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Title: The Christian Recorder Vol. 1, Issue 5 (1819-July)

Date of first publication: 1819

Author: Various

Date first posted: January 27 2013

Date last updated: January 27 2013

Faded Page eBook #20130130

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. JULY, 1819. No. 5.

ON RELIGIOUS CONVERSATION.

He who looks abroad at the great exertions now making by Christians of all denominations, to spread the light of the Gospel through the world, is apt to congratulate himself on the blessing which he enjoys in coming into existence during a period so propitious to the knowledge and practice of Holiness. But on a more serious and rigid examination, he will be disturbed with fears lest there be more of public appearance than of Christian humility in all these endeavours. And his fears will rather gain strength than be diminished, when he considers the low state of spiritual conversation. It is true, he frequently hears in company the merits of public institutions for religious enlargement affectionately discussed, their advantages contrasted, and the various ways by which they contribute to the same end ably set forth, but how seldom does the conversation take a more particular turn and descend to our individual situations? It cannot be said by any Christian, that he has no interest in such conversation, nor can he for a moment imagine that such friendly communications are of no use, but the general opinion is against introducing them, and he conforms himself accordingly. It is this that suggests the melancholy suspicion, that though the number of religious professors be great, the number of real Christians is small, for the Prophet informs us, "That they who feared the Lord spoke often one to another." It was their delight to speak of the goodness of God, to magnify his holy name, to communicate to each other the graces and favours they had reaped from his tender mercies, and the consolations they had experienced from his Divine love. And this must ever be the case with all those who are anxious to lay up treasures in Heaven. It is, however, to be feared that many persons who delight in discoursing on religion allow themselves to be carried away by the customs of the world, and are afraid of being called enthusiasts, hypocrites, or fanatics, should they attempt to turn the channel of conversation to questions of eternal interest. This fear becomes a sufficient argument for them to consent that the questions, which beyond all others distinguish us as rational, accountable, and immortal creatures, should be banished from society. But are we to give up this great source of comfort and improvement, because some persons have been found to be deceivers? Are we to refuse ourselves the blessings of religious communication because society has sometimes been disturbed with indiscreet zeal? To the weak who shrink from contending with the world, and who sink into its habits and rules rather than resist them, we are under the necessity of saying, that our Lord disapproves of neutral characters. We must either be with him or against him. The Christian life is a life of warfare. Every age has its difficulties and temptations, by which it is particularly characterised. Persecutions to death are passed away. No one is tempted to abjure the faith by the fear of temporal punishment, but it is not real terrors that are the most formidable enemies, the lap of luxury, the stream of dissipation, the fear of ridicule, frequently detach greater numbers from the Faith, than torments and death. And these are the obstacles to a religious life with which Christians have at present to contend. That charity which thinketh no evil has been confounded with a false candour or liberality which condemns all religious opinions alike, and producing an idle indifference to the Gospel, terminates in a total deadness to its concerns, or is transformed into passive hostility. Many Christians perceiving this tendency congratulate themselves on discovering the happy medium of reconciling a compliance to the world with their religious profession. They are careful of their exterior appearance, are neither profligate in their conduct nor rigid in their observances, hence they are able to avoid many of those evils which the genuine Christian meets, and to appropriate to themselves many advantages which he must be contented to lose. But these benefits are not to be regretted, they are dearly purchased by the loss of principles, nor will these lukewarm professors have reason to boast of their adroitness when called upon to give an account of the deeds done in the body. But let us descend to particulars, by shewing you the excellence of religious conversation from the practice of the Faithful in every age, from its great efficacy as the means of instruction, and from the happiness it confers.

1st. From the practice of the Faithful in every age.

It is of great advantage to recur to the practice of former ages in removing groundless prejudices, because the counsel given by the dead awakens no suspicion as to its sincerity. We are willing to listen to advice from the departed, which we would spurn from the living; they have no interest to serve, assume no superiority, do not remind us of our negligence and errors, with a self complacency, or with indignation and reproach. There is likewise a pleasure in transporting ourselves to the society of former times, a freshness, a richness of feeling highly salutary in cherishing in our own breasts the practices and habits for which they were distinguished. And in considering ourselves members of the primitive Church of Christ, we cannot for a moment conceive a single meeting without much of that conversation which we wish to recommend. We cannot, even in idea, present the disciples and new converts, without anticipating the most interesting inquiries. Those who had never seen our blessed Lord, and who were converted to the Truth after his resurrection, would be incessant in their questions concerning the Redeemer. They would ask of his manner of speaking and acting, the description of that mild majesty tempered by human limitations, that heart and soul transpiercing look yet

encouraging rather than alarming, that condescending affability, that cordial sympathy and comprehensive wisdom, that affectionate love, connecting the present with the future, earth with heaven. We have only to look into our own hearts for a thousand anxious questions respecting his deportment, his manner of instructing his disciples, the lineaments of his countenance, his manner of walking, his attention to the poor, his treatment of the Scribes and Pharisees by whom he was opposed, and whose wickedness he so nobly condemns. How often would the Apostles be called upon by their new friends, to relate his miraculous conception and birth, to repeat the history of his life, to speak of his last agonies, his death, his resurrection and ascension? It is not to be credited that these most important and interesting things were confined to set discourses, to public sermons before the whole Church. They were the subjects of anxious inquiry. And when that age passed away, when the disciples had extended the limits of Christ's kingdom, and had planted Churches far from Jerusalem, with what anxiety would these new converts inquire into the lives and labours of the Apostles and first Disciples! How frequently must Ignatius the cotemporary of the Apostles, Clemens the companion of St. Paul, have been asked about their conduct, that singleness of heart, that victory over the frailties of human nature, that humility and love for their Divine Master and anxiety to save the souls of men, which they uniformly exhibited? Could such inquiries fail, to animate these new converts to embody good resolutions, to inspire them with the most vehement desire to equal the glorious examples of righteousness and truth, which were thus brought vividly before them? Could they forbear, when they met together, of speaking of the mercy and goodness of God through Christ Jesus, in calling them to a state of salvation? Could they who had been lost in trespasses and sin, who had been given to all uncleanness, changing the glory of the incorruptible God into an image made like corruptible man, to birds and beasts and creeping things, who had lost all knowledge of God, and were given over to a reprobate mind to do these things which are not convenient, refrain from congratulating each other for their glorious deliverance, from rejoicing that they had beheld the promised helper and deliverer who was to redeem Israel and be the desire of nations, the Saviour of the world, proclaiming grace and pardon to sinful men, exterminating sin and misery, and conducting lost and wandering mortals to their benevolent Creator, depriving death of his dominion and reconciling earth to heaven? Could they refrain from speaking of that blessed King who is to reign forever and ever to subject all nations? The Son of the Father, the only begotten, through whom all the nations of the earth are blessed, the Son of David, who had established a far greater, more glorious and blessed empire, over which he was to reign till time should be no more. They felt that they were turned from darkness to light, from the power of Satan to God, and they talked sweetly of the mighty benefits they enjoyed, encouraged one another to persevere in well doing, for in due time they would reap the reward. That the first Christians spent much of their time in such mutual communication, that they rejoiced in religious conversation, and provoked one another to good works is proved from the whole history of the Church, and more especially manifested in the 2nd Chap. Acts of the Apostles. "And they continued stedfastly in the Apostle's doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread and in prayers. And all that believed were together and had all things common; and sold their possessions and goods, and parted them to all men, as every man had need. And they continuing daily with one accord in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house; did eat their meat with gladness and singleness of heart." If we turn from this happy society, happy notwithstanding their external tribulations and the persecutions to which they were exposed, to the Christian communities of the present day, how lifeless and cold are we in the cause of truth; but confining ourselves to the conversations in which we indulge, contrasted with theirs, what inference can we draw; if they delighted to discourse of their eternal welfare, if they spoke of the truths revealed by our holy religion with fervor, have we less interest in these things, are we not equally distant from God as they were before their conversion, if we still keep back and take no delight in proclaiming the goodness of his holy name? It is not that such serious conversation should be studiously introduced or affectedly prolonged, but that they should never be shunned, on the contrary they ought to be cherished and improved; nor should those who introduce them with propriety be branded with the name of fanatics. "It is to be feared," says an excellent writer, "that this general dread of serious topics arises a good deal from an ignorance of the true nature of religion. They conceive of it something that involves controversy and mischief, something of an inflammatory nature, which is apt to stir up ill humors and set friends at variance." But nothing can be more distant from the truth, our religion speaks peace and good will to man, it presents the most glorious truths, in which all have an equal interest, there is no place for rivalships or contentions, its promises are general, not exclusive, all may become partakers of them through faith in Christ Jesus. And are we ashamed to declare in company that our minds are under the guidance of Christian faith and principles, and while giving our opinion with the utmost freedom on the news of the day, do we hesitate to declare our faith in a moral Governor of the world, our trust in a particular Providence, our belief in the Divine Omnipotence and our confidence in the power of God in educing good from evil? By our silence on occasions proper for manifesting our decided faith and holy trust we encourage that pert infidelity which is ever obtrusively on the watch to disseminate its poison. One great cause of the low state of religious conversation arises from the opinion which generally prevails that religion ought to be separated from the common business of life; now this is an error highly pernicious: religion ought to enter into all our concerns.

The moment that we become a real Christian we are a new creature, all our motives of action are drawn from the Gospel; worldly considerations and temporal calculations vanish and the most minute part of our conduct is regulated as much by the rules of the Gospel as the most prominent and important. Until we come to consider all our actions under the direction of our holy religion as connected intimately with our eternal interests, we are not worthy of the name of Christians. Now, as much of our time is apt to be consumed in trifling, if not in wicked conversation, in correcting this fault we ought to substitute such topics as we are assured become the consolation and delight of early Christians, and indeed of all true Christians of the present day. It is impossible for good persons to meet together without introducing some of those questions which are of vital importance to their true interests here and hereafter; and when we contemplate the matter in this point of view we must feel astonished, that we have met our friends and companions so often, spent so many hours in vapid trifling, empty remarks, in long pauses, irksomeness and even weariness, without ever recurring to the most interesting of all subjects; that we have laboured, when conversation flagged, to discover something to raise the attention, and avoided serious matters with uncommon solicitude; even discoursed upon subjects which we really disliked rather than converse together on the state of our immortal souls.

VII CHAP. BOOK OF THE PROPHET MICAH, 14th Verse.

"Feed thy people with thy rod, the flock of thy heritage which dwell solitary in the wood."

It is observable, that although the Israelites never entirely forgot the worship of the Supreme Being, yet whenever their religious rites and observances were at any time interrupted by the invasion of foreign enemies, or by their different captivities, their zeal was in general greatly diminished, and often, in individuals, entirely extinguished. In Egypt, the mass of the people had become tainted with the superstitions and idolatries of the Heathen; in the wilderness, this corrupt state of mind prompted them to set up the golden calf, and during the whole of their march they were continually offending the God of Heaven, by their backslidings and their abominations. When they had at length obtained the Land of Promise, and had firmly established themselves, habits of regularity began to be acquired; and when the Temple was built and the stated services were ordained, their attention was naturally more immediately turned to the worship of the Deity, and we find in consequence, that there were at these periods less open violations of the Commandments which the Almighty had given.

It would undoubtedly be wrong to assert that their religion was either entirely dependent on, or had in the least degree its origin in any outward observances. But this may safely be affirmed, both of the Israelites of old and also of Christians *now*, that, with respect to the body of the people, religious sentiment is mainly affected by the neglect or observance of religious institutions. We are too well acquainted with the weakness, incapacity and unsteadiness of the human mind, not to consider outward helps necessary to keep up religious as well as other recollections. Even with all the aids of established ordinances, and services supported as they are by the weighty considerations which the subject itself supplies, the things of sense too frequently obtain the mastery over a weak faith. What would then be the result, if all observances were to be removed? Even almost a total forgetfulness of God and his commandments. It is true, "Religion itself, in its reality and importance, in its end and event, would be the same thing as what it is: we should still have to account for our conduct; there would still be heaven and hell, salvation and perdition; there would still be the laws of God, both natural and revealed, all the obligations which the authority of a Creator can impose upon a creature, all the gratitude which is due from a rational being to the Author and Giver of every blessing which he enjoys; lastly there would still be the redemption of the world by Jesus Christ." All these things would undoubtedly be the same whether any ordinances existed or not. But what is very essential, would men think about them—would they lay them to heart—would they continually meditate upon them, had they no outward observances occasionally to remind them of these most important realities? We have too much reason to reply in the negative, for we have too much proof in the world of the mischief produced by a total neglect of, or disuse of all religious observances. With such a sad conviction on our minds, it becomes a subject of serious consideration how we may guard against the evil in situations which are shut out from the use of religious observances in remote places "where Bells have never knolled to Church."

In this Colony, for many years to come, it will be impossible to give to its new inhabitants those facilities of attending the worship of their Maker, that they enjoyed in the Land of their Fathers. Can there nothing be done to prevent their falling away from the true faith and lapsing into a state of indifference, and neglect of religion, little better than downright heathenism? Yes, much if they themselves will lend their assistance. The Lord hath appointed one day in seven to be kept as a day of rest holy unto God. Here then we have a stable foundation to work upon: for a right and conscientious observance of this Holy Day will, of itself, essentially tend to keep alive in the mind religious dispositions. It remains only then for us to consider in what manner this day may most advantageously be spent, by those who for the present are unavoidably deprived of those religious privileges, to which they have been hitherto accustomed.

If we could convince men of the superior importance of religion, and could make them comprehend that it is a business which ought, more than any other, to occupy continually their thoughts, it would be no difficult task to induce them to pursue any feasible plan which had for its object, equally their own improvement in religious acquirements, and that of others in the same most essential knowledge. But because to a sensual and carnal minded man, every thing, even the most trifling object, appears of greater moment than religion, and because every where so many of this description are to be found; we usually experience difficulties almost insurmountable in effecting a purpose of the above kind, wherever any trouble or privation is to be imposed on the parties to whom it is offered. Hence in proposing to the members of the community (and especially to those who live remote from public worship) the instruction of the young and ignorant in religious knowledge as a fit employment on this sacred day, we must necessarily anticipate much objection. And yet a few hours thus spent on each returning Sunday will be found productive of most incalculable benefit to all parties—even the instructors will obtain knowledge, for according to the old maxim, "He who teaches another teaches himself." Let

then one or more Sunday Schools be opened in each Township, under the guidance and direction of the Elders of the Village. Let a certain number of the younger inhabitants, who are qualified for the undertaking, be invited to become Teachers. Let all the children, and their Parents also, be requested to attend. Let a short form of worship be read by one of the Seniors, and afterwards let the task of teaching commence: the Church of England Catechism may be taught those who do not object to it, and all may be instructed in reading and repeating the Holy Scriptures. This is the outline of a plan, which, if adopted generally, would essentially tend to keep alive in the recollection of the people (to whom at present no other external aids can be afforded) religious duties and religious knowledge. Let it not be imagined by any one that religion neither is nor ought to be indebted for its influence to any human helps; before this can be, the constitution of the mind must be radically changed. It is not religion which is defective; the imperfection is to be found in our own faculties, and it is this imperfection which we must endeavor to remedy. Even if for no other purposes, "outward observances are necessary, that the train of our thoughts may not be closed up against religion, they are necessary to preserve in the thoughts a place for the subject;" and by dedicating part of the Lord's day to an employment every way so immediately connected with religion, we shall of necessity enable it to obtain this place in our minds, at the same time that we become instrumental in communicating instruction to others. "Feed" then, ye Elders, "the Flock of God which is among you, taking the oversight thereof not by constraint, but willingly, not for filthy lucre, but of a ready mind, neither as being Lords over God's heritage, but being ensamples to the Flock, and when the chief Shepherd shall appear, ye shall receive a Crown of Glory that fadeth not away." 1 Peter, 5th chap.

L. S.

Dissertations on the Christian Doctrines.

No. 5.

THE APPOINTMENT OF A MEDIATOR.

In our last dissertation we noticed, at some length, the proofs that present themselves on every side of the corruption of human nature, that it was matter of experience which every person of reflection was forced to acknowledge. Even the most arrogant and vain never assert in their cooler moments, that they are perfectly innocent or not prone to wicked thoughts and actions. The wisest feel themselves drawn away by sordid and despicable objects, their most virtuous efforts in some degree polluted, their passions overpowering their reason, and matters of sense shutting out those that are invisible and infinitely more noble, and they confess that human nature is sadly corrupted and fallen from its primitive purity. If this be the melancholy situation of man, we have next to consider whether his Creator would restore him to purity, or leave him to reap the terrible fruits of his transgression. Heaven is filled with darkness and dismay. Some feeble analogies may be discovered, indicating better things, but totally insufficient to remove that dread of future punishment which the serious feel that their vices deserve. Here revelation steps in to dismiss those fearful apprehensions, the companions of shame and remorse, and presents a remedy in the blessed mediation of the Son of God. Jesus Christ is the light of the world, the propitiatory Sacrifice, the Lamb of God. This office of Mediator between God and Man is what St. Paul calls the mystery of Truth, not because we are incapable of comprehending it now that it is revealed, but because it never could have been discovered or anticipated by the most enlightened human reason. It might have been conjectured perhaps that our Creator would some time or other, from the infinite goodness of his nature, make discoveries of his will to men, degraded as they were, from the innocence of their first state; but that he would send the Son of his love, Jesus Christ the righteous, to be a propitiation for our sins, and not for ours only, but for the sins of the whole world, never could have entered the heart of men or of Angels, and must have remained a mystery till such a time as the Son of God was pleased to disclose it. This is the great article of the Christian Faith, by which it is distinguished from natural religion; it contains all that is strictly Christian, and until we believe firmly in it and sanctify our actions by the purity it begets, we cannot be said to lead a Christian life. When this stupendous doctrine of the incarnation and mediation of the Son of God is well considered, it will be discovered to possess a surprising efficacy in advancing the holiness of the Faithful. We behold in it a depth and richness of wisdom, a fulness of Grace and of Goodness, overpowering to the human mind. It paints the character of God in the most amiable point of view, and meets the desires and necessities of man. It is a doctrine every way suitable to the state of things betwixt God and his fellow Creatures, and offers the most powerful motives to make them wise unto Salvation.

In readily admitting that the doctrine of a Mediator between God and Man, who has made satisfaction for sin, and that this Mediator is Jesus Christ, to be matter of pure revelation, it must be observed that there are not wanting many considerations capable of preparing us to receive such a doctrine when once proposed, and of shewing the necessity of some satisfaction, in order to the pardon of sin.

It has been truly remarked by one of the most Scriptural and profound Divines, that the whole analogy of nature is in favour of a Mediator between God and Man, for all living creatures are brought into the world and their lives preserved in infancy by the instrumentality of others, and every satisfaction of it is bestowed by the like means; so that the visible Government which God exercises over the world is by the instrumentality and mediation of others. And how far his invisible Government may be so directed it is impossible for human reason to determine; but the supposition that part of it is so, certainly appears more credible than the contrary. Against this doctrine of a Mediator, there is, therefore, no sort of objection from the light of nature, whether it be considered a doctrine of Christianity or as an appointment in this dispensation, since we find from experience that God does appoint mediators to be the instruments of good and evil to us, the instruments of his justice and his mercy. It is farther to be observed, that every man dreads punishment in committing sin, for his conscience tells him he deserves it. This is matter of daily experience. No man of reflection is well pleased with himself after transgressing a human commandment, and he is farther conscious of having displeased his Creator, who is of purer eyes than to see iniquity. Shame and disquietude, therefore, take possession of his mind, he knows that he merits punishment, and lives in the continual dread of its overtaking him. Men of thought discover, that the natural consequences of vicious habits are of the most alarming and serious nature, bringing frequently extreme misery, irretrievable ruin, and death itself, upon the guilty; and they feel it impossible to say how far the consequences of sin may extend, if not corrected by the hand of God. All must perceive the folly of reckoning on safety by their own endeavours. No man ever thinks of acting upon his own independence, he is too sensible of the weakness of his nature to suppose for

a moment that he can make expiation for the sins that he has committed. It is true that many, not comprehending the real import of this Christian doctrine, think that repentance is sufficient, and say that though the sufferings and death of Christ were the necessary means of effecting the work of redemption, it was not by way of atonement for the offences of others, since it is neither agreeable to the laws of God or man, that the innocent should suffer for the crimes of the guilty; nor in the appeasing of any wrath which God the Father entertained against the human race, for no such wrath ever existed, but to exhibit a perfect pattern of humility and resignation.

In answer to this, we have only to quote a single passage of Scripture. "For he hath made him sin for us, who knew no sin, that we might be made the righteousness of God in him." If it be possible to read this text, and reconcile it with the idea, that in the work of our salvation, we do all and Christ nothing, or if it can be shewn that we are capable of ourselves in any way of making satisfaction for the sins that we are daily committing, then the question is at an end; but if this passage be a part of revelation which has never been impeached, and if it be corroborated by numerous other passages, equally clear, then may we conclude, that, however contradictory it may appear to be, according to our notions, that the innocent should suffer for the guilty, it is not so in the eyes of God. And if we look at the very nature and essence of repentance, we shall find that it has no power to alter the nature of sin, so as to make it less evil or less deserving of punishment, and so long as no expiation is made, the consequences are certain. There is, indeed, no security against them but by Christ Jesus, through whose merit our heavenly Father is pleased to pardon us our iniquities, on our sincere repentance.

Farther, the doctrine for which we are contending teaches that the divine nature of Christ was united to the human, and so united as to constitute one person, and as, consequently, by the human nature he could suffer, and by the Divine merit, so the same person most effectually did both. Now to apply this doctrine to the assertion that the innocent cannot suffer for the guilty. In human affairs do we not consider the acts of the representative as performed by the person he represents? Without this the affairs of society, and on many occasions the affairs even of individuals, could never be carried on: but further than this, even in the administration of justice, if one person represent and act for another, why may he not likewise suffer for him, particularly when he consents to do so, and the administration of Justice is willing to accept him. Have we not reason to infer, that if a representative, abler than the sinner, or person represented, was to offer himself, and who is not only willing to suffer the penalty threatened by the Divine law, but fully able, by such suffering, to exalt that law, have we not reason, I say, to infer that such a representative would be graciously admitted, and that the merited punishment would be transferred to him, and even the impending wrath of heaven would be averted, and the joyful tidings of pardon and eternal hope proclaimed to every sincere penitent. In fine, the translation of punishment, so far from being contradictory, is entirely agreeable to reason, and the guilty person may escape by the sufferings of another substituted in his room. To apply this reasoning more particularly, we have to remark that the condition of our blessed Lord was such as rendered the sufferings which he sustained for us fully answerable to all the punishments that would have been inflicted on sinners. By his sufferings every end was accomplished that could have been promoted by the personal sufferings of the offenders. He was a blessed person, of infinite dignity and excellence, and might not only be justly accepted in our behalf, but by this oblation, satisfaction for the guilt was fully obtained, and the forgiveness of sins and the hopes of a blessed immortality extended, and all this perfectly consistent with the Divine perfections, and with the order and dignity of God's moral Government.

(To be continued.)

THE CONFESSOR.

No. 5.

SIR,

You mention, in your second number, that a University is about to be established in this Province. I hope that it will be founded upon a very liberal scale, so that all denominations of Christians may be enabled, without any sacrifice of conscience or of feeling, to attend the prelections of the different Professors. It has been said that the Province is too young to support an establishment of this kind, and were it in contemplation to commence on such an extensive plan as that of the English, or even some of the Scotch Universities, it might in some measure be true. But it is very easy to begin with a President or Rector, and a few Teachers, making provision for increasing their number as the increase of students may require. Nor should it be forgotten that the rapid influx of Emigrants into the Province, together with the natural increase of the inhabitants, will now furnish a great number of young men. And although many people may choose rather to bring their children up as Farmers, because they can with even a little industry, acquire for themselves the comforts of life, and in their turn provide an excellent inheritance for their children, yet many will be found anxious to educate their sons for the learned professions. Besides, a greater number of Gentlemen will for some time be required for these Professions than is commonly supposed.

Forty Clergymen, for example, may now meet with full employment in this Province, and render themselves of great service to the temporal, as well as to the eternal interests of the people. If they were of conciliatory dispositions, and more disposed to promote vital Christianity than to enforce such forms as are at first new to the settlers, and not accordant with their manners and feelings, they would be of infinite benefit: indeed one in each of the settled townships of this description would give a new appearance to the country; for the appointment of Clergymen to instruct the people in the doctrines of revelation, and duties of morality, is so eminently wise as to be considered by many a strong proof of the divine origin of that blessed religion by which it is adopted. Now it would take a University some time, were it already in active operation, to furnish the number wanted, and the new settlements are extending so fast in all directions, that before the old Townships can be supplied, as many new ones will be destitute. Were it possible after the first four years are elapsed, to furnish twelve Clergymen, an age must pass away before each township could be supplied. It ought likewise to be remembered that it is of the greatest consequence that the Ministers of the Gospel should be men of learning and ability, and in order to qualify them for the great work to which they are appointed, competent opportunities must be given them. These they do not at present sufficiently possess, for although the very few that have been brought forward to the Ministry need not fear a comparison with any persons of their age in the Mother country, it has arisen from the circumstance that they were rather the companions than the pupils of their Tutor, who was able to watch the progress of their reason as well as the strength of their resolutions, and lead them step by step along the path of virtue as well as knowledge. But this method of instructing chiefly by conversation must be confined within very narrow limits, and cannot be so extended as to meet the growing wants of this extensive Province. In the University the business of instruction is divided, and each Professor becomes better qualified for his particular department. The student may have acquired, in private, a competent knowledge of English and classical literature. He may have read the best divines, he may have imbodyed in his conduct many of the most amiable graces of our holy religion, and become a useful, learned, and conscientious Pastor; but then almost every pupil would require his own special instructor, and even then he would remain ignorant of some branches of knowledge, highly useful in enlarging the views and ripening the understanding.

At the University the study of the Scriptures in the original language, and the comparison of this original with our English translation would employ a considerable portion of his time: collecting parallel passages of Scripture, arranging and comparing the Prophecies with the history of their accomplishment, examining the proofs which establish our holy religion, reflecting upon the sublime doctrines and beautiful precepts, so as to be able to give a reason for the faith that is in us, would engross many hours of valuable study. In a large Seminary these may be relieved by turning to the book of nature and reading the perfections of the Divinity in the beauty and sublimity of his works. For these purposes the young Divine may examine the heavenly bodies, their astonishing regularity and order; and admiring the perfection of Astronomy, which in as far as regards the Solar System, may now be said to be complete, as there is not a single motion that has not been accounted for and found necessary to preserve the wonderful harmony of the whole, he may draw the most comfortable proofs of the wisdom, power and goodness of God. Here likewise the Student of nature might make himself master of Chemistry, of Botany, and Anatomy; all of which he would afterwards find useful in his profession, not only in confirming his faith, but in the variety of illustration which they afford him in preaching to the people.

It is not generally known that there are now thirty Barristers in this Province, some of them men of talents and information, others less efficient from the want of good opportunities, but when a University is established, a greater strictness will be observed in admitting young men to the Bar, more preparation will be deemed requisite, and the Law Society will, as they do in England, dispense with two out of the five years now demanded, provided that they be spent in attending certain classes in the College.

In this Country, the practice of Physic, from the badness of the roads and the poverty of the people, has not been attractive, but matters are changing—the settlers are becoming wealthy and able to pay for advice and attendance during sickness. Indeed, no person can at present study Physic or Surgery in the Province, for there are no regular sources of information. It is true, a Surgeon or Physician may take apprentices, and reduce their liberal professions to a kind of trade, which may be taught by rote in a certain number of years, but without Lectures on the various branches of the Medical art they never can attain to any proficiency.

The number of Students likely to attend College, will not be confined to the three professions. Young men intended for Merchants, or who have the certainty of inheriting great landed estates will be no less desirous of becoming acquainted with the different branches of liberal knowledge. Add to this, the great benefit arising to the Province from the conviction which every one must feel after the establishment of a University, that in removing to Canada, he is not taking his children to a wilderness which affords no opportunities for ameliorating their condition, but to a country possessing equal advantages in religion and education with that which he leaves.

From a variety of considerations, I am confident that in a very few years the Students attending such a Seminary would exceed one hundred. I will, with your permission, trouble you again on this subject, which I consider all important in the mean time for the comfort of those who do not feel the want of knowledge but who are engrossed by profit. I have to remark, that the foundation of a University at York, open to all denominations, will add twenty per cent. to all the lands in the Province, by offering an advantage to emigrants which they can no where else enjoy.

SUNDAY SCHOOLS.

A meeting of the two Sunday Schools, established in York, and one attached to the Chapel lately built in Young Street, took place in the District School house on the 20th day of June, immediately after morning Service, for the purpose of ascertaining the progress which the children had made, and of distributing prizes to the most deserving.

At the close of a Sermon on the great importance of religious education, and the guilt incurred by those Parents who neglect to instruct their children, both by precept and example, in the truths of Christianity; the Rev'd. Doctor Strachan delivered the following

ADDRESS.

The reflections which we have been pursuing were suggested by the interesting duties which we are this day called upon to discharge. It is little more than two months since we were able to establish a Sunday School in this place with any prospect of increasing benefit. The measure had been in contemplation for several years, but as there was no accommodation for the children in Church, it was thought inexpedient to commence the School till we could accompany it with a regular attendance upon Divine Worship.

The repair and enlargement of the Church removed this impediment, and we set about arranging the School. The appeal made to the liberality of this congregation, to enable us to purchase small books, was most generously answered, and what I consider still more important, the heads of families, with one accord, offered their assistance in conducting the labour of instruction. The whole congregation seemed to feel it to be their duty to promote the religious education of the rising generation and to acknowledge that it was an object of the greatest importance. Not only the peace and happiness of families, but of all communities and of nations, depend upon the good impressions made upon the minds of the young.

I need not remind you, my Christian friends, how strongly the duty of instructing their offspring was enjoined upon the Israelites, as it must be familiar to your minds, and surely it is no less incumbent upon Christians to bring up their children in the nurture and admonition of the Lord; and it is pleasing to remark the increasing attention that is now paid to this interesting object. The Friends of the Gospel, as if ashamed of their former negligence, are now most active and zealous in diffusing the knowledge of religion among the youth before they come in contact with the corruptions of the world. But that a distinct conception may be formed of the advantages of such Schools, I beg to submit to your consideration, as briefly as possible, the method which we have adopted in conducting the School which your example and charity have enabled us to assemble.

We meet in the District School House every Sunday morning at ten o'clock, and begin with addressing ourselves to Almighty God in prayer, in order to compose our minds, to elevate our affections to spiritual things, and to impress our hearts with a deep sense of the Divine presence.

The School consists of about 84 children, divided into a great variety of classes, all of which, in the forenoon, are employed in learning their catechism or in answering questions taken out of the New Testament.

It was our intention not to admit any Scholars who could not read, as it was both laborious and tedious to instruct them in the Alphabet and in joining from two to six letters; but three or four children having come who had no opportunity given them of being instructed at other Schools, we were unwilling to let them go, and have accordingly taken some pains in teaching them. One or two begin to read, and all can repeat some prayers; but they consume too much time, and compared to the other classes, their improvement seems almost imperceptible; we shall therefore admit as few as possible of this description.

Our chief business is the communication of religious instruction, and such is the beauty and simplicity of our religion that the truths which it reveals may be comprehended at a very early age. In our Catechism all the principal doctrines and duties of Christianity are really compressed.—There is a brevity and clearness in the questions which render them easy to commit to memory. The method of instructing by question and answer possesses many advantages over every other,

and is not only the shortest and simplest, but the most satisfactory. In preaching, for example, the Speaker proceeds with his discourse, without the certainty that he is followed by his audience, but in catechising, the deficiencies of each scholar soon become manifest, and the teacher knows to what particular points he must direct his explanations. There is no time for inattention or wandering; the question and necessity of reply, compel attention and recollection. The children, if the Teacher proceed with a conciliatory firmness, acquire a lively interest in the lessons, for each is particularly addressed and brought forward into action.

The alternate question and answer, the hesitations, the solutions, the rapid transition from topic to topic, and from pupil to pupil, are circumstances which attract, relieve, and rouse the youthful mind. This variety renders the exercise pleasing and impressive, and consequently advantageous. No method can be better calculated to discourage negligence, which it soon detects, or to inspire ardour of application, which it so soon discovers by its fruits. It is impossible, even on the most cursory view of the contents of our Catechism, to forbear exclaiming that the child who can repeat it with some understanding, knows infinitely more than the most renowned Sages of antiquity. He acquires a knowledge of God, of the holy vows taken at his baptism, and of all the articles which he is bound firmly to believe. The Commandments present him with the finest and most sublime summary of moral wisdom, pointing out his duty both to God and man, the purity in which he ought to live, and the sad consequences of disobeying the will of his heavenly Father. The great importance of prayer is manifested as the best promoter of good and holy dispositions, and the strongest barrier against transgression. The nature and efficacy of the Sacraments are next explained in the most clear and convincing manner, and our state by nature unfolded, to shew us our need of a Redeemer. Some pains are taken by the Teachers to break down the questions, so as to make several out of one, and explanations of them are given in an easy and familiar manner to those somewhat advanced.

After the children are acquainted with the Catechism we proceed to Barrow's five hundred questions on the New Testament, which afford most excellent exercises for the higher classes. These questions excite the greatest emulation and most earnest inquiry, as may be seen by repeating a few taken promiscuously from the book.

Why was John beheaded?

How often should a man forgive injuries?

What were the ten Virgins like?

Who were Christ's Mother and Brethren?

Who first saw Christ after his resurrection?

What said the people of Christ?

What is the duty of Christians in regard to this world?

At whose instigation was Christ Crucified?

The book from which these questions are taken contains no answers. They are to be discovered by the children themselves, from a diligent perusal of the New Testament. It is sometimes not an easy matter to find the proper answer, many require much reading and research.

Children in a very short time become intimately acquainted with the life and crucifixion of the Lord Jesus Christ and the Acts of the Apostles, and it is within my knowledge that the Parents of several children have profited by assisting them in discovering answers to the questions proposed. The highest boys' class have four questions to answer in writing every Sunday morning. After the names of the class are called, and those absent marked, each produces his paper of questions. The answers are carefully examined, and likewise the writing and spelling, and the best goes to the head of the class, and all take their places according to their merit. Permission is then given to ask questions formed out of the four questions which they have already answered on paper, or out of subjects connected with them. Questions may likewise be asked about the Sermon, the text, the lessons, and Gospel of the day, the Collect and every part of the preceding service. Now begins the anxiety, the mental exertion, the continued attention, the rapidity of answer and acuteness of distinction; but it is impossible to describe the full effect of such an examination without beholding it.

The highest class of girls have the same task, but with this difference, they do not write the answers, but get them by heart. Many of them, as well as of the boys, have superior understandings, and frequently astonish the spectators by the

strength and propriety of their remarks. It is delightful to behold the great ease with which the holy Apostle's observation in regard to Timothy may be realized, that from a child he knew the Scriptures. These children, after a few days attendance, are better acquainted with the New Testament than they would have been perhaps during their whole lives.

When the morning classes are all finished, a short exhortation, if time permit, is given on one of the questions of the Catechism, and the children proceed to Church, walking two and two, with the Teachers at their side.

The School meets again at two o'clock in the afternoon, and commences with reading a short lesson from the New Testament. Those who learned the Catechism in the morning, are now employed in repeating a portion of a Psalm, or a few verses of the holy Scriptures.

The higher classes are engaged in repeating Prayers and Psalms. The text is asked and notes on the Sermon are required. These classes are again allowed to ask questions of one another, which renews that emulation which was exhibited in the morning, and impresses upon their minds the truths delivered in the Church.

The tasks committed to memory are all easy, that the pupils may not be discouraged and perplexed.

We have not yet had time to complete the whole of our plan, as the higher classes are hardly yet sufficiently advanced. We shall introduce examples of the power of religion on the greatest minds, and read the lives of the most eminent Patriarchs and Prophets and Apostles to the higher classes, as they must be highly interesting to their youthful minds and well suited to promote their instruction in righteousness.

After Divine Service almost all the congregation went to the School-house to assist at the examination of the children. His Excellency the Lieut. Governor consented to give the prizes of diligence, good conduct and punctual attendance to the boys who deserved them, and it was likewise intended that Lady Sarah Maitland, who was also present, would distribute the prizes among the girls but this was omitted, owing to the vast concourse of people which made us forget some of our arrangements.

The School belonging to the Chapel on Young Street was first examined; it was divided into two classes only, one for boys and one for girls; they repeated their catechism uncommonly well, and many of them appeared to understand what they were saying; some could repeat large portions of Scripture, with a distinctness highly pleasing. The progress of these children, forty-four in number, is highly creditable to their Teachers. A present of Books was made to the School, to be distributed under the direction of their Masters, and Sir Peregrine Maitland gave them with his own hand.

The Methodist School consisting of nearly the same number, and likewise divided into one class for boys and one for girls was next heard.

The children repeated many beautiful and interesting passages of Scripture, with much ease and fluency. The girls, under the direction of a Mistress, acquitted themselves remarkably well. There was a neatness and cleanliness among all the children quite delightful and very different from what had been the case with them a few months before. His Excellency presented to this School a handsome present of Books, to be distributed at the discretion of the Masters and Mistress.

The principal School was the last examined, and when the higher classes began to ask questions the same anxiety and interest took possession of the spectators as of themselves—the deepest silence prevailed, and the most eager attention to hear the several questions and answers. The propriety of many of these and the quickness with which they were answered astonished all the Assembly, and demonstrated the great superiority of this method above all other, in acquiring a knowledge of the Scriptures. Books were given by His Excellency to a few of the most deserving in each class, and the meeting broke up.

To see upwards of one hundred and sixty children, many of whom used to be continually in the streets, manifesting, in so short a time, a knowledge of the principal doctrines and precepts of Christianity, a more intimate acquaintance with the life and character of our Saviour than many of the spectators, could not fail of producing salutary effects. The whole was solemn and impressive, and I am convinced that several were more deeply interested on this occasion than ever they had been at any religious exercise before.

As Sunday Schools are so useful, why not establish them in every neighbourhood, or wherever one of the common Township Schools is kept. The Trustees ought to make it a condition with the teachers whom they employ that they assemble the Children on Sunday, read the Service, and a Sermon where it is agreeable, and afterwards Catechise them.

In this way a sense of religion would be preserved or introduced where it begins to fade away. That blessed day would be spent in a manner becoming a people professing themselves to be Christians. Let then Sunday Schools be established throughout the Province. Encourage and protect them all ye who are anxious to bring up your own children in the nurture and admonition of the Lord. The good effects of your exertions will soon appear—the roads will be more tranquil on the Lord's day—those who infested them will be seen enquiring after God, and learning with delight the truths of the Gospel. Your labours will meet with the most precious rewards, for you will have the blessed enjoyment of knowing that you are trying to extend and perpetuate upon earth the kingdom of our Glorious Redeemer, and while you are bringing sinners to Christ, and shewing to immortal beings the path of eternal life, you are contributing to people the heavens, and to increase the number of the blessed who surround the throne of God.

A DISCOURSE AGAINST EATING BEEF,

Delivered under the person of an Ox.

Translated from the Chinese by the Rev. Dr. MORRISON.

In the original, the characters composing this discourse are so arranged as to form the figure of an ox, and its influence on the people is so great, that one in twenty, some say one in ten, will not eat beef.

I request, good people, that you will listen to what I have to say. In the whole world there is no distress equal to that of the Ox.—In spring and summer, in autumn and winter, he diligently exerts his strength during the four seasons; there is no respite to his labours.

I, an Ox, drag the plough, a thousand pounds weight, fastened to my shoulders.—Hundreds and thousands of lashes are, by a leathern whip, inflicted upon me.—Curses and abuse, in a thousand forms, are poured upon me. I am driven with threatenings, rapidly along, and not allowed to stand still. Through the dry ground, or the deep water, I with difficulty drag the plough. With an empty belly, the tears flow from both my eyes. I hope in the morning that I shall early be released; but who does not know that I am detained till the evening? If, with a hungry belly, I eat the grass in the midst of the field, the whole family, great and small, insultingly abuse me. I am left to eat any species of herb amongst the hills; but you, my master, yourself receive the grain that is sown in the field. Of the *Chen Paddy*, you make rice; of the *No Paddy*, you make wine. You have cotton, wheat, and herbs of a thousand different kinds. Your garden is full of vegetables. When you men and women marry, amidst all your felicity, if there be a want of money, you let me out to others. When pressed for the payment of duties, you devise no plans, but take and sell the ox that ploughs your field. When you see that I am old and weak, you sell me to the butcher to be killed. The butcher conducts me home, and soon strikes me on the forehead with the head of an iron hatchet, after which I am left to die in the utmost distress. My skin is peeled off, and my bones scraped:—but when was I their enemy? When men in life are greatly distressed, I apprehend that it is in consequence of having neglected virtue. My belly is ripped open, and my bowels are taken out; my bones also are taken; the sharp knife scrapes my bones and cuts my throat. Those who sell me do not grow rich; those who eat me, do not grow fat; those who kill me, are decidedly bad men. They take my skin to cover the drum, by which the country is alarmed, and the gods are grieved. If they continue to kill me, in time there will not be oxen to till the ground, and your children and grand-children must use the spade. I am fully persuaded, after mature consideration, that the wicked persons who kill the oxen, will, in the next life, be transformed, each of them into an ox like me.

"Believe, and act, according to the above. Engrave and publish it. Hence your merits and your virtue will be boundless."

CHALMERS' ADDRESS.

SIR,

I take the liberty of sending you the following extract from "An Address to the Inhabitants of the Parish of Kilmanny," by the Rev. Thomas Chalmers. I think it speaks the doctrine of the Gospel. How far it agrees with Calvinism, the professed system of faith of the Church of Scotland, of which Dr. C. is a minister, I leave to your readers to judge. "You must be quite familiarized with the melancholy spectacle of a professor mourning over the sinfulness of his heart, and, at the same time, putting forth his hand, without one sigh of remorse, to what is sinful in ordinary conduct. Have you never witnessed one who could speak evil of his neighbour, and was, at the same time, trenched among what he thought the speculations of orthodoxy, and made the utter corruption of the soul of man one of these speculations? Is it not enough to say that he is a mere speculative Christian, for the very same thing may be detected in the practice of one who feels a real longing to be delivered from the power of that sin which he grieves has such an entire dominion over him? And yet, strange to tell, there is many an obvious and every day sin, which is not watched against, which is not struggled against, and the commission of which gives no uneasiness whatever. The man is, as it were, so much occupied with the sinfulness of his heart, that he neither feels nor attends to the sinfulness of his conduct. He wants to go methodically to work. He wants to begin at the beginning, and he forms his estimate of what the beginning is upon the arrangements of human speculations. It sounds very plausibly, that as out of the heart are the issues of life, the work of an inquiring Christian must begin there; but the mischief I complain of is, that in the first prosecution of this work, months or years may be consumed ere the purified fountain send forth its streams, or the repentance he is aspiring after tell on the plain and palpable doings of his ordinary conduct. Hence, my brethren, the mortifying exhibition of great zeal, and much talk, and diligent canvassing and conversing about the abstract principles of the Christian faith, combined with what is visible in the Christian practice, being at a dead stand, and not one inch of sensible progress being made in any one thing which the eye can witness, or the hand can lay a tangible hold upon. The man is otherwise employed; he is busy with the first principles of the subject; he still goes on with his wonted peevishness within doors, and his wonted dishonesties without doors. He has not yet come to these matters. He is taken up with laying and labouring at the foundation. The heart is the great subject of his anxiety; and in the busy exercise of mourning and confessing, and praying, and studying the right management of his heart, he may take up months or years before he come to the deformities of his outward and ordinary conduct. I will venture to go farther, my brethren, and assert, that if this be the track he is on, it will be a great chance if he ever come to them at all. To the end of his days he may be a talking, and inquiring, and speculating, and I doubt not, along with all this, a church going and ordinance loving Christian. But I am much afraid that he is, practically speaking, not in the way to the solid attainments of a Christian, whose light shines before men. All that meets the eye of daily observers may have undergone no change whatever, and the life of the poor man may be nothing better than the dream of a delusive and bewildering speculation."

ON THE AMUSEMENTS OF CLERGYMEN.

Broadhembury, Nov. 19th, 1773.

VERY DEAR SIR,

Never apologize to me, I beseech you, for any religious freedoms which you may be friendly enough to take. Without pretending to the apostolical gift of intuitive discernment, I know too much of your heart, to be offended at such real instances of your esteem. I must be a monster of pride, were I capable of resenting an intimation which breathes such sincerity of regard, and which you have the happy art of conveying with such delicacy of politeness. Instead of wishing you to intermit your labour of love, I request you to reprove, to rebuke, and to exhort me, as in your opinion occasion may require. Some individuals of, what is called, the religious world, are so very pert and impertinent that I have been obliged to treat them as I would the officiousness of wasps, and give them a gentle flap, to keep them at their due distance. But, without any shadow of compliment, I have so great and just an idea of the valuable friend to whom I am now writing, that I am desirous, not to repel, but to invite and caress his truly affectionate admonitions. They even induce me to love him the better, and to respect him the more; nor can he bind me to him by a stronger tie. As you, dear Sir, have unbosomed your thoughts, with such transparency of genuine faithfulness, I also, in return, will for once, consider you as my father confessor, and open to you my whole mind, on the subject in hand, without disguise, or reserve.

1st. I do not think that honest *Martin Luther* committed sin, by playing at backgammon for an hour or two after dinner, in order, by unbending his mind, to promote digestion.

2d. I cannot blame the holy martyr Bishop Ridley, for frequently playing at tennis, before he became a prelate; nor for playing at the more serious game of chess, twice a day, after he was made a Bishop.

3d. As little do I find fault with another of our holy martyrs, the learned and devout Mr. Archdeacon Philpot, who has left it on record, as a brand on the Pelagians of that age, that "they looked on honeste pastyme as a synne," and had the impudence to call him an Antinomian, and a loose moralist, because he now and then relaxed his brow with "huntynge, shootyng, bowlyng, and such lyke."

4th. Nor can I set down the pious Bishop Latimer for an enemy to holiness of life, on account of his saying that hunting is a good exercise for men of rank, and that shooting is as lawful an amusement for persons of inferior class.

5th. I have not the whit worse opinion of the eminent and profound Mr. Thomas Gataker, for the treatise which he professedly wrote to prove the lawfulness of card playing, under due restrictions and limitations.

6th. I think good Bishop Beveridge was quite innocent in amusing himself with his violin.

7th. The seraphic Mr. Hervey is, in my idea, entitled to no manner of censure, for allowing the devout father of "Miss Mitissa, and Miss Serena," to attend his daughters "once or twice, to the theatrical entertainments and public diversions;" nor yet for allowing him to let the said Misses "learn to dance, in order to acquire a genteel air and a graceful demeanour." Observe, that, in producing Mr. Hervey's judgment concerning the not absolute unlawfulness of all stage entertainments, and other public diversions, I do not mean to enter a plea for myself. I have seen but three plays since I took orders, i. e. for these eleven years and a half, and probably shall never see another: not because I am persuaded of its being sinful (for I think I might as innocently see Shakespeare's Henry 4th acted on the stage, as read the history of that Prince by my own fireside,) but because I consider the play-house as too public a place of amusement for a Clergyman to frequent. Moreover, I was never once at Vauxhall nor at Ranelagh, for the very same reason and for no other: neither was I ever at an assembly, except once; viz. several years ago at Weymouth, in mere complaisance to Mrs. Macaulay, though we both abstained from touching a card. While there, we only saw, and were seen, and chatted with those we knew. But enough of this digression.

8th. I cannot unsaint St. Chrysostom for admiring the comedies of Aristophanes to such a degree as to read them perpetually, and even to lay them under his pillow when he slept.

9th. I do not think it criminal, in that great, good, and useful man, Mr. Madan, to indulge himself in horseracing, and in hunting, fishing, and shooting. He himself makes no secret of all this, else I would certainly have omitted to mention it. Now, I am not attached to any of these sports. Not to the first, for I utterly dislike it; nor to the second, because I am rather a timid rider; nor to the third, because I have neither time nor patience enough; nor to the fourth, for I never fired a

gun in my life. But, shall I, like those in Hudibrass, and like too many censorious professors now,

*Compound for things I am inclined to
By blaming what I have no mind to?*

God forbid! Let every man judge for himself, and stand or fall to his own master above.

10th. Archbishop Williams required but two hours sleep in the twenty four. On the other hand, Bishop Kenn seems to have required twelve, for he says,

*Dull sleep, of sense me to deprive!
I am but half my time alive.*

Would it not be very absurd, were we, for that reason, to pronounce Williams a holier man than Kenn?

11th. Shall I question the piety of good old Mr. Moses Browne, because he finds a pleasure in angling for trouts and eels? He shewed me, when I was last in London, some sheets of the new edition (since published) of his "Eclogues on Fishing." He is fond of that recreation himself, and as fond of instructing others in it. Is he therefore ungodly? Or (permit me to ask) is there half so much loss of time at a pool of quadrille, as an angler's hook and line are attended with? I must add, which has least of cruelty in it? the depriving of real fishes of life by the most excruciating torture, or the playing for fishes made of ivory or mother of pearl?

12th. I will not sit in judgment on my dear friends Mr. and Mrs. Flower for having their amiable daughter, the fair inquisitive, taught to play on the harpsichord, to dance, &c. &c. &c. Nor am I angry with the fair inquisitive herself, for being one of the most elegant and accomplished females that ever was entitled to that character.

13th. I cannot condemn the vicar of Broadhembury, ^[1] for relaxing himself now and then among a few select friends with a rubber of sixpenny whist, a pool of penny quadrille, or a few rounds of twopenny Pope Joan. To my certain knowledge, the said vicar has been cured of the head ache by one or other of those games, after spending eight, ten, twelve, and sometimes sixteen hours in his study. Nor will he ask any man's leave for so unbending himself. 1st, Because another man's conscience is no rule to his, any more than another person's stature or complexion. 2nd, Because the word of God, no where, either directly or indirectly, says one syllable, or drops one hint, concerning either the lawfulness or unlawfulness of amusement by lots; and I would no more add to the commandments than to the doctrines of God. 3d, Because the Apostle says, "Blessed is he who condemns not himself in the things that he allows:" which is exactly my case. 4th, Because the same Apostle asks, "Why is my liberty judged of another man's conscience?" and so say I. 5th, Because I do not find myself hurt by this liberty, either in mind, body, or estate; not in *mind*, for my *mind* is sensibly relieved by it; not in *body*, for my body is sensibly the better for it; not in *estate*, for that cannot possibly suffer by it. I neither win nor lose forty shillings per annum. Doubtless Mr. Madan, Mr. Browne, and others, have "stumbled some weak Christians" many a time, by following and vindicating such unhallowed amusements. And those Christians must, I think, be very weak indeed, who can stumble at a straw, and break their shins against a barley corn! A very worthy female intimated to me last spring in London, that "I offended some weak brethren and made them stumble, by allowing myself to play at cards." As this was very seriously said, I was going to make a serious answer; but my gravity suffered more than a stumble, for it actually fell, on surveying the head dress of the fair expostulatress. I could not help asking with a smile; "and suppose a weak sister was to stumble at your elegant pyramid of hair, and crinkt ribbons, would you therefore reduce your attire to the taste of that weak sister?" The good woman honestly replied, in some disconcertment, "No, indeed."—"Then give liberty as well as take it." I could not help thinking of the lady and the patch mentioned in the 57th number of the Spectator.

And so much, my dear friend, for the grand subject of your letter. I hope our correspondence will in future, turn on topics more edifying and improving. Surely they, who are led by divine grace to experience the best things of God's spiritual kingdom, should learn to look on things indifferent with the indifference they deserve. I have hardly left myself room to assure you of the regard with which

I am, &c. &c.
A. TOPLADY.

THE FATE OF PERSECUTORS OF CHRISTIANITY.

(Continued.)

Diocletian, by adopting associates, and sharing the empire and the troops with them, took the most probable method to secure the lives of the Emperors from the arbitrary insolence of the army, which with little ceremony used to kill one and set up another.

Yet all these precautions did not protect the Emperor and his Colleagues from divine vengeance. At this time was the great contest between Christ and the Roman Emperors, which should prevail. They were determined to blot out the Christian name from under heaven, and the persecution was far more fierce and brutal than it had ever been, and therefore it was time for providence to exert itself; and so indeed it did.

Diocletian persecuted, A. D. 303, after which nothing prospered with him. He underwent many troubles, his senses were impaired, and he quitted the empire. Severus, who was raised by Galerius, and therefore, like Galerius, not disposed to spare the Christians, was overthrown and put to death by Maximianus Herculius, A. D. 307.

About the same time Urbanus, President of Palestine, who had signalized himself by tormenting and destroying the Christians, met with his due reward.

Immediately after the cruelties which he had exercised upon Pamphilus, and whilst he was still in his government, the Divine vengeance overwhelmed him. He who the day before sat in the judgment seat, exercising dominion, surrounded with guards, and ruler of all Palestine; he who was the companion, the guest, and the most intimate and honored friend of the Tyrant, suddenly was stripped of all his dignity and exposed to public ignominy before the face of those who had feared and revered him. The whole nation beheld their Governor dejected, dispirited, poorly begging for mercy, and shewing the meanest and most unmanly behaviour: whilst Maximinus himself, whose favour had filled him with vanity and insolence, and whose affection he had obtained by his barbarity to the innocent Christians, proved his most barbarous and inexorable enemy, and after having convicted him of many crimes and openly shamed him at Caesarea, condemned him to be put to death.

The Ecclesiastical Historian seems to have taken some pleasure in stigmatizing this inhuman and cowardly Governor, in consigning him to everlasting infamy, and in sacrificing his worthless name to the Manes of his dear friend Pamphilus.

ORIENTAL CUSTOMS.

No. 5.

Gen. IX. 4—"But flesh with the life thereof, which is the blood thereof, shall ye not eat."

Mr. BRUCE has given a very extraordinary account of the practice of eating blood in Abyssinia. This custom, so prevalent in several places, is forbidden in the Scriptures. A recital of the narrative will probably suggest to the reader the reasons of the prohibition. Mr. Bruce tells us, "that, not long after losing sight of the ruins of this ancient capital of Abyssinia, we overtook three travellers driving a cow before them: they had black goat skins upon their shoulders, and lances and shields in their hands; in other respects they were but thinly clothed; they appeared to be soldiers. The cow did not seem to be fattened for killing, and it occurred to us all, that it had been stolen. This, however, was not our business, nor was such an occurrence at all remarkable in a country so long engaged in war. We saw that our attendants attached themselves, in a particular manner, to the three soldiers that were driving the cow, and held a short conversation with them. Soon after, we arrived at the hithermost bank of the river, where I thought we were to pitch our tent: the drivers suddenly tript up the cow, and gave the poor animal a very rude fall upon the ground, which was but the beginning of her sufferings. One of them sat across her neck, holding down her head by the horns, the other twisted the halter about her fore feet, while the third, who had a knife in his hand, to my very great surprise, in place of taking her by the throat, got astride upon her belly, before her hind legs, and gave her a deep wound in the upper part of the buttock. From the time I had seen them throw the beast upon the ground, I had rejoiced, thinking, that when three people were killing a cow, they must have agreed to sell part of her to us; and I was much disappointed upon hearing the Abyssinians say, that we were to pass the river to the other side, and not encamp where I intended. Upon my proposing they should bargain for part of the cow, my men answered, what they had already learned in conversation, that they were not then to kill her; that she was not wholly theirs, and they could not sell her. This awakened my curiosity; I let my people go forward and staid myself, till I saw, with the utmost astonishment, two pieces, thicker and longer than our ordinary beef steaks, cut out of the higher part of the buttock of the beast: how it was done I cannot positively say, because, judging that the cow was to be killed from the moment I saw the knife drawn, I was not anxious to view that catastrophe which was by no means an object of curiosity: whatever way it was done it surely was adroitly, and the two pieces were spread upon the outside of one of their shields. One of them still continued holding the head, while the other two were busy in curing the wound. This, too, was done not in an ordinary manner. The skin which had covered the flesh that was taken away, was left entire, and flapped over the wound, and was fastened to the corresponding parts by two or more small skewers or pins. Whether they had put any thing under the skin, between that and the wounded flesh, I know not; but, at the river side where they were, they had prepared a cataplasm of clay, with which they covered the wound; they then forced the animal to rise, and drove it on before them, to furnish them with a fuller meal when they should meet their companions in the evening." "We have an instance, in the life of Saul, that shews the propensity of the Israelites to this crime: Saul's army, after a battle, *flew*, that is, fell voraciously upon the cattle they had taken and threw them upon the ground to cut off their flesh, and eat them raw; so that the army was defiled by eating blood, or living animals. 1 Sam. 14. 33. To prevent this, Saul caused to be rolled to him a great stone, and ordered those that killed their oxen, to cut their throats upon that stone. This was the only lawful way of killing animals for food; the tying of the ox, and throwing it upon the ground was not permitted as equivalent. The Israelites did, probably, in that case, as the Abyssinians do at this day; they cut a part of its throat, so that blood might be seen on the ground, but nothing mortal to the animal followed from that wound: but, after laying his head upon a large stone, and cutting his throat, the blood fell from on high, or was poured on the ground like water, and sufficient evidence appeared that the creature was dead, before it was attempted to eat it. We have seen that the Abyssinians came from Palestine a very few years after this, and we are not to doubt that they then carried with them this, with many other Jewish customs, which they have continued to this day." To corroborate the account given by Mr. Bruce, in these extracts, it may be satisfactory to affix what Mr. Antes has said upon the subject, in his Observations on the Manners and Customs of the Egyptians, p. 17. "When Mr. Bruce returned from Abyssinia I was at Grand Cairo. I had the pleasure of his company for three months almost every day, and having, at that time, myself an idea of penetrating into Abyssinia, I was very inquisitive about that country, on hearing many things from him which seemed almost incredible to me; I used to ask his Greek servant Michael (a simple fellow, incapable of any invention) about the same circumstance, and must say, that he commonly agreed with his master, as to the chief points. The description Mr. Bruce makes concerning the bloody banquet of live oxen among the natives, he happened never to mention to me, else I could have made the same inquiry; but I heard not only this servant, but many eye witnesses, often speak of the Abyssinians eating raw meat."

"Gen. IX. 21—*And he drank of the wine and was drunken.*"

Numerous passages might be selected from the sacred books of the Hindus, in which there appears an extraordinary coincidence with some parts of the Sacred Scriptures. It is admitted by those who are best acquainted with the heathen records, that the similarity is not merely casual, but that the facts and circumstances, thus detailed, had been in some way, however remote and traditional, derived from the Divine original. The following extract from the Padmapuran, of which the translation is minutely exact, may afford a specimen of these conformities, which are strongly *corroborative* of the truth of the *Mosaic history*. It is evidently the history of Noah and his sons just after the flood.

1st. "To Satyavarman, that sovereign of the *whole* earth, *were* born three sons; the eldest, Sherma; then C' Harma; and thirdly Jya' Peti by name.

2d. "They were all men of good morals, excellent in virtue and virtuous deeds, skilled in the use of weapons to strike with or to be thrown; brave men, eager for victory in battle.

3d. "But Satyavarman, being continually delighted with devout meditation, *and* seeing his sons fit for *dominion*, laid upon them the burden of government.

4th. "Whilst he remained honouring and satisfying the Gods, and priests with kine. One day, by the act of destiny, the King having drunk mead,

5th. "Became senseless, and lay asleep naked: then was he seen by C' Harma, and by him were his two brothers called.

6th. "To whom he said, what now has befallen? in what state is this our sire? By those two was he hidden with clothes, and called to his senses again and again.

7th. "Having recovered his intellect, and perfectly knowing what had passed, he cursed C' Harma, *saying*, thou shalt be the servant of servants,

8th. "And, since thou wast a laughter in their presence, from laughter thou shalt acquire a name. Then he gave to Sherma the wide domain on the south of the snowy mountain,

9th. "And to Jya' Peti he gave all on the north of the snowy mountain; but he, by the power of religious contemplation, attained supreme bliss."

HISTORY OF LUCY CLARE.

"There is in my parish," said my good old friend, "At some distance from the Village and the Church, or from any high road, a very deep valley, rendered shady by the Coppices and Orchards which are upon the declivity of the hill on both sides. At the mouth of this runs the river, and in its depth is a high rock, from which falls a Spring of very clear and cold water.

"When first I came to my living, there were two black timbered Cottages standing upon the shelving part of the rocks, one of which was much above the other, but each had a sloping garden, with flowers, fruit trees, and bee hives; also a few hops were cultivated in these gardens, which crept about the rock and hung down from the highest part of it.—One of these Cottages still remains, having been lately repaired: but the other, which was the higher of the two, was only inhabited a few years after my time, and is so fallen to ruin that it cannot now be used, even as a Stable for Cattle.

"In the lowest of these Cottages lived a person of the name of Lucy Clare. When I first came to the living she was still a young and very comely woman, and in her countenance beamed a soul renewed by grace. She had the charge of two orphan girls, to whom she acted the part of a most tender mother, bringing them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord.

"My wife and I, not unseldom, in summers' evenings, would take a walk to see Lucy Clare, and would sit and talk with her in her little neat and beautiful Cottage. Her conversation was wonderfully pleasing, abounding with pious sentiments, for she seldom spoke of worldly matters. It appeared that she had received an education above the common sort; but we never knew what had been her history, till we visited her in her last illness, which being a lingering one, afforded me many opportunities for prayer and conversation with her. She was not forty years of age at her death; and, as I before remarked, was to the last a very comely woman, but to proceed to her account of herself."

LUCY CLARE'S ACCOUNT OF HERSELF.

"My Father and Uncle," said Lucy Clare, "came from the North Country, on foot, to offer their help to King James; who, as they had been told in their own land, was very ill used by his disloyal subjects here.

"They were both very young when they set out from the place of their birth, and were withal very poor; but they thought that they could do much for their King, with the stout stave they brought with them.

"But as they travelled through this country, the younger brother fell sick; and the elder, having lodged him upon some hay in a Barn, went from house to house, to beg a bit of bread for him, but many refused him charity, because they did not love the King in whose cause they came to fight, for he would not conceal who he was, nor the purpose for which he came to England."

(To be continued.)

BRITISH NATIONAL EDUCATION SOCIETY.

(Concluded.)

The visitors to the school during the year, whose signatures appear in the Register Book, amount to 4224; being 302 more than in the year preceding.

Training of Masters and Mistresses.

The number of masters admitted during the year, and either retained in the service of the Society, or instructed in the system on special application of clergymen and others, has been 113; of mistresses, 56. Boys and girls from the Central School have organized 39 schools in different parts of the country.

On the whole, not less than 209 schools have, during the last year, received the National System by direct communication from the Central School; and among the places which have thus been benefitted, are to be numbered many large populous towns; as Leeds, Leicester, Gloucester, Lancaster, Carlisle, Bath, and Colchester.

PROGRESS OF THE SYSTEM AT HOME.

The progress of the system is accelerated, the rate of it increasing from year to year. At the last anniversary, the union of 192 new schools was reported: during the present year, 253 have been added; carrying the total number to 1009, in which about 155,000 scholars are receiving education. If to these be added the children in schools conducted on the principles of the Society, though not united to it, it will be found "that nearly 200,000 poor children in this kingdom are at this time imbibing the elements of useful instruction on the National System."

PROGRESS OF THE SYSTEM ABROAD.

Bahamas, Nova Scotia, & the Cape.

The system is extending itself to the British dependencies in the most distant parts of the world. Mr. William Cooper, formerly one of the Society's training masters, is successfully exerting himself in the Bahamas, in the organization of schools for the children of both white and black parents. Mr. William West, a training master, has been sent to Halifax, in Nova Scotia, and is vigorously introducing the system, under the patronage of the local authorities, into that province. The school at the Cape of Good Hope, formed by Mr. Van Wageninge, from the Central School, proceeds with great success, under the superintendence of the Senior Chaplain, Dr. Jones, notwithstanding the lamentable death of Mr. Van Wageninge.

India.

To the East-Indies, where Doctor Bell first proved and cultivated this system, the fairest prospect is now opening, that it will be transported back from this country, to become the instrument of the most valuable blessings. The Bishop of Calcutta, in a letter received in May last, made a request to the committee, that two persons, properly instructed in the National System, might be sent out to Calcutta. The committee, accordingly, have lost no time in providing two

competent persons, who have gone through a regular course of instruction at the Central School, and have now embarked for Calcutta. At Bombay a similar prospect is opening. By a letter received from the Rev. Archdeacon Barnes, at that Presidency, it appears that a school has there been opened on the National System, and most liberally supported by voluntary subscriptions. He expresses the hope, that a master, trained in the Central School, may, ere long, be obtained to give full effect to the plan.

But it is not to Europeans only in India that there is a prospect of imparting the blessings of this system of education. At Chinsurah, in the province of Bengal, and in the surrounding villages, schools have recently been established on a plan which corresponds, in its leading features, with that pursued by Dr. Bell, for conveying elementary instruction to the children of the poor natives. The government of India have approved the measure, and sanctioned it with their support, with the view of extending the plan to other parts of those vast territories, on the success of the experiment being further confirmed. Thus, by opening the minds, and improving the general character of the natives of India, the period may be approaching, when, in the words of Mr. Forbes, the commissioner of that province, "they shall derive, from their intercourse with us, benefits, which the vicissitudes of the world, and the revolution of empires, shall not be able to efface."

Russia.

Nor is the diffusion of this system from the National Society confined even to the British dependencies; it is about to be introduced into the vast empire of Russia, under the express authority of the Emperor. In April last, his Excellency Count Lieven, the Russian Ambassador, applied, by command of the Emperor, to his Grace the Archbishop of Canterbury, for permission that four young Russians should be admitted into the Central School, to be instructed in the National System, for the purpose of carrying it into Russia. They were accordingly admitted on the 14th of April. Their attention to the business of the school, and the whole of their behaviour, have been most exemplary; and they have, at the same time, nearly acquired perfect instruction in the system. When they first arrived in England, they were wholly unacquainted with the English language; but, in the clear articulation enforced in the National Schools, and in other circumstances connected with their mode of instruction, they have found great facilities in acquiring the language, and have rapidly improved, both in reading and understanding it, in a surprising manner.

In addition to this great design of the Imperial Government of Russia, Count Romanoff, the Chancellor of the Empire, proposes to introduce the system upon the large estates in Siberia. He has engaged an Englishman for this purpose, who is now receiving instruction in the Central School, and will shortly proceed on his destination.

On the general progress of the institution, the committee remark—

The interesting details which have now been given, are indeed calculated to awaken the most lively feelings of satisfaction in all who have been instrumental in furthering the great designs of the National Society. They not only prove that this society has succeeded, beyond hope, in promoting the instruction of the poor at home in the principles of genuine christianity; but that its beneficent influence is circumscribed within no limits; that its blessings are diffusing themselves over every part of the habitable globe; and that it seems destined, under the favour of Divine Providence, to become the powerful instrument of exalting the social character of man, and promoting his lasting happiness.

PECUNIARY GRANTS.

The principal grants of the year for the erection of school rooms are particularized. These grants have been in number, 61; of these, three have been of £200, one of £150, and twelve of £100 each; and the whole amount paid under this head, as appears from the cash account, has been £3635 10s.

FUNDS.

A benefaction of £100 from the late Princess Charlotte, with other liberal donations, and a legacy of £1000 3 per cents. by the late Rev. Dr. Bell, Prebendary of Westminster, are reported. The unappropriated sum, however, now remaining with the society does not exceed £3000. The annual subscriptions are insufficient to meet the annual expenses of the Central Institution, and those connected with the general business of the society. These amounted last year to more than £2500, of which the expenses of the training master and the other charges of the Central School were £1830, and the incidentals £720, while the annual subscriptions amount to but between £1400 and £1500, thus leaving an annual deficiency of upwards of £1200, which, together with grants in aid of schools in union, has hitherto been supplied out of the capital stock of the society.

The committee appeal forcibly on this subject to the members of the society and the public, and remind them—

That the sum originally contributed amounted to about £24,000, and that, on this sum being exhausted, and a second appeal made to the liberality of the public, a further sum of above £9000 was subscribed, of which less than £3000 remain at this time in hand—that, by means of the sum thus expended, the National Society has directly, by grants of money, contributed to the erection and enlargement of above 230 schools in different parts of the kingdom; and has trained, in its Central School, no less than 530 masters, and above 210 mistresses, all of whom have been employed in managing National Schools in various places.

After stating the number of scholars, as above reported, the committee observe—

With this most satisfactory statement of all that has been done, they trust that they may justly glory in the expenditure of their funds, and consider their present poverty as the means and the pledge of future wealth. They hope that the solid proof, which is hereby afforded of the extensive good that has been effected, will furnish the most powerful of all inducements with the public, to maintain and replenish those sources from which it has been derived.

With these impressions, the committee will continue, in the exercise of their best discretion, to execute the trust reposed in them; and to dispense the remaining funds of the society in that manner which shall appear most conducive to the great purposes for which those funds have been provided.

APPENDIX.

Among the various matters contained in the appendix, we shall notice the two principal.

The usual detailed account of the state of the schools in union with the society, occupies 95 pages. The statements are given in the tabular form, and show—the places, the kind of schools, whether daily, Sunday, evening, &c. the number of boys; the number of girls; the total number; donations; and annual subscriptions. By a little management, these tabular statements might be compressed, with advantage, into much less than half the space which they now occupy.

Extracts are also given in the Appendix, as usual, from the reports of the societies and schools in union. These occupy, in the present appendix, 78 pages; and contain satisfactory details of the progress and efficiency of the system, with many useful suggestions. Under the head of Gloucester, a forcible statement is given of the benefits of education, in an "Extract from Mr. Baron Garrow's Charge to the Grand Jury, at the Gloucester Assizes, on Monday, August 18, 1817."



Footnotes

[1] Mr. Toplady was at this time the resident incumbent of that parish in Devonshire.

Transcriber's Note

- Obvious punctuation and spelling errors repaired
- Hyphenation inconsistencies left as in the original

[The end of *The Christian Recorder Vol. 1, Issue 5 (1819-July)* by Various]