

THE CHRISTIAN INSTRUCTOR.

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“ THAT THE SOUL BE WITHOUT KNOWLEDGE, IT IS NOT GOOD.”—PROV. XIX. 2.

THE ROCK.

AN EXPOSITION OF MAT. XVI. 15-19.

[CONCLUDED.]

“ And the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.”

On this clause there is little room for a difference of opinion. Eastern cities being surrounded with high walls, and defended at the gates of entrance, the gates being also used as the places where the judges and persons in authority kept their courts, the word came to signify metaphorically *power*, and thus the gates of hell is an expression denoting the power of hell. The word translated hell in this passage is literally *hades*, and signifies the grave, or rather, in a broader sense, the state of the dead, the place of departed spirits. By the gates of hell, then, we are to understand the power of death and the grave. That power, says Christ, shall not prevail against my Church.—That is, as his Church consists of living members redeemed by His blood, sanctified by His Spirit and immortalized by His salvation, therefore the power of death shall not prevail over it, to conquer and to destroy it. Its life shall be sustained, and the congregations of his faithful disciples shall be perpetuated from age to age, till the close of time; and the members of his Church, though they may die and go, one by one, into the gates of death, shall be delivered in the general resurrection and shall triumph then finally and for ever over the grave. In the eloquent words of Bishop Horsley, “ Our Lord in these words promises, not only perpetuity to the Church, to the last moment of the world’s existence, notwithstanding the successive mortality of all its members in all ages, but what is much more, *a final triumph over the power of the grave*. Firmly as the gates of *hades* may be barred they shall have no power to confine His departed saints when the last trumpet shall sound and the voice of the Archangel shall thunder through the deep.”

“ And I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven; and whatsoever thou shall bind on earth shall be bound in heaven, and whatsoever thou shall loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven.”