

ment to, the Established Church, not only amongst its members, but in other denominations, the most numerous of which are the Lutheran, and German reformed, whose services are conducted in the German language. In surveying so extensive a field of labour, the mind of the solitary missionary is often cast down by the reflection, that his utmost endeavours are insufficient for its due cultivation. He longs and he prays for more labourers to help him in the plenteous harvest, to proclaim in every remote corner more frequently the blessed Gospel of Salvation, and administer the cheering ordinances of the Church of the Redeemer. And alas! to all this is added, the daily and hourly reflection that he is an unprofitable servant in his Master's vineyard, a reflection so painful as only to be soothed by the recollection that *that* Master is of great and tender mercy, and that it is not by the might or the wisdom of man that souls are to be gathered to Him, but by the powerful and sanctifying influence of His own blessed Spirit.—“Not unto us O Lord, not unto us, but unto thy name be the praise!”

LUMINOUS APPEARANCE IN THE HEAVENS.—On Wednesday evening the 25th ultimo, about 8 o'clock, a remarkable appearance was observed here in the northern portion of the heavens, of a bright red colour, which we are informed (for we did not observe it ourselves) continued for several hours to such a degree as to cast a very perceptible glare upon the snow and the houses. We copy from the ‘Chronicle of the Church,’ (New Haven) an account of a somewhat similar appearance, lately remarked at Brussels:—

Luminous Phenomenon in the Heavens.—On Tuesday evening, the 18th ult. the town of Brussels was charmed by the appearance of a brilliant red light in the north, which looked like the reflection of a large fire at a distance; it, however, soon assumed the form of a dense illuminated cloud of vapour, of an intense vermilion color, which, separating into two distinct portions over the town of Brussels, one part went off in a direction to the W. N. W., and the other to the N., the former, suddenly dividing itself again into long horizontal lines of electrifying fire, at length disappeared. Accurate minutes of this phenomenon were taken by M. Quetelet, of Brussels, and Dr. Foster, of Cambridge, who happened to be passing through Belgium at the time, and who determined the altitude of the phenomenon to be very considerable, and that it was not an ordinary aurora borealis. A similar phenomenon is described in Bertholin's ‘Hist. de l'Electricite,’ Lyon, 1783; and also Dr. Foster's ‘Essai sur l'Influence des Cometes sur l'Atmosphere.’ The opinion entertained by modern astronomers, that the gaseous matter of the tails of comets may be attracted by our planet, and may descend to mix with our atmosphere, gives to these phenomena an additional interest, for since the late appearance of Halley's comet, as Dr. Foster observes, these meteors, produced by adventitious gases, have been very prevalent in indifferent parts of the world.—*English paper.*

CHURCH IN CANADA.—The Bishop of Montreal was to set out on a Visitation of the Lower Canada portion of his diocese on the 6th January, expecting to be thus engaged for eight or nine weeks. We observe from a late number of the New York Churchman, that the proceedings of the clerical Meeting at Toronto, which were published in a former number, have become the subject of animadversion. It appears also that those proceedings are as yet without the sanction of the Episcopal authorities of the diocese. In reference to the question of the Clergy Reserves in Upper Canada, a friend informs us,—

“That after assuming a variety of phases, it has come to a conclusion, like the last chapter of Rasselas, in which nothing is concluded. One party had been clamouring, take them from the church and give them for General Education. Another, take them from the Church and give them among all sects, with a share to her according to her members and deserts. Another party demanded that they should be divided between the church of England and that of Scotland:—another, that the Methodists should be included with them, and the rest excluded. They all agreed, however, in resisting the exclusive claim of the Established Church. The last assembly, like former assemblies, had passed their judgment against that claim;—but the Legislative Council had ably maintained the just pretensions of the Church of England, in a most elaborate report, which I believe, was adopted by that body. In this new house of Assembly, the matter has

been again discussed; and as the instructions given by the Secretary of State to Sir Francis Head, had left the matter, as Lord Goderich had thrown it before the assembly—to be taken up, according to their fancies, in its whole length and breadth,—they have accordingly taken it up and laid it down as broad as it is long. They would not entertain the proposition, which the last assembly had favoured, of devoting the Reserves to general education. It was then proposed to divide them among all religious persuasions, but that was not carried; and finally the assembly came to a resolve, that they ought to be applied to the religious and moral instruction of the people at large,—this was carried by a large majority. This appears only to put the disputable position in a new disputable form.”

LENT—As we have now entered upon this season, appointed by the Church for the special exercises of humiliation and repentance, we extract from a standard work (Wheatley) the following explanatory notices respecting it:—

Shrove Tuesday.—The Tuesday after Quinquagesima-Sunday is generally called Shrove-Tuesday; a name given it from the old Saxon words *Shrive*, *Shrift* or *Shroec*, which in that language signifies to confess; it being a constant custom amongst the Roman Catholics to confess their sins on that day, in order to receive the blessed Sacrament, and thereby qualify themselves for a more religious observation of the holy time of Lent immediately ensuing. But this process of time was turned into a custom of invitations, and their taking their leave of flesh and other dainties; and afterwards, by degrees, into sports and merriments, which still in that Church make up the whole business of the Carnival.

Ash Wednesday.—The name of Ash-Wednesday proceeded from a custom in the ancient discipline, which began very early to be exercised on this day; an account whereof we have in Gratian as follows:—

On the first day of Lent the penitents were to present themselves before the Bishop clothed with sackcloth, with naked feet, and eyes turned to the ground: and this was to be done in the presence of the principal of the clergy of the diocese, who were to judge of the sincerity of their repentance. These introduced them into the church, where the Bishop, all in tears, and the rest of the Clergy, repeated the seven penitential psalms. Then rising from prayers, they threw ashes upon them, and covered their heads with sackcloth; and then with mournful sighs declared to them, that as Adam was thrown out of Paradise, so they must be thrown out of the church. Then the Bishop commanded the officers to turn them out of the church-doors; and all the clergy followed after, repeating that curse upon Adam, *In the sweat of thy brows shalt thou eat thy bread.* The like penance was inflicted upon them the next time the Sacrament was administered, which was the Sunday following. And all this was done to the end that the penitents, observing how great a disorder the Church was in by reason of their crimes, should not lightly esteem of penance.

Though this discipline was severe, yet the many good consequences of it shewed it worthy the imitation of all churches in succeeding ages; and our own particular heartily bewails the want of it: but till she can be so happy as to succeed in discharging those obligations she lies under to restore it, she supplies that want, by adding to her ordinary service a very proper and suitable office called the *Commination*, in which to bring the minds of the congregation into a serious composure, the office is introduced with a grave and solemn Preface; by which the Church informs them, in the first place, of the ancient discipline, and then proposes to them the best means to supply it. The ancient discipline, she tells them, was to put those to open shame, who by any notorious sins had given public scandal and offence. By which means both the souls of those that sinned were often rescued from damnation, that others also being admonished by their example, were deterred from incurring the same danger of punishment. But as this discipline is now lost through the degeneracy of the times, and even beyond retrieval as affairs stand now, she proposes that the congregation would supply it to themselves, by hearing the Curses which God has denounced against impenitent Sinners; by which means, as in a glass, each one will be able to discern his own Sins, and the Curses he is exposed to; the serious prospect of which will be apt to awaken them from their thoughtlessness and security, and

to put them upon flying from such imminent danger, by having recourse to a speedy repentance.

The original of repeating the Curses, in the manner we now use them, was a positive and divine institution, which twice enjoined it by Moses, and in obedience to which we find Joshua afterwards most religiously observed it. And Josephus also reckons it amongst those things which the Jews always used to perform. And though the circumstances in the Jewish manner of reciting these Curses were purely ceremonial, yet doubtless the end for which this duty was prescribed was truly moral. For to publish the equity and truth of God, and to profess our belief that his laws are righteous, and the sanctions thereof just and certain, is an excellent means of glorifying God, and a proper method for converting of sinners. So that it cannot be unfit for the Gospel-times, nor at all unsuitable to our Christian worship; especially when the necessities of the Church require the sinner should be warned and brought to repentance. Christ indeed hath taken away the Curse of the Law, by being himself made a *Curse* for us: but this is only with respect to those that truly repent; for as to all others the Curse stands in full force still. It is therefore fit, that all should declare their belief of the truth and reasonableness of these Curses: the good man, to own what his sins had deserved, and to acknowledge his obligation to our Lord for redeeming him; the bad man, to awaken him from his security and ease, and to bring him to repentance before it be too late.

For this reason all the People, as those sentences are read, are to answer and say, at the end of each of them, *Amen.* The end of which is not that the people should curse themselves and their neighbours, as some have foolishly imagined; but only that they should acknowledge they have deserved a Curse. For it is not here said, *Cursed be he, or may he be cursed;* but *cursed is he or he is cursed,* that is guilty of any of these sins. And consequently any one that answers *Amen,* does not signify his desire, that the thing may be so, as he does when he says *Amen,* to a Prayer; but only signifies his assent to the truth of what is affirmed, as he does when he says *Amen* to the Creed. It is used in this place in no other sense, than it is in several parts of the New Testament, where it is translated *Verily,* and signifies no more than *Verily it is true.* The man that says it, verily believes, that Idolaters, and all those other kinds of sinners that are mentioned in these sentences, are all exposed to the Curse of God; and his believing this is the cause of his repentance, and begging pardon for his sins; since he must be a desperate sinner indeed, that will not fly from such vices, for which he affirms with his own mouth so great and heavy a Judgment to be due. In short, these Curses, and the Answers that are made to them, are like our Saviour's Woes in the Gospel; not the causes or provokers of the evil they denounce; but compassionate predictions of it in order to prevent it. And one would indeed think, when we consider, that this manner of answering was originally appointed by God himself, people should be cautious how they charge it with being a wicked or foolish institution.

THE LEGISLATURE assembled according to proclamation, on the 31st ultimo; and the mail last evening brought us the report of their first proceedings. We wish they were more worthy of approbation than they are. The late hour at which we saw the paper, prevents our doing more than expressing the regret and astonishment with which we read the announcement that the deliberations of the Assembly are now to be begun, continued, and ended, without acknowledging a God above them, and seeking a blessing and direction from Him, by whose providence all things in Heaven and earth are ordered. If this be the first step in the course of REFORM, what will be the last? In other countries, where Religion and its Ministers have been disposed with, the subversion of law and government has not been far behind. We are thankful that in this province, if there be a few that have such a spirit, they are as yet devoid of the power to go so far.—We were prepared for a proposal to admit dissenting Ministers to the office of Chaplain, but not for the decision, that prayers are unnecessary in the gravest assembly of the land. It is some comfort to see that this grievous step was opposed by 18 members, and we are refreshed also by the mild and dignified rebuke which the measure has called forth from the highly respectable Body which happily forms the second branch of the Legislature, and which, we pray, may long be preserved from such large principles of religious freedom.”