

The Press and General Review.

SABBATH OBSERVANCE.

We are happy to learn that a Society has been formed at Kingston with the object of seeking a better observance of the Sabbath. At no period was such an Association more urgently required in Canada, and we hope the example of Kingston will be followed throughout the country. We have been so easy-going in business matters heretofore, that little desire for encroachment on the retirement of the Lord's day has been felt, but now that business energy, and a dense population begin to flow upon us, there will, doubtless, be a growing worldliness in the public mind on this point, which will be easier controlled now than at a later moment. We earnestly trust that there will be a strong expression of feeling throughout the Province in favor of stopping all mails, and closing all the Post Offices on the Sabbath-day. Whether regarded as a religious, social, physical or mere mercantile question, the strict observance of one day of rest in seven is mercifully a necessity. The Kingston Society have issued a circular, from which the following is an extract:—

"Scarce in modern times has there been such a hearty and unequivocal demonstration of public sentiment, among all classes of the community, in favor of any great religious or moral movement, as is now witnessed in Great Britain and Ireland, in regard to the sacred observance of the Lord's Day; and it is matter of congratulation that the spirit which has pervaded the masses in the Mother Country, and influenced them so powerfully during the agitation of the Sabbath question in connection with the Post Office, begins at length to manifest itself in this vast and important Province.

"It is confidently believed that in Great Britain the entire abolition of Post Office labor on the Lord's Day must be conceded to the prayer of already a greater number of persons than signed the petitions in favor of the Penny Postage in 1839, and which will, it is anticipated, prior to Lord Ashley's motion being brought before Parliament, exceed in numbers any demonstration ever made to the Imperial Legislature, and representing the flower of the morality, intelligence, and wealth, of the British Empire.

"In corroboration of the opinion of the practicability of the entire cessation of Postal labor on the Sabbath, it may be sufficient to refer to the following declaration of the Postmaster-General of the United Kingdom to a deputation which waited on him at London, on the 21st March last:— 'That neither he nor any member of her Majesty's Government was in favor, as a matter of preference, of Sunday Labor in the Post Office; that the proposed arrangement for the total cessation of all postal labor on Sunday was perfectly practicable; and that the authorities were prepared to carry such arrangement into effect if it appeared that the country generally desired it.'

The copy of a Petition to Parliament is appended to the circular, but as such petitions have all to be in writing, we have abridged it thus:—

To the Honorable the Legislative Assembly of the Province of Canada, in Parliament assembled. The Memorial of the undersigned inhabitants of—Humbly Sheweth:

That they regard the Sabbath as an Institution stamped with the seal of Divine authority, and designed and fitted to promote the best interest of the human family; that every violation of it is in the highest degree displeasing to its great author, and detrimental to the public welfare. That they contemplate with deep regret the extensive and legalized system of Sabbath desecration caused by the transmission of her Majesty's Mail, the opening of Post Offices, and delivery of letters, on the Lord's Day.

The undersigned, therefore, pray your Honorable House to adopt such measures as to your wisdom may seem most expedient for the abolition of all labor on the Lord's day in the above important department of the public service.

And your memorialists, as in duty bound, will ever pray.

We trust numerous petitions will be poured in from all parts of the country.—Globe.

PROTESTANTISM AND ROMANISM.

From the Prairie Herald.

A correspondent of the N. Y. Observer, writing from Dubuque, Iowa, says that the Romanists have lost their relative influence there. He remarks, "One revival of religion does more for Protestantism than a Cathedral that cost \$50,000 does for Popery." Never was there a truer saying uttered. No wonder their priests so hate prayer meetings. Prayer meetings and Bibles are terrible things for Popery. One lets us know what God says to us, and the other calls down his spirit to convince and convert. What can huge stone cathedrals, and troops of veiled women shut up in brick walls, and long coated priests, knowing nothing but to mumble masses, do against these? God's word and God's spirit preached and prayed home to the conscience of a community, will melt away their delusions as the hot sun does the frosts of a night. No wonder the Pope and the Cardinals are aching to get the Bibles all out of France, and to keep away Presbyterian praying. Here where they can never keep them out nor get

them out the case is bad for their cause. The case is now on trial in this country, whether Rome with its mummeries, or Protestantism with its Bibles and praying conventicles—the law of the State not interfering—shall prevail. Let Protestant-Christians pray mightily to God. If they do this, those that be with us are more than those that be with them.

THE CIRCUS.

A Remonstrance with Christian Professors.

"Abstain from all appearance of evil" is a scriptural direction, which is thus paraphrased by Doddridge:—"In order to preserve your innocence, it will be necessary to guard against circumstances of strong temptation, and things concerning the lawfulness of which you may have just suspicion, though you cannot absolutely pronounce them to be criminal. . . . As you value your safety, abstain from all that has so much as the 'appearance of evil,' and from whatever may be likely to prove the occasion of sin." With such a precept before them, is it not matter of surprise, as well as of sorrow, that Christian professors should frequent, or even visit scenes, and share in amusements of at least doubtful character? It is commonly reported that Christians who would shun the theatre, make no scruple of going to "the circus." such report is sufficient to justify, if not to demand remonstrance. It is natural to ask how such a course is to be explained, if not excused? It may be presumed that this thing has been thoughtlessly done. Has the judgment been uninformed? Has the conscience been unenlightened? Has there not been a low state of personal religion and spiritual feeling? Has there been no neglect of the spirit, as well as the letter, of the Divine word? or has there been deficiency in the instructions of the pulpit?

Bear with me, Christians, in laying before you some views and convictions which I have entertained on this subject, and which I hope you will henceforth also entertain. If anything advanced should wound such as have been betrayed into "the appearance of evil," I would beseech them to remember that "faithful are the wounds of a friend." Surely none who are Christians can or will be offended. Whatever may be the first impulse of feeling, it is not to be supposed that any Christian will, on reflection, express any other sentiment than that of the Psalmist: "Let the righteous smite me, it shall be a kindness; and let him reprove me, it shall be an excellent oil that shall not break my head." With tenderness and affection, yet with solemnity and faithfulness, let me warn you of danger, to which I am satisfied you are yourselves exposed, and of mischief to others, of which you may be unintentionally the occasion, by participating in worldly amusements, such as those of the circus.

1. Consider the class of amusements to which they belong.—That class is the theatrical: or if this be disputed, do they not at the best belong to the class of "things concerning the lawfulness of which you may have just suspicion, though you cannot absolutely pronounce them to be criminal?" In some respects the theatre may seem to have stronger pleas in its favor; as, for example, it is said to gratify the taste, the intellect, and the imagination. But who can plead that taste, intellect, imagination, are gratified in the circus, except, indeed, in the lowest sense of the terms? The circus may excite, and to some extent satisfy curiosity, and can do little beyond. You see splendid horses and extraordinary equestrians performing wondrous feats. Why not go for the same reason to the hunt, the steeple-chase, the race? You see a display of wonderful skill, and results of human skill, and strength, and training in attitude, action, agility. True; but those men, and O modesty! those women!—at what cost have this skill and its results been attained! What expenditure has there been of time, talent, property!—What risk of limb and life! What risk, if not loss of morals, character, souls! And for what? Mere pleasure, at best, without the slightest use. A grand objection to the theatre is its moral corruption. It is uniformly polluted and polluting. The mighty magnetism by which, when successful, it draws around it its kindred evils, makes it a pest to the neighborhood in which it is fixed. And is the circus, the amphitheatre exempt from the same condemnation when it becomes a fixed establishment? The only reason why the travelling theatre and circus do not exhibit, to a similar extent, the same phenomena of moral pestilence, is, that they do not abide long enough in one place. No further proof is required of the class to which the circus belongs than the bills of the day, announcing a farcical affair called, "the Shop-board in an Uproar; or, The Election, The Duel, The Ghost, and The * * *!" Such amusements, if "you cannot absolutely pronounce them to be criminal," have, you will admit, at least a strong "appearance of evil." The principle of the text gives, therefore, sufficient reason why Christians should entirely abstain.

2. Consider the general impression of Christian minds concerning such amusements.—Is it not strong presumption against them that in all ages the best and most exemplary Christians have strongly condemned and set their faces against them?—that faithful ministers have uniformly condemned them—classing them, like Bunyan, among the commodities of "Vanity Fair?"—that a Christian minister should find,

in a moment, his sense of Christian order violated, and feel himself wounded and scandalized on hearing that any of his flocks were known to share them?—that Christians should feel it would be inconsistent for a minister to be present at them, and that all should expect a minister to condemn them? If our Puritan fathers erred on the side of too rigid self-denial, their degenerate sons are in danger from too lax indulgence. Has conformity to the world less evil than of old? "The world," says Cheever, "appears better than it did to Christians, not so much because it has changed as because they have changed." Ephraim, he hath mixed himself among the people. The people have not come over to Ephraim, but Ephraim has gone over to them: the people have not learned the ways of Ephraim, but Ephraim hath learned the manners of the people. This is too much the case in the Vanity Fair of the world at the present time: there is not such a marked and manifest distinction between the church and the world as there should be; their habits, maxims, opinions, pursuits, amusements, whole manner of life, are too much the same; so that the pilgrims in our day have lost the character of a peculiar people, not so much because they have become vastly more numerous than formerly, as because they have become conformed to the world; not like strangers, but natives in Vanity Fair." What would be the general impression made upon the minds of the majority of church-members if they knew their minister visited the circus? Conceive of him standing staring at "The Shop-board in the Uproar; The Election, The Duel, The Ghost, and The * * *!" A notable witness for God! In no way distinguished from another Christian but by being more publicly known and committed, and as officially bound. Certainly the Christian ought not himself to be seen where, on the score of moral propriety, he feels that his minister ought not to be seen.

3. Consider the general impression of worldly men.—"Much may be learnt," says Cecil, "from the sentiments of men of the world. If a man of this character, who heard me preach, should meet me where he would say, 'Why, I did not expect to see you here!' then he ought not to have seen me there." The remark may equally apply to the Christian community. If a man of the world, who has seen you at the Lord's table, should meet you where he would say, "Why, I did not expect to see you here!" then he ought not to have seen you there. If we remonstrate with men of the world on hequenting even worse places, they sometimes seek to justify themselves by saying, "Your professors of religion go to 'the circus,' which is certainly a half-way house to the theatre. For my part, I can see little difference; and if they go to one, why not to both?" A play goer's own observation on the presence of Christians at the circus was this, "It is but one remove from the theatre." What is so evidently according to "the course of the world" should be avoided.

4. Consider the sanction and patronage of vice involved in sharing such amusements.—You sanction the proprietors, the performers, the system. You are compelled to take it in the lump. You sanction an idle, vagabond, unvirtuous, if not vicious life. You sanction indecent and indecorous language, posture, and dress, or want of dress. You patronize in public the training and exhibition of females in immodest costume, and in attitudes which you could not for a moment tolerate in private. Even if you yourself could go and come untainted, you cannot go without patronizing and sanctioning, by your money, your presence, and your example the reckless expenditure, the injurious excitement, the demoralizing associations of evil men, seducers and seduced, (to say nothing of women) who constantly crowd the cheaper parts of the house. They retire with unbalanced minds and disordered feelings to the commission of evil meditated or suggested while there, and, "mad upon their idols," return anon "like the dog to his own vomit again, and the sow that is washed to her wallowing in the mire."

5. Consider how religion is endangered or injured by sharing in such amusements.—To say nothing of your own personal religion, look at the hindrance to your dependants—to weaker Christians—to children. Some who go themselves hesitate to take their children. Some go for the sake of their children. Some, perhaps, take their children for the sake of going themselves. In either case, the example of the parent becomes the highest sanction for the child. A more effectual method could scarcely be devised to give children a relish for "the pleasures of sin." If children are thus taught to think no harm of theatricals generally, is it any wonder that they should afterwards become play goers, or worse? Is it not like setting them on the slope of a Russian ice-hill, and then wondering they should slide down? Is it not like presenting poisoned confectionary, and then wondering they should be sick? Is it not like allowing them to play with a beautiful, graceful serpent, and then wondering they should be bitten? It deserves to be most seriously considered whether these and some apparently less objectionable amusements are not gilded and attractive baits to cover the hook or to set the trap with which Satan most successfully catches souls. It may seem astonishing that people should be so fascinated by what is after all so frivolous, nonsensical, and vain; and more astonishing that among the "sight-seek-

ers" Christian should be found. The general impression on worldly minds has been already noticed. Were there only danger to the credit of religion, without hindrance to its progress, that were a sufficient reason why a Christian should never be seen in "the circus."

6. Consider how contrary such amusements are to the entire spirit, if not to the express precepts of Holy Scripture.—The Scriptures do not give us particular precepts about every detail of conduct, but broad principles, which Christian discernment, if not common sense, may readily apply to the occasions of life as they arise. The passage at the head of this paper is one of these broad and simple principles, of easy and universal application. If it be difficult to be a Christian, it is certainly not very difficult to avoid actions openly wrong, or which seem to be so, or which are at best doubtful, especially when such actions must be deliberately done. It is matter of lamentation that any called Christians should seem to have so little knowledge of the spirit of Scripture, so little sense of their own dignity, so little firmness or capacity of self-denial, as even for once to participate in amusements of this class. Perhaps it may be said, they do not transgress the bounds of safety.—They do not enter Beelzebub's garden, but they pluck the fruit that hangs over the wall! They sail close to the dangerous reef on which so many have made shipwreck, drive through the surf at the risk of dashing on the rocks! They try experiments with the moral constitution, drinking as much intoxicating poison as they may without destroying life! They may seem disposed to solve the problem with how little religion they can do, and how much of the world! It is like trying to go two ways at once, or undertaking the task of serving two masters. Not such half-and-half allegiance does the Saviour expect, or safety demand!—"Ye cannot serve God and mammon!"

What the Rev. T. Binney has said of the theatre may fairly be applied also to the circus: "It must suffice to say—and now let me be considered as just whispering gently to the ear and to the heart of members of churches, communicants at the Lord's supper, and persons who pass in society for religious women; hark!—the theatre is utterly inconsistent with their professed subjection to the laws of Christ, their separation from the world, their daily prayer (if they pray) not to be 'led into temptation,' and their solemn duty to avoid being 'partakers of other men's sins.' . . . 'Be ye imitators of God.' Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus.' 'Blessed are the pure in heart.' Let no communication proceed out of your mouth, but that which is good to the use of edifying.' Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom.' 'Mortify your members which are upon the earth; fornication, uncleanness, inordinate affection, evil concupiscence.' 'Put off all these; anger, wrath, pride, blasphemy, filthy communication out of your mouth.' 'Put on the Lord Jesus Christ.' 'He that hath this hope in him purifieth himself, even as he is pure.' 'What manner of persons ought ye to be in holy conversation and godliness?' 'Have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove them.' 'I beseech you, therefore, . . . that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service; and be not conformed to this world, but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind; that ye may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God.'

"My brethren, these and such as these are the precepts of Scripture, and however it may be attempted to give them a meaning peculiar to apostolic times and to idolatrous communities, they are equally applicable in their principles and spirit to every place and to all time, and require a separation from a baptized world as well as a heathen one."

"Be not deceived; God is not mocked." If you "sow to the flesh," you shall "of the flesh reap corruption." "All that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father but of the world; and the world passeth away and the lust thereof, but he that doeth the will of God abideth for ever."

assured that if the taste for spiritual things expel the taste for worldly amusements, there is extreme danger lest the taste for worldly amusements will expel the taste for spiritual things. Enough has surely been said to convince any candid mind that no Christian should share in amusements of this class. If you think on the suggestions which have been made, you will surely abstain. Take the lowest ground; admit that there is but "the appearance of evil," and the Christian is absolutely and authoritatively precluded. Nevertheless, if you can go with the full conviction that the views here presented are false—with entire forgetfulness of the principle of the apostle—with the certainty that no one will think there is any "appearance of evil" in your presence—with the full assurance that you shall neither do nor get harm—with the full belief that conscience will make no remonstrance when there, and inflict no sting when you come away—why, then, go and enjoy the scenes of the circus, farce and all! Pray God for his blessing on the engagements of the evening before you go, and thank him for the enjoyment you have received when you retire!

Let those who are not Christian professors remember they ought to be such, and let them