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FOR THE CHRISTIAN EXAMINER.

ON THE DOCTRINE OF TRANSUBSTANTIATION.

(Continued from page 100.)

Our third argument is, that the doctrine of Transubstantiation is inconsistent with what reason teaches us concerning the perfections of God. Reason and nature teach us that God is omnipotent and that nothing is impossible to be done by him. But though God is Almighty, we are not thence to ascribe to him contradictions. A contradiction consists of two contrary propositions, of which either the one or the other must be false. But no falsehood is to be ascribed to God. No contradiction is to be imputed to him.

That the doctrine of Transubstantiation contains a contradiction, may be easily shown. We admit that God may, if he pleases, convert the body and blood of Christ into the appearance of bread and wine. But the doctrine of which we speak, requires us to believe much more than this. It asserts that Jesus Christ while he was sitting in company with his disciples, discoursing to them and consoling them, at the same instant came into their hands in the form of bread. He was eaten, swallowed, and digested by them in the same manner as other bread; yet all this time he remained in his place, and continued to reason with

them, to admonish and comfort them. It is now time to ask, what miracle is there recorded in the gospel, which bears any resemblance to this. We are told that God might as easily effect this, as give sight to the blind, or restore the dead to life. But the cases are not at all alike. In the former there is a manifest contradiction: in the latter there is none. Had our Saviour, in restoring Lazarus to life declared him to be alive, whilst to the eyes of all the spectators he appeared to remain in the grave, without motion, activity, or sensation; this would have been a miracle similar to that of transubstantiation. Had our Lord declared the blind man's sight to be restored, whilst he could see nothing; or had he asserted the blind and deaf man to be healed, though he could neither speak nor hear, these would have been similar to the miracle of the Eucharist. Had our Saviour, in these cases, declared Lazarus to be restored; had he asserted the blind man to have recovered sight, and the dumb and deaf to have received the powers of speaking and hearing, we should then have been under the same necessity of believing these things, contrary to the senses of all present, that the church of Rome maintains, we are under to believe the transmutation of Christ's body into bread. But is there in fact any such miracle in

gospel as either of these? Did Christ ever require his disciples to believe that any diseased person was healed, without showing him to be healed? Or does he ever require them to believe that any dead person was restored to life, without first showing him dead, and then presenting him alive? Transubstantiation is the only instance in which we are supposed by the gospel to believe any thing contrary to our senses. It is a thing altogether peculiar, and totally unlike any other miracle that men ever were required to believe. It is not therefore to be explained or illustrated by a comparison with any other instance of the almighty power of God, either in creation or providence.

What is a miracle? It is a suspension of some of the laws of nature, effected by the power of God who appointed these laws. The appointment of these laws was itself a miracle, and indeed the greatest of all miracles. The instantaneous curing of the sick and maimed, the raising of the dead to life, the creation of the world, are instances of miraculous power that astonish our imagination, that convince us of the vanity of all human power, and force us to acknowledge the authority of the Sovereign Lord of all. But when a person offers us bread, and declares that it is himself, though he continues to be seen as before, to converse and reason with us all the time we are receiving or eating it, here we can see no miracle. There is nothing here which immediately strikes us as the effect of omnipotence. In fact, there is nothing but contradiction. A person requires us to believe that we see not what we do see, nor hear what we do hear—that we feel not that which we do feel, nor eat what we are eating.

Nor can the imperfection of our senses be pleaded in explanation of this contradiction. For it is admitted that the senses of our Lord's disciples informed them rightly. It might have happened through some disease of the eyes and ears of these persons, that they might have imagined they saw and heard our Saviour when they did not. By the effects of some other disease, they might have been mistaken in what they felt and ate. But here there is no room for this solution of the difficulty. Their senses informed them rightly, although this testimony of their senses was contradicted by our Saviour's declaration. Some of them saw him at the head of the table, others sat next to him; yet he declared they were eating him; and we are required to believe both these statements. In all other cases, when our senses give us contradictory information, we suppose them to be disordered, and that one part of the informa-

tion must be false. In this case, the declaration which the disciples heard from Christ, contradicted what they saw and felt; yet we are required to believe that their senses in both cases were equally sound, and equally correct; and that what they heard and what they saw, however contrary, were both true.

Let us farther inquire, what is the use of a miracle? It is to prove that God requires some doctrine to be believed, or some duty to be performed. The prophets and apostles were endowed with the power of working miracles, in order to prove that they derived their commission from God. Jesus Christ worked miracles for the same purpose. And it is easy to see how miracles serve this purpose, because no person can perform them except God himself, or those whom he empowers to do it. But the miracle of the Eucharist can never serve this purpose. It can never be offered as a proof of any doctrine; since it is of itself more difficult to be proved than any other doctrine that ever was proposed to the faith of mankind.

In the last place, let us inquire by what testimony a miracle can be proved. We believe the miracles recorded in the scriptures, because those who saw them have given us the clearest proofs that they were honest men who would not wilfully deceive. Since they were honest, we infer that the account which they give of what they saw must be true, inasmuch as a great number of persons could not readily be deceived respecting those facts which came under their observation. Had they told us things which they heard from others, or doctrines which they were convinced of by reasoning and argument, we should not have believed them so readily. But when they simply tell us what they saw, and we know that they were honest, we cannot refuse their testimony. The last appeal then is to the senses of those who saw these things. We believe the miracles of the gospel, because they were seen by those who recorded them; and we consider the testimony of the senses as sufficient to establish the truth of a miracle. But the miracle of the Eucharist contradicts the testimony of our senses. It requires us to disbelieve what our senses affirm, and to believe what is contrary to them. On what evidence then is this miracle to be received? Not on the evidence of the senses; for their testimony is overthrown by it. Is there then any evidence superior to that of our senses, on which this doctrine may be built? Is it not from the testimony of these senses that we receive the miracles of the gospel, and consequently itself? Is it not from the same testimony that we believe in God? For, from what other source can we de-

rive the proofs of his omnipotence, wisdom and beneficence? Where are we to search for the proof of these doctrines, but in the universe which God has made, and which cannot be known to us but by our senses? It appears then, that faith is founded in the testimony of the senses; and it can have no other foundation. But the doctrine of transubstantiation contradicts our senses. It overturns their testimony. Consequently, if true, it overturns faith also, and all the doctrines of religion, which can have no other foundation than that testimony. Since this doctrine overturns the testimony of the senses, and there is no other way in which it can be proved, it is evidently incapable of proof. There is no species of evidence left on which it can rest. There is no method of proof by which it can be established. It clearly follows that this doctrine cannot be proved at all. And if the gospel contained such a doctrine it would be a clear proof that the gospel did not contain a divine revelation.

The fourth argument that was mentioned, was, that the doctrine of transubstantiation is contrary to what we are taught in the scriptures concerning Jesus Christ. The scriptures inform us that Jesus Christ rose from the dead, the third day after his death, and that he will die no more. He is alive for ever more. But how is this consistent with the assertion that we eat his body in the sacrament of the Eucharist? Is it not a plain contradiction to say we eat the body of a person, who is still alive, and who reigns over all things? We eat his body, and feed upon it, digesting it in our stomachs; yet he is alive, glorious and triumphant. The one of these propositions flatly contradicts the other. They cannot both be true—one of them must be false. Whatever we have proved respecting the former contradiction, is equally true of this. It must not be ascribed to God, the Author of the scriptures: it cannot be explained as a miracle—it affords no proof of omnipotence. It does not serve the purpose of a miracle; nor can it be proved by the same evidence by which a miracle is established. This therefore is another contradiction implied in the doctrine of transubstantiation, which contains all the absurdity, and all the difficulty of the former.

Having explained our four arguments for the figurative interpretation of our Saviour's words respecting the bread and wine used in the Eucharist, we go on to consider the reasons stated by the Bishop of Meaux, in favor of the literal explanation of the same words.

The Bishop of Meaux argues, that, as the Jews

were required to eat the flesh of their sacrifices, so christians behoved really to eat the body of Christ. This at least is given as an illustration of the doctrine, if not as an argument for it.

This mode of reasoning is altogether inconclusive. For, although the Jews had been required to eat part, or the whole, of *their* sacrifices, it does not follow that all sacrifices must be eaten. There were many circumstances attending the Jewish sacrifices which are not to be found in the sacrifice of Christ. The victims among the Jews were presented by the persons in whose behalf they were offered; they were slain by priests, and laid upon an altar. But Christ presented himself, though he was not sacrificed on his own account; he was slain by Roman soldiers, and laid upon the cross, not an altar. We are therefore authorized in saying that it was by no means necessary for the sacrifice of Christ to be treated in every respect, in the same manner with the Jewish victims.

But what sets the weakness of this reasoning in the clearest point of view, is, that, in fact, the Jewish sacrifices were not all eaten. Some were required to be eaten, and some were to be wholly consumed with fire; which clearly shows that the circumstance of eating the victim is not essential to the nature of a sacrifice. The Bishop of Meaux indeed attempts to explain this in a manner agreeable to his own hypothesis, by saying, that the eating of one kind of sacrifices shows that we must eat the body of Christ; while, the abstaining from eating another kind of sacrifices served to remind the Jews of the imperfection of their oblations; and therefore Christ the perfect sacrifice, must be really eaten. But this explanation is entirely arbitrary. It has no foundation in scripture, and is altogether unsatisfactory. It still remains clear, that since some sacrifices were to be eaten, and others not, we are just as much at liberty to suppose the sacrifice of Christ to be of the latter kind, as of the former.

The belief of transubstantiation; it is said, greatly heightens the effect of the sacrament; as the person who receives the mass, believes the body of Christ to be within his breast, and consequently is more deeply affected with the impression of his Saviour's love than he could be by simply meditating on his passion. To this, we answer, first;—that Christ's corporeal presence in the sacrament does not in the least enhance his love. His sufferings, whether corporeal or mental, are allowed to be the same, whether this doctrine be true or false. The only way, then, that this doctrine can be supposed to produce a better effect upon christians, than the manner in which Protestants consider the

sacrament, is by exciting them to more serious and devout meditation. And here, it must be granted, that if this doctrine could be proved to the satisfaction of christians, a deeper impression would probably be made upon their minds, than can be produced by the most striking representation of our Saviour's sufferings, without the assistance of this doctrine. But this is a supposition that can never be realized. It is impossible to satisfy the minds of christians in general respecting a doctrine so contradictory to all sense and reason. And the more repugnant any doctrine is to the common sense and understandings of mankind, the more readily must doubts and suspicions arise in the minds of those whom we endeavor to persuade of its truth. And the more doubts and suspicions are occasioned by any particular doctrine, the less influence must that doctrine have on the mind.

Any effect that the doctrine of transubstantiation can have in exciting a more lively attention to our Saviour's sufferings, is far more than counterbalanced by the extreme difficulty of proving such a doctrine, and the uncertainty and doubts which it must generally produce.

As this argument for transubstantiation relates entirely to the effect which the doctrine is calculated to produce on the minds of men, and not at all to the evidence of the doctrine, it is fair to contrast with the good effects ascribed to it, the bad effects with which it appears to us to be attended. Among the bad effects which we have reason to attribute to this doctrine, this is one, that a doctrine so full of contradiction, so contrary to all the ordinary methods of judging of the nature of bodies, must naturally be productive of doubt in the minds of the faithful themselves. In consequence of these doubts, the influence of religion on the minds of christians is weakened. It is impossible for persons of any degree of reflection to avoid considering the many and evident contradictions implied in this doctrine. However those who are wholly ignorant and uninformed may profess to assent to it, such as have acquired any habit of reasoning can never view it without being struck with many difficulties. The doubts which are thus excited, and the uncertainty into which the mind is thrown respecting principles that are regarded as of the first importance, are exceedingly unfavorable to the influence of religion. They diminish the authority of moral duty, and are subversive of the practice of virtue.

The effect of the doctrine of transubstantiation is not less hurtful in another view. Those who

set themselves against all religion, and endeavor by every argument which their ingenuity can devise, to depreciate the importance of christianity, are too numerous in every christian country. The prejudices of these persons are greatly strengthened by every doctrine that appears to contradict the good sense and reason of mankind. And the more these tenets abound in the christian churches, the more violent will be the prejudices of unbelievers, the more numerous will they become, and the more lasting will be their opposition. The particular doctrine in question has no doubt been the cause of the infidelity of thousands. Mankind seldom take the trouble to consider what the gospel itself teaches. They take it for granted, that christianity contains all the contradiction which clergymen ascribe to it, when they defend and explain the doctrine of transubstantiation. Hence they infer that a religion which contains so much contradiction could not proceed from God. They reject therefore the whole gospel as a fable.

The defenders of transubstantiation maintain that this doctrine, though superior to reason, is not contrary to it. They assert that it is not more contradictory than the omnipresence of God, the immateriality of the human soul, and many other doctrines of natural or revealed religion, of which we cannot fully explain the nature. The omnipresence of God is indeed inexplicable to the human understanding. We cannot comprehend in what manner the Divine Being exists everywhere. But though this is inexplicable, it contains no contradiction. It is allowed on all hands that we do not understand the nature of divinity, nor the manner in which God exists. The divine essence must possess qualities which we cannot understand nor explain. To say therefore, that his nature is such as to exist every where, is no contradiction. It is only saying that he possesses qualities which we cannot explain. But, to say that any human being can exist in two or more places at the same time, is a contradiction; because we are acquainted with the qualities of human beings, and know that this is inconsistent with their nature. The same reasoning may be applied to the immateriality of the soul. It is no contradiction, to say there may be such an immaterial substance as the soul; or to say that it may influence the body. For we are not acquainted with the particular mode of subsistence of every being in the universe. But, it is a contradiction to say that two or more persons eat the same substance at the same time. We know this to be inconsistent with the nature of any corporeal substance. The doctrine of the

Trinity implies no contradiction : for any being may, in one respect, be three ; and in other respects, one. But no animal substance can be entirely eaten while alive, nor can any human being be in heaven, and on earth at the same time. Though, therefore, many doctrines of religion be inexplicable as to their peculiar nature, yet none of them implies a contradiction. But the doctrine of transubstantiation is strictly and properly contradictory.

But here we are answered, that the body of Christ possesses other qualities than those with which we are acquainted, and that, in consequence of some of these, it may be in more places than one at the same time, be eaten while alive, and by different persons at once. It is admitted that the glorified body of Christ may be possessed of some qualities with which we are not acquainted, and may possess those with which we are acquainted, in a degree of perfection of which we have no conception. But still, these qualities whatever they are, cannot be inconsistent with a human or a corporeal nature. If these qualities be such as cannot possibly be attached to a human being, then Christ is no longer possessed of a human nature. But the scriptures assures us that he has a human nature, or the nature of man. Consequently, this human nature, or human body, can possess no qualities but such as may be attached to a human body. But any substance that can exist in more places than one at the same time, possesses qualities which a human body cannot possess, qualities which no body whatever can have. It must be neither human, nor even material. It must be an immaterial substance. That is, it must be a spirit, and can, upon no account, be termed a body. If the scriptures termed such a being, a man, their purport could only be to perplex and deceive, not to instruct us. If God has communicated a revelation to mankind, that revelation must be expressed in human language, in some language which men employ in common life. If it is not so expressed, it can be of no use : nobody can understand it. If it be so contradictory as to call a man, a spirit, and a spirit, a man, it must confound the ordinary forms of human language, and can be of no advantage—can yield no instruction to any man.

Q.

W.

To be concluded in our next.

THOUGHTS ON THE DUTY OF THE SYNOD TO TAKE IMMEDIATE STEPS FOR THE EDUCATION OF THOSE YOUTHS WHO ARE ASPIRING TO THE MINISTRY.

MR EDITOR,

I have now to request that you will copy into your columns, the "*Report of a Committee of the Presbytery of Toronto, on the subject of a Theological Seminary.*" That Report was put into the hands of the members of the Synod in the year 1836, but it will be new to many of your readers ; and the perusal of it may tend to awaken the attention of the Church generally to the all-important subject of which it treats. The Report, it will be remembered, was brought before the Synod in the above year, and called forth considerable discussion. The result was the passing of a series of Resolutions, not substantially different from those which had been recommended by the Presbytery of Toronto. The Commission was instructed to carry them into effect ; but it did not appear at the last meeting of Synod that they had taken any steps to do so. The subject then obtained very slender consideration ; though a resolution in itself highly important, was adopted. We make the following extract from the printed Minutes for the last year :—[See page 31.]

"On a reference from several members of the Presbytery of Hamilton, for advice respecting the education of young men looking forward to the office of the Ministry, it was resolved, that Presbyteries shall in the next time, receive under their care such young men applying to them as they may deem qualified for entering on a course of preparatory study, and shall direct their studies as they best can, in the hope that better means of instruction shall ere long be obtained, and that the Church at home will accede to the educating and licensing of Probationers within our own bounds."

From the slender interest yet felt throughout the church in the training of youths for the ministry, we do not see that the Synod could have done more in the matter than what is implied in the adoption of such a resolution. It is an initiatory measure which should encourage our young men who are aspiring to the honorable work of the ministry, to communicate their views to ministers and Presbyteries, as it warrants Presbyteries to give their best counsel, encouragement and aid to such youths.

It is true, that in order to our licensing probationers, consistently with our present relation to the Church of Scotland, there must be a modification of the declaratory enactment of the General Assembly of the year 1833, which recommended the formation of Presbyteries and Synods in the Colonies. Yet who does not see that such modification of that enactment, like any direct aid to-

wards the endowment of a seminary amongst us, is most likely to be obtained, when we can go to the General Assembly, and tell our venerable Fathers and Brethren, that God has so far honored the ministry of the word sent forth by them into these regions, that some who have through it been united into the Saviour, are desirous of serving him in the same ministry? Let us but show to the General Assembly that we have even a few Christian youths of good parts, who are bound in spirit to serve God in the ministry of the gospel in these provinces; and we need not fear that our purpose and efforts to give them the most thorough training competent for us to give, will be frowned on by that Venerable Court. They shall, we trust, have no ground to surmise, that we wish to run counter to what is confessedly the tendency of all churches in the present age—the elevating the standard of scholarship among students for the ministry. And while for obvious reasons they may be disinclined to admit our ministers educated in Canada to an entire equality with those trained in their own Divinity Halls, in so far as eligibility to a parish in Scotland goes, we on our part, may without grudging consent to this, in the full confidence that when we have in Canada as good institutions for the education of ministers as those in Scotland, and have withal an over-supply of probationers—then our licentiates shall be duly respected and welcomed to the charge of Scottish parishes.

We rejoice to think that a few youths are already avowedly directing their studies towards preparation for the ministry, encouraged by the favorable reception which the proposal for a seminary obtained in the Synod. And it should be known throughout the church, that several of these are now studying in Hamilton under the accomplished Master of the District School there.

We know not whether the Presbytery of Hamilton, who must feel that a special superintendence of these youths devolves upon them, will apply for any farther instructions, to the next Synod; but in whatever way the subject comes before that assembly, we trust that they will promptly and cordially resolve to promote their education by all the means which the great Head of the Church enables them to employ. It is certainly a favorable indication that one so well versed in literature and science as Dr. Rae undoubtedly is, should be ready, as we believe he is, to lay himself out to the full extent that his other avocations will permit, for assisting and directing the studies of our young men. And we believe, that the earnest and unanimous representation of the Synod would easily obtain

from the Church at home, an able and experienced minister for the theological and pastoral training of our students, and the means, too, for his support.*

An arrangement like this would, we trust, not supersede, but introduce some more extensive and permanent institution. From the condition, both of the Church and of the province, all our institutions must have their "day of small things;" but through the blessing of God on prudent counsels and faithful exertions, we may assure ourselves that they shall yet have their day—their long day, we trust, of great things. If it could be so that the Synod should resolve not to train any of the members of our church for the ministry, until they obtain a chartered college, and some goodly pile of buildings with suitable grounds in its occupation, then we, at least, would bid adieu to the hopes, both of training our Canadian youths for the ministry, and of having the Presbyterian Church rooted in the community. Let us diligently employ the means which through the divine blessing on our exertions, we may command for educating our young men, and we may be assured that with the increasing demand for instruction, and the growth of the Church, suitable institutions will be obtained.

It should be kept in mind, that the minute subdivision of labor which now prevails in teaching the arts and sciences in our Scottish universities, was not coeval with the foundation of these institutions. The time was, when a Regent or Professor carried his students through the whole curriculum of study; and that was by no means a time of superficial acquirements. A similar plan would be most suitable to the circumstances of our Church in these provinces. We can expect only a few students at first; and our resources would not admit of supporting many teachers. Nor should we greatly fear that our students would not make any considerable advancement without the formal organization of a college. It is to be kept in mind that the actual acquirements of students are in the ratio rather of the impulses that move them to study, than of their opportunities for the prosecution of it. Let us but find young men moved by the Spirit of God to desire to take part with us in the ministry of the glorious gospel, and we may be assured that they will cultivate the best gifts for the exercise of that ministry.

Every age that has been distinguished for a re-

* We believe that some of the members of our Church, are longing for the actual commencement of the Seminary, that their offerings in the Saviour's cause may flow in this direction. We have heard of an offer by one gentleman of £25 per annum for ten years to the Seminary, when it shall be commenced. Happily this gentleman's zeal and liberality do not all hinge on the resolves of the Synod in this matter.

vival of genuine religion, has had a revival of biblical learning; as on the other hand, when the Church has declined in purity and zeal, biblical learning has languished even in Divinity Halls and Colleges. Gibbon sneers at the "fat slumbers" of the Church of England, had much to provoke it in the sloth which in his day oppressed alike multitudes of the well benefited clergy, and the pensioned members of the universities. Let us aim at promoting a vigorous tone of piety in those who are aspiring to the ministry, and we shall be in the direct way of inciting them to the culture of that learning which is necessary to the proper discharge of its offices.

The obtaining of a permanent foundation for the education of our ministers, is obviously a distinct object from the education of the youths who are now seeking for admission to the ministry among us; yet we trust, that the Synod will see that the immediate prosecution of the latter object with such means as we now command, is a measure all but indispensable to the former.

If an enemy found a seat in our councils, he could not more effectually counteract our efforts to obtain a permanent foundation for the education of candidates for the ministry, than by counselling us to reject the applications now made to us for instruction, by the youths who are offering themselves for the ministry, and to do nothing towards obtaining a Theological Professor, until we obtain a chartered institution of our own, or a professorship in connection with the Synod in King's College.

It is a law in the divine government, of extensive application, "He that hath, to him shall be given." And if we show ourselves zealous and faithful in training up in sound learning, the aspirants to the ministry who are found in our churches, then may we the more confidently reckon on aid and patronage from without. It would, we believe, be a new thing for the government of the Church, to aid in an enterprise like that which we are contemplating, those who were doing nothing to help themselves. The Royal Institution of Belfast, a college of the Synod of Ulster, the London University, and the College of Pictou, are examples which occur to us, of institutions that struggled into existence and notice through private exertions before they obtained royal and legislative charters and endowments.

It is well that the Colonial Secretary has spoken favorably of the scheme of a professorship of Theology, in connection with our Church, in King's College. But now that that institution has been modified in its constitution by the Provincial Le-

gislation, it is obvious, that in order to obtain the desired professorship in it, we must become suitors not in Downing street, but with the Council of the College, and eventually also, with the Provincial Legislature. The appointment of professors, and the regulation of the course of education, belong to the Council, and by the modified charter, no other religious test is required of a Professor, than the declaration of "a belief in the authenticity and divine inspiration of the Old and New Testaments, and in the doctrine of the Trinity." And thus the Council might appoint to a Theological Professorship, a minister of the Church of Scotland, or any other minister who would subscribe the test. But it is by no means likely, that the present Council would appoint a professor of our Church, with the express design of his taking a special charge of our Theological students. And as it does not seem that they could, without a farther modification of the charter, permit our Synod to exercise any control over one of their Professors—even though he were taken from our Church, and appointed to teach Theology, it is still less likely, that we could obtain from the Provincial Legislature, an enactment to give the Synod such a superintendence of their Professor as they unquestionably ought to possess. So that although the Colonial Minister was undoubtedly sincere in his professions of a desire to further our views for the education of our candidates for the ministry in the University of King's College; we cannot but look upon that seminary as a very doubtful, and at best, a remote resort for them. At any rate, the most strenuous exertions that can be made on our part for a foundation in the college, in connection with the Synod will be supported, and not counteracted by our being able to show that we have students ready to introduce to the class room, when the Professor shall take his Chair.

In every view of the matter then, the Synod appears to be imperiously called on, to make vigorous efforts for the immediate training of the youths who are seeking admission to the holy ministry amongst us. The peculiar difficulties and hardships which attend that office in these provinces afford a presumption that those who are now desiring it for their sons or for themselves see it in its proper glory as subordinate to the advancement of the kingdom of God, and the salvation of immortal souls; and hence, we are the rather bound to sympathize with them and encourage them. And if the Synod shall adopt some more decisive measures towards this end, they will speedily find that there are throughout our churches several Hannahs and Elkanahs who are ready to

lend sons to the service of God in His spiritual temple.

Your present correspondent, Mr. Editor has met with a few of such, and he will close this letter—which has run out beyond his expectations, into a kind of dissertation, with the notice of one case, in which he was brought vividly to see the need of an institution amongst us for the education of ministers.

When prosecuting a missionary tour in the month of February last, through a part of the Gore and Home districts, along with a co-presbyter, we stopped one night in the house of a thriving farmer, an elder from the North of Ireland. The evening worship brought of course all the children who were very numerous into the same apartment with us. We had just been told that the two elder sons, stout lads not above twenty years of age had returned a few days before from the frontier where they had been in arms with the militia to repel the threatened invasion; when, we asked the mother what she would think of giving one out of the many sons who still encircled with us the blazing hearth, to a different kind of warfare—the service of Christ in the ministry of the gospel. “Ah,” said she pointing to one of the lads “here is a boy whom his father and I have wished to educate for the ministry, but we have such a poor school in our own neighborhood, and we know of no college in the Province that, we despair of being able to obtain our wish respecting him.” We could not but admit the reality of the discouraging circumstances which the good woman had mentioned; and yet, rejoicing to find that such a purpose had been entertained by her and her husband, we exhorted them to commit it to God, and to improve every opportunity they could obtain for the education of the lad—mentioning to them at the same time the measures which the Synod were contemplating for the establishment of a seminary, and that the very knowledge of cases like theirs, in which christian parents were desirous to train a pious son for the ministry, would encourage the Synod, to pursue those measures with alacrity and vigour.

I remain,
Yours &c.

PRESBYTER.

REPORT OF A COMMITTEE OF THE PRESBYTERY
OF TORONTO, ON THE SUBJECT OF A THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY.

The committee report, that soon after their appointment, they applied to the highest quarters for in-

formation respecting the likelihood of King's College going into early operation; and, in the event of this taking place, of provision being made in it for the theological education of candidates for the ministry in the Presbyterian church; but could obtain no information on these subjects. The position of parties in the Provincial Legislature at that time, indeed, utterly forbade the hope that Theological Professorships in connexion with any Church in the Province would be established in King's College; and, though that position is now altered, it remains to be seen, how far any thing like unanimity will prevail in regard to the commencement of the College, and the organization of a theological Faculty in it. The committee are decided in the conviction, that it would be unbecoming in the Synod to intrust any Professor with the Theological instruction of their students, unless he were to a greater or less extent under the control of the Synod; and that the Synod should look to King's College as their Divinity School, only on condition of their obtaining a Professor of Theology in it who should be a member of the Synod, and subject to their jurisdiction. But the commencement of this royal institution does not appear to be so near, and neither does the obtaining of a Professorship on these terms appear to be an event so probable, as to warrant the Synod to delay preparations for the education of ministers from among the pious and devoted youth of our congregations. And the committee recommended the Presbytery to press upon the Synod, the importance of immediately taking steps, for the foundation of a Theological Seminary, for the training of such youths for the ministry. The founding of such a Seminary, it may be observed, does not imply the relinquishment of the claims which the Synod may have on the Government, for an endowment in King's College, if that institution shall at any time provide for the Theological education of the students of any of the Christian Denominations in the Province. On the contrary, it will rather strengthen such claims; inasmuch, as that however humble the Seminary may be, it will directly promote the enlargement of the Church; and Government aid of any kind may be expected in proportion to the extent and influence of the Church in the community.

The appointment of this committee implies, on the part of the Presbytery, a recognition of the importance of the establishment of a Theological Seminary; yet, as no common exertions and sacrifices will be demanded towards effecting this object; the committee feel themselves warranted to preface the scheme they are now about to submit with a few remarks humbly designed to deepen in the minds of the brethren, a sense of the importance of the speedy foundation in the Province of a college for the education of ministers.

It is submitted, then, in the first place, that ministers educated in the Province will have some considerable advantages over those of the same standing, as

to general qualifications, who have been educated in Britain. For, recent as the population of the Province is, and possessing as it does many characteristics of that of the Mother Country, it has yet a character of its own, in many important respects, distinct, on account of its mixed origin, and the circumstances which are peculiar to it as a young community. Hence, our preachers on their first arrival in the Province, even when amongst those who have migrated from Scotland at an early period, and still more when amongst the descendants of such, or emigrants from other parts, find themselves to be in some respects amongst a strange people; and they in like manner have something of the character of foreigners to the population. So that there is for a time a want of sympathy in each others views and feelings on many subjects; and the preacher is at once the less comfortable, and the less fitted to put forth the full influence of his office and character on the community. Ministers educated from amongst our own Provincial youths would have no such drawback on their usefulness; and they would have a more palpable advantage in their physical training, which would prepare them for the hardships incident to Missionary and Ministerial service in Canada.

SECONDLY,—It should be known throughout the Church, that there are now, in some congregations, individuals desirous of entering into the Ministry, and to demand of such an education in a Scottish University, would be a virtual barring of the door to their admission. Such individuals are not, it is true, known to be numerous; but unquestionably more of our pious youths would direct their attention to the Ministry, if means for a suitable education were within their reach. It may be safely affirmed, that the number of persons in a Church, who aspire to the Ministry from right motives, forms a fair test of the success, which God gives to the ministration of the word and ordinances in that Church; and it seems equally plain, that if a Church deny to such persons all opportunity of qualifying themselves for the Ministry, and of actually entering upon it, it is in the very way of counteracting the work of God, and cannot but provoke his displeasure. In this view of the matter, the present condition of our Church in these Provinces, destitute as she is of a school for the Prophets, may well awaken serious alarm. Many direct evils may be seen to be connected with the present system of obtaining Ministers. A certain nationality of character is induced on our Church, which by no means befits the origin of a great proportion of those who compose it: and in this way also, the Church is severed from many generous sympathies of the general population, and commends itself only to the national predilections of those who are of Scottish descent. The Church with a ministry purely Scottish, cannot acquire a Provincial character, and neither can it grow with the growth of the community; while in the changes to which a Colonial State is peculiarly liable,

it incurs a risk of being altogether overturned. Church history, it is believed, furnishes no example of the establishment of Christianity in a country, by means of the continued use of a foreign Ministry. Indeed, it has become an established maxim in the conducting of Christian Missions, that, the sooner that the converts of a country can be trained for the Ministry, the sooner may its evangelization be expected.

THIRDLY,—The commencement of a Seminary in the Colony for the education of Ministers, has become, in some measure, a matter of necessity.

The supply of preachers from Scotland has hitherto been very scanty and has rather tended to shew the extent of the want of Ministers than met that want: and, while for these several years past, the people have been more alive to a sense of their destitution of divine ordinances, the supply of preachers has been actually diminishing. This is attributable partly to the greater demand at home for able preachers, caused by the establishment of town and city missions, and the erection of new churches; and partly, it must be confessed, to the inadequate remuneration made to ministers in this Province. On the latter of these grounds only, is the diminished supply of Ministers from Scotland to be lamented. Let us rejoice, that the services of the best of her preachers are given to the culture of her own moral wastes. And how painful soever the consideration is, that ministers of the gospel in this land are very slenderly and inadequately paid, far from us be the thought, that the great work of bringing its people into the kingdom of God's dear Son, must stop, or even be abandoned by us. Let ours be the determined purpose to devote ourselves more entirely to this work; and then, we may without presumption assure ourselves, that the Master whom we serve, shall not leave us unrequited even in this life. As the Church gains a hold of the community we cannot doubt, that its ministers will be provided for.

The Glasgow Colonial Missionary Society may be regarded as the principal provider of preachers for the Scottish Presbyterian Churches of British North America: and yet, it furnished for Upper Canada only one laborer during the past year; while applications had been sent to them, from each Presbytery for one or two missionaries, with engagements for their support; and they had been pressed by the corresponding Secretary to send a still greater number of missionaries of their own, in order to meet the actual necessities of the Province, the directors of this excellent society, it should be known, deeply lament their inability to meet the demands which our missionary fields and vacant congregations make upon them, and they freely confess, it arises more from the aversion of suitably qualified preachers to come hither, than from the scantiness of their funds. If then, we would not see our mission stations abandoned, and congregations scar-

tered for the lack of pastors, we must be prepared for the alternative of raising up preachers amongst ourselves, or seeking them from other schools, than the Divinity Halls of our Scottish Universities.

FOURTHLY,—The importance of commencing early a school for the training of ministers, may be urged from the consideration, that the earlier it is planted, the more readily may it be expected to take root, and grow with the growth of the province. Some seem to be repelled from seriously considering the scheme of a seminary for our church at present, from the fancied hopelessness of the undertaking. They look at the richly endowed universities of Britain, and they think that nothing but a large endowment from the state, can originate an institution, such as the church should acknowledge. But such persons, it is believed, forget that the most flourishing colleges which public or private benevolence has endowed had an infancy, and in general have advanced by a slow growth to the maturity in which we now behold them. Colleges and other similar institutions ordinarily have at first aimed at providing only for the felt wants of the period at which they were founded, and their enlargement has been consequent on the increasing want of educated men, and on the increasing resources of the community. Now, it may be enough for us, to originate an institution that shall supply the present want of ministers. Let us not think of completing at once a great establishment. Let us lay a large and deep foundation—a foundation capable itself of extension, and build on it a superstructure suitable to our present wants and means: and it may be left to another generation to complete it. The funds that we might now acquire might be so laid out as to increase in value with the increasing capital of the Province.

Once more—as it does not seem out of place to remark—no ecclesiastical body, except our Church, and none of the secular professions in the Province, exact of those admitted into them an education in a British University. All other churches, whether following a rigid or lax ecclesiastical organization, a high or low standard of literary attainments for ministers, open the ministry to those whom they severally deem qualified, without respect to the place where they have been trained. Obvious advantages, as has been already remarked, must result from introducing our Canadian youths to the ministry;—and it is important here to remark that some of the most efficient ecclesiastical bodies in this and the adjacent Province, are making considerable progress in promoting education amongst their candidates for the ministry. The Episcopal Church, which indeed is very accommodating in its terms of admission to the ministry, so long as its ritual requirements are complied with, finds some of its most useful ministers amongst those who have been educated in Canada. And the Methodist body, which has heretofore gloried in an unlearned ministry, has, through its own exertions in contributing and

collecting funds, founded a Seminary in Cobourg, which promises to rival institutions that have for their endowment drawn deeply on the public revenue.

If we turn to the secular professions, we see one, the Medical Board, ready to receive applicants for their license, from the American or Transatlantic Schools indifferently; yet, zealous in exacting from those on whom they bestow it a good education. And in another, we see, that the Lawyers have already founded in the metropolis a Hall, which at once bespeaks their enterprise, and their determination to uphold the honor of their profession, in so far as this may be done, by affording to all who aspire to it, ample opportunities for preparatory study.—And shall the Church, which calls itself the Presbyterian church of Canada, continue to declare to its members, that that any candidates for the ministry, however well accomplished, if trained in Canada or any where but Scotland shall be rejected? Shall her ministers and elders in Synod assembled, permit another year to pass over without committing themselves in the Lord's strength, to the founding of an institution in which aspirants for the ministry, may require all the necessary qualifications which human teaching can confer, for that high and holy work?—We trust not. The committee conceive that a Theological Seminary might be organized so soon as an endowment for one Professorship and a Tutorship, or assistant Professorship could be raised.

A suitable edifice is of course indispensable to the effectual prosecution of the plan: but the first and most vigorous efforts should be directed towards providing the endowment. Temporary accommodations for classes could easily be obtained, until permanent buildings could be erected. It is conceived, that the sum of five thousand pounds currency, might be regarded as adequate for the first endowment, the interest of this at 6 per cent, being £300 per annum. The assistance of Government in the way of a grant of money or lands, would of course be sought; but the issue of such application should not be allowed to control our exertions in other quarters. The assistance of friends in Great Britain will doubtless be obtained, for endowments and buildings, scholarships and a library: but our first dependence upon God, must be on ourselves and our congregations. We must not seek help from abroad, until by the liberality of our own contributions we can prove to others that we have such a deep interest in the undertaking, as may be an earnest at once of wisdom and energy for the conducting of it. There should be employed in pleading this cause throughout the church, those who feel its magnitude and its urgency; and our people should be called to shew their concern for perpetuating christian privileges amongst themselves, and extending these to others, by large and willing offerings of their substance.

The committee submit the following draft of an

overture to the Synod, that the Presbytery, if they see fit, may adopt and transmit the same.

The Presbytery of Toronto respectfully overture the Synod of the Presbyterian Church of Canada, to take into serious consideration the importance of founding a collegiate institution for the education of pious youths, for the work of the holy ministry. And the Presbytery at the same time respectfully submit the following resolutions on this subject, for the adoption of the Synod.

RESOLVED, 1.—That the inadequate supply of preachers hitherto obtained from Scotland, and the capability of the Church here to furnish some students for the Ministry, urgently calls on the Synod to adopt vigorous measures for the foundation of a Theological Institution.

RESOLVED, 2.—That such Institution, if founded, shall be located within the bounds of the Upper Province.

RESOLVED, 3.—That respectful applications shall be made to the Home and Colonial Governments, for an endowment of lands or money, for the founding of such Institution.

RESOLVED, 4.—That the actual commencement of the undertaking shall not be contingent on the success of these applications.

RESOLVED, 5.—That a committee of Synod be appointed for drawing out Memorials and Petitions to the British and Colonial Governments, for assistance towards the foundation of the Theological Seminary, and making collections throughout the bounds of the Church for the same object: for preparing a scheme for the foundation, and for drafting a bill of incorporation for the Trustees and Directors of such Institution. The scheme and draft to be submitted to the commission of Synod, at their meeting in——for their approval; and the same committee to prosecute the passing of a bill of Incorporation in the Colonial Legislature, which shall have been approved of by a majority of the commission; and to publish reports from time to time as they may see fit.

ON CHRISTIAN BAPTISM.

Every true disciple of the Lord Jesus Christ must from his profession and desires seek to become acquainted with what our divine Master has taught and commanded us. We own his sovereign authority, and therefore we owe him implicit obedience; we acknowledge his infinite wisdom, and therefore all that he has taught demands our cordial

belief and acquiescence; we are assured of his infinite love, and therefore cannot but conclude that every command and institution ordained by him for our observance must be designed for our benefit; and if indeed the love of Christ does constrain us, it will be as our meat and drink to know and do his will.

The will of Christ which as his disciples we are bound to reverence and obey, must be ascertained by continued and patient investigation of that book wherein it is revealed. "Search the scriptures, for in them ye think ye have the words of eternal life, and they are they which testify of me:"—and just in the degree that we devoutly comply with this injunction we shall be able to give to every man a reason for the hope that is in us with meekness and fear.

The ordinance of Baptism, enjoined in Matthew's gospel, xxviii. 19—"Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost," occupies a conspicuous place in that simple ritual which is observed in the Christian church; and we may now be profitably employed in considering—Its origin—Its perpetuity—Its nature and design—Its subjects—Its mode and the obligation resulting from it.

1. The origin of christian baptism. On this point no difference of opinion has ever existed in the christian church, it being declared in a manner so clear and explicit as entirely to preclude all diversity of sentiment. The passage quoted above contains the origin of the rite. It was instituted by Christ and enjoined on his apostles and their successors in the ministry, immediately before his ascension into heaven. So far then, concerning this ordinance the views which have prevailed in every age have been the same.

2. Was it designed as a perpetual ordinance to be observed by the church throughout all ages? On this point also I am not aware that any considerable diversity of sentiment has at any time existed among those who have believed that all scripture is given by inspiration of God. With the exception of the Quakers, every sect of christians have regarded baptism as necessary to the christian profession, and of permanent obligation. This singular sect have presumed to expunge this rite from christian observances chiefly for the following reasons;—that the christian religion being wholly spiritual there is no need to admit into it any merely external forms or material emblems, that the baptism of the spirit being en-

joyed, baptism with water cannot be of any service. For similar reasons they do not observe the sacrament of the supper. The reasons are in themselves extremely trivial, for even a religion purely spiritual may, in the case of such a creature as man—a being compounded both of soul and body, of spirit and matter,—very properly admit of material adjuncts. Thus although prayer is an exercise purely spiritual, the frame of mind may be promoted by the attitude of the suppliant, and the place where he performs his devotions. Praise is an exercise purely spiritual, but who does not feel that the frame of mind may be assisted by that melody of the voice, and those hallowed poetic breathings in which we are accustomed to adore the Creator. In like manner baptism is an outward material sign of an inward spiritual grace, a sign in itself appropriate and impressive, and none but the wildest visionary could seek or wish to reject it on the plea that it is inadmissible in a spiritual religion. But we may take this occasion for remarking that this error of the Quakers has arisen from a principle which has been a fertile source of error in the church of Christ—an undervaluing of God's written word. This sect prefers what they call their internal light to what God has revealed in the scriptures; and it cannot be deemed wonderful that the light which is in them should sometimes prove darkness. Are not the words of the institution peremptory? Why tamper with them? I would scarcely have adverted to this peculiarity in the Quaker practice had it not prevented me from asserting generally that all christian churches have deemed the ordinance of baptism perpetual and obligatory. But indeed this single exception, to which we have thought it proper to advert, is so recent and adhered to by so small a division of the christian family, that it is hardly necessary, on account of it, to limit the assertion that all branches of the christian church in all ages, have with one consent regarded baptism as essential to the christian profession. And this general consent is manifestly founded on the words of the institution. "Go ye therefore and, teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world." The command is co-extensive with the promise.

3. Its nature and design. To elucidate this it may be useful to advert to the history of this rite; for it was not peculiar to the christian system. It existed long antecedent to it, and under very different forms of religion and even of heathenism. The washing with water indeed, seems to be an

emblem suggested by nature itself, expressive of a purpose to abstain from those moral pollutions which may have been contracted. Accordingly we find that those who were initiated into the mysteries or certain forms of heathenish superstition, bathed before their initiation in a particular stream, where they were supposed to leave all their previous errors and defilement, and from which they entered firmly into the belief of new opinions and the participation of sacred rites. This baptizing of proselytes was common also among the Jews, although it was not enjoined in any part of their law. They borrowed it from nature or from those typical washings or baptisms of sacred utensils by which they were cleansed and again made fit for sacred use. Thus when a Gentile sought to become a disciple of Moses, he received the initiatory rite of baptism—the sprinkling or dipping of water—by which he was emblematically purged from his former errors and sins, and made a public profession that he should enter upon a new course of belief and conduct. In conformity with this prevailing practice, John preached the baptism of repentance—that is, he performed the rite upon those who confessed their sins, and as a pledge and symbol of their determination henceforth to forsake them. When our Lord therefore instituted the ordinance of baptism and incorporated it with the ritual of his dispensation, it was, that it might answer a similar intent to that in which it had before been employed. It was the outward badge of those who received it that they had become his disciples, had entered his church, and were henceforth to be instructed by his doctrines, and to be guided by his precepts. When in the early age of the church this rite was administered to a convert to the christian faith, he was not required to give his assent to a long and elaborate confession of faith. "If thou believest that Jesus is the Christ," says an evangelist, "thou mayest be baptised." On his professing faith in this simple truth the initiatory rite was administered to him, he became a member of the church of Christ, and was admitted to a free participation of those privileges by which he might afterwards attain to the full perfection of the christian character. The nature and design of baptism therefore is to denote the baptized person's separation from all other forms of religion to the gospel, from all other masters to Christ, and his admission to that spiritual kingdom of righteousness and peace which Christ came to establish among men. And hence with admirable propriety and comprehensiveness, it is defined in our shorter catechism. "Baptism is a sacrament, wherein the washing with water, in the name of the Father and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, doth signify

and seal our ingrafting into Christ, and partaking of the benefits of the covenant of grace, and our engagement to be the Lord's."

4. Another inquiry connected with this rite is, who are the proper subjects of it, or to whom ought it to be administered? On the points previously touched upon there has been, and is, an almost entire conformity of opinion; but on this point, who are the proper subjects of this ordinance, there has been much controversy in the christian church. I shall here state not in the form or spirit of a polemic, but with the plainness and simplicity of a christian teacher, what seems to be the doctrine of scripture on this head.

Observe then that we do not find any where in scripture any fixed rule laid down to enable us to determine the age, the attainments, the character, of those who should be admitted to this christian ordinance. The words of the institution are very general. The following translation is more literal, and does not vary in sense from the authorized version. "Proceeding forth make ye disciples of all nations by baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, and by teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you." The injunction is to make disciples of all nations, this is to be done by baptizing them; and this baptism is to be followed up with a full course of instruction regarding every thing which Christ has commanded. With respect to adults it is quite obvious, that there is no mode of making them disciples but by a previous course of instruction sufficient to make them acquainted with the nature of this ordinance and the claims of the gospel upon their belief. The plan which the Jesuit missionaries followed of passing through extensive countries and sprinkling water in the name of the Trinity over multitudes at once, without any previous or even subsequent instruction, was as repugnant to common sense as to scriptural precedent. Such a practice could not by any possibility make christian disciples. For this cannot be done otherwise than by instructing them who Christ is and what he hath taught. This plan, we have every reason to believe the apostles and primitive missionaries uniformly observed. They instructed their catechumens in some short summary of christian doctrine, which so soon as they fully understood and embraced, they were admitted by baptism to a full standing in the church, and to a free participation in all its privileges. In this manner the Ethiopian prince was baptized after Philip had preached Jesus to him. So Cornelius and his household were baptized after Peter had discoursed to them of the death and resurrection

of Christ; and the Philippian jailer, after Paul and Silas had spoken to him the word of the Lord, and had solved his question, "What must I do to be saved? was baptized, he and all his straightway." Nor can there be any doubt that this was the uniform practice of the church in regard to adults converted from heathenism to the christian faith. They were previously instructed before they were baptized, and it was not until they obtained a competent knowledge and belief of the leading articles of the gospel, that they were admitted into the church by this initiatory rite, and were numbered among the professed disciples of the Lord Jesus. We reach then this conclusion that persons arrived at years of understanding were not admitted into the church by baptism until they were instructed, and professed their faith in him. Up to this point the whole christian church is agreed on the question, who are proper subjects of baptism? In regard to the condition on which this rite should be administered to adults, the Anabaptist and the Pædobaptist are of the same sentiment, and thus far their interpretation of the will of their common Saviour harmonizes.

But then there is an onward position which the Pædobaptist has attained on which his fellow christian, the Anabaptist, cannot follow him; and that is, the admission of infants and children into the christian church by baptism. The grounds on which the Anabaptist refuses to assent to this practice, are chiefly these:—That as infants and children cannot be taught, they cannot in strict propriety, become disciples, nor participate in the fellowship of saints; they can neither believe nor profess belief; and therefore they ought not, it is alledged, be admitted to a community wherein such belief and profession are the conditions of fellowship. In order to exhibit what we deem the insufficiency of these grounds for the exclusion of infants from this initiatory ordinance, let us observe, that at this day infant baptism is administered among every considerable division of the christian church, as an ordinance having the implied sanction, as is believed, of its divine Head. Following the history of the church backward from the present day, until the time of the apostles, it cannot be determined that there is any period in which this practice did not prevail, while there is very satisfactory evidence that it has prevailed even from apostolic times. Again we think this practice has both a direct and indirect sanction in the scripture histories. The practice is no where expressly forbidden. It is not at variance with the words of the institution; for those who observe it, resolve to make disciples of the young by baptizing and instructing—each as the child is

capable of receiving. The solemn dedication of the child to God in the baptismal rite, needs only precede by a few months, its apprehension of the glorious truth, that Christ is the Saviour of the world. And few will presume to deny, that children may not at a very early age, understand this simple truth, and believe in it to the saving of the soul. Again, we know, that in the Jewish church, the children of the promise were admitted, on the eighth day after their birth, by the rite of circumcision; and why may not the seed of the promise—the children of believers—be admitted into the gospel church? Has not our Lord himself declared, that *of such is the kingdom of heaven*? Did he not solemnly enjoin that they should be suffered to come unto him? In the sacred histories, we often read of whole households being baptized. Now, in almost every case, children form a part of the household; yet it is not recorded that the younger branches of the family were excepted in the administration of the rite. It is neither said, nor remotely implied, that the adults only of the household, were baptized. Nay, the strain of the narrative manifestly conveys the impression, that *every member*, connected with the believing parent, and represented as to his faith, in him, received the initiatory rite, and was admitted by the visible sign into the communion and fellowship of the church. We argue, therefore, that while there is no express prohibition forbidding the baptism of infants children, and while we have so strong a chain of presumptive evidence that it has been administered to them in every age of the church by universal consent, it would be a very unwarranted step to discontinue the practice.

In corroboration of the preceding views, we may advert to two other points which seem to have great weight in establishing the right of infants, who are the children of believing parents, to the ordinance. The first point is, their relation to believing parents; the second is, the duty of the church to them as such. When a parent has professed himself a believer in Christ, and has entered into covenant with God, the blessedness of the reconciliation thus effected, is not confined to himself alone—it extends to his children; for God has been pleased to give special promises and privileges to the seed of the righteous. They are blessed for their father's sake. The effusion of the Spirit of grace is promised to them also. They are not aliens from the commonwealth of Israel; they are fellow citizens with the saints, and of the household of God—of such is the kingdom of heaven. They share in their parents' daily prayers,

and participate in the mediation of the Lord and Saviour, in which their believing progenitors are interested. Again, the church has a particular duty to discharge to the children of its members. They are its seed and hope. If their religious culture be neglected, the Lord's vineyard will soon become barren and desolate; and not another task of greater moment is committed to christians, individually and collectively, than the duty of bringing up their children in the nurture and admonition of the Lord. Thus, it is manifest, that whether children are baptized, as they are among the Pædobaptists, or whether they remain unbaptized as among the Anabaptists, they must still be regarded as under the tuition and guardianship of that church with which, as the offspring of believers, they are connected. But mark the peculiar advantage with which churches entertaining views similar to ours, of the nature of this ordinance, may assume authority over the children of its members. We may say to them, your parents entered into covenant with God in his church, in your behalf; and in virtue of that covenant we claim the authority of caring for your spiritual interests, as comprehended in the same covenant engagement with them. Your parents, acting in your behalf, did consecrate you in baptism to the Saviour of the world; and the church as a party to the ratifying of the deed, assumes the right of calling upon you to redeem the solemn vow. The rite of initiation already performed upon you, you are free as a christian disciple, to all the privileges which the church has to confer, and you are bound to walk in them. And thus in due time, may we call upon them to renew by their own personal act at the Lord's table, an engagement made for them in infancy before they were conscious of obligation to the Lord that bought them. It is for reasons such as these, that we admit to the ordinance of baptism the children of believing parents.

5. There is another point connected with this institution worthy of a brief notice—the mode in which this rite ought to be performed; and this subject is brought before us in the question, Whether ought baptism to be performed by dipping or sprinkling? Be it observed, that the word *baptize* in the original Greek, denotes both to dip and to sprinkle. The question, therefore, cannot be settled by any mere explanation of the term. We naturally ask, then, what was the primitive practice? And this may with much certainty be inferred from the sacred histories. Thus from the circumstances connected with the baptism of John*—the multitudes that went out to him “from Jerusalem

* Matthew, iii. 5, 6, 16.

and all Judea, and all the region round about Jordan," to be baptized of him, *in that river*, we do not very naturally come to the conclusion that he immersed them all. In such promiscuous assemblages of age, rank and sex, and of a people distinguished for delicacy and reservedness, it is not in the least degree probable, either that they were undressed for the purpose of immersion, or that they were all conveniently supplied with bathing robes for the purpose, according to the practice followed now by the advocates of adult baptism and total immersion. It is much more reasonable to suppose that the convenience of the prophet, and of the parties applying to him, required a more expeditious method; and the impression made on us from the whole circumstances, is, that after the Baptist had addressed the multitudes on the bank of the river, enforcing the doctrine, and calling on them to bring forth fruits meet for repentance, those who professed went down with him to the very margin, or perhaps into the stream, and were sprinkled with the baptismal water by John, using, it may be, as the Jews were wont to do in purifications, a branch of hyssop for a sprinkler: this being done, *they went up out of the water*. The same observations may be applied to the baptism of the three thousand converts on the day of Pentecost.† We should be not a little perplexed to account for the arrangements necessary for the baptism of so great a multitude by immersion, in the city of Jerusalem, independent of the obstacles arising from Jewish feelings of delicacy and reservedness. We can scarcely suppose that the necessary means could be furnished in private houses, and there was no stream in, or near, the city adapted to the purpose. The same obstacles did not stand in the way to prevent the baptism of the Ethiopian prince‡ by immersion: Philip and he were alone, or only in the company of servants; and we may readily suppose there was water enough; and hence we can offer no reason why this form should not have been employed, except the single one, that sprinkling was much more convenient. Again, the case of the Philippian jailer,§ seems to us very conclusive in favor of the latter mode. For it is barely possible, that in the prison, at the hour of midnight, on a sudden and unforeseen emergency, there could be found all the prerequisites for administering baptism by immersion.

I have directed attention to these instances, not with the view of establishing that either dipping or sprinkling was the uniform and instituted manner in apostolic times. Enough will be gained to the ar-

gument, if I have shown that it is difficult to determine whether the primitive christians confined themselves always either to the one or the other—whether they immersed or sprinkled in baptism, or used either method indifferently. And that the wisest and best men have entertained different views of the primitive practice, would seem to authorize the conclusion, that the great Head of the church has not determined the mode by any precise rule, or by any clear and unvarying model. It seems to be a mark of divine wisdom, that the mere manner and non-essentials of the form of baptism, are left thus indeterminate and variable, as the circumstances of individuals and the diversities of climate may require. In tropical and warmer regions it may be suitable to employ immersion. In northern and polar latitudes, where this mode might prove dangerous to health, and inconvenient and cumbrous in its administration, the simpler form of sprinkling might be employed; and yet each be in perfect consistency with the revealed will of Christ, and in entire subserviency to the great end for which this ordinance was instituted, as a sign and seal of our admission into the visible church.

While we think the sacred scriptures do not precisely prescribe the manner of administration, and that a considerable latitude of variety may not invalidate the essentials of the ordinance; and while we admit that we cannot charge disobedience to God upon such as depart in the above degrees from the prevailing practice, we may express our high approbation of the simple, becoming and scriptural manner in which this rite is now performed by most of the protestant reformed churches. Sprinkling with water is now almost universally used. The smallest quantity of the material element is justly deemed a sufficient emblem of the spiritual baptism without which the external washing can prove of no avail. And our church, rejecting all idle ceremony and pomp, and sprinkling only in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, the mind is left free to expatiate on the mysterious but delightful cooperation of the blessed Trinity, in the scheme of man's redemption, as it is set forth in this divine institution.

6. In conclusion, let us advert to the obligations under which christians are placed by this solemn ordinance. By it they become the professed disciples and subjects of the Lord Jesus. Every wilful and deliberate violation of his commandments, becomes therefore a kind of perjury. It is not simply an act of disobedience against God—of this all sinners are guilty, whether they be baptized or not. But to renounce our christian profession after a new covenant engagement to it through this holy

† Acts, ii. 41. ‡ Acts, viii. 36. § Acts, xvi. 33;

rite, or to act inconsistently with it, is an aggravation of guilt; it is returning to the idolatry of a sinful life, after we have solemnly engaged before God and his church to forsake and renounce it. Oh! let us ponder on the momentous consequences resulting from such criminal conduct. Let us remember that our solemn dedication to God may prove a curse instead of a blessing. For if after receiving the outward sign and seal of Christian discipleship, we linger amidst the beggarly elements of the world; if we cling with idolatrous fondness to what God has forbidden; if while we bear the christian name, we aspire to nothing of the christian sanctity; if by a profane, ungodly and infidel life, we dishonor the holy name wherewith we are called; and if we thus continue to evince a mind wholly depraved and unregenerate—oh! what can our baptism avail? What can it avail but to envenom the stings of an awakened conscience, because when admitted into the church, we desecrated it; when admitted to its privileges, we trod them under foot; when stamped with the sign of the Christian disciple, we betrayed our Master's cause, crucified him afresh, and put him to an open shame.

OMEGA.

CHRISTMAS DAY—BETHLEHEM

I set out for this village, six miles to the east of Jerusalem, signifying "the house of bread," from the fertility of its soil; and which is distinguished from another Bethlehem in the tribe of Zebulun, and the scene of events which, to Christians must ever invest it with the deepest interest.

"Bethlehem, thou sacred spot,
Henceforth be thou my paradise! O God,
Eternal, infinite! Thou, who thy Son—
Thy only Son—hast given, to save the race
Of Adam's long-bewail'd posterity,
Holy art Thou."

I entered this most sacred village with feelings which quite overpowered me; the birth-place of our adorable Redeemer, and the very cradle, I may add, of the Christian world. Truly was the prediction fulfilled—"In this place will I give peace, saith the Lord of Hosts." One circumstance struck me most forcibly on entering by an archway or gate. On the left were wells of antique structure, each three feet in circumference, which unquestionably must have been the same that David longed to drink from, when he waged war with the Philistines, who had occupied the

place, and which was well adapted for a garrison. These are just "by the gate," and being so much filled with earth, I was reminded, to stop them up was construed into an act of hostility. 2 Sam. xxiii. 14-16.

But, ah! how impossible is it to find language sufficiently strong to describe my emotions on setting my feet on this chosen spot of earth, where the "Holy Child" was born, in all the helplessness of sinful and suffering humanity, reposing in the arms of his mother in a mean stable. I can only say that, at this deeply interesting moment, my heart was filled with the most profound and awful reverence, accompanied with heartfelt gratitude, when calling to recollection those ever memorable words, "Unto you a child is born, to you a son is given, the Saviour who is Christ the Lord;" and who, on passing by the nature of angels, took upon him that of man, leaving the bosom of the Father, for an heritage of the very greatest poverty. Here was produced that inscrutable mystery of godliness—God manifested in the flesh, to whom things most opposite, which never met before, existed in harmonious union—the divine and human nature, mercy and truth, peace and righteousness. There reigned around at the moment, a truly glorious solemnity, amidst the serenity and stillness of the day, and in unison with that train of reflection which the inspection of such scenes raised to a high degree of excitement. The sun shone most brilliantly, and in its beams I beheld a piece of glass or metal on the roof of the convent, sparkling with a beauty altogether indescribable, similar to a star; and by a singular coincidence, this was exactly over the very spot of the Nativity. The evening again was calm, as if the general pulse of life stood still; and as the host of heaven, one by one, appeared in the fine, deep blue sky, like the Patriarch of old, I yielded to the pensive influence of the hour in such a place, and walked forth at eventide, to meditate in the valley beneath, where the heavenly host appeared to the humble shepherds watching their flocks.

After a description of the Franciscan convent, where the author was accommodated, he proceeds thus:—"I was conducted to a small staircase of about twenty steps, leading to the chapel of the Nativity, under ground. This is thirty-eight feet in length by twelve in breadth, and ten in height, lined and floored with marble, and contains five oratories on each side. Before the altar about forty massy silver lamps, the gifts of Catholic sovereigns and princes, are kept constantly burning. On the east side of it is the identical spot where the Son of God came forth, and was cradled in obscurity.

'Glory, to God on high, who gives
Love, grace, and peace on earth;
Let every sex and age adore,
And sing the Saviour's birth.'

This is marked out by a star formed of white mar-

ble, inlaid with jasper, surrounded with a radiance and glory, and the following inscription :—

'Hic de Virgine Maria Jesus Christus natus est.'

To the right of this, and at the distance of seven paces, is pointed out a low recess, hewn out of the rock, raised two feet above the floor, and scooped in the form of a manger, where the infant Jesus lay, which originally belonged to a caravansay or inn. This is also paved with marble. Here, also, lamps of silver are always in a state of illumination; but, alas! faint symbols of that blessed light which, rising here, shed its healing influence on the nations. I saluted on my knees the place of the Nativity, as observed by pilgrims, although no kind of ceremony was necessary to enhance or express that sense I entertained at the moment, of those eternal obligations which, in common with the whole race of mankind, I was under to that now glorified and exalted Being, who, in this most remote corner of the earth, entered upon his state of humiliation, suffering, and obedience, even to the death of the Cross.—*Rac Wilson's Travels in the Holy Land, &c.*

LIFE OF JOHN KNOX.

Extracted from M'Gavin's Life of the Reformer.

If those men whom Providence has destined to be instructors and benefactors to their fellow-creatures, had some presage of future eminence in their infant countenance, as Moses seems to have had, there would be no subsequent controversy about the place of their birth, their parentage, or education, as every circumstance of their early life would be observed and carefully recorded. But in this, as in other respects, the future is wisely concealed from human eyes. Persons born in the middle and lower classes of society, are known only within a small circle at first; and before they can distinguish themselves by any great enterprise, they are often placed in situations where no one knows who were their parents, or where they were born. Every one, if he pleased, might leave on record some account of himself; but persons of distinguished merit are the last to think that the world would care for their early history; or, by the time that they have become distinguished, their hands are so full of important business, that they have no time to think, much less to write about their childhood and youth, which they remember to have been vanity.

Knox died in the year 1572, aged sixty-seven; so that he must have been born in 1505. The place of his birth is not certainly known, but it is generally agreed to have been in or near Haddington. There is nothing known with certainty of his ancestors, ex-

cept what he relates in his history as having said to the earl of Bothwell. "My great-grandfather and father," says he, "have served your lordship's predecessors, and some of them, (meaning his ancestors) have died under their standards." "These words," says Crawford, "seem to import that Mr. Knox's predecessors were in some honorable station under the earls of Bothwell, at that time the most powerful family in East-Lothian." But every man in Scotland must have had honorable ancestors, if that is to be inferred from the simple fact of having died under the standard of some powerful chieftain. David Buchanan, the first editor of Knox's entire history, affirms that his father was a brother's son of the house of Ranferly in Renfrewshire, and the fact of his connection with that family is admitted by Dr. M'Crice, who informs us that his mother's name was Sinclair, which name he sometimes affixed to private letters instead of his own, in times of danger and persecution.

He who has risen by his own merit to the first rank in society, and to a conspicuous place in the history of his country, may give himself little concern about the rank of his parents, provided they have honorably filled the place, however low, which Providence assigned to them. But that Knox's parents were not of the lowest rank, appears from their being able to give him a learned education, which must have incurred considerable expense. He was put to the grammar school of Haddington, and afterwards sent to finish his education at the university of St. Andrews. There is a fact not mentioned by any of his biographers, except by the writer of this, in a note to the late edition of the Scots Worthies. "In the records of the university of Glasgow, anno 1520, John Knox appears in the list of matriculated students, when, if it was our Reformer, he must have been fifteen years of age, a proper enough time for his appearing in that character; and this was probably an intermediate step between his leaving the grammar school, and going to St. Andrews, for there is no doubt of his having studied there." It is probable enough that he might spend a part of his youth with his friends in Renfrewshire, and that they would give him the advantage of attending a seminary so near at hand.

At St. Andrews, he was the fellow-student of the afterwards celebrated George Buchanan; and it was well for both, that they had for their preceptor John Mair, or Major, a man who was considerably in advance of his neighbors, in useful knowledge and liberal thinking. Knox, while very young, received the degree of Master of Arts, and before he left the university, he became a teacher of scholastic theology, which Melchior Adamus, as quoted by Crawford, says he did with great authority, and was in some things more happy than his master; and David Buchanan adds, that he was advanced to church-orders before the time usually allowed by the canons. At this time he was a mere popish priest; but he had acquired too much light to suffer him to remain in the darkness of the cloister.

He has not recorded particularly the progress of his mind from darkness to light, or what were the means which Providence made use of for the purpose of leading him to embrace the truth. He must have been familiar with the vulgate scriptures, if not with Wickliff's translation into English; and we are informed by Adamus, already cited, that he carefully read over the writings of Augustine and Jerome, and found in them another kind of theology than that which had been long taught by the schoolmen. Both these great authors are still regarded as saints by the church of Rome, though she has long abandoned the doctrines which they taught. It was from Augustine that Luther, who was a monk of his order, learned a purer theology than was taught by the church; and Knox seems to have derived benefit from the same source. But he must have been early and intimately acquainted with the Holy Scriptures, as appears from the ready extemporaneous use which he made of them, in preaching and in argument; and he yielded the most profound submission to their authority as supreme in all matters of faith and worship. The first sermon he preached, and for which he had little time to make preparation, was from a difficult passage in the book of Daniel, which he handled and applied as any Protestant would do at this day. He is said to have profited much from the preaching of some who had embraced the truth before him, such as Thomas Guiliam, John Rough, and George Wishart, whose names and labours are recorded in the history. The progress of his mind to a clear perception of the truth was gradual, and not very rapid. "It was about the year 1535," says Dr. M'Crie, "when this favorable change in his sentiments commenced, but, until 1542, it does not appear that he professed himself a Protestant." They must have been seven years of serious and deep reflection; and, perhaps in proportion to the slowness with which his mind yielded to the truth, was the firmness with which he afterwards held it.

After leaving college, we find him employed as tutor to the families of Ormiston and Langniddey, having his residence chiefly with the latter. His sentiments were known to be hostile to the established religion, and he was on that account in danger of suffering death at the stake, as many others had done, particularly his friend and father in the gospel, George Wishart, on whose character and sufferings he dilates with much interest in the history. The rage of his enemies increased on the death of Cardinal Beaton, in which certainly Knox had no hand; but to save his life, he took refuge with those who had effected it, in the castle of St. Andrews; from which circumstances a great hue and cry has been raised against him, as becoming the voluntary companion of murderers. That can scarcely be called voluntary which a man is obliged to do to save himself from being burnt to death; but in point of fact, Knox did not look on those men as murderers, but as the executioners of righteous judgement upon a murderer, and therefore he

felt no scruples about making a common cause with them. They kept the castle as long as they could; but were compelled at length to surrender to the French, who broke faith with them, and sent some to prison, and others to the galleys. It was Knox's lot to be confined to the latter, in which he suffered a rigorous captivity of nineteen months, and it is uncertain by what means he obtained deliverance.

Knox never approved of Henry VIII's reformation of the church of England; for though that monarch threw off the authority of the pope, he retained many popish errors in doctrine, worship, and government. Henry died about the time that Knox obtained freedom from the galleys. He then went to England, expecting a more thorough reformation in the reign of Edward VI. under the administration of Cranmer. He was not entirely disappointed; but there was not so much improvement there as he desired and expected. He was appointed to preach in different places, and had a sort of stated residence in Berwick, where he diligently improved his time and talents; and formed an attachment, which, afterwards, issued in a happy marriage. "He spared neither time nor bodily strength," says Dr. M'Crie, "in the instruction of those to whom he was sent. Regarding the worship of the popish church as grossly idolatrous, and its doctrine as damnable, he attacked both with the utmost fervour, and exerted himself in drawing his hearers from them, with as much eagerness as in saving their lives from a devouring flame or flood. Nor were his labors fruitless: during the two years that he continued in Berwick, numbers were, by his ministry, converted from error and ignorance, and a general reformation of manners became visible among the soldiers in the garrison, who had formerly been noted for turbulence and licentiousness."

He was afterwards removed to Newcastle, and placed in a sphere of still greater usefulness. He was appointed one of King Edward's chaplains in ordinary. He was consulted about a revival of the Book of Common prayer; and he had influence to procure some improvement of it. "These alterations," says Dr. M'Crie, "gave great offence to the papists. In a disputation with Latimer, after the accession of Queen Mary, the prolocutor, Dr. Weston, complained of our countryman's influence in procuring them. "A runaway Scot," said he, "did take away the adoration or worship of Christ in the sacrament, by whose procurement that heresy was put into the last communion book; so much prevailed that one man's authority at that time. In the following year he was employed in revising the Articles of Religion, previous to their ratification by parliament."

Knox had the honor of preaching before the King, and the much greater honor of refusing, first a city living, and then an English bishoprick, which, together with his reasons for doing so, gave high offence to his majesty's council, in which were several bishops, who

no doubt, regarded his conscientious scrupulousness as a reflection upon themselves. They told him they were sorry that his judgment was contrary to the common order; and, with his usual honest bluntness, he replied, he was sorry that the common order was contrary to Christ's institution. He appears to have perfectly understood the difference between a mere preacher of the gospel, and one who was pastor of a church. The sphere of the former is the world of mankind as sinners; the latter includes the oversight of a company of Christians, professing separation from the world; and one great object of the pastoral office is to watch over them, and take care that separation from the world be strictly maintained. Knox delighted to preach to Englishmen as sinners, whether papist or protestant; but he would not incur the responsibility of a pastoral charge over a congregation of them as Christians, because the law of the land would not suffer him to maintain their separation from the world. This is plainly expressed in his own words. He said, there were many things that needed reformation, without which, in his opinion, ministers could not discharge their office conscientiously in the sight of God; for no minister, according to the existing laws, had power to prevent the unworthy from participating of the sacraments, which was a chief point of his office.

He remained in England, and even continued to preach for several months after the accession of Mary to the throne. That lady whom, not without good reason, he usually called Jezebel, soon procured the repeal of all the statutes that had been made in favor of the reformation. Popery was re-established, and all who refused to conform were liable to suffer death as heretics. Still Knox manifested no disposition to leave his post. It was not till after it was known that his enemies were actually in search of him, that he was persuaded to leave the kingdom, by the urgent entreaty of his friends, and contrary to his own mind; for never, said he, could he die in a more honest quarrel, than by suffering as a witness for that truth of which God had made him a messenger. This step, though reluctantly taken, was evidently his duty, though it has been objected against him that he was too ready to take himself out of the way of danger. True courage consists in confessing the truth at all hazards, and suffering for it when that cannot be avoided without committing sin. But when it can be avoided by flight, Christ not only permits but commands it. "When they persecute you in one city, flee ye to another." Had Knox at that time been brought to trial, he would certainly have been committed to the flames, as many others were. But he was preserved for nearly twenty years longer labor in the service of his Master. It was some time, however, before his own mind was reconciled to his flight. He could scarcely acquit himself of what must have at least had the appearance of cowardice: and he was afraid that it might operate as a discouragement to the

faithful few whom he had left behind him. His feelings on this occasion are strongly expressed in some of the private letters which he wrote at the time, from which Dr. M'Crie has given very interesting extracts.

He arrived at Dieppe in France in January, 1554, from whence he travelled to Switzerland. "A correspondence," says Dr. M'Crie, "had been kept up by some of the English reformers and the most noted divines of the Helvetic church. The latter had already heard, with the sincerest grief, of the overthrow of the reformation in England, and the dispersion of its friends. Upon making himself known, Knox was cordially received by them, and treated with the most Christian hospitality. He spent some time in Switzerland, visiting the particular churches, and conferring with the learned men." He afterwards went to Geneva, where he became acquainted with Calvin, a man of a kindred spirit, whose friendship he enjoyed till the death of that eminent reformer and divine. Here he fixed his residence till Providence found employment for him elsewhere.

During the heat of the persecution in England many protestants fled for their lives, and took refuge in different places on the continent where the reformation had been embraced. Frankfort, an imperial city in Germany, had done so. A number of the exiles had found an asylum there, where there was already a congregation of French protestants. By permission of the magistrates, the English got the joint use of the place of worship which had been allotted to the French, with liberty to conduct the service in their own language, but on condition that their mode of worship should differ as little as possible from that of the French congregation; and that they should avoid the use of certain ceremonies which were practised in England. Some of these ceremonies, and the dresses in which they were performed, were so much akin to popery, that the magistrates dreaded a breach of the peace, if they were again to be exhibited within the walls of their city. "The offer," says Dr. M'Crie, "was gratefully accepted by the English, who came to an unanimous agreement, that in using the English liturgy they would omit the litany, the audible responses, the surplice, with other ceremonies, which in those reformed churches, would seem more than strange, or which was superfluous and superstitious." Knox accepted an invitation to be one of the pastors of this church, to which he repaired, and "commenced his ministry with the universal consent and approbation of the congregation."

It might have been expected, that now he would be suffered peaceably to pursue the work of his vocation as a Christian pastor. He could not conscientiously accept that office in the church of England; but his objections did not apply to a congregation of Englishmen, in a foreign country, untrammelled by anti-christian statutes. This congregation consisted only

of men who were suffering exile for the sake of the truth. It must therefore have been a church as thoroughly Christian as perhaps any since the days of the apostles. Knox must have had upon the whole much satisfaction in their fellowship, and in ministering to them, though at first he found considerable difference of opinion among them, and some strife about the use of the liturgy, which has been England's great idol ever since the Reformation. Knox succeeded in effecting a compromise, by which the most objectionable parts of the liturgy were laid aside, and some things added suitable to their own circumstances. The whole church was thus brought to a happy agreement; they gave public thanks to God for it, and joined in the celebration of the Lord's Supper, as a pledge of union, and the burial of all past offences. By effecting a compromise, I do not mean that Knox made any sacrifice of principle. He was not inimical to the use of a liturgy, provided it were purged of error and superstition. Nay, he and John Craig, by appointment of the General Assembly, in 1565, composed a book of prayers, for the use of the church of Scotland, as related by Calderwood. This was printed and prefixed to the metre version of the Psalms; and I suppose it was the original of what I described as Knox's liturgy, in a note to the history, p. 107.

But the English church in Frankfort was not suffered long to enjoy peace and the benefit of Knox's ministry. The persecution still raged in England, and other sufferers were driven to seek refuge abroad. Among those who came to Frankfort was Dr. Cox, a very high churchman, who had been preceptor to king Edward VI., and probably had a hand in revising the liturgy as directed by that pious young prince. He could not endure that a word of the sacred composition should be omitted in public worship. Accordingly, the first sabbath that he and the other newcomers were in church, they began, in the orthodox English fashion, to repeat the words of the prayer after the minister, to the disturbance of the congregation. No remonstrance would prevail on them to forbear. They were determined, they said, "to do as they had done in England; and they would have the face of an English church." "The Lord grant," said Knox afterwards, "they may have the face of *Christ's* church." This was the consequence of the half-measures, or compromise, to which Knox had consented, or rather had recommended. He had done so, I believe, in perfect sincerity, and without any sacrifice of principle, as I have just observed; but had he been enough enlightened to discard set forms of prayer altogether, as the church of Scotland did at a subsequent period; and had he and his co-pastors been content to pray as the Holy Spirit gave them utterance, they would not have suffered the unreasonable, nay, the wanton intrusion of such men as Dr. Cox, who, seeing so much of the form of "an English church," must of course have regarded it as a monster without having also

"the face" of one. Had they exhibited nothing but the divine simplicity of New Testament order and worship, they would have had no attractions at all for such sticklers for ceremonies, who would have formed a church for themselves, or have sought for one elsewhere.

A breach was now made which it was impossible to heal. The intruders found little difficulty in gaining a party to their side, among those who had still a lingering affection for the English forms; but the presence and the influence of Knox formed a mighty obstacle to their carrying all things as they desired. In order therefore to get quit of him, a scheme was devised, which, for downright diabolical treachery, has scarcely a parallel in the history of any worldly kingdom, and only one in the history of the church, of which our Saviour himself was the victim. Soon after leaving England, Knox wrote a faithful admonition to the people of that kingdom, which will be found in the Appendix to this volume. In this he wrote in very strong terms of condemnation of Mary the English Queen, and of her husband's father, the emperor of Germany, calling them enemies of Christ and his church. Frankfort was in the emperor's dominions, and though Knox had committed the crime, such as it was, while not a subject of his, some of his new brethren went to the magistrates of the city, with the book in their hands, pointed out the obnoxious words, and accused Knox of high-treason against the Emperor, his son Philip, and Mary Queen of England. Happily the Lutheran magistrates had more of the Christian spirit than these English sufferers for the truth. They saw the insidious treachery of the thing; but they could not protect the delinquent, should the emperor demand him, or require him to be delivered up to his enemy the Queen of England. They therefore sent a private communication by a friend of his own, informing him of the charge laid against him, and advising him to leave the place; which might have made them liable to a severe reckoning, had their connivance at his escape come to the knowledge of the emperor.

He returned to his favorite retreat at Geneva; and soon afterwards, ventured to take a journey to England. His first object was to visit his wife and friends in Berwick, from whom he had been absent two years; and while with them, he heard such an account of the state of matters in Scotland, that he was encouraged to take a journey thither. He began to preach in Edinburgh in the house where he lodged, and he was heard with intense interest by all who could get access, including some of the nobility and gentry of rank. From this period he was constantly employed in different parts of the country, of which he has given an account in the history. The clergy became dreadfully alarmed when they heard of his preaching, and at the rapid progress of the reformed doctrines. He was summoned to appear before a convention of them in

Edinburgh; and he determined to obey the summons: which, when his enemies understood, they durst not meet him, and the convention was not held. He, however, kept the appointment; and on the very day on which he was to have been put on his trial, he began preaching again in Edinburgh to greater audiences than he had had before.

While thus busily employed at home, he received an invitation from the English church in Geneva to be one of their pastors. This church consisted of some of his former flock, who had left Frankfort the year before, and come to settle in Geneva, where they had liberty to worship God without being subject to the yoke of the ceremonies. It must have been very gratifying to him to receive this public testimony of his integrity from those who were best acquainted with his conduct in Frankfort, and the cause of his leaving it. Perhaps it was on this account that he so readily accepted the invitation. To the friends who had pressed him to remain in Scotland, he said, "Once he must visit that little flock which the wickedness of men had compelled him to leave." At the same time he gave them to understand, that if his services were again required at home, he would not be backward to return. He proceeded to Geneva with his wife and her mother, then a widow, in July 1556.

Knox remained two years in Geneva in great peace and comfort, and had two sons born to him there. But his heart was still in Scotland. In a letter to some friends in Edinburgh, March 16th, 1557, he says, (I quote from M'Crie,) "My own motion and daily prayer is, not only that I may visit you, but also that with joy I may end my battle among you. And assure yourself of that, that whenever a greater number among you shall call upon me than now hath bound me to serve them, by his grace it shall not be fear of punishment, neither yet of the death temporal, that shall impede my coming to you." The same year he received an invitation to return, signed by some of the Scottish nobility. His correspondence on the occasion is recorded by himself in the history; and indeed from this period, the history of the Reformation, is so much the history of Knox himself, that I need add little more here. In little more than a year after his arrival, the Reformation was embraced by persons of all ranks throughout the kingdom; the protestant church was organized and established; and ministers were appointed to all the principal cities. Knox was appointed to Edinburgh, where, after great labor and many vicissitudes, he ended his days in peace, and great spiritual comfort, the 21th of November, 1572. As he was laid in the grave, the Regent of the kingdom pronounced his eulogium in these memorable words, "Here lies he who never feared the face of man."

"He died in the sixty-seventh year of his age, not so much oppressed with years, as worn out and exhausted by his extraordinary labors of body and

anxieties of mind. Few men ever were exposed to more dangers, or underwent such hardships. From the time that he embraced the reformed religion, till he breathed his last, seldom did he enjoy a respite from these, and he emerged from one scene of difficulties only to be involved in another, and a more distressing one. Obligated to flee from St. Andrews to escape the fury of Cardinal Beaton, he found a retreat in East Lothian, from which he was hunted by Archbishop Hamilton. He lived for several years as an outlaw, in daily apprehension of falling a prey to those who eagerly sought his life. The few months during which he enjoyed protection in the castle of St. Andrews were succeeded by a long and rigorous captivity. After enjoying some repose in England, he was again driven into banishment, and for five years wandered as an exile on the continent. When he returned to his native country, it was to engage in a struggle of the most perilous and arduous kind. After the Reformation was established, and he was settled in the capital, he was involved in a continual contest with the court. When he had retired from warfare, and thought only of ending his days in peace, he was again called into the field, and, although scarcely able to walk, was obliged to remove from his flock, and to avoid the hatred of his enemies by submitting to a new banishment. Often had his life been threatened; a price was publicly set upon his head, and persons were not wanting who were disposed to attempt his destruction. No wonder that he was weary of the world, and anxious to depart. With great propriety it might be said, at his decease, that *he rested from his labors.*"

The people of Scotland were very tardy in doing justice to the memory of our Reformer. Indeed his character was not properly appreciated till the appearance of Dr. M'Crie's book. He had suffered so much from the false representations of popish and high church writers on the one hand, and from admirers of queen Mary on the other, that he was generally regarded as a sort religious Mohawk, who was to be remembered only for the mischief he had done to our ancient cathedrals, the ruins of which were looked upon, and pointed out to travellers, as so many monuments of his ruthless fury. I well recollect the astonishment that was expressed by many persons, well informed on other points, when they read Dr. M'Crie's narrative of his life, and the exhibition of his real character, to find that he was a gentleman, a scholar, and a warm hearted benevolent Christian, distinguished above any man of his age for the union of two things, which are but too rarely, in any age, united in the same mind, the love of his Saviour, and the love of his country, in relation to both her religious and civil interests. The current of public opinion was now turned in his favor; and people began to talk of some public testimony of respect for his memory. But this would probably have terminated in mere talk, but for the well directed zeal of the reverend Dr. Mc-

Gill, professor of divinity in Glasgow university, to whom this city is indebted for the honor it has acquired by Knox's monument. He was the first to bring the subject before the public; and by most persevering activity, aided by the good offices of some of the most influential citizens, and of many friends to the cause at a distance, a sufficient sum was obtained for erecting the column and statue, which surmount the fir park to the north of the city.

Glasgow, Jan. 1831.

PRACTICAL SERMONS.

No. IV.

ON SOME OF THE CAUSES WHICH PREDISPOSE TO INDIFFERENCE AND SCEPTICISM IN RELIGION.

By the Rev. Robert Macgill, Minister of St. Andrew's Church, Niagara.

But if our gospel be hid, it is hid to them that are lost: in whom the god of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God should shine unto them.—2 Cor. IV. 3, 4.

On the shores towards the extreme north of the American continent, there are settled numerous savage tribes who were lately visited, on a voyage of discovery, by some of our adventurous countrymen. They are described as standing at the very bottom of the scale of civilization and intelligence, having no intercourse except with the few savages who people those bleak and desolate regions, having no knowledge that there is any part of the world better than their own, or any class of men superior to themselves. Their country, their habits of life, their means of subsistence, the whole circumstances of their lot, would in the estimation of men of enlightened and cultivated society, be reckoned miserable in the extreme. Reason, man's noblest prerogative, is there as stunted as the vegetation of their valleys clad in perpetual snow; and no ideas of religion could be at all discovered among them.

Now, what notions, think you, did these wretched creatures entertain of the manners and accommodations of civilized life? They fancied the ship of the navigators to be a bird, the sails its wings; a watch they regarded as an animal; a picture a living image. They were amused and astonished at many things that were shown them; but they always preferred their own. A bed made

upon the snow was more agreeable to them than any that the British sailor could offer the blubber of whales and sea-fish was more palatable than European dainties: in short, while our countrymen looked upon them as the wretched victims of barbarism and an inhospitable climate, they considered themselves as a great deal better and happier than their visitors.

Now, supposing one of the scientific men who accompanied Captain Parry's expedition, had collected a group of these Esquimaux around him, for the purpose of explaining and recommending to them some of the more simple and practical arts of civilized life, what think you, would have been his success among such a people? Teach them to cultivate their fields?—Why should they? They use no vegetable diet, and taste it with dislike. Teach them manufactures?—Why should they engage in such employments who reckon the skin of the rein-deer and the seal warmer and more beautiful than any thing the loom ever produced? In short, and without farther enumeration, we may affirm, that until by some means the force of their old habits were broken—until they had acquired new tastes and new ideas of comfort and elegance, the instructor would reason with them in vain. They might listen, perhaps, to his commendation of British art, and wonder at its productions; but they would continue Esquimaux still, and give a real preference to their own rude workmanship, to their old customs, and their old enjoyments.

Again, let me suppose that the commander of this expedition, had wished to take twelve of these savages to Britain, what arguments would have been proper to persuade them to change their country? Explain to them the science, and learning, and education of our empire?—The savage does not know to value these things. Tell him that there are churches throughout the land, where the good taste an exalted enjoyment in the worship of God, and are prepared for heaven? You speak to him in an unknown tongue; for you cannot by mere description give him a christian's idea of a church, or of enjoyment, or of heaven. Tell him of green fields?—He never saw one in his life. His hills and valleys are clad in everlasting snow; he knows not the beauty of a verdant landscape, and cares nothing for its productions. He cannot, in fact, be persuaded by such representations as these until his mind have undergone some change. His ideas and feelings run altogether in a different channel; and although of the same species with the Briton, the savage Esquimaux has tastes, and feelings, and habits, and enjoyments so dissimilar to ours that we may almost regard him as a different being. Describe to him Britain as it is

in the most glowing colors, you cannot persuade him to relinquish the polar regions for it; because the enjoyments and habits of his mind are averse from all that Britain can offer him. And it is in vain that you make known to him a better climate and a more cultivated society, so long as the dispositions of his mind are such that he could not derive happiness from them.

What connection has all this, some one may ask, with the causes which predispose to indifference and scepticism in religion? Do you mean to insinuate, that there is any resemblance between the polar savage and the infidel? Yes, brethren, that is just what I mean; and I assert that reasons similar to those which render the one averse from leaving his country, render the other averse from embracing the true religion. Let us trace the parallel a short way; and in doing so, let us enquire what is revealed religion and its design, and what is the character and condition of man—the being to whom it is revealed?

Revealed religion, that is, the scriptures, discovers to us what God is, what man ought to be, and for what state the Creator has destined him. (This summary of divine revelation is sufficiently explicit for our present object.) Now, I assert that the scripture representations of the divine nature can neither be well understood nor loved by a sinful and wicked man. God is infinitely holy, and he hates sin with a perfect hatred; but holiness is an attribute of the eternal mind as difficult of comprehension to a sinner as the moral sentiments and associations of an enlightened European would be to the polar savage. Holiness, indeed, and all the moral perfections of Deity, can only be understood by those who possess, in some degree, similar qualities. If these similar moral qualities do not exist in the heart, it is no more possible to convey an idea of them than to communicate to the blind ideas of color, or to the deaf ideas of harmony. Hence were it possible in this life to find a man in whom all moral feeling was dead, the word of God would be to him literally a sealed book; he could not be made to understand it. It is because some moral feelings still exist in fallen man that he is capable of being recovered by the means that God has appointed. As these moral feelings become more lively in any individual, the discoveries of divine revelation become more clear; and on the contrary spiritual darkness and unbelief become more thick and inveterate in proportion as iniquity is indulged in. Hence it is, that the fool says in his heart there is no God—there is no fear of God before his eyes. "But if our gospel be hid, it is hid to them that are lost: in

whom the God of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them."

But again the scriptures explain to us the real nature of God's moral government of which we are the subjects—they teach us what we ought to be. They record his laws, they state the principle of obedience, "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart and soul and strength." Now, it is quite obvious that this implies a habitual and affectionate recognition of the divine authority in all we think, or say, or do; for his law extends to each and all of these. But the sinner is not only not inclined to recognize this authority, but if sin be agreeable to him he will study to forget it. The remembrance of it would render him unhappy. The law remembered, either curbs his appetites or stings his conscience: by forgetting it his appetites may be more freely indulged, and conscience will become less troublesome—seared and dead. Thus the sinner's averseness to the law and government of God inclines him to forget, reject and deny them.

But let me fix your attention for a moment upon the grand and main design of revelation that you may discover how the averseness of the mind to it is a general cause of indifference and unbelief. You will remember that its main design is to prepare man for an immortal existence—for a place in the celestial world. In order to persuade us to make this preparation, the inspired writers, as messengers from that unseen world, have described to us in glowing language its glory and its inhabitants, its employments and its blessedness. I need not repeat these descriptions at present, but I may state that they can make no impression upon the mind debased by iniquity. What efficacy could it have in making the man in love with iniquity to prepare for heaven, to tell him that there the presence of God is enjoyed? This would rather awaken his fears than kindle his love. Tell him that angels will be his future companions?—Alas! he has no sympathy with them. The fellowship even of good men operates here as a painful restraint—he would rather avoid their society. Tell him of the peace and holy exercises of its eternal Sabbath?—He has no relish for them—the brief Sabbath of time is to him insufferably dull, and he would rather convert it into a day of worldly amusement. In short, the God that the Bible reveals is not an object of his love; the duties which the Bible inculcates are directly opposed to his views of pleasure; the heaven after which the Bible teaches him to aspire, consists in employments for which

he has no relish, and promises a blessedness so foreign to his nature that he cannot understand it. And in such a frame of mind, unbelief, or at least, indifference, is nothing more strange than the averseness of the polar savage to change his own desolate and dreary country and the enjoyments in it for which he has contracted a fondness, for other enjoyments in distant climes, the nature of which he cannot comprehend.

This, then, I hold to be a universal cause of indifference and unbelief in regard to revealed religion in all mankind, that the general tenor of its discoveries is opposed to man's natural tastes, habits and inclinations. It is spiritual, he is carnal; it is holy, he is sinful; and so far from indifference and unbelief being unnatural, they are just what might be expected from such creatures, to whom such a revelation was made. Hence, in order to its cordial reception, some influence must be previously exerted upon him to refine his views, and tastes, and feelings, that he may be prepared to discern and relish it as the oracles of God and the words of eternal life. The evil heart of unbelief is his nature; it can only be conquered by an experimental knowledge of the gospel's moral influence. "If any man will do my will, he shall know of the doctrine whether it be of God." He cannot know it fully till then.

But in order to unfold this principle of indifference and unbelief, the averseness of the corrupted mind to the general tenor and main design of the discoveries of the gospel, let me point out its operation in a few particulars:—

1. Prosperity and its ordinary effect—a heart contented with the world, is a very common cause of religious indifference and unbelief. This is emphatically set forth in the Jewish proverb, "It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich, or world loving man, to enter into the kingdom of God," that is, cordially embrace the gospel. The impossibility does not rest in the amount of his property, but in the usual consequence of wealth and prosperity, which create a fondness for worldly pleasure, and a disrelish for that which is spiritual; for the love of the world and the love of God cannot coexist in the same heart. The gospel is designed to direct the view of man principally to a future life as the proper scene of his enjoyments; but when the heart is contented with its present condition it looks no farther, and religion is neglected as a useless thing, or useful only for the afflicted, or the poor, or the miserable, or the dying. Hence it is, that religious indifference prevails chiefly among the fortunate whose present condition seems to offer all that

their heart could wish, and among the young who cherish sanguine expectations of what they shall hereafter acquire, when they have advanced high in the world's favor.

Then there is but a short step between religious indifference and scepticism. When the gospel comes to be regarded without any interest, as a thing of trivial importance, the transition is easy to the doubt or disbelief that it is from God; for who can ever imagine that an unimportant communication can come from God? Thus there is a general and manifest connection between prosperity which attaches men's minds to this life, and indifference to that gospel which leads them to aspire upwards to another. For when men cease to aspire after and prepare for immortality, they soon practically cease to believe in it.

2. The omission of deliberate inquiry is a second cause of religious indifference, and practical unbelief. The gospel, like any other written communication, cannot be understood without a good deal of serious attention. Nor can the evidence and importance of its discoveries be felt until they are fairly considered. Now what is the usual conduct of a large proportion of mankind in regard to the oracles of God? In their youth, perhaps, they were taught to read some portions of them; and in more advanced age they occasionally peruse them, and hear them explained in the sanctuary; but they are read with no settled and continued attention; the relation of one part to another, and one doctrine to another, is not perceived; and thus the evidence which arises from the harmony of the whole scheme, and its adaptation to the circumstances of man are quite overlooked. To such the Bible can appear in no higher light than as an ancient venerated book, by which a large proportion of mankind have agreed to shape their religious opinions, according as they severally understand it, but which may be entirely rejected (if they please) without any peculiar danger or culpability. This, in our judgment, is a very general state of the indifferent and the unbelieving arising from the want of a deliberate inquiry.

Observe here, that I am far from alleging the charge of general ignorance against all who are indifferent to the truths of the gospel. This would not be true; for religious indifference in many parts of the world, prevails much in the higher and better educated classes of society. In this case, however, we may allege besides the effect which prosperity and worldly pursuits have in fixing the attention on this life, and withdrawing the mind from that book which reveals another, that

the want of deliberate inquiry upon *this particular subject*, is the main cause of their indifference. Superior education by no means implies that the mind has been properly instructed in the principles of religion. There are many persons of excellent education, who yet in regard to the evidences and doctrines of the gospel, might be pronounced grossly ignorant; because this particular branch of knowledge has not been examined and studied. Were the multitudes of the indifferent and the doubting put to trial of their scriptural knowledge before competent examiners, if they did not confess at the outset their ignorance and inattention to this particular subject, (which they would most likely do if they were ingenuous) the trial would render the fact abundantly manifest.

Now what I wish you to remark is, that indifference and unbelief in these circumstances is nothing more than what might be expected. We must necessarily be careless about that which we take no trouble to understand; and if it be a question the truth of which must be determined by evidence, inattention to that evidence must necessarily leave us in doubt. And no matter how extensive our information on other subjects, it can be of no avail in a new subject which we refuse to investigate. As skill in music does not confer skill in painting, so proficiency in general knowledge does not imply proficiency in the knowledge of God's revealed will; and until this is made the subject of special and deliberate examination, its importance and truth cannot be discovered, its moral influence cannot be experienced; and unbelief is a consequence as necessary as that he should remain in darkness who shuts his eyes upon the sun.

3. A third cause of indifference and scepticism in religion may be found in misdirected ingenuity. There are some men who have a very singular dexterity in starting difficulties, and perplexing their own understanding. This is sometimes passed off for acute penetration; but it is in reality an evidence rather of feebleness and indecision of judgment; and is commonly attended by the most unhappy consequences. When this propensity is indulged in regard to sacred subjects, it is not unfrequently combined with close and curious research. The Scriptures are made the subject of strict investigation; the different parts are critically compared, and all the doctrines are most rigidly canvassed. Nothing save good could flow from this, were it done in a humble and impartial spirit; but then it is done with a certain pride and self-confidence which destroys impartiality, overlooks important distinctions, and hurries the mind on to false conclusions. A man of this hu-

mor is commonly found wandering and stumbling among the high and mysterious doctrines of revelation; while he is apt to neglect the culture of his heart by those which are more level to his capacity. He will start, for example, numerous objections against the scripture account of the origin of evil—is utterly confounded with the doctrine of the Trinity—the incarnation of the Son of God is to him an insurmountable stumbling block—concerning God's superintendence of the world and predestination of events he will ask a thousand puzzling questions which no one can solve; and therefore he sits down in indifference and dissatisfaction, or relapses into scepticism and unbelief, and flatters himself that he is much superior in acuteness of intellect to those who embrace as truth what the gospel declares on grounds which he judges to be incompetent. And truly if it were any mark of superiority to raise objections, and propose hard questions on such subjects as lie on the very boundary line, or even beyond the domain, of unaided reason, the distinction may be very cheaply obtained. But it may be remarked concerning those who thus exert their misdirected ingenuity in examining the sacred scriptures, that there is a manifest error at the bottom of it—there is a misconception of the very nature of a revelation. Reason cannot be the judge of the facts revealed; for if this were the case a revelation from God would be unnecessary, and reason alone would be a sufficient guide. On this point let me be plainly understood.—This book professes to be a revelation from God. Well, what evidence is brought in support of its claim? Its authors, we say, were inspired by God, and wrote infallible truth under the dictation of the Holy Spirit. Well, and what proof can you bring of their inspiration? Now the whole stress of the fact lies on this—did these men write and speak as they were moved by the Holy Ghost? I cannot at present enter into the full proof of this doctrine—it does not properly belong to this subject. But let me ask in a few words what proofs would content you as to the divine inspiration of this book? If you had heard one of its authors with his dying breath declare, that he had witnessed with his own eyes, the facts recorded, and received the doctrines by inspiration from the Eternal Spirit, you might perhaps be disposed to hear him favorably—more especially if you have good assurance that the dying witness had been a man of a good understanding, and inflexible integrity, and a holy life. Again, if in looking into the book itself, you found amidst some things hard to be understood, many sublime truths told with the greatest simplicity and propriety of speech, many just and noble principles of

morality laid down, which the greatest moralists and philosophers had never known nor inculcated before—would you not be inclined to judge still more favorably of the testimony of the dying martyr? I am sure an unbiassed mind would; and comparing the martyr's life with the martyr's doctrine, and the composure and solemnity of his dying testimony—the suspicion of falsehood would not enter your mind, even in regard to those parts of his writings on which the greatest obscurity rested. Still farther, if these facts and doctrines were corroborated by several other witnesses of character as unimpeachable, who sacrificed every temporal advantage for their propagation, and some of whom died in attestation of their truth—I think you would have a chain of evidence in proof of the veracity of these witnesses, which a candid mind could not easily resist—which any intelligent jury would pronounce valid. All this we may allege in proof of the truths contained in *this Book*. But strong as it is, it forms only a small part of the proof on which we rest their inspiration. For this we claim still higher and still surer ground—the miracles which the authors wrought, and the prophecies which they delivered. What more unequivocal proof of a divine commission could be given than to cure diseases by a word, to give eyesight to the blind, to raise the dead, to be delivered from prisons by angels or by the convulsions of earthquakes, to lift up the veil of futurity, and tell what should come to pass after the lapse of many ages? Surely such facts as these, established on certain testimony, give clear evidence that these men were the servants of God, inspired by him with miraculous power and heavenly wisdom that they might be received as his ambassadors; and consequently to reject them, is to reject God speaking by them, and to reject any of their declarations, is to question the veracity of God. To this point, then, are we brought—the writers of this book are the accredited messengers of the Most High. We are bound, for this reason, to receive what they declare as truth and fact—and simply on their testimony. If they declare things of high and mysterious import, it is no more than what might be expected in a communication from the incomprehensible God to creatures of such limited capacities as we are; and to question the truth of what they declare, on the ground of its mysteriousness, not only argues the most inexcusable arrogance of your own understanding, but also an unpardonable disrespect of God's inspired messengers. You would smile at and pity the polar savage who, measuring all things by his own little intellect, would mutter his objections, and express his disbelief of the representa-

tions made by British philosophers of the state of their country, and the wonders which science had achieved. You would despise the dark-minded barbarian, contending in fruitless argument with our enlightened countrymen, disputing and denying every thing which he could not comprehend. Say then, with what pity angelic beings must behold the little ingenuity of mortals impiously questioning the discoveries God has made of his own nature and purposes, refusing as a sufficient voucher the declaration of the God of truth, and exalting their own imagination in opposition to the knowledge of God. How much more becoming would it be in a creature who is but of yesterday, who knoweth nothing, and who can know nothing of the nature of the infinite God or the methods of his government, unless what is revealed to him—how much more becoming and reasonable would it be to submit humbly to the teachings of inspired wisdom, to be grateful for its celestial light to conduct him to immortality, to hush the murmurings of a doubting and over curious spirit by an implicit reliance on the testimony of God!

The three particular causes of indifference and scepticism which I have now dwelt upon, namely, prosperity which, leading man to be satisfied with his present condition, prevents him from looking forward to that which the Bible reveals; the omission of deliberate inquiry, which prevents the unbeliever from ascertaining and establishing the proper grounds of his religious belief; and the exercise of a misdirected ingenuity which leads the mind away from just views of that evidence on which religion rests—these three causes are chiefly of an intellectual nature. Permit me now to advance a fourth—a moral cause of indifference and unbelief;

4. The love and practice of iniquity. This is in general rather an effect of unbelief; but it is also frequently a cause, and is in its very nature, calculated to render indifference and scepticism inveterate and invincible. A wicked man, inclined to continue in his wickedness, has the greatest reason in the world to wish that christianity were untrue; for if it be true, it is clear that his condition and prospects are most miserable. It declares in terms that cannot be misunderstood, that God is his enemy, that Christ his Judge will condemn him, that misery more aggravated and more enduring than he can now conceive, will be his portion; and surely it is natural for a man unwilling to forsake his sins, and yet prone to cherish hope, to search on all hands for reasonings to disprove truths so decidedly unpalatable. What is not agreeable to a man he is easily brought to

disbelieve. And thus with many the doctrines of the Bible are driven away into forgetfulness, or rejected as without foundation. Even apart from the decisions of a judgment day and the fate of eternity, there are many reasons connected with this life, which would incline a wicked man to deny the faith. Is he the slave of some criminal pleasure? It must be abandoned before he can become a real christian. But how can he repent of that of which he is fond, or relinquish that which forms his favorite enjoyment? It is much easier and more expeditious to doubt or deny the Bible; and this, for a time at least, sets his conscience free. Is he engaged in some dishonest but profitable traffic? This must be abandoned if he become a real christian. What a blessed peradventure were the Bible untrue, and no future reckoning! I might pursue this lucrative, money making course, although a little crooked, and my gains would continue to augment without any danger of their eating like a canker. I shall at least defer the examination of the question until some future period. But if christianity be true, this conduct will only increase the bitterness of a future repentance; for it commands reparation for fraud, and the restitution of ill gotten gain. Ah! this is strictness with a vengeance. Why, it leaves no loop-hole for the transgressor! No—none. Then it is easier to deny such a religion than to practise it. Yes; easier for a wicked man—but ah, not so safe! But the danger is future; the pleasure is near; we will therefore embrace the pleasure though forbidden; and, thus the love of iniquity makes many an infidel, and is the universal cause of that neglect and indifference with which true religion is treated in the world.

5. I shall advert only to one other frequent cause of religious indifference, verging to unbelief, and that is, the want of an experimental knowledge of its truths. A general conviction that the Bible is a revelation from God, is not christian faith; yet it forms the whole amount of many a one's christianity. Saving faith implies the affectionate consent of the heart as well as the unhesitating submission of the understanding. And unless these are combined the moral influence of the gospel can never be experienced, nor can it be heartily acknowledged as the power of God and the wisdom of God. If man were purely an intellectual being, he would be made a Christian by the conviction of his understanding. But as he is also a moral being, his will must be subdued, and his affections won to the practical duties which flow from admitted doctrines. This illustrates these two most important truths:—"If any man

will do my will, he shall know of the doctrine, whether it be of God;" and again, "he that believeth hath the witness in himself." Live the christian's life, and you will have the evidence within yourself of the heavenly origin of the christian's faith. Meditate upon your present knowledge until it purify your heart and regulate your life. And as your holiness becomes perfected your mind will take a clearer and more comprehensive view of revealed truth; new points radiant with celestial light, will be constantly starting up before the eye; and though in this imperfect state of our existence darkness will continue to rest upon a great part of our mental horizon, you will be assured and grateful that such rays are vouchsafed as may guide you securely to a blessed immortality.

In conclusion, brethren, permit me to urge upon you this consideration that religion is a matter respecting which you cannot safely be either unconcerned or in doubt. If God has spoken to man, the evidence must be complete, and the discoveries momentous; and it must be criminal not to inquire, and dangerous not to be settled. Come then, in the fear of God, in a candid spirit, with the love of goodness, and the Bible will not shrink from your examination. It will manifest the signs of its divinity as clear as external nature does the eternal power and Godhead of its Creator. By the divine blessing it will mould your sentiments and habits and whole character into a conformity with those of the heavenly world towards which it directs your hopes. In every reverent and faithful perusal it will send forth a sanctifying energy into the heart which no merely human production ever exerted; and by casting down imaginations and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ, it will demonstrate itself to your own knowledge and experience, the divinely appointed instrument for the moral recovery of this fallen world.

MEETING OF COMMISSION.—At a late meeting of the Presbytery Toronto, it was resolved to send a requisition to the Moderator of Synod calling upon him to intimate a meeting of the Commission, on an early day, to take into consideration the reversal of the opinion formerly given by the Law Officers of the Crown respecting the illegality of the 57 Rectories established in this province by Sir John Colborne, and the measures that might be necessary to vindicate and maintain the rights of the church. Accordingly, on the call of the Moderator, the Commission met at Toronto on Wednesday the 9th May. The following members were present.—the Rev. Alexander Gale, Moderator, Rev. John Machar, Rev. James Ketchan, Rev. James George, Rev. William T. Leach, Rev. William Rintoul, Rev. Andrew Bell, Rev. M. Y. Starke and the Rev. Robert McGill.—Elders John Mowat, Esq. the Hon. James Crooks, John Burns, Esq. and Mr. William Paterson. After the Moderator had constituted the meeting by prayer, and the requisition from the Presbytery of Toronto to the Moderator had been read, it was stated by the Moderator of that Presbytery that the communications which His Excellency the Lieutenant Governor had promised to send him, had not yet reached him, and the commission not being prepared to enter on the consideration of the question for which they were summoned together, it was resolved to send a deputation with an address to His Excellency, craving copies of such despatches as had been recently received from Her Majesty's Government, on the subject of the Rectories, which might enable the Commission to take what steps it might deem proper to vindicate the rights of the church, and carry into effect the resolutions passed by the Synod in 1836. The deputation was graciously received by His Excellency who informed them that the pressure of business arising from the numerous state trials had prevented him from attending to the request made to him by the Presbytery of Toronto, and that the promised communications had not yet been prepared; but they would be prepared forthwith, and sent to the Moderator of Synod. This delay of course prevented the Commission from taking any measures except a renewal of their solemn protest on the part of the Synod against the establishment of Rectories, as "an act injuriously affecting their just rights;"—and the Moderator was instructed to lay a copy of the protest before His Excellency the Lieutenant Governor, together with a brief statement of the reasons on which it is founded. The deputation enjoyed the favor of a very lengthened interview, and were enabled to state in a desultory manner, their claims and complaints. Its members were much gratified with the manifest candor and honesty of Her Majesty's Representative, and with his enlightened and Christian views of the ecclesiastical policy adapted to a new colony. With such a spirit and such views as are possessed by Sir George Arthur, we fondly hope that he may be successful in his efforts for abating the incompatible pretensions and soothing the asperities of party, and that some plan may be carried into effect which will peacefully and equitably settle this complicated question.

DONATION.—It is with sincere gratification that we announce a donation of £500 Sterling from the General Assembly's committee on colonial churches, in aid of the eighteen congregations in Canada which from their smallness and their poverty, are unable to provide a maintenance for their ministers. A representation was sent home some time ago of the circumstances of these congregations, setting forth their inability to maintain divine ordinances amongst them without foreign aid, that they were not assisted in any way by the government of the country agreeably to

the just expectations they were led to entertain when they emigrated from the parent state, and craving whatever assistance the Assembly's committee could grant to prevent them from being subjected to so severe a deprivation as the loss of their pastors and the shutting up of their places of worship. This application has called forth the above liberal donation, which will materially alleviate the necessities of the current year. We trust, moreover, that this token of christian remembrance, will still more affectionately unite the Presbyterians of this colony with the church of their fatherland. Her pecuniary donations are for the present necessary to relieve the spiritual destitution of this land, but far more do we need and prize her counsel, protection and prayers. Seas divide, but must never estrange us. United in heart and holy enterprise—she in preserving and beautifying her own ancient towers and palaces, we in laying the foundation of a church which will be her own fair type on this new continent—we will encourage each other in the good work of the Lord. We trust the time is not far distant when the increasing wealth of this magnificent and populous province will enable its people (in connection with that aid which they are entitled to claim from a parental and christian government) adequately to maintain and extend the church among us, without drawing upon the liberality of our transatlantic brethren. Then, it may be hoped, we shall be both able and forward to send contributions to her treasury for the support of her missions among the millions of India and other heathen lands. How melancholy is it that sectarian jealousies, and the hostility of a home-born heathenism should be leaguely together to cut off the means by which the national church is seeking to fulfil her part in the conversion of the world! We cannot hope to escape the opposition of infidelity; but, oh, that this strife among brethren were heard of no more! Whilst they are fiercely contending for obscure and doubtful principles, death ever busy is sweeping generations of unenlightened and sinful men, who have a strong claim upon their compassion, into eternity. While multitudes are angrily debating about the sufficiency of the *voluntary principle*, the church in all its branches, is making only very slender and feeble exertions to diffuse the message of mercy and prepare them for their destiny. The Scottish church alone, were she possessed of the pecuniary means, could find and send out every year a hundred qualified missionaries into the heathen dependencies of our country, to disseminate these blessings, infinitely greater and more durable than any our commerce and civil protection can bestow. But, alas these means are not within her reach; and even those resources which the liberality of her people places at her disposal, are drained by the demands for christian instruction at home, which a feeble and ill-compacted administration, guided by no sound principle, and ever yielding to temporary expedients, refuses to supply. Had the state, as a sound christian policy would have dictated, both on the ground of christianity and economy, built and endowed the numerous churches which have within these few years been erected by private liberality in Scotland, and left that liberality free for carrying the gospel into her colonial possessions and heathen territories, the government and people would have been doubly blessed. But it would seem that an evil spirit now presides in the councils of the nation and turns them away from the noblest designs—those connected with the intellectual and spiritual well-being of a people on whose empire the sun never sets. If such an unchristian policy belong persisted in, we have reason to dread the displeasure of God, and may be looking out for sure indications that the British empire is hastening to its downfall. But as the principles that have prevailed for the last few years are manifestly exotic—

foreign to our christian institutions and to the minds of our people—it may be hoped that they will ere long be utterly repudiated; and that our rulers as most sacredly bound will honor the Supreme Ruler in the nations homage and by the nation's wealth, and that their labors to advance among the people the spiritual kingdom of our Redeemer, will bring to them above all others, in the day of our Lord Jesus Christ, a great and imperishable reward. When our Canadian rulers think thus and act accordingly, resources will be found existing within the colony adequate to its religious wants, and we shall not need to draw upon a treasury that might be set apart for others even more needy than ourselves.

COPY OF THE SYNOD'S ADDRESS TO THE QUEEN, AND HER MAJESTY'S REPLY.

TO THE QUEEN'S MOST EXCELLENT MAJESTY.

The Address of the Synod of the Presbyterian Church of Canada, in connection with the Church of Scotland.

MAY IT PLEASE YOUR MAJESTY—

We, Your Majesty's most dutiful and loyal subjects, the Ministers and Elders of the Presbyterian Church of Canada, in connection with the Church of Scotland, in General Synod assembled, embrace this first opportunity afforded us, since Your Majesty's accession, of approaching the throne with the expression of our loyalty and attachment to Your Majesty's person and Government.

We condole with Your Majesty on the afflictive dispensation of Providence, which has deprived Your Majesty of a beloved relative, and us of a most illustrious, upright, and patriotic King.

We congratulate Your Majesty on Your accession to the Sovereignty of the British Empire, and assure Your Majesty that unceasing and fervent prayer is offered by us and the congregations committed to our care that the throne to which You are thus early called may be established in righteousness, and that God may give Your Majesty a wise and understanding heart to rule over so great a people, and, for Your own and Your subject's sake, endow You plenteously with His heavenly grace.

We rejoice in these solemn assurances Your Majesty has given of Your resolution to maintain inviolate the Church of which we are Members, in her rights and opportunities of doing good, and feel assured that Your Majesty will ever estimate aright the high privilege of promoting in every part of Your wide dominions the best interests of Your subjects, by securing to them the blessing of instruction in the pure Word of God, the only foundation of national happiness and prosperity.

May that Word be Your Majesty's counsellor, and through all the cares of an earthly Crown Your guide to a Crown of Glory.

At Toronto, this Fifth Day of September, One Thousand Eight Hundred and Thirty-Seven years.

(Signed.)

In Name,

In Presence and

By Appointment of Synod,

ALEXANDER GALE.

REPLY.

Copy No. 252.

Downing Street, 29th Nov. 1837.

Sir,

I have received your despatch No. 103 of the 16th September last, transmuting an Address to the Queen, from the Synod of the Presbyterian church in Canada in connection with the church of Scotland. I have had the honor to lay this Address at the foot of throne, and her Majesty has commanded me to instruct you to acquaint the Synod, that she has received with high satisfaction this loyal and dutiful address from the members of a church for whose rights and privileges Her Majesty entertains the greatest respect, and that it will afford Her Majesty the most sincere gratification to co-operate with the Legislature of the Province of Upper Canada, in whatever measures may be most conducive to the diffusion and maintenance of the blessing of religion among Her Majesty's faithful subjects inhabiting that valuable and important part of Her dominions.

I have the honor to be

Sir,

Your most obedient
Humble servant,
(Signed,)

GLENELG.

Sir Francis Bond Head Bart. &c. &c. &c.

INDIA MISSION LIBRARIES.—With the sanction of the General Assembly's committee for India Missions, a committee, consisting of several of the Ministers of Edinburgh, and gentlemen interested in India, has been appointed to procure a collection of books, with the view of forming Libraries, under the control of the Missionaries of the Church at Calcutta, Bombay, and Madras.

All who are friendly to the cause of Missions, and the diffusion of learning, are earnestly requested to make donations of Works in Theology, and the various departments of Literature and Science. Donations of Money for the object will also be gratefully received.

The principal Booksellers in the cities and towns in Scotland are ready to give farther information, and to receive donations, either in Books or Money. All communications to be addressed to Capt. Jameson, Secretary of the committee, 33, Dublin Street.

Edinburgh, 9th April, 1838.

The above is an advertisement regarding the formation of libraries for the mission seminaries of the Church at Calcutta, Bombay, and Madras. We trust that the proposal will meet with the warm support of the friends of Missions. The nurseries of the future native instructors of India, which our Church has established, already contain a large number of reflecting and educated young men, and their numbers are daily increasing. Oral instruction will not do all that is needed, their attention must be turned to our standard English writers if we wish to act in accordance with the principles on which all the foreign missionary undertakings of the Church are based. Now, unhappily, books in India are still scarce and dear, and some additional means must be had recourse to in order to supply the desideratum. The means suggested in the advertisement appear to us admirably calculated for this purpose. Every one must have many books lying by him of little or no service to himself, which yet contain information quite new to a land just opening its eyes to truth in religion, literature, and science. Books on history, geography, travels—in short, in every branch of useful knowledge, would prove at present an incalculable boon to India. We trust that our clerical friends in every district of

Scotland will both give from their own collections, and take every opportunity of pressing so momentous a subject on the attention of their people. Apart from erroneous doctrine in religion, or exploded tenets in philosophy, scarcely anything can come wrong. We sincerely rejoice to see that a committee, composed of such men as are mentioned in the circular letter of the secretary, have the subject under consideration.

☞ We will rejoice in every effort that is made to provide Libraries for India; but we must not forget to urge the claims of our proposed Theological Institution in Canada.

THE POPISH CONFSSIONAL.

From Third Pamphlet of the Rev. L. J. Nolan, lately a Romish Clergyman, but now a Curate of the Irish Church at Athboy.

During the last three years I discharged the duty of a Romish clergyman, my heart often shuddered at the idea of entering the confessional. The thoughts of the many crimes I had to hear—the growing doubt upon my mind, that confession was an erroneous doctrine—that it tended more to harden than reclaim the heart, and that through it I should be rendered instrumental in ministering destruction to your souls, were awful considerations to me in the hours of my reflection. The recitals of the murderous acts I had often heard through this iniquitous tribunal, had cost me many a restless night, and are still fixed with horror upon my memory. But, my friends, the most awful of all considerations is this, that through the confessional I had been frequently apprised of intended assassinations and most diabolical conspiracies, and still from the ungodly injunctions of secrecy in the Romish creed, lest, as Peter Dens says, the confessional should become odious, I dared not give the slightest information to the marked out victims of the slaughter. But though my heart now trembles at my recollection of the murderous acts, still duty obliges me to proceed, and enumerate one or two instances of the cases alluded to.

The first is the case of a person who was barbarously murdered, and with whose intended assassination I became acquainted at confession. One of the five conspirators (all of whom were sworn to commit the horrid deed) broached to me the bloody conspiracy in the confessional. I implored him to desist from his intention of becoming an accomplice in so diabolical a design. But, alas, all advice was useless—no persuasion could prevail, his determination was so fixed; and his only reasons for having disclosed the awful machination to his confessor, seemed to have originated from a hope that his wicked design would be hallowed by a previous acknowledgment of it to his priest. Finding all my remonstrances unavailing, I then recurred to stratagem. I earnestly besought of him to mention the circumstance to me out of the confessional, in order that I might apprise the intended victim of his danger, or caution the conspirators against the committal of so inhuman a deed. But here ingenuity itself failed in arresting the career of his satanic obstinacy. The conspirator's illegal oath, and his apprehension of himself becoming the victim of brutal assassination should he be known as the revealer of the conspiracy, rendered him inflexible to my entreaties; and, awful to relate—yes, awful—and the hand that now pens it shudders at the record it makes—a poor inoffensive man, the victim of slaughter, died a most cruel death by the hand of ruthless assassins. Oh, my dear Protestant countrymen, you will now naturally ask, whether am I or the perpetrators of the

bloody deed, most to be censured? I who knew the murderers and the murdered previous to the act—I who had met the intended victim of slaughter in the public streets but a short time antecedent to his death? But, my friends, the prejudices of my early life in favor of the doctrine of auricular confession, and the influence of subsequent education, instilling into my mind the inviolability of that iniquitous tribunal, must plead before my God and the public, as my only apologies for the concealment of the diabolical conspiracy. And now, you, Romish priests, I ask you, could the Lord Jesus institute a doctrine so monstrous in its practice, and so subversive of the principles of humanity—a doctrine that beholds the dagger pointed at the human heart, but hushes the warning voice that would apprise the devoted victim of his danger? I must now proceed with the recital of another case more revolting to humanity than even the former one. It is that of a female administering poison to her parent. Her first attempt at parricide proved ineffectual, owing to an immediate retching that seized the parent after taking the draught. The perpetrator of this foul deed afterwards came to confession, and acknowledged her guilt, but circumstances proved that she only sought for priestly absolution, to ease her mind and prepare her for a speedy repetition of her heinous crime. Again she attempted the act, and it proved successful. I was called on to attend the dying parent. The unnatural throes and convulsive agonies of the unfortunate man convinced me that the disease was of no ordinary nature. The previous confession of his daughter, who at this time made her appearance, rushed upon my mind, and suggested that the parent was a second time poisoned. From what I had known through the confessional, I could not even hint at the propriety of sending for medical attendance, for the Romish doctrine impressed an inviolable secrecy upon my lips, and prevented me giving the slightest intimation of the malady; whilst the poor patient, unconscious of the cause of his death, died in the most excruciating agonies of which humanity can form a conception. Oh! monstrous system of confession! Will you dare any longer to ascribe your origin to the Great Eternal, and thus affix to nature's God the blasphemy of your tenets? Oh, thou iniquitous tribunal! thou cloaker of crimes—thou abettor of wickedness, thou brutal murderer! A child attempts the most diabolical act against a parent, but thou, by presuming to erase the past transgression, only encouragest to a repetition of the crime. A parent suffers the most agonising tortures, and dies in the most excruciating pains from poison, administered by an unnatural daughter, but thou, polluted tribunal, wilt not allow the priest acquainted with the circumstances to disclose the cause of this heart-rending death. Oh, my Roman Catholic countrymen, why not awaken from your lethargic slumbers!—why not arise from the mystic spells that bind you, and cast off that unnatural yoke which would dare to unite your God in an unholy alliance with such monkish blasphemy! Should any unacquainted with Romanism question the veracity of these statements, let him consult history, and he will find many similar facts. Did not the Romish priest, the Rev. Mr. Garnet, the provincial of the Jesuits, justify his concealment of the gunpowder plot, on the pretext of its being revealed to him at confession? Did not Father D'Aubigny, the French Jesuit, put forward a similar plea of justification for concealment, when the assassin, Ravallac (that stabbed Henry IV.) in 1610, acknowledged to him in the confessional his plan of regicidal murder? But why need I refer to such circumstances, as every priest who has acted in the capacity of a confessor, must admit the fact of similar cases frequently coming before him at the confessional?

POETRY.

THE SCOTTISH SACRAMENTAL SABBATH.

BY JAMES HISLOP.

River La Platta, 1824.

The Sabbath morning gilds the eastern hills,
The swains its sunny down wi' gladness greet,
Frae heath-clad hamlets 'mang the muirland rills,
The dewy mountains climb wi' naked feet—
Skiffin' the daisies druket i' the weat,
The nibblin' flocks come bleatin' down the brae,
To shadowy pastures screen'd frae simmer heat,
In woods where tinklin' waters glide away,
'Mang holms o' clover red, and bright brown rye-grass
hay.

His ewes and lambs brought carefu' frae the heigh,
The shepherd's children watch them frae the corn;
On green sward scented lawn, wi' gowans white,
Frae page o' pocket psalm-book, soiled an' torn,
The task prepar'd assign'd for Sabbath morn,
The elder bairns, their parents join in prayer,
One daughter dear, beneath the flowery thorn,
Kneels down apart, her spirit to prepare,
On this her first approach the sacred cup to share.
The social chat, wi' solemn converse mix'd,
At early hour, they finish their repast.
The pious sire repeats full many a text,
Of Sacramental Sabbaths, long gone past.
To see her little family featly drest,
The carefu' matron feels a mother's pride;
Gie's this a linen shirt—gie's that a vest—
The frugal father's frowns their finery chide;
He prays that Heaven their souls may wedding robes
provide.

The sisters buskit, seek the garden walk,
To gather flowers, and watch the warning bell,
Sweet-william danglin', dewy frae the stalk,
Is mix'd wi' mountain daisies rich in smell:
Green sweet-brier—sprigs an' daisies frae the dell,
Where Spango shepherds pass the lane a-bede,
An' Wanlock miners cross the muirland fell,
Then down the sunny winding woodland road,
The little pastoral band approach the house of God.

Stream of my native mountains, O how oft,
That Sabbath morning walk, in youth was mine;
Yet fancy hears the kirk bell, sweet an' soft,
Ring o'er the darkling woods o' dewy pine;
How oft the wood rose, rich wi' scented thyme,
I've stooped to pull, while passing on my way,
But now in sunny regions south the Line,
Nae birks nor brunn flowers shade the simmer brae—
Alas! I can but dream o' Scotland's Sabbath-day.

But dear that cherish'd dream I still behold:
The ancient kirk,* the plane-trees o'er it spread,
And seated 'mang the graves, the young, the old,
As once in simmer days for ever fled—
To deck my dream, the grave gives up its dead,
'The pale Precentor,† sings as then he sung,

The long lost Pastor † wi' the hoary head,
Pour's forth his pious counsels to the young,
And dear ones from the dust again to life are sprung.

Lost friends return from realms beyond the main,
And boyhood's best beloved ones, all are there—
The blanks in family circles fill'd again,
No seat seems empty round the house of prayer;
The sound of Psalms has vanish'd in the air.
Borne up to heaven upon the mountain breeze—
The Patriarchal Priest wi' silvery hair,
In tent erected, 'neath the fresh green trees;
Spreads forth the Book of God, with holy pride, and
sees

The eyes of circling thousands on him fix'd,
The kirk yard scarce contains the mingling mass
Of kindred congregations round him mix'd,
Close seated on the grave-stones, and the grass—
Some crowd the garden walls—a wealthier class
On chairs and benches round the tent draw near—
The poor man prays far distant—and alas!
Some seated by the graves of parents dear,
Among the fresh green flowers, let fall the silent
tear.

Sublime the text he chooseth—"Who is this,
From Edom comes, with garments dyed in blood,
Travelling in greatness of his strength to bliss,
Treading the wine press of Almighty God?"—
Perchance the theme, that mighty One who rode
Forth leader of the armies, clothed in light:
Around whose fiery forehead rainbows glow'd,
Beneath whose tread Heaven trembled—angels bright,
Their shining ranks arranged around his head of
white.

Behold the contrast! Christ the King of kings,
A houseless wand'rer in a world below—
Faint, fasting, weary by the desert's springs,
From youth, a man of mourning and of woe.
The birds have nests on summer's blooming bough—
The foxes in the mountains find a bed,
But mankind's friend found every man his foe,
His heart with anguish in the Garden bled,
He, peaceful like a lamb, was to the slaughter led.

The action sermon ended, tables fenced,
While Elders forth the sacred symbols bring,
The day's more solemn service now commenced,
To Heaven is waded, on devotion's wing,
The Psalms, these entering to the altar, sing,
"I'll of salvation take the cup—I'll call,
With trembling on the name of Zion's King—
His courts I'll enter—at his footstool fall,
And pay mine early vows before his people all."

Behold the crowded Tables clad in white,
Extending far above the flowery graves—
A blessing on the bread and wine-cups bright,
With lifted hands, the holy Pastor craves;
'The simmer's sunny breeze his white hair waves,
His soul is with his Saviour in the sky,

* Sanquhar Kirk.

† James Hislop, a namesake of the poet.

‡ The Rev. Mr. Rankine.

The hallow'd wheaten loaf he breaks, and gives
The symbols to the Elders seated nigh—
"Take, eat the bread of life, sent down from heaven
on high."

He, in like manner, also lifted up
The flagon, fill'd with consecrated wine—
"Drink—drink ye all of it—Salvation's cup,
Memorial mournful of his love divine."
Then solemn pauseth—Save the rustling pine,
Or plane-tree boughs, no sound salutes mine ears ;
In silence past, the silver vessels shine,
Devout's Sabbath dreams, from bygone years,
Return, till many an eye is moist with springing tears.

Again the preacher breaks the solemn pause—
"Lift up your eyes to Calvary's mountain—see,
In mourning veil'd, the mid-day sun withdraws,
While dies the Saviour, bleeding on the tree.
But hark ! again the stars sing jubilee.
With anthems Ilaven's armies hail their king
Ascend in glory from the grave set free—
Triumphant see him soar on seraph's wing,
To meet his angel hosts around the clouds of spring

Behold his radiant robes of fleecy light,
Melt into sunny ether soft and blue ;
Then in this gloomy world of tears and night,
Behold the table he hath spread for you.
What, though you tread affliction's path—a few,
A few short years your toils will all be o'er—
From Pisgah's top the promised country view—
The happy land, beyond Immanuel's shore—
Where Eden's blissful bower blooms green for ever-
more.

"Come here, ye houseless wand'ers, soothe your
grief,

While faith presents your Father's bless'd abode
And here, ye friendless mourners, find relief,
And dry your tears, in drawing near to God.
The poor may here lay down oppression's load,
The rich forget his crosses and his care,
Youth, enter on Religion's narrow road,
The old, for his eternal change prepare,
And whosoever will, life's waters freely share.

"How blest are they who in thy courts abide,
Whose strength, whose trust, upon Jehovah stays !
For he in his pavilion shall them hide
In covert safe, when come the evil days.
Though shadowy darkness compasseth his ways,
And thick clouds like a curtain hide his throne,
Not even through a glass our eyes shall gaze ;—
In brighter worlds, his wisdom shall be shown,
And all things work for good to those that are his own.

"And blessed are the young, to God who bring
The morning of their days in sacrifice—
The heart's unrisen flowers yet fresh with spring,
Send forth an incense pleasing in his eyes.
To me, ye children, hearken and be wise,

The prophets died—our fathers where are they ?
Alas ! this fleeting word's delusive joys,
Like morning clouds, and early dews, decay :
Be yours that better part, that fadeth not away.

"Walk round these walls—and o'er the yet green
graves,
Of friends whom you have loved, let fall the tear,
On many dresses dark, deep mourning waves,
For some in summers past, who worshipp'd here—
Around these tables, each revolving year,
What fleeting generations I have seen,
Where, where my youthful friends and comrades dear?
Fled, fled away, as they had never been ;
All sleeping in the dust beneath these plane-trees
green !

"And some are seated here, mine aged friends,
Who round this table never more shall meet ;
For him who, bow'd with age, before you stands,
The mourners soon shall go about the street.
Below these green boughs shadow'd from the heat,
I've bless'd the bread of life for threescore years,
And shall not many mouldering 'neath my feet,
And some who sit around me now in tears,
To me be for a crown of joy when Christ appears ?

"Behold he comes ! with clouds a kindling flood
Of fiery flame before his chariot flees ;
The sun, in sackcloth veil'd, the moon in blood—
All kindreds of the earth dismay shall seize—
Like figs, untimely shaken by the breeze.
The fix'd stars fall, amid the thunder's roar—
The buried spring to life beneath these trees—
A mighty angel standing on the shore,
With arms stretch'd forth to heaven, swears times shall
be no more.

"The hour is near, your robes unspotted keep—
The vows you now have sworn, are seal'd on high.
Hark ! hark ! God's answering voice in thunders deep,
'Midst waters dark, and thick clouds of the sky.
And what, if now to judgment on your eye
He burst—where yonder livid lightning's play.
His chariot of salvation passing by,
The great white throne, the terrible array
Of Him, before whose frown the heavens shall flee
away ?

"My friends, how dreadful is this holy place,
Where rolls the thickening thunder, God is near !
And though we cannot see him face to face,
Yet as from Horeb's mount his voice we hear ;
The angel armies of the upper sphere,
Down from these clouds on your communion gaze,
The spirit of the dead who once were dear,
Are viewless witnesses of all your ways.
Go from his table thou—with trembling tune his
praise.