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THE
CHRISTIAN BANNER.

"If any man speak, let him speak as the oracles of God."
"This is love, that we walk after his commandments."

VOL. X.

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NO. 7.

RELIGION IN COMMON LIFE.

[It is presumable that a very respectable majority of the readers of this Monthly have heard of a discourse entitled "Religion in Common Life." It is also presumable that more than a few would be pleased to have a sample of this sermon sent to them—a sermon not only celebrated by its delivery before Queen Victoria and Prince Albert, but famous on account of being published by Her Majesty's command. Nay, more; it is reputable because it treats a popular topic in a manner not very popular, but not the less proper. The following is a liberal extract from the aforesaid published sermon upon Religion in Common Life, by Mr. Caird, preached at Carthie Church, Scotland, on the 14th day of last October.—D. O.]

TEXT.—Not slothful in business; fervent in spirit, serving the Lord.—
Rom. 12: 11.

To combine business with religion, to keep up a spirit of serious piety amidst the stir and distraction of a busy and active life,—this is one of the most difficult parts of a Christian's trial in this world. It is comparatively easy to be religious in the church; to collect our thoughts and compose our feelings, and enter, with an appearance of propriety and decorum, into the offices of religious worship, amidst the quietude of the Sabbath, and within the still and sacred precincts of the house of prayer. But to be religious in the world; to be pious and holy and

earnest-minded in the counting-room, the manufactory, the marketplace, the field, the farm; to carry out our good and solemn thoughts and feelings into the throng and thoroughfare of daily life—this is the great difficulty of our Christian calling. No man not lost to all moral influence can help feeling his worldly passions calmed, and some measure of seriousness stealing over his mind, when engaged in the performance of the more awful and sacred rites of religion; but the atmosphere of the domestic circle, the exchange, the street, the city's throng, amidst coarse work and cankering cares and toils, is a very different atmosphere from that of a communion-table. Passing from the one to the other has often seemed as if the sudden transition from a tropical to a polar climate—from balmy warmth and sunshine to murky mist and freezing cold. And it appears sometimes as difficult to maintain the strength and steadfastness of religious principle and feeling when we go forth from the church into the world, as it would be to preserve an exotic alive in the open air in winter, or to keep the lamp that burns steadily within doors from being blown out if you take it abroad unsheltered from the wind.

So great, so all but insuperable, has this difficulty appeared to men, that it is but few who set themselves honestly and resolutely to the effort to overcome it. The great majority, by various shifts or expedients, evade the hard task of being good and holy, at once in the church and in the world.

In ancient times, for instance, it was, as we all know, the not uncommon expedient among devout persons—men deeply impressed with the thought of an eternal world and the necessity of preparing for it, but distracted by the effort to attend to the duties of religion amidst the business and temptations of secular life—to fly the world altogether, and abandoning society and all social claims, to betake themselves to some hermit solitude, some quiet and cloistered retreat, where, as they fondly deemed, “the world-forgetting, by the world forgot,” their work would become worship, and life be uninterruptedly devoted to the cultivation of religion in the soul. In our own day, the more common device, where religion and the world conflict, is not that of the superstitious recluse, but one even much less safe and venial. Keen for this world, yet not willing to hold on the next, eager for the advantages of time, yet not prepared to abandon all religion and stand by the consequences, there is a very numerous class who attempt to compromise the matter, to treat religion and the world like two creditors, whose claims cannot

both be liquidated, by compounding with each for a share—though in this case a most disproportionate share—of their time and thought. “Everything in its own place,” is the tacit reflection of such men. “Prayers, sermons, holy reading, are for Sundays; but week-days are for the sober business, the real, practical affairs of life. Enough if we give the Sunday to our religious duties; we cannot be always praying and reading the Bible. Well enough for clergymen and good persons who have nothing else to do, to attend to religion through the week; but for us, we have other and more practical matters to mind.” And so the result is, that religion is made altogether a Sunday thing, a robe too fine for common wear, but taken out solemnly on state occasions, and solemnly put past when the state occasion is over. Like an idler in a crowded thoroughfare, religion is jostled aside in the daily throng of life, as if it had no business there. Like a needful yet disagreeable medicine, men will be content to take it now and then, for their soul’s health but they cannot, and will not, make it there daily fare, the substantial and staple nutriment of their life and being.

Now, you will observe that the idea of religion which is set forth in the text, as elsewhere in Scripture, is quite different from any of these notions. The text speaks as if the most diligent attention to our worldly business were not by any means incompatible with spirituality of mind and serious devotion to the service of God. It seems to imply that religion is not so much a duty, as a something that has to do with *all* duties; not a tax to be paid periodically, and got rid of at other times, but a ceaseless, all-pervading, inexhaustible tribute to Him who is not only the object of religious worship, but the end of our very life and being. It suggests to us the idea that piety is not for Sundays only, but for all days; that spirituality of mind is not appropriate to one set of actions and an impertinence and intrusion with reference to others, but, like the act of breathing, like the circulation of the blood, like the silent growth of the stature, a process that may be going on simultaneously with all our actions; when we are busiest as when we are idlest: in the church, in the world; in solitude, in society; in our grief, and in our gladness; in our toil, and in our rest; sleeping, waking; by day, by night; amidst all the engagements and exigencies of life. For you perceive, that in one breath—as duties not only not incompatible, but necessarily and inseparably blended with each other—the text exhorts us to be at once “not slothful in business,” and “fervent in spirit,

“serving the Lord.” I shall now attempt to prove and illustrate the idea thus suggested to us—the compatibility of Religion with the business of Common Life.

We have, then, Scripture authority for asserting that it is not impossible to live a life of fervent piety amidst the most engrossing pursuits and engagements of the world. We are to make good this conception of life,—that the hardest wrought man of trade, or commerce, or handicraft, who spends his days “midst dusky lane or wrangling mart,” may yet be the most holy and spiritually-minded. We need not quit the world and abandon its busy pursuits in order to live near to God :

“ We need not bid, for cloister'd cell,
Our neighbor and our work farewell ;
The trivial round, the common task,
May furnish all we ought to ask,—
Room to deny ourselves, a road
To bring us, daily, nearer God.”

It is true, indeed, that if in no other way could we prepare for an eternal world than by retiring from the business and cares of this world, so momentous are the interests involved in religion, that no wise man should hesitate to submit to the sacrifice. Life here is but a span. Life hereafter is *for ever*. A lifetime of solitude, hardship, penury, were all too slight a price to pay, if need be, for an eternity of bliss ; and the result of our most incessant toil and application to the world's business, could they secure for us the highest prizes of earthly ambition, would be purchased at a tremendous cost, if they stole away from us the only time in which we could prepare to meet our God ; if they left us at last, rich, gay, honored, possessed of everything the world holds dear, but to face an Eternity undone. If, therefore, in no way could you combine business and religion, it would indeed be, not fanaticism, but most sober wisdom and prudence, to let the world's business come to a stand. It would be the duty of the mechanic, the man of business, the statesman, the scholar—men of every secular calling—without a moment's delay to leave vacant and silent the familiar scenes of their toils ; to turn life into a perpetual Sabbath, and betake themselves, one and all, to an existence of ceaseless prayer, and unbroken contemplation, and devout soul.

But the very possibility of such a sacrifice proves that no such sacrifice is demanded. He who rules the world is no arbitrary tyrant prescribing impracticable labours. In the material world there are no

conflicting laws ; and no more, we may rest assured, are there established, in the moral world, any two laws, one or other of which must needs be disobeyed. Now, one thing is certain, that there *is* in the moral world a law of labour. Secular work, in all cases a duty, is, in most cases, a necessity. God might have made us independent of work. He might have nourished us like "the fowls of the air and the lilies of the field," which "toil not, neither do they spin." He might have rained down our daily food, like the manna of old, from heaven, or caused nature to yield it in unsolicited profusion to all, and so set us free to a life of devotion. But forasmuch as He has not done so—forasmuch as He has so constituted us that without work we cannot eat, that if men ceased for a single day to labour, the machinery of life would come to a stand, an arrest be laid on science, civilization, social progress—on everything that is conducive to the welfare of man in the present life,—we may safely conclude that religion, which is also good for man, which is indeed the supreme good of man, is not inconsistent with hard work. It must undoubtedly be the design of our gracious God that all this toil for the supply of our physical necessities—this incessant occupation amid the things that perish, shall be no obstruction, but rather a help, to our spiritual life. The weight of a clock seems a heavy drag on the delicate movements of its machinery ; but so far from arresting or impeding those movements, it is indispensable to their steadiness, balance, accuracy : there must be some analogous action of what seems the clog and drag-weight of worldly work on the finer movements of man's spiritual being. The planets in the heavens have a two-fold motion, in their orbits and on their axis, the one motion not interfering, but carried on simultaneously, and in perfect harmony with the other : so must it be that man's two-fold activities, round the heavenly and the earthly centre, disturb not, nor jar with each other. He who diligently discharges the duties of the earthly, may not less sedulously—nay at the same moment—fulfil those of the heavenly sphere ; at once "diligent in business," and "fervent in spirit, serving the Lord."

And that this is so—that this blending of religion with the work of common life is not impossible, you will readily perceive, if you consider for a moment what, according to the right and proper notion of it, Religion is. What do we mean by "Religion?"

Religion may be viewed in two aspects. It is a *Science*, and it is an *Art*—in other words, a system of doctrines to be believed, and a system of duties to be done. View it in either light, and the point we are

insisting on may, without difficulty, be made good. View it as a Science, as truth to be understood and believed. If religious truth were, like many kinds of secular truth, hard, intricate, abstruse, demanding for its study, not only the highest order of intellect, but all the resources of education, books, learned leisure, then indeed to most men, the blending of religion with the necessary avocations of life would be an impossibility. In that case it would be sufficient excuse for irreligion to plead, "My lot in life is inevitably one of incessant care and toil, of busy, anxious thought and wearing work. Inextricably involved, every day and hour as I am, in the world's business, how is it possible for me to devote myself to this high and abstract science?" If religion were thus, like the higher mathematics or metaphysics, a science based on the most recondite and elaborate reasonings, capable of being mastered only by the acutest minds, after years of study and laborious investigation, then might it be well urged by many an unlettered man of toil, "I am no scholar—I have no head to comprehend these hard dogmas and doctrines. Learning and religion are, no doubt, fine things, but they are not for humble and hard-wrought folk like me!" In this case, indeed, the Gospel would be no Gospel at all—no good news of Heavenly love and mercy to the whole sin-ruined race of man, but only a Gospel for scholars—a religion like the ancient philosophies, for a scanty minority, clever enough to grasp its principles, and set free from active business to devote themselves to the development and discussion of its doctrines.

But the Gospel is no such system of high and abstract truth. The salvation it offers is not the prize of a lofty intellect, but of a lowly heart. The mirror in which its grand truths are reflected is not a mind of calm and philosophic abstraction, but a heart of earnest purity. Its light shines best and fullest, not on a life undisturbed by business, but on a soul unstained by sin. The religion of Christ, while it affords scope for the loftiest intellect in the contemplation and development of its glorious truths, is yet, in the exquisite simplicity of its essential facts and principles, patent to the simplest mind. Rude, untutored, toil-worn you may be, but if you have wit enough to guide you in the commonest round of daily toil, you have wit enough to learn the way to be saved. The truth as it is in Jesus, whilst in one view of it, so profound that the highest archangel's intellect may be lost in the contemplation of its mysterious depths, is yet, in another, so simple that the lisping babe at a mother's knee may learn its meaning.

Again: View religion as an *Art*, and in this light too, its compatibility with a busy and active life in the world, it will not be difficult to perceive. For religion as an art differs from secular arts in this respect that it may be practised simultaneously with other arts—with all other work and occupation in which we may be engaged. A man cannot be studying architecture and law at the same time. The medical practitioner cannot be engaged with his patients, and at the same time planning houses or building bridges,—practising, in other words, both medicine and engineering at one and the same moment. The practice of one secular art excludes for the time the practice of other secular arts. But not so with the art of religion. This is the universal art, the common, all-embracing profession. It belongs to no one set of functionaries, to no special class of men. Statesman, soldier, lawyer, physician, poet, painter, tradesman, farmer,—men of every craft and calling in life—may, while in the actual discharge of the duties of their varied avocations, be yet at the same moment, discharging the duties of a higher and nobler vocation—practising the art of a Christian. Secular arts, in most cases, demand of him who would attain to eminence in any one of them, an almost exclusive devotion of time, and thought, and toil. The most versatile genius can seldom be master of more than one art; and for the great majority the only calling must be that by which they earn their daily bread. Demand of the poor tradesman or peasant, whose every hour is absorbed in the struggle to earn a competency for himself and his family, that he shall be also a thorough proficient in the art of the physician, or lawyer, or sculptor, and you demand an impossibility. If religion were an art such as these, few indeed could learn it. The two admonitions, “Be diligent in business,” and “Be fervent in spirit, serving the Lord,” would be reciprocally destructive.

But religion is no such art; for it is the *art of being, and of doing good*; to be an adept in it, is to become just, truthful, sincere, self-denied, gentle, forbearing, pure in word, in thought, and deed. And the school for learning this art is not the closet, but the world,—not some hallowed spot where religion is taught, and proficient when duly trained, are sent forth into the world,—but the world itself—the coarse, profane, common world, with its cares and temptations, its rivalries and competitions, its hourly, ever-recurring trials of temper and character. This is, therefore, an art, which all can practise, and for which every profession and calling, the busiest and most absorbing, afford scope and discipline.

SINCERITY SEEKING THE WAY TO HEAVEN.

CHAPTER VI.

Our young friend *Sincerity*, shortly after his late conversation with Mr. H., was at a funeral, and, being detained by the failure of the undertaker to arrive in time, his attention was attracted by the conversation of a very grave, dignified, and thoughtful lady, in appearance, who sat near him, and directed her discourse to some ladies at her side. He soon found that her remarks were of a religious character, and of course was deeply interested in them. But he could not discover what religious party this venerable lady was of; yet he was struck with the sense and propriety of what she said. For the present, we shall call this distinguished and interesting lady *Priscilla*. When the conversation had terminated between her and those to whom she directed her remarks, our young friend approached her as follows:

Sincerity. May I ask you, madam, to what denomination you belong?

Priscilla. The Church of Christ, sir.

S. I supposed you belonged to the Church of Christ; but what branch?

P. I do not belong to a *branch*, my good sir, but am a branch myself. The Saviour said to his disciples, "I am the vine, ye are the branches." I trust, sir, that I am one of these branches, or a member of Christ's body—the church.

S. Well, but what do you and your brethren call yourselves?

P. Christians, sir; Disciples of Christ.

S. Nothing else?

P. Sometimes we call the members of the church "brethren," "friends," "children of God," "saints," etc., as they did in ancient times. We apply to ourselves none but Scripture designations.

S. Why, I am astonished! How do you distinguish yourselves from others?

P. We do not wish to distinguish ourselves from others who are satisfied with the simple designations by which the people of God are called in the Scriptures. But those who are not satisfied with Scripture designations for the children of God, by calling themselves by other names, *distinguish themselves from us*. There is, therefore, a distinction kept up where there is a difference, and that is as far as there should be any distinction.

S. Well, this is a new idea to me. You say that you simply apply to yourselves Scripture names, as you find them in the Bible?

P. No, sir, not exactly as we find them in the *Old Testament*; as we find them in the *New Testament*. We are not Jews, but Christians; not under Moses, but Jesus; not under the law, but the gospel; not under the letter, but the spirit.

S. If I understand, then, you call yourselves Christians, Disciples, etc., as the followers of Christ did in New Testament times, and nothing else. Am I right?

P. Yes, sir. Is not that sufficient? If you were about to die, and knew yourself to be a Christian, a Disciple of Christ, etc., would you not be satisfied?

S. I must confess that I would. That is precisely what I have been desiring to know and inquiring into for weeks. What doctrine do you hold, madam?

P. The doctrine of Christ, or Christianity.

S. Nothing else?

P. No, sir, nothing else. The Lord has given nothing else. We need nothing else. Not only so, but the Lord has pronounced a curse upon man or angel who shall preach anything else, or even pervert the gospel of Christ. Are you not satisfied to receive Christianity—pure and unadulterated Christianity, as the Lord gave it, and nothing else?

S. Yes, if I knew how to receive Christianity as God gave it, and nothing else, and how to become a Christian, or a disciple of Christ, as you seem to think one may, it would be a relief to me worth more than world. But this is where my trouble lies. I have had several conversations with Mr. H., but find it utterly impossible for me to understand him. He thinks I am blinded by unbelief. I confess I am blinded by some means; I do not understand.

P. My dear sir, I have not an unkind feeling toward Mr. H., or a hard word to say of him. He is evidently a kind-hearted man, and is just about sufficiently enlightened to conduct a mourner's bench excitement, without Scripture or understanding, but he is as ignorant as a new-born infant of the Bible plan of salvation, and what is worse in his case than that of an infant, he is so blinded by bigotry, sectarian partizan zeal and self-conceit, that there is even less hope of his ever being enlightened than an infant. The reason you could not understand him was that he presented nothing tangible that your mind could take hold of.

S. That is what my friend, the lawyer, told me in a conversation the other day, but he said the fault was in religion—that there is no understanding it.

P. I am acquainted with your friend, the gentleman of the legal profession, and consider him an honourable man of the world, but he has been confused with sectarian difficulties and absurdities, and is now a skeptic. But this want of intelligibility is not in religion itself, but in the confused minds of men, who have never learned to take hold of religion at its beginning.

S. Madam, will you tell me what its beginning is?

P. Its beginning and ending is the Lord Jesus Christ, the Saviour of the world. He is revealed to the unconverted and unbelieving world in the four gospels, Matthew, Mark, Luke and John. Hence John says, "These things are written that you might believe." When the inquirer has examined these divine testimonies concerning Christ, and believes on him as a divine person, the Saviour and Redeemer, it leads him to inquire what he shall do to be saved.

S. Allow me to say, madam, that that is precisely where I am now standing. I believe in the Saviour with all my heart, and love Him, but cannot find how I am to come to him.

P. You are then prepared to proceed to the second division of the New Testament, the Acts of the Apostles, and read the inspired accounts of the numerous cases of conversion there recorded, that you may proceed the same way they did, to obtain pardon and admission into the kingdom of God.

S. That is precisely the part of the Bible I desired to find, but Mr. H. evaded and did not point it out to me. I was at the protracted meeting, held by Mr. H., and saw a number of persons come forward to pray and be prayed for, and requested him to point out to me where the Scriptures mention such vast numbers turning to the Lord, that I might read for myself, and learn precisely what they were required to do, but, for some cause, he did not point out the place to me. Did you say I would find this in the Acts of the Apostles?

P. Yes, sir: you will there find the account of all the conversions recorded in the Scriptures. But you will find nothing there, or any place in the Bible, about coming to the mourner's bench to pray and be prayed for. There was no such procedure in the Apostles' times.

S. What then were they required to do?

P. You will find, Acts ii, 38, where a vast number inquired what they should do, and where the inspired Apostles answered them. Read the case for yourself and the whole book of Acts through, against I see you again, and you can tell yourself what they were required to do as well as any preacher in this city.

READING THE ORACLES.

The instruction and improvement to be derived from the perusal of the Bible, depend upon the *manner* in which it is read. It cannot be doubted, that much of the benefit which a correct reading of this sacred book is calculated to impart, is often lost, in consequence of the faulty and incorrect manner in which it is read. It is more than probable that if it were read aright by the great body of Christians, the ignorance of its contents, and the divisions arising from that ignorance which prevail, would be to a great degree removed. All admit that there are no contradictions in the Bible—no discordance in its sacred contents—but, that it contains a grand and harmonious system of religious truth, framed by the infinite wisdom of God. In God's material system—the Universe—we behold endless variety combined with perfect unity and harmony: it is constructed upon a vast plan, in which there is not a single jar. As in a sublime and perfect musical composition,—even the apparent discords only complete the harmony of the whole. The same observation is true of God's religious system—the Bible. It follows, therefore, that the discords of religious opinion, which divide the professors of Christianity, are not derived from the Bible, correctly read and understood; but from its defective and erroneous interpretation.

It ought ever to be remembered, that, while as respect its author, and the ideas which it reveals, the Bible differs from all other books, its language is similar—it is written in the conventional language of men,—and, therefore, must be interpreted like all other books and documents according to the established laws of language. If an acquaintance with the customs, the ideas and history of ages and countries far remote, be necessary to the correct interpretation of any ancient document, the same knowledge is necessary in interpreting the Bible, some portions of which are the most ancient writings which have survived the wrecks of time. And all the aids, geographical, historical, and literary, which

are resorted to in the interpretation of an ancient classic, are requisite, in order to a perfect understanding of the inspired language of the Scriptures.

The object and character of each portion of the Scriptures, and also the persons addressed, should be continually kept in view. Is one of the Apostolic epistles the subject of examination? the inquiry should be made: To whom was it addressed? what were their character and circumstances? and for what object or objects was it written? The solution of these queries will furnish a key to its interpretation, which will obviate many difficulties, and impart clearness and comprehensiveness to our views of its meaning. We cannot rightly interpret an ordinary letter, without pursuing this course; how much more necessary is it, when we attempt to interpret epistles which were written to settle questions of eternal moment, and to develop the grand scheme of human redemption in all its details?

Every portion of the Bible must be construed with a reference to its context, to the connection in which it stands, in order to ascertain its meaning. No sensible man would attempt to interpret a part of any common written instrument, relating to the ordinary transactions of life, without carefully examining the scope of the whole. Yet from a disregard of this plain common sense and universally admitted principle of interpretation, the most erroneous, fantastic, and absurd meanings have been attributed to many portions of Scripture: and doctrines and notions utterly at war with the plainest teaching of *Divine Revelation*, have been deduced from the words of that revelation, and promulgated under its pretended sanction.

But, perhaps, the right interpretation of the Bible depends more upon the spirit and disposition of mind with which it is read, than upon any other qualification. A controversial spirit is the most inimical to a correct understanding of the Scriptures: under its influence the controversialist reads them not to conform his faith to the Word of God, but to conform that Word to his faith; he searches for proofs of his own opinions, not for the truth of God; the Scriptures are wrested and distorted to accord with his pre-conceived notions; he sees with eagle glance all that seems to favor his system, but is blind to all that opposes it—every truth, however important, that lies beyond the pale of his system, is excluded from his vision. To study the Bible aright, it must be approached in humility, in a teachable spirit—with a sincere desire

to learn the wisdom of God rather than to confirm our own ; it must be read, not in a spirit of pride and controversy, but of devotion and obedience ; to learn the will of God, in order to obey it, rather than to fortify a system of our own, and thus flatter our own pride, must be the motive that prompts us to its perusal.

THE CHRISTIANITY I WANT.

Commercial men advertize for wares and articles in which to trade and by which to profit. They have their own purpose or purposes to serve in every article they want. Their stock is their medium of wealth. I want, for my part, a large stock of christianity for personal, social, and general use as follows :

1. I want christianity so that I may know Jesus as a Teacher.
2. That I may become acquainted with Jesus as a Friend.
3. That I may realize him as an endeared and endearing Sacrifice.
4. That I may see Jesus as an Example and imitate him as a Model.
5. That I may appreciate him as the only Mediator and Intercessor.
6. That I may regard and claim Jesus as my Captain, Leader, and Prince.

Again, I want large lessons in christianity so that I may—

7. Learn the lives, labours, and character of the purest men of the primitive age.
8. Become familiar in mind, heart, and life with the principles and government of the Lord of heaven and earth.
9. Have an acquaintance with things that perish not, incorruptible and eternal, and at the same time desirable in the first degree.

Then, let it be scrupulously noted, I want christianity in its power to impart to me—

10. Contentment, which, through godliness, is great gain.
11. Control over my passions, appetites, and selfish propensities—so that the spiritual man shall grow large and the fleshy man grow small and weak.
12. The loveliness and temper of heaven, in order that I may not only have a broad and deep interest in the whole living race of Adam, and act the part of a good citizen of the world, but joyfully cherish

affection for every member of the Lord's true household—every one who bears the spiritual stamp of the gospel of God.

13. I want christianity to furnish me soil, sun, seed, atmosphere, moisture and all things requisite to produce an abundant supply of the Spirit's fruit, such as joy, peace, hope, purity, charity, mercy, forbearance, kindness, temperance, zeal, courage, diligence, perseverance, and every virtue that can benefit myself, be a blessing to my relatives who constitute the family of the Lord, and be of service to the community and the world.

14. I want christianity that it may give me fitness for the society of the redeemed hereafter, who shall be glorified in immortality with the Lord of Life and Prince of the empire of the universe.

15. I am desirous of sharing largely in christianity that I may be happily rid of the abstractions and fanciful mixtures—the doubts and perplexities—of the times, realizing and enjoying the same testimonies, the same precepts, the same appointments, the same assurance of forgiveness, the same holy spirit, the same hopes, and the same divinely revealed aids and agencies to overcome the world and live the life of faith as the friends of Christ my Lord in the age when christianity was established.

Will any friend or any foe tell me whether I want too much or too little—whether this sort of salvation be the salvation of God or some deceptive system which should be spurned and rejected?

D. O.

Nova Scotia, July, 1856.

ESSENTIALS AND NON-ESSENTIALS AGAIN.

DEAR BROTHER OLIPHANT.—In the 4th No. of the Banner your correspondent A. F., demurs at a statement made in an article which appeared in the 1st No. intitled “Conversations on the Christian Religion viz: that christianity had essentials and non-essentials.” I read A. F.'s letter with mingled emotions of satisfaction and regret, pleased that the subject was stirred up for examination, and sorry that he should consider that he had just grounds for public animadversion. Deeming it more blessed to lessen than multiply the points on which brethren differ. I am happy to learn that the *real* difference between A. F. and myself is no wider than the different meaning each attaches to the word

Christianity. Both Webster and Walker define it *The Religion of Christians.* From this I understand it to be the divinely approved conduct of Christians. I have shown that Christians were allowed to differ on matters of opinion, but were not allowed to differ upon anything that was positively taught or commanded in the word of God. The Apostle shows that a diversity of opinion in Christians was perfectly consistent with the unity of the spirit in the bonds of peace. Respecting the various insinuations of A. F., that I encourage persons to treat the commands of Scripture as non-essentials, and support the strong pillars of sectarianism, which separate the flock and divide the kingdom &c., &c. I only refer the reader to the article in question as the best reply to such insinuations.

With best wishes for yourself and Brother F. and the church of God, I remain yours, &c.,
B.

JUNE MEETING.

Louth, June 27, 1856.

DEAR BROTHER O. PIANT.—On Friday the 20th inst. brother Palmer and I, accompanied by brother and sister Bradshaw of Wainfleet started for the annual meeting in Eramosa. On the way we very fortunately fell in company with Prof. Munnell, of Williamsville Seminary, N. Y., attended by his truly amiable sister wife—both destined for the same place. It was assuredly a rich treat for me thus to meet a brother whom I had never seen before, and who is so favorably known to many of the brethren in Canada. Sweetly and happily did the hours pass while journeying on the way. Not being present on the first day of the meeting, I can report nothing relative thereto; but on the second day the brilliant sun adorning the eastern sky we repaired to the appointed place, and were glad to behold many good friends from Wainfleet, among whom were brother and sister Graybiel. How pleased was I to see for the first time our dear brother Eaton who long ago consoled my heart by his rich and attractive productions of the pen. I well remember the effort made by certain stupid materialists of the school of Dr. Thomas, to disseminate principles causing spiritual desolation in this region; a check to whom was administered through the pages of the "Christian," in an able article based upon the parable of the rich man and Lazarus; It occasioned a brisk stir in the camp of

the destructionists. With ghastly countenances they demurred but could do no more. Brethren Eaton, Sheppard and Munnell (if I mistake not for I took no notes,) occupied this day in melting glowing, and soul-stirring addresses and exhortations; at the close of which, two interesting young persons presented themselves for admission into the kingdom of our Lord and Saviour. Angels rejoiced and the saints were glad. Perfect harmony and holy affection obtained during the day and indeed continued throughout the entire meeting. The third day opened upon us propitiously. The audience, some 1,500 persons, manifested order and attention during the day. I pensively viewed this vast multitude composed of almost every description of mind and character. How many in this great assembly will obey the glad tidings of salvation? How many will be recognized as children of God in the great judgment day? Alas! these are interrogatories of the most solemn import. Frequently, however, in the dense crowd the eye rests upon a countenance breathing heavenly sweetness and innocence seeming to possess perfect happiness in the company of God's dear children. How delighted Mary and Martha must have been while hearing the Saviour speak, to view his face, beholding there goodness, meekness, kindness, sweetness, purity and love. A meek and quiet spirit is in the sight of God of great price. By reference to a note elsewhere, you will see to whom I refer. Cheerfulness at all times is pleasing, but a morose disposition reminds me of the character spoken of in Daniel chap. 3; 19. Bro. Munnell gave the morning address which was productive of much edification to me, although he regretted being hindered in bringing it to a desirable conclusion by reason of the dash of rain in conjunction with other inauspicious circumstances. No properly educated disciple of the Lord Jesus will demur at or question the utility of those cheering annual gatherings of the saints from all quarters; because, perhaps, every movement may not be in consonance with his views of right, but will exercise due forbearance considering the great amount of good accomplished on such occasion. But some individuals very far off are so surprisingly perpendicular that they lean a little the other way. Let me ask every disciple small and great, rich and poor—do you not on returning from a scene so rich and glorious, feel emotions of delight indescribable, and joy, peace, and sweet composure of mind, superlatively pleasing and effectually bracing to the soul? In the affirmative you all will answer. Let the giddy world chase its fas-

inating delusions—let the covetous and supercilious worship idol wealth and a soul absorbing speculation, while I but sit in some lonely retreat or shady bower with the meek, humble and loving children of the Lord Jesus, singing in exulting strains the sublime wonders of redemption. The longer I live the greater assurance I have that the church of God is the loveliest, happiest, and most desirable of all the combinations of earth. O! how transporting the thought that the Lord loves the church! Five hundred citizens of Messiah's kingdom partook at the Lord's table, presided over by the venerable Elder Sinclair, an aged father in Israel. How pleasing to contemplate old veterans in the service of heaven. It is therefore a gratification to possess the company of such godly men as Elder Black, and others of pleasant memory. Think Bro. O., of 500 children of the Redeemer sitting down at the Lord's table with hearts overflowing with christian love, which thinks no evil, and rejoices in the truth, presenting a glorious object on which Angels contemplate with superlative admiration, and then consider him who permits some sinister motive or imaginary peccadillo to turn his mind in opposition to such holy convocations or heavenly places in Christ Jesus; and tell me, does that person enjoy sound spiritual health? In the afternoon Bro. Sheppard—always welcome, always pleasant.—persuasive and eloquent, addressed the multitude to the edification of the hearers. Fortunate the vicinity, and happy the congregation, that possess so amiable, argumentative and prepossessing a speaker as our good Bro. Sheppard. Would that Bethany College could send us many such. The day closed by five persons presenting themselves for baptism. During this day Bro. James Thompson and I visited Bro. William Oliphant of whom we had heard so many good things. We found him standing "on Jordan's stormy banks" viewing with sweet composure the glorious land of promise on the other side. Oh! what a heavenly boon is a hope in death—compared with which earthly possessions, influence, authority, power, kingdoms, empires, are as the sordid dust or chaff of the thrashing floor. Let us dear brethren at the throne of favor remember the sick of the fold of Christ. On Monday morning the blazing luminary appearing in the oriental heavens shedding his life-giving rays to all—fit emblem of the "Sun of Righteousness with healing in his wings," we repaired with joyous hearts to the place of meeting. Assuredly the Lord was in our midst. Unfortunately Prof. Munnell was obliged that morning to return home. Bro. Eaton and others being called upon to warn, teach and exhort, succeed-

ed most admirably to the gratification of every soul in the assembly. O that the church possessed myriads of such men as our dear Bro. Eaton. At a certain meeting held not 10,000 miles distant, an eloquent preacher manifested great ado for the good cause, but it was clearly evident that *self* towered pre-eminent above every other consideration. Not so with Bro. Eaton. Don't you feel dear brethren, to thank God and take courage since hearing those rich, appropriate, and soul-subduing admonitions and exhortations from one so much like the Saviour? Will Bro. Eaton be so kind as to publish his address relative to the two classes of christians found in his travels—one class of the school of Cain, the other of the school of Abel. Let it appear in the "Christian Age," and copied thence into the "Christian Banner," for the special benefit of the congregations at large. And what shall I say more, for time and space would fail me to speak of brethren Anderson, Kilgour, Ash, Parkinson, Mitchell, Lister, Beaty, Stephens, and Butchart; who, by words full of comfort, exhorted and strengthened the brethren to continue faithful in well-doing, and in the end lay hold on eternal life. The meeting terminated with the addition of three more—ten in all. A few reflections and I am done.

Jesus admonished his disciples to be united in love that the world might believe that the Father had sent him. In order that the proclamation of the truth may have its desired effect, the members of a congregation should be on the most happy terms of sociability, else how can the good cause prosper in that particular locality? In like manner that our great annual festivities may prove happy, successful and glorious, it is of paramount importance that our Rabbis and our chief brethren throughout the province be joined together in heart and soul—that they be lovely, affectionate, and confidential—otherwise heaven will frown upon efforts which will prove mischievous, abortive and humiliating. Though a voice feeble and unheeded declare it, nevertheless it is most true that unless our "chief men among the brethren"—our prominent teachers in Israel—be joined together in tenderness and love the work of God must languish and eventually die. Soon the great day of God Almighty will approach when the trump of heaven in peals of thunder shall call the nations to judgment; and O, how painful the reflection, that while on earth alienation abounded among some who should have been foremost, in the exhibition of every christian excellence in the church of Christ. Witness the Saviour enduring hunger, scoffs, insults, and death itself, because his love towards us was so rich. Be-

hold him forgiving his enemies because he was full of tenderness and sympathy. Observe his attachment and confidence in his friends because he designed his followers thus to appear one to another. And now, O my brethren, can we not love the saints constantly, ardently, unfeignedly, bidding depart all bitterness and strife, if any there be, and then will the cause of truth advance most gloriously, bearing down all opposition. Dear brethren, ere the period for the next spiritual festival shall have rolled around let confidence and good will be increased—let Paul and Barnabas become reconciled—*then* will the church be glad, then will the gospel triumph and angels exultingly sing peace in the congregation and good will to man.

Through the kindness of brethren Abbott and Stewart—both fine fellows—our company, including Bro. Sheppard, was conveyed some 20 miles to the mansion of sister Forester, in Galt, with whom we remained a few happy hours. Joining with Bro. Sheppard in prayer, we bid adieu to our sister and her dear family and fled to the cars, which in a few moments were rapidly bearing us on our journey home.

Amid frequent interruption was the above written. Enough from
AUG.

From the Christian Age.

THE CHRISTIAN FAITH.

The Lutheran Reformation was a reformation of the *church*. It proceeded from within the church itself, and consisted in the correction of errors and abuses in regard to what are usually termed the “doctrines of Christianity.” The great object of the movement was to reform the *church*.

On the other hand, the introduction of Christianity was a movement upon the world from without. “Go ye into all the world and preach,” was the commission of its heralds, and the object of the movement was to reform the world.

The difference in purpose made a great difference in the mode of proceeding in the two cases. In the effort of Luther and his coadjutors, doctrines were taught; in that of the apostles, the gospel was preached. In the former each thinker delivered his own views of “doctrinal Christianity,” and each one established his own peculiar reformation. In the latter, one gospel only was presented to the world; to convert the world to Christ.

Protestantism is, in its very nature, a grand doctrinal controversy. It has never been a converting power for Christ. The character stamped upon it in its inception, continues with it in all its progress. There is no question here of anything but doctrine. Even the gospel, which is for the world, can be contemplated only through the medium of doctrines, and is made really the exponent of the doctrines of each particular party. Thus doctrines are confounded with the gospel. No distinction is made between the gospel and the doctrines of the gospel. Doctrines are preached for the conversion both of saints and sinners—of “saints,” from one party to another; of sinners, from the world to some particular sect. The Swedenborgian preaches the reveries of Swedenborg; the Calvinist, the doctrines and “Institutes” of Calvin; the Arminian, the opinions of Arminius. Each one has his theory, even of conversion, which to be valid, must be in conformity with some intellectual view or theory of the process. Hence conversation has come to be not so much a change of heart as a change of head. It is in fact, in popular practice, the adoption of a religious theory, rather than of a religious life.

As the Christian Institution, not only in its evangelical ministrations to the world, but in its doctrinal instructions in the church, is now committed to the body of believers, who are to be the “light of the world”—“the pillar and support of the truth,” we have not to expect any movement from without, as at the beginning, either to create the church anew, or to convert the world. What is to be done now, is to be done through the church itself, which has thus resting upon it the duty, not only of self-reformation, but of the conversion of sinners. All Christianity is now in the church or body of true believers. Theirs is the Bible, the only source of divine illumination; theirs the privilege of access to the throne of favor; theirs the Holy Spirit, the only source of spiritual power, the only personal manifestation of God on earth, working in them both to will and to do his own good pleasure.

The present reformation movement in which we are engaged is an effort for this purpose. It is an overture to the religious community for co-operation in an endeavor to discover a clue which will lead the church out of the confused maze of sectarianism, and which, while restoring to the church its original unity, will enable us to present also to the world the gospel in its pristine simplicity, unmingled with human theories.

To this end, it is proposed, in the very first instance to take the Scriptures interpreted in conformity to the established laws of language as the only lamp to guide our feet, and to seek by earnest prayer and in humble confidence in the divine promises, both the wisdom and the strength necessary to the task. It is, hence, entirely accordant with our aims, that we should zealously favor the revision of translations, and the circulation of pure versions of the word of God, in order that each individual may have in his own vernacular, a correct expression of the mind of the Spirit. To content ourselves with this, however, would be to renounce the end for the sake of the means of its accomplishment. To rest satisfied with clearer views of particular passages, or even with an enlarged knowledge of the whole volume, would be to neglect or ignore the great practical purposes of this movement for the sake of mere theoretic knowledge. Certainly a purer version can profit no one, unless as it leads to a purer practice; and it would be a futile effort at improvement to labor diligently, and at vast expense, to obtain the true words of God, unless we secure thereby the true spiritual things which these were designed to impart. Hence, the various parties now engaged in the Bible Union Revision, will profit but little by the success of their efforts, if they do not, by obtaining a more accurate version of the original scriptures, attain also to a more exact conformity to the faith and practice of the primitive churches. For our part we desire to keep it ever in view, that our purpose, while it embraces the attainment of a correct version, reaches far beyond this, even to the recovery of everything which has been lost and the subtraction of every thing which has been added, as regards the gospel and doctrine of Christ since the days of the Apostles.

These authorized omissions and additions may be divided simply into two classes: 1st, Those which have respect to the ministration of the gospel to sinners, and 2ndly, Those which have regard to the knowledge and practice of believers. We have an example of the first in the error to which we have already referred, viz: the making doctrinal matters a part of the gospel proclamation, and thus confounding simple Christian faith with Christian knowledge. It is to the consideration of this error that we shall devote the remainder of the present communication.

This is one of the most serious perversions of the gospel of Christ, and it is a melancholy reflection that it prevails so generally in the

Protestant world. I do not, indeed, know a single religious party that is content to preach the simple primitive gospel as the Apostles preached it. Each one demands, in addition to the simple faith demanded by the Apostles, or rather instead of it, the acceptance of various tenets and tests of orthodoxy.

This is a sad and unfortunate mistake, for what is properly called the Christian faith has direct and exclusive reference to Christ himself, and is hence personal instead of doctrinal, and designed to fix the attention, the affections, and the entire trust of the soul upon the Lord Jesus in his personal and official character, as our Saviour, our Leader and our Hope of glory. But the above perversion in making faith to consist in the reception of certain intellectual conceptions, called "tenets," necessarily leads the mind away from Christ, to trust in the accuracy of its own reasonings, and leaves the heart, destitute of the true love and of the spiritual presence of Christ, to become a prey to a narrow sectarian bigotry and Pharisaic pride of opinion.

It is the characteristic feature of the present reformation to endeavor to disentangle the Christian faith from doctrinal controversy, and to restore it to its original character, as a simple reception of the facts concerning Christ—a heartfelt personal reliance upon Christ alone. Hence it is, that we plead so earnestly for the original formula of confession by which the true nature of the faith is so clearly exhibited. We propose to the whole religious community a return to the simple confession of faith made by the converts under the apostolic ministry—a confession which, while it affords no legitimate ground of controversy, is yet sufficiently comprehensive to include all necessary truth, and sufficiently definite to exclude all fatal error. This confession is in substance that made by the Ethiopian eunuch: "I believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God," and that such was the primitive confession is incontrovertibly evident not only from the inspired writings, but from the testimony of all authentic history. The greatest and most candid historian of the church, Neander, thus speaks in relation to this subject:

"The existence and first development of the Christian church rests on an historical foundation—on the acknowledgement of the fact that Jesus was the Messiah—not on a certain system of ideas. Hence, at first, all those who acknowledged Jesus as the Messiah, separated from the mass of Jewish people and formed themselves into a distinct com-

munity. In the course of time it became apparent who were genuine and who were false disciples; but all who acknowledged Jesus as the Messiah were baptized without fuller or longer instruction, such as in later times has preceded baptism. There was only one article of faith which formed the peculiar mark of the Christian profession, and from this point believers were led to a clearer and perfect knowledge of the whole contents of the Christian faith, by the continual enlightening of the Holy Spirit. Believing that Jesus was the Messiah, they ascribed to him the whole idea of what the Messiah was to be, according to the meaning and spirit of the Old Testament promises, rightly understood: they acknowledged him as the Redeemer from sin, the Ruler of the kingdom of God, to whom their whole lives were to be devoted, whose laws were to be followed in all things; while he would manifest himself as the Ruler of God's kingdom by the communication of a new divine principle of life, which to those who are redeemed and governed by him imparts the certainty of the forgiveness of sins. This divine principle of life must mould their whole lives to a conformity with the laws of the Messiah and his kingdom, and would be the pledge of all the blessings to be imparted to them in the kingdom of God until its consummation. Whoever acknowledged Jesus as the Messiah, received him consequently as the infallible divine prophet, and implicitly submitted to his instructions as communicated by his personal ministry, and afterwards by his inspired organs, the Apostles. Hence baptism at this period, in its peculiar Christian meaning, referred to this one article of faith, which constituted the essence of Christianity, as baptism into Jesus, into the name of Jesus; it was the holy rite which sealed the connexion with Jesus as the Messiah."—*History of the Planting of the Christian Church. Chap. ii.*

Let no one imagine that in opposing the substitution of belief in doctrinal tenets for faith in Christ, we oppose what are called "evangelical doctrines," or disparage the true doctrine of Holy Scripture. We say, simply: Let everything have its due place. Let not an intellectual assent to points of doctrine be mistaken for the Christian faith. But let this faith be allowed to stand forth in its true character as a personal trust in Christ, and let doctrines of Christianity be the study of those who are already converted to Christ. From this point of view all doctrines appear to be equally unevangelical, that is to say, equally foreign to the gospel proclamation, and the faith which this is designed to produce. In this view, the declaration that "Christ died for our

sins," is not a doctrine, but a fact, and the same may be said of the announcement that he "was buried," and of that, also, which completes the gospel, viz: that "he rose from the dead." These are statements of fact, not doctrines, tenets, or deductions of human reason from premises scriptural, or unscriptural; not matters of speculation to engage the intellect, but divine realities to control the heart. Or, it may be compared to the seed which includes and enwraps, but does not display the future plant which it is designed to produce, with its branching stem its verdant outspread leaves, its flowers and fruits. It is this seed of the divine word, in all its intact simplicity, that the true evangelist seeks to implant in the human heart, confident that while "he sleeps and rises night and day," it will "grow up, he knoweth not how," for "the earth bringeth forth of herself first the blade, then the ear, then the full corn in the ear." But the doctrine, loving religionist must, forsooth, presume himself to unfold that seed, to separate its parts, to give to them a new arrangement, to mingle with them the germs of his own philosophy, and endeavor to implant this bulky and complicated substitute in the minds of men. But this dissection has destroyed the vitality of the seed. It cannot vegetate. On the other hand, it is the germs of human philosophy that grow and flourish in the name and stead of the gospel and faith of Christ. It is this philosophy, this doctrinal opinionism, which, like the larva of a parasite in the body of an insect, feeds upon the gospel into which it has been introduced, until by destroying the life of the truth, and consuming its materials, it has succeeded in effecting its own developement, and in establishing itself in the room of that divine faith which was designed to save the world.

R. R.

Bethphage, Va.

NOTES ON A TOUR.

That we may present some truths to the brethren, and state some facts of which some may not be fully aware, we present the following narrative of a short tour among friends, brethren, and churches in the western part of western Canada.

On June the third, after taking farewell of the friends and brethren of King, we were borne speedily along the iron highway by the power of steam, controled by human skill, till we arrived at Edwardsburgh, a

station on the Great Western Railway, nine and a half miles east of London. From this point we journeyed on foot alone, and somewhat pilgrim-like to the vicinity of the brethren in South Dorchester; whose kindness and hospitality we enjoyed for several days. We felt much pleased to have an opportunity to renew our former acquaintance with these brethren, and were enlivened by finding them so lively and deeply engaged in the Lord's service.

The church here, by the labours and zeal of brother E. Sheppard, and the wise conduct and piety of the brethren, with the Lord's favour, has increased to a numerous and noble band, and command the confidence and respect of the surrounding region. The success of the gospel in South Dorchester, might inspire many with courage and zeal; for, it has made a desert to "bloom with roses;" a barren waste to be fruitful; has silenced infidelity; put slander to the blush, and made haughty prejudice listen with attention, and learn wisdom from the holy oracles. There are few places, if any, where the gospel commands more attention and a more promising field for labour can be found. It is a field white to harvest, which, brother E. Sheppard is endeavoring with much labour and self denial to reap. There are some six or seven places, many miles distant from each other, where the truth is presented to the people frequently, and which are sometimes supplied to the number of three. by brother E. Sheppard in one day. There have been several persons added to this congregation lately by immersion: three on Lord's day the 1st, one on the 8th, and two on the 17th inst., and there is a good prospect for more being enrolled among the faithful, whose names are in the book of life.

On Monday the 9th, we left Dorchester in company with brother Sheppard, on a tour among the brethren in the Townships of Aldborough, Howard, and Harwich. Having arrived in London in time for a train going west, we proceeded on to Wardsville railway station. Here we turned southward into Aldborough; and passing through Wardsville and calling upon several brethren, we journeyed on to brother A. Monroe's at whose residence a meeting was held that evening, notice of which, was circulated by the pupils of the school in the vicinity, and other juvenile messengers sent in various directions. Next day we proceeded onward to Howard and Harwich, where several appointments for brother Sheppard, had been announced. Our route was over a very rough road, over which by the kindness of a brother we were conveyed so far as he could, and meet other engagements for the day. The appoint-

ments which had been given out in Howard and Harwich, were well attended by attentive and intelligent audiences ; and the good seed sown we trust, found a place in some honest hearts, where, it will hereafter bring forth some fruit. The brethren of this region are widely spread, and do not see each other so often as would be desirable for their improvement and enjoyment, but their intelligence, piety, and sincerity are easily discovered, and may be "known and read of all men." Howard and part of Harwich, present an excellent field for evangelical labour ; and if the brethren there were organized into a church, their influence would be increased, and many who now occupy the position of intelligent friendly aliens, would be found we trust, honouring their Saviour and themselves by an immediate and devout submission to his will in all things. From Howard we proceeded in company with certain others to Aldborough, where we met brethren who had come from distant localities to attend a semi-annual meeting ; and the same evening the brethren assembled to hear a discourse, engage in worship, and greet each other with kind salutations. Here we met with elder Dugald Sinclair, "a father in Israel," and his esteemed companion, who is a "mother in Israel," and many others whose names we cannot now give, but whom we could freely greet as kindred spirits for the truth's sake. On Lord's day morning a large meeting convened, which was presided over by elder Sinclair, and addressed by brother Sheppard and also by elder Sinclair in Gaelic ; after which, bread was broken and the cup was poured in memory of the scene of Calvary. After an intermission the brethren and friends again assembled, and the gospel was again presented for the reception of the sinner, and the joys of heaven for the consolation and edification of the saints.

For the information of those who may not know much about these brethren, we would state that they have been and are still known as Baptists, (scotch Baptists we suppose) but they are really disciples of our Lord and Saviour, who is the great pattern to be followed ; and yet from the intelligence and piety of these brethren some might learn a useful lesson, by which they might better adorn their profession. Their number we cannot state ; but, they are located in some seven or more townships, and enjoy the labours of elder Sinclair ; a workman who can divide the word of truth aright, and who has grown old, though not weary, in his labours of love among them. They are now occasionally visited by brother Sheppard, whose labours among them we trust will result in in-

creasing their number, and tend to promote their spiritual growth, and their enjoyment of all divine things.

On Monday 10th after parting salutations with many brethren and sisters had been exchanged, brother Sheppard proceeded towards St. Thomas, and we were kindly conveyed by brethren to the northern side of Aldborough, and sojourned with brother A. Monroe. Next day taking a seat at Wardsville station in a train going east, we proceeded onward to Eramosa, where we arrived in safety: and, though fatigued with the journey, we felt that our debt of gratitude to the Lord was increased, since he had protected us from all the dangers of the way, and permitted us again to enjoy the privilege of meeting with our aged parents, and other relatives, and many esteemed brethren.

J. B., jr.

Eramosa, June 28th, 1856.

TRAVELS AND LABORS.

NUMBER SIX.

A tour to the Eastern Provinces at length! Having covenanted with a christian friend, brother G. Trumpour, last autumn, that we should accompany each other to New Brunswick and Nova Scotia in the month of June, this present year, I left home on the morning of the 7th—was at West Lake, near Picton, on Lord's day the 8th, and talked a short time to friends and brethren who assembled—and in the evening of the 9th and on the 10th, brother Trumpour and I were carried by steamer from Picton to Montreal. Halting nearly a full day at this most westerly city of Canada East, we were next wheeled by railway to the line between Lower Canada and the state of Vermont, some one hundred and forty miles, and next day at an early hour, after witnessing portions of Vermont, New Hampshire, and Maine, through the might and speed of the untiring locomotive, the city of Portland was hastily visited, distant from home not far short of six hundred miles.

Full one half of June 12th was spent in reviewing Portland. By the time the 6 o'clock bell rang, which was six hours after noon, we were marching into the steamer "Admiral," bound for Eastport, Me., and St. John, N. B. The noble vessel, with an army of passengers and large piles of freight, turned her face to the Atlantic and moved forward

on her mission in fine style ; and although the breath of the north-east was blown against her, and many a foaming wave gave her a spiteful slap, the trip was made from Portland to St. John in something like twenty-two hours. A long enough stay was made at Eastport for me to run up and salute brother Burgin, who serves the citizens at the Post Office by receiving, distributing, and delivering the mail matter of the city ; always a responsible and honorable post.

Arrived at the chief city of New Brunswick, it was not difficult to become acquainted with the friends of reform at that meridian. The brethren Barnes, Hewitt, Allen, Clerke, Robertson, Christie, McInnis, and their companions, with others, were as friendly, hospitable, and sociable as could be desired. Here also for the time then present was found Elder J. B. Barnaby, of Deer Island, who was a constant companion during the days of our call at St. John. Elder Hughes, who had left the city for a few weeks to labor at or near St. Stephens, we had not the pleasure of seeing.

I discoursed publicly in the city only on three occasions—twice on Lord's day the 15th, and on the evening of Monday following. The brethren have a modest and very appropriate House in which to meet, recently completed ; and judging from a variety of symptoms my emphatic impression was that the disciples in St. John possessed among them the elements of much strength, enlargement, and undoubted prosperity. Whether these elements are husbanded and economized, wisely concentrated and judiciously employed, it is not the province of a visiter to decide ; but it is devoutly hoped that the friends of the one creed of Christ in the city of St. John are making use of their gifts, their numbers, their social and business position, their wealth and knowledge in the happy and well-rewarding service of the Author of the Eternal Redemption.

Unless memory be at fault, I understood the congregation of brethren in St. John to count between 125 and 150. The spirit of emigration has taken many of their number and transplanted them in the south and west. But it appeared to me, from all that I witnessed, taking all things into account, that there are few localities where a larger quantum of permanent happiness could be secured and maintained than in this prosperous city. With a population of 30,000—its healthfulness undoubted—its commercial condition at par—its moral position more than par, compared with almost all cities in the west—what more is wanted

until the "better country" is attained? Saving in a single instance, I have not, to my recollection, witnessed a higher degree of municipal decorum, order, and morality in any city that it has been my lot to visit; and this is the more noticeable by reason of the large amount of shipping carried on, which, usually, is in nowise friendly to acceptable manners and wholesome morals.

Of the religious bodies commonly termed denominations, and the religious journals in St. John, I cannot at this moment speak particularly.

The Baptists are numerous. Dr. Robertson who wrote sundry letters which appeared in this monthly two or three years ago, takes care of one Regular Baptist Church. Dr. Bill takes charge of another; and likewise superintends the Baptist paper entitled the "Christian Visitor." There is a second Baptist journal published in the city. It belongs to and is conducted by the Free Baptists. It has a good title, the "Religious Intelligencer." The Churchmen have a Weekly that they call their own, got up and kept up by a Committee, and christened the "Church Witness." There is another paper, numbered with the 'Religious Press,' but its name is not at command. Each of these journals is, of course, busily at work advocating *our* principles, *our* customs, *our* creed, *our* party, *our* church; while the church of Christ and the gospel of Christ ought to enlist every mind, heart, and hand.

D. O.

Nova Scotia, July.

SILENCE SAVED ME.

I remember, said a young man, being in company with several thoughtless girls. Among them, however, there was one exception; a serious, quiet and beautiful woman, whose religious opinions were well known, and whose pen had for a long time spoken eloquently in the cause of truth and virtue through the columns of our village paper. Suddenly I conceived the thought of bantering upon religious subjects, and with the fool-hardness of youth and the recklessness of impiety, I launched forth with some stale infidel objections that none but 'the fool who saith in his heart, there is no God,' would venture to reiterate. The flock of silly goslings about me laughed and tittered, and I, encouraged by their mirth, grew bold, and repeated my innuendoes, occasionally glancing slyly towards the principal butt of all my fun. She

did not seem to notice me at all ; she did not smile, did not look away, did not look *at* me.

Still, I continued my impious harangue, thinking that she must refute something, that she would not surely hear her own holy faith held up to ridicule by a beardless boy. The snickerers around me gradually began to glance towards her. Her face was so quiet, so even solemn in its quiet, that seriousness stole over them, and I stood alone, striving by my own senseless laughter to buoy up my fast sinking courage.

Still she never spoke, nor smiled—scarcely moved ; her immobility grew awful ; I began to stutter—to pause—to feel cold and strange—I could not tell how. My courage oozed off ; my heart grew faint—I was conquered.

The night after I went home, in reflecting over my fool-hardy adventure, I could have scourged myself. The sweet angelic countenance of my mute accuser, came up before me even in the vision of the night ; I could not sleep. Nor did I rest, till, some days after, I went to the home of the lady I had insulted and asked pardon. Then she spoke to me, how mild ; how Christianly ! how sweetly !

I was subdued ; melted down ; and it was not long after that I became, I trust, a humble Christian, and looked back to my miserable unbelief with horror.

Her silence saved me. Had she answered with warmth, with sarcasm, with sneer, or with rebuke, I should have grown stronger in my bantering and more determined in my opposition. But she was silent, and I felt as if my voice was striving to make itself heard against the mighty words of an omnipotent God.

BIBLE UNION IN CANADA WEST.

BROTHER OLIPHANT: DEAR SIR :—I am requested to send you, for publication, an abstract of my account with the Bible Union of the Disciples of Christ, in Canada ; as some of the churches were not represented at the meeting just now closed in behalf of the Bible Union, the managers had to remain as last year.

We had a glorious meeting of the Disciples from all the points of the compass in Canada, and a goodly number from the other side of the line. Our hopes and expectations were *more* than realized. O, brother Oliphant, it would cheer and warm the coldest heart to see and hear the

venerable and esteemed brethren who have grown old and grey in the service of the Lord so earnest and pathetic in exhorting the brethren to more piety and confidence in running the christian race.

Abstract of Secretary's account with Bible Union of the Disciples of Christ in Canada, for the year ending June 20th, 1856 :

	£	s.	d.
June 20, 1855, by balance on hand at last report,-----	6	11	0
By cash from St. Vincent,-----	2	10	0
“ “ “ Bowmanville,-----	2	10	0
“ “ “ Eramosa, East,-----	25	13	2
“ “ “ “ Centre,-----	8	4	3
“ “ “ “ West,-----	3	10	0
“ “ “ Erin,-----	13	5	0
“ “ “ King,-----	1	5	0
“ “ “ Toronto,-----	2	10	0
“ “ “ Esquesing,-----	6	0	0
“ “ “ Jordan,-----	9	5	0
“ “ “ Wainfleet and Rainham,-----	5	5	0
“ “ “ Dorchester,-----	3	5	0

£39 13 5

To cash remittance to American Bible Union, New York, from 20th June, 1855, till June 20, 1856,-----	£56	11s	6d
To paid postage and sundries,-----	10	10	
To balance on hand,-----	22	11	1

£39 13 5

Gross receipts of Canada Disciples' Union since formation :

	£	s.	d.
Receipts for 1854,-----	68	11	0
“ “ 1855,-----	74	11	6½
“ “ 1856,-----	83	2	6

£226 5 0½

Expenditures of Canada Disciples' Union since formation.

	£	s.	d.
For 1854,-----	65	18	10½
“ 1855,-----	70	17	9
“ 1856,-----	57	2	4
	£203	15	11½
	226	5	0½
Balance on hand,-----	£ 22	11	1

JAS. MENZIES, *Sec'y.*

Norval, C. W., 25th June, 1856.

PSALMODY—A REVIEW.

There is a pamphlet before us, presented by the author, Elder W. W. Livingston, of Cornwallis, N. S., the title of which is in these words:—"Review of Somerville on Psalmody; being a Defence of the practice of Singing Hymns of Praise to God, opposed to the 'exclusive use' of David's Psalms, as advocated by Rev. W. Somerville." Although we have not had the requisite leisure to peruse every page of this lately published work, which consists of some 50 pages, yet we have read enough to learn that there are sundry good things and not a few logical points in it. Mr. Somerville must take an additional draft of theologic lore and attend a new singing school before he will be able to meet friend Livingston.

D. O.

ANNUAL MEETING.

The Yearly Meeting of the Disciples of the State of New York will be held with the Church Meeting at South Butler, Wayne Co.; beginning the Thursday preceding the third Lord's day; in September next, at 10 o'clock, A. M.

Persons going by Railroad will stop at the Savannah station, four miles from the place of meeting. Teams will be in readiness to take you from the cars to the place of meeting.

Come brethren, come one come all, there is enough for all.

July, 1856.

H. A. CHASE.

The Age and Harbinger will please copy.