

From the Christian Witness.

H Y M N.

'Casting all thy care upon Him, for He careth for thee.'

—St. Peter.

If seeds that in the heart were sown,
To cheer the darkening years,
Are torn with all their rooting forth,
Deep bathed in blood and tears,
While from that agony of pain,
No healing balm can flee,
I'll cast my care on Thee, my God,—
I'll cast my care on Thee.

Should sorrow to the spirit's cell
Intrude with baleful gloom,
And one by one, the friends of youth,
Forsake me for the tomb,
Till, lost in lonely grief, I bend,
A lightning stricken tree,
I'll cast my care on Thee, my God,—
I'll cast my care on Thee.

And when the last appalling hour
Its solemn signal brings,
When earthly honor, wealth, and power,
Are but forgotten things,—
When sun and moon, beheld so long,
Like sable shadows flee,
I'll cast my care on Thee, my God,—
I'll cast my care on Thee.

L. H. S.

RELIGIOUS MISCELLANY.

THE NECESSITY OF AN ESTABLISHED CHURCH.*

It is a fact of singular importance, that no nation known to history, with the exception of the United States, ever existed without an established form of worship: and that some signal judgment has not already destroyed that exception, may be accounted for from the circumstance that Christianity prevails to a considerable extent among the people, and therefore a space may be given for repentance: but already symptoms of destruction appear. Anarchy is making rapid strides, and the foundations of the social compact are giving way.

The devout believer in the Bible can have no more patience or sympathy with professing Christians who place themselves in opposition to religious establishments, than with the avowed infidel: for such institutions are scriptural and sanctioned by heaven. An ecclesiastical establishment was ordained among the Jews by God himself, and though in some respects inapplicable to the Christian revelation, it involves the great principle of National Religion, and may with some modifications be adapted to all nations believing in the Gospel. It would indeed be monstrous if a religious establishment moulded by the hands of God yielded no instruction—no practical example for human guidance. Far from admitting so profane and impious a supposition, we boldly avow that no sincere and enlightened reader of his bible can be opposed to National Church Establishments, or hesitate in admitting that the Jewish Church, separated from what was evidently special and temporary, furnishes the best ground-work of a national religious polity, and will operate in every sanctified mind as a clear revelation of the will of God, that every nation professing Christianity is bound to make provision for its being taught to all its people.

Nothing can be more clear than that the enemies of ecclesiastical establishments never read their Bibles with a sincere view of ascertaining the truth.—For in every page such an institution stands forth in bold relief, and presents a brief but complete refutation of all their objections.

Nor are the Scriptures less conclusive against making the Clergy dependent for their maintenance on the voluntary offerings of those whom they are ap-

*From 'Letters on a General Union of the British North American Provinces.'

pointed to instruct. The divine economy placed the ministers of religion in absolute independence of popular will or caprice, as well in regard to pecuniary support as to appointment and removal.

But although the ministers of religion among the Jews were secured in a comfortable maintenance adequate to their wants and station in Society, scope was still left for the manifestation of the spontaneous affection of the people towards them, and to their zeal also on special occasions when public spirit was likely to meet the demand. There was an annual gratuity to the Priests, left to the liberality of the people, and such as might give excitement to pious regard towards them and open the way for a reciprocal feeling on the part of the Clergy. It was also the usage of the Jewish Church, following the example of Moses, to appeal to the generosity of the nation whenever the house of God needed extensive repairs, or was to be rebuilt, or synagogues erected.—A generous enthusiasm was thus enkindled and always surpassed the necessities of the occasion.

The Jewish polity, as established by God himself, likewise furnishes a complete refutation of the monstrous dogma of modern infidels and political dissenters, that governments ought to have no business with religion. "Thou shalt provide out of all the people, able men, such as fear God, men of truth, hating covetousness, to be rulers of thousands, &c., and let them judge the people at all seasons." In the teeth of this, modern reformers in Church and State prefer men without religion. Whether they or God be right, judge ye.

The administrators of government ought undoubtedly to be religious. They are individuals amenable to God, and being appointed to act in high trusts, it is their duty to sanctify their acts as public men by the offices of religion, otherwise their acts cannot be acceptable, but displeasing to God, and destructive to themselves. Irreligious men are in truth incapable of discharging the functions of government. When a nation is piously administered, it possesses the means of conveying religion to every one of its families; it has all the qualifications and conscientious inducements, spiritual and secular, to make its people religious—those who cannot afford to pay as well as those who are indifferent and disinclined; and to all it offers a prevailing example.

An established Church is therefore of infinite advantage to the well being of any nation. It preserves the purity of doctrine which ought to be the first consideration in every christian country, and sanctifies the State by maintaining the purity of political practice. In private life it gives confidence and uniformity to virtue and true dignity of manners. It secures the religious instruction of the whole population and fixes their minds on the purest principles, from which they cannot be easily shaken. Spread over the whole land, they cannot be influenced by any sudden wind of doctrine. Moreover, fortified by their creeds and Liturgies, standards of truth resting on the Bible, and with forms sanctioned by apostolic usage, they are kept steady in the true path, and proceed with a regularity eminently conducive to right-mindedness and holiness of life.

It is the duty of an Established Church to present religion with authority, to be what it really is, the first object of every man—his noblest interest—and what ought ever to be nearest his heart. Such an institution affords a general refuge for and defence of religious truth—a magnificent example of purity of doctrine, and a model of clerical manners and learning. Accordingly, among no class of men will there be found such exemplary purity of manners and conduct in all respects, as among the established Clergy of Great Britain and Ireland.

There is perhaps no greater blessing possessed by any nation than that which the mother country enjoys in having so many men whose behaviour and attainments are unquestionably far above the average, established as permanent residents all over the kingdom. The Protestant Church of the British Empire is the ballast of the state, the sheet anchor of its power, and the dispenser of the only sure principles of action—principles which, professed and steadily adhered to, must produce prosperity and felicity and from which to depart is to fall. These principles embodied in the forms of the Church, and engrained in the hearts of the people, offer a perma-

nent and formidable check to vice and folly in every shape. It is too large to be suddenly acted upon, and too much controlled by long established habits of feeling and opinion and complicated discipline, to yield to transient impressions, however general they may be for a time.

In fine, an established Christian Church is essential to the permanent existence of every government, and to the public good, and teaches those principles only on which all governments ought to be conducted. Completely independent in her spiritual character, she yields not her principles to the will of kings, ministers, statesmen or the people: and therefore it becomes essentially necessary that she should be allied to the State. She is the only fixed body in any country, able to influence its proceedings, to give it strength and an inclination of steady obedience to the people.

'TOO MUCH PREACHING.'

That the fashion of multiplying sermons to the same congregation, is not favorable to the real prosperity of religion, seems to me so obvious that I do not see how an intelligent person can think otherwise—and I must confess, that I have seldom met with a truly thinking Christian, who does believe otherwise.

One objection to this practice, is, that it interferes with that family instruction on the Sabbath which in a Christian family, ought never to be neglected.—I will not say family instruction is important,—it is indispensable. In other days, there was scarcely a family in New England in which it was not maintained, and then it was a principal means of placing each new generation under the sway of religious influence. I fear this custom is falling into neglect, and it certainly will be neglected where the Sabbath is so entirely filled up with sermons or religious meetings as to leave no opportunity for attending to it. In such a case, Sabbath afternoon will generally bring so much hurry, and so little leisure, that family instruction will be dispensed with. Let any one make the inquiry and he will find that what I am saying is true in point of fact.

Another objection to this multiplication of meetings on the Sabbath is, that it does not leave sufficient time for serious meditation. It is useless for a man to hear a sermon if he does not afterwards reflect upon, and digest what he hears. One part of our business on the Sabbath is to meditate. It is the duty of every hearer to cultivate such habits of attention and meditation, as will make him able to remember what he hears and lay it up in his heart. Now, what I have seen and experienced makes me confident that this cannot be done properly, if it be done at all, by any person who is accustomed to attend more than two services on the Sabbath. Such a person's mind has no opportunity to settle into the deep calm of meditation. It is hurried and confused, so that a sort of mental distraction takes place. His memory is weakened, until he becomes incapable of retaining and treasuring up the subject of a sermon. In almost every congregation there are some who seem to have settled in their minds that religious prosperity consists in this multiplication of meetings, and commonly persons of this class are so little accustomed to digest what they hear, that they have never formed such habits of memory as will enable them to retain even the leading thoughts of the preacher's discourse. Such persons derive but little profit from hearing, and they discourage their ministers;—how discouraging it must be, after preaching a sermon on which he has bestowed the most careful labor, to hear one of his most serious hearers, a man of fair mind and mature age, say, "Ah! my memory is so poor, that I cannot remember a word of what I hear." In such a confession, the man acknowledges he does not attend to what he hears, and has always neglected to form habits of serious meditation.

Another evil of 'too much preaching' is, that by hindering habits of memory and meditation, it disposes the mind of the hearer to feel little or no interest in any sermon which is not calculated to produce a strong excitement of the feelings. And when a man has contracted this habit of hearing, it will be long before he adopts the notion, that religious con-