

and wrought upon, combine them into a wicked confederation; a people mute in public, but in converse private and full of spite and Gelois also, who lived little more than 50 years after the death of the Apostle John, jeers at the fact, that "wool-workers, cobblers, leather-dressers, the most illiterate and vulgar of mankind, were zealous preachers of the gospel, and addressed themselves, particularly at the fairs, to women and children, though before they were properly understanding they were mute as fishes." The early apologists replied, and agree, that the emperor was offered to all who manifested a desire to receive it, that the poor and ignorant were not excluded; that some men of superior learning and of high rank had passed over to the Christians; and that, were the charge admitted to its full extent, it could not imitate against the goodness of their cause. Paul speaks of converts that were in Nero's house-hold; and Phiny the younger, when Governor of Bithynia, wrote to the emperor Trypan, that Christianity had sprung over the city and open country, but many of every age, rank, and of either sex, are and will be called into danger."

"The heathen saint," says Testallian, "the city is besieged; there are Christians in the open country, in the castles, in the islands; they complain of it as a loss, that every sex, age, condition, and even dignity, has passed over to this name."—A proof that though not many, yet some mighty and noble are called.

The heathen will farther affirm, that Christians were useless to the state, and as many of them conscientiously refused to engage in war, it was asked, if all men were to be Christians, what would the Emperor do? It was answered that the Christians were highly serviceable to the state, because they prayed for the welfare of their country and for the safety of the Emperor; that they carefully obeyed the laws, and sought to retain more from the taxes, and to pay a better account to the treasury. Thus, under the guidance of the gospel, the Pagans abandoned their incestuous marriages, the Massages refrained from the practice of sacrificing the old and infirm, and the Seythians no longer buried the living with the dead. "The early defenders of Christianity maintained that the Christians benefited mankind by the miracles which they wrought. Irenæus, bishop of Lyons, about the year 170, says: "The disciples of Christ confer benefits on others, every man according to the gift which he had received. For some have most signally expelled demons, and they who were possessed of unclean spirits, have believed and are now in the church. Others, by the imposition of hands, cure and restore those to health who labour under diseases; and, as we now declare, the dead rise and remain with us many years."

But the heathen asserted that Christians were not only useless subjects, but that Christians were an injury to the state. They said that the gods were angry, on account of the rapid and extensive propagation of the gospel, and when the Tyber overflowed its banks, or any great calamity befell the city, the cry was, "to the horns with the Christians." It was answered, that these judgments were inflicted on account of the wickedness of the pagans themselves. Tertullian enumerates many calamities which the Romans suffered before the true God had a single worshiper at Rome. Among other instances of this kind, evidently on the authority of Livy the Roman historian, he mentioned that Hannibal defeated the Romans at the battle of Carna, and so great was the slaughter, that he measured in a bushel those rings which were the badge of knighthood. This reasoning, however, powerful though it was, made no impression on hearts enticed with the love of sin, and on men determined not to renounce their errors.

But perhaps the most unreasonable objection was, that the Christians did not yield proper obedience to the emperors, because they would not give them the title of Lord God. Some of the emperors claimed divine honours; and all received the absurd flattery of the times, and were styled Lord almost in the same manner in which we address the Deity. Thus, Phiny the younger, in his letters, frequently addresses the emperor Trajan as "O Lord," and before the emperor he says: "Flavius Ardephius requests me, through thy safety and eternity, to send to thee the little book which he gave me." (Phiny's Epistles, book 10, epistle 68.) Now this was language which the Christians could not admit to man, without proving unfaithful to their divine Master; and they therefore reminded their persecutors, that it was as much their duty to fear God, as it was to honour the King.

Charges brought against the moral character of the first Christians. Their enemies accused them of incest. The heathen said that the Christians met during the night, that they might more secretly and securely perform their unholy rites, that after having feasted together, they tied a dog to the candlestick, then they threw a piece of meat beyond its reach, when the lights were overturned, and when in darkness, they committed incest of the most revolting description. The Christians, in answer to this charge, boldly challenged their enemies to the proof. They maintained that they were examples of chastity to the world, for they either married only once, or not at all, regarding second marriages as a more reputable kind of adultery. Phiny, though a heathen, admits that having examined certain Christians by torture, to ascertain the truth, this was the sum of their fault or crime, that they met on a stated day, before the lights were light; that a mutter was said a hymn to Christ as to God; and that they then, and then, by the sacrament to countenance no wickedness, such as thefts, murder, adulteries, not to falsify their word, not to deny a pledge when demanded, which being finished, according to their manner, they departed, and met again at a promiscuous though innocent meal." Trypho, the Jew, likewise said that he did not believe the charges that were brought against them; he thought that their precepts were excellent, though too difficult to be obeyed. But the ques-

tion is, if this report was totally false, how did it originate? Athenagoras, a disciple of Justin Martyr, accounts for the slanders by stating, that the Christians spoke of each other as brothers and sisters, sons and daughters, in reference to age, while they honoured the elder as fathers and mothers. This was a mode of speech the heathen did not understand; and therefore, when two Christians were married, it was commonly said that the brother had married a sister, meaning that both individuals were Christians. The heathen also, as a proof that transubstantiation, under pretence of superior knowledge, were guilty of the grossest crimes; and as they claimed to be Christians of a very high order, it was easy for the heathen to confound them with true believers.

The heathen farther affirmed, that before the Christians committed incest, they slew an infant, drank its blood and ate its flesh, as the seal of their horrid confederacy. They maintained, I deemed this charge, without ever endeavouring to trace the slender to its origin—a profane tradition was not then taught in the church, else they must have thought that they ate human flesh. Tertullian reminds the Roman Senate, to whom he wrote, that not only were their gods said to have committed such crimes, but that in North Africa, where he resided, an infant was annually sacrificed, and that with a refinement in cruelty never supposed; they kept the confederacy alive, by annually all the year was struck which depicted it, if, as they imagined that the gods would not receive a weeping, and therefore an unwilling, victim. In the isle of Crete, a medal has been since discovered, representing this sacrifice to Saturn—an appalling proof that "the dark places of the earth are full of the habitations of cruelty." But these charges were fully refuted by the admissions of the heathen. When an individual accused of Christianity, and conformed to the rites of heathenism, instead of being punished for murder and incest, he was at once released. It was also said that the Christians loved one another so cordially, and were so closely associated, that their union was dangerous to the state—a neat admission that they were united to each other by firmer and more enduring ties than the bands of wickedness. It was even customary to say, such an individual is a good man, only he is a Christian; and the heathen pointed to them with astonishment, saying, Behold, how they love one another." They were not only brethren, because they were partakers of the same human nature, but as sharing the same renewed nature. "But how much more," says Tertullian, "are they called and regarded brethren, who acknowledge one father, God, who have drunk into one spirit of holiness, who, from one womb of ignorance have tremblingly come to the one light of truth. These facts render it apparent that a charge of extermination was well founded, and that, against the very name, Christian; that believers were distinguished for whatsoever things were lovely and of good report, while the Church appeared "fair as the sun, clear as the moon, and" to her enemies "terrible as an army with banners." Never were the words of the Saviour more fully realized—"Blessed art ye when men shall revile you and persecute you, and shall say all manner of evil against you falsely, for my sake." II.

[FOR THE CANADIAN PRESBYTERIAN MAGAZINE.]

A GOOD EDUCATION.

A GOOD EDUCATION—A comprehensive term, frequently used, but seldom suitably considered. It includes the physical, the mental, and moral development of our nature—it embraces all the attainments which qualify us for the proper business of life. God has been pleased to endow us with those natural powers, in the exercise of which we begin at our birth to become acquainted with external objects. These faculties are so actively employed in infancy, that it has been thought, a child at three years of age has acquired half the amount of valuable knowledge of his nature, which, in time, he will gradually possess. This is not an exaggerated, but a perfectly accurate. The names, and the properties, and the uses of all things familiar to the child are known. Many things, by imitation and experience, can already be performed. An entire language has been acquired, and, by many children, it can be fluently spoken. All the faculties have been most actively engaged—much good and much evil have already been learned. The parents and guardians should then, that the first few years of life may, by them, be wisely neglected, let them ask themselves, why and the incongruous opinion would probably be speedily corrected.

The time has gone by when parents considered it necessary to send their children to the infant school, at two years of age. The physical being certainly needs development, by means more natural than could be permitted even in that premature worldly situation. Experience confirms the opinion, that youthful precocity is not, by any means, the security of truly and great intellectual power. The first five years are better filled up under proper parental guidance; about the close of this period, however, all other things being fit, it is perhaps preferable to send to our parents—if so, it becomes a matter of very great importance to them, and to the community, that these institutions be well adapted for securing the means of a valuable education for the young.

Those who have interested themselves in our common schools, during the last ten or twelve years, can scarcely fail to be gratified by their progressive improvement, as well as pleased with much that is in operation for their farther advancement. Both the character and the qualifications of our teachers, as a class, have in that time risen greatly. The institution of our Provincial Normal School, as well as Teachers' Institutes for