

tion, when it was abolished, 'as being a shadow, or vain show,' and a suitable office was substituted in its stead, in addition to the ordinary service, styled the Communion.

'In the ancient Church, this day had two titles—the Head of the Fast and the Day of Ashes; the former because Lent commenced on that day—the latter from the ceremony already described, of sprinkling ashes, &c. from whence our Ash Wednesday.

'That the observation of Lent was originally established in commemoration of our Saviour's miraculous fasting, and to prepare the mind for the great feast of Easter, seems generally to be admitted by the Romish Church, and by many Protestant divines.

'The Jew's yearly Passover, or feast of Expiation was begun by a solemn humiliation of forty days; and the primitive Christians, following their example, appropriated an annual fast, as a proper preparative for the commemoration of the great expiation of the sins of mankind, though the number of days varied in different churches, as well as the practices of each in its observance, and it is evident that at first only forty hours were enjoined, from about twelve o'clock on Friday when our Saviour fell under the dominion of death, to Sunday morning, when he arose again, which was subsequently augmented to that number of days, there appears to be reason for concluding that this fast was originally instituted in solemn commemoration of the period our Saviour lay in the grave of death, as several eminent critics assert, and not of the miraculous fasting, the imitation of which Irenaeus denominated, 'a superstitious and vain conceit.'"

For the Colonial Churchman.

MESSRS. EDITORS,

In every age of the Church, true religion has had to contend with many and great difficulties, and to encounter continual opposition. The principles and practices of the world are directly opposed to it; and from these principles, as also from the natural infirmities of man even under the influence of religion, numerous prejudices have always prevailed, which are very unfavorable to its progress. In addition to these common or general sources of impediment, there are others in every age arising from the peculiar circumstances of the times. When religion is restricted by the rigorous hand of spiritual tyranny, the enemies which then chiefly prevail, and are the most injurious to its cause, are superstitions and bigotry; but when left unrestrained, and permitted to be received just as it may suit the humour, or the fancy of every individual, endless division and a forgetfulness that God is a God of order, together with false ideas of real conversion or renovation of the heart, are the usual consequences; almost every person setting up himself as most fit to determine the true character of religion, both in its general and particular features. In days gone by, the Church of Christ long suffered from the former evil, when the Papal power exercised its unrestrained influence and sway.—In this our day the true Church of Christ, the 'pure and undefiled' religion of St. James, is in equal if not greater danger from the latter evil, because it is one more subtle in its opposition. To help this latter evil 'revivals,' as they are termed, lend a powerful aid. The Book of God being now in almost every man's possession, which so plainly denounces the threatenings of a just and powerful Being against the soul that sinneth, the convicted but not converted sinner gladly catches at any thing which may afford ease to his affrighted conscience, and too often times is lulled into a false and fatal peace, by coming up to the standard, not of the word of truth, but of that which some individual or party of men have fixed upon as the criterion of true religion, thus speaking peace to his soul, when God hath not said peace. The Church to which we belong very wisely requires no man publicly to relate his Christian experience, much less does she authorize him to build the hopes of to-morrow upon the experience of yesterday. Rejecting the auricular confession of the Romanist and the kindred practice of those who require of such as seek admission to their peculiar religious rites, or to the Holy Communion, a history of their religious experience, she enjoins it upon her members to examine themselves whether they repent them truly of their for-

mer sins, steadfastly purposing to lead a new life, have a lively faith in God's mercy through Christ with a thankful remembrance of his death and be in charity with all men, and teaches that good works, being pleasing and acceptable to God, are the best evidences of a real Christian faith, which can be exhibited to man. By other denominations a different course has been adopted, and the following anecdote related in a religious periodical, some few years since, which I accidentally met with, is well calculated to shew that the evidence of Christian character upon which their reliance is placed may prove extremely fallacious.

'Mr. — was brought under religious exercises of mind; so much so that he offered to join a society of Christians in his neighbourhood. They required him to give an account of his christian experience, before they would receive him. He did so. It seemed satisfactory, and he was received as a member. He committed it to writing for his future satisfaction.—In it he gave the dealings of God to his soul, in awakening him to a sense of his lost state, in discovering to him the depth of his depravity, his utter helplessness, and dependance upon Christ for salvation. He had imbibed the peculiar doctrines of the society of which he was a member, one of which was, that a soul once united to Christ by faith, might fall into great darkness, and even open as well as secret transgressions of God's law, without endangering its eternal salvation; that being once in God's favour, we were always in his favour. Whenever he would fall into doubts about his state, or be in heaviness through manifold temptations, he would resort to his written Christian experience. He did not continue to bring forth fruit—'good fruit'—but on the contrary often very bad. But on taking out and reading his written experience, his favorite doctrine had so trained his conscience, that it would hush with its accusations and murmurings, and he would go on satisfied. In process of time, he was laid on the bed of affliction, and brought down to the side of the grave.—He despaired of his recovery, and, indeed, it became so doubtful, that even his friends began to lose the hope of his restoration to health. In this state, conscience once more assumed her authority, and spoke with a voice that awfully alarmed the poor backslider. Here he was, on the brink of eternity, and without the evidence of his acceptance with God. The feelings of his heart, the blackness of darkness that gathered around him, and the awful eternity that he felt himself about to enter, conspired to alarm his wretched soul. In this agony he thought himself of his written Christian experience. 'Go,' said he, 'bring my experience, and read it to me.' One of his family went to the place where he had deposited it and on examination found that it had been eaten or cut to pieces. On being informed of the catastrophe, he became still more wretched. He had no data—no evidence of his salvation—and he vented his sorrow in repeated exclamations, 'that his Christian experience had been destroyed.'

We cannot but conclude that had this man's experience or testimony of his love to God, and faith in Jesus Christ, been written and engraven on the tables of his heart, and not on perishable paper, he would have been spared those bitter lamentations, and would have enjoyed such humble confidence in God through the merits of his Saviour, as would have enabled him to have rested his hope in the Almighty conqueror of death, hell, and the grave, the only mediator between God and man, the man Christ Jesus.

Nova-Scotia, Feb. 1836.

SAMECH.

Important News from China.—The Rev. Mr. Stevens, Seaman's Chaplain at Canton, in a letter to the Secretary of the American Seamen's Friend Society, dated Aug. 21, 1835, says—

'Of late there has been much solicitude among the brethren at Canton, on account of the search just instituted by government for such natives as have assisted foreigners in manufacturing Chinese Christian books. So far as can be seen, however, the present danger seems nearly past, though the native assistants are yet terrified!

'In consequence of this shutting up the door of active labor here, as well as for other reasons, Mr. Medhurst has been desirous to get up an expedition to the eastern coast, and has at length succeeded in get-

ting one unconnected with opium. He has chartered the brig Huron, Captain Windor, to go up as far as Lat. 40 degrees if necessary, and to call at such places as he pleases. A good supply of books are ready, and he is to go in a few days.'

Mr. Medhurst, above named, is Rev. Walter Medhurst, formerly of Calcutta, now of Canton, China, an English missionary at that place, a gentleman well qualified to conduct such an expedition in a judicious manner. Mr. Stevens accompanies him, having once before been on the coast with Mr. Gutzlaff. Before this they have probably returned to Canton, and we may expect at no distant day, to receive an account of the town in detail.—Ch. Intelligencer.

Joyful Discovery at Tharet in Burmah.—Rev. Mr. Kincaid, Baptist Missionary in Burmah, in his journal of a tour of 700 miles up the Irawaddy river, from Rangoon to Ava, in which they passed through 300 Burman cities or villages, relates the following delightful incident.

At Tharet, while giving away Tracts to a crowd of people that lined the shore, a young man came near and said, 'Will you give me St John's History of Christ and the Acts of the Apostles?' It appeared that Brother Judson had given these books to him at Prome; but when the city was burned, he lost them. I gave him the books and four Tracts. He immediately disappeared; but, two miles above, came to the boat again and said, 'There is a man in this city besides me, who believes in Jesus Christ, and he wants to see the teacher and get books, but thinks the boat is away.' We followed the young man; and how were we surprised and almost overjoyed to find a venerable old man full of faith and hope in Christ though he had no other teacher than St. John's History of Christ and the Acts, accompanied by the influence of the Holy Spirit. He said he had loved Christ for about two years, and his language was that of a man acquainted with his own heart. He spoke distinctly of the carnal and spiritual mind, and of regeneration. The young man had read the books received from Brother Judson to this old man, and both, I trust, are born of God. To find two pilgrims in this great desert—to hear them speak so boldly and decidedly of their love to Christ, in the presence of more than forty persons, filled me with joy.

Green Bay.—In March, 1834, the Mission School consisted of 94 boarders, of whom 50 were males, and 44 females. Of these not more than 8 are whites; the remainder being Menominees, Chippawas, Oneidas, Winnebagoes, Knisteneauxs, Sionas, Osages, Foxes, the Delawares. Within the past year, five full-blooded Indian children have been baptized by the Rev. Mr. Cadle, the late superintendent, after being duly instructed in the fundamental doctrines of the Gospel. The Rev. Mr. Cadle has preached during the year, administered the communion to the Oneidas at Duck Creek and to the Stockbridge Indians at Grand Kakalen.

History of the Church in Virginia.—We take great pleasure in announcing that the valued work of Dr. Hawks, which has been long impatiently expected, is through the press, and nearly or quite ready for delivery. We have been favoured with a copy, and shall endeavour in our next to present copious extracts to our readers. * * *

The present volume is entitled 'A Narrative of Events connected with the Rise and Progress of the Protestant Episcopal Church in Virginia;' it is complete in itself, and forms the first volume of the projected work, which the author has modestly styled 'Contributions to the Ecclesiastical History of the United States of America,' and which, if finished as it is begun, will form an admirable history of the Church, and will thus, besides being a valuable addition to our literature, acquit the present generation of a debt due to the future. Most sincerely do we congratulate the author in the result of his labours, as far as they are disclosed, and wish him all success in what remains to be accomplished.—N. Y. Churchman.

Christ.—There is no honor, like a relation to Christ; no riches, like the grace of Christ; no learning, like the knowledge of Christ; and there are no companions, like the friends of Christ.

Repentance is the greatest honor, next to innocence.