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Title: The Christian Recorder Vol. 1, Issue 10 (1819-December)

Date of first publication: 1819

Author: Various

Date first posted: January 27 2013

Date last updated: January 27 2013

Faded Page eBook #20130132

This eBook was produced by: L. Harrison, Marcia Brooks & the online Distributed Proofreaders Canada team at <http://www.pgdpCanada.net>

THE

CHRISTIAN RECORDER,

VOL. I. DECEMBER, 1819. No. 10.

ORIGINAL COMMUNICATIONS.

MISSIONS.

There are three Missionary Societies in London: the Baptist Missionary Society, formed in 1792; the Missionary Society, in 1794; and the Church Missionary Society in 1800.

There is very little difference among these Societies as to their views of religious truth. In one particular the Missionary and Baptist Societies differ from that of the Church. They assume as a fundamental principle, that their design is not to send Presbyterianism, Independency, Episcopacy, about which there may be difference of opinion among serious persons, but the glorious Gospel of the blessed Lord to the Heathen; and that it shall be left, as it ought to be left, to the minds of the persons whom God may call into the fellowship of his Son from among them, to assume for themselves such form of Church government, as to them shall appear most agreeable to the word of God.

This principle, adopted no doubt in the spirit of conciliation, and for the purpose of promoting peace, concord, and unity, and of opening the doors of the institution to all denominations of Christians, is yet liable to serious objections. Admitting the propriety of leaving the form of the Church government to the Heathen converts, it is not stated whether the Missionary should explain all the views which Christians maintain on this point, or merely his own, and yet the principle implies the necessity that there is for the converts to form themselves into some society called a Church.

"But why," it has been asked, "is so much indifference shewn to a preference being given to any form of Church government? as little as if none were commended in the Scriptures. Some form of worship is practised by Christians of all denominations in Europe, how comes it about that none whatever is worthy of recommendation in the dark regions of Africa, and the South Seas?"

"At home, the directors and members of this Society profess Presbyterianism, Independency, Episcopacy, &c. &c. they belong to societies called Churches, of these denominations; but abroad, how different! they do not wish to promote what they themselves believe to be consistent with the Scripture revelation. If Presbyterians and Independents think no form of Church government is ordered by Christ, why not unite with the Established Church of the country? But does not the Gospel require its professors to worship God by some form or mode, and are the commands of revelation of little or no obligation?"

The fundamental principle itself acknowledges that it is a matter of some importance; but the directors wishing to unite Christians in one common bond of union, for promoting the blessed Gospel of the Son of God, so far please the popular feeling, as to relax a Scriptural obligation, thereby introducing among the Heathen laxity on a point of great consequence in the formation of a Christian Church. No satisfactory reply has ever been given to these objections; for the plea set up, that this intimate union of different denominations is necessary to convert the Heathen, is refuted by the fact that the Moravians, and even the Methodists, have done more, and have a greater number of Missionaries employed, than the Missionary Society of London. Nor is it clear that this mutual concession will promote that union and harmony so desirable among Christians, which must be found in mutual forbearance and charity, and not in sameness of opinion, much less in a relaxation of principle.

The Baptist Missionary Society, which was first of the three, in point of time, commenced its active labours in 1793, by sending two Missionaries to Bengal. To this quarter of the globe, its efforts have principally been directed, and with a degree of wisdom which has received the praise of all denominations. The two Missionaries first sent out, Messrs. Carey and Thomas, have reflected the greatest credit on the Society by their great prudence, zeal, and diligence, and they have entitled themselves to the admiration of the Christian world, by their extraordinary exertions in translating and publishing the Scriptures in all the principal languages of the East. By the last report of this Society, it appears that forty-three Missionaries are employed; and, that besides preaching, and translating, and publishing the Scriptures, they are busy in establishing native schools. The number of these has greatly increased during the last year, and as the advantages derived from them become more and more evident, applications for the establishment of new schools are made from various quarters, and to an extent far beyond the present means of our brethren to defray. For the regulation of these schools, the Missionaries have lately drawn up a comprehensive and systematic plan, the result of much experience and long deliberation, and which has been highly approved of by the most distinguished residents in India.

The Missionary Society is supported by almost all denominations of Christians, and may therefore be called the General

Mission. After the publication of Cook's Voyages, a great interest was excited in the public mind for the inhabitants of the South Sea Islands, which he had visited. And as they appeared to be gentle in their manners, and of tractable dispositions, it was deemed practicable to convert them to Christianity. A Mission to these Islands was proposed, adventurers volunteered for the service, but when the time of departure arrived, they shrunk back, though they had been a year under tuition, to prepare themselves for the enterprize. The project was again renewed, a society was formed, and a general meeting convoked in London. Subscriptions poured in, and candidates in abundance presented themselves, from whom thirty were selected, six being married men. Every possible precaution was taken to secure success, as far as the foresight of the directors could secure it. On the 20th of August, the ship Duff sailed under the command of Capt. Wilson, who had left his retirement for this purpose, a man well qualified for the charge by temper and opinions, as well as professional skill.

The difficulties which these Missionaries experienced, and the little success which attended their labours, as well as those of others, who were sent out to their assistance, greatly damped the zeal of the society; but they still persevered, and God has at length opened better prospects, and the benevolent intentions of converting the Heathen to Christianity, seem now to be realizing. The cruel superstition which was depopulating by its murders the South Sea Islands, is giving way; the dreadful abominations which deformed them are disappearing from before the light of the Gospel. In nine of the islands their savage customs are abolished; infanticide is uncommon; their prisoners are exchanged, not murdered and eaten. Society is now cemented, the ties of affection acknowledged, decency and order practised, and the bloody altars of their gods transformed into the altars of a crucified Redeemer, cherishing piety and peace. "It was God Almighty," said the Royal convert of Otaheite, "who sent your Mission to the remainder of my people."

Much attention is at length paid by the Missionaries to the civilization of the natives, and the directors have been of late years much more careful in selecting proper persons for converting the Heathen. They have discovered, from dear bought experience, that zeal alone is not sufficient, but that many rare qualifications ought to be united in the man who assumes the important profession of preaching the Gospel to savage nations. He must recommend himself to their attention by promoting their temporal as well as their spiritual comforts. Accordingly measures are taking to introduce the sugar cane and cotton plant into Otaheite, and the neighbouring islands. This will give employment to the people, beget industrious habits, gradually open and enlarge their minds, sharpen their understandings, render it more easy for them to comprehend moral truths, and the nature of divine worship. One single circumstance, which appears in some degree fortuitous, though certainly directed by the wisdom of Providence, seems to have done more towards converting the natives of the islands to Christianity, than all the labours of the Missionaries for twenty years; it was this: that Pomare, instead of massacring his prisoners, as had always been the custom, treated them with great lenity and moderation, which was productive of the happiest consequences; for, all exclaimed, that the true religion must be good, because it produced so good effects. They declared also, that their gods were cruel and false, had deceived them, and sought their ruin, and therefore, they were resolved to trust them no longer. On the evening of that day on which Pomare gained the victory, which restored him to his kingdom, he and his people, with many of the idolators united in one large assembly to worship the God of heaven and earth, and return him thanks for the events of the day. Since his restoration, Pomare has been actively employed in overthrowing all the vestiges of idolatry, and destroying the gods, in which he is zealously assisted by the chiefs, who are likewise employed in erecting places of worship for the true God in every District, all around the island, the whole of which, is now professedly Christian, and in a great measure, several of the neighbouring islands, the chiefs of which, intreat the Missionaries by every opportunity to come over and help them.

These rapid and extraordinary changes in the South Sea Islands, have, no doubt been, under the providence of God, greatly promoted by the more frequent intercourse between them and Europeans, and which has been further increased by the prosperity of our neighbouring colony of New South Wales; but still, the Missionaries had sown the seed which now promises to bring forth abundantly. This Society has likewise made some progress in disseminating the Gospel in the East Indies, but the peculiar and now successful field of its labours is the islands in the South Sea.

The Missionary Society keeps its anniversary in London about the middle of May, with a splendour and solemnity far superior to that of any other religious institution. It has more the appearance of a triumphant celebration, than a pious assembly. The most celebrated preachers are invited from different parts of the kingdom, and the most impressive readers, to perform the different services during the solemnity, which continues three days. "It is difficult," says the Journalist, after stating the proceedings, in May, 1817, "to make an accurate comparison between the services of the present year and those that are past; nor is it necessary. It is enough to say, that they were highly satisfactory; that the Missionary spirit, which aims at nothing less than the evangelization of the world, and its subjection to the King of kings,

appears to be increasing; and, should it please God to enable this Society, and others of a similar kind, to continue their exertions for twenty years more, a very great change will probably take place on the face of the moral world."

ON FORMS OF PRAYER.

SIR,

I should not have known, Mr. Editor, by the Recorder whether you belong to the Church of England or not, you have cultivated so carefully the candour of modern times. Perhaps you consider this a praise; but I who am old-fashioned, think it no merit in any man to conceal his opinions for fear of giving offence, nor have I found that an honest and manly avowal of principles was ever attended with bad consequences. The truly candid are those who steadily avow their own opinions, and treat with respect such as differ from them. While therefore you admit liberal discussion into your pages, Mr. Editor, be not ashamed of sometimes revealing in your leading articles, that you belong to the purest of the Protestant Churches.

If you take this hint kindly, you will not refuse a place to the enclosed Essay on a subject of singular importance.

The most accurate reasonings very often fail to convince, while they remain reasonings only, and are not illustrated and enforced by actual experience. This may be exemplified in the discussions that have taken place respecting set forms of prayer. With the practice of all antiquity in their favour, it might have been anticipated, that the controversy would have been of short duration; but such are the perversities and aberrations of the human mind, that when once we get engaged in a controversy, we seldom listen to the voice of reason, and rather search for arguments to defend our own side of the question, than listen candidly to the force of those of our opponents. It is not my intention to enter into the controversy between those who approve of a form of prayer, and such as consider it unnecessary; my object is, to add to the experience of those who devoutly use the Common Prayer Book, a few proofs of its excellence, and hence enforce the duty of its dissemination.

We know that the Jews, after their return from the Babylonish captivity, built Synagogues, or places of worship, wherever ten families could be collected. In these, the people assembled themselves on the Sabbath day to worship God, and hear the law and the prophets, the reading of portions of these books, constituting a part of the regular service. In reference to this, St. James observes, that Moses, of old time, hath in every city them that preach him being read in the Synagogues every Sabbath day. We are informed in the book of Nehemiah, that when Ezra was appointed to read the book of the law to the people, he began by a solemn invocation to God in prayer, the people lifting up their hands and bowing their heads, worshipped God with their faces to the ground, saying, amen, amen.

The building of Synagogues in every village and neighbourhood, insured regular service to God on all the Sabbaths and festivals, and gave the people such a knowledge of the law and the prophets, as afterwards protected them from the contamination of idolatry a crime into which they were continually falling before this period.

After the Apostles had established Churches in the cities where they had preached the Gospel, and the converts began to assemble on the first day of the week for the purpose of worshipping God through the merits of our beloved Lord and Master, some regular mode of service became necessary. Few of the Christians could then read or write, for these accomplishments were confined to the learned, and therefore, to the majority the Gospel was a treasure sealed. To multiply copies of the Scripture, was too expensive for general use, and the people had therefore no other opportunities of being instructed in the truth except when they assembled themselves for public worship. To remedy this, forms of prayer were introduced into all the Churches, and being comparatively short, were easily transcribed, and copies multiplied in the congregation. Their dissemination among the people had another blessed effect; in times of persecution, when the brethren durst not meet together, or when they were obliged to fly, the possession of one of these forms of devotion enabled them to worship God in spirit and in truth. Forms of prayer were therefore necessarily introduced in the primitive ages of the Church, and have continued in use among all Christians to this very day, except a few denominations, who have taken umbrage at them as dead forms, incapable of engaging the heart. Unfortunately for those who entertain this opinion, our blessed Saviour delivered to his Disciples a form of prayer, and had he thought it necessary to have given many forms, he would have certainly done it. Following the example of the Jewish and Apostolic ages, the luminaries of the English Church at the reformation, drew up a form of worship, which, after undergoing several careful revisions, at length arrived at the simplicity and beauty for which it is now distinguished.

We are creatures made by the power and preserved by the care of the Almighty, and we are sinners restored by his redeeming love to a capacity of salvation. By his unspeakable mercy, we are promised eternal life, in a world where perfect virtue and happiness dwell. With God, therefore, we are connected by every engaging relation, and by all those

obligations which imply dependence, inculcate submission, induce humility, require gratitude, invite confidence, and excite hope; and, that we should cheerfully acknowledge these endearing relations our hearts warmly admit. Now the Scriptures are full and explicit in whatever concerns the nature and substance of Christian worship; but the Scriptures prescribe only general rules for the exercise of it, and the man who has not the gift of prayer, after purchasing a Bible, finds himself still at a loss, as it respects the regular worship of God through Jesus Christ. Pursuing, therefore, the method suggested to the Jews by Ezra, the primitive Christians, in their assemblies, read the holy Scriptures divided into certain portions or lessons; then they offered up to God preconceived and well known prayers, in which the people joined with the Priest, who conducted the worship. In fine, as far as history can trace, the method followed by our Church, as set down in the Book of Common Prayer, is a transcript, or nearly so, of the service of the primitive Church.

The great design of public worship is to join with one heart and one mouth in adoring God, petitioning him for those things which we want, intreating the continuance of those we possess, and praising and blessing his holy name for all his benefits, more especially for his redeeming love. In order to promote the piety and devotion of the worshippers, some known form appears to be absolutely necessary, and it has been truly remarked, that there can be no public worship without a form. Even should the Minister, in confidence of his own powers, pray extempore, yet, to all those who hear him, this prayer, unconnected as it may be, is to all intents and purposes, a form, since it is not different, but the same, to all who join with him in public devotion. Nor can they have any other than these words, whether they make use of them or not. It has been pertinently observed, that all worshipping assemblies have forms of some part of their service. Singing psalms, for example, is a most essential part of divine worship, which cannot be performed except with a written form, without producing the greatest confusion; and, may not the same, nay, worse confusion attend extemporary prayer, although it may not be so visible.

Let us suppose, for example, that a pious and devout person enters the Church of God, with the design of worshipping him in spirit and in truth; that he falls upon his knees, bowed down to the earth, and his eyes, heart, and hands lifted up to heaven; and while he is thus engaged, in the spirit of true humility, in worshipping God, let us suppose that a proud arrogant minister conducts the worship, and ignorant of the world, his own state by nature, and the religion of Jesus, dictates the supplication of the congregation, and instead of praying in an humble and contrite spirit, addresses the Almighty in a familiar style, and with a multiplicity of words, more proper to flatter the vanity of man, than to express the feelings and aspirations of a sincere penitent, what would the situation of the devout Christian be? If such cases often happen, or even if there be a possibility of their ever happening, would it not be much better to have a form of prayer well digested, in which the whole congregation might conscientiously unite.

(To be continued.)

CHALMERS' SERMONS.

(Continued from page 297.)

We have other objections to the extent to which Dr. Chalmers carries several doctrines of our religion; but as our readers are, no doubt, anxious to possess some specimens of the rich and varied eloquence of this powerful preacher, we hasten to gratify them. From the very full opening Sermon, we might select many valuable passages, in which the natural feebleness of man, and his acquired power through prayer, are nobly contrasted. Take the following:

"We read of the letter, and we read also of the spirit of the New Testament. It would require a volume, rather than a single paragraph of a single Sermon, to draw the line between the one and the other; but you will readily acknowledge, that there are many things in this book which a man, though untaught by the Spirit of God, may be made to know. One of the simplest instances is, he may learn the number of chapters in each book, and the number of verses in each chapter. But is this all? No! for by the natural exercise of his memory, he may be able to master all its historical information. And is this all? No, for by the natural exercise of his judgment, he may compare Scripture with Scripture; he may learn what its doctrines are; he may demonstrate the orthodoxy of every one article of our national confession; he may rank among the ablest and most judicious of the commentators; he may read, and with understanding too, many a ponderous volume; he may store himself with the learning of many generations; he may be familiar with all their systems, and have mingled with all their controversies; and yet, with a mind supporting as it does the burden of the erudition of whole libraries, he may have gotten to himself no other wisdom than the wisdom of the letter of the New Testament. The man's creed, with all its arranged and its well weighed articles, may be no better than the dry bones in the vision of Ezekiel, put together into a skeleton, and fastened with sinews, and covered with flesh and skin, and exhibiting to the eye of the spectators the aspect and lineaments of a man, but without breath, and remaining so, till the Spirit of God breathed into it, and it lived. And it is in truth a sight of wonder, to behold a man who has carried his knowledge of the Scripture as far as the wisdom of man can carry it, to see him blest with all the light which nature can give, but labouring under the power of darkness, which no power of nature can dispel—to see this man of many accomplishments, who can bring his every power of demonstration to bear upon the Bible, carrying in his bosom a heart uncheered by any of its consolations, unmoved by the influence of any of its truths, unshaken out of any one attachment to the world, and an utter stranger to those high resolves which shed a glory over the daily walk of the believer, and give to every one of his doings, the high character of a candidate for eternity."

We cannot forbear inserting the following antidote to enthusiasm, in which the preacher shews that by divine illumination, we are not to understand the revelation of any new truth: "The Spirit does not make us wise above that which is written. When a telescope is directed to some distant landscape, it enables us to see what we could not have otherwise seen; but it does not enable us to see any thing which has not a real existence in the prospect before us; it does not present to the eye any delusive imagery, neither is that a fanciful and fictitious scene which it throws open to our contemplation. The natural eye saw nothing but blue land, stretching along the distant horizon; by the aid of the glass there bursts upon it a charming variety of fields, and woods, and spires, and villages; yet who would say, that the glass added any thing to this assemblage? it discovers nothing to us that is not there; nor out of that portion of the book of nature which we are employed in contemplating, does it bring into view a single character which is not previously inscribed upon it. And so of the Spirit.—He does not add a single truth or a single character to the book of revelation—he enables the spiritual man to see what the natural man cannot see; but the spectacle which he lays open is uniform and immutable.

"Let us now bring the whole matter to a practical conclusion.—For the acquirement of a saving and spiritual knowledge of the Gospel, you are on the one hand to put forth all your ordinary powers, in the very same way that you do for the acquirement of knowledge in any of the ordinary branches of human learning; but in the act of doing so, you on the other hand are to proceed on a profound impression of the utter fruitlessness of all your endeavours, unless God meets them by the manifestations of his Spirit.—In other words you are to read your Bible and to bring your faculties of attention, and understanding, and memory, to the exercise, just as strenuously as if these and these alone could conduct you to the light after which you are aspiring; but you are at the same time to pray as earnestly for this object as if God accomplished it without your exertions at all, instead of accomplishing it in the way he actually does by your exertions. It is when your eyes are turned towards the book of God's testimony, and not when your eyes are turned away from it, that he fulfills upon you the petition of the Psalmist—'Lord, do thou open mine eyes, that I may behold the wondrous things contained in thy law.' You are not to exercise your faculties in searching after truth, without prayer, else God will withhold from you

his illuminating influences; and you are not to pray for truth, without exercising your faculties, else God will reject your prayers, as the mockery of a hypocrite; but you are to do both, and this is in harmony with the whole style of a Christian's obedience, who is as strenuous in doing as if his doings were to accomplish all, and as fervent in prayer, as if without the inspiring energy of God, all his doings were vanity and feebleness.

"And the great Apostle may be quoted as the best example of this observation. There never existed a man more active than Paul in the work of the Christian ministry. How great the weight and variety of his labours! what preaching, what travelling, what writing of letters, what daily struggling with difficulties, what constant exercise of thought in watching over the Churches; what a world of perplexity in his dealings with men, and in the hard dealings of men with him; and were they friends or were they enemies, how his mind behaved to be ever on the alert in counselling the one and in warding off the hostility of the other. Look to all that is visible in the life of this Apostle, and you see nothing but bustle, and enterprise, and variety; you see a man intent upon the furtherance of some great object, and in the prosecution of it, as ever diligent, and as ever doing, as if the whole burden of it lay upon himself, or as if it were reserved for the strength of his solitary arm to accomplish it. To this object he consecrated every moment of his time, and even when he set himself down to the work of a tentmaker, for the sake of vindicating the purity of his intentions and holding forth an example of honest independence to the poorer brethren, even here, you just see another display of the one principle which possessed his whole heart, and gave such a character of wondrous activity to all the days of his earthly pilgrimage. There are some who are so far misled by a perverse Theology which they have adopted, as to hesitate about the lawfulness of being diligent and doing in the use of means. While they are slumbering over their speculation, and proving how honestly they put faith in it by doing nothing, let us be guided by the example and pains taking of St. Paul, and remember, that never since the days of this Apostle, who calls upon us to be the followers of him as he was of Christ, never were the labours of human exertion more faithfully rendered—never were the workings of a human instrument put forth with greater energy.

"But it forms a still more striking part of the example of St. Paul, that while he did as much towards the extension of the Christian faith as if the whole success of the cause depended upon his doing, he prayed as much, and as fervently, for this object, as if all his doings were of no consequence—a fine testimony to the supremacy of God, from the man who in labours was more abundant than any who ever came after him, that he counted all as nothing, unless God would interfere, to put his blessing upon all, and to give his efficiency to all! He who looked so busy, and whose hand was so constantly engaged in the work that was before him, looked for all his success to that help which cometh from the sanctuary of God. There was his eye directed—thence alone did he expect a blessing upon his endeavours. He wrought, and that with diligence too, because God bade him; but he also prayed, and that with equal diligence, because God had revealed to him, that plant as he may, and water as he may, God alone giveth the increase. He did homage to the will of God, by the labours of the ever-working minister, and he did homage to the power of God by the devotions of the ever-praying minister. He did not say, what signifies my working, for God alone can work with effect? This is very true, but God chooses to work by instruments, and St. Paul, by the question, 'Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?' expresses his readiness to be an instrument in his hand."

In his second Sermon, Dr. Chalmers illustrates the reception given by many persons to the doctrines peculiar to Christianity, from that given to the parables of Ezekiel by his hearers, who wanted "either principle to be in earnest or patience for the exercise of attention, or such a concern about God, as to care very much about his will." But in doing this, he goes too far, by condemning the most clear and impressive mode of preaching drawn from the analogies of common observation, and the divine appeals to the common sense of mankind. He seems to forget that the exclamation of the Prophet, "Ah, Lord God! they say of me, doth he not speak parables?" is not applicable to the whole, but to some parts of his prophecies, and if adopted by the Christian preacher, it cannot be applied to the whole, but to some parts of the religion which he professes. It must indeed be manifest to all who read the New Testament, that our Saviour is continually explaining and illustrating his doctrines from the more obvious analogies of common life, and that he is ever appealing to the common sense of mankind; even in these matters where the preacher conceives the strength of his argument to lie, the Scriptures have continual recourse to the different relations of life, to render the meaning clear and distinct to the reader. It is very true, that many preachers entertain a sort of antipathy to Scripture language, and Apostolic phraseology; but such persons not only prove themselves unworthy of their station, but essentially injure the subjects which they wish most to enforce, since the Gospel morality and doctrines are rendered infinitely more impressive by associating them with the common feelings and obvious relations of society. It will be found, that the mysterious aspect of the Gospel to the men of the world, consists not in the use of such terms and such phrases as it furnishes, or in illustrations drawn from social intercourse, but in the influence which its precepts and doctrines

possesses over the lives of believers. They are unable to conceive (because they have never felt their power) how such doctrines as the atonement and sanctification, and the in-dwelling of the Holy Ghost, and salvation by Christ, should produce a radical change of life and conversation. They have frequently heard these doctrines, and are perhaps well acquainted with their general import, but they have never brought them home to their hearts and experienced them as words of power.

In the conclusion of this Sermon, the preacher beautifully expatiates on the value of the doctrines of the Gospel upon a death bed.

"We never saw the dying acquaintance, who, upon the retrospect of his virtues and of his doings, could prop the tranquillity of his spirit on the expectation of a legal reward. Oh no! this is not the element which sustains the tranquillity of death-beds; it is the hope of forgiveness; it is a believing sense of the efficacy of the atonement; it is the prayer of faith offered up in the name of him who is the Captain of our salvation; it is a dependence in that power which can alone impart a meetness for the inheritance of the saints, and present the spirit holy, and unreprouceable, and unblamable, in the sight of God."

DISTRICT COMMITTEE
OF THE
Society for promoting Christian Knowledge.

York, 7th December, 1819.

A Meeting of the Members of the Congregation of the Established Church, at York, and others residing within the Province of Upper Canada, in the Diocese of Quebec, was held this day, in the District School-house,

His Excellency Sir PEREGRINE MAITLAND, K. C. B.
the Lieutenant Governor, in the Chair.

After an appropriate prayer, the object of calling the Meeting was explained by the Rev. Dr. Strachan, as follows:

On the third day of December, 1816, the principal part of the inhabitants of this town assembled for the purpose of taking into consideration the propriety of establishing a Society for the distribution of the Bible and Common Prayer Book throughout this Province, and accordingly such a Society was formed, under the special protection and patronage of His Excellency Lieutenant Governor Gore, then at the head of this Government.

As it was expected that many persons not belonging to the Established Church would be disposed to join this Society, great care was taken in drawing up the constitution, to adapt it to their accommodation; and it was provided, that the Treasurer should have two columns in his subscription book, one for the Bible alone, and the other for the Bible and Common Prayer Book. The money subscribed in the first column to be laid out in the purchase of Bibles only, and that subscribed in the second might be expended in Bibles and Prayer Books, in such proportions as the Committee of Direction found expedient. In this way it was hoped, that those who were desirous of distributing the Bible alone would be gratified, while an opportunity was likewise given to the members of the Established Church to provide Prayer Books as well as Bibles for those who were anxious to obtain them. The Society was in effect divided into two distinct branches under one general name.

It was well observed, that as it was the desire of the Society to give liberty both in the distribution and in the choice, the constitution invited those to join, who, being more disposed to unite in the simple and meritorious object of the Bible Society, than to contribute for the dissemination of the Prayer Book, wished to confine their subscriptions to the purchase of Bibles only, and provides that this shall appear on the face of the Treasurer's accounts; for it is not the intention of the Society to press the liturgy where there appears a reluctance to receive it. Thus the door is open to all denominations of Christians, to all who are anxious to extend the limits of vital religion. Those who think that the distribution of the Bible alone is sufficient to dispel the darkness of ignorance, to warn and rouse from that indifference which infidelity has produced, to lead the throbbing soul to the foot of the cross, and point out the way to salvation, may be fully gratified by supporting this institution; and those again who consider the Prayer Book not only a guide to worship, but a manual of instruction, furnishing the penitent with the most affecting invocations, with which to implore his Redeemer to have mercy on his perishing soul, will here find an opportunity of indulging their pious desires.

Notwithstanding the catholic liberality of these principles, an opinion seemed still to exist among many, that it would be better to separate the Society into two distinct institutions, and it was confidently said, that different Bible Societies would associate themselves as auxiliaries were this done.

At the annual meeting of the Bible and Prayer Book Society, in November, 1818, it was proposed to separate the two branches entirely from one another, and, instead of one, to form two institutions.

In discussing this subject, it was remarked by one of the members, that from the care with which the distinction was marked in the original constitution, it was hardly to be anticipated that scruples could have arisen. Nevertheless, as they appeared still to exist, he consented to separate the Societies, each of which would then have a simple object in view. We are taught to have respect to the weakness of a brother, and his scruples, should we think them wrong, are entitled to favour, as they indicate the force of conscience. In this country, where all the various denominations of Christians meet together, far from their native homes and the lively and interesting scenes of their childhood, there is generally a disposition to be kindly affectionate one towards another. This spirit should be cherished, and no Society can promote

this more than one for disseminating the Scriptures. The resolution was therefore adopted, and from that period there were two Societies; one, for disseminating the Bible only, and the other for distributing the Prayer Book.

As there was a very considerable supply of Prayer Books on hand, which had been purchased agreeable to the resolutions of the original institution, it did not appear requisite, during the last year, to call upon the friends of the Prayer Book for any contribution.

There have been distributed about 240 Prayer Books, and by the munificence of Government, we have still nearly 200 Copies on hand, which were sent out last summer through the Society for promoting Christian Knowledge.

The mention of this venerable Society, must forcibly remind every member of our Church, that as the object of the Prayer Book Society now to be established, is the same, it would be proper and expedient to join ourselves as a Committee or auxiliary to that institution. This could not been effected till within a very few years, as the Society held all its meetings in London, and although it had members in every part of the British Empire, it gave them no particular authority to promote its views. In consequence of this, though it had existed above a century, it was little known even in the distant Provinces at home, much less in the Colonies abroad. But in June, 1810, at a general meeting of the members of the Society for promoting Christian Knowledge, the late Bishop of Ely in the chair, it was unanimously agreed, that a Committee be appointed for the purpose of considering and reporting upon the proper means to be adopted for extending the usefulness of the Society, for increasing its influence and promoting the union and co-operation of the parochial clergy, and other friends of the Church throughout the kingdom. The Committee met immediately, and recommended Diocesan and District Committees, or Branch Societies, which was adopted, and are now established over all England, in the East Indies, at Halifax, and Quebec. The success attending this measure is almost incredible. The members of the parent Society have increased from 3560 to 11746; the revenue from £13210 to upwards of £60,000.

The advantage of joining ourselves as a Branch of the Society for promoting Christian Knowledge, will appear when we read its admonition and objects in forming Branch Societies, or District Committees, and all must perceive that it gives unity of design, and therefore double effect to the exertions of the friends of our establishment; and while all other denominations are acting in a body, it places her in her proper situation, as the first to instruct the ignorant, and to send the Gospel to the uttermost parts of the earth.

The greater part of the members of the Prayer Book Society having already contributed to the dissemination of the Scriptures, may with propriety do something in particular to promote the more general knowledge of that system of belief which they profess, and conscientiously believe to be the best. The other Society supplies Bibles; this gives a book which aids the Christian in the practical use of his Bible; a book which breathes a spirit of piety, calm but fervent, of humility deep, but unaffected, conveyed in language both simple and sublime, so clear that the most ignorant can understand it, and so beautiful, that the most learned despair to improve it. Nor is this the language only of those who are members of the Church of England, Dissenters of all denominations acknowledge its excellence, and are penetrated with its devotional spirit. This is the age of religious and moral improvement; Providence is evidently publishing its gracious designs and preparing for the blessed consummation of Christ's kingdom. Christianity is extending on every side, it is breaking down the walls of partition, and it calls for all its friends to assist in the gracious work. And have we nothing in our power? Yes, we can say to our destitute or ignorant neighbour, here is the Bible, and here is a summary of its contents, the work of pious and learned men—read, compare, and judge, and decide for yourself; here you have the doctrines, the ministry, and a form of worship; a complete manual of truth and devotion. It is indeed evident, that the distribution of the Scriptures is incomplete, without the accompaniment of a regular system of worship, and especially in a new country like this, and among Heathen nations, who cannot always have ministers to conduct their public devotions.

"With such important pious purposes in contemplation, I confidently appeal to this meeting, and to the inhabitants of the District, for your countenance and support, and can I appeal in vain? Can I appeal in vain to the friend of true charity, when our object is to promote the present peace and future happiness of our neighbours? Can I appeal in vain to the admirer of rational piety, when its purpose is to diffuse throughout the land the light and life of Christianity, uncorrupted by human traditions, unwrested from its true meanings by partial interpretation? Can I appeal in vain to the members of our Church—that Church which is Apostolical in her origin, rational in her discipline, pure in her formularies, tolerant in her principle, and scriptural in her doctrines, which has in most cases a good report of them which are without, and of all those who are included within her pale, of all who have studied her character and borne part in her ministrations."

The regulations for the establishment of District Committees, and a statement of their objects being then read from the last Report of the Society for promoting Christian Knowledge, it was

Resolved,—That this Society be henceforth constituted a Branch or District Committee of the Society for promoting Christian Knowledge, established in London, and be governed by the rules and orders of that venerable Society, in as far as they are applicable to the state of the country.

Resolved,—That this District Committee or Branch be open only to persons who subscribe two dollars annually to the purposes of the Institution.

Resolved,—That this District Committee or Branch Society do meet on the first Tuesdays of January, April, July, and October.

Resolved,—That the chair be taken at one o'clock precisely; but if nine members be not present, the meeting do adjourn; and notice be sent to the several members of such adjournment for a second meeting within ten days.

Resolved,—That this be considered the first annual meeting of this District Committee or Branch Society.

Resolved,—That His Excellency the Lieutenant Governor, be requested to accept the office of President.

Resolved,—That the Chief Justice and Judges of the King's Bench, be Vice-Presidents.

Resolved,—That William Allan, Esq. be requested to accept the office of Treasurer, and the Rev. Dr. Strachan that of Secretary.

Resolved,—That the President, or Vice-President, or any member of this District Committee or Branch Society have power to call a special meeting, having given three days notice of such meeting and the object of it.

Resolved,—That the accounts of the Treasurer and Secretary be open for inspection at all general meetings, and be audited annually.

Resolved,—That the names of the subscribers be published twice a year.

Resolved,—That the funds be restricted at present to the distribution of the Book of Common Prayer, and the Homilies.

Resolved,—That the Hon. Justice Campbell, the Hon. Justice Boulton, and the Rev. Dr Strachan, be a Committee to draw up such rules as may appear necessary for the direction of this Branch Society or District Committee.

Resolved,—That a local Depository of books for the supply of the District and members of the Society be formed from the appropriation of such monies as come into the Treasurer's hands.

Resolved,—That an account of the state of this Depository be regularly kept and laid before the Committee by the Secretary at every meeting.

ON AMUSEMENTS.

Some good and pious persons condemn all amusements as vain, and incompatible with the spirit and practice of true religion. This judgment seems to me to be founded on error, or on principles of morality stretched to excess. It proceeds from an opinion, that it is not necessary or expedient to give up any time to recreation; or, it arises from the sentiment, that there is not any thing in the habits and intercourse of human life of an indifferent nature, but that our duty with regard to every thing is invariably fixed.—These sentiments exceed the due bounds of reason, and are liable to mislead the weak and the ignorant, if I be not mistaken. It is the infirmity of human nature to be always running into extremes.

The opinion that all amusements are vain or sinful, as well as other erroneous principles of an enthusiastic nature, sprang up early in the Church of Christ; but the prevalence of similar sentiments among many persons in this country, is to be traced to the descendants of the Puritans, who came from England, with strong prejudices of this description, which have been handed down to their posterity. They are also fostered and maintained by the Methodists, who endeavour to institute a more strict and perfect rule of life and precepts, than that which is plainly set forth in the holy Scriptures. To me it seems imprudent to go beyond the rule in any doctrine or precept; either to command or to forbid any thing that is not plainly prescribed, directly or indirectly, in the word of God. The natural consequences of this excess of rigor, is preciseness of attention to some inferior points of duty, while those of signal importance are neglected. Therefore, we frequently find strict notions of morality, as to minor objects, accompanied with very loose and deficient sentiments, and practice regarding honor, truth, and other cardinal and Christian virtues. To persons erring in this way, the sentence of our Saviour is applicable: "Ye blind guides! which strain at a gnat, and swallow a camel."

The sentiment, that there is not any thing in itself indifferent, and that our duty in every circumstance of life is absolutely fixed, is certainly incorrect.

The great Apostle, writes to the Romans respecting the use of meats and drinks, in a manner which shews that there was not any occasion for an exact rule of obedience concerning them. In such, or similar matters, he only directs, that we should not unnecessarily offend a weak brother, or act in a manner inconsistent with the dictates of our own conscience.

The constant improvement of our time and talents, is unquestionably a great duty; at the same time, it is difficult to point out exactly the amusements which are vain and useless in their nature, or to set down the time which may innocently be given to harmless recreation; and it is presumptuous to condemn all indulgence in amusements as sinful. One and the same rule relative to them cannot be equally applicable to all persons, characters, and ages. The recreation suitable to persons who are chiefly employed in manual labour, is not adapted to those who are engaged in literary pursuits; and, young people and private individuals may, without censure, be allowed to partake of some amusements, to join in which would be indecorous for the aged, and for persons high in authority; but some recreation of mind or body, after long or diligent exercise of either, is beneficial to all persons, in every condition of life.

The great spring of error in reasoning on the subject before us, and it is a common cause of error, arises from the abuse of the thing considered, and from beholding it in a clouded and unfavourable point of view. Drawing general conclusions from imperfect premises, or partial views of any subject, must end in error; and appreciating any thing by its abuse only, must lead to a false estimate. Yet many censors consider all amusements in a confined view, and in speaking of them, they reason only from their abuse. No doubt, they are often made instruments and occasions of vice and immorality; and frequently when this is not the case, they are indulged in to excess; so that time is wasted and misspent, and positive duties are interfered with and neglected. But this is not necessarily their character, or effect; this is a perversion of their genuine design, and a departure from their legitimate use. It is a mistake to suppose, that folly, vice, and excess, are inseparably connected with all indulgence in recreation and amusements. There is such a thing as being merry and wise at the same time.—Indeed abuse and excess of recreation entirely destroy its nature and object. Its usefulness consists in renewing the mind or body in strength for fresh exertions in the best employment of them, and in affording us opportunities to join in social intercourse and friendly conversation, which are pleasures and comforts of life desirable and profitable to all men. It contributes to the health of the body, and the cheerfulness of the soul; and these are objects not to be despised; they are mutually beneficial to each other, and to the good and happiness of the whole man. Labour and rest, seriousness and cheerfulness, sorrow and joy, are variously and alternately our lot in this imperfect world, and in our present state of probation; and they are ordered for our improvement and preparation for a better world. It behoves us to exercise them with patience and watchfulness, that we may profit by the gifts and dispensations of Providence; that good things may not be evil spoken of, and that their abuse may neither betray us into sin, nor mislead

our judgment.

They who condemn all amusements as vain and sinful, endeavour to call in Scripture authority to their aid, in support of their sentiments; but herein they are weak; for the texts which they produce, do not plainly or positively apply to the subject; and even in their indirect tendency they only condemn sinful pleasures, or excessive indulgence in those which are innocent. For my own part, I do not wish to diminish or add to the word of God, or to question its sufficiency for instruction in all righteousness. I would be guided by its wisdom; and learning of Christ, I would take him for my example. I shall venture to observe, that if Jesus Christ had not attended a marriage feast, and contributed to its hilarity, I am persuaded that many modern teachers would have condemned all festivity as sinful. As it was, in his days, he was by some called "a gluttonous man, and a wine-bibber, a friend of publicans and sinners!" and now, in our time, some persons condemn all drinking of wine, except in cases of sickness, as a sin; although Jesus Christ at a feast turned water into wine.

The Ministers of our Lord ought to be sociable with their people, and happy to join with them in a kind and devout intercourse of mutual good offices. It is not necessary for them to be always engaged in religious conversation, professional studies, or devotional exercises. Like other men they require some cessation from their appropriate duties; but they ought to be watchful, above all men, to abstain from all unprofitable amusements, and to make the best improvement of their time. Their avocations in visiting and comforting the sick and the afflicted, catechising children and young people, and examining schools, in addition to their other duties, must, in general, fully occupy their time, and also afford them sufficient recreation after diligent employment in their peculiar functions. Clergymen, especially, should be careful and jealous of their conduct and example in their whole life and conversation. All things that are lawful for them, are not expedient; and they should be tender of giving offence to a weak brother in any matter, in which they can reasonably avoid it.

The sum of my observations, is, that I would not exclusively, or indiscriminately condemn all amusements as unprofitable, vain, or sinful; and that I would not be censorious or pragmatical about matters of small moment. But I would rouse attention to important duties and doctrines, and press conformity to them with all diligence and perseverance. They who are seriously alive to the value of spiritual and eternal things, and studious to promote their everlasting interests, will grow in grace, and in the knowledge of Christ Jesus, and of heavenly things; and they will not lose time, or loiter in the way, unnecessarily to stoop to earthly objects, or vainly to join in trifling, transient, and unprofitable amusements. This is the best way, I believe, of teaching and acquiring elevation above the world and its follies, and devotion to heavenly wisdom and pursuits.

Charity and forbearance in the consideration of all questions, and in the exercise of all duties, ought to be cherished and cultivated with tender solicitude and uniform kindness, agreeable to the perfect Christian law of doing to all men as we would that they should do unto us. It was an excellent remark of Archbishop Sharp, in speaking of divisions, that the worst of heresies, is the want of Charity.

CANDIDUS.

ANNUAL REPORT
OF THE
QUEBEC DIOCESAN COMMITTEE
OF THE
Society for promoting Christian Knowledge.
FOR THE YEAR 1818.

The Quebec Diocesan Committee, in presenting to the public the first Annual Report of their proceedings, beg leave to express their sense of the readiness with which all classes have come forward in support of the design: and they are led by the view of its incipient stages, to augur favourably for the future; they cannot but humbly hope that it will be attended by the divine blessing in its progress, and in proportion as it becomes better known, will more effectually recommend and diffuse itself.

It was in compliance with directions received from the Lord Bishop of this Diocese, that the public attention was first called to the formation of the Society; and it commenced, upon the spot, under the auspices of the late Governor in Chief, who had extended the same countenance upon a former occasion to the Diocesan Committee in Nova Scotia. His Grace the Duke of Richmond, succeeding to the administration of this Government, was pleased also to honor the Society by his patronage and support; and it will be seen by the list of subscribers, how respectably the design has been encouraged. The subscribers to whom it has been convenient to comply with the requisitions which constitute them members of the Parent Society in England, amount, at present, to 95; but the smaller contributions of those whose means are more confined, are equally to be appreciated as indicative of an equal zeal in the cause.

The first step which was taken by the Committee, after its formation, was to remit an order for Bibles, Prayer Books, and such other books as they had selected from the Catalogue of the Parent Society. An anxiety having been expressed in the letter of their Secretary to the Secretary at home, that the supply might be sent with promptitude, (in order to secure its arrival before the closing of the navigation in the St. Lawrence,) this request was attended to with such zealous alacrity, that the books were actually shipped within three days from the receipt of the order; a circumstance which deserves thankfully to be noticed.

The books were received late in the autumn, and the following is a statement of the whole number, exclusive of such small tracts and printed sheets, as are sent gratis by the Parent Society.

Family Bibles, in 3 vols.	4 sets.
Common Bibles, of various size and type,	106
Testaments, do. do.	122
Prayer Books, do. do.	174
Other bound books	239
Tracts, half-bound and stitched	3,741

Upon the arrival of these books, it was resolved, in conformity with the latter part of the tenth original resolution, that a considerable proportion should be exposed for sale, at the prices charged respectively to subscribers and to the public; and the book-store of Messrs. T. Cary, jun. & Co. was opened accordingly for this purpose. The greater part of the remainder were divided between the Rev. Official Mountain, and the Rev. J. L. Mills, Chaplain to the Forces, either for gratuitous distribution, or otherwise at their discretion.

The experience of half a year has sufficiently shewn that much larger means than are now possessed by the Diocesan Society, would not do more than meet the demands arising upon them; and very few of the books which were placed at the disposal of these gentlemen now remain in their hands. They have been chiefly distributed among the poorer classes of Protestants in Quebec, and the vicinity; a few have been sent to the new settlement at Val Cartier; a certain number have been dispersed among the Drummondville settlers; and others have found their way into different parts of the

Eastern Townships, where vast quantities might be circulated with excellent fruit. These have been all distributed gratis; but with regard to such as were reserved for the benefit of the troops, it has been found more advisable to commit them to the Regimental School-masters, to be sold on account of the Society, at a reduced rate: and it is highly gratifying to the Committee to be enabled to say, that a laudable forwardness to avail themselves of this advantage has been manifested by a class of men exposed to peculiar temptations, but equally capable with others of becoming soldiers of Christ, and encouraged to become so by marked instances in the Gospel.

In the City of Montreal, and the Town of Three-Rivers, as well as in certain parts of Upper Canada, some subscriptions have been obtained, and some preparatory steps have been taken; and matters it is hoped, are in train to yield materials for the next report, but they are not yet sufficiently advanced to form a part of the statement for the present year.

A box was dispatched very soon after the arrival of the books, to the Hon. and Rev. Dr. Stuart, in the Township of Hatley, and another to the Rev. J. Jackson, of William Henry, agreeably to the respective orders of these gentlemen, who anticipate much benefit from the dispersion of the Society's supplies among their flocks.

A letter has been just received from the Rev. J. Reid, Minister of the Churches in Missisquoui Bay, announcing the formation of a District Committee, with the amount of subscriptions, and expressing a desire to be furnished accordingly with books; but the names of the subscribers have not yet reached the Diocesan Committee. Mr. Samuel Hatt, of Chambly, has also lately written to desire that a certain number of books and tracts may be sent, on his own account for distribution at that place.

It will be satisfactory to the public to learn that His Majesty's Government has made arrangements with the Parent Society in England for sending out successive supplies of Bibles, Testaments, and Prayer Books, (the first of which supplies has been received) to be placed at the disposal of the clergy of the Established Church in Upper and Lower Canada. This attention on the part of Government, to the spiritual wants of the Protestants in these two Provinces, will tend considerably to lighten the burthen upon the funds of the Committee, and will thus enable them, with better hope of success, to prosecute an object which they have ventured to comprise within their views, and which is certainly as important and interesting as any other part of them.

This object is no other than to introduce the system of education for the poor, invented and first practised by Dr. Bell, at Madras, and to establish a school in this place, in connection with the National Society at home. A Master and Mistress, trained and qualified to teach upon this system, have been sent for, and it is with infinite satisfaction that the Committee announce the favourable intention of His Grace the Governor in Chief, to appropriate to the support of this school, a salary of £100 per annum, attached to an appointment recently vacated by death.

His Grace had previously been pleased to signify that his permission should be given for the use of any Government building, which may be vacant at the time, and can be adapted to the purpose, till a permanent school-house shall be erected; and the school will be opened with all the advantages accruing from the patronage and encouragement of His Grace and Lady Mary Lennox.

In this department of the labours which lie before the Committee, the field of exertion is very considerable, and likely to receive continual accessions from the annual influx of settlers, many of whom establish themselves in Quebec. The number of poor children of civilians who, through the indulgence of commanding officers, are now receiving instruction, as a temporary measure, in the different Regimental Schools, and who will be proper subjects, among others, for the contemplated National School, is at this moment, Boys, 70—Girls, 44.

It remains only to recommend the designs of the Society at large, and of the branch established in this community, to the cordial encouragement, the zealous co-operation, the mindful and earnest prayers of all who wish the *kingdom of God to come*: of all who believe, that the promotion of Christian Knowledge, and the Religious Education of the poor, are things intimately connected with the temporal and eternal welfare of mankind: of all who feel it incumbent upon them to be instrumental, within their sphere, to such a work. And it will never be found an impediment to the true interests of Religion, that, while it is made the primary object to disperse and familiarize the word of God, it is also laid down as a radical and characteristic rule of the Society to disseminate it in connection with those sound, correct, and authorized human aids, of which the necessity is too apparent from the annals of Ecclesiastical History, and which, as there is all reason to believe, are united with the Church of Christ, essentially, and in its original constitution.

J. Sewell, V. P.
G. Mountain, V. P.
J. Irvine, Committee of Management and Report.
J. Harvey,
J. Davidson, Treas.
J. L. Mills, Sec'y.

Quebec, 4th May, 1819.

To the Editor of the Christian Recorder.

SIR,

If you think the following reflections which are thrown together with so little method as almost to deserve the name of a fragment, worthy a corner in your Christian Recorder, they are at your disposal; and if the perusal of them bends one knee, or raises one heart to adore that Great Being, whose service ought to be our proudest boast, I shall be amply repaid for risking the criticism of the worldly wise, and the sarcasm of those who will not be sensible of their own weakness until all their strength is gone.

Resolutions recommended to the adoption of all those who wish to find pleasure in the retrospection of this present year.

I will begin this instant, if I can, to reflect with gratitude on the mercy of God, in bringing me to the beginning of another year. I will try, with faith in his gracious promise, to beseech him to send his grace into my heart, that it may assist me in living this year as if my last.—I will remember that the night cometh when no man can work; and while it is yet day, I will prepare as well as all my heart, all my soul, and all my mind can enable me, to meet that great and notable day of the Lord, which shall as certainly come to me like a thief in the night, and by its refulgent brightness upon all my dark thoughts and wicked actions, as that sun which this evening sunk beneath our horizon, shall to-morrow rise, and by its beams bring to light all those objects now shrouded in darkness.

I will think how, if now called upon, I could bear that awful hour, and which action of my past life, even my own partial judgment could pronounce fit to bear the blaze of that all-searching light! or whether its whole tenor could enable me to stand before a neglected God—a crucified Saviour.

I will think how wretchedly I have forgotten myself and my own interests, whilst a gracious God has remembered me, and given me another day, perhaps another year, during which, if I use it wisely, I may, through the merits of a blessed Redeemer, blot out the remembrance of my former sins.

I who am a parent and have servants at my command, will reflect on my past negligence, and shudder whilst I call to mind my long neglect of duties the most sacred; and in order to strengthen my household as well as myself, I will this evening assemble them, and by my example, as well as my authority, raise their voices, with my own, to the throne of heavenly grace, praying God to draw our hearts also.—From this day I will lose no opportunity of recompensing these poor creatures, these innocent children, for the injury I have done them, in allowing their precious lives to pass unpractised in those habits by which alone the respect of this world, and their eternal happiness can be ensured. I will remember that religion is the only guard I can have over the honesty of my servants, and that by teaching my children their duty to God, in the first place, I myself can alone deserve from them duty and confidence. From this time I will point to heaven and lead the way; shewing them that no earthly concern, no worldly business is to interfere with the

stated duty of offering praises and thanks to that bountiful Being, by whose goodness alone they enjoy life and blessings. I will remember, that if I allow them so eagerly to grasp at the benefits as in their haste to forget their Benefactor, I can never expect them to be mindful of my own care for them, and I must inevitably sink in their minds far below the place I think my due.—I will remember how just my childish reasoning told me was the punishment of that wretched mother whose wicked son was allowed to bite off her ear, at the moment he was about to suffer the sentence of that law, which her precepts had never taught him to revere, nor her example to dread.—I will then, if any mind can bear the horrid inference, reflect on what must be my own condemnation, should I meet my children and dependents on the day of judgment, trembling at the sight of that book, which I never taught them was to record all their actions, and striving to flee from that wrath which I never led them daily to deprecate.—I will think how little all my daily labours on earth can avail me at such a moment—how useless would be the richest inheritance the worldly father could leave his child, in assuaging the agony of those little ones who in this misery are calling upon me to exert that only power which my pride and my brutality ever taught them to dread or confide in, in extricating them from that awful presence which their guilty souls cannot bear. I will think all this, and say, can my hard heart reject as speculative what my reason tells me is truth? Can I dare, I and my household, to use so many hours, which God has given us, for our own gratification, and not devote the smallest fraction of all that time to the Giver of all goodness? Shall I allow the daily labours and daily pleasures of my house to go on, and not insist on all being suspended for ten minutes, morning and evening, that I and my house may serve the Lord? I have indeed too long delayed; I will begin this very evening, lest to-night my soul be required of me, and I should find too late, that there is no repentance in the grave! Even though I feel my own hard heart cannot admit the finer sentiment of religion, yet I will do what my reason and experience points out as my indispensable duty to my children, my servants, and the stranger that is within my gates. I will lead them with bended knees to adore that God, and that Saviour, through whose mercy and love, they can alone obtain salvation.

January 5th, 1820.

THE HISTORY OF LUCY CLARE.

(Continued from page 297.)

When we came into the church, (the clergyman not being yet come,) we sat down in our proper places, and I employed myself in looking out the psalms and lessons for the day; when suddenly, my cousin whispered me, "Look, Lucy, see what a fine lady is come into the church! It is Sally Page, the miller's daughter: is she not very smart, and very pretty too?"

I was vexed both with his manner and the place he had chosen for this discourse, and begged him to be silent.

"Nay but," answered he, "do but look up for once; she is just opposite to you, and, I promise you, that you never saw so smart a lass before."

To satisfy James, I looked up; and much surprised was I to see so fine a lady. She was a handsome tall young woman, with black eyes, and cheeks as red as a rose: and yet there was something in her appearance altogether which I did not like; for she was dressed above her station, and I thought that she had a bold free air. She wore a straw hat, with cherry-coloured ribbons, and a silk gown, with a hoop, and lace apron, and ruffles, and a string of glass beads about her neck.

"Well," said my cousin, looking hard in my face, "how do you like her, Lucy? is not she handsome?"

"I will tell you what I think of her by and by," said I, "this is no time for talking." And I remember that I felt vexed.

When we were coming out of the church, Sally Page came up to my cousin, and, calling him by his name, asked him how he did. He smiled and looked pleased, and answered, that, he thanked her, he was very well.

When James and I were quite out of every one's hearing, I said to him, "Now, cousin, I will answer the question asked me in church about the miller's daughter."

"Do, Lucy," said he, "tell me whether you like Sally Page?"

"I cannot say," I replied, "that I altogether like her looks; I never think it a very good sign when a young woman is dressed above her station; it leads one to suppose—"

"To suppose what?" said he, hastily.

"Why, I do not like to say what, lest you should think me too severe upon my neighbours," I replied.

"Indeed, I shall not think you so, Lucy," he answered: "so speak out without fear."

"Why," said I, "when a young woman pays too much attention to her dress, and spends too much money upon it, one cannot but think, that all this care, and pains, and expence, is for no other reason, than that she is anxious to be admired and looked after by the young men."

"Well! and do not all women," said he, rather warmly, "wish, above all things, to be admired by the men? Is it not natural to them?"

I looked at him, when he spoke these words, with a look of sorrow. "Alas! James," I said, "what you say is true; it is natural enough: we are all by nature sinful; but are we not led, by divine grace, to resist and subdue our old sinful nature and inclinations? and, therefore, we must not allow it in ourselves, nor approve of it in our neighbours."

"Ah! my beloved Lucy," said he, "I see that I have grieved you; pardon your James, this time, and you never again shall hear such words from his mouth. Women, and men too, are, I know, by nature, vain and proud, and in every way inclined to sin: but I must not forget what I early learnt, in my Catechism; that, although we are born in sin, and the children of wrath, we are made by grace the children of God."

On hearing these words come from his lips, I smiled, and forgot my displeasure: and he, while he gathered some flowers, and tied them up in a bunch, to carry them to my mother, (knowing that by any kindness to her he should best please me,) added, that he was sorry he had made any acquaintance with Sally; and declared, that he would henceforth keep as much out of her way as possible.

"But how, my dear James, did you make this acquaintance," I asked, "since it is scarcely one week since her father came to the mill?"

"On Thursday, you may remember, I took some corn to be ground. The miller was not at home; and while I waited his return, Sally opened a window of the house, which is opposite the mill, and stood there for some time, looking about her."

"Go on," I said, "go on, James!" but I could not help sighing.

"Ah!" said he, "I shall make you angry again, but I will tell you all. I shall be more happy when you know it. Sally at length saw me, as I stood leaning against the mill-door, which was shut; and having looked at me, for the space of a minute, she called to me, and asked me what I wanted. I told her my business; and she invited me into the house, to wait till her father's return."

"And did you go in?" said I.

"I did!" replied he, looking sorrowfully upon the ground; "and there I stayed in discourse with her, full two hours. She gave me two cups of cider, with spice in them, and talked to me so condescendingly and graciously, that I, for a short time, forgot you, my dear Lucy, and praised Sally's beauty; saying many foolish things to her, unworthy of a true Christian."

When I heard this story, I could not help shedding tears; but James soon comforted me, by promising, that he would in future, be more cautious, and would keep from all company which might tempt him to wrong.

In the evening of that day, as I was sitting with James and my mother, on a bench before the door, hearkening with much pleasure to her pious discourse, suddenly our peace was disturbed by the loud voices of men and women, who, as they climbed the path which led round the rock to our cottage, were laughing loud, and singing unholy songs, as if they did not even know that the day was God's day.

"There," said my mother, "are some young folks, who are going, no doubt, to the wake at the village above. Alas! it is a sad thing to think how many people profane God's holy day, and thus too often destroy their own souls."

While my mother was still speaking, these riotous persons came in view. There were two young women, the daughters of a farmer in the parish; the son of the hostess of the Red-Lion, near the bridge which crosses the river in the village; a young tailor, and Sally Page.

Sally and the young man from the Red-Lion came up the hill arm in arm; but as soon as they were opposite to our house, and Sally saw my cousin, she drew her arm from her companion; and standing for some moments, looking at James, "Your humble servant, James Clare," she said, "who would have thought of seeing you here?" James arose, and coloured, but made no answer. "We are going to the wake at the next village; will you be of the party?" said she. "Come, we are to be very merry, they say, and all our neighbours are gone."

James stepped forward; then standing still, and looking at me, "Shall I go, Lucy?" he said.

"As you please," I answered, looking gravely.

He then turned to Sally, and said, "thank you, but I cannot come; it is not in my power."

"What, your sister does not choose you should?" said she, laughing. "Ask her if she too will come with us. We shall be glad of her company."

James looked at me, as if he would have persuaded me to go; but I thanked Sally for her invitation, and begged that she would excuse me.

"Well, but you will not prevent your brother from coming, I hope?" she said.

"My cousin," I answered, "is at liberty to do as he thinks right."

"What! you are not his sister?" replied she, looking very hard at me; "well, do as you please, I shall say no more." Then taking the young man's arm again—"Come," said she, "we shall be late." As they turned towards a stile, over which the

young people had passed before, we heard her say, "That James Clare is a fine lad; I wonder that he should like to mope himself with those dull folks yonder."

After Sally and her party were gone, we sat for some time silent, and James was very grave; therefore, to amuse him, I sang his favourite hymn, and afterwards read a few chapters in the Bible to him; which entertained him so well, that when it was time that we should part to go to rest, "My dear Lucy," he said, "I am very glad that I did not go to the wake; for, I am sure, I should not have spent so happy an evening there, as I have done here with you and my aunt. And I should have been unhappy too, in the thoughts of having offended my God, and profaned his Sabbath."

About twelve o'clock that night, my mother and I were awakened by the loud voices of the party coming back from the wake. As they passed by the cottage door, we heard the young men swear, and sing scraps of drunken songs; and the young women laugh and scream. When I heard this, I was much grieved; and I prayed to God to keep me, and all those who were dear to me, from the company of these who depart from God.—(*To be continued.*)

BIOGRAPHY.

THE REV. JOHN NELSON.

On Sunday, March 21st, expired, at the house of his mother, in Trinity-street, Bristol, the Rev. John Nelson, Lecturer of All-Saints, and Chaplain to the Orphan Asylum in that city. From his childhood he was remarkably gentle, amiable, and affectionate; shrinking with abhorrence from deceit and falsehood, and glowing with generous indignation at cruelty and oppression. At nine years of age he was placed under the care of the Rev. Mr. (now Archdeacon) Rudge, of Gloucester, with whom he continued nearly two years. A severe illness having obliged him to return home, his friends, who could never be prevailed on to send him to such a distance again, removed him to Mr. Robbin's Academy, Long Ashton, where his education was finished, with a view to commercial pursuits. He was apprenticed at the usual age, to a house of great respectability; and entered on the duties of his situation with cheerfulness, and acquitted himself to the satisfaction of those around him. Though his character had not yet received its highest grace, he was yet mercifully preserved from the vices and follies so natural to youth. Averse from dissipation and noisy mirth, his happiest hours were spent at home, and his leisure was chiefly devoted to reading, drawing, or other innocent and rational amusements. Like Timothy, he was blest with a pious grandmother, whose delight was to communicate religious instruction to her children's children. He venerated the character of this "elder parent," even before he could fully understand the principles which formed and gave it lustre; and afterwards, in a sermon describing the aged Anna, she was the model from which he drew. His parents assisted her endeavours; so that he was early taught to reverence God's Word and Sabbaths, and to be diligent in the use of all the means of grace. He had not, however, at this period, that deep and permanent sense of the importance of eternal things which he afterwards exhibited; yet even then his Heavenly Parent was gradually leading him "by a way which he knew not," to a more perfect "knowledge of the truth as it is in Jesus;" and preparing him for pointing out the Saviour in all his gracious offices to others.—He was a remarkable instance of the fulfilment of that promise, "If any man will do his will, he shall know of the doctrine whether it be of God." After four or five years spent in business, he began to regret that he had not received a classical education, and determined to supply the deficiency by devoting all his leisure hours to study, but without any intention of leaving the situation in which he was placed. He soon acquired a respectable knowledge of Latin and Greek; and though, as he afterwards declared, had the path which his friends marked out for him continued open, he should have considered it a point of duty not to quit it, and would in thus acting have sacrificed his own inclinations to theirs; yet some time after, on the disappointment of their hopes, he felt at liberty to declare his own, which were, to be permitted to wait at the altar. He accordingly entered at St. Edmund's Hall, Oxford, October 11th, 1809. His letters from college manifest an increasing spirituality of mind; and his views of religious truth, which had been hitherto obscure, especially on the doctrine of justification by faith, perceptibly brightened to a more perfect knowledge. His conduct also, which was always amiable and exemplary, became now increasingly subject to the influence of truly religious motives; and while his attention to the external forms of devotion for which he was peculiarly conspicuous, increased rather than relaxed, it began to wear less of the aspect of a pharasaic or self righteous spirit, and to assume that of willing and evangelical obedience.

With sentiments such as he now possessed, he was anxious to lose no time in entering on his public labours: he therefore passed his first examination in June, 1811; his final one, November 26th, 1812; and was ordained Deacon at Wells, December 20th: at which time he felt much impressed by the service, and also by a sermon preached on that occasion by the Hon. and Rev. the Dean of Wells, now Bishop of Gloucester.—From that hour he more than ever renounced all vain and sinful compliance with the customs of the world, even in things which he had hitherto considered as matters of indifference. He preached his first sermon at St. Nicholas's church, December 22d, on the love of God to fallen man in the precious gift of a Saviour. For twelve months he laboured with much acceptance as Curate of St. Philip's. He took his Bachelor's degree, June, 1813; was ordained Priest the September following, at Salisbury; and in March, 1814, took the degree of Master of Arts. He entered on his public labours as Curate and Lecturer of All Saints, January 13th, 1814—a day appointed for a general thanksgiving:—and took his final leave of that people as Curate, November 24th, 1816; but retained the Evening Lectureship, and assisted the Rev. Mr. Day, at St. Philip's, until appointed Chaplain to the Orphan Asylum, in 1817.

A memorandum, found in his desk after his decease, shows the state of his mind about this period. It was dated June 3d, 1817—his birth day—and is as follows: "The clock has just struck twelve. For the first time in my life, I could and can say, (I hope sincerely) that I love my Saviour better than any person or thing which this world contains.—Whom have I in heaven but Thee? and there is none upon earth I desire in comparison of thee. Lord, I thank thee for this feeling: may I

thus feel for ever!"

Conscious of the awful responsibility of his situation as minister of the Gospel, he delighted to fulfil its important duties. A friend meeting him one Sunday last Autumn, observed he was much fatigued—he had gone through three services that day) and asked him if he did not act wrong, in undertaking so much? "No," said he, "I feel I have a great work to do, and the time is short."—He was diligent in attending the bed of sickness; and within about a month of his death, took a journey of thirteen miles to visit a sick relation, to whom he spoke of the Redeemer, and had the satisfaction of hearing her declare Him to be the sole ground of her hope and confidence. Writing afterwards to one who was with her, he gave, among various directions, the following: "Whilst her life is spared, do not think that all is done: speak to her of those inestimable blessings which are spiritual and eternal: remember that man can never be too highly exalted. I trust your visits may, under the blessing of God, be made a means of deepening her repentance, of increasing her faith, and of keeping her views and her hopes steadily directed to the only object which can give us solid peace in this life, and sure and certain hope for that which is to come."—Though "strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might," his increasing debility of frame was such, that he felt for many weeks, especially towards the close of last year, that each returning Sabbath might be his last; and as such he endeavoured to improve it. His funeral service for the Queen was remarkably impressive; and in this and many others which he preached about that period, especially one on the lamented death of the Rev. J. B. Simpson, he gently hints at his own approaching departure.—The man who is taught of God, will feel conscious, when he has done all, that he is an unprofitable servant; and this was eminently the case with our dear departed: the subject of his last sermon at All Saints, March 7th, was the genuine feeling of his soul; "I abhor myself, and repent in dust and ashes." He prepared once more to address his beloved people, with a parting wish for their best interest, from 1 Thess. v. 23; but pain and weakness compelled him to lay down his pen. The termination of his labours and life was hastened by a cold, caught while he was under the immediate influence of a course of medicine, which was considered the only means of arresting the progress of a disease which had for more than two years baffled every other remedy. Hitherto his earthly tabernacle had been gently shaken; and though he felt it would soon be dissolved, his principal suffering was that of extreme weakness and debility.—On Wednesday, March the 10th, alarming symptoms having appeared, he was prevailed upon to have further advice. "I consent to this," said he, "in compliance with the wishes of my friends; I am perfectly satisfied myself." It was not till Friday that he gave up the hope of being able to officiate on the Sunday following, although he acknowledged to one who was with him, that he had been obliged to lean upon the desk the preceding Sunday, and that it appeared to him as though he was then addressing his congregation for the last time. On the possibility of his restoration being suggested, he answered, with great earnestness, "I do not wish it: I'm quite as willing to go now, if it is the will of God, as at any future period. I can enter fully into the Apostle's declaration, that it is better to depart and to be with Christ—far better." To a lady, who expressed her hope that the advice of the physicians might be blessed to his restoration, he made a similar reply, adding, "I can look to the Saviour whom I have preached." In the evening one of the Rev. Daniel Wilson's Sermons was read to him, from Philip, i. 19, with which he was much interested; the following observation he desired to hear again, and then marked it: "It is disappointment in the favourite object, which loosens the soul from earth, and draws it more powerfully towards Christ and heaven." That his own sentiments were perfectly in unison with this remark, appears from his observing to a very dear friend and fellow-labourer, a few days before his death, "he could thank God that every disappointment or affliction, which had befallen him in the course of life, had been over-ruled in the end to his good."—On Monday, a consultation of physicians was held on his case, which they pronounced to be a dangerous, though not a hopeless one, provided he should gain strength to bear those medicines on which, humanly speaking, his restoration depended. He heard their opinion with perfect composure.

But though unable longer to officiate abroad, he continued to the last to improve every opportunity of conveying instruction to those around him. He addressed a young relation, who was then in a decline, and is now no more; kindly pointed out her danger; bade, her "look to the Saviour, trust in him, and to remember the Christian's one great inquiry should be, 'Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?'" He endeavoured to impress on her mind the solemn truths which he had laid before her, by adding, "we are all going, but some faster than others; you and I appear to be going very, very fast."—His patience and resignation were remarkable; acute suffering one day wrung from him a groan; he immediately observed, with a degree of regret and self-reproach, "I certainly do not bear pain as I ought;" but never did any murmur or repining word escape his lips, and during the whole of his illness, his will appeared to have been made conformable to the will of Him who ordereth all things well.—On Thursday evening, he read and explained to the family part of the 14th chapter of St. Luke, as was his usual custom before prayers. On Friday, feeling incapable of much exertion, he requested one of the family to read a Psalm, after which he prayed with them. On Saturday, he appeared to be sinking very fast; but, still anxious for the good of others, desired to see a little boy who was at the house, and going to school

from thence, saying, I will speak to him for two minutes. He gave him a Prayer-book; warned him against those failings to which he appeared most addicted, and earnestly entreated him to pray to God to make him good, as only his grace could do so. Unable in the evening to lead the devotions of the family, he knelt beside them, and for the last time mingled his supplications with theirs: then walked up stairs with great firmness, and thanked God for enabling him to do so, as he did when he came down in the middle of the day. This grateful acknowledgement was not a momentary emotion, but the general feeling of his mind; his every action seemed to say, "Praise the Lord, O my soul, and forget not all his benefits;" and while lingering in this wilderness, he appeared to have imbibed the spirit of those celestial beings who surround "the throne of God and of the Lamb" with ceaseless adoration.—Early on Sunday March the 21st, the person who was with him found his debility increasing, but did not imagine his end so near; he was free from pain, and appeared at intervals to sleep; she observed his lips moving, and believes him to have been engaged in prayer, as he seemed unwilling to be interrupted. On the family coming to inquire for him, he answered he was tolerable. An intimation that he was worse soon brought them all to his bed side—he sat up and looked anxiously around, but he saw them not. Convinced that his end drew near, he had just strength enough to embrace his afflicted parent: she gently closed his eyes, and he opened them on earth no more.—He lingered speechless until half past four, then entered into the joy of his Lord.

His remains were deposited in the family burying ground, St. Augustine's church-yard, preceded by the children from the Orphan Asylum, who seemed in him to have lost a second father. Eight clergymen bore the pall; and a large number of sincere mourners followed, anxious to pay their last tribute of respect to one so justly valued in life, so deeply regretted in death; to whose instructions they had so lately listened with delight, but whose voice they will hear no more, until that moment when, released from the burden of mortality, their ear shall catch the song of the redeemed. In that song, through the merits of a crucified Redeemer, may they unite, and be presented by their departed minister as the children whom God hath given him!

B.

*From the 42d No. of the Quarterly
Review.*

**ON THE CEMETERIES AND
CATACOMBS OF PARIS.**

We cannot close this article more appropriately than by a church-yard poem, written by a youth who soon afterwards was laid in the grave himself.—His life had been eventful and unfortunate, till his extraordinary merits were discovered by persons capable of appreciating, and willing and able to assist him. He was then placed under a kind and able instructor, and arrangements had been made for supporting him at the University; but he had not enjoyed that prospect many weeks, before it pleased God to remove him to a better world.—The reader will remember, that they are the verses of a school-boy, who had not long been taken from one of the lowest stations in life, and he will then judge what might have been expected from one who was capable of writing with such strength and originality upon the tritest of all subjects.—

LINES

*Written in the Church-yard of Richmond,
Yorkshire,*

BY HERBERT KNOWLES.

"It is good for us to be here: if thou wilt, let us make here three Tabernacles, one for thee, and one for Moses, and one for Elias."—*Matthew*, xvii. 4.

1

Methinks it is good to be here,
If thou wilt, let us build, but for whom?
Nor Elias nor Moses appear;
But the shadows of eve that encompass the gloom,
The abode of the dead and the place of the tomb.

2

Shall we build to Ambition? Oh, no!
Affrighted he shrinketh away:
For see they would find him below,
In a small narrow cave, and begirt with cold clay,
To the meanest of reptiles a peer and a prey.

3

To Beauty? Ah no! she forgets
The charms which she wielded before;
Nor knows the foul worm that he frets
The skin which but yesterday fools could adore,
For the smoothness it held, or the tint which it wore.

4

Shall we build to the purple of Pride,
The trappings which dizen the Proud?
Alas! they are all laid aside,
And here's neither dress nor adornment allowed,
But the long-winding sheet and the fringe of the shroud.

5

To Riches? Alas! 'tis in vain,
Who hid, in their turns have been hid,
The treasures are squandered again;
And here in the Grave, are all metals forbid,
But the tinsel that shone on the dark coffin lid.

6

To the pleasures, which Mirth can afford,
The revel, the laugh, and the jeer?
Ah! here is a plentiful board;
But the guests are all mute as their pitiful cheer,
And none but the worm is a reveller here.

7

Shall we build to Affection and Love?
Ah, no! they have withered and died,
Or fled with the spirit above.
Friends, brothers, and sisters are laid side by side,
Yet none have saluted, and none have replied.

8

Unto Sorrow? The dead cannot grieve,
Not a sob, not a sigh meets mine ear,
Which compassion itself could relieve.
Ah, sweetly they slumber, nor hope, love, nor fear;
Peace, peace, is the watchword, the only one here.

9

Unto Death, to whom monarchs must bow?
Ah, no! for his empire is known,
And here there are trophies e'now.
Beneath the cold dead, and around the dark stone
Are the signs of a sceptre, that none may disown.

10

The first Tabernacle, to Hope we will build,
And look for the sleepers around us to rise!
The second to Faith, which ensures it fulfill'd;
And the third to the Lamb of the great sacrifice,
Who bequeathed us them both, when he rose to the skies.

ON THE DEATH OF A FRIEND.

(Communicated.)

"Is there a duty unfulfill'd?"
Miranda calm inquir'd,
Whilst admiration wept applause,
She worship'd, and expir'd.

I watch'd the fluttering pulse of life,
I felt it stop and cease,
Yet on her lips, the parting soul
Diffus'd the smile of peace.

A pause ensued—a solemn pause,
A pause of pious awe,
The triumphs of a Christian faith,
And Christian faith we saw.

Affliction in her big-swoln eye
Restrained the rising tear,
And, while her soul returned to God,
Was dumb with holy fear.

She saw, at least with mental ken,
Angelic forms attend
They seem'd to wipe the dews of death,
And soothe the tortured friend.

The entrance of the world unseen
From mortal films they clear'd,
And, when the silver cord was loos'd,
Their parting wings she heard.

Ye cold hard hearts, whose stubborn nerves
Compassion never prest,
Who ne'er with love or pity's tear,
The nobler feelings blest.

Do not the vision's hope supplies.
To soothe affliction scorn,
Well might Miranda's mortal sense
Attract the sons of morn.

The sufferer's mind compos'd serene,
Nor doubt, nor dread avow'd,
But (medicinal succour vain)
To heaven submissive bow'd.

'Tis done—terrestrial duties close,
Enough hath faith been tried;
She broke the sacramental bread,
Received the cup, and—died.

Thou, bright Religion! canst alone,

O'er death's assaults prevail,
Caught on thy radiant shield of faith,
I saw his arrows fail.

Sweet cherub! thou o'er pallid grief
Canst comfort's balm diffuse,
And from the tomb where virtue sleeps,
To Heaven exalt our views.

Upheld by thee, Miranda clos'd
Serene her spotless life,
And the fond husband to her God
Resigned his angel-wife.

Religious hope dispels the tears,
By grief to memory given,
The love that virtue rear'd on earth,
Is perfected in Heaven.

ERRATA.

Page 331, line 25 from bottom, after "others," insert "belongs in some sort, to the profession of persons."

Page 332, line 23 from bottom, after "same" insert "time."

Page 334, line 6 from top, for "more" read "mere."

TO CORRESPONDENTS.

The Editor request frequent communications from the writer of the excellent reflexions commencing at page 890.

He acknowledges a paper on Chrysostem.

Transcriber's Note

- Obvious punctuation and spelling errors repaired.

[The end of *The Christian Recorder Vol. 1, Issue 10 (1819-December)* by Various]