

BX

5965

.G7



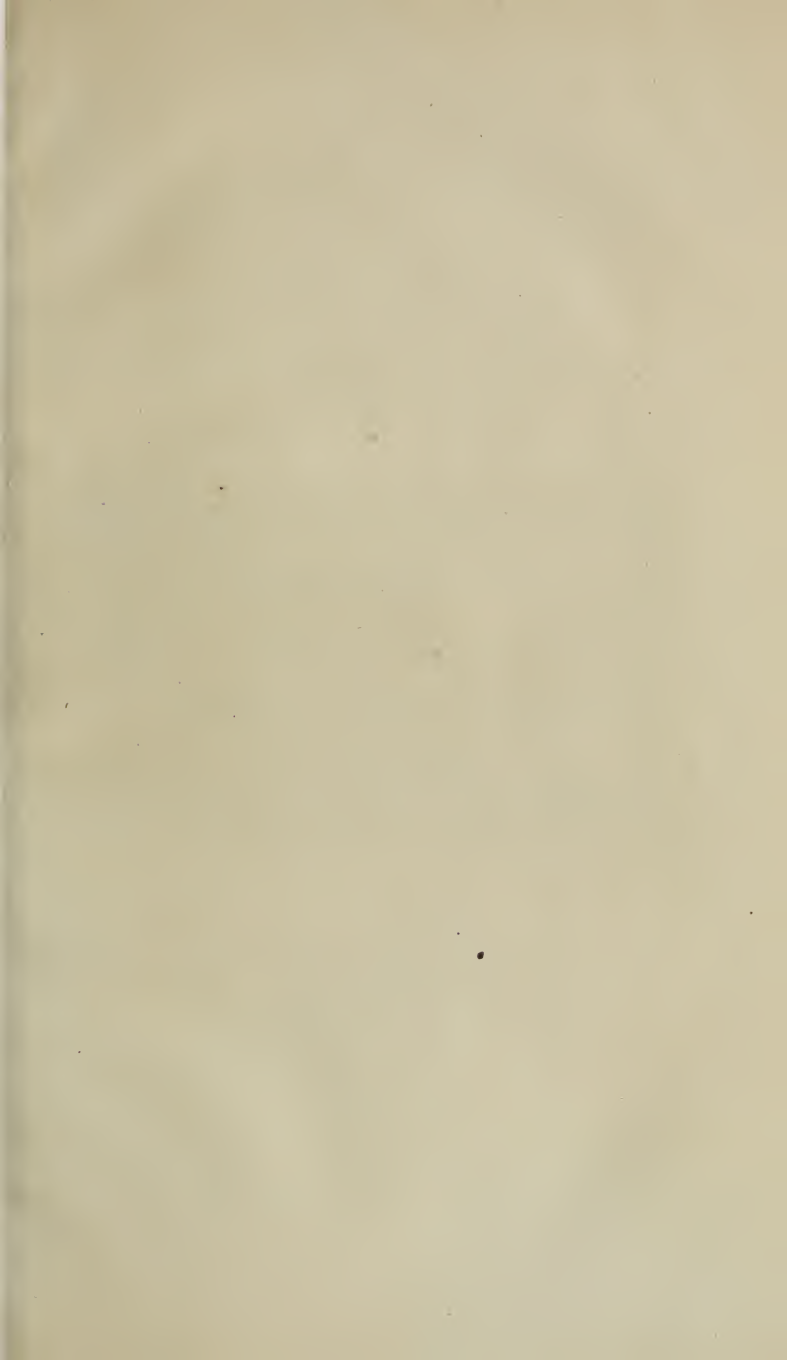
LIBRARY OF CONGRESS.

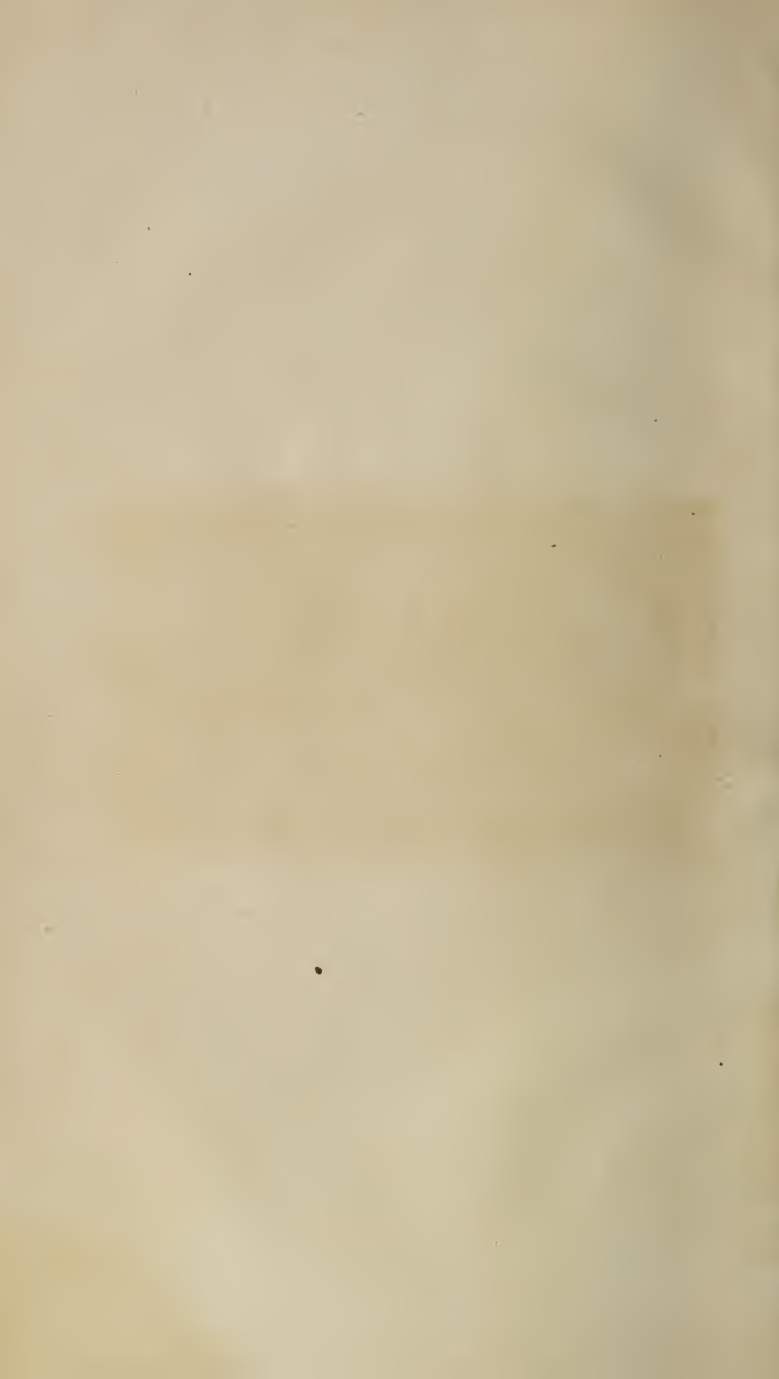
Chap. BX5965

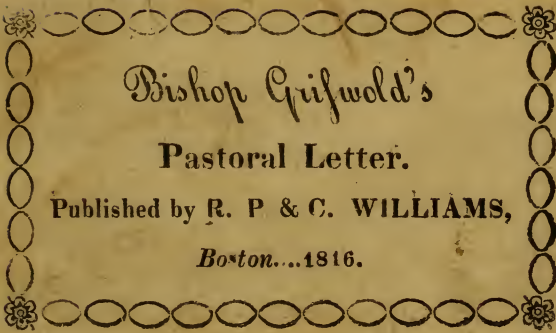
Shelf .G7

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA.









Bishop Gifford's

Pastoral Letter.

Published by R. P. & C. WILLIAMS,

Boston...1816.

THE HISTORY

OF THE

REIGN

OF CHARLES THE FIRST

BY

JOHN

WELLES, ESQ.

OF THE BARR

AND

OF THE

REIGN

OF CHARLES THE FIRST

BY

JOHN WELLES, ESQ.

Miss Phillips from her friend
JD

A

CHARGE,

ADDRESSED TO THE CLERGY

OF THE

PROTESTANT EPISCOPAL CHURCH

IN

THE EASTERN DIOCESE,

DELIVERED

BEFORE THE BIENNIAL CONVENTION, IN PORTS-
MOUTH, N. H. SEPT. 28, 1814 ;

AND PUBLISHED BY THEIR REQUEST.

TO WHICH IS PREFIXED,

A PASTORAL LETTER.

BY

ALEXANDER V. GRISWOLD, D. D.

BISHOP OF THE DIOCESE.



BOSTON :

PRINTED BY MUNROE, FRANCIS & PARKER,
NO. 4, CORNHILL...1816.

BX 5965
.G7

TO THE
PROTESTANT EPISCOPAL CHURCHES
OF
MASSACHUSETTS, RHODE-ISLAND, NEW-HAMP-
SHIRE, AND VERMONT.

DEARLY BELOVED IN THE LORD,

THE discourse, herewith presented unto you, was delivered more than a year since, and you may justly demand the reason of its appearance in public, and why at so late a period. There was at the time a vote of the Convention, requesting a copy for the press, which compliment was then declined from a consciousness that it possessed not merit sufficient to justify its publication. It has certainly at present no better claim to this honour; but circumstances have at length constrained me, with much reluctance, to

this measure, in hope that it may possibly, through the Divine blessing, be made, in some degree, the humble instrument of calling your attention to a subject, in which the general cause of religion, and the interest of our Church especially, are much concerned. Some efforts have been made, and are still in agitation, by a few individuals, to form Missionary Societies, and to collect a little fund for sending the light and comforts of the gospel, among those who are destitute. We are far from believing that there is any peculiar repugnance to this good work, among Christians of our communion : yet from some unhappy cause, it is a fact but too evident, that your serious attention has not been duly engaged in this important subject. There is probably no other church by which it is so much neglected, as by ours in this Diocese,

In our Diocesan Convention, which met at Providence, Sept. 30th, 1812, it was " Voted, that the Bishop be requested to appoint a Sunday annually, on which a contribution shall be made at each church within the Diocese, and transmitted by the Rector and Wardens thereof to the Treasurer of the

Trustees of Donations to the Protestant Episcopal Church, to be appropriated under the direction of the Bishop, to the supplying of vacant parishes with preaching and the printing and distributing of cheap tracts, explanatory of the doctrines and discipline of the Episcopal Church." Such a Circular Letter was accordingly sent to all the churches in the Diocese, appointing Easter Sunday as the day on which such collections should annually be made. On the Easter following, most of the parishes complied with this request of their Clerical and Lay Delegates: but, in the two years since, a few of them only appear to have given attention to this business. That an effort so laudable, and so well calculated to do good, has not been more successful, is much to be regretted by all pious Christians, and chiefly by those who are friends to the Episcopal Church. To whom, or to what cause must our failure be ascribed? Have the ministers of our churches felt so little concern for the spread of the Gospel, and the salvation of mankind, as to neglect the proposing and encouraging of such contributions? Or is it rather the fact, that

the collections have been duly attempted, and, in most of the Churches, none were found able, or none willing to contribute? Is our disappointment owing to the want of zeal, or to the want of means?

In the Charge, which follows, the attempt is made to awaken our Churches to a sense of this momentous duty; and the hope is indulged, that no offence will be taken at line upon line, and precept added to precept. The efforts, made by other denominations of Christians, to propagate the Gospel, are a reproach upon us; and when we consider what they effect, it should encourage us the more to follow their good example. Is it to us only, that God has denied the ability of sending missionaries to preach his Gospel? Are we of all men the most indigent? Let the contribution be general,—let each one give something, though it be but little, and the whole amount will be considerable. Very few are so destitute, that they can make no offering to God. Who will say, that he cannot give a *mite*? A very little, applied to so excellent a purpose, may do much good: and if it be given freely and with pious inter-

tion, no sacrifice—no work can be more acceptable to God. He knows our wants—our abilities, and our hearts; and we know who hath said, “If there be first a willing mind, it is accepted according to that a man hath, and not according to that he hath not.” If the fault be in the mind; if we have no zeal for the Lord’s work; if we feel no sincere interest in the propagation of our holy faith, how can we hope, that he will give us prosperity? If, while others are sending their missionaries to the four winds of heaven, we will not provide for our own house, nor cultivate that part of the vineyard allotted for our labours, what less can we expect, than that the Lord should cast us out, and let his ground to other husbandmen.

“But, beloved, we are persuaded better things of you—though we thus speak.” We are persuaded, that this apparent indifference to Missionary labours is not from want of love to the Redeemer’s Kingdom: we believe, that you possess both the desire and the means of promoting its prosperity. Your serious attention has not been awakened to the importance of the subject. It is but re-

cently, if indeed it may be now said, that Protestants have been generally, and much engaged in this work. Too just has been the censure cast upon us all, by the Church of Rome, that, while we professed a purer faith, and more ardent zeal for the Gospel of Jesus Christ, the burthen of propagating it among the Heathen was left with them. It is a reproach, that we must bear in common, with the exception of the Moravian Brethren, whose zeal and persevering labours to convert the Heathen are above all praise.* Though we are late in the work, who will boast of being early? We may yet tread on the heels of those, who are gone before. Our numbers are few, and thinly scattered over a large extent of country; nor have we, till very lately, been so organized and united, as to attempt, with probability of success,

* We may add also, the exceptions of two ancient and very respectable Societies in England by members of the Established Church; the one *for propagating the Gospel in Foreign Parts*, and the other, *for promoting Christian Knowledge*, which have laboured more than a century, with honour and much usefulness. To the former, for its fostering care of our Churches in this country, we are under the deepest obligations of gratitude and affection.

any Missionary labours. But now, through Divine goodness, these obstacles are in part removed,—our Churches flourish: our numbers increase, and we may conveniently unite, in any measures, to promote the cause of Christianity. The time is now fully come, when we may and we ought to shew our faith, by our works; the purity of our doctrines, by our care to impart them to every creature.” Should the present publication be instrumental in awakening your thoughts to this subject, its object will be attained. With this humble hope, has the following discourse been committed to the press, in which some of the considerations above suggested are much insisted upon. If we use plainness of speech, it is to those, who know that the excellence of spiritual food consists not in its novelty, nor in the elegance of style in which it is served up; but in its wholesome and nutritious nature. Nor is this Pastoral Address, if it may be allowed so honourable a name, intended as a censure for any past neglect: rather and most cordially, in behalf of the Church and the cause of religion, do we render grateful acknowledg-

ments to those of you, whether parishes or individuals, who have contributed for our Missionary fund. Something considerable was collected, which has been, and we trust continues to be, the means of doing much good.

The gospel has been preached and is now heard, in several small parishes, and some are likely to be preserved and raised up by your bounty. Even this little book is among the fruits, though the least worthy, of your liberality. As a body of Christians, we are very remiss in Missionary labours; but there are individuals among us whose praise is, or ought to be, in all the Churches: whose liberality and zeal have, under God, been chiefly instrumental in reviving the Church in these Eastern States, from its rapid decline. "Remember them, O my God, concerning this, and wipe not out their good deeds that they have done for the house of our God, and for the offices thereof."* Future generations shall rise up and call them blessed. May they never want that comfort of peace and salvation, which they would charitably

* Nehem. xiii. 14.

impart to others. May the invaluable blessings, which instrumentally they dispense to perishing sinners, be rewarded seven fold into their own bosoms.* The object of this address is to call your serious attention to a subject, which has not been generally and duly considered. When you reflect how much it is the duty of Christians to promulge

* In 1810, a Society was incorporated by the Legislature of Massachusetts, by the name of *The Trustees of Donations to the Protestant Episcopal Church*. About the same time, a number of gentlemen in Boston, by a liberal subscription, raised a sum of several thousand dollars, the commencement of a fund, which, as we have reason to hope, will, through the Divine blessing, be the instrument of great good for many ages. The Trustees have also, by one of their bye-laws, voluntarily and most generously obligated themselves to pay into their treasury the annual amount of five dollars each. With very great pleasure, we can now announce to the friends of our Church, that a donation of three thousand dollars, and another of two thousand dollars, have lately been made to our funds, by persons, who would not that their names should be known, as connected with these noble benefactions. But no modesty, we trust, will be able long to conceal names and deeds, so worthy of praise, and grateful remembrance.

the gospel ; how great are its blessings to mankind : how many of our fellow creatures, and even of our fellow citizens, are yet destitute of these blessings, and how little has been done to enlarge the borders of our Zion, in comparison of the efforts made and unceasingly making by other denominations, to advance the interest and increase the number of their respective communions ; your concern will be more engaged, for the honour and the interest of ours, not only that we should bear our full share of evangelical labours ; but that the doctrines and formularies of our Church, may be displayed, among the standards of other Christian communities ; and, that the people may be informed “ concerning this sect,” which in this country has been so much “ spoken against.” The most decided experience has fully shown, that this prejudice will yield to knowledge, and that those sincere believers, who are best acquainted with the Protestant Episcopal Church, are sure, with very few exceptions, to become its warmest friends. There is every reason to suppose, that thousands, not only of Christians, but of those who profess

no religion, though now much prejudiced against it, were they made acquainted with its true character, would rejoice in the purity of its tenets, and the efficacy of its apostolic administrations : not to mention the numbers (which to some would be astonishing) of those who are unacquainted, not only with the excellencies, but even with the name of the Episcopal Church. I am sensible, that we generally and very much disapprove of the means and artifices, too often used, to draw Christians from one denomination to another, and that we would not build on another man's foundation. But let us also shun the opposite extreme : let us not, through a false delicacy, forbear to teach what we sincerely believe. Let us modestly, and in the fear of God, propose our claims to orthodoxy ; preach the gospel, such as we think it to be, and let men judge, as the Lord shall direct, and their hearts be inclined. " I would have you wise unto that which is good, and simple concerning evil."

At the last Biennial Convention in Portsmouth, it was voted still to request the parishes to continue their contributions at Easter,

or some other Sunday, if to any of you another should be more convenient. A motion also was made for the establishment of a Missionary Society in the Diocese, the consideration of which is postponed to the next meeting of the Convention. Already has there been one established in Massachusetts ; but it is yet destitute of funds. A Missionary Society is also commencing in Rhode-Island for the purpose of propagating the gospel in that state.

You see then how much it is my duty, at this time especially, to call your attention to this subject. From various coincident considerations, *now* is evidently the favourable time for the encouragement of missionary labours. Never perhaps, since the apostles days, has the Lord more clearly manifested his willingness to bless the faithful labours of any church. Let us take heed, that we receive not this grace of God in vain. Many spiritual seasons we have lost ; let not this be added to the number. Let us be thankful to God for the many and great mercies already bestowed. Let us gladly cherish in our hearts a grateful remembrance of those pious

benefactors of our Church, whom the Lord has made the instruments of that degree of prosperity, which it now enjoys. And let nothing be neglected which will perpetuate their memory, and transmit the memorial of their charity, and labour of love, to the remotest generations. And why, we may well ask, is not the number of these bright constellations enlarged? When we consider how much it is in the power of many in this way to confer such great and permanent benefit upon mankind; how easily, not only by occasional contributions, but by testamentary distribution of property, for which they have no further use, and to which there is no reasonable claim, they might immortalize both their charity and their good name; and yet how many, in such cases, though pious, and sincere friends to the prosperity of religion, have chosen rather to bequeath their estates wholly to those, who neither need, nor are thankful for the bequest; to those, not unfrequently, who are really injured, and sometimes ruined by the sudden acquisition; to what cause shall we ascribe such apparent forgetfulness of a Christian's duty? May it

not in part be owing to our ingratitude ? because we do not, as we ought, cherish the remembrance of our benefactors ? For though men, in giving to religious uses, seek, or ought to seek, the honour of God, and the good, rather than the praise of men ; yet, while ungrateful, we are unworthy of benefits, and God in justice may withhold them from us. But chiefly, I fear, we neglect applying directly to Him, who is the true Source of all benefactions. A praying people God will bless. Let us humbly and devoutly look to him in prayer, that he will inspire us with a holy zeal for his glory, and the increase of his kingdom : That he will open the hearts of all our people, to whom he has given the means ; that, through his blessing, provision may be made for sending faithful ministers to preach his gospel to the poor, and to repair the waste places of Zion ; and that our Church may grow and prosper on the sure foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being ever and truly regarded as the chief Corner-Stone.

Other subjects are briefly considered in the following discourse ; and they are not here

passed in silence, because of less importance. Lest I should too much weary, or divide your attention, I have here called it to that point only, which is of the most immediate concern. As my situation and circumstances will not permit me to visit you, often as my inclination, and, perhaps, the good of the Churches may require, I may soon, should the Lord be pleased to continue my pastoral labours, avail myself of the facility, which the press affords, for some further communications respecting other and not less necessary things.

That the Lord may enlighten you in all knowledge, wisdom, and grace ; strengthen your hands to every good work ; and bless you with that comfort and peace which passeth knowledge, is the humble and earnest prayer of your pastor and friend,

A. V. GRISWOLD.

NOTE.

Since writing the foregoing Address, I have received a letter from the Secretary of "THE CHURCH MISSIONARY SOCIETY FOR AFRICA AND THE EAST," accompanied with a number of "books, which explain its objects and proceedings, and the general efforts which are making," by members of the Established Church of England, "to propagate the Christian faith among the Heathen;" desiring, in behalf of the Committee, "to interest the Episcopal Church of the United States" in the same good work; and kindly offering "to render *any aid* to such efforts in this great cause, as we may be inclined to make." From these communications it appears, that a zeal for propagating the Gospel is rapidly increasing in the Church of England, which promises great success. Soon, no doubt, will that Church, as she ought, take the lead in this holy warfare; and from her means and advantages, through the Divine blessing, may reasonably be expected the most happy effects. Thus have we another call, and a loud one, to this glorious work. A powerful Ally nobly offers to take us by the hand, and conduct our more feeble steps to the immense field, which now lies open to Missionary labours. Let us then immediately accustom our hands to labour in the smaller, but not less fertile vineyard around us. And let us rejoice in Him, who thus teaches our "fingers to fight the good fight of faith." "Let the praises of God be in our mouth, and a two-edged sword" "of the Spirit, which is the word of God," "in our hands." AMEN.

CHARGE,

ADDRESSED

TO THE CLERGY OF THE PROTESTANT EPISCOPAL
CHURCH IN THE EASTERN DIOCESE ;

Delivered before the Biennial Convention, in Portsmouth, Sept.
28, 1814 ; and published by their request.

REVEREND BRETHREN IN CHRIST,
AND CHRISTIAN FRIENDS :

THE twenty-third canon of the General Convention makes it the duty of every Bishop of our Church in these United States to deliver "Charges to the Clergy of his Diocese." This duty, in the events of Divine Providence, has devolved upon one the least worthy to address you on such an occasion, and who, at the present time, would rather hear, than speak. But, called as I am to this office, it is fruitless to waste your time with

apologies, or to anticipate those defects, which too soon will be apparent. The discourse, which is well heard, "with an honest and good heart," and faithfully applied to practical purposes, is seldom wholly unprofitable; and this good result may at least be expected from the following observations. It will be attempted to show the state and progress of our spiritual labours, and direct your attention to some of those very important duties, to which, as ministers of Jesus Christ, and stewards of the mysteries of God, we are now more especially called. And this will be attempted with a reverential respect to that awakening and comprehensive admonition of the Holy Ghost to the church in Sardis, written in the Revelation of St. John iii. 1, 2, most applicable indeed, and most awakening to myself; but an admonition, in which none who are Christians can be uninterested, and in which all, who are preachers of the Gospel, must have a deep concern: "I know thy works, that thou hast a name that thou livest and art dead. Be watchful, and strengthen the things which remain, that are ready to die."

First of all we ought, brethren, and most earnestly, to call for united and fervent acknowledgments of gratitude and praise to the Father of mercies, and our Lord Jesus Christ, that this Convention is permitted once more to meet, under circumstances, so auspicious to the continued peace and prosperity of our communion. When we reflect on the many and complicated discouragements and obstacles, under which the formation of this Diocese commenced; the diminished and declining state of our churches; the unsocial habits of our brethren, from their remote and unorganized situation; while the avails of the property, which had been charitably designed for religious purposes, were, in a great degree, diverted into other channels, and alienated from the use intended by the pious Donors:—and when we further consider, notwithstanding these impediments, what, and how much beyond our expectation has been our prosperity: what blessing has attended the few zealous efforts which have already been made; what unanimity has prevailed in our counsels; what success attended our measures, must we not see, and can we hesitate to ac-

knowledge the hand of God, and the special favour of his kind Providence? How ought this earnest of his goodness to awaken our zeal, and animate us to greater and persevering exertions! Our work is but commenced. How vast the field which opens before us! The harvest truly is great, and the labourers few. To us few, reverend brethren, has it pleased the Lord to commit the care of so large a portion of his vineyard. We are appointed watchmen on this hill of Zion. Like the tribe of Levi, under the law, our duty and privilege it is to encamp "round about the Tabernacle of testimony." And while we thankfully acknowledge the hand of God in his mercies past, let us not forget the duties neglected, and the work still undone.

And here is presented a less pleasant view: here we behold ruins and desolation, and of "the things, which remain," many "that are ready to die." Let us view the present condition of our Churches, not to compliment ourselves with the little that we may have done, nor to solace our minds with the flourishing state of a few solitary plants in so large a field: but rather to deplore the desolations,

which overspread the land ; to humble ourselves for seasons neglected, and by redoubled diligence and zeal to redeem the time, which has been lost.

Among the things, which demand your wisest counsels and most vigorous efforts, stand first and most conspicuous the small number of our churches ; the declining state of some, which yet remain ; and the still less number of ministers to labour in them. From the last of these evils evidently have proceeded, in no small degree, the other two. Many opportunities have passed away, and now are lost, where, in various parts of these four States, churches with large and respectable congregations might have been established ; but, through want of clergymen to encourage the wishes, animate the zeal, and lead the devotions of the people, necessity has compelled them to form religious connexions less agreeable to their choice and belief. In other instances, and they are not few, efforts are still making by pious individuals, or by small organized societies, to commence, or to continue their existence as Episcopal Churches ; but there are no ministers of Christ to second

their exertions ; to preach the word, and administer among them in holy things. Clouds of despondency darken around them ; their efforts languish, and their zeal is “ ready to die.” And, notwithstanding the few bright exceptions, which enliven the scene, we may well take up the lamentation of the prophet, and bewail “ that the ways of Zion do mourn ;” “ her gates are desolate ;” her pleasant things decay ; “ her people sigh” while “ they seek their bread ;”—while they feel the “ famine of hearing the word of God.” What is highly necessary to the increase and prosperity of the Church in every Diocese is peculiarly so in this : a competent number of clergymen, endued with knowledge, piety, and zeal. Ministers of Christ we need, who possess the Spirit of their divine Master, and emulate the fidelity of his first apostles ; who have a serious concern for the salvation of mankind ; a deep sense of the truths which they teach, and who illustrate and enforce their heavenly doctrine, by their own good example. We need those, who will “ seek *first* the Kingdom of God and his righteousness :” whose meat

and drink it is to do his will : who can renounce the world for Christ's sake, and prefer his glory to their own. In Churches, well established, a very moderate share of these necessary things ;—a decent deportment, and formal routine of official duties, may preserve them from decline. But here we have to *strengthen* the things which remain : we have to build up the waste places of Zion ; to repair the ruins of what is decayed ; nay, to build anew from the foundation. There is still, in many places, a call for our labours, where, by proper means and due attention, new churches of our Communion may yet, with the Divine blessing, be raised up ; where we may apparently be very instrumental in promoting the general interests of good morals and true religion ; of extending the Redeemer's Kingdom, and the Knowledge and comforts of his Salvation ; and contributing to the increase and stability of public happiness and social order.

It is a duty then, highly incumbent, brethren, on us, whom the Lord has set as watchmen on this portion of Zion's towers, by all possible means to supply this deficiency

of labourers ; by praying fervently and daily, that the Lord of the harvest will send them ; by encouraging worthy clergymen to come amongst and continue with us, and by bringing forward suitable candidates for the holy ministry : remembering however, that their qualifications are far more essential, than their numbers. Those, who have not the necessary foundation of inward piety and love of God ;—who appear not, from conscientious motives and a deep sense of its importance, to be seriously and zealously engaged in the sacred cause, however splendid or popular may be their talents, will be of little real use in any Church, and least of all in ours. There are those, we fear, and their numbers not few, who run to this work before they are sent : who enter the sacred ministry, without a due sense of its nature, and of the awful responsibility attached to the office. Those, most worthy and best qualified, are often the most diffident ; and such should be sought for and encouraged to devote themselves to God. We need such, as have the good of religion more at heart, than its emoluments : those, who follow Christ for his sake ; who

are willing to labour, before they reap ;—to make some sacrifice in the Redeemer's cause, that the poor may have the Gospel preached unto them.

It is a further duty, incumbent on us, in which however we can do but little without the aid of our lay brethren and the people of our congregations, to supply such Churches as are poor and destitute, with the preaching of the word, the administration of the sacraments, and other means of religious edification. In our last Biennial Convention, some laudable measures were adopted for effecting this charitable work. By collections in our Churches it was intended to raise a little fund to employ Missionaries within this Diocese ; and scarce in any part of the world can they more be needed. This promised us the means, in some degree, of carrying the Gospel to those, who seldom hear it ; and of extending essential and permanent benefits to many small and vacant parishes. Nor did our success, the first year, disappoint our humble expectations. But, since, the result has been painfully discouraging. Has this falling-off been occasioned by the pressure of

the times ? or is it owing, Brethren, to our own remissness in not setting before our congregations the importance of the duty, and the great benevolence of the object ? We surely cannot suppose, that the people of our flocks are less liberal, than other Christians. The testimonies of a generous and charitable spirit, so great and so often repeated, which we have seen and received, forbid us to ascribe this failure to sordid principles. Is it not rather to be feared, that we have not faithfully called them to this duty ? that we have not duly set before them its importance ? Have we laboured, as we ought, to awaken in them a spirit of love for the souls of men ? a desire to evangelize the world, to extend the Redeemer's Kingdom into distant lands, and communicate the consolations of the everlasting Gospel to those who sit in darkness and the shadow of death ? Is it not the fact, that our own hearts are cold in this glorious work ? Are we not too indifferent to the spiritual famine, by which our fellow creatures are daily perishing ? It is our Lord's will, that we "preach the Gospel to every creature :"—that none should perish through

want of knowledge. Such is the compassion of the Divine Saviour for dying sinners, that he has given commission for proclaiming the good tidings of his salvation to all the people and nations of the earth.

True it is, that each minister of Christ has his peculiar charge;—his family of Christians to provide for,—a little flock committed to his care. In this charge it is indeed of the first importance, that he be found faithful:—that the blessings of religion be diffused through every part of his cure, and each cottage be consoled with the salvation of our God. But we are bound to extend our care, as the Lord shall give us means, to other parts of his vineyard, and call upon our flocks to assist us. In this labour of love, should every Christian, according to his state and abilities, unite. And what Christian will say, that he cannot contribute something, to so good a work? And who, that is able, will refuse to assist us? Freely have we received: freely let us give. Shall any, to whom the arm of the Lord is revealed;—who are called to a knowledge of Divine grace, and enjoy themselves the blessings of the Gospel, feel no solicitude to dis-

pense the same blessings to all whom they equally concern? Are we refreshed, at the fountain of living waters, with bread enough and to spare, and yet have no compassion for those who are perishing with hunger? who are parched in a thirsty land where no water is? In all those noble efforts, which are daily making, to diffuse the light of the holy Scriptures, and the knowledge of salvation to the remotest parts of the earth,—to the darkest regions of the habitable world, shall our Church only take no part? Shall we, who ought, from the purity of our doctrines, and the charity which we profess to lead the way in every good work, be the last to engage in the best of all works, the spreading of the Saviour's Gospel? Far from sending it to distant regions, we neglect to promulgate it among ourselves. Considering our advantages, and how much the Lord has smiled upon us, no part, perhaps, of the Christian field is less cultivated, than this in which we are appointed to labour.

Happily for the general state of religion, and to the great honour of the Christian name, the disciples of Jesus are, at the present day,

awakening to a sense of this duty, and sending the light of the Gospel to those who sit in darkness. The walls of Zion, we trust, are extending on its true *foundation* and *chief Corner-stone*: on “the apostles and prophets, and Jesus Christ himself.” His kingdom is enlarged by “the sword of the spirit which is *the word of God*.” Most astonishing have been the exertions, and not less wonderful the effects of Bible Societies, now extended, or rapidly extending through the greater part of the Christian world. This is an era of Gospel light, surpassed only by that of its first propagation: and the great miracle of the day of Pentecost is almost repeated. Again do the apostles, though all Galileans, “preach the Gospel to every creature.” Parthians and Medes—Cretes and Arabians—the dwellers in Africa, and the remotest parts of Asia, “hear them speak, *in their own tongues*, the wonderful works of God.” Much is already done, and more, we may hope, will be speedily effected, by the propagation of the written word. It will tend, we may trust, to what is so much by all good men to be desired, the union of Christians in faith and affection—in

doctrine and practice. In proportion as they receive these living waters pure from the holy fountain, they will be refreshed with the same comforts, and imbibe the same spirit. With the divine blessing it will facilitate that for which we daily, and, it is to be hoped, most sincerely pray ; “ that all, who profess and call themselves Christians, may be led into the way of truth, and hold the faith in unity of spirit ; in the bond of peace, and in righteousness of life.”

But still to those, who have the Bible in their hands, may be applied the words of St. Paul to the Romans : “ How shall they believe in him, of whom they have not heard ? and how shall they hear, without a preacher ? and how shall they preach, except they be sent ?” The holy Scriptures, excellent as they are, will be, in a great measure, but a dead letter to those who have no spiritual teachers. God in his wisdom has appointed the ordinance of preaching, as the ordinary means of conversion, and of instructing his people in truth and righteousness. Unquestionably it is the duty of all, like the wise Bereans, to search the scriptures, and to learn

directly from the pen of inspiration, what God has taught: but will they ordinarily do this, and will they sufficiently understand what they read, except, like the same Bereans, they have first heard the word *spoken*? except, by messengers sent of God, their consciences are awakened to the serious concerns of their future state? In those parts only of the spiritual vineyard, where faithful ministers “labour in word and doctrine,” can we expect, in much abundance, “the fruit of good living.”

But justice requires us to acknowledge, that this duty has not been wholly neglected. Not only is the Bible sent to instruct the ignorant, but teachers also to bear it: to publish its sacred contents, and to preach the Gospel in this country and in foreign nations, where Christ before had not been named. In America, and in England, there are Missionary Societies, which have manifested a zeal for propagating the Gospel, becoming those who profess it;—becoming those who feel its blessings, and are actuated by its heavenly principles. But the harvest is immensely great, and the labourers yet but very

few. With sorrow too and with shame must we add, that our Church has taken but little part in this good work. There is no greater stigma, which has justly been affixed to the Established Church of England, and sullies that reputation, which so eminently she has acquired in the Christian world, than her apathy in regard to propagating her faith. In all manner of charities her children much abound; but in this department—in this work of evangelists, they have been unaccountably deficient. They contribute freely to promote the general work, but have done little to extend their own communion. In few of the British colonies has Episcopacy, till very lately, been completely organized. In these States, before the revolution, while other denominations of Christians enjoyed the full establishment of their respective systems, the Episcopal Churches here were not permitted to have a Bishop. But now we rejoice to bear testimony that the Church of England is awaking from this lethargy, and arising in her strength. A voice is heard from the pale of the Establishment, exhorting her members to missionary labours—a voice

that speaks not in vain : and soon, no doubt, will she appear in the foremost ranks of the evangelizing host.

But there is one portion of the Christian Church still delinquent, and however humiliating may be the confession, truth will compel us to acknowledge, that it is this portion to which we belong : even the Protestant Episcopal Church in the United States. It must however be admitted, that there are here some recent and honourable exceptions. Several of our sister Churches in the other States are now making very considerable efforts to spread the Gospel. Where then shall we find a Christian community, so little engaged in extending its faith as ours ? And yet the Lord, patient in goodness, and abundant in mercy has most evidently manifested a willingness to bless our labours. But how long will he be with us ? how long will he suffer us ? Can we still expect his favour, while our zeal, if indeed it be among "the things which remain," is thus languishing and "ready to die ?"

Now then is it high time to wake out of

sleep. Let us not by our indolence, tempt the Lord to forsake us.

Is it not a fact, that we place improper reliance upon our orthodoxy, as supposing that truth will spread of itself and bear away the prize ; while others on a worse foundation, by using better diligence, build with more rapidity ? How is it to be lamented that knowledge and zeal, which God has joined together, should so often by man be put asunder ! Divine truth was never popular in this world, and never will be popular, till the nature of man is changed. While the true labourer *sleeps*, the enemy, ever vigilant, sows tares ; and when sown, they take such root that they *must grow*. They who are zealous in propagating the doctrines of Christ, though with some mixture of error, will be more successful, and indeed more useful, than others who, with a sounder creed, are lukewarm. If we would maintain that rank among the champions of the cross to which we think ourselves entitled, let us not rely on the paper arms of canons, creeds and articles ; but put on the whole armour of God : let us press forwards amidst the perils of the holy warfare, the first

in labours, or not the first in fame. When Peter the apostle was going forth to the good fight of faith, how did his Master direct him to distinguish his love above that of others? By his fidelity in dispensing the words of life: "feed my lambs—feed my sheep." Those who thus "rule well," and "labour in the word and doctrine," with fidelity, shall "be counted worthy of double honour." Let us be so distinguished. Let us wake out of this sleep. It is time that this too just reproach of indolence should be taken away from our Church, and that we, who profess the purest faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, should no longer be the coldest in zeal for enlarging the borders of his kingdom. It is time, that we show our faith by our works. Is it not our duty to impart the bread of this life to the hungry? And is it less the duty of Christians to make known the will of God to the ignorant, and to rescue thoughtless sinners from misery and shame? Was the command of Christ, to preach his Gospel to every creature, limited to his first apostles? Has the merciful Saviour, no love—no grace—no concern for sinners at the present day?

Is it not the duty still, of every minister, and every Christian, according to his means and opportunities, to sound abroad these tidings of salvation? Was it necessary for the first disciples to labour so abundantly in word and doctrine;—must they encounter perils by land, and perils by water;—be in season—out of season: boldly withstand persecution, flames, and death; and reprove, rebuke, and exhort with all long suffering; and is it now become of so little concern;—are the souls of men now so worthless, and their salvation of so small account, as to give us no anxiety or solicitude! as not to be worth the sacrifice of a few hours from the year, or a few pence from our abundance! “Tell it not in Gath.” Why did our blessed Saviour suffer such indignities, and the cruel death of the cross? why, with such awakening concern, send his Gospel to all the nations of the earth? to what purpose were all the labours and sufferings and martyrdom of apostles, and evangelists and prophets, except it be a matter of the utmost importance that men should hear and believe the Gospel? except it be an indispensable duty, and most benevolent work in all Christians, to impart to mankind the knowledge and the means of salvation.

But I am not calling your attention now to the pagan world, nor to those who, in distant quarters of the globe, still sit in darkness. God be praised, that they are not altogether neglected : that the Lord has raised up those, who are daily dispensing his saving word to the ends of the earth. Their praise is in all the Churches ; and the Lord shall reward their labour of love. My present views, if more humble, I trust are not of a less useful nature. In no part of the world is a better field, nor perhaps a larger, for missionary labours, than in our own country, and even in this Diocese. Let us provide first for our own house. Here shall we find work, more than our hands at present are able to do. But let our charity be unbounded. Let it be our care and delight, as opportunity may offer, to impart to all others those invaluable blessings, which on us the Lord has so freely and so bountifully bestowed. Let our Church excel as much in her zeal for God, as we trust she does in the purity of her faith and her worship. Let not the minister of Christ be wholly employed in trimming the little lamp of his parochial cure ; let us not be content with feeding the fire of heaven upon

our own altars ; but let the sacred flame be extended, and its light shine in darker regions. Let us do the work of evangelists. Let the work begin in our hearts, and in our families ; let it extend to our friends and neighbours, and to the humblest cottage of our respective parishes ; nor let it cease till it pervades our country, and all the ends of the world have seen the salvation of our God.

Permit me also at this time to direct your attention to the provisions and duties required in the 45th Canon. The neglect of them in this Diocese has already disgraced us in the General Convention, and whilst continued, must defeat, in no inconsiderable degree, the object of the Canon. The utility of these provisions, when duly carried into effect, and the ill consequences of disregarding them, you may learn from the Canon itself, and also from the Pastoral Address, of the House of Bishops, in the year of our Lord 1811. It will suffice, I trust, to remind you, that every minister of our Church ought faithfully to keep such true records of his parochial transactions, and yearly transmit them to the State Conventions, as the rules of our Church require. It is not to be supposed, that any

clergyman is so culpably inattentive to his duty, as to neglect the keeping of such records. The trouble of sending them to the Convention, or to the Bishop of the Diocese, is very little, in comparison with the advantages which it will produce. Suffer me then, brethren, to intreat and to enjoin it upon you to be punctual in your compliance with this Canon : let us never appear again in the General Convention, without these returns, regular and complete.

On the very important subject of confirmation, and the duties connected with it, there is much more to be said than the present time and occasion will admit. Here we are loudly called to strengthen the things which remain. The administration of this apostolic ordinance has, for an obvious reason, been but recently introduced into the greater part of this Diocese ; and our people generally are not sufficiently acquainted with its nature and design, nor do they appreciate as they ought its practical utility. To the praise of God's goodness and grace, we must acknowledge, that this rite has already been much blessed among us. You know well, that in the partial and imperfect practice, which it has al-

ready obtained, how very much it has apparently contributed to the increase of piety and true godliness. But neither the excellence nor the authority of this institution will be generally understood, nor can we reap the full benefit of the ordinance, till our congregations—our youth especially, are well instructed in its nature and design, and their duty respecting it; that they may not, as is now too much the case, neglect, at the suitable age, to receive confirmation; nor, which is much more essential, receive it without sufficient instruction in the rudiments of Christianity, and the due preparation of repentance towards God, and faith towards the Lord Jesus Christ. It is lamentable to find, and it is painful now to mention, that no inconsiderable part of those, who frequent our religious assemblies, scarce know what we mean, when calling upon them to be confirmed. In our pastoral visitations, we “bring strange things to their ears.” “When for the time they ought to be teachers, they have need that we teach them—which be the first principles of the oracles of God.” It is true that, in the baptismal office, the Sponsors are told that the child, when duly qualified, must “be

brought to the Bishop to be confirmed by him." Is this sufficient instruction for the performance of a very important duty, and at the distance of several years? And even of this, little as it is, are congregations, we may fear, sometimes deprived, by the administering of baptism after they have retired; or perhaps in the vestry room, or a private house.

Sermons also, I gladly acknowledge, and excellent ones, are preached on this subject, before most of our congregations; but so rarely, and in such seasons, as to be very inadequate to the desired effect. It is, if I mistake not, much the practice to preach on this subject at those seasons only, once perhaps in three years, when the ordinance is to be administered, and but a short time before; which discourse some do not hear; others do not sufficiently understand, nor do any have due time to consider of the subject. The natural consequence is, that a very considerable part of those who ought to be confirmed, either postpone it for want of information, or of time to prepare; or, what is much worse, they perform it without such knowledge and sincere devotion, as are necessary to obtain the spiritual benefit of the

ordinance. They who thus lose one opportunity, perhaps before another occurs are dead, or absent, or for the like reason still postpone it ; or, what is worst of all, may have devoted themselves to the world and its vanities, and become callous to all religious impressions.

These, brethren, are not imaginary things ; but evils which are often realized. For reformation, under God, we must look to you. Let more time and care be systematically appropriated to this branch of religious instruction. It is a duty, and a very important one, of every parish minister, to see that those of his charge, who are of proper age and standing for confirmation, be well informed of its use and excellence ; that they may be in constant preparation to witness that good confession before God and his Church, when opportunity shall call them. Be careful also that none are presented for confirmation before they have attained to an age and understanding capable of a reasonable faith in God, and a knowledge of our salvation in Jesus Christ. Let none be urged to the duty against their will. Their offering themselves to God is to be their own act, and should be their free choice ; “ for God,” as in all

things, so especially in this, "loveth a cheerful giver." Let none be encouraged to come to this ordinance, who appear not to be influenced by religious motives;—by a humble, sincere, and devout desire to serve God and to obtain his blessing. You know well what reproach has been cast upon our Church, and how much this holy ordinance has been brought into disrepute from inattention to this most essential part of our duty. Not that we are to suppose this evil exists, or ever existed in our Church, in such degree as uncharitable adversaries have represented: but, that so great an evil should exist in any degree; that such a reproach should be ever cast, and we unable to refute it, is a humiliating reflection. By well doing, let us put to silence the ignorance of those, who unjustly censure; and evince to pious and candid Christians, of all denominations, that we put no vain confidence in outward acts of religion; nor ascribe any efficacy to our administrations, repugnant to the word of God. We use the means, in humble reliance upon his promised grace; but expect no spiritual blessings, except our hearts are prepared, through grace, to receive them. Let these things be so often and clear-

ly taught, and so uniformly practised, that none, who have ears to hear, and eyes to see, can misapprehend them. In the confirmation office, as also in that of baptism, are a few words in a sense somewhat different from their modern use.* These have perplexed some serious Christians who do not consid-

* In the first prayer of the Confirmation Office, are the following words :--“ Almighty and everlasting God, who hast vouchsafed to regenerate these thy servants, with water and the Holy Ghost, and hast given unto them forgiveness of all their sins.” These words have reference to their baptism, acknowledging God’s great mercies exhibited to mankind, and sealed to the faithful in that sacrament. We pretend not to judge the heart, or to know whose sins are forgiven of God, or whose retained; nor whether any one is certainly renewed in the spirit of his mind. But it is the belief of our Church, (as it is indeed of most other Churches, declared in their Standards ;---their Articles, Platforms and Confessions.) that baptism is *the sign of regeneration*, representing, by the washing of water, the forgiveness of sins, through Jesus Christ, and that “ we also should walk in newness of life.” A person may outwardly receive this “ washing of regeneration,” without “ the renewing of the Holy Ghost,”---he may “ be born of water, and *not* of the Spirit :” he may receive “ the outward sign, or form in baptism,” and not “ the inward part, or thing signified.” But in this prayer the ordinance is supposed to have been duly administered, and worthily received : it is supposed, that the persons present, desiring to be confirmed, have been truly baptized, according to the institution of Jesus Christ, with such faith and repentance, preceding or following as his Gospel requires. If this be the case (as it ought to be with all, before they come to that ordinance,) they are regenerate, in the sense in which the word is used by our Church ; they are ingrafted into Christ’s spiritual kingdom, and their sins past are forgiven. In this sense we use these words of the prayer : we humbly acknowledge God’s mercies, manifested to his people in the sacrament of baptism. And when persons have been baptized, and present themselves before the Lord’s minister, desiring publickly, in the presence of God, and the congregation of his people, to ratify and confirm the obligations of that sacrament, and acknowledge themselves bound to believe, and to do what they had undertaken, or their Sponsors had undertaken for them ; it is surely not improper for the Lord’s minister, in this prayer, charitably to suppose that these persons are sincere ;---that the Lord’s mercies, by them are thankfully received, according to his will. Farther than this, we presume not to say that any are regenerate, or that their sins are forgiven.

er the ancient and scriptural sense in which we use them ; and the adversary takes advantage by perverting it to excite a prejudice against us. Let those expressions be frequently and clearly explained to our congregations, who will then see that the objections so often raised are but “ strifes of words.”

Parents also, and sponsors, should often be reminded of their duty, and exhorted and encouraged to be faithful in the important charge, committed to them by the Church of Christ :—to “ see that their children are taught, so soon as they shall be able to learn,” the solemn obligations, and also the inestimable privileges of the Christian covenant.

And here we may number among the things which, though through God’s goodness they yet remain, are ready to die, “ *sponsors in baptism.*” Perhaps no institution so wise and salutary was ever so neglected. Considering how very important it is that the children, who are made members of Christ, should be brought up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord ; our Church requires one at least, besides the Parents, to engage in this duty. it is expected certainly that the parents do it.* But in how many thousand instances

* Parents are bound by nature, and by the word of God to de

they do it not. They are taken away by death : or they journey into distant lands. From ignorance or some infirmity they may be incapable of teaching their children ; or from indolence or vice, indisposed to do it. How great then is the blessing to such children, that the Church has appointed one or more of its pious members to be their god-fathers, or godmothers : to be their spiritual parents in the Lord, and train them up in the paths of godliness ! But how deplorably in some instances are these promising fruits blasted, by the negligence of Sponsors !

Perhaps some will object, “ If such be the duty of Sponsors, who would undertake it ? ” Permit me rather to ask, what real Christian would *not* undertake it ? Will we do nothing for the Lord's sake ? Or will we be weary in well doing ? What charity, more benevolent or acceptable, can adorn a disciple of Jesus Christ ?

And not only parents and sponsors, but every Christian, according as he is able,

this duty for their children, without being their sponsors in baptism. The Church of England, considering this, and also how often, through indulgence to their children, and other failings they neglect to give them religious instruction, requires three sponsors for a child, neither of which shall be its parent. This therefore is required, not as some absurdly object, to deprive the parent of any right ; but to increase the certainty of benefit to his child.

should assist in this, and all other good and charitable works. The most faithful minister, and the most able, can do but little without the co-operation of his people. In every branch of his parochial duties, the assistance of the pious members of his Church is of vast importance, especially in teaching the rudiments of christianity.

I shall conclude with a few words respecting the state of piety and godliness in our congregations. Vital religion, through the Lord's goodness, is not, we humbly trust, decreasing in our Churches, but the contrary; yet the deficiency of this one thing needful is too obvious to need proof, and too essential to be passed in silence. We see, and it is painful to see, what wickedness still prevails in the world. And among those "who have a name that they live;" who are called Christians, it is not less lamentable to see so much love of the world, and coldness towards God, and each other: to see such ignorance of Christ and of the holy Scriptures, where means and opportunities of acquiring religious knowledge abound:—to see those doctrines of the cross which are the hope of man, and "the power of God, and the wisdom of

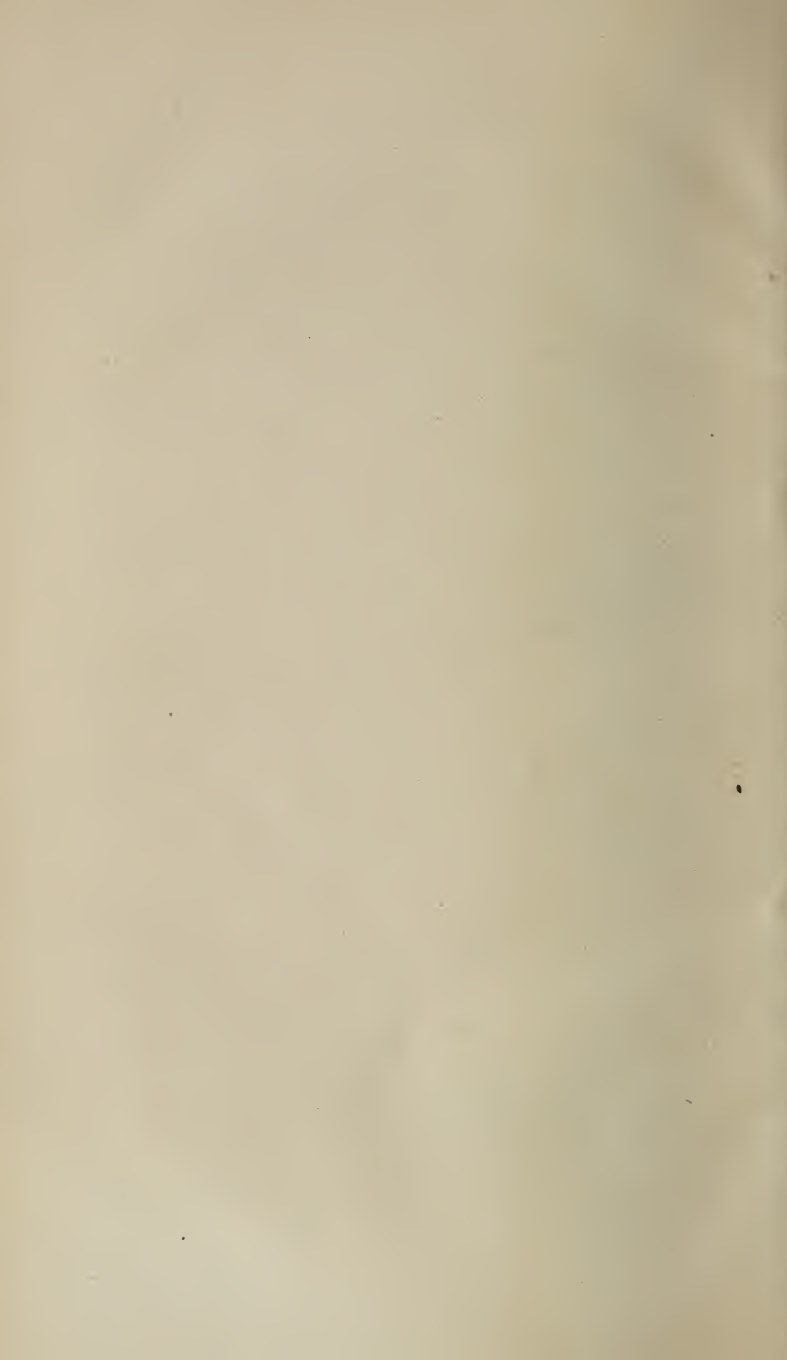
God," degraded at the footstool of human reason ; to see, in a word, so little concern, and less zeal for those tenets, and sacred rites which chiefly distinguish the religion of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. With what awakened apprehension, my Reverend Brethren,—with what trembling solicitude should we reflect, that for these things we may be in some degree accountable ! If ungodliness prevails in our flocks, we are not released from the responsibility ; we have not *delivered our own souls*, till we have given warning, and declared the whole counsel of God, by our preaching and example. We are ordained to be " the salt of the earth ; but if the salt have lost its *savour*," it is good for nothing. Our Divine Master has commanded his Ministers to be wise as serpents, and harmless as doves : and no ministers, that he has ever sent, have had more need than we of such *prudence and innocency*. We have to contend, not only with all the impediments and difficulties common to those who preach the Gospel ; but, unhappily, with the préjudices of our Christian brethren of other denominations, against the Episcopal Church ; which prejudices, you well know, prevail, and

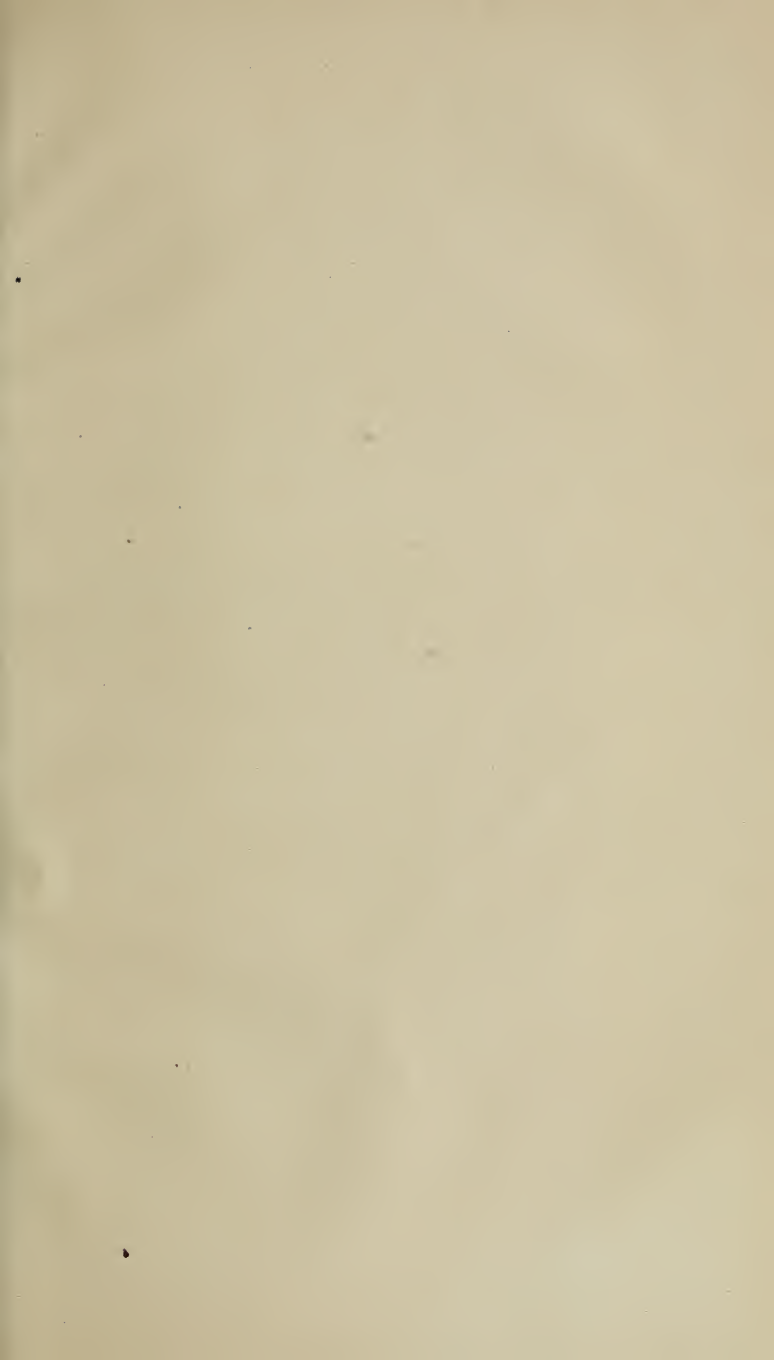
in a very great degree, in most parts of these Eastern States. It is certain, that thousands and tens of thousands are led to believe, that we neglect the essentials of religion ; that we do not teach the depravity of human nature ; the necessity of conversion ; the renewal of the heart by the Holy Spirit ; and that we are justified, not by our works, but by our faith in the merits and sacrifice of Jesus Christ. Our Articles, you will say, may teach them the contrary. True : but they may not read our Articles ; or they may think, that *we do not read them*. Let *us* teach them the contrary. Let the true doctrines of our Church, on these points, be clearly and often taught, according to their importance. Add line upon line, and precept upon precept, till prejudice shall give place to conviction. In teaching our flocks, let us carefully endeavour to lay the foundation of repentance, faith, and sincere piety. To instruct them in moral righteousness, without this foundation, is like building a house upon the sand.

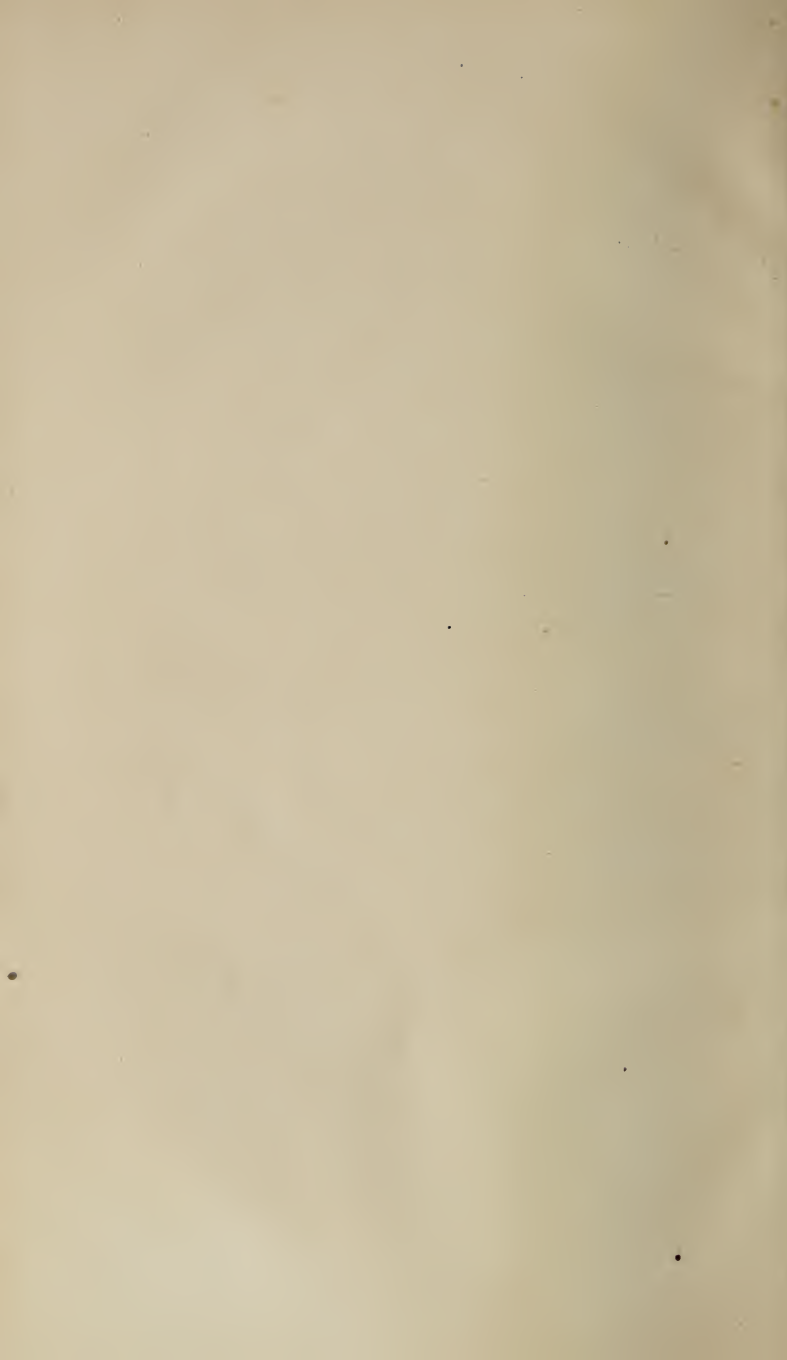
And let us “ take heed to *ourselves*,” as well as “ to our doctrine.” Let us be sure, that we possess that, which we pretend to dispense. Shall we preach “ repentance towards

God," while we live to the world? or "faith towards the Lord Jesus Christ," while, by our own conduct, we put him to open shame? How can we persuade others, by "the terrors of the Lord, except those terrors have awakened our own hearts to righteousness? or impart to them comforts, which we have never felt? Let us not only embrace the truth, as it is in Christ Jesus; but adorn the doctrine of God in all things. Let us show by our own example, how men should walk and please him. Let us labour not to please men, but to save them; and evince, by our zeal for their spiritual interest, that we seek not theirs, but them. If we would have them "so account of us as stewards of the mysteries of God," let us never forget, that "it is required in stewards, that a man be found faithful."

That we may be so found; and that the Churches, committed to our care, may increase in numbers, piety, and zeal, the Lord mercifully grant, through Jesus Christ: to whom, with the Father and the blessed Spirit, be ascribed all glory and praise forever. Amen.

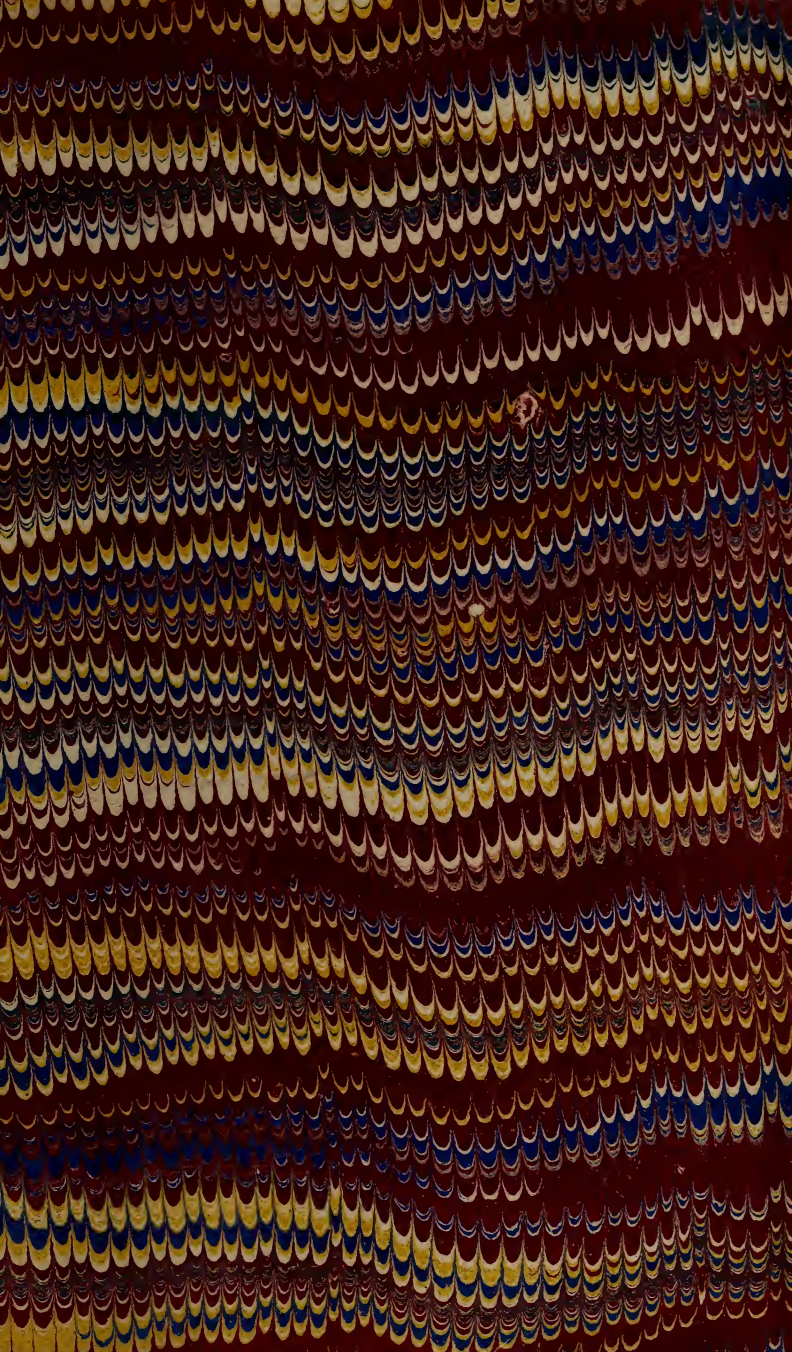






BX
5965





LIBRARY OF CONGRESS



0 021 897 786 8