

For the Colonial Churchman.

Messrs. Editors,

For some time past I have derived very considerable satisfaction from reflection upon the effects of the clerical meetings in different parts of this diocese, and especially the general and large assembly at Halifax under the superintendence of our indefatigable Bishop. I have uniformly seen that an increased love for each other, love for the church, and love for Christ was the result. And many fancied differences either in opinion or practice which had previously (as it were) drawn some closer, and repelled others farther from each other, have been found to dwindle as the intercourse increased, until unity appears to attach us as the brethren of one family.

The Bishop's public charge, and his more private communications with his clergy, were judiciously designed, under God's blessing, to cement and perfect that growing union.

It was observed with sincere delight that during the protracted and free intercourse we held with each other in Halifax, scarcely a syllable was uttered that could lead to the supposition that anything like a party spirit had ever existed in this portion of the church of Christ; and I think this ought to be generally made known to the lay members of our congregations who are frequently agitated by an imaginary marked distinction between evangelical and high church parties, perhaps little conceived by their teachers.

I flatter myself that this injurious conception may be allayed somewhat if you will give publicity to the following extract from a work of the Rev. George Townsend, a dignitary of the church, and well known in the literary world. I think it will afford our congregations a standard whereby they may judge of the incorrectness of the character which is given to various members of the clerical body by those who love strife rather than edification.

Mr. Townsend has pointed out the errors of both the evangelical and the anti-evangelical preachers; and I think it probable, that any person who will take the trouble to test the first sermon he may hear in his parish church by this standard, will acknowledge that his pastor has framed his system on the middle and right course, and has not diverged into the extremes which could stamp him of either party.

It is but right to say a few words as to Mr. Townsend's qualifications for laying down a standard; and perhaps he can put in as good a claim as any clergyman. He has himself belonged to both parties above alluded to, as having existed in the church. He was originally of what he calls the anti-evangelical class, and since has forsaken it, and attached himself to what is styled the evangelical.

Those who have no friendship for our Zion are well aware of the injurious tendency of this party spirit; and what has been subsiding for some years within the church, I am sorry to see by a recent advertisement in one of our papers, is about to be agitated by some without. That it may please God to keep it without, is my earnest desire; and if this extract shall in any degree conduce to the sustaining or improving our present peace, unity, and concord, I shall have reason to rejoice.

"The faults of the evangelical teachers are, that they render Christianity repulsive to men of sober judgments, and refined taste, by enforcing the peculiar doctrines of the gospel in an obscure and unusual phraseology, which is neither consistent with a right interpretation of scripture, nor with sound and strict reasoning. If they would enforce, for instance, the doctrine of the corruption of human nature, they use language which would lead their hearers to infer that we are demons in malignity and wickedness—whereas we are represented in scripture, and the truth is confirmed by experience, to be only fallen men, inclined to evil rather than to good; but capable of restoration to the favour of God, which a demon cannot be. If they would deny the merit of good works, they sometimes speak so incautiously that they seem to represent good works as unnecessary; and they do this by confounding the doctrine of the reformers, who denied the meritorious nature of penances, pilgrimages, and similar works, with the doctrine of the Antinomians, who deny the merit of repentance; and obedience:

whereas while the former class of good works are utterly useless, as the proofs of true faith, the latter are so essential, that without them faith has no existence. If they teach the necessity of the influences of the Holy Spirit, they interpret some passages of scripture so inconsiderately, that a hearer of their own modes of expression would imagine the Deity to be a capricious, or arbitrary Being, instead of being governed by laws as just, and certain, in his conduct towards his accountable spirits, as He ordinarily proceeds by certain and immutable laws, in His regulation of the material universe. They too often separate passages of scripture from those which precede and follow them, to enforce the probable truth of opinions, to which the passages which they quote have no reference. They too often insist on some one truth, to the exclusion of others—as the foreknowledge of God, to the exclusion of so much free will on the part of man, as renders him a responsible being. They speak with too much familiarity of the love of God, of the Holy Spirit, and of the Atonement of our Saviour. They do not sufficiently represent the episcopal clergy as the only authorised teachers. They sometimes speak of the salvation of the soul, as if that salvation depended upon the decrees of the Almighty, and not upon the acceptance of that mercy which the Almighty decreed to be the means of salvation. They do not seem sufficiently to value the Sacraments, nor the institutions of the church. The language of their devotions is mysterious, and almost unintelligible: as when they inquire of their hearers, whether they feel that they have an interest in Christ; by which, and similar phrases, they mean to inquire, whether the belief which their hearers profess in the truth of the doctrines of revelation, has so influenced their conduct, and their hearts, that they are conscious of having endeavoured to remove wilful evil, and have begun to derive consolation and happiness, under the sorrows of the present life, and in the anticipation of the future. One of the most strenuous advocates of that mode of instruction which is generally called evangelical, has written an essay on the aversion of men of taste to evangelical religion. If taste be the result of knowledge, cultivation of intellect and mental refinement, that taste will never be adverse to Scripture, to the Liturgy, to the Articles of the Church, or to the solemn language of the devotional Christian writers, who unite the soundest sense with the language of the purest religion. The confession that men of taste can be adverse to evangelical religion, while they are not adverse to the volume of Scripture, and the truth of orthodox Christianity, is the severest condemnation of that system of instruction which is generally called evangelical.

The faults of the anti-evangelical preachers are no less objectionable; and they may easily be pointed out as being the opposite of those already enumerated. If the anti-evangelical party, for instance, have occasion to speak of the corruption of human nature, they sometimes use phrases respecting the dignity of man, and the excellence of that moral virtue to which he may certainly attain, even without the aid of revelation, which would seem to imply that the assistance of the Holy Spirit is not so absolutely essential to perfection. They sometimes confound those moral virtues, which are the result of instinct, society, necessity, and experience (and are therefore practised alike by the heathen and by the infidel, as well as by the Christian), with those higher virtues, which can only be the result of more than human principle. The corruption of human nature consists in this—that the heart of man, and his affections, are alienated from the will of God; and not that He is unable or unwilling to perform the duties which are required by man. The love of children to parents, and of parents to children, are universal duties; but they may be the result of instinct, or natural affection, without any reference to the will of God; and the practice, therefore, of the moral virtues, which are the consequence of this natural affection, does not imply that the nature of man is not alienated from God. The same reasoning will apply to such duties as obedience to magistrates, and many others, which must be practised for the sake of the general happiness. And while these various duties must be all enforced by the christian teacher, upon christian principles, and not

upon human motives only, the exercise of the virtues from human motives no more invalidates the doctrine of the alienation of the heart from God, and therefore, the necessity of the assistance of a divine power, than the bursting forth of a few wild flowers, or a little self-sown wheat, amidst the thorns and thistles of an uncultivated field, can render unnecessary the toil of the sower, or the labour of the reaper.

The anti-evangelical preachers have frequently deserved the censure of their brethren, by the incautious manner in which they have spoken of the efficacy of the Sacraments. Baptism, more especially, has been represented to be so absolutely necessary to salvation, and to be attended with blessings so valuable to a christian, that it would almost appear to be equally essential to future happiness, with faith and good works. They apply those passages of St. Paul's Epistles, which describe the influences of the Holy Spirit, too exclusively to the apostolic age. When they speak of those subjects, which are too frequently discussed in the affected phraseology to which I have alluded, they adopt the very opposite extreme, and use language so cold, and tame, that it would almost seem as if they deemed energy a crime, and the eloquence of enraptured devotion, fanaticism and folly. They only then use (pardon the ungrateful terms) a language which may be called cant, when they declaim against canting language.

Scripture is too unfrequently quoted. The necessity of spiritual assistance, the one great doctrinal truth of the dispensation under which we live, is insisted on with too much timidity, as if the divine aids which are afforded to the faithful believer in the Atonement, were incompatible with that degree of human liberty, which is essential to the responsibility of a christian. They study, as they ought to do, severe and strict reasoning, and correct and elegant composition, in their discourses; but they do not sufficiently remember that all the reasoning of a christian teacher, is only then useful when it kindles the affections, as well as instructs the mind. They are contented with appealing to the intellect, rather than to the heart; and their hearers sometimes leave their churches, convinced of a truth, but unmoved as to any practical conviction of its importance, and the necessity of its personal application. The bold appeal—the affecting interrogation—the energetic address—the irresistible persuasion which is founded upon the undeniable solemnities of the truths of Christianity, do not sufficiently characterise the teaching of those, who only seem to be enthusiastic, when they denounce enthusiasm, and who are more anxious to avoid censure, than to attain to excellence. C.

MR. SIMEON'S JUDGMENT OF THE LITURGY.

An excellent friend, who has lately returned from England, visited the venerable Mr. Simeon, a few months before his death. In the course of much conversation, he said, "Mr. Simeon, after the experience of your long life, and in the prospect, not very distant of its termination, how does the Liturgy now appear to you?" "Oh Sir," he said, lifting up both his hands with characteristic energy, "it is more precious to me than ever; it suits my case exactly; it is so mellow."—*Gos. Mes.*

LORD MANSFIELD.

This eminent judge was never ashamed of publicly retracing any wrong opinion he had entertained, when once convinced of his mistake. He used frequently to say, probably after dean Swift, who has a similar passage in his writings, "That to acknowledge you were wrong yesterday, was but to let the world know that you are wiser to-day than you were then."

"If it should ever fall to the lot of youth," says Sir Walter Scott, in his Autobiography, "to peruse these pages, let such a reader remember that it is with regret that I recollect in my manhood the opportunities of learning which I neglected in my youth; that through every part of my literary career I have felt pinched and hampered by my own ignorance; and that I would at this moment give half the reputation I have had the good fortune to acquire, if, by doing so, I could rest the remaining part upon a sound foundation of learning and science."