

THE
CHRISTIAN INSTRUCTOR.

APRIL, 1859.

"THAT THE SOUL BE WITHOUT KNOWLEDGE, IT IS NOT GOOD."—Prov, xix.

THE LATE REV. JOHN KEIR, D. D., S. T. P.

Concluded.

X. HIS PROFESSORIAL LABORS.

We have now to exhibit Dr. Keir in a different position—one in some respects of higher usefulness, at all events of greater importance to the church at large. Dr. McCulloch having been removed from the church on earth in the year 1843, Dr. Keir was at the meeting of the Synod in the summer following chosen his successor. For the discharge of the duties of this office, it must be acknowledged that Dr. Keir was under considerable disadvantages. He had been in a situation, where he had but little access to books, except his own library, and his limited salary had not enabled him to gather a large collection. Indeed with the productions of recent writers, orthodox or heretical, he had scarcely had any opportunity of being familiar. Besides, his life had been devoted to pastoral labors of a kind, which required so much time and involved such an amount of physical toil, that in the matter of study, he could do little more than attend to what was absolutely necessary for his congregational work. Under these circumstances, his acquaintance with that higher range of study, with which it is expected that a professor should be versant, was necessarily limited. From the date of his settlement, even the study of the sacred languages, had not been prosecuted with any degree of constancy or regularity; and he was at an age when men generally do not enter upon a new course of study. These disadvantages he felt strongly himself, and it was therefore with some difficulty that he could be persuaded to undertake the office.

But on the other hand, if he had not attended to the forms in which Theology had been presented by modern writers, he was abundantly familiar with its matter, as exhibited on the writings of the great standard divines of the 17th century in England, and of the Marrowmen and the Secession fathers in Scotland on the 18th. We conceive the writings of the former to form a complete storehouse of