

MINISTERIAL.

AN AGREEABLE MINISTER.

*'High these pursuits, and sooner to be named,
Deserved; at present, only named, again
To be resumed.'*

Whoever has been, for any length of time, the pastor of a congregation, whether in town or country, has doubtless been called to mourn over a class of his parishioners, who have wished to look upon him not so much in the light of a faithful ambassador for Christ, as in that of an agreeable companion, and a good hearted, friendly visitor. It is my desire and practice, as far as circumstances will permit, to say more or less on the subject of religion in all my pastoral intercourse with my people. I feel the solemn responsibility of my office. I look over my ordination vows, and find that I promised in the most sacred manner to 'use both public and private admonitions and exhortations, as well to the sick as the whole, within my cure; and I know that I can never discharge my duty while I live only in the partial fulfilment of this promise. But in the parish over which the Lord has placed me as an overseer, there are some few families whom I can never approach with the subject that lies nearest to my heart. I enter their houses, and if, after the usual chit chat of the day has been gone through with, I attempt to introduce some religious conversation, the topic is instantly changed, and the high theme 'is only named again to be resumed.' Not unfrequently the church is substituted; but I beg leave to observe that there is a vast deal of difference between talking about the church and her principles, her prosperity and her institutions, and talking about *vital, personal and practical* religion.

The true Christian never should be reluctant to converse freely with his minister on all points touching the welfare of his soul. How else is the man of God to know the degree of piety that pervades his congregation? When he has communicants whom he has never heard of, the name of Jesus—who are perpetually discoursing on secular subjects—whose reading is confined to novels, and travels, and reviews, what estimate is he to put upon the holiness of their hearts and the foundation of their hopes? I am not one of those who would obtrude religion upon the notice of persons at all times and on all occasions. I believe, with Solomon, that 'to every thing there is a time and a purpose under heaven—a time to weep and a time to laugh;' but what I complain of, is, the conduct of those few families who would fain be regarded as occupying the highest positions in society, and holding in their hands the largest measure of influence. They never seem to look upon themselves in the character of sinners who need to be instructed and pointed to the arm of the Saviour for support.—They are glad to hear a faithful, eloquent preacher, and they can speak loudly in his praise; but the theme on which he discourses in the pulpit is not the one which they would be pleased to have introduced in their parlor. Here the minister must be agreeable and entertaining. He must talk freely about the merits of the last novel, and laugh heartily over the funny papers of the 'Pick-wick Club.' I knew a clergyman who once told me, that a family of the character complained of above, used to say that, 'whenever he entered their house, he sat down apparently with the expectation of being entertained!—A more preposterous idea,' replied he, 'never entered the mind of a professed Christian, and if I could, with delicacy and propriety, convey to them a message on this subject, I would make them distinctly understand, that 'never desire nor expect, in the popular sense of the phrase, to be called an agreeable minister. The point of my ambition is infinitely higher.' His views were just and scriptural. For, did Jesus Christ, as he journeyed to Jerusalem, and stopped on his way at a house in Bethany, expect Mary and Martha to entertain him with conversation foreign to the business of his heavenly mission? Did the great apostle of the Gentiles, as he travelled from place to place, and entered into the cottage of the poor man, and the palace of the rich, anticipate anything like ordinary social enjoyment? And must the minister of Christ, at the present day, be censur-

ed if he does not, with all the policy of a man of the world, seek to please a certain class of his parishioners, by entering into familiar conversation on topics unsuited to the dignity of his character, and the solemnity of his office?

The great principle by which Paul was governed in his ministry among the Corinthians is the one which should control us. 'We should know nothing,' among our people, 'save Jesus Christ and him crucified.' All our actions and all our efforts should bear either directly or indirectly upon the enforcement of this important doctrine. Are we called to visit the sick, and to pray over them? Let Jesus Christ be our theme, for he alone is the Christian's consolation in the time of anguish and sorrow. Are we solicited to enter the house of mourning, and speak words of comfort to troubled minds? Let us point to Him who 'is touched with the feeling of our infirmities,' and who has promised, 'Blessed are those that mourn, for they shall be comforted.' Are we going in and out among our people, rejoicing with them in their health and prosperity? Let us still direct their attention to that Saviour whose arms are stretched out in mercy, and who would have all men come to the knowledge of his gospel. An agreeable minister, who studies to please any part of his flock by falling needlessly in with their worldly notions, is, of all others, the last character for whom I should break the tenth commandment. I would sooner covet the reputation of such a divine as the celebrated Archbishop Usher, who, after conversing long with his intimate friends on burning and other subjects, would say before separating, 'Come now, one word of Christ before we part.'—Oh! that every steward of God had such a deep sense of his responsibilities! Few would then be the occasions on which he would not, in some way, bring forward religion, and show that his affections are set on things above, rather than on things on the earth.' He would thus make himself agreeable to the more pious part of his people, if not those who would wish their minister, out of the pulpit, to be a social, jovial, entertaining companion.—*Chron. of the Ch.*

THE COLONIAL CHURCHMAN.

LUNENBURG, THURSDAY, DECEMBER 13, 1838.

ADVENT.—We are now in the midst of those four weeks of Advent which have, from a very early period, been set apart by the Church for the devout observance of her children. To the great benefit of such appointments we have frequently adverted; and, as appears by a late extract in our paper,* their advantage has not escaped the notice of some even of those who walk not with us. It is remarked "that it is the peculiar computation of the Church, to begin her year and renew the annual course of her service at this time of "Advent," therein differing from all accounts of time whatsoever. The reason of which is because she does not number her days, or measure her seasons so much by the motion of the Sun, as by the course of our Saviour, beginning and counting on her year with Him, who being the true "Sun of Righteousness," began now to rise upon the world as the Day Star from on high.—The lessons and services, therefore, for the four first Sundays in her liturgical year, propose to our meditations the twofold Advent of our Lord Jesus Christ, teaching us, that it was He who was to come and did come to redeem the world; and that it is He also who shall come again to be our Judge. The end proposed by the Church in setting these two appearances of Christ together before us at this time, is to beget in our minds proper dispositions to celebrate the one and expect the other: that so with joy and thankfulness we may "now go to Bethlehem, and see this great thing which is come to pass, which the Lord hath made known to us,"—even the Son of God come to visit us in great humility, and thence with faith unfeigned, and hope immovable, ascend in heart and mind to meet the same Son of God in the air, coming in glorious majesty to judge the quick and dead."

* See No. 1, Vol. 4.

This design of the Church is especially and beautifully embodied in that collect for the first Sunday in Advent which is appointed to be used every day until Christmas, and than which we know of no prayer more suitable to the closet of the Christian, while he continues in this mortal life. There we have that set before us which ought to be the great object of all our prayers, and of our persevering endeavours, namely, "that we may rise to the life eternal," after we have laid this body down. And in order to this, our minds are turned to that solemn day in which "Lord shall come in His glorious majesty to judge the quick and the dead" in the day of final decision for souls of men. And we are reminded of the necessity of the mode of preparing for that great Day, namely, "casting off the works of darkness," or sin, and "putting on the armour of light," or the true religion of Jesus Christ. And further, the Church, ever mindful of the frail corrupt hearts of her children, puts into their morning prayer to the Almighty for "grace" from Him, to enable them thus to stand prepared for the coming of His Son. And finally, we are taught here that "now in this mortal life" is the short and uncertain season, in which all this is to be done, in which sin is to be put off, and every man put on, which after God is created a righteousness and true holiness.

Oh! that every son and daughter of the church should have grace to use this sublime prayer, as they should and engage in daily preparation of heart and life for those solemn scenes which all must realize. No prayer, however excellent,—no services, however solemn,—no appointments, however wise and beneficial in their day, no church, however scriptural in her character and institutions, will profit us in that great and terrible day, if we are found with hearts unrenewed, and minds unglorified. Nay, assuredly our condemnation will be proportion to our privileges, if when weighed in the balances of the sanctuary above, we are found wanting. We are to have a lively and justifying faith in Him who now offers his arms of mercy as the Saviour, but will then sit upon the Throne of glory as our Judge.—Let us prepare to come another anniversary of his first gracious visit, turning from those sins from which He came to deliver us by embracing the offers of free pardon for our faith in His name, which his Gospel holds out to us, seeking earnestly that Spirit which alone can cheer and convert our sinful souls, filling us with the love of God and man, and making us a people prepared for the Lord.

ORIGIN OF THE CHURCH OF ENGLAND.—The pious and learned Bishop Burgess of St. Davids, as is remembered by our clerical readers, some years ago addressed to the Clergy of his Diocese, a letter, entitled "An Inquiry into the origin of the Christian Church, particularly of the church in Britain," in which he (as we think) establishes, by the most abundant and satisfactory authorities, a few important facts, which afford information of those who sometimes read the "history" the wrong way, it may not be amiss to set down our columns.

I. That St. PAUL preached the Gospel of Christ in Britain about the 14th year of the reign of the Emperor Claudius, and A. D. 65.

II. That he there appointed Aristobolus, mentioned in the Epistle to the Romans, as the first Bishop, and issued a complete Episcopal form of Church Government.

III. That the Church of Britain thus established was senior to that of Rome: Linus, the first Bishop of Rome, latter place, being appointed by the joint authority of Peter and Paul, in the year of their martyrdom, after their return from Britain.

IV. That the Church in Britain continued to be governed by its own Bishops for six hundred years, independent of any foreign church, and was found in that state in the time of Austin, the Pope's first missionary; at which time