

Natural utterance and solely can  
Speak the unbounded beauty of the world  
And the primordial concords of pure mind."

And as the plans of God have been unfolded and predictions have become facts in the course of the world's history, the religious spirit has seen more and more to stir its sentiment and call forth its song. It is natural for the Christian emotions to embody themselves in verse: hence praise is part of Christian worship. Pliny in his letter to Trajan in the second century, mentions this as one of the peculiarities known to him of those people he was persecuting. Thus was it early a distinctive feature of Christianity. And no doubt this will be very signally a feature of a future Christianity. But Christian poetry has not confined itself to the disclosure of Christianity but it describes its pervasion of the human spirit. In confirmation of this we may point to the gorgeous epic of Milton, in which are combined the scenery of heaven, earth, and hell, treasures of classic lore, bursts of devotion and the utmost fertility of lofty imagery; the Christian wit and pious sense of Cowper, the dark cloudy terrors of Young, soured with life and bitter with disappointment, the pleasing strains of Montgomery; the "Course of Time" penned by a hand already clammy with the touch of death; the feeling thoughts of Beattie and last though we think not least, the well kept up sentiment, the quaint and pious chant of George Herbert, Pastor of Bemerton.

[To be concluded]

### Lay Associations.

We beg leave to direct the attention of our readers to the Report and Proceedings at the Annual Meeting of the Lay Association of Montreal, which we have extracted at length from the pages of the Presbyterian. This and other kindred Institutions in the Mother Country and in the Colonies, owe their origin in a great measure to the circumstances of the times and the exigencies of the church, and furnish abundant evidence of the over-ruling providence of God, in bringing good out of evil and order out of apparent confusion. At a time when the Church in these Colonies was in a low condition, when her congregations were lamentably distracted, and her ministers rudely and cruelly assailed as renegades, apostates, God-dishonouring soul-ruining hirelings, and abundance of other abusive epithets, it was not to be expected that the true and steadfast friends of the church would look on with cold indifference and feeble apathy, and see the congregations with which they had been long connected torn to pieces, and the characters of those ministers under whom they had derived much spiritual instruction, and for whom they cherished the highest respect and esteem wantonly traduced, and their usefulness impaired and destroyed. With a decision and purity worthy of the highest commendation, and with a generosity and liberality suited to the occasion, many of them prompt-

ly and voluntarily come forward, and enrolled their names as members of these Lay Associations, formed for the express purpose of supporting and defending the church against her assailants, not only devoting their time and their talents, but also contributing of their substance to a cause which was dear to their hearts, manifesting their zeal and activity amidst careless and selfish spectators, avowing the steadfastness of their attachment among their wavering brethren, publishing and circulating numerous pamphlets and tracts, in vindication of the church and in support of their principles corresponding with friends in all parts of the country and enlisting all within the sphere of their influence in active co-operation with themselves.

In looking back upon those troublous times, we are ready to acknowledge with unfeigned gratitude to the giver of all good, the incalculable services which were rendered to the Church by other as well as our own Lay Association, in the hour of need; and to its opportune and efficient aid at the very moment when its assistance was most required, we owe, under God, the present prosperous condition, we might almost say, the very existence of the Church in this colony. Formed at a time when all the church courts were in abeyance, and when nearly all her ministers had either separated from her communion, or left the province, established in the capital of the colony, under most energetic and efficient office-bearers, the influence of the Nova Scotia Lay Association began to be instantly felt in the remotest parts of the country; and it soon constituted a strong and powerful bond of union between the mother church and the colony, and between Halifax and the numerous adhering congregations in the interior, which had been literally left as sheep without their shepherds. The influence and utility of this and similar excellent institutions in the mother country, and in the colonies have been satisfactorily and practically demonstrated beyond the possibility of doubt or contradiction; they have been cheerfully and gratefully acknowledged by all the deputations from the parent church which have visited these provinces; they have inspired hope and confidence into not a few tried and desponding congregations, and have infused joy and gladness into many a disconsolate heart.

Now although the assistance of these Associations is not so much required, as when they were originally formed, viewed in the light of mere defence institutions, yet they are still well fitted to become, and may possess great influence as auxiliary and missionary institutions, for circulating useful intelligence, encouraging educational efforts, and drawing forth the liberal contributions of the members of the church, and hence we find that all the Lay Associations which sprung up in aid of our beloved church in her time of need, are still in existence, and most of them in active and vigorous operation. The Lay Association

of the Church of Scotland is one of the largest contributors to all her benevolent and missionary funds; it includes among its supporters a number of the highest noblemen and wealthy proprietors, as well as the successful merchants and enterprising tradesmen of Scotland. It is now in the ninth or tenth year of its existence, and contributed last year the magnificent sum of £2,357 11s. 9d. as a free donation to the different schemes of the parent church.

From the report of the Montreal Lay Association, now before us, we learn that it is entering on the tenth year of its labours. It has at present three Students of Divinity at Queen's College, receiving aid from its funds. Beside its Bursary it has also a Publication Fund for the support of "The Presbyterian," which owes its existence to, and has hitherto been conducted by a committee of the Lay Association. It has on various occasions afforded relief to poor congregations in Canada, and it suggests with much propriety and good feeling, whether it may not be advisable to devise some means of aiding the more recently organized congregations, whose pastors must feel their own future maintenance so seriously affected by the passage of the secularization Act.

Our own Lay Association has still a wide field of usefulness lying open before it. Indeed, our work in the colony considered as an efficient Christian Church, can scarcely be said to be begun, notwithstanding the self-denying labours of our early missionaries. We have now, it is true, through the goodness of providence, and the co-operation of sincere friends, an able and zealous publication committee, to whom we are indebted for the establishment and support of our monthly periodical. But we are still in want of a Home Mission Fund, to assist us in proclaiming the glad tidings of the glorious gospel, throughout the length and breadth of our land, and no provision has been made for defraying the unavoidable expenses necessarily incurred in attending our Synodical meetings. Nothing has as yet been done on a general or systematic plan, either for the encouragement of religious elementary, or collegiate education. We must soon be prepared to face these, and a number of other important questions, and we shall not be required to do so unassisted. For we verily believe that if we bring the circumstances and necessities of the church fully and fairly before the community, it will not be difficult to enlist the sympathies, and draw forth the spontaneous and liberal contributions of numerous friends in the Capital, and in all parts, of the country in behalf of her interests and undertakings.

### Presentation.

A deputation of the Ladies connected with the Rev. John Sprott's congregation residing in Sheet Harbour, lately waited