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Continued on last page.

MAGAZINE

OF THE

GERMAN REFORMED CHURCH.

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SEPTEMBER, 1831.

Vol. IV.

SUGGESTIONS FOR STUDYING THE SCRIPTURES WITH ADVANTAGE.

That the Bible is the great charter of our privileges as Christians—that it is amply sufficient to make us wise unto salvation—that it is a record of unalterable and eternal truth—that it is an inexhaustable treasury of heavenly doctrines, of the purest precepts, and of the most consoling promises, is admitted by all who acknowledge its Divine inspiration. Yet multitudes derive from it no saving benefit, either because they altogether neglect to peruse it or because they do not peruse it in a right spirit; and even among those who are really anxious to profit by its sacred contents, few reap all the benefit which they are calculated to afford. I purpose, therefore to point out a few practical suggestions for studying the Scriptures with advantage.

1. In the first place, Whenever we open the sacred Volume, we should endeavour to realize the infinite Majesty of the Divine Author .- In consequence of the fall of man, a haughty spirit of independence is so inseparably allied to our moral constitution, that we are too apt, even while reading the Scriptures, to lean unconsciously to our own understanding; we are more inclined to bring the truth of God to the level of our finite reason. 'n to receive it with that humility which our blessed Lord inculcated. when he said, "Except ye be converted and become as little children, "e cannot enter into the kingdom of heaven;" a temper of mind to which his Apostle also alludes, when he speaks of our "becoming fools" in order that we may be wise. From this bitter root has proceeded much of that hostility v 'h which a simple declaration of the doctrines of Christianity has in every age been met, as well as those various ramifications of false doctrine which so frequently harass the seemingly penetrating, but really perplexed and vacillating, mind. Much also of the the theological warfare which has been maintained among those who are agreed in the fundamental tenets of vital godliness, and into the lists of which the best of men have sometimes entered, has had its origin in the same cause. How common is

Vol. IV .- XIX.

it to see even persons professing piety, so fondly attached to particular systems of doctrine, as to make no scruple of bending, by a laboured explanation, any text which does not seem to favour their preconceived opinions, and thus refusing to embrace "the whole counsel of God." But surely if such persons were deeply affected with right conceptions of the inconceivable greatness of that Being by whose inspiration the Scriptures were given, they would not easily fall into snarcs such as these. They would be sensible that the perfect understanding of many of the subjects revealed in the sacred writings, especially whatever relates to their great Anthor, is for beyond the province of human intellect. Every attempt to fathour, by our limited reason, the deep things of the Most High, or to reconcile with systematic nicety particular points which, though clearly revealed, may not appear to our contracted view perfectly accordant with each other, or with our idea of what is right and befitting the Almighty, must be utterly vain and futile. Humility, contrition of spirit, steady faith, implicit confidence, a disposition to receive, in its unsophisticated meaning, all that God says, because he says it-these are the dispositions which become man when his Maker condescends to be his Instructor, and in the exercise of which alone we can make any profitable attainments in spiritual knowledge. The omniscient Creator must be best acquainted with the fittest method of conveying to our understandings a right knowledge of his own being, attributes, dispensations, and decrees, and if we are willing to construe the words of a human author in their plain obvious signification, surely we ought not to refuse to do so with regard to him that speaketh from heaven. This sentiment is very beautifully expressed by Saurin in one of his sermons. "I freely grant," says he, "that had I consulted my own reason only, I could not have discovered some of the mysteries of the Gospel. Nevertheless, when I think on the grandeur of God-when I cast my eyes on that vast ocean-when I consider that immense ALL-nothing astonishes me-nothing staggers me-nothing seems to me inadmissible, how incomprehensible soever it may be. When the subject is divine, I am ready to believe all, to admit all, to receive all, provided I be convinced that it is God himself who speaks to me, or any one on his part. After this I am no longer astonished that there are three distinct persons in one Divine Essence; one God, and yet a Father, a Son, and a Holy Spirit. Either religion must tell us nothing about God, or what it tells us must be beyond our capacities; and in displaying even the borders of this immense ocean. it must needs exhibit a vast extent in which our feeble sight is lost. But what surprises me, what staggers me, what affrights me, is to see a diminutive creature, a contemptible man, a little ray of light glimmering through a few feeble organs, argue a point with the Supreme Being; oppose that Intelligence who sitteth at the helm of the world; question what he affirms. dispute what He determines, appeal from his decisions, and even after God has given him evidence, reject all doctrines that are above his capacity. Enter into thy nothingness, mortal creature! What madness fills thee! How dost thou dare, thou who art but a point-thou whose essence is but an atom -to measure thyself with the Supreme Being; with him who fills heaven and earth; him whom the heaven-the heaven of heavens cannot contain?

"Canst thou by searching find out God? canst thou find out the Almighty

to perfection?" "*

2. The necessity of an entire dependence upon the enlightening and teaching influences of the Holy Spirit ought always to be kept in view in pervsing the word of God. He who originally dictated the sacred Scriptures is alone able to convey to our understandings their true meaning; and unless his Holy Spirit shall cast a ray of Heavenly illumination upon our minds, no power of genius, no erudition, however great, will be able to conduct us to a saving knowledge of their contents. Not, indeed, that there is any deficiency in the revelation itself: to suppose so, would be as absurd as for a blind man to maintain that the sun did not shine, because he was unable to discern its splendour. No: the defect is in ourselves: we are by nature, in a spiritual sense, born blind, "having the understanding darkened, and being alienated from the life of God through the ignorance that is in us because of the blindness of our hearts." "The natural man understandeth not the things of the Spirit of God; neither can be know them, because they are spiritually discerned." But this declaration does not stand alone; it is accompanied with an assurance, that "he which is spiritual" (that is, a partaker of the Holy Spirit) "dicerneth all thing." St. Paul declares in the same chapter, with respect to himself and the Corinthian converts, that they had already, "received of this Spirit," and, in other places, we find the same heavenly boon promised freely and without exception to all who seek it. Two passages in particular deserve to be noted. "If ye, being evil," says our blessed Lord, "know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more shall your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask him?" "If any man lack wisdom," says his Apostle St. James, "let him ask it of God, who giveth to all men liberally and upbraideth not, and it shall be given him." While men entertain so high a conceit of themselves, as to imagine that Divine wisdom is attainable by the aid of their own unassisted reason-whilst admitting the inspirations of the scriptures, they neglect the chief means which God has appointed for understanding them, and remain destitute of any other compass to direct them in the perilous voyage of life than their own veering fancy-it is not at all surprising that they should be constantly in danger of making "shipwreck of faith and of a good conscience." They may read, and dispute, and put their ingenuity to the rack, but they will still remain ignorant of the very rudiments of the Gospel. But the prayer of faith, offered from the humble and contrite heart of one who has learned to sit meekly at the feet of Jesus Christ, can never fail to unlock the sacred treasury of heaven, and to enrich the happy supplicant with that inestimable pearl which is "more precious than rubies, and with which all things in the world are not to be compared." It is the peculiar office of the Holy Spirit, according to the testimony of our Lord in the last instructions which he gave his disciples, to "lead men into all truth." Most justly, therefore, did that eminent Reformer, Martin Luther, in commencing his career of triumph over the ignorance and superstitions of Popery, thus express his conceptions upon this subject as early as the year 1520; "The sacred writings are not to be understood but by that Spirit by whom they were written; which

^{&#}x27;Saurin's Sermons, Tol. i pp. 79, 79.

Spirit is never more powerful and energetic than when He accompanies the serious perusal of those writings which He himself has dictated. Setting aside an implicit dependence upon human writings, let us strenuously adhere to the Scriptures alone." At this heavenly teaching is requisite, not merely in the first stages of our inquiries after religious truth, but in every subsequent period of life. Our knowledge is at best but finite, whilst the objects offered in Scripture to our meditation are infinite; and the more we know, the more we shall perceive that there is much which yet remains to be known.

3. But there is a third particular, to which it is of importance to direct the attention of the biblical reader; namely, The advantages of a regular and methodical study of the Holy Scriptures .- This is a point in which many Christians are lamentably remiss. Though regular in their attendance upon public worship, they do not allot any thing like a due proportion of their time to the duty of private reading and meditation, without which public instruction must lose much of its effect. I am very far from depreciating the ordinances of divine worship, and earnestly wish that we could all habitually experience more of the feelings of the devout Psalmist respecting them, when he said, "My soul thirsteth for the living God. O when shall I come and appear before God!" But daily experience proves that if a christian has any desire to obtain solid religious instruction, and to grow in grace, and of his Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, he must for himself daily and diligenthy search the Scriptures, which are able to make him wise unto salvation. In matters of human science, we do not expect to become proficients merely by hearing a few lectures or occasionally reading a treatise upon the subject of our inquiries; we must regularly devote many hours to patient and laborious investigation, and that probably for a considerable period of time. And if this close application be necessary in the pursuits of earthly wisdom, is no effort required for the attainment of divine truth? Shall we be thus sedulous for the acquisition of a temporal advantage, and wholly remiss in the pursuit of cternal glory? And when, by the grace of God, we have already obtained some degree of information respecting those things which belong to our future peace, can any thing be more interesting and important to us than to endeavour to gain a larger measure of knowledge? depth of our repentance and hatred of sin, the strength and firmness of our faith, and the holiness of our lives flowing from that repentance and faith, have a tendency to keep pace with our practical knowledge of the evil of sin, the holiness of God, the person and offices and love of Christ, the ne cessity of the renwal of our nature, and similar objects- of what vast moment must it be diligently to investigate the word of God, in which these things are described and enforced? And in so doing, the advantages of a regular method are very great. It is desirable, therefore, that a certain fixed portion of time every day should be set apart for the exclusive study of the Bible, making use principally of that best comment—the comparison of Scripture with Scripture-which may be readily done by the assistance of a Bible with good marginal references to corresponding texts. torical and didactic parts both of the Old and New Testament throw mutual light upon each other, the attention should be directed to each of these parts in succession. If such a course of reading be undertaken in that spirit of reverence and dependence which has been attempted to be described, alight will speedily break forth as the morning?—an increasing knowledge of the whole counsel of God, and an enlarged participation of that wisdom which descendeth from above, with many other happy consequences, will follow; the danger of paying an exclusive attention to one part of the Scriptures, whilst another is comparatively neglected—of regarding the promises, for instance, more than the precepts, or the precepts more than the promises—will be materially lessened; the just proportion, consistency, and harmony of the whole, will be rendered manifest; and, unlike all human compositions, the Divine record will appear to possess an additional beauty the oftener it is perused.

I shall conclude these remarks with a passage from the works of Bishop Horsley, in which some of these sentiments are expressed in few words but in a very fercible manner. "It is incredible," says the Bishop, "to any one who has not made the experiment, what a proficiency may be made in that knowledge which maketh wise unto salvation, by studying the Scriptures in this manner—without any other commentary or exposition than what the different parts of the sacred volume mutually furnished for each other. Let the most illiterate Christian study them in this manner, and let him never cease to pray for the illumination of that Spirit by whom those books were dictated, and the whole compass of abstruse philosophy and recondite history shall furnish no arguments with which the perverse will of man shall be able to shake this learnod Christian's faith."

S. N.

YORK COLONIZATION SOCIETY.

July 4th, 1831. The York County Colonization Society held its first annual meeting in the Lutheran Church.

Calvin Mason, Esq. from the committee appointed to make the annual Report, presented and read the following report:

It is a fact, of which all experience proves the truth, that of all important objects which have been hitherto accomplished by human means, few have progressed to their final accomplishment, without having at some perriod, encountered obstacles which appeared at the time, to be almost insurmountable, and met with difficulties which it seemed impossible to overcome.

How many fruitless attempts were made to effect a permanent settlement in the country in which we are this day uniting with millions of freemen, in celebrating the anniversary of the birth-day of civil liberty. Rivers of blood, and millions of treasures were expended in endeavours, which at times appeared worse than fruitless, before our fathers accomplished the final establishment of that independence which is now, not only our boast, but which, we confidently hope, is soon to be awarded to struggling millions, now endeavouring to break the fetters of European oppression. How long, how desperate, and how bloody were the struggles of Mexico. Peru, Chill, Col-

umbia, and the other South American provinces, to effect a separation from that country which had for centuries been their oppressor; and how much longer will it be before these provinces shall, by their intelligence and virtue, become capable of enjoying that great desideratum for which they have been, and still are, using such strenuous exertions.

The spread of that religion which proclaims "peace on earth, and good will to men," and which will as surely triumph, as that God sits on his throne and ruleth, has been so slow, and at times so impeded in its progress by the obstacles thrown in its way by fanatic wickedness, that the arm of the Almighty himself has sometimes seemed to have become parallized and imposent

The emigration, or rather the colonization of the children of Israel after a servitude of more than 400 years in Egyptian bondage, although opposed by the arms of that mighty nation to whom they were slaves, was, after a series of difficulties, disappointments and opposition, effected, by a people, patient, persevering, and trusting in the justness of their cause, and the aid of that God who is all powerful to succour. Will it be said that that was the favoured people of God, and that they were the exclusive objects of his protecting care? That a Moses and Aaron were raised up by his special interposition, as their leader and lawgiver? And who is now so presumptuous as to say that 4000 years have palsied the arm of the Almighty, that he is less able to call into exercise human means, adequate to effect the emancipation and colonization of the decendents of the African race, who are now enduring worse than Egyptian bondage among us? There can be nonethe thought is impious as it is untrue. Although the American Colonization Society has had, and still has difficulties of great magnitude to encounter, among the great and the good of the nation, how great a proportion have united their exertions in this great cause. The oppressed Africans and their descendent have in the person of Henry Clay, found an Aaron who has been "their spokesman to the people," and in the wisdom of the counsels of the American Colonization Society, the finger of God is as visible in pointing the way, as his voice was audible when thundering from Sinai's Mount. And what has already been the consequence, more than one half of this great work has been accomplished. Successful efforts have been made in procuring a territory suited to the wants, the constitution, and the character of the people who are to be colonized; sufficient in extent, in fertility, and in means necessary to their final establishment, as a happy and a powerful people. A country, which, like the Canaan of the Israelites, is the land of their forefathers, a land pointed out by the finger of God as their promised land-a land, which, if it do not already 'flow with milk and honey,' is, by suitable culture, capable of producing all the comforts and luxuries A colony, of life. The first great effort of settlement has been made. more extensive, prosperous and wealthy, has been established on the coast of Africa, in the short space of ten years, than was effected by our forefathers in any of the original colonies, during the first fifty years after their landing; nay more, instead of a Pharaoh with his powerful armies, to oppose their emigration from this land of their servitude, a considerable portion of the slave holders are not only ready and willing to liberate their slaves, but also to contribute largely to the means necessary for aiding in their transportation. The moral feeling and sympathy of a considerable portion of the citizens of the United States, is already enlisted in the cause of the oppressed sons of Africa among us, as well as of those millions in Africa, who are now in worse than midnight darkness, and who, through the means and agency of the colony now establishing under the patronage and protection of the American Colonization Society, are to become instructed, not only in the arts of life, but in that religion which teaches how to live, that we may never die.

The Colony thus established, has been progressing in improvement from year to year, without war or bloodshed, and with as little expenditure of human life, particularly among the blacks of the Colony, as among the same number of persons in any part of the United States.

The moral influence which radiates from that centre of civilization, on the coast of benighted Africa has already, began to produce its salutary effects on surrounding nations; and from the progress already made, we have reason to believe that the day is not far distant when in Africa, "nations shall be born in a day" to the exercise of the arts of civilization and of humanity, and to the practice of those precepts and principles which the chris-

tian religion inculcates.

If the effects of the efforts of this Society on the people of Africa are thus salutary, will not the final consummation of their object be as beneficial to the well being of our own country and its inhabitants?

We now have, within the limits of the United States, a population of 300, 000 slaves, who, if they are not all in a miserable state of oppression, are all precluded from the enjoyment of civil liberty, and the happy consequences resulting from the improvement of the intellectual faculties. In a considerable part of those states in which slavery is admitted, the number of blacks of far exceed that of the white population, as to render the situation of the whites perilous, unless by the most rigid discipline, they render it impossible for them to raise in insurrection. Hence they are kept in a state of restrictive starvation, calculated to break down and conquer all energy of mind, as well as of body. This diminishes their capability to labour, and consequently so lessens them in value to their holders; this consideration alone induces many to liberate their slaves, provided they can be taken out of the country. Others are induced by humane and worthy considerations to offer to liberate theirs on the same terms. Others still, are willing to contribute largely to defray the expense of transporting them to Liberia.

The evils arising to the slaveholders from the increase of the black population, like the plagues of Egypt, have already produced, not only a willingness "to let the people go," but an anxious desire that their departure may be speedy, and the only difficulty now existing with the society, is that of raising money to defray the expense of transporting them.

To accomplish this, great and increasing exertions have been made by the society and auxiliaries, and by individual contributions. Already has so favourable a change taken place in public sentiment, that we have reason to hope and believe that the day is not far distant when our legislators in congress will be instructed by their constituents, to make the subject a national concern. When that shall be done—when this great nation shall, with the same determined spirit, enter upon the plan of rid-

ding itself of this increasing enemy within, as it has hitherto done to repeal the invasion of a foreign foe, then will the great work be speedily accomplished; and at what expense soever of the treasures of the country it be done, it will be a prudent expenditure. As well might the miser complain of the expense of extirpating from a vital part of his body, a tumour, which, if suffered to remain, would inevitably destroy his life, as for the American people to complain of the expense of removing from among them, an evil, which, if suffered to remain must inevitably tend to the destruction of this hitherto happy country. But, we have a hopenay, we have a surety for better things. The principles which have actuated the American Colonization Society in their progress, are spreading throughout the country; auxiliary societies, like the one which we now address, are daily being established in different parts of the United States, and if the first fruits of their exertions, be like ours spare and limited, yet, being planted in a congenial soil, they will take deep root. and will annually increase in product, until the crop be abundant.

Although the auxiliary Society which we now address, has been in existence but a short time, and the number of members very small, yet sufficient has been done to demonstrate satisfactorily, that the citizens of this borough and its vicinity, need only to be made properly acquainted with the object of the society to give it their continued countenance and Already have their laudable contributions been sufficient to confer the title and privileges of citizens of Liberia, upon a number of those individuals who are anxious to emigrate to that land of their fathers; and we have reason to believe, that correspondent exertions have been attended with an equal or greater success, in a majority of the cities, boroughs, towns and villages throughout the United States.

The subject is of importance, worthy a nations exertions, and the effect of those exertions will be the regeneration, civilization, and christianization of that vast continent, which has for ages been enveloped in the darkness of superstitious ignorance.

The following resolutions were offered by the Rev. J. R. Reily, and adopted, viz :-

Resolved—That the thanks of this Society be presented to the vestries of the different churches of the borough, who have taken up collections for the use of this society.

Resolved—That we continue our exertions in promoting the noble object of the parent Colonization Society.

The following persons were then elected officers to serve the ensuing

President-Penrose Robinson, Esq.

Vice Presidents-Rev. Dr. Schmucker, Rev. Dr. Mayer, Rev. J. R. Reily, Rev. Mr. Kluge, Rev. Mr. Gere, Rev. J. Oswald.

Secretary-C. A. Morris.

Treasurer-John Voglesong.

Managers-Rev. Mr. Ziegler, C. S. Morris, J. Emmitt, C. Mason and T. C. Hambly, Esq'rs.

RELIGIOUS INTELLIGENCE.

THE SUSQUEHANNAH CLASSIC.

Extract from the proceedings of the Classis, heid at Selinsgrove, Union county, Pa. July 19, 1831.

The narrow limits of our Magazine forbid the publication of all the pro-

Of the regular members of this Classis, five were absent. On the two days preceding its organization, sermons were preached by Rev. I. Gerhart and Rev. B. S. Schneck, the President and Secretary of last year; by the former, from Rom. 13, 14, and by the latter (a missionary sermon) from Phil. 2, 20. Also two sermons by Rev. J. J. Ungerer, one from Rom 13, 14 and the other (on Sunday Evening) from John 17, 3. On Monday A. M. after a season of social prayer, the Classis regularly organized and elected for their officers

Rev. B. S. SCHNECK, President and Rev. J. J. UNGERER, Secretary.

The reports of the Rev. members present respecting their several charges were presented.

Rev. R. Fisher of Sunbury, a member of the Synod, called the "Free Synod," having expressed a desire to be received into this Classis; it was resolved, that his request be preferred and recommended to Synod. Further,

Resolve! In reference to the Theological Seminary; that every member of this Classis obligate himself to the payment of at least \$5 to the assistance of indigent young men, who have devoted themselves to the gospel ministry and are in a course of preparation therefor at this Institution: which monies shall be delivered to the following persons and forwarded by them viz: Rev. B. S. Schneck, J. J. Ungerer, H. Wagner, and Elders, J. Rupert, W. Nice and P. Spangler.

Residued. In reference to the resolution of Synod which enjoins upon all its members new and ever increasing carnestness and zeal in the discharge of their ministerial duties; that the members of this Classis cordially receive and endeavour to profit by this kind admenition of the Synod, by humbling themselves before God and imploring his blessing upon them in their all-important calling; so that in "walk and conversation" they may be found worthy servants of Jesus Christ, having near at heart the welfare of this Church and the salvation of immortal souls, and after the example of the holy Apostles, without regarding the praises and reproaches of men perseveringly go forward, instructing, correcting, admenishing, comforting and with all patience conducting the flock intrusted to their care.

in concluding this short extract, we subjoin the very interesting Report of the present condition of the Churches of this Classis, prepared by the Rev. Messrs. Weiser, Fisher and Bossler and Messrs. Nice, Uhring and Krick, Elders. a committee appointed for that purpose.

This committee rejoice to learn from the reports of the Rev. Brethven, that, within the bounds of this Classis, undisturbed peace and unani-

Vol. IV .-- XX.

mity generally prevail and hence, by the blessing of God attending zeal in the ministers of His word, that godliness with its accompanying fruits and evidences grows and prospers. Open ungodliness and vices dishonouring God and disgraceful to man, blessed be God, are constantly growing less; and one mark of increasing piety in our midst is the better celebration and more worthy observance of the Lord's day, a more curnest use of the means of Grace, which God has given us, especially a more diligent attendance upon the public services of His house.

The Lord has vouchsafed to our Churches special evidences of His favour, with gratitude we acknowledge it, in that many souls have been awakened to greater earnestness in Faith, Love and Sanctification and have been admonished no longer to abuse the grace of their God and Saviour. To

him, to him alone be all Hounour and Glory.

The business of the Classis being ended, the meeting with devout hearts, united in offering to God a hymn of grateful praise, prostrated themselves before Him to whom every knee shall bow in heaven and on earth; implored His continued blessing and the gift of the Holy Spirit in the discharge of their duties; and rose thence, strengthened in reliance upon Him who is mighty in our weakness to return to their respective homes and to their beloved congregations.

CHRISTIANS IN GERMANY.

Among their brighter traits we may reckon that frankness and sincerity that open-heartedness and candor, which characterize the christians of Ger-One might almost say, that they carry their hearts in their hands; they rush to meet a christian affection, and pour out all their feelings and their whole hearts before him, unchecked by the embarrassments of English or American reserve, or the calculations of cold and wary prudence. We have seen and admired in our own land, the exhibitions of religious character among the Moravian christians. These are here mostly Germans: and it is in fact the national character that we have admired, and not the peculiarities engrafted upon them by their religious faith and discipline. The same purity and unaffected piety; the same zeal and self-devotedness, the same 'simplicity and godly sincerity,' constitute the distinguishing traits of the great body of German believers. It is the national frankness and affectionate open-hearted kindness, purified and elevated and ennobled by the influence of the religion of Christ, and pouring itself out in the habitual and ardent practice of 'whatsoever things are pure and lovely and of good report.'

We may also notice, as a happy trait in the character of German Christians, the absence of a consorious spirit. There are indeed in that country, as well as in others, those who esteem it their right and their duty to watch over the spiritual as well as temporal concerns of their neighbors; and to make their own views and opinions the standard to which all others should conform. But as a general fact, this is not the character of the Christians of Germany. If a brother agrees with them in essentials, they are willing to bear and forbear with him in regard to other matters; and by the exhi-

bition of meckness and gentleness seek rather to win him over in minor points than by disapprobation and censure drive him to a greater distance from them. They abstain from "judging one another, remembering that the kingdom of God is not meat and drink, but right-cousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost." Indeed this would seem to be the true spirit of

religious tolerance.

We might here go on to speak at large of the humility, the patience, the zeal, and other virtues of the christians in Germany. The whole however may be summed up in a few words by saying,—and it is a testimony which is deserved, and which the writer rejoices with his whole heart being permitted thus publickly to say, that in no nation under heaven is the gospel, when received into good and honest hearts, more fully and faithfully carried out in practice; no where is the spirit of the gospel more fully exemplied, or "every thought and deed brought more into captivity to the obedience of Christ."

OBITUARY.

In the last number of the Magazine we announced the death of our beloved brother, the Rev. Jacon Bereiner, late paster of the congregations in Shepherdstown, Martinsburg and Smithlield Va., and promised that a fuller notice of this affilicting event should appear in the present number. We have since been favoured with the Martinsburg Gazette of July 28, containing an obituary notice of the deceased which appears to have been written by an intimate acquaintance and a witness of his death-bed scene. We give this notice entire, because it expresses our own feelings and accords with our knowledg of the excellent character which it describes.

Mr. Beecher was one of those few men who do not live or desire to live for themselves, but for him that loved them and gave himself for them. He sought not his own, but "the things which are Jesus Christ's." Phil. 4, 20 21. The great interests of christianity, the success of which constitutes the general property of the Redeemer's kingdom, and in which the seperate concerns of individual churches are lost, were his favorite subjects. For these he could set aside all others; and in prosecuting plans for their advancement, he could literally forsake all that he had. The success of the plan to raise a capital of \$10000 for the Theological Seminary of our church in the winter of 1825 and 1829, which at that critical period saved the institution, is due to him. The cause of Sunday Schools in which he engaged with all his heart, owes much to his exertions. He spent a year in the service of the Executive Committee of the American Sunday School Union to promote the establishment of Sunday Schools in the Valley of the Mississippi. From this agency, the duties of which he performed with exemplary zeal and fidelity, he had returned to his pastoral care a very short time before his death, burning with desire to benefit his little flocks, whom he found destitute and in some measure scattered; and placed in this scondition too by cause which no generous mind would have anticipated, but by which such a mind could be deeply pained. His labours in this field were resumed in all the spirit of a devoted servant of God, as one who was not his own, and whose life was preserved only that he might do the will of him who sustained him. Though he found ample room for activity among the people committed to his charge, his affections and his zeal could not be confined by such limits; accustomed to elevated and extensive views of duty, he was still meditating plans of general usefulness to the church of Christ, and particularly to the portion of it of which he, he in common with us, was a member. Our Theological Seminary, our Sunday Schoo

This dispensation of Heaven is enveloped in impenetrable mystery. Why are the excellent is clearly taken away while the wicked and prolligate, whose very purpose is to do evil, are suffered to remain? How unsearchable are his judgements, and his ways just finding out!

REV. JACOB BEECHER.

The memory of those who have died in the Lord should be affectionately cherished in our hearts, and their example should be es eemed the most precious begave to the living. Although "they rest from their labours" in the silence of the grave, they still continue to speak with persuasive cloquence in favour of God and of truth—and instead of entertaining a wish to recall them from the smiles of their Creator, to mingle again in the miseness of human life, we should give all diligence to secure an interest for conselves in that faith which sustained and soothed them in the day of affliction and in the hour of death.

For those who throng the eternal throne, Lost are the tears we shed, They are the living, they alone, Whom thus we call the dead.

Rev. JACOB BEECHER was born near Petersburg, Adams county, Pa. on the 2d day of May, A. D. 1799, and continued to reside in the place of his nativity until the spring of 1814, when his parents removed with him to Hagerstown in Maryland. Sometime in 1822 he commenced his studies in the Academy at Hagerstown; and at the expiration of twelve months repaired to Jefferson College, and became a member of that institution. In the fall of 1824 he completed his College course, and immediately entered the Theological Seminary in Princeton, N. Jersey. For about eighteen months he pursued his theological studies in connexion with that Seminary; when declining health compelled him to relinquish the duties of the institution and retire. At Carlisle, Pa. he afterwards spent about six months in the study of the German language-and in the fall of 1826 he was set apart and ordained to the gospel ministry by the Synod of the German Reformed Church, which held its session in Fredericktown, Md. He immediately received and accepted a call from the German Reformed Churches of Shepherdstown, Martinsburg, and Smithfield, to become their pastor. charge he continued to labour for the space of about five years-altho' his labours were frequently interrupted by the declining state of his health. He was absent from his people at several different times in the pursuit of health -but he was not idle in the service of his heavenly master. He united the works of benevolence with the pursuit of health, and twice engaged in the toils of a responsible agency, and twice returned to his pastoral care with increased strength and brighter hopes. Only a few weeks have passed away since he returned from extensive usefulness abroad, to close his days in the midst of the flock over whom God had made him a spiritual watchman. He died at his residence in Shepherdstown on Friday morning, July 15, about t o'clock.

In the death of Mr. Beecher society has lost a most valuable member; and the churches over which he presided have lost a faithful friend, and a zealoss pastor. His picty was of that humble and unobtresive kind which finds its home at the foot of the Redeemer's cross; and in his walk and

conversation he adorned the doctrines which he professed and advocated. His exemplary department and his labours of love are deeply en-balmed in the hear's of the friends he has left behind him-and the cheering success which attended his labours abroad is too well known and appreciated by the churches to need the voice of culogy. He was indeed a man of God, who in every situation in which he was placed, and under all the circumstances of life, possessed in patience his soul, and maintained an intimate communion with the Saviour. Seldom has it fallen to the lot of the writer of this housbie memorial to witness such unbroken calmness and such strength of hope in prospect of death. His mind was entirely composed and submissive; and his views were sometimes rapturous. He seemed to be fully emptied of self, and lost in adoring contemplations of the riches of divine grace. In the course of one of his last conversations with a friend, he exclaimed with the deepest emphasis and feeling, it is all of grave. When he spoke of his approaching exit, a smile was seen to play upon his lips; affording an assurance that death had been disarmed of its terrors. All his wishes about a longer life on earth were lost in the will of Godand all his worldly interests he was happy to trust in the hands of his redeeming Creator. As the last gleams of thought were streaming from his eye, he turned to one who waited beside his bed and said, the day of my redemption draweth nigh. These were almost the last words that broke from his lips; and in a few moments his soul spread its wing for immortality. Farewell watchman of Zion, "thou hast fought a good fight-thou hast finished thy course, and kept the faith!" It is a glorious sight to see a christian soldier die on the walls of Zion with his armour on-to see him like a watch-worn and weary sentinel fall in the arms of victory; crying as he sinks, oh death where is thy sting; oh grave where is thy victory.

The circumstances which attended the death of Mr. Beecher are well adapted to imprint a lasting impression upon all who knew him. Especially to those who enjoyed the privileges of his ministry, and met with him around the sacramental altar, this dispensation should speak the language of solemn warning—Be ye also ready. When "the godly man ceaseth"—when "the faithful fall from among the children of men"—it becomes us to look to the Lord for help. We have thus attempted an humble delineation of what our deceased friend was as a christian and a pastor—but what he was to one in a nearer and dearer relationship, it is not for us to describe. Such a mourner can only find consolation for so great a loss in the confident hope that it has been his unspeakable gain, and in the sustaining promises

of the gospel.

COMMUNICATION.

Meetings of Synods and other Judicatories of the same character are usually regarded by the people of God as occasions of much interest. To such assemblies the ecisiastical business of a particular communion is entrusted. But their proceedings concern not only their own constituents, the whole Christian Church has an interest them; and their influence is not limited to the present age, it extends to the future, and involves the spiritual welfare of unborn generations—nay stretches itself into eternity and links itself with the happiness of heaven and the glory of God. To estimate therefore the importance of these meetings and the responsibility resting upon their officers and members one must be capable of appreciating the worth of the soul and the magnitude of its interests.

In a few weeks the meeting of our synod will take place and as usual many subjects of interest will claim their attention. The growing extent of our church in common with those around us, has opened new fields for labour and extended those already under the care our clergy; pious, educated and intelligent men are at present called for in various places; requests and intreaties are almost daily made by letter for pastoral supplies and the universal cry is "come over into Macedonia and help us" Places long destitute have renewed their calls and increased their importunities with the hope of being now ultimately heard. While in such entreaties we behold with pleasure the attachment of our people to the Church of their Fathers it gives us pain that their wants cannot be immediately supplied. It should however cause the true friends of religion within our bounds to redouble their exertions to discharge at least a part of their duty toward their suffering brethren. Our Church has none to look to but lier own members and to them she has a right to appeal with the expectation that every one will do what he can and do it quickly.

The Theological Seminary under God is our chief and indeed our only dependence. Twenty-two students are now pursuing their education in this institution, and some of them in the course of a year or two will be prepared to go forth and supply a few of our vacant congregations. At the next session we have reason to believe that the number will be enlarged. In these facts we perceive satisfactory proof that the eyes of our people are upon this institution and that it enjoys their confidence.

But we would respectfully suggest to our clergy and people whether much might not be done to render the Seminary more efficient. There are a number of talented and pious young men in our church who would very willingly devote themselves to the ministry and pass through the course of a regular education if they could receive the necessary assistance. This assistance must be derived from the Church at large and can only be obtained as an adequate and regular supply through the instrumentality of Education Societies. Such societies ought to be formed in all our congregations. This is the only way in which the Church can be furnished with an efficient ministry and her waste places built up. Among other christian nations provision is made by law for the support and education of the ministry of the gospel. It is not so in our country. Our Church affords no temptation to avarice or ambition, but it presents sufficient motives to the humble devoted follower of Christ, to enter into his moral vineyard and labor for the good of souls. The Church must depend upon her own resources which are to be found only in the willingness of God's people to sustain his cause. We rejoice that it is so, for the Lord has their hearts in his hands and no well grounded appeal (we have reason to hope) will be made in vain. Past experience enables us "to thank God and take courage," although our institutions have been obliged to contend with many difficulties, the good hand of the Lord has been around us.

We venture to offer another suggestion. In order to give proper efficacy to the Theological Seminary an additional professor or some other assistance ought to provided. No one man can attend to all the recitations of the different classes nocessarily existing in the Seminary at this time. But to sustain an additional professor the permanent fund should be enlarged.—This is no objection to the proposed object; it is only a strong motive to vigorous action. To this fact we wish to invite the attention of the friends of the Seminary. There are abundant means at hand, in the Clurch to sustain all her institutions and benevolent enterprizes. Let some practicable scheme be devised to bring forth the resources of our people, and the cause of the Redeemer in any of its interests will not languish in our midst. Immediate provision might be made for the support of a second professor by semi-annual collections in the different congregations. There are probably 400 in our communion, \$5 for each of these at an average would yield a revenue of \$20000 a year—more than sufficient for the payment of two professors. This indeed is the plan upon which the Rev. Synod might properly proceed, until the several departments contemplated in the Seminary are fully endowed—the interest of the capital being applied annually to the increase of the persanent fund. In the meautime the 10,000 scheme might be enlarged or some other mode of obtaining subscriptions adopted. There are many friends of Religion in our bounds who would gladly contribute for the support of Christ's cause if opportunity were presented and the wants of the Church properly made known. One thing ought unquestionably to be done, a general Agentought to be appointed to be em-

ployed continually amongst the people, arousing them to a sense of the importance of our institutions. He should be a man of energy, discretion and piety, ardently attached to the Church, well acquainted with her actual condition, and the means of her enlargement and spiritual improvement. He should have a liberal salary, and would find laborious, but delightful employment in obtaining funds for the Seminary and subscriptions for our periodicals, and establishing and sustaining Sunday Schools and Missionary and Education Societies.

COMMUNICATED.

Brethren of the German Reformed Church, the present is in the history of the Church a period of uncommon interest. Momentous events are rapidly determining by our influence. Whether we calmly look on or actively employ our powers, our influence is exerted and felt and will tell upon the records of Eternity.

From every part of the Church our vineyard, come up to us mingled sounds of lamentation and joy. Here and there refreshings from the Holy one of Israel have been had; but generally a dearth of instruction, an absence of the Spirit, alarming apathy prevailing, worldly pursuits seducing professors of religion, or contentions creeping in, cause the friends of our beloved Church to mourn. Much of the land is a scene of spiritual desolation. The number of visible members of our Church is indeed constantly increasing, the standards of our Church are steadfastly maintained, general attention is given to the external means of grace. We have many encouragements. But loud cries for help are heard from many regions. When the errour is overruning our borders and fortifying itself against every future attack, Shall our brethren call in vain?

There is no time for delay. "There remaineth yet very much land to be possessed." And when we have the means to possess it and our brethren loudly cry "come over and help us," Shall they call in vain?

These calls have been in part anticipated by the establishment of a Theological Seminary. Amid the smiles and chastisements of the Head of the Church it has slowly but uninterruptedly risen. In it several have already been prepared for the field of Labour, and at present a larger number of students is here than has been at any former period. Piety, good health, harmony and industry characterise them and give good promise of many labourers for the Harvest. Still however our Seminary's wants increase faster than her supplies. When, as one body, will the Church come up to her help?

How long shall "we charge them that are rich, not to trust in uncertain riches, but in the living God; to do good, to be ready to communicate and thus lay up a good foundation against the time to come, that they may lay hold on eternal life?" Scarcely any efficient means have been instituted to meet the exigencies of our Church and Seminary. How long, eve the pray-

ors and exertions of the friends of Zion will unite and centre upon this Institution, the last hope of the Church?

Soon may the day be -Soon may our Seminary arise, firmly established and long to remain a school whence an apostolic ministry shall go forth to

lead hosts of the redeemed to glory.

As a nursery lies near a parents heart, may our Rev. Synod give in their affections, their counsels, their prayers, their labours a pre-eminent seat to the Seminary. May they go forward with cheerfulness and courage, wood is with us." His Spirit is our companion in all honest designs and faithful labours and nothing can frustrate them. Difficulties shall vanish before us. Mountains shall sink and vallies rise to prepare the way of the Lord. "Not by might, nor by power; but by my spirit saith the Lord of hosts."

UNIVERSALISM NO. 2.

Remarks on Isaiah 5, 7, will be continued in a future number. Meanwhile, may our friends search the Scriptures, which we here present them

on this interesting subject.

Dying sinner search them; for needless hazard has in it the essence of madness. Heb. 10: 31. Luke 16: 22—31. Job 18. Ich. 9: 27. Mat. 25: 41. Eccl. 12: 7. Luke 18: 25—28. Matt. 7: 21—25. Prov. 14: 32. Is. 53: 14. Ps. 75: 8. Matt. 25: 41. Mark 9: 44, 46, 48. John 5: 29. Rev. 20: 13 &c. Ps. 49: 14. Daniel 12: 22. Matt. 22: 13; 8: 12. Rev. 16: 10, 21. Rev. 6: 16. Is. 13: 6 &c. 2 Pct. 2: 4. Rev. 1: 18. Matt. 25: 46. 2 Cor. 2: 16. Rom. 7: 5, 10, 13. 2 Cor. 2: 7. Rom. 6: 16, 21. 1 Tim. 6: 9. 2 Thess. 1: 9.

DIED. On the S0th nlt. in New-York City Col. RICHARD VARICK, in the 79th year of his age. His remains were interred, with the honours which his distinguished valour, patriotism and moral worth so nobly deserved. Though cherished in thousand hearts, as the veteran soldier and citizen let his name be embalmed, the Christian Philanthropist.

MEETING OF SYNOD OF THE GER. REF. CHURCH.

In accordance with a resolution of Synod held at Hagerstown, Md. the Synod will meet this year at Harrisburg, Pa. on the last Sunday (25th) of September. All those who have business with Synod are respectfully invited to attend.

July, 1831. JACOB GEIGER, Secretary,

The Board of Trustees under the Charter, whose names were inserted in the last No. of the Magazine, will hold their annual meeting on Wednesday preceding the meeting of Synod (Sept. 20.) The Board of Visitors will also meet on the same day, to attend to the examination of the students. All those who are friendly to the institution are respectfully invited to attend this meeting.

THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE OF MISSIONS will meet in York on the last Wednesday in every month until further notice.

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