

persecutions which they continually experienced, in pursuing their great and laudable purpose, we must have little of Christian charity, as well as little knowledge of human infirmity, if we be not disposed to make large allowance for the peculiar circumstances in which they were placed.

Nothing, indeed, can be more evident, than that the English Reformers, in particular, acted not against any lawful authority, but in complete subordination to it; the Reformation in this country being carried on under the direction of the Spiritual Governors of the Church, who were Bishops as truly and Apostolically constituted as any Bishops upon earth.

THE CHURCH.

TORONTO, SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 5, 1840.

The advocates of truth, in the present day, must not be discouraged if they encounter opposition and even meet with hostility in their honest and virtuous career: such has been their experience in every age, since its first revelation to a heedless and ungrateful world.

There was a time when, in the British isles, the truth was veiled by intervening clouds of a soul-darkening, and every knee was bowed to the idololatry which human device had set up as a rival to the uncorrupted faith; but, thank God! a brighter day has long since dawned upon our father-land, and the demon of a destroying superstition had been well-nigh banished from its shores.

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Mysterious are the ways of Providence; and for our nation's sins, no doubt, blindness in part has returned to our highly favoured people: the purity of God's revealed truth has, of late years, been regarded coldly and indifferently; and a countenance—the result, we must believe, of a judicial visitation—has been given, in high places, to religious error, and alas! to avowed infidelity in its most repulsive form, which, unless a blessed change speedily ensue, threatens the most appalling disasters to our once highly exalted and happy country.

When the blessing of God is not upon our land as it used to be, the fact is obvious, the truth cannot be concealed. The plague-spot is upon the land—the judgments of God are already breaking upon England—the vials of his wrath are ready to be poured upon our guilty country. His vengeance for our sins lingers upon our horizon, as if loath to descend upon us in the full sweep of its terrific fury.

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England has committed this mad and disastrous act. She has struck out of her policy the only vital element of her greatness and durability. She has destroyed the centre of her state system. She has rolled in the dust the standard of her Protestantism.

Protestant British hearts will beat in thrilling unison with these noble sentiments; nor shall they be chilled in their warmth by the opposition of violent foes, or by the discouragements of indolent and indifferent brothers. They must reiterate to their own consciences the important question, "What is truth?"—and when once persuaded on that vital subject, they will never forego or deny it, though the Inquisition tortures should be renewed again, and the Smithfield fires blaze as brightly as in the Marian era for their victims.

The discussions on the second day were confined, in a great degree, to a consideration of the claims of the great Church Societies,—namely, of the Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge, and of the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts, to the hearty support and co-operation of the Colonial branches of the National Establishment, and of the best means for a general and systematic concurrence in the important designs of those venerated Institutions.

There are but two opposing systems in the world. Truth—eternal, immutable truth; and error—baseless, worthless, perishable error. There is, there never was, there never will be, any middle system between the two. To try to compose a system which shall contain the elements of both in harmony, is to endeavour to weave light with darkness, the sun-beam with the thunder-cloud. You might as soon expect to wring tears of blood from the flinty rock, to extract honey from the adamant, or evoke strains of melody from the marble bust. Nothing can be more chaste than truth; nothing more simple, nothing more meritorious; the vitality of truth may be said to consist in its purity.

This position being thus happily established, the author before us goes on to express the duty of those who have, through the blessing of God, arrived at the knowledge of the truth. That they should not look idly on, when they see that truth assailed,—that it should not be with them a matter of indifference, whether it stands or falls, whether it remains firm and unadulterated or becomes contaminated by the inventions of men, the same writer thus forcibly points out:

"If, then, truth be assailed by powerful adversaries; if her strongest bulwarks are perilled, her defences threatened, her outworks already sapped or stormed; what are those men who cast in with their arms folded, and look on with contemptuous indifference, and see her noble buttresses battered to pieces, without one voice raised, one arm uplifted, to stay the wild work of devastation? Are they neutral, are they guiltless, are they harmless? Nay, are they not rather depressing the energies of the faithful; are they not damping the zeal, the ardour, and the courage, of those who are battling valiantly for the truth? Are they not rather cowards? Are they not enemies? Are they not traitors? Are they not the worst kind of enemies? Are they not the danger of our God's word as clear upon this point.

"I write to acknowledge, and gratefully to thank the Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge, for the most kind and liberal grant of books and tracts, to the value of £25, a great part of which is already distributed amongst the poor people under my charge. Many cases of destitution are doubtless brought under the Society's notice, but I think few more so than that which you have so kindly relieved. The inhabitants of ten townships, each containing 120 square miles, look to me for instruction, and earnestly desire the privilege of being enabled to worship God after the manner of their fathers. In many parts of this destitute tract of country, I have regular congregations, varying in distance from three to forty miles from my residence; and wherever I can obtain teachers, I establish Sunday Schools, of which I have now nine in operation; but, generally speaking, the people are not only very poor but also very ignorant. Teachers, therefore, are difficult to be procured.

"Yes, illustrious Reformers! ye noble martyrs of our God! your words yet live, the martyr's agonizing rage of your baffled enemies shall never obliterate your names from the brightest page of the annals of Christianity. Your illustrious deeds shall survive the wreck of nations; and the wild desolation of depopulated cities. The restless tide of time, as it buries in oblivion kings and their noble fame, empires and their brilliant rise and rapid fall, shall wait upon her rolling bosom the memory of your matchless deeds in the cause of Christ. Your thrice-hallowed memory shall be enshrined in the hearts and warm affections of myriads of posterity. When the present generation shall sleep in dust, the children and their children's children shall live to dwell upon your holy memory. Father to son shall tell the story of your victory over the powers of darkness, your triumphs over the dark night of error, your immortal achievements on behalf of imperishable souls. The lamp of Divine truth, lit at your martyr's pile, already sheds its lustre upon the brightest page of English history, it yet shoots upwards its steady flame, and through the wide circuit of succeeding ages shall light myriads of our race to the paradise of God. Ye did not die in vain. Your names are in the Lamb's book of life, and live indelibly engraved on the deathless tablets of a nation's gratitude. Noble Luther! Indomitable Huss! Well-lit! Melancthon! Bucer! Knox! Ye lived not in vain. Venerable Cranmer! Immortal Bradford! Pious and learned Ridley! Illustrious Latimer! Ye did not die in vain. The spirit by which your labours were animated still survives—it slumbers not—it moulder not in the ashes of your martyrdom. It still exists in many a British heart; and should Rome again gain power—should she once more lord it over Christian heritages, in this favoured land, she would find that the indomitable spirit of our martyrs' forefathers was not yet extinct. Should she once more unshrink her convincing arguments against heresies, she should not want victims with which to satiate her persecuting sword. The flames of Smithfield should again attest the sincerity and the purity of our faith; the rack, the dungeon, and the stake, should once more prove to the wide world that our faith would support us in death, and carry us triumphantly through the pains, the tortures, and the last dread agonies of martyrdom, to our glorious and eternal rest!"

The MIDLAND CLERICAL ASSOCIATION held their last meeting at Cobourg, according to appointment, on Wednesday and Thursday the 19th and 20th of August. Fourteen of the brethren composing the Association, were present; only one—and that from unavoidable circumstances—having been prevented from attending. The usual subjects were discussed by the Association with great earnestness and accustomed affection; the conversations on the first day being almost wholly confined to the nearly exhausted topics for practical edification furnished by the Service for the Ordination of Priests. Much was said on the irregularities in the exercise of occasional offices which the circumstances of a new country rendered pardonable, if not necessary; but of which its growing advancement and increasing population would seem to justify the gradual abolition, and a return to a more rigorous compliance with rubrical directions and the discipline of the Church. The exercises of the day were concluded with Divine Service in St. Peter's Church, at 7 P. M.; when Prayers were read by the Rev. J. Deacon, and the Lessons by the Rev. T. Fidler, and a valuable Sermon in elucidation of the 21st Article of the Church was preached by the Rev. R. V. Rogers from Acts iii. 19, 20, 21.

The discussions on the second day were confined, in a great degree, to a consideration of the claims of the great Church Societies,—namely, of the Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge, and of the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts, to the hearty support and co-operation of the Colonial branches of the National Establishment, and of the best means for a general and systematic concurrence in the important designs of those venerated Institutions.

Our readers, we are sure, will perse with great satisfaction the pleasing narrative given in another column under the signature of "Eye-Witness." The circumstances described remind us not a little, though on a more limited scale and under a different aspect, of the occurrences in India so graphically told by the Bishop of Calcutta, and transferred not long since to this Journal. It is, we trust, the scattering of the good seed which, with the Lord's blessing, is to yield an abundant harvest. The next meeting of the Association is appointed to be held at Kingston on the 20th of October next.

The lessons conveyed from the pulpit and even the private monition conveyed in the course of pastoral visitation, are liable in many cases to be forgotten; but the remembrance of both, and especially the good impression which may have been happily awakened, is likely often to be maintained by the presence of that constant though humble monitor, a sound religious tract. Such is often a persuasive counsellor, when the living teacher is unheard or disregarded. Most sincerely do we hope that the good work so well recommended in this communication, will be vigorously pursued.

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The Township of West Flamborough, and not very far distant from the romantic village of Dundas, is an extensive clearing, known by the name of the "M—e settlement." The settlers consist chiefly of European emigrants and their descendants of two generations. They were most of them originally members of the Church of England; but partly owing to the religious destitution of the neighbourhood in which they were settled, and partly to that indifference to spiritual things, to which the human heart is, alas! too prone, they appear very soon to have lost any serious impressions which they may have brought with them from their native land, and at length to have lapsed into a state bordering upon heathenism. The Bible, (if Bible there was to be found), lay dusty and unopened upon the shelf; the Lord's day was spent in listless indolence, if not in the more gross and positive violation of the fourth commandment; public worship was unknown; private prayer abandoned; the Sacraments neglected and forgotten; and their children and their children's children were growing up to man's estate without the rite of Christian baptism. O, England! are these the descendants of thy privileged, thy Christian people! How is the gold become dim! how is the most fine gold changed! Hadst thou but followed thy exiled children with maternal solicitude those distant wilds,—hadst thou provided them with the sincere milk of the Word, (and where should the infant look for nourishment but to the bosom of its mother?)—hadst thou given them the bread of life, and spread a table for their spiritual sustenance in the wilderness,—many a hungry soul would have been satisfied, as it were, with marrow and fatness; many a desponding spirit would have been cheered in its dreary passage to the tomb; many a repenting sinner would have kindled joy in the presence of the angels of God, and have awakened notes of praise and thanksgiving from the strings of their golden lyres. But we must descend from heaven to earth.

At a subsequent period, the "M—e settlement" appears to have attracted the notice of itinerating preachers, of various Dissenting persuasions, who, doubtless, with good Missionary zeal, but with more zeal perhaps than knowledge, or competency for the work, endeavoured to till the unyielding soil. Their efforts proved abortive; and it was reserved for the present zealous and indefatigable Minister of Auster and Dundas to break up the neglected ground,—to sow the good seed,—in other words, to furnish the people with the wholesome food of sound doctrine, and having preached Christ unto them, to give them admission into the Christian fold. A week-day service was commenced among them,—a congregation was gradually formed,—the zealous Missionary persevered "through evil report and good report," till it pleased the Lord to open the hearts of his hearers to attend to the things which were spoken, and to enquire, "Sir, what must we do to be saved?" Repent and be baptized every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ, for the remission of sins, was the prompt and Apostolic reply; and after having been more fully instructed in the principle of the Christian faith, and in the nature of the Baptismal covenant, these honest-hearted people expressed their delight, and testified their readiness and anxiety to receive the initiatory rite.

A day was accordingly appointed, and the neighbouring Clergymen were invited to attend and to assist in the ceremony; the large number of persons to be baptized (nearly seventy in all) rendering the service too arduous for one individual. On Monday morning, the 3d August, in the middle of the wheat-harvest, and consequently at a season when loss of time to the farmer was attended with great sacrifice, the self-denial, the members of the newly-formed congregation laid aside their worldly occupations, and with pious haste, repaired to the largest house in the settlement, which, for want of a Church, had been selected as best adapted for the performing of the interesting ceremony. A little before the hour appointed, the Reverend Mr. McMurray arrived, attended by three of his brother-clergymen. The house was already thronged, and yet men, women, and children could be seen in every direction wending their way in holiday attire towards the place of sacred rendezvous. The day was delightfully propitious; a Sabbath stillness reigned around,—the cattle, free from toil, reclined beneath the pasture-shade,—the newly formed cocks of golden grain, ranged at regular intervals, lay smiling in the sun,—and the chirp of the grasshopper, or the more musical and lengthened note of the locust, were the only sounds that fell upon the ear.

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Strong in the Lord of Hosts, And in His mighty power, Who in the strength of Jesus trusts Is more than conqueror. Stand then in His great might, With all His strength endowed, And take ye up ye for the fight, The panoply of God. That having all things done, And all your conflicts past, Ye may behold your victory won, And stand complete at last.

The Rev. Mr. Geddes then proceeded, with much feeling and solemnity, to read the impressive service of our Church for "the baptism of such as are of riper years." One by one, the elder candidates received the holy rite by affusion, and were signed with the sign of the cross. The feelings that were at work within were easily discernible, even in the hardy lineaments of the men; while the eyes of the female candidates were bathed in tears, and freer vent was given to their agitated feelings. The baptism of the adults over, they retired, and the parents were requested to bring forward their infants. In the interval, the following beautiful and appropriate Hymn was sung:

The gentle Saviour calls Our children to His breast; He folds them in His gracious arms, Himself declares their best. "Let them approach," He cries, "Nor seem their humble claim; The heirs of heaven are such as these, For such as these I came." Gladly we bring them, Lord, Devoting them to thee; Imparting to us what we prize, Thy love, our offspring be.

The lambs of the flock were then received and blessed by the Rev. Mr. McMurray; the joyful parents presenting them with eager emulation, and seeking from the man of God the same precious boon which had so recently been imparted to themselves. Nearly fifty infants, and children under twelve years of age, were admitted into the congregation of Christ's flock, and their names registered in the Parish Record. God grant that at the last great day they may be found written also "in the Book of Life."

Before the congregation dispersed, the faithful and affectionate Pastor took each of his newly-baptized converts by the hand, and addressed to each, individually, a brief but fervent and emphatic exhortation, reminding them of the new relation they now sustained, and expressing an ardent hope that they might have grace to adorn the holy profession they had that day made, with corresponding holiness of life. In reply to the sneer of those who, even in high places, have stated that the ministrations of the Church of England are not adapted to the inhabitants of this province, I might point to the Township of West Flamborough, as a proof that the Church of England be but faithfully exhibiting in her Apostolic Ministry, zealous and laborious Missionaries, and dissent, with its thousand shades and variations of error, shall vanish before her as noxious vapours before the genial sun. The day was fast declining before the services were finished. The four Clergymen then took their leave, and as they drove from the house, amidst the hearty salutations of the honest yeomanry and their families, I could not regret indulging in pleasing reflections on the interesting nature of the sacred profession. Happy they, thought I to myself, who, influenced by zeal for the glory of God and love for the souls of men, thus devote themselves to the work of the ministry. For "they that be wise shall shine as the brightness of the firmament, and they that turn many to righteousness as the stars for ever and ever."

AN EYE-WITNESS. August 17, 1840. TORONTO CHURCH OF ENGLAND TRACT SOCIETY. It may not be generally known or understood, that a Society in connexion with the Church of England, was established in this City during the past winter, under the patronage of the Lord Bishop, the primary object of which is "to loan and circulate RELIGIOUS TRACTS among the poor and destitute inhabitants of this City of Toronto." The Society has now been in active operation for about the space of six months—Tracts are distributed in various sections of the City, by a number of disinterested individuals who have kindly volunteered their services in promoting this good work;—and there is every reason to hope that their labour has not been altogether in vain. Indeed many instances of the good which has been already effected by these humble messengers of mercy, have come under the notice of the Society, and experience has shown that the little Tracts have, by the Divine blessing, been a powerful means of stemming the corruptions of Popery on the one hand, and of curbing the proud spirit of licentiousness and infidelity on the other. The Committee, while making this gratifying announcement to the public, and particularly to the congregation of St. James', have, at the same time, to express their regret that the number of distributors is by no means commensurate with the work to be performed; and they earnestly appeal to the Ladies, who have ever been prominent in every pious work of labour and love, and earnestly and respectfully solicit them to step forward as distributors of Religious Tracts, and thus by their influence and piety, become instrumental in diffusing the light of Christian truth among their poorer neighbours. We should never forget the great amount of good, which, in this way, is effected in Great Britain, chiefly through the instrumentality of pious females, who, by works of piety and charity, ameliorate the condition of the suffering poor. Let us then, while we look up to the larger number of our fathers with reverence and respect, imitate the virtues of her sons and daughters, remembering that one distinguishing mark of "pure and undefiled religion is, to visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction."

Persons desirous of becoming distributors, will please leave their names at the Depository, at Mr. Rowless's, King-street, where the Subscription List now remains for subscriptions and donations; and where the religious public will always find a supply of Church of England Tracts on sale. Toronto, August 21, 1840.

CHURCH RATES.—One of those disgraceful scenes which have of late so frequently taken place in different parts of the country, occurred in our town Thursday, July 16th, and gave rise to many, very many, degrading, immoral, and blasphemous remarks within the porch of our parish church. The Vestry, on Thursday, it was proposed that a rate of one halfpenny should be granted, in order to defray the necessary expenses that might be incurred in repairing the parish church, &c. This moderate proposition did not suit the combined phalanx of dissenters; they, therefore, opposed the motion, and, as a matter of course, carried it, there being no more than six real friends of the church assembled. Mr. Hatch, the parish churchwarden, immediately demanded a poll, which being acceded to, commenced on Thursday and Friday 7 o'clock, and on Saturday morning finally at 12 o'clock. The Vestry went on satisfactorily to both parties until the last two hours, when every trick that could be brought to bear was practised by the opponents of the rate. Roman Catholics, Dissenters (so called), Chartists, Radicals, Whigs, Unitarians, Socinians, and, lastly, the Socialists who came to their help, were found canvassing the town, falsely representing that "a rate of one shilling was about to be imposed, and if not overruled it would happen twice a year." This trickery not succeeding, a Radical of church-rate notoriety objected to the poll closing at 12 o'clock, and persisted in recording a protest to that effect. We have, however, happy to say that the poll did close at 12, and with a majority of 219 in favour of the rate.—Cheltenham Chronicle.

A signal victory was obtained in the parish of Hackney on the question of church rates. The rate was opposed in the vestry at great length by the radical party, seven of whom inflicted their tiresome speeches upon the meeting, in the hope of tiring out the church party, but in vain. The Rev. T. O. Goodchild (the rector) put the question to a vote, and the rate was carried on a show of hands by nearly 2 to 1. The radicals demanded a poll, which lasted three days, and gave the following result. For the rate, 650; for a voluntary subscription, 150; majority for the rate, 500! Thus the anti-church-rate party did not amount to one-fourth of their opponents. We regret to state that a member of the church of England, Mr. Hensley, recorded his vote against the rate. On Monday, Dudley was distinguished by one of those gratifying scenes which will long dwell in the memory of its inhabitants, and which, under the blessing of Divine Providence, cannot fail to be productive of the most beneficial effects in improving the moral and religious condition of a large proportion of its poorer residents. On that day two new churches, reared chiefly through the active exertions of the Vicar, and warmly aided by the liberality of the principal inhabitants of the town and neighbourhood, were consecrated by the vicar, the Lord Bishop of Worcester. The edifices, which are respectively situated on the Wolverhampton road, near

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