

THE CHRISTIAN MIRROR.

MONTREAL, THURSDAY, JUNE 13, 1844.

LOVE OF THE MARVELLOUS.

THE Creator of the world has so constituted man, as to render him capable of *knowing, loving, and serving*, his Maker. In order to this, he has endowed him with certain powers of mind, very different from those which have relation exclusively to the visible and tangible creation—powers by which he is enabled to behold things “that are not seen,” and to realize “the substance of things hoped for.”

Prominent among this class of mental endowments, is the love of that which is wonderful—the desire to apprehend things that are superhuman, supernatural, and beyond the every day concerns of life. This power, rightly exercised, and divinely directed, gives vigour to faith—indeed, it may be said to be one of its constituents. By it, the mind may delight in the contemplation of a spiritual and invisible world, and acquiesce in the truth of those stupendous miracles and events recorded in the Book of books.

Notwithstanding the value of this important power or faculty, it is liable to great abuse. Witness its effects in the religious rites and ceremonies of the various heathen nations, ancient and modern. It was it that gave popularity to the oracles of antiquity—that made Mars Hill a place of resort by the Athenians, for hearing and seeing new things—and that now sustains Buddhism and Brahminism in India, Mahomedanism in the East, and Popery throughout Christendom.

A love of the marvellous is frequently associated with very limited reasoning faculties. In proof of this, we need only mention the case of Joe Smith, the Mormon, and his misguided followers, and the story of the Book of Mormon, said to have been written by a Jew belonging to one of the ten tribes of Israel, after they had migrated to America from the Holy Land, up through Asia to Kamschatka, across Bherhing's straits, into the land we now occupy; and which is said to have been found hid in the earth after it had lain there for centuries. Marvellousness reasons not—and when not kept within its legitimate bounds by the intellectual faculties, directed by Divine influence, leads to the most injurious and fatal results.

The influence of this faculty, too, is visible in ordinary life. It gives a peculiar bias to the course of reading which a student may adopt—the class of books an individual may wish to read. The kind of instruction a teacher in a Sunday school may impart to his class, may, for instance, be more curious and wonderful than useful. The Minister of the Gospel, even, from his own love of the marvellous, may possibly fall into the same error.

We have been led to these remarks from a consideration of the obvious tendency of the age to depart from, or to attempt to improve upon the good old ways our fathers walked in—one great cause of which, we think, is an inordinate LOVE OF THE MARVELLOUS.

PROTESTANTISM.—This is a word, the original import and tendency of which is too generally overlooked by those bearing its name. It is merely understood in contradistinction from, and as opposed to, that species of faith known by the term Roman Catholicism, or Popery. A moment's consideration, however, will convince any mind that the word embraces a more extensive mean-

ing than this. It is a term of peculiar force, implying not only objection to and dissent from, but a determination to oppose the spread and prevent the injurious effects of, every species of error. The following remarks on this subject are well worthy of careful perusal. They were delivered before the Operative Protestant Association of Liverpool, on the 5th of March last, by the Rev. H. McNEILE:—

“There was a Protestantism which did not reach the heart in its theory, and, therefore, did not reach the life in its practice. There was a Protestantism which did not alter the temper—which did not restrain the tongue—which did not guide the affections and desires, in the life of the brethren, to do them good during life. There was a species of Protestantism which, he grieved to say, had done their true cause much harm. What he desired was, to see Christianity at the root, and the protest against error maintained, not for its own sake, but for the sake of that precious root which was to be preserved. The object they had in view was to deepen and to give solidity to the Protestantism of their neighbourhood. The way now to do good was for every man, in his place, to give sound instruction; because, to protest against error, without having direct instruction in truth, would never satisfy thinking men. Every man in his place, then—every master in his family—every young man amongst his companions, his brothers and sisters—every clergyman in his church, should endeavour now to convey, both by precept and example, a true, sound, scriptural instruction, which was the only safeguard against Popery. Popery could win its way, directly or indirectly, against anything and everything except scriptural truth. Armies would not keep it out; and what the armies of paganism failed to do, the Bible, in the hand of Luther, did not fail to do. Moreover, he would tell them another thing—a secret, and he would not ask them to keep it either; that the public mind, commonly so called, now in England, had got into such a diseased state that it recoiled from truth. They had been told that Popery was increased by evangelical preaching—that exposing the flagrant errors of Popery caused a reaction in its favour.

The fact was, the public mind was in that diseased state, that it recoiled from anything positive; a positive statement of truth made it rather inclined to the error; and a doubtful statement that asserted nothing and questioned everything—that was charity, that was love, that was Christianity, now-a-days in England. What, then, were they to do? They wanted not to make men in love with Popery, and yet if they spoke of it as the Reformers did, as the Homilies of the Church did, immediately there was a recoil in its favour. Should they praise it, in order that people might see it black?—They could not do that for truth's sake; neither could they set it up as white, for that would condemn their own consciences. What, then, were they to do? They were all to teach Christianity, not merely to protest against error, but to teach the truth; for there was nothing Popery feared so much as people reading the Bible in their own tongue.”

TO THE EDITOR OF THE CHRISTIAN MIRROR.

DEAR SIR.—While I was stationed in the island of Zante, in the Mediterranean, on the 19th of December, 1820, the Greeks brought down from Mount Squeboo the coffin of St. Beniccio, as they term him. He was formerly a priest, and has been dead more than 300 years. His mortal remains are embalmed in a gold coffin, which was deposited in a small chapel about a mile out of the town of Zante. On the morning of the 20th, at four o'clock, the island was visited by one of the severest shocks of an earthquake that had ever been felt; and between nine and ten o'clock, when the procession was moving in all the pomp of solemn mockery along the street, a tremendous shower of rain descended on their devoted heads for the space of twenty minutes; then came another shock, which was followed by an awful shower of hail, truly terrific. At first the hail-stones

were about an inch in diameter, but speedily increased to four inches, and came rushing down with such violence as to cause the tiles on the houses to fly into splinters. To my own knowledge, one man was struck by a hailstone on the brain, and immediately dropped down dead; a large number were severely wounded, from thirty-five to forty houses were levelled with the ground by the shaking of the earth, and about thirty-six persons were buried in the ruins. Some of the hailstones, which I saw weighed by a doctor, weighed from six to seven and a half ounces. A Scotchman, with whom I was acquainted, informed me, that, three years before, when the procession was coming along the street, in the same form as we had now seen it, there came a shower of sand and fire, which dispersed them.

When I remember the many rainy days on which the Procession has walked since I came to Canada, I am led to believe that the time is not far distant, when God will not reprove idolatry in such a mild manner, but when he will make known the thunder of his power.

May God, in the abundance of his mercy, grant them repentance, for the sake of Jesus Christ.

AN HUMBLE BELIEVER IN CHRIST,
St. Johns, June 9, 1844.

ENGLISH WESLEYAN MISSIONARY SOCIETY.

THE Annual Meeting of the English Wesleyan Missionary Society was held in Exeter Hall, on the 29th of April, and was largely attended. The Right Hon. Sir George Rose presided, and his opening address was followed by others from Ministers and gentlemen of various churches. The leading speakers were the Rev. Dr. Wilson and the Rev. James Hamilton, of the Free Scotch Church; the Rev. Thomas Waugh, from Ireland; the Rev. Dr. Newton; the Rev. Jonathan Crowther, from Madras; and the Rev. Robert Young, just returned from his visit to the West Indies. From the Report we collect an item or two. The Society has 274 Stations, 387 Missionaries and Assistants. Other Paid Agents 1640. Church Members 101,137; Printing Establishments 7. Of the Stations generally a favourable account is given, especially of those not long formed. We extract the following particulars relating to finances:—

“The Rev. Dr. BUNTING then called attention to the Financial Statement, reminding the meeting, at the outset, that while the review of the Missions themselves included the most recent intelligence, the account of Receipts and Disbursements respected only the current year ending in December last. That account was as follows:—
The Gross Income received from all the usual and regular sources in 1843, amounted to . . . £99,280 11 7
Being a net Increase, as compared with 1842, of £1,026 18s. 11d.
To which must be added the Surplus of Income over Expenditure in 1842, viz: . . . 523 13 6

Making together the sum of . . . £99,804 5 1

But the Gross Expenditure of 1843 had been . . . £112,908 5 2
Being an Increase, as compared with 1842, of £12,244 11s. 5d.
Leaving an Actual Deficiency, as far as all ordinary Resources, belonging to that year, having been available, of . . . £13,104 0 1

The committee then proceeded to offer some explanatory observations, which were classified under the several heads of *Income, Expenditure, and Deficiency*.”

The observations convey the intelligence that, besides the above total amount of income, there has been received in special subscriptions, donations for liquidating the old debt, and others for injured chapels, what makes the full receipts of the Society, to near the time of the meeting, £110,620. The entire Anniversary seems to have been unusually gratifying.—*Chr. Guardian*.