

cencies of a christian community. Have we not heard the stillness of the Sabbath morn broken by the noise of the drunkard returning from his revel? Is not our ear frequently stunned with the stroke of the axe—as if the six days allowed by God were not sufficient for human toil? Do we not sometimes witness an ostentatious recreation on the evening of the solemn day which should be consecrated to the concerns of immortality? These are proofs too painfully conclusive of a prevalent indifference to the things of God, and should press upon our souls feelings of humiliation, lest on account of them He should visit us with righteous indignation.

The criminality and danger of this religious indifference is of a magnitude sufficiently appalling when viewed even in its immediate effects upon the community; but when we contemplate its future consequences it must become an object of still greater anxiety and alarm to every christian mind. It is the natural and universal tendency of irreligion to confirm and perpetuate itself; and to inundate the country where it prevails with all that moral and political disorder which is noxious to its well-being. The prospect of such an evil in our circumstances would be dreadful, even were our Canadian population to accumulate only in the ratio of natural increase. But when in addition to this we consider that tens of thousands are yearly added to the number by emigration from the mother country, and that not a few of these are infected with the same spiritual malady that prevails among ourselves, the evil assumes a much more threatening aspect. For let us ask what is the description of people who leave their native land to seek with their families a home in this country? Is it not for the most part the poor, and the poorly educated who are borne on the tide of emigration—the very class who in their native country, least desired and profited least by its religious advantages, and who when they are removed into a new country, are most likely to cast off the restraints which kept them in some degree of order in the land of their birth—and to fall headlong into the vices of the new community into which on this side of the Atlantic they are introduced? Follow them through these vast tracks of forest into their new settlements, and do you not perceive a great likelihood that they will add to their original vices those which are peculiar to their new associates? Visit these poor emigrant families and contemplate as a christian what meets your eye. Behold a parent too ignorant, perhaps too ungodly, to afford any solid religious instruction, or any good example to his children. Behold these children, the future hope of our country, growing up in ignorance and spir-

itual destitution. There is no village school to which they can repair. Sabbath comes, but the church-going bell sounds not in the forest, and none of the Sabbath exercises are enjoyed. If at wide intervals any one penetrates to their settlement in the garb of a Christian Missionary, there may be that in the style of his address, in the modes of his worship, and in the peculiarities of his doctrine, which, when compared with what they were accustomed to, tends rather to unhinge their religious sentiments than to strengthen them; and the conflicting dogmas of their different visitors, while they gradually wear out from their minds the exclusive veneration for the creed in which they were brought up, substitute nothing else in its room. That we do not in this matter speak unadvisedly, we need only appeal to what has taken place in our town township. We find on its assessment roll for 1828,* in a population of 2,856, no fewer than 331 persons who distinctly own that they do not know to what division of the Christian family they belong, or whether indeed they assume the Christian name at all! That attachment to a particular sect and creed, which even in the absence of vital godliness answers some good ends, is entirely destroyed. This is an unavoidable consequence of permitting the youthful mind to grow up unimbued with religious principles, strange to religious discipline, left without a guide, to be tossed about in the most impressible period of life, by the storms of conflicting opinions which every wandering, unauthorised teacher as he passes along may raise in their vicinage. Similar processes of unhingement and infidelity are at this moment going on every where around us—processes which, if not checked, are pregnant with evils, the extent of which cannot by us be foreseen or estimated, to our fresh and rising country. To us calmly reflecting on these things, the impression is irresistible, that both the parent state and the provincial legislature, are very blameable for the indifference which they have hitherto manifested regarding the spiritual destitution of Canadian settlers. We do not deny that it is the duty of every Christian people who have the ability, not only to provide for their own spiritual edification, but also to do what they can to disseminate the gospel throughout the world. But surely this ability is not possessed by thousands upon thousands in this vast uncultivated territory, struggling with the hardships and penury of new settlements, and with whom years of constant toil must pass away, ere they can hope to attain any thing beyond the merest necessities of life. Meanwhile if they do not obtain foreign aid,

No religious census has been taken since that period.