

ECCLESIASTES, XII. 1.—“Remember now thy Creator in the days of thy youth.”

That there is a God existing in the unapproachable and invisible heaven, who made, created and overrules all this world; who lighted up the sun and stars; formed the mountains, and rendered fluid the rivers and seas; who varied the seasons from summer to autumn and from winter to spring; who, in short, was and is the moving principle of life and activity to all things,—is a solemn and serious truth, which, however common it may be to hear it acknowledged, is, perhaps, my young friends, much less considered than from its sovereign importance it claims to be.

For, to give you an idea of its importance, what, let me ask you, is the simple act of creation?—Behold the land and the water: look from the breast of the sea to the arch of the sky; and reflect what must be the awful nature of that glorious and powerful Being, who, out of nothing, could have called such a splendid and well-contrived world into existence! The utmost that human art can do is to change the forms and uses of things already existent: it moulds matter into things convenient or beautiful; but unless the materials already existed, the wisest and most ingenious of men could effect nothing;—and even the best effects that human sagacity can produce are clumsy imitations of some of the inferior and every day processes of nature, derived from the original impulse imparted by the creating God.

Creation indeed is so solemn and awful a thing, that it has apparently but once, in the strict sense of it, taken place in all this world,—and that was in the beginning of time, when God created the heavens and the earth. The manner in which Almighty God proceeded in calling things out of nothing—in giving reality to that which was not—in summoning all the varieties of the material world out of a vast vacuity of being,—is astonishingly mysterious, and impresses the reflecting mind with wonderful feelings of adoration and awe. And yet I doubt much whether any of you have given that patient and reverential consideration to this subject, to which its interesting and important nature well entitles it.

But when we call further to mind the innumerable varieties of animated and intelligent creatures,—from the minute and busy ant that lives amid the verdant grass to the monstrous and almost reasoning elephant, or from the wren that frolics in the zephyrs of the morning to the whale that plays his huge gambols amid mountain waves and terrific icebergs,—and then again, when we trace intelligence from the quick and clear perception of the infant, to the matured wisdom of the wan and pale sage who studies by the midnight and lonely lamp, or from the most intellectual of men to the youthful and immortal angel, or from the ministering spirits on the outskirts of heaven to the lofty archangel that approaches the more immediate presence of God;—when, my young friends, the view of this department of creation is brought before us, the feeling that naturally springs up in our minds is that of diffidence unutterable, and shame. Like those of our race who have seen heavenly inhabitants, a mighty fear comes upon us: a sense of an awful and indescribable presence shakes our inmost souls; and we tremble to think that we too exist, that we too live, where such a full and glorious and active and intellectual world of beings are beside, around, above and beneath us. And yet I doubt, whether you have heretofore carried your reflections so far as to have deliberately and deeply pondered on these things.

What must this great Creator be, when his creation is so magnificent? We are awe-struck when any man of superior virtue, or exalted in office, or venerable from hoary and experienced years, moves before us, and we never could forgive ourselves for the impudence that would make us do any thing more than blush and shrink back within ourselves at such a presence. Nor are we singular here;—for when the angelic host appeared to the honest shepherds in the fields near Bethlehem, they were seized with fear and dread from the same principle of our constitution. And by the like necessity of nature, St. John fell down to worship the ministering angel, and the idolatrous inhabitants of Lystra brought bullocks and sacrifices to offer up to the supposed deity of Paul and Barnabas. Such is the reverence with which the very existence of nobler and more gifted natures invariably inspires the breasts of all mankind. But to what length must this feeling proceed, when there is present to the heart of man the idea that there is indeed a Creator—a Being invisible, but inconceivably more potent than all the combined forces and energies of the whole universe,—a Being without body, and filling all space—a Being crowned in an immeasurable manner with every virtue and accomplishment, every perfection and lofty attribute, that human intuition can perceive, or human imagination feign, or human capacity grasp! The loftiest, noblest, most ambitious and most glorious spirit of angel or seraph that exults around the more secret recesses of heaven, is unclean and contemptible in the sight of this august Creator:—an act of simple volition in the Deity will give such their being, or blot them for ever out of the realms of existence. Indeed language fails to express, and thought labours to conceive the grandeur of this great sublime Creator. I see him every where—in heaven, earth, and the expanse of air. His most obvious works, all admirable as they are, only his lowest performances; and surprising, and still more surprising glories awaiting my observation, at every step that with hesitating foot, and erect attention I advance into the universe in which he has set me down! I see his glory in the first rays of the sun. I see him still more wonderful, when, with regular vicissitude, he interposes clouds, and the sable mantle of the night. The music of the birds—the lowing of the cattle—the loved voice of friend and brother, are but as the cries of the evening watch, pointing out him, the great Creator of all. If I look at the peopled city, or the sparsely cultivated plain, I behold there in the communities of men, in their works and operations, the grand effect of the Almighty and wise Creator's will. If I take up a production, where the human pen has traced its reasonings and ruminations in lasting characters on paper, the more sweet the har-

religion, and were ready to receive him in his journeys with affectionate welcome. His disinterestedness in all he did and the delight he enjoyed in doing acts of kindness to his Clergy will be long most gratefully remembered. In our hearts he still dwells, and well will it be for us to follow the godly purity of his character and conversation.

The subject of an annual Convocation being still in abeyance, it was deemed inexpedient to convene a general meeting of the Clergy during this summer; but for the purpose of procuring brotherly communication and a good understanding among the Brethren, the Archdeacons resolved to meet in their respective Archdeaconries, and, by means of a deputation, it was hoped that the same community of opinion and sentiment would be obtained as if all had assembled in one body.

Next season, the Lord Bishop of Montreal will, no doubt, extend his visits to this Province, for the purpose of exercising his Episcopal functions, and will, in all probability, assemble the Clergy and favour us with his opinion on the subject of a Convocation. It is matter of joyful congratulation to have, as it were, one of ourselves placed over the Church in the Canadas;—one who knows so well the privations, and difficulties, and perplexities with which the Missionary has to contend, and who has already given so many proofs of his anxious zeal to promote the influence of true religion, and whose mildness of disposition and promptness in performance of duty offer the most pleasing anticipations.

In regard to the encouragement and support of Missions, a step has been taken in accordance with the recommendation of the meeting which promises the most happy and extensive results.

The Revd. Messrs. Bettridge and Cronyn were authorized last winter, to proceed to England on this business. They were directed, however, to go by the way of Lower Canada, to consult with the Bishop of Montreal on the propriety of taking such a journey to solicit donations in behalf of the Church of the Diocese, and to procure His Lordship's countenance, and such additional authority as he might think necessary. The Bishop of Montreal received the Deputation most kindly—examined such of their documents as the shortness of the time permitted,—bidding them God speed, and promising to send letters after them to his friends in England. The Deputation was graciously received by the Archbishop of Canterbury and the heads of the Church. They have held public meetings at Cambridge, Oxford, and London, and are succeeding in procuring subscriptions for the support of the Missionaries and for the building and endowing of Churches.

Their exertions have attracted very considerable attention and the leading journal of England, perhaps of Europe, very forcibly remarks that “while the expediency of imparting Christian instruction to the Idolaters of India is universally recognised by the friends of humanity and religion, the latter can never doubt that the stated supply of divine ordinances among our own countrymen, whether at home or in the Colonies, is a matter of superior urgency and importance. We are satisfied that the retention of the Canadian Provinces depends mainly upon the retention of British feelings and habits among the Inhabitants;—the conviction which we have long entertained as to the expediency of increasing our Ecclesiastical force in that Colony has only gathered strength from the appeals and representations on the subject now submitted to the public. The case indeed appears to be one of peculiar urgency.”

The recommendation respecting the education of young men for the Ministry has not been lost sight of, and it is hoped some arrangement may be made in that behalf with the University of King's College, without becoming very burthensome to the Church. A faculty of Divinity in connexion with the Established Church may be attached or become part of that Institution, and as it is in contemplation to add a Professorship of Divinity for the benefit of the Scotch Church so soon as the University shall be in actual operation, no particular difficulty is to be apprehended.

The most alarming part of this important subject is that there are very few young men in the Colony looking forward to the Clerical profession. Parents are debarred by the great poverty of the Church, from directing the attention of their children to the sacred profession. It is nevertheless essential to the true interests of religion, to have a well educated Clergy, for, without learning, they cannot discharge with fidelity the functions of that high office.

The Bible consists of Narratives, Prophecies, Psalms and Letters,—in which the divine Doctrine is not delivered in naked and simple propositions, but, on the contrary, requires a sound judgment to separate its general truths from the particular circumstances in which they are involved. The sacred volume consists not of Articles or Catechisms, but declarations, made on certain occasions, and the dealings of God with certain nations or individuals; and from them it is required to deduce the peculiar principles or doctrines which constitute the Christian system.

Had the Scriptures been left entirely to themselves, without any authoritative interpretation, we may see, from the conduct of the various sects around us, who all claim oven for the most wild and opposite opinions the support of Scripture, that the true doctrine never could have been discovered.

Now this dangerous confusion was most carefully guarded against by our Lord and his disciples. Our Saviour selected the Apostles to be always with him and afterwards the Seventy.—To these men he gave authority to preach, and he provided the means of their perpetuation as a separate class. The first of this class heard the doctrine of the Gospel from the mouth of the Apostles, and were carefully instructed how to teach the same to others. They were supplied with the forms of sound words in the most ample manner, and the writings composed by the Apostles and their immediate disciples are still extant.

Polycarp was instructed by the Apostles and was in the society of many who had seen the Lord—he taught the form of sound words handed down by St. John, and which our Church, at this day, teaches in all their purity, and he sealed them with his blood, as an illustrious and glorious Martyr. From the ear-

liest period, including the Apostolic age, Creeds, Articles, and Canons were adopted in the teaching of the Church, in order to secure her members against particular errors, and render them familiar with the true Faith. And, in the present age, how are Clergymen, unless competently learned, to become acquainted with the knowledge of the state and succession of the doctrine of the Church, and to contend for the faith once delivered to the Saints? Even St. Paul, notwithstanding his great abilities and thorough instruction in the law, found it necessary after his conversion to read and meditate upon the Scriptures, and to seclude himself for this study several years before he assumed the office of a public instructor. Surely then, if this eminent Apostle required to make use of such diligent exertions to prepare himself for the great work of preaching the Gospel, how much more need have we of much study, prayer, and meditation? God does not supply, by miracles, natural deficiencies which care and industry may remedy, and yet the burthen of our profession has been infinitely increased. Indeed, all that was necessary in the Apostles' time, and much more is necessary now; and it is only to be supplied, in humble dependence on Divine power, by a superior education, extensive reading, and deep meditation. We must not therefore lose sight of this recommendation, but do all we can to secure to our Church the benefit of a learned Clergy.

Time has not permitted, nor perhaps does the situation of the Clergy at present make it expedient, to take any measures respecting the Establishment of a Widows' Fund, but the subject and its further consideration can be very easily resumed in more prosperous times.

In deference to the recommendation of the assembled Clergy, a Journal for diffusing religious intelligence, in connexion with the Church of England, has been established, and we are under the greatest obligation to the Revd. Gentleman who has undertaken the arduous task of being Editor for the first year. Of his superior talents and fitness for so troublesome an office there can be but one opinion.

Doubts have been entertained by persons whose opinions merit respectful consideration, regarding the propriety of making use of the public press for the dissemination of religious knowledge; but in what way are we to counteract error and diffuse the truths of the Gospel among such as never or seldom come to Church, or who have no opportunities of obtaining information on Christian Doctrine from their local situation, if the Press be not employed?

Every one knows that the most dangerous errors are, at this moment, propagated through the Province with alarming success. In the present state of religion in the Colony, it is easy to seduce into error a large portion of the population who are not grounded in the principles of Christianity, and have had no opportunity of acquiring religious knowledge. Their attention is attracted by novelties, which their inventors endeavour to conceal under the appearance of truth. They are thrown off their guard, by the pretensions of their new teachers to superior piety. Bewildered by a plausible sophistry, which they are unable to detect or expose, they are silenced by bold assertions which they are unable to disprove.

In fact, the people, scattered as they necessarily must be in a new country like this, are not only destitute of the information necessary for self-defence, but of all the means of acquiring it, and are therefore apt to become the adherents of every species of error prepared for their acceptance. It is not uncommon to find people who have professed many different forms of Christianity, changing from one denomination to another, till they make a total shipwreck of the faith, and at length discard religion altogether.

Some teach Christianity, mutilated and divested of almost every thing which distinguishes the faith of the Messiah from infidelity. Many who, with better opportunities, might be ornaments of society, sink into total indifference to all religious opinions, and too frequently become regardless of the common principles of morality. The only way to meet many of these evils, in the present limited power of the Church, is to employ the press.

It is, indeed, the only expedient that we can adopt in order to withstand the progress of error in many places where we are unable to carry the Gospel sound. To place, by means of our weekly Journal, true information on religious subjects in the hands of the people is an effectual means of arresting the progress of error. It will enable many to form their opinion with judgment, to detect false principles, and at length to contend earnestly for the faith.

And while our Journal, in this manner, furnishes an increase of Christian Knowledge, among all classes of the community, it, at the same time, vindicates truth and elevates the common standard of morals.

In addition to the dissemination of the purest Christianity, the Press may be made still more efficient than the Pulpit in removing the bitter and unfounded prejudices against the Church, which are sedulously propagated throughout the Colony. No denomination suffers so much as we do from this cause. Doubtless, much of this bitterness arises from ignorance of our forms and doctrines, and the grounds on which they rest; but they are not the less injurious because unjust. They beget jealousy, and a spirit of restless and rancorous hostility: in some, superstitious aversion; in others, a self-righteous contempt. Even many of our own members in the back settlements, conscious of the unfavourable light in which our Church is viewed by other denominations, waver in their attachment to her cause—love her with a divided affection—and support her interests by languishing efforts. It will be the business of the Journal to direct the spirit of religious inquiry to the principles and usages of the Church, and furnish the information which it demands. From such investigations our Church has every thing to hope and nothing to fear: the faith of her children will be confirmed, and their exertions animated; the prejudices of ignorance will be subdued or removed, and the tongue of slander put to silence.

(To be Continued.)