

Like all men who thus study Scripture, which will not give its holy wisdom to the negligent, the hasty, or the proud, he found its difficulties rapidly clearing before him. His knowledge increasing, and his conviction of the profound wisdom of inspiration, and the irresistible truth of Christianity, growing more strongly upon his mind. This result has been promised to all who will seek for the truth in sincerity, humility, and prayer. If there be any one exercise of the human heart and understanding on which the eternal Spirit of the Almighty pre-eminently descends, it is to bless and enlighten the conscientious search into the wisdom of the Bible, but mingled with these elevating sensations were others that belong to the weakness of our mortal nature. Luther's whole previous system of thinking on religious subjects was to be swept away, before the great foundation for his purified knowledge was to be laid. The strong discordance between his habitual conceptions and the new unearthly teaching of the inspired word disturbed him, and there were periods when he fell into such despondency as to feel himself ready to expire. The terrors of divine justice, exemplified in the punishment of the infidel and criminal, pressed with painful strength on his imagination, until he was urged, by this very conflict of mind, to examine more deeply into the grounds of the divine mercy. He has been known to hurry away from a dispute on doctrine, and, overpowered by the struggles of his own heart, to fling himself on his bed in an agony of supplication, repeating the words of the inspired apostle:—"He hath concluded all in unbelief, that he might have mercy upon all."

Those trials are well known to the history of conversion; and if they do not occur with equal force in all instances of a change from natural darkness to the knowledge of God, yet they have taken place in many of the most vigorous intellects of the Christian world.

But the first efforts of the awakened understanding, to relieve itself from those throes of conscience, are often marked by human weakness. Luther, like thousands in his situation, seems to have sought relief in a more vigorous observance of personal mortification. Fasting was the great conventual standard of virtue. Luther, when he was to celebrate mass, abstained from food between midnight and noon. He sometimes even fasted for three days together. This discipline, joined to his intense study, threw him into a violent illness. But his illness was probably more of the mind than of the body: for it was to the mind that the medicine was applied. Even in the ignorance and corruption of the conventual life, God had not left himself without witnesses. An old brother of the order, who attended his sick-bed, discoursed with him on "the remission of sins;" and finally brought him to the conviction, that "justification was of grace, by faith."

In the Superior of the Augustines, too, Luther found at once a protector and a guide: Staupitz commenced his application to the Scriptures, and advised him to make himself a master of the leading doctrines, and quick at the quotation of scripture language.

To those essential acquirements Luther added important one of fluency of public speaking, a faculty indispensable to his public effect, and which he cultivated by preaching for his brethren in the churches of the surrounding villages. Thus furnished with the knowledge, the will, and the active ability for the work of God, his time was at length come to be called into a service before which the glories of the world are a dream.

In the middle of the fifteenth century, the art of printing had been discovered. Before the close of the century, the spirit of this wonderful discovery had transpired, in an almost universal conviction of the vaul of literature to the prosperity and honour of nations. In 1495 the German Electors, in their assembly at Worms, passed a resolution in favour of the erection of universities in their several states. Frederick, Elector of Saxony, a man whose temper and wisdom well entitled him to the name of "the Sage," lost no time in acting on this auspicious resolution, and founded the far-famed University of Wittemberg. Staupitz was applied to for his recommendation of a scholar of his order, and he named Luther, who was appointed to the professorship of logic in 1508, at the age of twenty-five. One of those signal circumstances now

occurred, which impressed its character on his future life. Seven of the Augustine convents in Saxony, having quarrelled with the Vicar general of the Order on discipline, the question was referred as usual, to Rome; and it is an evidence of the early and general respect for Luther, that he was chosen as the delegate.

Rome opened an overwhelming scene on the eyes of the German scholar and divine. He had in his convent imagined, that in the central city of the church, he should find himself in the supreme seat of Christian virtue. He found himself suddenly plunged into a centre of worldliness and insidious policy, of religious indifference and open licentiousness. The spirit of Christianity had been long extinguished in the perpetual intrigues of a court struggling to preserve its influence in the furious rivalries of France, Germany, and Italy. The decencies of religious ceremonial were forgotten or perverted, in the insolent levity, or factastic innovations, of a clergy degenerated into political minions, and too necessary to the vices of their superiors to be in awe of discipline. Individual life was a tissue of the most desperate excesses of profligacy and blood. The restraints which have been since imposed on Popery by the presence of a pure religion, were not then present to tame and rebuke this audacity of vice; and Luther saw Rome in the full riot of the grand corruption of Christianity, inflated by a thousand years of power, fearless of change, and maddened by the terrible delusion that Providence suffers to thicken round the head and heart of the wilful rejectors of its wisdom.

"I would not," said he often afterwards, "have missed, for a thousand florins, the lesson given to me by my journey to Rome." The lesson was destined to work mighty consequences.

(To be continued.)

## The Wesleyan.

MONTREAL, THURSDAY, NOV. 12, 1840.

We have pledged ourselves in conducting this journal not to enter the arena of political discussion, nor to meddle with exciting topics connected with either foreign or domestic policy, and we have neither a disposition, nor are we under any temptation to swerve from our purpose. We cannot, however, "hear of wars and rumours of wars" in Syria, Circassia, South America, China, indeed throughout the world; or contemplate the hostile attitude which the most powerful governments and nations of Europe have assumed towards each other, and the extensive warlike preparations which are now in progress, but with feelings of the deepest anxiety. War—European war, at all times tremendous, would at this time be rendered if possible, ten-fold more terrific, by the augmented power of destruction, with which mechanical forces newly discovered or applied would arm it. And to the eye of the calm and Christian observer of recent and passing events, the signs of the times are portentous. The political horizon all around is dark and lowering, portending an approaching storm.—Armies are collecting and marching—Navies are equipping and sailing—Arsenals are filling with munitions of war—Cities are fortifying—the "dreadful note of preparation" is heard in every direction—thousands of restless mercenary spirits tired of a state of peace, are ready to fan the spark of discord which may be struck off by the collision of jarring interests into a flame of civil or foreign war, and myriads in Christian as well as in heathen lands, are by their infidelity, impieties and crimes, imprecating the wrath of heaven upon themselves and their country! Let Britain then at once assume the attitude of humility, prayer, preparation and courage.—Let her sons throughout her dominions be loyal to their Queen, and true to their protestant faith and constitution, and her churches at home and abroad

be faithful to their God; and then should the tempest gather and burst, the shield of the Divine protection shall still be thrown around our beloved Empire, and her institutions, and upon "all" be "glory there shall be a defence."

Without presuming to indulge in a dictatorial strain, there is another subject to which we would venture to advert, because it is one of general interest, and involves the peace and well-being of the community—we mean the formation of the Provincial Parliament, according to the principles of our unrevoked Constitution, at least, in one of its branches, by exercising the right of *elective franchise*. That it is our duty and privilege as Christians to claim and exercise this right, is not to be doubted. But let it be done with Christian prudence and in a Christian spirit. The history of the past, as to the elections for Colonial Legislatures, as well as for the Imperial Parliament, speaks to us on this subject with a warning voice; and by the severed friendships—the domestic feuds—the public mischiefs—the loss of piety, which many good men have sustained, as the result of yielding to that spirit of rivalry and political partizanship, which at general elections is too much the spirit of the times,—bids us beware at the present time of similar results. We say again, let Christian prudence and principle guide the lovers of order, of their constitution and of their country, in the exercise of the privilege of elective franchise. We say not from what class of politicians, the representatives and guardians of our political interests should be chosen, with this as journalists we have nothing to do, but let our suffrages be cheerfully given to the support of those individuals who we have reason to believe will in the most Christian, disinterested, constitutional and patriotic manner discharge their duty as Legislators, and renouncing all selfish ends, seek only to promote the general interests of the united colony. And let us pray that "all bitterness, and wrath, and clamour, and evil speaking, may be put away with all malice."

Since the above was in type, the mail by the *Caledonia*, which left Liverpool on the 20th ultimo, has arrived. We learn that though the life of Louis Philippe had been again attempted; and naval and military operations were still going on in Syria; there is some prospect of a settlement of the eastern question without a general war. In this, we rejoice, and trust that there will yet be found in the governments of Europe, wisdom and virtue enough to avert, through the divine blessing, so dreadful a catastrophe.

We learn from the *Christian Guardian* of the 28th ultimo, that at the Special Conference, convened at Toronto on the 22d ultimo, the Rev. W. Case was chosen as president, and the Rev. E. Ryerson, secretary, who, however, resigned in favour of the Rev. J. C. Davidson. In reporting the proceedings of the Conference, it is said, "we regret to learn it is now almost certain, that several brethren will disconnect themselves with the Canada Conference, and attach themselves to the Wesleyan Missionary Society." This is no more than we expected, especially as we learn from a source on which we can rely, that the "Rev. E. Ryerson has spared no pains to represent the British Conference in a most odious light, and to destroy the moral influence of that venerable Body and all its agents in Canada." Indeed, this is sufficiently apparent from his last pamphlet, and is to be, it seems, the only return which he has the honour or gratitude to make to the British Conference and Connexion, for all the kindness