the proofs of its own celestial origin, and all the evangelical virtues springing from it, and branching out into the various duties of civil, social and domestic life. The result was, that I resolved on discharging my share of these weighty obligations by giving lectures on the Gospel of St. Matthew, in my own parish church of St. James, Westminster, every Friday in Lent. It pleased God to bless the attempt with a degree of success far beyond every thing I could have expected or imagined. I have been assured that several, even of those amongst my audience that disbelieved or doubted the truth of Christianity, were impressed with a more favourable opinion both of its evidences and its doctrines, and with a higher veneration for the sacred writings, than they had before entertained." These lectures, in-

deed, were attended by crowded audiences, and by persons of all religious persuasions, and were instrumental in producing the best effects.

Bishop Porteus, thus actively engaged in the discharge of his various duties, with more especial reference to the good of his own diocese, was eminently useful as a defender of the Christian faith. His small work on the "evidences" is a very useful publication. A zealous supporter of every institution having for its object the glory of God and the good of man, his situation in society gave him a beneficial influence, which he was ever ready to exercise in the cause of religion. "We have been spending the last fortnight with my excellent friend, the Bishop of London," says Mrs. Hannah More, in a letter dated June 3, 1805. "He is going on well, in the best sense, and has done himself great honour by the stand he has made against Sunday concerts. He has written an admirable letter, very strong and very pious, but temperate and well-mannered, to all the great ladies concerned in this unchristian practice. The effect, I trust, will be such as could be wished; they have in general behaved well, and promised amendment."

The most decided step, however, which Bishop Porteus took, with reference to Sunday meetings for business or amusement, was a very short time previous to his death, when, having been informed of the institution of a club under the patronage of the Prince of Wales, which was to meet on a Sunday, even though weak in bodily frame and scarcely able to walk, he requested an audience of the Prince, to entreat him to fix on some other day. The Prince received the venerable bishop most graciously, seemed much affected, and promised that his wish should be complied with.

The bishop's frame was gradually sinking. In the month of May 1809, having arrived at Fulham, he was seized after dinner with something like a convulsion, and fell into a quiet sleep, from which he never awoke. He had frequently prayed, but always with devout submission to the will of the Almighty, that he might be spared the pangs of death; and his prayer was granted.

Thus departed in peace the venerable Bishop Porteus, than whom a more amiable, affable, and kind-hearted prelate never sat upon the episcopal bench. The friend of Hannah More, the reader will find scattered throughout the pages of the life of that admirable woman by Mr. Roberts, many most interesting circumstances recorded of the subject of this memoir. He was a man peculiarly fitted for the see of London at the trying and eventful period when he was called to fill that most important station; and his name will be honoured by posterity, as one of those who stood boldly forward to claim for the swarthy child of bondage and oppression the rights of a fellow-creature, and who testified his deep anxiety that the everlasting Gospel, in all its life-giving power, and soul saving efficacy, should be carried to the remotest regions of the habitable world.

ADDRESS,

TO THE CLERGY OF THE ARCHDEACONRY OF YORK, BY THE HON. AND VEN. THE ARCHDEACON OF YORK.—DELIVERED AT TORONTO, ON WEDNESDAY THE 13TH SEPTEMBER, 1837.

My Reverend Brethren,

The meeting of the Clergy of the Established Church of this Province, held, in October last, under their two Archdeacons, in the absence of the Bishop, may, with great propriety, be considered an era in our Ecclesiastical History.

The measures then considered and agreed upon have been carried out or put in operation with as much diligence and effect as time and opportunity, or their nature and character, permitted.

A most gracious answer has been received from our late beloved Sovereign to the Address which we adopted and sent to the Secretary of State for the Colonies to be presented;—and we are encouraged to hope that the Diocese will be divided, and that this Province, at no distant period, will be placed under the superintendence of its own Bishop.

In regard to annual Convocations nothing material has been effected from the absence and feeble health of our late excellent Diocesan. His Lordship was too far gone in the distemper which has since removed him to his place of rest, to permit of his examining the communications which were directed by the meeting to be placed before him.

The great merits of Bishop Stewart are so well known to you, my Reverend Brethren, that I feel it impossible to add to what your hearts and recollections will of themselves readily suggest. In his Lordship were combined a frankness of disposition, an honesty of purpose, and a conscientious anxiety to promote the welfare and interests of the Church, which attracted the most general regard. He was literally worn out in the service of religion. Before his elevation to the Episcopate, he had, for many years, been travelling Missionary through the whole of this vast Diocese,—exposed to the vicissitudes and privations of the weather, intolerable roads, and a partially settled country. Nevertheless he went on his way rejoicing, and his arrival at any of our numerous stations was hailed by the resident Minister as a sort of jubilee and felt to be a blessing. The sincere kindness of his disposition never failed to beget confidence and esteem. It was easy to see that his heart was wholly in the work of spreading the Gospel according to the forms and principles of our Apostolic Church, of which he was so zealous a servant and so bright an ornament. His plainness of speech and primitive simplicity of character gained him the confidence and esteem of all denominations of Christians, for all were convinced of his faithful and hearty devotion to the cause of true