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THE MISSIONARY RECORD

OF THE

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THE LOST FOUND.

LUKE XV.

A lost sheep knows not whither it is going: it cannot track its way: it is bewildered and helpless. Nor is it sensible to *all* its danger. It has a sense of its danger. It may often be alarmed.—It is afraid, and it makes known its feelings by its cries. It is wretched. It gazes around it, and finds no help. It is in danger of perishing for hunger—or falling into some pit, or over some beetling precipice—or of being devoured by some beast of prey, of becoming the prey of the wolf, the lion, or the bear. And such is descriptive of our state by nature. We are astray, away from God. We are wandering in sin. We know not whither we are going. We may have some sense of our danger, but we know not the full amount of it. We see not the yawning pit which is ready to receive us: we see not the dangers which encompass us—the snares, the temptations, the evils which beset us.—The sinner is miserable: he is wretched. He has no solid peace—no abiding or satisfactory happiness. His soul has no resting place—no fold—no security, it is ill at ease even amid its enjoyments: it is disquieted and alarmed. Nor can he recover himself. The lost sheep cannot, of itself, find its way back to the fold: it would wander on till it perished. So the sinner cannot find his way back to happiness and to God. He would wander on for ever: he would still continue in sin, preferring the evil to the good, departing farther from the living God. His ignorance would lead him to wander: his very perverseness would lead him to wander: he would prefer the evil: he would not choose to return

to God: he would rather go on in his sins, till he be plunged into the pit of destruction. Meantime, the storm of divine wrath is ready to burst over his head. Just as the pitiless tempest may assail the sheep that has wandered from the fold, so the wrath of God is ready to overtake the sinner—And all the powers of darkness are seeking his destruction. Satan goeth about as a roaring lion seeking whom he may devour. The old serpent, the devil, is ready to sting him—to inflict his venomous bite. Every temptation with which he is plied is an enemy of his soul, is like a beast of prey. Hell and destruction yawn before him; and how much danger is there that he may fall into the devouring abyss!

Or, our state is like that of the lost coin. A lost piece of money is of no use to its owner. It does not serve his purpose. It may be recovered, but while it is lost it is useless. So are we lost to our Creator, of no use. We do not fulfil the purposes for which we were created. Our soul is lost to God. It is no fitter for the purposes for which God made it, than a lost coin is fit for exchange or purchase. Those powers of reason with which God has endowed us are employed upon every object but that which they were created chiefly to contemplate and admire. They are seldom, if ever, turned upon God or things divine. They are conversant chiefly about meaner themes. They are exercised often about the most worthless objects. It is the description of the wicked that God is not in all their thoughts.—They can think about every thing but God: they studiously exclude him from their thoughts. Then, our affections are

not fixed upon their proper objects. We do not love God. Till it is changed the carnal mind is enmity against God, for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be. All our desires and affections are earthward—set upon the world, or upon sin. We are useless for good. We do not glorify God—the grand object for which we were created.

Or, we are like the younger son in the parable, who demanded of his father the goods that fell to him, and on his receiving his portion, went into a far country and wasted his substance with riotous living. When he had spent all, there arose a mighty famine in the land, and he began to be in want. He then went and hired himself to a citizen of that country, who sent him into the field to feed swine. And so abject was he, so poor, so miserable, that he would fain have partaken of the very husks which the swine did eat. Such is no exaggerated description of our state, as sinners. Did not our first parents demand of God the portion of goods which fell to them? Did they not exhibit a similar spirit to the younger son in the parable? They claimed a right to use the faculties which God had given them, in their own way, for their own purposes, for their own pleasure. They would be as gods, knowing good and evil. They would be independent. They would take what would administer to their gratification. They thought not of God at the time, or their own will was paramount to his: they set their own will above his. "And when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was pleasant to the eyes, and a tree to be desired to make one wise, she took of the fruit thereof and did eat; and gave also unto her husband with her, and he did eat"—There was the demand: "Give me the portion of goods which falleth to me".—The will of the creature rising superior to the creator—the son wishing to be independent of the father—striking out a path of his own, going after his own objects, seeking his own pleasure. Did the portion of goods actually fall to him, or did it not depend upon his father's will whether it fell to him or not? In one sense the portion did fall to him: the goods were his own. In another sense the portion did not fall to him: the goods were not his own. Now, exactly so is it with those faculties and endowments which God has conferred upon his creatures. In one sense they are theirs, in another they are God's. They are ob-

viously not theirs, to be employed as they please. They must be employed for the purposes for which they were bestowed, and not in direct opposition to the bestower. Man had no right to say, because he was created with such and such faculties: I can employ them as I please: I can covet what I please: I can will what I please: I can think and act as I please. The moment that a thought entered Adam's heart which he knew to be contrary to God's will, it should have been discarded. He should have entertained no desire which was contrary to the will or command of God. The moment that he did so he had sinned, he had fallen. Then he went into a far country—a far country indeed!—estranged from God—away from him—as far from God as evil is from good, as alienation is from friendship, as hatred is from love. He went into a far country, where he had no master, where he was his own master, where he might do as he liked, where he might follow his own will, where he might gratify his own pleasure, pursue his own tastes, live for himself, and by himself, "without God in the world". Ah! this is what man did. "Give me the portion that falleth to me". Let me use my faculties as I please. Let me have my own will, my own pleasure. Let no restraint be upon my thoughts, my passions, my actions—no parental restraint—no control, whether of a father's love or of a father's authority. And he went his way. He left his father's presence, his father's house, a father's tenderness, and a father's affection—and settled at a distance from his home—at a distance from God, and from heaven, and from the endearments of the Divine love, and the advantages of the divine intercourse and counsel and protection. And what did he do there? What does man now do as a sinner? He spends his substance in riotous living—not in a literal sense, but in a spiritual sense—wasting his faculties, mispending his powers, casting away on the most worthless objects the treasures of his affections—employing them all on his own selfish or sinful gratification. Is it not so? To what waste are all our powers put? To what objects are our affections devoted? Is not self, is not sin in them all? Some may go farther than others in sin, in intemperance, in sensuality, in godlessness—but all are away from God, and pursuing their own objects, gratifying their own desires, wasting their powers, their

time—spending them on frivolous if not sinful pursuits. All these should be devoted to God—should be employed in his service, or in subordination to his glory—but it is not so. God is perhaps the farthest from our thoughts—the least, or not at all, in our affections; and his glory is the remotest from our consideration and our pursuit. And what is the effect? Why, that we are reduced to beggary, to spiritual beggary: we have nothing: we are poor and miserable, and wretched, and naked. We are poor in respect of spiritual joy, spiritual happiness, spiritual endowments, the graces of the Spirit—love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness. In all these respects we are poor, destitute, in want.—We are an hungered. We have not the bread of life to eat: we feed on husks. Our occupations, or pursuits, are the most servile and mean compared with what should engage immortal powers, and what should employ the children of God. We are fain to betake ourselves to these for promoting our happiness—for want of all nobler occupations and pursuits. Our minds must have something to occupy them: we must have some resource of pleasure or happiness. If we cannot get it in one way we must get it in another: if we cannot get it in holiness we must get it in sin: if we do not get it from God we must get it away from him. And the farther that any one goes in sin he is willing to go farther still: he becomes more willing to submit to any thing: he descends farther and farther: he sinks like the prodigal, till at last he counts nothing too mean that he may feed his soul with the husks of this world's pleasure.—Every sinner is held forth under the figure of the prodigal. It is but husks after all that this world confer—that any thing short of loving, obeying, God, affords. True happiness, the true food of the soul, the true occupation of immortal spirits, is the favor, the love, the service of God. Any thing else will not satisfy—any thing else is a servile occupation.

Such is our state as sinners, let us now look at our recovery from it. We are like sheep going astray, let us now look at the mode of our restoration] by the shepherd and bishop of our souls: we are like the lost piece of money, let us see how it is found: we are like the prodigal son, let us see how he returns to his father's house.

“What man of you having a hundred

sheep, if he lose one of them, doth not leave the ninety and nine in the wilderness, and go after that which is lost, until he find it”?

The way, then, by which the lost sheep is restored, is by the shepherd leaving the rest of the flock and seeking the wanderer till he find it. The shepherd leaves the ninety and nine in safety, and goes after the hundredth—the one lost sheep. He is anxious to restore it, to save it from perishing, to bring it back to the fold. He goes forth, therefore, prepared to encounter every danger, and hardship and fatigue, in order to recover the wanderer. He traverses the mountains and the valleys, he wanders over the desert. He heeds not the blast, or the lurking foe, or the long, long, distance he has to travel: he pursues his search, till at last he sees the solitary wanderer, seared by a thousand terrors, perhaps crouching under the storm, and wasted with hunger, and all but dead: he sees it, and he lays it on his shoulder rejoicing, and he carries it to its long lost companions, and to the fold from whence it had strayed. Such is the picture, the tender picture which Christ himself draws of what he has done for sinners. He is the good shepherd that left heaven, the safe members of the flock there, the ninety and nine, that had never strayed, and that were in the fold, safe, and happy. He left them and came down to save man, fallen man—to recover that one wanderer—that one race which had fallen from their integrity, and to bring them back to God. He came into this earth, and did all that was necessary to recover us from sin and from death. He undertook all the toil, and hardship and trial of this enterprise. Here the analogy ceases.—The good shepherd laid down his life for his sheep. The analogy is useful only thus far, to shew that we were lost, and that Christ came to seek and to save us. He left heaven and came into the waste howling wilderness of this world. He invested himself with the mantle of the shepherd; he became bone of our bone and flesh of our flesh. He became the substitute of sinners, to suffer and die in their room, to endure the wrath of God on their account, to offer himself a ransom for many. He died that we might live: he encountered God's wrath that we might be delivered from it. He bore our sins in his own body on the tree, and thus we are rescued from the penalty due to sin.

"All we, like sheep, have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and the Lord hath laid on him the iniquity of us all". But Christ does more than this, and here the analogy again holds good,—he lays hold on the sinner: by his word and spirit he converts him: he works in him faith—he produces in him all the dispositions which qualify for new obedience; he thus leads the sinner, or brings him, back to God. And in every instance of a converted soul, Christ is like the Shepherd—coming, and seeking, and delivering that soul—laying hold of it, turning it to righteousness; preventing it from wandering farther; saving it from the yawning pit, and the roaring lion; saving it from sin—from destruction—from death—from Satan and from hell. Christ's spirit arrests that soul, and convicts it of sin, brings it to faith, awakens it to repentance, and leads it to new obedience. When this is the case, it is brought back to the fold: it is returned to the shepherd and bishop of the soul. It is safe, and Christ rejoices over it—and angels rejoice over it: Heaven is glad, and the anthems of Heaven re-awakened to a new, a more joyful song.

The same truth, you will perceive, is taught us in the figure of the lost piece of money. The woman lighteth a candle, and sweeps the house, and seeks diligently till she find it. So, it is by Christ coming and seeking the soul that it is recovered. It would have been lost for ever otherwise. Christ comes by his word and spirit and restores the useless energies, the useless faculties, of the soul—restores them to their proper object, to their proper use. He awakens repentance, and begets faith, and revives love, and produces new obedience. The soul is again useful to its Creator, its rightful owner. It becomes available for his purposes. Its reason, or understanding, is again employed in contemplating God—its faith in trusting in him—its affections in loving him—all its powers in serving him.

In the parable of the prodigal son, the exercise of the soul itself in returning to God is brought out; the repentance and faith of the sinner are admirably illustrated. It is Christ that apprehends a soul, and works both repentance and faith in it: but the process of repentance and faith, the manner of them, is here illustrated. In what state is the sinner?—He is abject, vile, miserable. He has departed from God: he has followed his own

desires; he has set up his own will: he has been serving diverse lusts and pleasures. He is in consequence plunged in misery. He is in spiritual want, spiritual starvation. He is occupied in the meanest drudgery, the bondsman of Satan. In this state he is made to feel his want.—He comes to see his wretched and destitute condition. He comes to himself, as the parable has it. He thinks of his degraded and miserable condition. He thinks how far otherwise it might be with him—how different it is with others of God's children, who have never departed from God, who are still his servants. "How many hired servants of my father's have bread enough and to spare, and I perish with hunger!" "I will arise and go to my father, and will say unto him, Father, I have sinned against heaven, and before thee, and am now no more worthy to be called thy son: make me as one of thy hired servants."—Not that there are any in God's house that are regarded in any other light than as children. But Christ would here teach the low estimate that a sinner has of himself, his willingness to be nothing in God's sight—to occupy the humblest place in his household—to be admitted on any terms into his house. When once the resolution is finally made, he puts it in execution. He arises and goes to his father. The sinner thus exercised—come to himself;—for sin is regarded as a species of madness—the sinner is alienated even from himself; he is not in his right mind: "madness," it is said, "is in his heart":—when the sinner has come to himself—to his right mind—he goes to God in prayer, confesses his sins to God, and implores pardon through Jesus Christ. He goes to God as his father in heaven, and humbles himself before him—just as a penitent child will go to his father, and humble himself in his sight, if haply he may obtain reconciliation and forgiveness. The son of an earthly father who has acted the part of the prodigal, will naturally, on seeing his folly, return to his father's house to ask that forgiveness which he is well assured will not be withheld.—He counts upon his father's forgiveness, his affection even for an erring child.—He feels a conviction that he will be received, that he will obtain pardon, that he will not be cast off. And so, the sinner who has come to himself, who has seen his folly, who repents of his sins, goes to God, with the same, or a similar, confidence, having God revealed to him in all the grace and mercy of the gospel.

And how does God meet the returning penitent? How does he receive him? In the most gracious manner. Just as an earthly father will receive a penitent child, both into his favor, and into his house. We have it here represented. "And he arose and came to his father; &c." vs. 20-24. In the same way God deals with the penitent, and returning sinner. He receives him into his favour and love. He bestows upon him his forgiveness. He puts him into his family again. He restores him to all the privileges of a son. He invests him with the character of a son. He puts on him the fine robe of Christ's righteousness: he arrays him with his own holiness—the sanctification of the Spirit; and he makes merry; for this his Son was dead and is alive again, was lost and is found.

It is thus that we are lost; and thus we are restored. We are brought back to the fold by Christ, the Shepherd of the sheep: we are recovered to God by Christ: we become again available for the purposes of God's glory: we are reinstated in our place in our father's house, in God's favor, and in the heavenly mansions.—We come to God as penitent children: we receive his forgiveness, we have Christ's righteousness put upon us: we are sanctified by the Holy Spirit, and are introduced at last into the joys and the glories of the heavenly mansions.

What is your state? Are you yet like the lost, wandering, sheep, away from God and from happiness, stumbling on the dark mountains of sin—ready to fall into the pit of destruction, to perish under the storm of divine wrath, the prey of every temptation, of the spirits of darkness, and, unless arrested by the mercy of God, unless saved by the great and good Shepherd, sinking into eternal ruin? Are you yet lost to God? Are your faculties useless to God? Are they not employed to his glory? Are you still wanderers from your father's house, ungrateful, rebellious children? Are you living upon the husks of this world? Are you following your own sinful courses?—Reflect upon your state. You are *lost*. You are lost to happiness, lost to God, lost to yourselves. You are in danger of everlasting destruction. You are ready to plunge into the yawning gulf of eternal misery. You are wretched, and miserable, and poor, and naked. Return now to the fold, to the Shepherd and bishop of your souls. See your danger, and seek safety only in the guardianship and care of Christ. Let your powers no

longer be spent uselessly, but give them to God. Return to your father's house. God will receive you into his favor. He will bestow upon you the place and privileges of sons and daughters. He yearns over you to do you good. He will meet you on the way. He will see your returning footsteps, and he will anticipate you, and give you the embrace of a tender and affectionate welcome.

THE SUPPORT OF THE MINISTRY A PART OF THE TRAINING OF A CHRISTIAN PEOPLE.

The general rule as to the support of the gospel ministry is stated by the Apostle Paul (1 Cor. ix. 13, 14), in the following terms, in which he refers in the first instance to the arrangements of the Mosaic institution; "Do you not know that they which minister about holy things live of the things of the temple? and they which wait at the altar are partakers with the altar? *Even so hath the Lord ordained, that they which preach the gospel should live of the gospel.*" The same Apostle shows in his own conduct that there may be exceptional cases—cases of such a nature that it may be right for a minister, instead of burdening his people, to labour working with his own hands, in order to minister to his own necessities, and to them that may be with him; Acts xx. 34, Eph. ii. 9. In many quarters a disposition has been shown by the people to convert the exception into the general rule; and it is to be lamented that, from an unwillingness to urge their own claims—from an earnest desire, at whatever sacrifice to themselves, to preach to perishing sinners the glorious gospel of the grace of God, ministers, in too many instances, have yielded to the tendency, and in the want of adequate support from their people, have endeavoured to provide for themselves by the profits of some other employment. Schools, farms, mills, and various other secular pursuits have been resorted to. These, in some cases, may have yielded after all but a scanty subsistence; and, while his worldly avocations may have interfered very materially with the discharge of his spiritual duties, the minister is left to struggle on under the depressing feeling that instead of "providing for honest things, not only in the sight of the Lord, but also in the sight of men," he is in great danger of bringing into contempt the sacred office which he holds. In other

cases, which we regard as still more dangerous, there may have been such a measure of success, that those who have had recourse to such pursuits at first merely under what they regarded as the impulse of necessity, come to be pleased with the arrangement, and are willing that their people should be satisfied with that measure of ministerial duty which they can extend to them, after the calls of a lucrative business have been answered.

We do not pretend here to discuss the merits of particular cases in which ministers, not receiving adequate support from their people, endeavour to make up the deficiency by some secular pursuit; nor do we venture to say with respect to any such cases, how far the example of the Apostle Paul may warrantably be pleaded in justification of them. Our object is to remind those who have practically to dispose of such cases, that the Bible has a voice upon this subject to which they ought to listen; and that, according to its announcements, it does not follow that all is right merely because a minister may be able to subsist without burdening the flock among whom he labours. We believe few of our congregations would feel greatly flattered in being relieved from the burden of supporting their ministers, on the same ground which induced the Apostle Paul to say to the Corinthians (2 Cor. xi. 8, 9), "I robbed other churches, taking wages of them, to do you service. And when I was present with you and wanted, I was chargeable to no man: for that which was lacking to me the brethren which came from Macedonia supplied: and in all things I have kept myself from being burdensome unto you, and so will I keep myself." We are not sure either that even the poorest of these congregations—and we are not indifferent to what may be their trials in this respect—would venture to take up the position that in these matters they have given to the Lord according to his kindness to them. It is very evident that the work of the ministry requires the full and devoted attention of him who is put into the office—that nothing but a case of the most urgent necessity can warrant the abstraction of his time to any other pursuit; and as the people must be the heaviest sufferers from an inadequate supply of his services, they are the parties most concerned to make every effort in order to secure the full benefit of his labours.

It is not, however, from the mere necessities of the case, and from a regard to the evils that result from an inadequate provision for the support of the ministry, that we would press our congregations to a more earnest attention to this subject? The giving to which they are called is a part of that moral and spiritual training whereby God is pleased to exercise, to strengthen, and to mature the graces of his people, and so to ripen them for glory. With whatever feeling of derision the idea may be contemplated by some, it is nevertheless true, that an honour is conferred upon those whom God is pleased to employ as his instruments in communicating of his goodness to others. In the right discharge of the duty they will find that there is also the enjoyment of a privilege; for "it is more blessed to give than to receive." It was no selfish feeling that prompted the Apostle to say to the Philippians (Philipp. iv. 10), "But I rejoice in the Lord greatly, that now at the last your care of me hath flourished again; wherein ye were also careful, but ye lacked opportunity;" for he immediately adds, "Not that I speak in respect of want: for I have learned, in whatsoever state I am, therewith to be content." He was not indifferent to the benefit thus communicated to himself, but he especially rejoiced on their account, as he states in the 17th verse, "Not because I desire a gift: but I desire fruit that may abound to your account." These contributions are fruits which he describes as constituting "an odour of a sweet smell, a sacrifice acceptable, well pleasing to God."—The believer knows well that the only ground on which he, or any thing that he does, is acceptable before God is Christ our passover who is sacrificed for us; but he may also rejoice in knowing that, being accepted in the Beloved, the efforts which he makes in the service of God—in promoting the interests of religion, are graciously accepted as offerings of thanksgiving, as sacrifices of praise, according to the language of the same Apostle, in the epistle to the Hebrews, xiii. 16, "But to do good and to communicate forget not: for with such sacrifices God is well pleased."

No one at all capable of thinking will for a moment imagine that God is dependent upon the liberality of the most devoted of his people for the means of supporting the ministers of his word. It is he himself that formed the heaven as his throne, and the earth as his footstool. It

is his own grace that forms his people to be temples of the Holy Ghost. If he had been so pleased, he could have provided an earthly temple for his worship as immediately as he has provided that Saviour of whom the temple at Jerusalem, in all its splendour, was but a faint representation. He could have made a provision for the family of Aaron and for the tribe of Levi as he did for the other families and tribes of Israel. He was pleased, however, to separate the Priests and the Levites for his own immediate service; and he called upon the other families of his people to show their devotedness to himself, to express their gratitude for the many blessings he had bestowed upon them, to manifest their interest in religion, their concern about their own souls, their love to their brethren who ministered to them in holy things, by the provision which they made for the temporal comfort of those who were thus cast upon their care. "And ye shall rejoice before the Lord your God, ye, and your sons, and your daughters, your menservants, and your maidservants, and the Levite that is within your gates; forasmuch as he hath no part nor inheritance with you". "Take heed to thyself that thou forsake not the Levite as long as thou livest upon the earth". "And the Levite, (because he hath no part nor inheritance with thee), and the stranger, and the fatherless, and the widow, which are within thy gates, shall come, and shall eat and be satisfied; that the Lord thy God may bless thee in all the work of thine hand which thou doest". Deut. xii 12, 19; xiv. 29. Whatever changes may have taken place in matters of detail, the Apostle is express in stating, in the passage already quoted, that this principle as to the support of the ministers of religion by the church is continued under the New Testament dispensation; "Even so hath the Lord ordained, that they which preach the gospel should live of the gospel".

"Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father of lights, with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning".—The most liberal of those who contribute of their substance for the honour of his name must still say with David (1 Chron xxix. 14), "all things come of thee, and of thine own have we given thee". David acknowledged God as the bestower of all that worldly substance, a portion of which he was now devoting to religious objects. He acknowledged Him al-

so as the author of that grace which had so opened and enlarged his heart. "But who am I, and what is my people, that we should be able to offer so willingly after this sort"? The liberality of the gift is an index to the state of the heart, for "the liberal deviseth liberal things"; and the heaviest grief of the neglected minister may arise, not so much from a feeling of the privations to which he is subjected through this neglect, as from the saddening thought that the people who can be so careless about the support of ordinances, may be total strangers to that grace which these ordinances are the means of communicating. Nor let any one seek to relieve himself from the check of conscience which this remark may make him feel, by thinking of the liberality with which he too would act if he had means such as those with which David was blessed. The liberality is to be estimated not by the amount that is given, but the spirit in which it is bestowed—"God loveth a cheerful giver". "She hath done what she could" is the gracious commendation which Christ bestowed upon her who anointed him with ointment. Do the hearts of any swell with a desire of emulating Mary in acts of kindness to the Saviour, were an opportunity afforded? Let all such remember that Christ identifies himself with his disciples, and says (Matthew xxv 40), "Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me". In the days of Malachi, the Jews were visited with failures of crops; but instead of being authorized on that ground to withhold their contributions for the support of the ministers of religion, they were exhorted to renewed attention to this neglected duty, and were encouraged to look for relief in connexion with an amendment of their ways: "Bring ye all the tithes into the storehouse, that there may be meat in mine house, and prove me now herewith, saith the Lord of Hosts, if I will not open the windows of heaven, and pour you out a blessing that there shall not be room enough to receive it".

(From the *Missionary Record of the Free Church of Scotland.*)

COLONIAL CHURCHES.

AUSTRALIA AND AUSTRALIAN CHURCHES.

In the *Record* of last month we urged the claims of our colonies from considerations of a general kind. There is, first, our peculiar relation to the colonists as our countrymen, and the obligation arising there-

from to do our utmost to prevent them lapsing into heathenism or being gained over to a Church which has shewn herself in all ages a more bitter persecutor of the truth than even heathen nations. There is, second, the future great advantage which we shall secure to Christianity by making our Australian colony a thoroughly Christian state. Recent causes, too well known to be here specified, have given a prodigious impulse to that colony. It is growing more in a year than other empires have done in a century. It may be reckoned upon as certain, that if no unforeseen disaster overtake it, Australia, even in the lifetime of the present generation, will be one of the leading empires of the world—one of the powers of the earth—rich in men, rich in monetary and agricultural resources, and rich, too, in wise laws and noble institutions, provided we take care that its Christianity keep pace with its population. But in proportion to its influence for good, so will be its influence for evil, provided we fail to send it the gospel. Rome is now running a race with Protestant Britain for this great colony. Future ages will hold us inexcusable provided we allow so splendid a prize to fall into her hands. The claim comes home not only to our nation and our Church—it comes home to each of us individually. Are there those among us qualified for such a work, with very limited spheres of usefulness at home, or it may be with no field of public labour at all? Such should seriously inquire what Providence means when it closes doors of usefulness here and opens them abroad. Wherever his Master calls, there the minister should be ready to go. Wherever he can preach the gospel and convert souls, there are his country and his kindred. And though this may not be the lot his own imagination may have chalked out, it is that which God has appointed him, and he may find it the most useful and honourable in the end.—By following the path of duty, though at the sacrifice of many a darling scheme and of many a long-cherished prospect, he will find, undoubtedly, that the promise is made good in the end—"Every one that hath forsaken houses, or brethren, or sisters, or father, or mother, or wife, or children, or lands, for my name's sake, shall receive an hundredfold, and shall inherit everlasting life." It is not in Scotland only that the office of a minister is a noble and honourable one. It is not here only that the Church of Christ can be benefited by our labours. Christianity is of no country; it has the good of the whole family of man for its object; and were we more under the influence of its catholic spirit, we would not feel the claims of country less, but we would feel those of the world more; and we would be more willing to do the meanest service, and to fill the least dignified post whereby the cause of the gospel might be promoted.—

"He that humbleth himself shall be exalted."

The discoveries of the gold mines of Australia and the awakening energies of British Christianity have been contemporaneous. We cannot doubt that Providence had a high purpose to serve by deferring till now the revelation of treasures hidden in the earth from the dawn of time. Already great ends have been accomplished thereby. The solitudes of the globe have been peopled, a new kingdom has been added to the family of nations, and wider fields have been opened for the activity and enjoyment of man. But the special purpose of Providence has not yet been developed. Who can doubt that that purpose is to place at the service of Christianity more powerful agencies of a subordinate kind than any it has hitherto been privileged to wield, and so to hasten the advent of those blessed ages for which the world has so long waited? But, in order thereto, experienced and efficient ministers must be sent to that colony. The people there must be aroused to a sense of their duty, and taught both to enlist themselves and their substance in a better service than any they have known in that distant land. The opportunity is great, and the work to which the Free Church is called is a noble one.—It is nothing less than to erect in a new world the kingdom of her Lord and Saviour. And could she by the generous surrender of a few of her choice men (for it may be questioned whether less than this will meet the emergency) cross the great Pacific, and in the name of her Head take possession of the largest island in the world, she would not only thereby create new scenes of interest for her people at home but she would open unmeasured fields of usefulness abroad, and would save, by the preaching of the Word, thousands of immortal souls, at present devoting their whole heart and strength to the amassing of this world's wealth, and perishing, unwarmed and unprepared, in sin. Thus would the Free Church shew that her principles know no limit of country or of clime, and that, so far from desiring to concentrate exclusively her forces within the narrow bounds of home, she regards the world as her field, and will strive, as opportunity is given her, to proclaim in every realm and to every tribe the glorious truth that Christ is King of kings and Lord of lords.

But let us come to particulars. It is only when we do so, and when we take each locality by itself and weigh its claims, that we feel how strong the case as a whole is, and what a wide door and effectual has been opened in Australia. We have before us a mass of letters from our American and Australian colonies—enough to fill a little volume. To publish them as they have reached us would only be to obscure and bury the information they contain; and yet

it grieves us not to be able to permit the writers to plead their cause before the Church at their own length. It is difficult to say which to take first. Each pleads more importunately for help than another; and the help they crave is not of a pecuniary kind, be it remembered, but is of that sort for which the man of Macedonia prayed when he appeared to Paul in a vision, and addressed him, saying, "Come over and help us." Those who judge of the colonies by the spirit that animated them, even so lately as half a dozen years ago, make, we are persuaded, a great mistake. The indifference to religion and its ordinances which characterised the colonists to so great a degree then—the gross worldliness and selfishness which made them lean almost entirely upon the Churches at home—appear now to be at an end. Since that time, our colonies have received a large infusion of Christian intelligence and enterprise from the mother country, and the fruits of this appear in the more wholesome spirit that now pervades them. They ask from us only ministers; they are both able and willing to support them.

The next letter we select is from the Rev. Mr. Lindsay, LAUNCESTON, VAN DIEMAN'S LAND. There is here a small but growing congregation. They are labouring to erect a church, and have already subscribed among themselves upwards of £700, and hope to be able by the time the subscription list is completed to realise at least £1000. As an indication of their attachment to the Scottish Reformation and its ecclesiastical polity, they propose naming their structure "Knox's Free Church," Launceston. They have been gratified to learn from the convener of the Colonial Committee that some eight or ten ministers are to be sent out to Australia, and expect to have their hands strengthened by some of the number being settled in their own neighbourhood. "There is no fear of support," they say. It is cheering to find, from the following extract, that the cause of the Free Church is making progress there.—Mr. Lindsay says—

The odium, incurred by a straightforward adherence to the grand cause of the Free Church begins to break up and clear off. As an indication of which fact I mention, that last Sabbath evening I preached an anniversary sermon in the Wesleyan chapel to a crowded and most attentive audience. Now, at first the Wesleyans would not have applied to me, neither would the people have come to hear. "Great is truth, and it shall prevail." For these things I thank God, and take courage.

The second letter is from the Rev. Mr. Nicolson, HOBART TOWN, of the same country. It is only seventeen months since Mr. Nicolson arrived in Van Dieman's Land, and the congregation over which he presides, and which has been formed mainly

by his own exertions, has been privileged to raise the first Free Church in that colony. It was opened in September last, and the collection on the day of opening amounted to upwards of £170. "The church is seated for 750. Previous to its being opened, a day was set apart for letting the seats; three hundred sittings were let in three hours; and in a few days almost every pew in the church was taken. "As to the building itself," says Mr. Nicolson, "it is generally allowed to be a model of neatness and beauty. I suspect few of our friends in Scotland can imagine anything so elegant in this distant land; but I assure you there is a spirit among my people which would do credit to any congregation of the Free Church." The beautiful edifice just erected bears the name of "Chalmers' Free Church." Adjoining it is a good substantial school-house—Mr. Nicolson's object being to have an efficient week-day as well as Sabbath-school in connexion with the congregation.

The next letter is from the Rev. Mr. Salmon of SYDNEY. It reiterates the cry for help, and urges its appeal by the fact that the country, in the length of it and in the breadth of it, is open to the Free Church. We can scarce help regarding the following statement as a presage of that day when the gain of the whole earth shall be consecrated unto the Lord. "I was in hopes," says Mr. Salmon, "that £1000 at least, in the shape of gold-dust and nuggets, would be on its way to you by this time. I have not yet ascertained whether it is sent off, but I will immediately see after it." The writer continues:—

I do hope, and most earnestly pray, that you will be able to respond to our call for ministers, and that God will dispose the hearts of qualified men to come to our aid. I say advisedly that the country is yet open to us, throughout the length and the breadth of it, and I venture to say to you, that our cause was never more popular in the metropolis than it is now. Nothing but the extravagant price, both of land and labour materials, hinders us from immediately proceeding with a new church to contain a thousand sittings, and many are urging this in spite of all these considerations. Our church is all let, and there are multitudes of applications that we cannot supply. My dear friend, send us more good and right men—real Free Churchmen, with whom I can heartily co-operate and take sweet counsel. That will put an end in some measure to the pitiful jealousies that from the beginning have distracted and disturbed this Church.

I know not in what terms to express my anxiety, that eight at least, right men should be sent without a moment's delay to Sydney. They have funds to keep them till they are settled. They have important spheres of usefulness for them all, and

there is every reason to expect ample temporal support for them all. Do endeavour—indeed, I know you will—to secure men who can hold up their heads with God's help—workmen not needing to be ashamed. This will be a great country soon. Give us the means of making an impression upon it.

It is encouraging beyond measure to observe the missionary spirit beginning to display itself in Australia. A better token of the healthy condition of its own Christianity we could not have than this. Of all the institutions of the Jews, few were more beautiful than the offering of the first sheaf in the time of barley harvest, by which the whole fruits of the season were sanctified, as it were, and consecrated to the Lord.—In the extract that follows, from a finely toned letter by a lady, we see, as it were, the first sheaf offered, and the golden produce of that land consecrated to the Lord. May our largest expectations as to what Australia will do for the cause of Christ in future years be more than realised.

I have much pleasure in sending you a few pounds to aid a little the Portuguese refugees from Madeira, now in the island of Trinidad, and their pastor, M. de Viero, whose case, related in our *Record*, is most interesting, and whose faith and courage amidst so many difficulties have not escaped the notice of Christians in this land. A few friends in Melbourne offer this small tribute of their sympathy, along with their prayers, to their friends in Trinidad, and trust that such an example as they present of an infant Church struggling with her own trials, and at the same time holding out a helping hand to missionary efforts, may stir up other churches to follow her in the same path of duty and prosperity. I have handed over to the Rev. Mr. Millar ten guineas, which he promises by his good management will be twelve when at home, and expect will be shipped by the steamer "Australian," which leaves this to-morrow or next day, and should be with you in about sixty-five days after.

I am sorry that in this land of gold we can do so little, but as yet gold is not within the reach of every one to such an extent as may be supposed, and what we shall yet do in turning this gold into its proper channel depends entirely upon the help we get from home.—*Extract Letter to Co-conventor of Colonial Committee from Miss Janet Jackson, Melbourne, Victoria, September 22, 1852.*

We have numerous other letters, equally urgent for help, and filled with facts equally cheering, which we shall endeavour to overtake in our next.

(From the Home and Foreign Record of the Presbyterian Church in the U. S.)

INDIA: LODIANA MISSION.

EXTRACTS FROM A LETTER OF THE REV. JOHN S. WOODSIDE.

Evenings in the City.

SHARANPUR, June 22, 1852.

You will see by the heading what is to be the character of the letter; but I beg, before proceeding to the narration of facts, to explain the circumstances that led to these evening visitations. The gospel is preached every evening throughout the week, with rare exceptions, at the outside of the city church, on the highway side. When this place is occupied by one of the older missionaries, I consider it my duty to go somewhere else, though frequently I feel it a privilege to be a listener there. There is a large class of the community who never come to these evening assemblies. They would consider it beneath them to be seen mixing in the crowd that presses round the missionary.—It sometimes occurred to me that we ought to visit such people at their houses, and if they will not come to us, that we should go to them. For some time a number of the school boys had been inviting me to visit their fathers' residence, and I thought this a favourable opportunity for commencing the family visitation plan. I tried it, and am quite astonished what success has thus far attended it. I have a number of invitations which I have not yet been able to meet, and I hope, if my health is spared, to follow up this plan more thoroughly, particularly during the cold weather. I shall now specify a few cases, to let you see our manner of procedure, &c.

First Evening.—I went, accompanied by my Munshi, (a Mohammedan,) to call upon the father of a young Brahman who is a scholar in the English school. When we reached the house, we found both father and son absent, and were turning to come away, when another young Brahman, also a scholar, stepped up, and invited me to "honour his house with a visit." I complied, and following him a short distance, soon found myself surrounded by a crowd of men and boys in the open area or enclosed square of the Brahman's dwelling. I may here remark, that in all the dwellings of respectable natives, or rather inside of the outer enclosure of the whole establishment, there is an open area, around which are arranged the several apartments of the house. It is usual to receive visitors in this place, or in a kind of public hall before you enter this space. The owner of the house was engaged in enlarging its dimensions, and as the masons were busy at work all around, we were crowded upon mud, mortar, heaps of bricks, and what not. A seat was set for me, and after a few preliminary congratulations, I proceeded to the object of my visit. The Brahman is employed in the garden of the

East India Company at this place, so I thought I should adapt my discourse to the auditor. I began by glancing at the beauties and wonders of the company's garden—the variety of trees, plants, and fruits it contains. I then said I was a gardener on a small scale myself, and, pointing towards our school-house, said that was the garden in which I laboured. I tried to follow up the analogy between the sowing, planting, and gathering in the company's garden and the intellectual and moral culture of the school. From this I went on to the higher analogy of the soul, and the heavenly Gardener or Husbandman who cultivates it, and concluded by urging upon them all the cultivation of their intellectual, moral, and spiritual parts. At the conclusion, one of the men stepped forward, and said he was also a servant in the company's garden, and knew the name of every flower and plant in it, but said he would like his son to be a plant in my garden, and promised to send his boy to school the next day. He was as good as his word; the boy entered the school the following day, and is now receiving the usual culture of our "Seminary."

While I was engaged here, the young Brahman, to whose house I had first gone, had been informed of my visit, and came to ask me to return with him. I went along, and was soon in a large front room in the second story, which he had fitted up as a study. When I say "fitted up," I should explain that he had emptied it of all rubbish, had the walls all thoroughly scoured over with clay and cow-dung, and kept in it only his few school-books, and charpai (or bed.) There was a servant standing ready with a plate of sweetmeats, of which I had to partake. I was then shown all around the house, except the women's apartments, and last of all, he took me to see the shrine of his household gods. It was a little apartment about five feet long by three broad. I told him it was a shame to put his gods in such a small cell, while he himself occupied so fine a house. But then, said I, "Let us see what the gods are who live in this little cell, bring them out, and let us examine them." He brought them out, with a little persuasion, and there were the usual Hindu "Penates" quite in miniature, I could not be allowed to touch them, but I asked him to allow me to break off the trunk from the head of Ganesh, (Ganesh has an elephant's head on him,) and see if he has the power of re-attaching it. In a variety of ways I pointed out the absurdity and sinfulness of worshipping such useless pieces of brass and stone, and pointed out the only worship which can be acceptable in the sight of a holy God. Here I had a large concourse, chiefly of boys. I had also more auditors than I could see. The place we were in was separated from the women's apartments by a large door and a screen. I could easily perceive that we were seen and

heard by those within. I may mention that this young Brahman has commenced to teach his wife to read. He is a very promising young man, and I trust the Lord will one day so influence his heart that he will throw his idols "to the moles and the bats." Another fact about this young man will be interesting to note. He is the very youth who, on the first of August, 1849, told me that if I would admit a sweeper's boy into the school, they would all leave. That movement for the time broke up our school, and for two years this young man never came near us. He again entered the school in October last, and has scarcely ever been a day absent since. He says now he deeply regrets his former folly. So you see even our strongest enemies are converted into our friends. After giving him a little advice about the furnishing of his study, &c., I took leave. On my way home I thought I should call and see a young Bengali—one of those mentioned in my last. Two young Brahmans and my Munshi accompanied me. We found the young man with his two friends engaged in a game of chess, as he said, "to settle his head after the fatiguing duties of the day." The natives of this country are very fond of chess and other games of this kind. Even the females, I understand, while away the weary hours of their solitude at this favorite amusement. We had not stood many minutes when one of those awful dust storms, that sweep in such terrific grandeur over the plains of India, swept over the city. It was already twilight, but immediately we were in the most impenetrable darkness. It was too late to think of moving. I told my friend I should stay with him till the storm was over. So he invited me inside a large room which he used as a sitting and sleeping apartment. He had not a chair nor a stool of any kind to offer me. He seemed greatly embarrassed to have me standing, but as the place was well carpeted, to relieve him, I at once sat down on the carpet, *native fashion*, and invited all the rest to be seated. Our host then asked if I would allow him to play a few tunes on the guitar. I said I should be very happy to hear his performance. He played three tunes which to a native ear might have music in them, but, to my uninitiated organs, sounded rather rude. I then took the liberty of interrupting the music, and introducing other subjects. Our party altogether consisted of three Bengalis, two Brahmans, my Munshi, and myself. The room was a long, narrow apartment, and was lighted by a single taper at the upper end. The universal light in the Hindustani houses is a little earthen cup filled with oil, and a wick laid over the edge, the top of which burns with a very dim light indeed. There was just one such light in the apartment we occupied. After some conversation on the subject of Christianity, in which the Bengali (our host) clearly and systema-

tically exposed to my two Brahman converts the folly and sin of idolatry, and the superiority of Christianity, I began to press upon my young friends the importance of an early personal interest in Christ. I took the Bible—for the Bengali had one I had given him some time before, and opening at the 12th chapter of Ecclesiastes, I made a running commentary on it, and tried to apply the whole subject to those around me. I concluded the whole with prayer, in which they all joined in a standing position.—When I arose from the ground, my legs were so stiff I could scarcely move. I had been nearly two hours in that most uncomfortable position, but which to a native is the easiest method of sitting. It was near ten o'clock when I got home. The storm was over, the sky clear, and though I had a late cup of tea, I felt that I should like to see many such "evenings in the city."

Second Evening.—Two days after the above, I paid another visit to the house of a young Bengali pupil in the English school. This young man's father was for a long time the head of the Bengali community in this city, and the chief opposer of missionary operations. He maintained an English school in his own house for the benefit of his own and other Bengali boys, to prevent them from coming to our school. The epidemic of 1850 carried him off, and soon afterwards his two sons entered our school. The eldest is about sixteen years of age. Formerly he was a wild boy, and spent his time in foolishly running to the courts of the judge and magistrate. For many months he has been one of the best boys in the school. He attends our public worship on the Sabbath very regularly. A few Sabbaths ago he came to me, and said, "I like your church very much now. I am very happy to come to it." He had frequently invited me to visit his house, and on this evening I determined to accept the invitation. He took me around all the accessible apartments, and showed me his father's library, which contained a considerable collection of valuable English books, but generally deficient at some part, as they had been purchased at auction. A large assembly of men and boys collected. I began by an examination of the latter, on a variety of subjects connected with their studies, and led them on to the higher topics of religion, the folly and danger of sin, the necessity of a Mediator, and the certainty of salvation to all who believe in Christ. I was listened to throughout with the greatest attention, and most of them assented to all that I said.—During the conversation, a servant set a teapoy, spread a cloth on it; and brought in a large platterful of sweet-meats and a water-melon. I tasted both, and according to Hindustani fashion, was obliged to allow the whole to be given to my attendant. At the conclusion of the entertainment, I said it was our custom invariably to ask a blessing upon the food that God in his goodness has

sent us, and also to return thanks for the same. I said I could not think of partaking of their kind hospitality without returning thanks to God for his mercies, and entreating his blessing upon them all. They all stood up respectfully while I prayed to our heavenly Father for their conversion and salvation. After this I took leave, having spent upwards of two hours in this interesting assembly of benighted Hindus.

Third Evening.—Soon after the above, I fulfilled another appointment of the same kind at the house of a Bengali gentleman, whose sons are at our English school. This evening was, perhaps, the most interesting of all. It was a regular "field day" I had to encounter all the ability, learning, and subtlety of the Saharanpur Bengalis. The gentleman had invited all his friends to meet me. I found a new chair had been purchased expressly for my own use. A table was spread, with a snow white cloth. The reception apartment was set in order, and soon after my arrival one after another of my swarthy friends poured in till the house was filled. I was not long in getting into conversation on the great subject of my mission to this land. The chief part of the discussion was in Hindustani. If I could only tell you all that transpired, and report faithfully all the speeches that were made, and I am sure you would be much amazed.—They had evidently come prepared to give battle, and were eager for the conflict, and I do not know that I ever felt in better spirits for a discussion than that evening. At first I had to reply to four or five, but they were soon all siled, with the exception of one, a wiry, hard-faced, yet most intelligent little man, with reasoning powers of a high order, and a logic as elastic as India rubber. This man was educated in the Free Church Institution in Calcutta, and with the exception of one other young man in the assembly, who supported me in the discussion, he was better acquainted with Christianity than any present. This enabled him to continue the combat after his less knowing friends had given it up. I kept as cool as possible, listened to all he had to say, and refuted it in detail. I drove him at last into such a dilemma that he was either obliged to deny all evidence of every kind, or admit the truth of Christianity. I pressed him home in this direction with several illustrations, till his denial of some of the most palpable facts raised a general laugh against him. I then turned from him to the audience and said, "All the people of Hindustan know, that there once lived a great King called Akbar. Suppose our friend here says he does not believe this fact. Is he right, or are all the people of the land right?" They soon all saw how he was fixed, and cried out that he should not attempt to answer any more. I then turned to him, and in the most solemn language and manner entreated him not to use his talents against the truth. I showed him how he

could be held accountable for the scriptural knowledge he had received in a missionary school. I told him I knew well he did not believe a word of all he had been reasoning in favour of, and that I hoped he will no longer stifle conviction, but yield himself up to the Saviour. I invited him to visit me at my own house, and I should lend him useful books, and help him all I could in his inquiries after truth. He said he hoped I would "honour him by partaking of an entertainment at his house." To this I willingly assented; sweetmeats as usual were then presented, and I concluded the meeting with prayer, the whole assembly standing up. I was engaged over three hours and felt fatigued, as the evening was very warm; but as I rode home I could not but feel glad to have such an opportunity of hearing a testimony, though feeble, for the truth. I have not now time for more on this subject. I hope, however, this is not the last you will have of it. If God spares my life and permits me to labour here, I intend spending many evenings in the city in the houses of its idolatrous inhabitants. As ever, yours in gospel Bonds,
JOHN S. WOODSIDE.
—Banner of the Covenant.

(From the *Missionary Herald of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland.*)

HOME MISSION.

ACCOUNT OF THE PRIEST'S VISIT AT
THE BEALDERIG SCHOOL ON THE
20TH DEC. 1852.

It is seldom that a minister of Christ has an opportunity, away from the heat and passion of public discussion, of presenting to the mind of a Romish priest any portion of Gospel truth. Mr. Ferguson happily enjoyed such a season, and appears to have admirably improved it. The quiet hour of Father Williams' visit to Bealderig school will, we think, be remembered by him. May he be profited by what he heard on the occasion!

The Rev. Father Williams was just coming from celebrating a mass for the benefit of Mr. K.'s cows. The door of the school-house was open, and when he turned in from the road, two or three of the little girls ran into the other apartment. I told the children to sit down quietly. He entered, and said, "Some of them are running away. They are getting blushed."

I said, "It is strange how much afraid children are of the priest."

"They have sometimes reason to be afraid," he replied.

"No doubt of it," said I, "for it is only a few days ago since a priest, in Eng-

land, beat a poor woman with his umbrella because she got her child baptised by a Protestant minister instead of a priest."

"He was a great fool," was his reply.

"The result showed him to be that," I said, "because he had to pay £5 for his trouble."

As there was no reply, I proceeded by saying, "The priests appear to me to act a very unreasonable part. Man consists of two parts—a soul and a body.—The one is only dust, and will soon return to corruption, but the other is the more noble part, and will live for ever. You should, therefore, appeal to the soul, and convince the judgment.

"The sufferings of the body are often beneficial for the soul," was his concise answer.

"Neither Christ nor his apostles," said I, "give us either command or example to show that we should convince men in that way; and God's direction is—he that saith he abideth in Christ ought himself also so to walk even as He walked. Christ's way was going about continually teaching and preaching the glad news of the kingdom. His disciples likewise pursued the same course. They preached the Gospel to the people. And Christ's command is, 'Search the Scriptures'—a command given, not to the Scribes, or Pharisees, or priests of that day, but to the multitude that were assembled around Him. The command is not, hear the Scriptures from your teachers. They were commanded to search them for themselves—to search with diligence, like men looking for metal, as the original shows, to search the *Scriptures*—the written Word of God. This is the instrument, in the hand of the Spirit, by which men are regenerated—born again. 'The law of the Lord,' says David, 'is perfect, converting the soul.'—And this is the instrument by which God's people are sanctified and prepared for heaven; hence Christ's prayer is, 'Sanctify them through thy truth, thy word is truth.'

To all this he listened patiently, without offering a reply. He then said, "The Scriptures are hard to be understood. They should be read along with the comments of learned men. The reading of them by the unlearned leads to many errors and heresies in the Church."

"I have often thought it strange," said I, in a rather hortatory manner, "that when the Church of Rome considers the

word of God so obscure that the people cannot understand it of themselves, the clergy are not continually teaching it to them, and reading it for them. Do you, and the priests in general, read the Bible for yourselves?"

"We do," was his reply: "and when I was at college, we could read only a very few verses in the day, because they require so much explanation. A great deal may be written on a single verse."

"Now, permit me to ask you," I said, "did what you call heresies in the Church arise more from the laity or the clergy reading the Bible?"

He would not answer. I then put the question, "Was not Luther in holy orders?" He said, "He was."

"Well, then," said I, "on your own principle, it is the clergy, and not the laity, that should be prevented from reading the Scriptures."

With the desire, no doubt, of putting an end to this unpleasant business, he then said, "I heard that you were about to leave Bealderig."

"I would have no serious objection," said I, "if I were sent to a more inviting place."

He said, "I do not know how you could stay here so long as you have done."

"The belief," I replied, "that I was doing good to these poor neglected creatures reconciled me to the place."

He then said, "I just called in because it was reported that your school was very much increased; and I have to do my duty. I therefore took the liberty of calling, to see it with my own eyes. I will do what I can outside, but I will give you no annoyance inside."

In reply, I said, "I will be happy to receive you any time you call. You are at perfect liberty every time you pass.—I received the former priest in a friendly manner when he first called, and would have continued to do so, but, on the Sabbath after his visit, he said a great deal in the chapel, and, if I was rightly informed, his statements were not at all correct. I therefore told him, when he next called, that I would be happy to receive him in my own house, but that I would not receive him here."

"It is very hard to depend on what we hear," responded his reverence.

"It is quite true," I said, "and that is one reason why I blame the Church of Rome very much for trusting to tradition, instead of taking the rule that God has given us. We must neither add to,

nor take from, that rule. To protect us, therefore, from any tendency of the kind, God said, when it was completed, "He that addeth unto these things, God shall add unto him the plagues that are written in this Book; and if any man shall take away from the words of the Book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part out of the Book of Life."

He said, in reply, "Surely you do not think that our Church has taken away anything from the word of God? But I did not come to discuss with you."

Here he seemed anxious to be off, but I detained him by saying, "It is so seldom I have the pleasure of talking to a priest, that I am anxious to have a little conversation with you. I am afraid (I proceeded to say) that your Church suppresses the second commandment. It is not in the catechism that you put into the hands of the young."

"It is not easy for the children to commit it to memory," he answered.

"But, in your catechism," I rejoined, "the third commandment is called the second. The children will repeat the second commandment for us." The children here vied who could be first in repeating it. "You see," I continued, "this command forbids the making of images, and the bowing down to them. Perhaps that is the reason you do not care for their learning it. You make the images of God, and the Apostles, and the Virgin Mary, that are in heaven, and you bow down to them, though God commands you not to do so; hence, no doubt, you keep this commandment out of view as much as possible."

Here he became warmer and more loquacious. "You do not suppose that we worship the images," he said. "They are only to remind us of the history of Christ's passion, and of the Apostles.—When we see these things it assists our devotions. It is just like striking a medal to the memory of the Duke of Wellington, or getting the likeness of a father or mother."

"This is opposed," said I, "to the nature of the worship which God requires. God is a spirit, and requires a spiritual worship. I fear that few of your people have so intelligent views of this matter as you speak of. The great difference between the likeness of Wellington and the images in the chapel is, that the one is for religious purposes, and the other is not, which is the greatest difference imaginable. I am much afraid

that the common people have more reverence for the images than you say."

"They all have the same view that I have expressed," he said; and, for my satisfaction, proceeded to ask one of the larger boys some questions. These were put, however, in Irish, and, therefore, unintelligible to me; and when I told him to ask the questions in English, that the boy could speak English quite well, he stopped at once.

I resumed the subject by saying, "I would be glad to know how intelligent the views of the members of your Church may be; but one thing is evident, that your practice breaks God's commands—in the first place, by making images for religious purposes, and, in the second place, by bowing down to them. I was in chapel some time ago, and saw the people, as they went out, bowing to the image that was over the altar. When God came down on Mount Sinai, the Spirit tells us that he did not permit the people to see any manner of similitude, and he tells us the reason. It was lest they should corrupt themselves, and make a graven image. Now, if it was bad for the Israelites to have an image of God to remind them of the giving of the law, it cannot be good for the Church of Rome to have one."

Here again he seemed anxious to be off, and said that he did not come in to discuss with me, but that he was obliged to do his duty; and that he did not blame me.

I answered, "I believe that I am doing what is right, and I suppose you think you are doing what is right. But if I convince you that your opinions are wrong, would you not change from them?"

He then asked me, would temporal considerations cause me to profess to hold opinions that I did not believe?

To this I replied, "By the grace of God they would not; and perhaps I may succeed in convincing you of the error of your views on various points.—Not only is the making of images for religious purposes, and bowing down to them, contrary to the command of God, but praying to saints and angels, and the Virgin Mary, is also contrary to the teaching of the Bible. When John fell down to worship the angel that showed him the wonderful discoveries contained in the Revelations, he would not permit him. 'See thou do it not,' &c., 'worship God.' 'Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou

serve.' In worshipping angels you are guilty of the sin for which the Apostle reproved the Colossians. I may say to you, as Paul said to the Romans, 'You worship the creature more than the Creator.'"

No reply was made to these observations. "But," said he, "did not Christ leave a church upon earth, and rulers in the church?"

"No doubt of that," I replied; "but he did not leave any priests in it. To none of Christ's ministers or apostles is this term applied. Nor is the word that means priest applied to them in either the Irish Testament, the Vulgate, or the Original. There is no sacrifice now to be offered for sin; for we are told, in the Book of Hebrews, that 'by one offering he (Christ) hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified.'"

"Have not you priests in your church?"

"We have none," I responded.

"What, then, are the rulers in your church called?" he asked.

"They are called elders or bishops," I replied.

"From the Greek word *presbuteros* your church takes her name," he said.

"It does," I said, "and you must admit that we have a Scriptural name, at least."

"But the term also signifies priest," he said.

"It has never been so translated, except in a few instances, in the version of the Scriptures received in your own church," I replied.

"But," said he, "the Hebrew shows that the term does signify priest."

I answered to this vain and petty attempt at a display of superior learning—"I have learned a little Hebrew, and would like to hear you explain from it how the term comes to signify priest."

This etymological attempt was not made of course. But, by way of saving appearances, he again said, "Sure did not Christ leave a Church upon earth?"

"He did," I said, "and He also tells us of an apostate Church, and gives us the marks of it. Do you you recollect what the apostle says, in writing to Timothy, 'Now the Spirit speaketh expressly, that in the latter times some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits and doctrines of devils, forbidding to marry, and commanding to abstain from meats.' Peter also tells us that she would make merchandize of men. Now, these marks are applicable to no Church except yours."

"If you had a friend or sister," he said, "would you not think celibacy a holier state for them? The apostle also recommends it"

"But God hath said, by the same apostle," I replied, "that marriage is honourable in all." This includes priest as well as laymen; and surely Adam, in a state of innocency, and Moses, and David, and Aaron the priest, and his successors, were as holy men as the priests of the present day."

"Celibacy is a rule of the Church," he said.

"But," replied I, "the Church has no right to make such a rule, and by doing so the Church of Rome has showed she is the apostate Church"

"In the Church," he said, "Christ appointed a vicar on earth to regulate the affairs of the Church."

"Christ," I replied, "is both head and foundation of His Church. He is King in Zion, and he has given laws and regulations to His Church. It is no human foundation on which God's Church rests. 'Other foundation can no man lay than that which is laid, which is Christ Jesus.'"

He bade me good morning, saying "We must hear the Church."

I followed him to the door, saying, "Christ is its head. We must receive His teaching and obey His laws." I bade him good morning, and said that I would be happy for him to call whenever he found it convenient.

B. FERGUSON.

Bealderig, Dec. 24, 1852.

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