

Contributors and Correspondents

For the Presbyterian. ORIENTAL OCCUPATIONS.—THE SHEPHERD

BY REV. JOHN DUNBAR, DUNBARTON.

While the early record of our race is exceedingly brief, yet some of its statements, short though they be, are exceedingly significant. This is verified by the simple fact, that as the two first-born of our race grew up it was neither in ignorant idleness nor in similar occupations. Each one, it may be, either by his father's wish or his own inclination, or both, adopted a distinct profession, for "Abel was a keeper of sheep, but Cain was a tiller of the ground."

These important facts show that the first of our race were not the rude savages which many suppose, and not a few assert, seeing that division of labor and diversity of pursuit are ever constituent elements of advanced civilization; whereas, in man the savage, each one follows equally all the pursuits which collectively constitute his manner of life and mode of existence. While conjecture has it that Cain and Abel had each a twin sister, and that the twin of Cain became the wife of Abel, and the twin of Abel the wife of Cain, we can afford to humor the fancy, and hopefully conclude that these two first-born of men, with their help-meets, would successfully put forth all their inventive energy and bodily vigour in their respective pursuits. Adam, too, while honoured to name the animals, doubtless knew not a little of their nature as well, and this knowledge imparted to Abel must have been of very great importance to him as "a keeper of sheep."

Many stirring adventures with wild beasts, such as those recounted by David, occur, and the shepherd has to put his life in his hand to defend his flock, and in instances are not rare in which he has bravely, yet cheerfully, given his life in deadly conflict with human plunderers or animal depredators for their protection, and a recent traveller tells of a fine faithful fellow who instead of fleeing, actually fought three Bedawin robbers until he was hoked to pieces and died among the sheep he was so nobly defending. From the fact of the Eastern shepherd being so much with his sheep, and away from the abodes and associations of men, as well as their continual movings, there grows up between him and them, not only a mutual knowledge, but also a mutual attachment. The beautifully graphic and singularly affecting outline, which our Lord gave of shepherd life in His day, is no less a picture of the present than of the past. To the sheep were given names, and they soon learned alike to know their own names as well as the voice of their keeper. Now, as then, the shepherd "callesth his own sheep by name and he goeth before them and the sheep follow him for they know his voice."

A recent traveller passing by a flock of sheep, asked the shepherd to call one of the sheep, and on doing so it immediately left its pasturage and its companions, and came running to the shepherd with many signs of manifest satisfaction, but if a stranger calls they instantly lift their heads, prick up their ears, and open their eyes wide in alarm, and if the call is repeated they "will flee from him, for they know not the voice of strangers."

resembles candied honey, but in summer it is mere oil. The butter, however, which Jael offered to Sisera, and with Job washed his steps, was not butter but rather sour milk or butter milk. Butter was eaten by them not on the bread as with us, but with the bread, or to the bread. It is best when it is new and comparatively soft, and in this state large quantities are consumed. In the East the sheep are said to bring forth their young twice in the year, and not unfrequently bear twins. It is also said that they are shorn twice in the year. The time of sheep-shearing was one of great bustle and festivity. The flock was collected in an uncovered enclosure, called the fold, and here they were caught as they were needed, and their feet tied together preparatory to being floored, and the whole season which lasted for days together was one of unwonted bustling activity, healthful hilarity, and festive enjoyment.

Few figures, if any, more graphically outline, in sentiment and sympathy the intimate relationship of Jesus and his people, than does the picture parable of the shepherd and his sheep. In it we see the simple and the beautiful, the tender and the touching, harmoniously blended and embodied in one. There we see the lost and the found, the bountiful provision and the benevolent protection. There we see a life of unwearied anxiety and activity, and a death of unspeakable agony and ignominy. Nothing else could either show the power or serve the purpose of His love, and nothing less could either express its warmth, or exhibit its worth, all showing Him not only mighty to love, but "mighty to save."

EXPENSES OF DELEGATES TO GENERAL ASSEMBLY.

MR. EDITOR.—Will you permit me to ask through the medium of your paper, why it happens that while other Presbyteries are making provision for defraying the travelling expenses of their delegates to the ensuing meeting of the General Assembly at Halifax, the Toronto Presbytery is making no move in the matter.

In our civil affairs the duty of paying the services of those we elect to represent our interests in parliament, and those who are summoned from our midst to serve on juries, is fully recognized and acted upon, and is it less imperative as a duty on the Church, to assist at least, in paying the travelling expenses of those she sends to represent her interests, and transact business in her Courts?

Our ministers are not generally overpaid, and among our elders are men in ordinary circumstances, and therefore, it is thought, no reason can be shown why the whole burden of the expense should fall on the delegates, or why, as it is the business of the whole Church, that has to be transacted, the whole should not be called upon to aid in meeting the expenses. Yours truly, ENQUIRY.

OUR SABBATH SCHOOLS.

MR. EDITOR.—A report of the state of our Sabbath schools will no doubt be handed in to the General Assembly of our Church, soon to meet. For one I was a little disappointed with that of last year; inasmuch as I believe it to have been drawn up without statistics having been obtained. It was the first report of the United Church, and many are desirous of finding out facts and figures as fully as possible in this important department of our work.

The few facts that we get in other reports are quite inadequate to giving us a view of the working of our schools.

There is one thing in particular I would like to know: How many of our schools are engaged in distinctly missionary work? That is only one among many other things that it is desirable we should have.

Improvements are needed in many quarters, and no doubt a full report founded on statistics would give a stimulus in the right direction. MINISTER. April 24th 1877.

THE Missionary churches in Japan, belonging to the various Presbyterian denominations have decided upon a union.

DR. JESSUP, of Beirut, writes that the sea has recently thrown up a whale 60 feet long near Tyre, at about the same spot where the whale threw up Jonah 2,700 years ago.

For the Presbyterian. THE BLIND AND THE DEAF.

THE BLIND:

I sing to thee who hast the power of sight; Whose eye is dimmed not by a pall of night. Who seest the world so wondrous and so fair, And all those orbs beyond the realms of air. I sing of thee to whom this boon so great, By some mysterious way of life and fate Is sealed, unknown, and never enjoyed at all: Who dost, in hope, for future mercy call. Whose soul is shrouded thus from outward light, Dost thou often yearn to have the power of sight, Dost thou yearn to see the form whose voice thou hearest, And see that sun, which guides the rolling years Go, and thou, thou, who art with vision blest; Go, comfort, cheer, and soothe the troubled breast, And pray that they to whom no sight is given, May have their souls illum'd with light from heaven.

THE DEAF.

I sing to thee, who hast the power to hear; Whose soul is of debarred from voice dear; Who hearest sounds that do the mind inspire, The tempest's shriek, the sweet resounding lyre.

I sing of thee in whom the thunder's roll Inspireth neither dread nor awe of soul; Around whom doth a world of silence rest, Although the lightning gleam above the plain.

Who sees the birds, that sit among the trees; Who sees the waves and feels the cooling breeze; And yet to him these all in silence go: O how he seeks the time, 'twill not be so!

O thou who art not of this boon bereft Shouldst not see that these enjoy the blessings left, And do thou tell them that the time will be, If good, when they shall hear as well as see. G. S.

For the Presbyterian. COMMUNION OF SAINTS.

We all believe in this doctrine. It consists partly, as the Confession of Faith has it, "in performing such other spiritual services as tend to their mutual edification." Of this communion of saints "in each other's gifts and graces," the Confession moreover says: "which communion, as God offereth opportunity, is to be extended unto all those who in every place call upon the name of the Lord Jesus."

We call special attention to the words—"as God offereth opportunity"—for in this regard we have much given up, and therefore much for which to account.

Ours is an age abounding in inventions. Telegraphy and steam have brought us into a large place. They have given mind and body a sort of omnipresent power, compared with former times. Thought is wafted over the earth in a few hours, for multitudes in most distant regions to receive and ponder over. Men can go far and wide now-a-days, to enforce by personal presence, their ideas upon their fellow-men. And one hesitates to speculate upon the marvels in this direction which remain to be accomplished by telephony. Verily for good or evil, men are becoming in this respect rulers over many things.

One important result attending this species of power is the purifying of men's thoughts and purposes.

When their means of intercommunication with each other were slender, sectional jealousies and bigotries, as a consequence, marked their relations to each other. Having seen but little they wanted but little, and became by custom and exclusion so attached to it that they were in danger of doing other than wanting "that little long." They inclined to gauge the eternal sphere by their local measurements. As their inter-communication with each other increased, their thoughts became larger and truer. Enrichment in the quality and quantity of our acquisitions, material and mental, is the result of interchange, alike of commodities or ideas. We are physically benefited by the North giving us its furs, and the South its fruits. So thought contributed from various quarters enriches our spiritual treasury, not only in quantity, but peculiarly so in quality.

Belief ought now to be strengthened in the existence of "the Holy Catholic Church," on account of the enlarged means of inter-communication put providentially within our reach in our day. Believers can now carry out more fully into action their belief in the doctrine of the communion of saints, one part of which is rendering "services which tend to mutual edification."

One way in which such service may be rendered regularly and therefore effectively is through the religious press.

It is no mean privilege for the Church to have a weekly interchange of thought presented to the minds of all its members. Think what a boon it is to have brother A, delivering himself upon some important topic one week, and brother B, next week in kindly vein correcting or supplementing the deliverances of the previous week. In this manner may we not in some measure have, as a church, weekly religious conferences, ministers' meetings, scientific and ecclesiastical discussions, etc., etc.

A religious paper by turning, in a proper manner, the mind of the Church to the same subjects of thought and endeavor, cannot but greatly promote and maintain unity of interest and aim in the Church.

A paper is a vent through which are kept alive the fires of healthful thought, and feeling, and purpose. Undue strictness in the admission of matters to its columns, like stopping up the chimney, will smother smoke, and might result in practically putting out the fire. But then it must be re-

membered that there is such an evil as too wide a vent. Worse than all is throwing red pepper on the fire. Let our denominational organ, when it comes to us weak by week, come not freighted with acrid thoughts, or stinging sarcasms, or uncharitable innuendo, or jealous depreciation. These are essentially "a Saviour of death unto death." They benefit no one and hurt many, and none so much so, as the one from whom they issue.

By all means let the truth be spoken, but let it be ever in love. Let us follow after the things wherewith one may edify another. "Knowledge puffeth up, charity edifieth." OLIO.

OBITUARY.

The late Mrs. Donald O. Brown, of Arthur, who died suddenly on the 4th inst., was born in the year 1838 in the township of West Gwillimbury, and was at the time of her death in her thirty-ninth year. Though cut off at a comparatively early age, she has left a large family and a numerous circle of friends to lament the loss of an affectionate parent, and a remarkably kind, constant and sincere friend. Her residence was conveniently situated on the Owen Sound Road, and many were the weary strangers that enjoyed her hospitality, for she could turn no one away without trying all in her power to make him comfortable; indeed, so noted was she for entertaining strangers that her home has been frequently called the "Strangers' home." She was brought up as a Presbyterian, and continued until her death a consistent, liberal and exemplary member of her church. Many ministers of the Gospel, who, when the modes of traveling were not so numerous or convenient as at present, had occasion to call on her, experienced the cheering influence of her conversation, and her many acts of kindness; for waiting on such passengers was always to her a source of particular pleasure. Her hospitality was equalled by her charity, and the liberality with which she, in proportion to her means, contributed to all religious and educational schemes. The funeral was a fitting tribute to the memory of one so widely and favorably known, and it was admitted by all to be the largest concourse of people ever seen on such an occasion in this locality. The bereaved husband and family have the sympathy of the community.—Osm. Arthur, March 28, 1877.

Random Readings.

Nothing purifies the conscience but the blood of Christ, and everything that denies it is high treason against the King of Kings.

When thy last hour is come, thou wilt begin to have a far different opinion of thy whole life that is past, and be exceedingly sorry that thou hast been so careless and remiss.

Commit yourself to Him; cast your care upon Him, and He will care for you. Let Christ be your scope and mark to aim at; let Him be your pattern to work by; let Him be your example to follow; give Him, as your heart, so your hand—as your mind, so your tongue—as your faith, so your feet; and let His Word be your candle to go before you. He that gathereth not with Christ scattereth abroad.—Bradford.

"MADE in the likeness of men" (Phil. ii. 7). Christ's incarnation is Israel's consolation; for all equal comfort stands in happiness, all happiness in fellowship with God, and all fellowship with God is through Christ; who, for this cause, being very God, became very man, that He might reconcile God to man and man to God; He became little that we might be great; the Son of man, that we might be the sons of God.—Boys.

"To-day's duty is no discharge for tomorrow: every day has its own pre-emptory demand upon us, not only for repetition but advancement. It is a saying of St. Basil, that the soul would starve, as well as the body, without a continual renewal of its proper food; and St. Paul's motto in the midst of such a course of labor and activity as would quite have sunk the spirits of another man was, 'Forward.'—Adam.

The largest and clearest print can never assist our sight as long as a covering remains before our eyes. The best commentary cannot enlighten the mind until the veil is taken away from the heart. O how needful then is the prayer, Unveil—open Thou mine eyes, that I may behold the wondrous things that are in the law! Let the veil be taken away from the law that I may understand it, and from my heart that I may receive it."—Rev. O. Bridges.

OUR HOME IS NOT HERE.—"Seek ye first the kingdom of God, and His righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you," (Matt. vi. 33). There is not one amongst us who does not need to be perpetually reminded, amidst the toils, or the distresses, or the anxieties, or the pleasures of this life, that he also is but "a stranger and a pilgrim upon earth." Not one who does not perpetually need to lift up that humble prayer, "Lord, increase our faith." Not one, therefore, who has not ample cause to receive and to use with devout gratitude all those gracious means with which our heavenly Father has blessed us, in order to strengthen our conviction of his faithfulness, and to invigorate our hope and trust; until our pilgrimage be past, our race run, and we at length, through the precious blood of Christ, receive among them that are called, "the promise of an eternal inheritance."—E. Howland.