

ers, and the effect of whose faithful instructions would not be limited by the first religious excitement which the entrance of some over-heated or ignorant enthusiast might be enabled to awaken;—of one, in short, who could outlive this deranging effervescence, and by shewing the calm and imperturbable mien of sound and dignified Christianity in the midst of this unnatural tumult, would, by contrast, soon demonstrate which was the safer guide to follow in the narrow pathway of Christian duty.

We would put it candidly to every man of every Christian communion, whether the fixed and permanent establishment, in every township for example, of such an instructor of religion,—of one who would conjoin with piety and zeal the advantages of a sound biblical and general education,—of one who could not shift and adapt his doctrines to the whims and fancies of the changeable multitude, but who, bound by the wholesome restraint of Scriptural articles of faith and a Scriptural form of worship, would present an unvarying front of opposition to the capricious and innate desire for change;—we would ask every honest Christian man whether to such township an instructor of religion like this must not prove a real blessing. We would ask the conscientious Dissenter himself whether he would not desire to see the establishment of this unalterable barrier against the innovations of absurd, false and destructive religion. We would ask the mere moral member of society, the sincere lover of his country, whether he would not anxiously wish such a corrective to the native unsettledness of the human character, and the adoption of means for ensuring that stability of society which erroneous religious instruction so mournfully helps to disorganize. We would ask of such to dismiss all sectarian jealousy, and view the subject in the full breadth of Christian philanthropy, and with the sound and unbiassed views of a true Christian patriot; and we dare anticipate that he will come to the conclusion, that the provision for the establishment of such a settled system of religious instruction is amongst the best blessings which could be conferred upon the land;—that its abolition would have to be ranked amongst the heaviest misfortunes with which the land could be afflicted.

All this, as we have often said, was foreseen by one of England's best kings, and by one of England's greatest statesmen. King George III. aided by his illustrious counsellor William Pitt, established for the Canadas that provision, by the appropriation of the Clergy Reserves, which would ensure the benefits to which we have adverted; but which, from jealousy or want of reflection on the one hand, and from a deficiency of manly firmness and undaunted constitutional principle on the other, has been suffered to remain unemployed,—rendering every day more and more difficult the realization of the benefits which it was undeniably calculated to bring about.

We shall not be so unjust as to deny to those of our legislators who propose what we deem an unconstitutional division of this property, the credit of perfect sincerity in the sentiment they entertain and in the belief which they avow, that in doing so they will best promote the quiet and well-being of this our rising country. Possibly, however, to the existence of such an opinion the doctrines of 'liberality' so sedulously diffused of late years may unconsciously have contributed; and possibly it may have been not a little strengthened by a feeling—to which human nature in its weakness is very apt to be blind—a feeling of self-interest, to the preservation of which the maintenance of popularity is conceived to be so essential.

When clamour against a principle chances to rise very loud, and happens not to be met with equal vehemence on the side of its defenders, many are apt to mistake the empty declamation for the legitimate expression of public opinion; and some, unfortunately, even if public opinion be manifestly wrong,—as on some points it may, from a peculiarity of circumstances, for a time at least very easily be,—are weak enough to fancy that, whether right or wrong, it is to be adopted as the rule of legislative conduct. From such a mode of thinking and acting we, of course, most unequivocally dissent; and we would, with every deference, ask our friends from whose legislative views on the point in question we seriously differ, whether they think the public mind has as yet been so well informed upon all the beneficial workings of a public provision for religion, that the expression of its opinion—founded, too, and elicited, as it has been, in a great measure, by notorious enemies of our invaluable constitution—ought to be adopted as the basis of legislation upon the question of the Clergy Reserves.

To the scheme of dividing a settled appropriation we object, in the first place, as involving the moral crime and dangerous precedent of spoliation; and we object to it further on the ground that it will give countenance to, foster, and perpetuate that religious instability which already exists to so lamentable an extent, and which, in the ratio of its increase, must weaken the common cause and practical benefits of religion itself. But settle and establish the Protestant faith in this Colony according to the spirit of the British Constitution, and the manifest intention of our Provincial charter; and while by this means a safeguard is established for the soundness and permanence of Christianity amongst us, it would seem absurd to anticipate that, where no burden is imposed—where no wrong is inflicted—where mere justice is done, and law obeyed—agitation can continue, or opposition be persevered in.

We were about to comment upon the remarks contained in certain of the Lower Canada papers on the subject of the General Thanksgiving recently observed in that Province, when we were favoured with the following letter. Although the public quiet has, in neither Province, been so far restored as to supersede the necessity of watchfulness—a watchfulness, however, confined chiefly to the movements of foreign aggressors—it strikes us as extremely strange to deny that the arm of Providence has not, in both Provinces, been recently interposed in a way which calls for the unfeigned gratitude of every Christian. If, then, special mercies have confessedly been vouchsafed, is it wrong,—is it not rather a religious duty, to make a special acknowledgment of them to the heavenly Giver? We were pained to observe that a dissent from the alleged reasons for a General Thanksgiving should, in some instances in the Lower Province, have

produced a manifest disregard of the day thus sacredly set apart; nor can we understand, although the circumstance may possibly be capable of ample justification, why persons who, in becoming recognition of the care of their God, were proceeding to his holy temple, should have been met by others proceeding with trumpet and drum to practice at a target! We mean, however, to reflect upon none—far less to impugn any thing more than perhaps the thoughtlessness of the gallant defenders of our sister Province; but as Christians, we must vindicate the duty of declaring publicly our thankfulness to God when, by his special providence, we have been preserved from the atrocities of a foul and unnatural rebellion.

To the Editor of the Church.

QUEBEC, March 5th, 1838.

Rev. and dear Sir,—May I beg a place in the columns of "The Church" for the subjoined extracts from a Sermon preached by me, in the Cathedral Church of Quebec, on occasion of the late Public Thanksgiving; the propriety of which has been very freely canvassed, and its object very generally misunderstood.

Yours very truly,

GEORGE MACKIE.

"A day of thanksgiving!" it has been said; "and for what?—The embers of sedition are smouldering yet, and it needs but a breath to fan them into a flame! The sword of justice* is still unsheathed: and can this be indeed a time for joy and gladness? Rather tarry we the Lord's leisure, let us await the removal of His chastening hand; then will we praise Him in that day."—My Brethren, it may be that the Lord has not seen fit to grant our petitions for deliverance exactly in the manner or to the full extent which we desired; but if His signal judgments called upon us for a distinct acknowledgement of our guilt, a distinct expression of sorrow and humiliation before Him; so do the special acts of His Providence, "openly shewed in our sight," require a distinct acknowledgment of His goodness, a distinct expression of our gratitude and love. Possibly—probably—the danger is not past:—I can readily believe that the political horizon may be overclouded, and I be unskilled to discern "the signs of the times;" nay I doubt not but that the Lord's "hand is stretched out still;" but this I do know that He has interposed in our behalf in a marked and wonderful manner:—were I to doubt this, every murmur of that noble stream which flows on beneath our walls would taunt me with ingratitude! *****

But indeed, indeed, my brethren, our faith is weak, if it have failed to recognize, in the late conjuncture of affairs, sufficient grounds for deep and devout thankfulness: and those amongst us who feel a distaste for this present service and are inclined to call in question its propriety, would do well honestly to enquire of their hearts whether there may not be some lurking dislike to the exercise itself.—Alas! the best of us—what a low estimate does he form of this privilege! To seek relief in difficulties—and to implore deliverance in pressing dangers—and to throw ourselves before a mercy seat—this is comparatively an easy task; and there are few who, in seasons of need, will be found to question the efficacy of special prayer,—nay, if the truth were told, there are few who are not impelled to it by a feeling of instinctive awe.—But praise!—O my friends, we are men "of unclean lips," and we dwell in a strange land—and it is not easy for us to raise our voices to hymns of joy. Oh! we are too conversant with the grosser things of sense—and too frequently engaged in other callings, our right hands "forget their cunning"—our fingers are unskilled to awake the harp to strains of melody, and if they do touch the chords how faint and how uncertain the sound. Praise is to the natural man a hard service—and even those who have been taught to discern the *profit of godliness*, are often how slow to desire the *beauty of holiness*! The fear and shame of conscious guilt, the prevailing features of its conduct when it was yet sold under sin, will not fail to haunt and to linger about the soul which has been translated into the glorious liberty of adoption in Christ—and that slavish disposition, which suspects the Lord in all his advances of love—will even then but too frequently stifle the accents of thanksgiving in their first essays of utterance, or withhold the tribute of praise until the manifold goodness of God has again and again forced itself upon the judgment with a conviction which it cannot resist, and wrung from it, as it were, its niggardly dole of acknowledgment.

A day of thanksgiving premature!—And would it then be so grievous a crime if we were grateful by anticipation?—but such assuredly is not our case:—we are but too tardy in this giving of thanks; as I have before intimated, the weakest faith cannot but have perceived the hand of God in the late crisis of danger, for consider the mode of His dealings to us-ward!—The inclemency of the season was a rallying point of hope to the disaffected, and lo! a winter unparalleled in mildness of temperature has at once baffled their devices. He who was wont to "give snow like wool, and to scatter the hoar frost like ashes, and to cast forth His ice like morsels, has sent out His word and melted them, has caused His wind to blow and the waters flow."

But for this interposition vouchsafed in the beginning of troubles, it had been difficult to assign a limit to their probable continuance or extent, for whether our fears have or have not exaggerated the danger, all must acknowledge that it is well for us that the flame of rebellion was thus early arrested in its progress:—fed by success, who shall say how widely or how fiercely it might have raged! The establishment of an *anti-British supremacy*, the first object of disaffection—successful revolt would possibly have contemplated nothing less than the *extinction of the British name*; and though the mad project must soon have recoiled with the weight of a fearful destruction on the heads of its infatuated authors, yet meanwhile much of individual suffering would have been the inevitable result of a sudden panic: our own position would have been far from secure, and that of the isolated settlers frightful in the extreme; and, further, the lawlessness of a border populace which has so lately proved to demonstration that the sovereignty of an empty phantom called "The State," is far less rational than that sovereignty of a female which mob-philosophy affects to despise, would then have been enabled almost without a check to have run riot

* Martial law is still in force in this Province.

in plunder and desolation. But it is needless to speculate:—Whatever of good, political foresight may have effected for us—whatever, under the blessing of God, human sagacity may have devised in our behalf,—the direct agency of the Lord himself has been plainly visible in warding off from our troops the rigor of climate, in shielding their lives in the day of battle, in reviving and animating their courage by a series of fortunate events; and for these and all other His mercies it well becomes us to be thankful, and to extol His name who has not suffered "our foes to triumph over us." Come then, and let us with one heart and one mind make the one voice of melody to ascend. What though our deliverance be not yet complete!—we have been delivered from many and great dangers. What though the Lord have not given perfect peace in all our borders! He has strengthened the bars of our gates. He has protected—he has preserved us;—and if we have not received the full tale of desired mercies, still how "great is the sum of them!" and moreover how wise and how just is He with whom we have to do!—My Brethren, it can hardly be that we shall wield with less effect the "two-edged sword in our hands," if the praises of God be on our lips. It can hardly be that a devout acknowledgment of what He has done for us, will render us less fitted to trust Him for help and strength,—or that by magnifying Him in his own appointed way, we shall cause him to turn his face from us. Only let us see to it that our thanksgiving be in *very deed* that of the heart,—the thanksgiving of a life and conversation ordered aright. This is the true eloquence of praise—this the song of gratitude which he loves to hear. * * *

THE FORTY DAYS OF FASTING.

Concerning the period of forty days during which our Lord fasted, the words of St. Luke seem to imply that it refers to some other transaction of Scripture, as a counterpart and accomplishment; and that this precise time of forty days, rather than any other, was proper to the occasion. He says, *when the days were ended*, or, as the Greek will bear, 'when the days were fulfilled'; the word being the same as in that passage of St. Mark, 'What shall be the sign when all these things shall be fulfilled?' But I lay no great stress upon the word: for, whether the expression of the evangelist implies it or not, the period of forty days doth certainly connect this transaction with many others in the Sacred History; and there is reason to suppose, that the period itself was derived from some very early occasion. After revolving it long in my thoughts, I would propose the following conjecture to those who are skilful in the Scripture, namely, that the first man spent forty days in Paradise, and that in this period he was tempted, fell into sin by eating the forbidden fruit, and forfeited the tree of life with the inheritance of immortality. If this be supposed, the period of forty days will occur naturally in other transactions, and particularly in this of our Saviour's temptation, which is evidently founded on the temptation and fall of the first Adam. The curse brought upon the world by the flood, and occasioned by the sin committed in paradise, (Gen. v. 29,) was forty days in the execution; for so long the rains were descending, and the great deep emptying itself upon the earth's surface, that the sin and its history might be recognized in its punishment.—When the Israelites searched the land of Canaan, that second paradise, which was to be the reward of their probation in the wilderness, they had a foretaste of it for forty days (Numb. xiv. 33, 34); and the people who murmured at the evil report of the faithless spies were condemned to wander forty years in the wilderness, a year for a day: so that this penance symbolizes again with the curse which was consequent on the loss of paradise.

Under the ministry of the prophet Jonah, the space of forty days was allowed to the Ninevites, as an interval in which they might have opportunity of averting the divine judgment by repentance and fasting. Moses spent forty days and forty nights upon the mount, when he received the tables of the law from the hand of God, and the same act was repeated on occasion of the tables which were broken. During his continuance in the mount, he did neither eat bread nor drink water; and his fast was observed in a wilderness. Elijah also, when he fled out of Judea, crossed the river Jordan, and fasted forty days and forty nights in that wilderness wherein mount Horeb stood; where Moses had twice fasted forty days, and where the Israelites were led about in a state of penance for forty years.

The general agreement on so many occasions concerning the period of forty days, might probably be derived from the original I have supposed; but however that may be, it could not happen by chance; and therefore it might well be said, when Christ had fasted forty days, that the days were fulfilled, this period, according to the abundant testimony of the Scripture, being more suitable to the occasion than any other. As he suffered and rose again on the third day, according to the Scripture, so he fasted forty days, according to the same Scripture; and the example of Moses, independent of every other testimony, would have thought sufficient to prove this, in the opinion of many good judges both ancient and modern.—(Sir William Jones.)

TUITION.

THE Subscribers to the Classical and Mathematical School established in Quebec in 1836, are desirous of increasing the number of pupils by adding five more to the original number (25.)

The Institution is now conducted by the following Masters. Head Master—Rev. F. J. Lundy, S. C. L. late Scholar of University College, Oxford.

Mathematical Master—Edward Chapman Esq. B. A. late Scholar of Caius College, Cambridge. Second Master, and Teacher of French, Italian, Writing, &c.—E. H. Brown Esq. many years resident in France and Italy.

Persons wishing to become Subscribers, and desirous of being informed of terms, &c. &c. are requested to apply to J. Geo. Irvine Esq. Secretary to the Quebec Classical School, Dalhousie Place; or to the Rev. F. J. Lundy, St. Ursule Street, Quebec.

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LETTERS received to Friday, 16th March:—

Rev. C. P. Reid, rem. in full for vol. 1.—including remittance in full from Rev. J. Braithwaite; Wm. Proudfoot, Esq. with enclosure; S. S. Wilnot, Esq.; J. Kent, Esq. (2) with enclosure; Rev. F. J. Lundy; (the papers have been sent); Rev. J. Shortt;