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THE
WITNESS OF TRUTH.

VOL. III. OSHAWA, OCTOBER, 1848. NO. 10.

A QUESTION ANSWERED.

Do you believe in experimental religion ?

Y.

I do, and I do not. Are you disposed to ask, How can this be ? My answer is at hand.

If, by experimental religion, you mean a religion that may be experienced, wherein the mind, heart, soul, and every moral faculty may be made better by "continuance in well doing," I am a decided believer in experimental religion, and would not give Jeremiah's basket of bad figs for religion of any other character. Religion that can be thus experienced is my soul's delight. Experience, as it is now employed, refers to a species of knowledge that we have acquired for ourselves by a long course of trial and training ; and hence the religion in which I confide, is experienced by holding its principles firmly and consistently amid opposing elements, and by partaking of its joys and realizing its promises in a continued course of godliness and divine submission. My faith is strong in experimental religion of this order.

But if by experimental religion you mean a religion of experiments, —in which experiments are to be made ; or if you mean a religion which promises to give in an instant the experience of a christian, which always demands time, I must then say that I am not a believer in experimental religion. To make experiments in religion, as the experimenters in the arts and sciences for new discoveries, would be to make the whole inspired scheme a system of doubts, and vexatious chances and changes. Or to believe that the religion of Christ, brings, on reception, an experience with it, and makes the new convert old and well tried in his profession, would not only be contrary to reason and contrary to fact, but directly opposed to the teaching of the Spirit.

The only place where the word experience is found in the christian scriptures, it is found in a connexion justifying what has now been affirmed. Paul to the Romans, chapter fifth, tells us that patience produces or works experience. Patience then is the chief element that gives existence to experience. And what is patience? Not the feeling of a moment: not the impulse of an instant. It requires time. There is no possible means of even thinking of patience without the idea of duration and long endurance. Hence the justness of the argument, that, if experience has its existence in patience, there is no such entity as sudden or instant experience.

Again, an apostle has given us liberty to speak of children, young men, and fathers in the christian church. A child, we all say, has no experience; and if this be true in the natural, it is also true in the spiritual world; for a babe in Christ has a little experience in the christian religion, as the babe in its mothers arms has experience in the kingdom of nature.

Were you to ask me if I have experienced religion, I would promptly reply in the affirmative; for it is several years since I confessed Christ, and therefore I could, if called upon, tell my experience. But suppose I was a new convert, having only received the gospel to-day, the case would be so materially altered, that the person asking for my experience would prove himself either a simpleton or a dunce in biblical learning.

In view of the past, the word "experimental" before religion, is, I confess, rather pretty, somewhat interesting, and upon the whole, edifying. The old state church in England whose doors stood wide enough to admit the whole race of Adam the first, was rapidly and ruinously descending to the cold and frigid ceremonies of dead abstractions, when the Reformer Wesley was born. He had a warm voice, a warm heart, and a warm religion. The war commenced. The genteel and thorough-bred churchmen, argued, at least in their lives, that they were Christ's subjects on nearly the same principle as they were the subjects of English law, without any personal acceptance of the love of God. They rejected experience in their religion. Christianity with them was a nationality. The new Reformer raised another banner, and required every one who joined his standard to believe in a religion that was experimental—something that was felt and personally accepted.

This, I am free to say, was an improvement. But still it was as far from the bible as it was in advance of episcopacy. The candidate for admission into the church, was received *on trial*, or which is the same thing, *experiment*; and if, at the close of the term allotted for this ex-

periment, he could relate a suitable experience, then he was admitted as a member of the church. It thus required a full half year to make a member of this church, while a member of the church of Christ was made by Peter or Paul "the same day" that the gospel was preached to him.

The contrast may be still more strikingly perceived by considering the means by which the New Testament converts and the converts of "experimental religion" were made. Many prayers, conflicts, and spiritual wrestlings are embraced in the one case; but according to the inspired direction, there is the simple knowledge and simple confession that Jesus is Christ.

I am, then, a believer and an unbeliever in experimental religion. The term indeed is rejected, because anti-scriptural; but all that is good in the thing itself,—all that refers to religion being heartily felt, constantly enjoyed, personally applied, and steadfastly honored by a holy life, I cherish with all my heart, and desire to live and die in this faith.

Yours,

D. OLIPHANT.

DISCUSSION.

INFLUENCE OF THE SPIRIT.

To the Editor of the Witness of Truth.

DEAR SIR:—The marked attention paid to my former letter, and the readiness you express to examine the subject I proposed for a candid investigation, and the candid manner in which you propose to do it, and not the apparent flattery (by which I trust I am not to be influenced) that appears in your notice of the proposed discussion, leads me cheerfully, though candidly, with a sincere desire for the truth, to resume my pen. And first, agreeably to your request, I state the number of letters to be four on each side, the fourth of mine to be a review of your arguments in opposition to my own. I shall therefore in the meantime attend to my own arguments.

The propositions for discussion, are, first the Spirit and next its influence upon the heart of man, in order to his conversion to, and acceptance with, God.

First, the Holy Spirit. What is it? It is the power of God. *Gen.* 1: 2: "The Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters." Here it appears the power of God in the creation, preparing blind chaos for the reception of light. "It moved upon the face of the waters," after which God said, "Let there be light, and there was light." It is the

power of God exhibited in the divine philanthropy for man: *Gen. 6: 3*: "My Spirit," says God, "shall not always strive with man." Here it is evidently the power of God striving with man for his good—man who had become wicked, grossly wicked, hardened in sin, rebellious in his disposition, depraved in his whole nature, and unsolicitous for good. Still, God's love for him is such that his power is exerted in his behalf in sending his Holy Spirit to strive with him—to teach him the will of God—to show him the right way—and the things of God that make for his peace. *John 16: 15*: "All things that the Father hath are mine; therefore he, the Holy Spirit, shall take of mine, and show it unto you," said Jesus. These quotations are sufficient in sustaining my first proposition. "In the matter of two or three witnesses every word shall be established."

But there is something further to be drawn from the above quotations of vital importance in advancing to consider the second proposition, which is the Holy Spirit's influence on the heart of man in order to his conversion to God. In *Gen. 6: 3*, we learn the office-work of the Spirit: the influence it was to exert upon the human heart. It was to lead them away from their sins, up to God, the author of their existence. Notwithstanding God had given them Noah, a preacher of righteousness, who could approach the outward ear, it was but the outward ear he could approach. He could not reach the heart, or search the heart. But not so with the Spirit of God. "It searches all things, yea the deep things of God." It searches the dark and inmost recesses of the heart of man, illuminating his darkened understanding by taking the things of God and showing them unto him; thus striving with him in order to his conversion to, and acceptance with, God. "Teaching us, that, denying ourselves of all ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly in the present evil world." From *Neh. 9: 20*, we learn the manner of the Spirit's influencing the heart of man in order to his conversion. After the prophet had spoken of many things that God had done for the Israelites in their journeying through the wilderness, and of their rebellion against him, adds, "Thou didst also give thy good Spirit to instruct them." From the language of the prophet it is plain that the spirit influences the sinner's heart by teaching him. The outward man does not perceive or comprehend the things of God: it is the work of the inner man. Words addressed to the outward ear, are comparatively speaking as a dead letter. "For there is a spirit in man, and the inspiration or Spirit of the Almighty giveth him understanding." *Job 32: 8*. Again, the natural man cannot

discern or receive things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness unto him, for they are spiritually discerned, 1 *Cor.* 2: 14. It is the work of the Spirit of the Almighty to give the benighted spirit of man the understanding of the things of which are spiritual.

I am, dear Sir,

Yours in hope of a spiritual resurrection,

A METHODIST.

REPLY.

MY DEAR SIR:—The existence of the Spirit—the influence of the Spirit—and the manner of the influence of the Spirit—are three distinct propositions. You and I agree that the Spirit exists. We agree also in the influence of the Spirit as respects the fact of such influence. But we are at variance concerning the manner, method, or mode in which men are influenced by the Spirit or the way in which spiritual power is imparted. My attention will therefore be confined to your present letter only so far as it treats of the peculiar way in which you believe the Spirit invariably works.

You begin in the Old Testament. You are found even beyond the flood. I have long concluded that we have had two dispensations since that time. But suppose I admit, for argument's sake, that the people who lived prior to Noah, and also prior to Nehemiah, were guided, converted, or saved by the Lord's Spirit exerted upon them directly, nakedly, and without the agency of language, what, let me ask, could it avail in the present investigation? Even should you prove from the writings of Moses and the Prophets that all conversions to God in days of old, were effected by the Spirit without instrumentality, it will be necessary to furnish a second suit of arguments from the new oracles, in support of the doctrine that men are converted in these days by a Spirit immediately from heaven.

Still, for the purpose of showing all courtesy, I shall attempt to join you, and share your company, although I should risk a long passage, and perhaps a little tediousness before a final return. The words, "My Spirit shall not always strive with man," are quoted by you to prove that God employed or exerted his Spirit without the medium of language or the instrumentality of words. Now, my dear Sir, look over this passage again, and point out where you find this idea; for I confess that I am incapable of finding a hint in these words relative to the manner of the striving of the Spirit. There is not ground in this passage even to infer how the Spirit strove. With you I say

that it did strive; but the question is—how? I will leave the proof to the affirmant.

Nehemiah is next summoned. He says, "Thou (God) didst send thy good Spirit to instruct them"—instruct the children of Israel in the wilderness. You say that the "manner of the Spirit's influence" may be learned from this language. My friend, there is nothing affirmed by the prophet in respect to the manner of the Spirit's influence. The fact is stated that the Spirit taught them; but how they were taught, whether the Spirit instructed them by signs, or words, or events, or miraculous displays, the prophet informs us not. If anything could be proved from this passage concerning the manner of the Spirit's power, the argument, in my judgment, would be against you; for the term "instruct" seems to carry with it the idea that words must have been employed. It is seldom we speak of imparting instruction without the aid of language, spoken or written. Still it may be safely affirmed that the prophet only states the fact of the Spirit's influence, without explaining the manner in which that influence was exerted.

Your last passage is a resting-place and a refuge for all who travel under the spiritual banners, made of spiritualized spirit, without materiality or visibility. We may therefore give special attention to 1 Cor. 2: 14. Not only you, but Paul says, "The natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit;" but your meaning and the apostle's meaning, as it appears to me, are as distinct as Egypt and Canaan. By the way, if allowed to say it with all good feeling, this was not a fortunate passage to bring forward to prove abstract Spirit, because it is found in a connexion that will not permit it to speak as most of the interpreters endeavour to make it. Let us candidly read the verses preceding: "Now we have received, *not the spirit of the world, but the spirit which is of God*; that we might know the things that are freely given to us of God: which things also we speak," and then he adds, "not in words which man's wisdom teacheth, but which the Holy Spirit teacheth." The apostle, then, spoke the things of the Spirit, and he spoke them in the language of the Spirit itself, or spiritual language—showing at once that there is the Spirit, the things of the Spirit, and the words of the Spirit.

The whole passage may be paraphrased thus:—We apostles have received the spirit of God, and not a worldly spirit; and by this good spirit, we are made acquainted with all things that God in his favour has given us. And these things we reveal or speak to others, not taking the liberty of speaking them in our own language, nor in the

language of man however wise ; but as the things themselves are spiritual, we speak them in spiritual language, teaching spiritual things in spiritual words. But the natural man in his pride, (the wise man of the world,) rejects the *things* of God's Spirit, which are thus spoken in plain spiritual language ; for *these things* seem only foolishness to the proud wise man, elated with his own wisdom : he cannot know the *things* of the Spirit that we teach in the Spirit's own language, because they are discerned only by those who are humble enough to see them in the humble words of the Spirit.'

I will leave the above paraphrase for your consideration without further comment, only requesting you to examine more minutely into Paul's meaning of "natural" in connexion with "man." You will, I think, on further study, conclude that Paul is not speaking of men generally, but of a peculiar class of men, wise beyond measure in their own conceit, and who gloried in their superior learning. The first part of the chapter confirms this view. "My preaching while in Corinth," says the apostle, "was not with enticing words of man's wisdom"—"that your faith should not stand in the wisdom of men." These evidently are the "natural" men who despised the teaching of the Spirit, because not beautified with the enticing words of human wisdom.

But how would you read the passage? Perhaps in this way—"The natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit until a more powerful Spirit prepares him for the things of the Spirit.' Remember that in a combat we must employ weapons. My paper is full. Inviting your reply,

I am, yours sincerely,

D. OLIPHANT.

Toronto, 5th September.

From the New York Observer.

THE GREATEST MAN IN TOWN.

The Squire thought he was upon that eminence to be sure. The Judge knew he was mistaken ; but could not be himself in his belief that he had himself reached that noble distinction. The Captain thought the Squire and the Judge, with all their honors, were far enough from the top, on which there was but one man comfortably seated, and that was a man who had spread his sail on most of the oceans, but who had exchanged their turbulence for the quietness of a country village.

I thought I would leave these dignitaries to settle this matter as

they might, while I set out on a short pilgrimage of my own, for the purpose of finding the greatest man in that town.

And I fell in with him, after beaming the bush for awhile; but being willing to have my readers to judge for themselves, I shall set the matter before them.

1. The *greatest motives* had the greatest power over him. Small motives make small men. And so up along. Men grow greater according as the greatest principles of action gain supremacy. And when one gets to a point where motives drawn from the greatest things in the universe gain supreme dominion, he is then on the top, and is a great man. The Squire and the Captain and the Judge had never reached this point. The greatest motives which governed them were drawn from quite a small circle comparatively. But the man I found went quite out of that circle. He "walked as seeking things invisible." His motives were drawn from Eternity, which is a great country. They had to do with eternal joy and eternal sorrow, which are very great things. And they make people great in the best sense who come under their power. And because the man I found was the most under their power of any man I could find, I called him the greatest man in town. If the Squire thinks I am mistaken, and will prove it, I will take it back.

2. I found him doing *the greatest work* there was going on in town. People were doing great things as they called them. One sort of honorable enterprize after another had been started and pushed forward successfully. Matters of trade and manufactures, &c. reached an high point of prosperity, and those eminent in carrying them on were somewhat eminent, for that reason, in their own esteem. They were near being, or were actually—the last, likely—the greatest men in town.

But my examination corrected that mistake. I found a man who was doing a far greater work than any of them. He was—a carpenter perhaps they might call him—engaged upon a building. It was a singular structure for the place, since there were not many in the place that resembled it very strongly, and not one just like it. He was doing his best to make it the most beautiful edifice in town. I saw him often consulting an Old Volume upon architecture—and he dug into that old book as for hidden treasure. He found there, as I also saw as I looked into the book, some very fine drawings and sketches and outlines, &c. of buildings. Abraham, I think, was the name of one of the architects, and Daniel another, and Paul another. The hints

these men gave him were eminently wise and judicious, and I saw him steadily following out their counsels. And the building rose in beauty and symmetry daily, and very much by a close adherence, as I found, to one or two general principles of architecture out of the Old Book, one of which ran thus: "Add to your faith, virtue; and to virtue, knowledge; and to knowledge, temperance; and to temperance, patience; and to patience, godliness; and to godliness, brotherly kindness; and to brotherly kindness, charity." And another ran thus: "Whosoever things are true, honest, pure, lovely, and of good report: if there be any virtue, any praise, think on these things." The man, with all deference to such high authority, acted as directed. And accordingly he was putting up the handsomest building there was in that town. I did not see another like it.

And it was a plain case that he meant his edifice should *stand*, for he put it upon a foundation which the greatest Builder in the universe had laid, and all the materials, as the work went on, were of the most durable kind, and the best judges that ever gave an opinion united in saying that a building such as that man was erecting would last forever. Now as I saw no other man in that town putting up such a beautiful and enduring edifice, with similar intelligence, zeal and success, nor engaged in any other enterprize an hundredth part so great and important, therefore I called that man the greatest man in that town.

And I could not but notice, too, how interested he was in having every body about him as great a man, and even yet greater than himself in that kind of work. He was forever putting them up to it. He furnished, when they were wanting, the best authorities, placing the Old Volume on the top of them all, and drawing attention to its advice, &c., in every possible manner. And it was said, and I have not a doubt of it, that number were induced to follow his example and secure for themselves a dwelling which would be fit to stand in one of the streets of the eternal city.

3. I must add one thing more. The man I found was the greatest man in that town, because he had *the greatest God*. Not a soul there thought himself guilty of idolatry. Not one. Yet were there plenty of gods in that place. The Squire had one. His *honor!* What an object of homage! And the Captain had more *money* than any man about, and there was not any other God that had such dominion over him. And the Judge had *learning*, which was a much taller image than any about it, and looked down upon other objects of homage with great contempt.

And there were divers other kinds of gods in the place, but they, too, were all small gods. But the one man I found worshipped, was THE GREAT GOD; one so great that no other could come into his presence or stand before him. Other lords had had dominion over this worshipper once; but now this greatest of all Gods had come into the soul, to the utter confusion of all others, and there was no god like unto Him; he knew not any.

Now if the Squire, the Captain, or Judge, feels hurt at the above decision about eminence, I will give them an infallible direction for the attainment of the same, so that there may be more erect men in that town; which is as far in the way of comforting them as I feel authorized to do.

SIMON.

HOW SHALL WE PRAY !

THE glorification of God in our bodies and spirits which are his—the complete subjugation of the whole man to the mind and will of God—are clearly commanded. He whose name is Reverend and Holy, claims that honor which is due to him, and much of the enjoyment of the Christian depends upon the manner in which he approaches the Deity. Under the Jewish economy, an immediate approach to the Deity, and the high honour of being called children, in a spiritual sense, were not conferred—all the sacrifices and offerings being offered through a priest. The people were not allowed to pass through the veil to the mercy seat and call upon God. All had to be done through a priest.

But it is not so now. The veil is torn down, and instead of offering our sacrifices, even the praise of our lips, through a priest, we are permitted to approach the Lord and make our requests known unto him. Then to bow down before the mercy seat and there, in humility, unbosom ourselves before the searcher of all hearts—to feel, yes, to feel and realize, that we are speaking to the living God—that Jesus our Lord is our Advocate, and that angels are gazing as auditors—is at once the most solemn, important, and awful, and yet pleasing privilege. How carefully then should we frame our speech and order our words in order to be acceptable to him who sits upon the throne of the Universe.

No topic connected with the christian religion should undergo a stricter investigation than prayer. Who that is well instructed in the Scriptures, can pray as various religious sects do, who make prayer almost every thing—a sermon, an exhortation, regeneration, confession, &c. &c., and lengthen to thirty, forty, and fifty minutes, until all are

wearied of kneeling or standing. How unedifying to a well and scripturally enlightened mind is this jumble of Pharisaism. To hear a preacher in his prayer teach doctrine to saints and exhort sinners to obedience and faithfulness, relate experiences, &c., and finally ask the Lord for various things that he has never promised, which things if God should bestow they and their congregations would share the fate of the Captain's fifties that the Prophet Elijah prayed for, is indeed sad and lamentable.

Again, to hear the preacher for himself, and in behalf of his flock, adopt the language of the prophet and Psalmist, spoken in reference to backsliding rebellious Jews and idolatrous pagans, and say they are all gone astray, that from the crown of the head to the sole of the feet they are full of wounds and putrifying sores, and also confess they are miserable sinners, the worst of sinners, yes, worse than the worst, is still more lamentable.

Words are the signs of ideas. Now we can come to no other conclusion than that those who thus pray are actually such characters as they represent themselves, or that they say things they do not believe. Now, in which ever light we view this matter, it looks bad enough.

Thinking persons naturally conclude from such statements, that those who make them are false professors, or that religion is a farce, a fable, as the infidel says, got up and perpetuated by priestcraft. They see no beauty, loveliness, or purity in religion, and will stand aloof from the Church unless a union with it will put them in a way of making a little more money. These are some of the bad effects of the abuse of the truly precious and heavenly exercise of *prayer*. When prayers are offered up according to his will, we know that God hears us, and will grant our requests. "His eyes are over the righteous and his ears are open to their prayers." But if any one ask for things not promised, there is no assurance of his being heard. "Ye ask and receive not, because ye ask amiss." Should any professor of Christianity have reason to consider himself in this light he should confess, repent, and turn from his evil way; but the place for him to confess is in his closet, where there is no eye to see or ear to hear but God's, and there in the depths of humility unbosom all his anguish before him who sees in secret, and who will reward openly.

Now let me ask our brethren, Are any of you guilty of making such prayers? If so, it is high time you reformed in this department. Seek a pure speech—take the prayers recorded in the New Testament

for your pattern. Let your words be few and well chosen, and let these be put forth in that earnestness becoming children of the light; and let your private devotions be frequent and fervent. Better occupy ten minutes at two different times than ten minutes at once. Let us, dear reader, if ignorant of how to perform this duty, go with the disciples to Jesus, and ask him in his word, "Lord, teach us to pray."

J. ASH.

VOLTAIRE AND HALYBURTON.

From a little book, entitled, "the Bible True."

I WILL contrast the feelings of the prince of infidelity with those of an humble yet learned and pious servant of God.

Voltaire says, "Who can, without horror, consider the whole world as the empire of destruction? It abounds also with victims. It is a vast field of carnage and contagion. Every species is without pity pursued and torn to pieces through the air, and earth, and water. In man there is more wretchedness than in all other animals put together. He loves life, and yet he knows he must die. If he enjoys a transient good, he suffers various evils, and is at last devoured by worms. This knowledge is his fatal prerogative. Other animals have it not. He spends the transient moment of his existence in diffusing the miseries which he suffers; in cutting the throats of his fellow-creatures for pay; in cheating and being cheated; robbing and being robbed; in repenting of all he does. The bulk of mankind are nothing more than a crowd of wretches equally criminal and unfortunate; and the globe contains rather carcases than men. I tremble at the review of this dreadful picture, and find it contains a complaint against Providence itself. *I wish I had never been born.*" This is the testimony of him whom kings courted and nations flattered. This is the sum of all to him, "I wish I had never been born."

Turn we now to Halyburton, a good man, who loved his Maker and his maker's word. In the midst of pain he said, "I shall shortly get a very different sight of God from what I have ever had, and shall be made meet to praise him for ever and ever. O, the thoughts of an incarnate Deity are sweet and ravishing. O, how I wonder at myself that I do not love him more, and that I do not adore him more. What a wonder that I enjoy such composure under all my bodily pains, and in the view of death itself. What mercy, that having the use of my reason, I can declare his goodness to my soul. I long for his salvation, I bless his name that I have found him, and I die rejoicing in him. O,

blessed be God that I was born. O, that I was where he is. I have a father and a mother, and ten brothers and sisters in heaven, and I shall be the eleventh. O, there is a telling in this providence, and I shall be telling it forever. If there be such a glory in his conduct towards me now, what will it be to see the Lamb in the midst of the throne? *Blessed be God that I was born.*"

Here is a contrast indeed—a contrast which the blind themselves may discern between the righteous and the wicked, the man that loves and the man that hates the word of God.

QUERY.

BROTHER OLIPHANT:—What is meant by letters of commendation: should they be given to brethren when they remove from a church: if so, what should be their contents?

Z.

There are three queries in one. Letters of commendation, introduction, or approval, (1 Cor. XVI: 3.) are different names for the same species of epistolary writings—documents making known or certifying character. Sometimes, in this age of new things, we hear of letters of dismissal. We have never seen a letter of this description, but from the name, should judge that all such letters are far below par. They are of recent origin.

All who are worthy of christian fellowship, are worthy of receiving letters which testify their relation to the church, on application, when about to remove. The church who gives a letter is responsible for it, and should have a care how it is used, until delivered to another church, at which time it becomes a *dead letter*, so far as relates to its original object. A brother on removal, having a letter from the elders who formerly watched over him, if he does not unite with another church, will have such respect both for himself and the brethren with whom he formerly united as to return the letter, or if not, the church who gave, has the right to demand it.

The contents of such letters should be simple. Facts should constitute them. There can be little difficulty here. Any church giving a letter, knows what testimony it is willing to receive, and if governed by this rule, the document written and given will be as near perfect as it can be under the circumstances. But is it not sometimes the case, that churches retain members which they are reluctant to recommend on their removal? This, we fear, sometimes happens. It betokens an exceedingly weak or very delinquent eldership. They will allow per-

sons as members to sit with the saints around the table of the Lord, but when called upon to give a letter certifying their character and standing, they would if possible shrink from the obligation. It is not a spiritual symptom.

Evangelists, who at this day hold the highest office in the christian church, should, in all places where not known, always have their credentials or testimonials at command. Hence one of the reasons why an Evangelist should be well tried before appointed. No man can rationally be trusted with a constant certificate of his character, unless that character has in divers ways been put to the test. And no church or community is obligated to acknowledge an unknown Evangelist until his testimonials are produced and examined; and in all cases of suspicion or doubt, application made to the church or people whence his documents show on their face to have originated.

If these few remarks are not satisfactory to the querist, we shall expect to hear from him again.

CONDUCTOR.

LUKEWARMNESS AND ZEAL.

HE that is warm to-day and to-morrow, zealous in his resolution and weary in his practices, fierce in the beginning, and slack and easy in his progress hath not chosen what side he will be of. For religion cannot change though we do; we have left God; and whither he can go that goes from God, his own sorrows will soon enough instruct him. This fire must never go out; but it must be like the fire of heaven; it must shine like the stars, though sometimes covered with a cloud, or obscured by a greater light; yet they dwell forever in their orbs, and walk in their circles, and observe their circumstances; but go not out by day nor night, and set not when kings die, nor are extinguished when nations change their government. So must the zeal of a Christian be, a constant incentive of his duty; and though sometimes his hand is withdrawn by violence or need, and his prayers shortened by the importunity of business, and some parts omitted by necessities and just compliances; yet still the fire is kept alive, it burns within while the light breaks not forth, and is eternal as the orb of fire, or the embers of the altar of incense.

In every action of religion, God expects such a warmth, and a holy fire to go along, that it may be able to kindle the wood upon the altar and consume the sacrifice; but God hates an indifferent spirit. Earnestness and vivacity; quickness and delight; perfect choice in the service and a delight in the prosecution, is all that the spirit of a man can

yield towards his religion; the outward work is the effect of the body; but if a man does it heartily and with all his mind, then religion hath wings, and moves upon wheels of fire.

LECTURES TO CHILDREN.—BY JOHN TODD.

LECTURE I.

HOW DO WE KNOW THERE IS ANY GOD?

No man hath seen God at any time.—JOHN I. 18.

THE author of the following may be justly classed with the elegant writers. Among the first books that stirred up our whole soul, and laid a foundation for unyielding activity, was a work from his pen. His name and power will, no doubt, be better known next century.—We copy from brother Eaton's *Christian*:—

D. O.

CHILDREN have heard a great deal said about God. Our forefathers a great while ago, used to call him "*the Good*." We shorten the word a little, and call him GOD; but it means the same thing—*good*. And they gave him that name because he is so good to men. But I am going to ask these children a question. How do you know there is any God? Have you ever seen him? No; for "no man hath seen God at any time."

Are we sure there are a great many things in the world which we never saw? Yes, a great many. You never saw Paris, or London; and yet you know there are such places. How do you know? You know because others have been there and *seen* them.

Now, suppose nobody had ever seen those cities, could you know there were such cities? No. How then do you know there is any God? Is it because the men who wrote the Bible *say* there is a God? But how do they know? They never saw God. Can we believe there is any thing which nobody ever saw? Yes, a great many things.

Go to the window some cold day. Do you see the trees rocking, and the limbs swinging and bending, and the heavens all flying about? What makes them do so? Can any of you tell? Yes, you all know, it is the *wind* blowing the trees. But can you see the wind? No, but every body knows there is such a thing as the wind, though we cannot see it.

Did you ever feel sick, so as to take medicine, and feel in great pain? Yes, I suppose you all have. But which of these children ever *saw* the pain? Did you hear it? No. Did you smell it? No. And you know there is such a thing as pain, though we cannot see it.

You all know there is such a thing as hunger. How do you know? You never saw it, nor heard it, nor smelt it; but you felt it.

Suppose I should now say there is no such thing as love. Would it be true? No. But why not? You never saw love. No, but you love you parents, and know by your feelings that there is such a thing as love, though you never saw it

Suppose one of these children should have both of his eyes put out, and be a blind little boy. He could still think. He could sit down and think how his home looked, how his father and mother looked. Suppose he then should lose his hearing so as to be deaf. He could still think how the voice of his father and mother used to sound when they spake pleasantly to him. Suppose he were then to lose his taste, so that he could not taste sweet things from sour. He could then sit down and think how food and fruit used to taste, and how he used to love them. Suppose, next, he were to lose his feelings, so as to be numb and cold. He could then think how things used to feel; how an orange felt round, and a book felt flat.

Yes, and if we were to lose eyes, and ears, and taste, and feeling, and smelling, all at once, he could still tell us how things used to be. The sun used to look bright and round, and so did the moon; the rose and the pink used to smell sweetly, the flute to sound pleasantly, the honey to taste sweet, and the ice to feel cold. He could think about all these things.

Now, what is it that *thinks*? Is it the soul,—the soul within you. How do you know that a watch-case has any watch in it? Because you hear it tick, and see the pointers move. And just so you know your body has a soul in it, because it thinks, and moves your hand, and your eye, just as the watch within the case moves the pointers. But nobody ever saw the soul. And yet we know we have a soul, *because we see it do things*. When you feel happy, the soul makes the face laugh; when the soul feels bad, it shows itself through the face, and perhaps makes the face cry. When you feel wicked, it makes you cross and speak wicked words, and disobey your parents, and disobey God.

Now, it is in just such ways we know there is a God. Just attend to what I am going to say, and see if I do not make it plain, and prove it all out to you, that there is a God, because *we see that he does things*.

You see this meeting-house. You see it is full of things which were planned out, and every thing in it planned for some use. Now, look. This pulpit with its stairs, and window, and seat—for what are they

designed? Why, the window is to let the light in, the seat for the preacher to sit down, and the stairs so that he can get into it; and this place where I stand that he may stand up so high as to be seen by all in the house. Those seats or pews were made for you to sit in, during the sermon, and all done off and numbered so that each family might have their own pew, and know it. Those windows were made to let the light in; those posts to hold up the gallery, so that it might not fall on those who sit under it. Those doors are made to shut the noise and the cold out, and those stoves to warm the house in winter, and the long pipes to carry off the smoke. That front gallery is for the singers to sit in, and sing praises. Look now, and see if you can find any thing to play with. No. There is nothing. Of course, this house was not made to play in. See if you can see any thing to sleep on—any couch or bed? No, none. Of course, this house was not made to sleep in. It is all planned to be a place in which to worship God.

Suppose, now, I should tell you this house was never built by any body! The brick for the walls on the outside, and the roof on the top, grew just so, making this great square room, with its pews, and pulpit, and windows, and stoves, and every thing just as it is! It all grew so by chance! Could you believe this? No, you could not believe it. Why, you would say, this house must be built by somebody. True. True. But tell me, did you ever see the man that made these bricks, and spread these walls? No. Did you see the carpenter who built these pews, and pulpit, and doors and windows? No. Did you ever see the glass-maker who melted the sand and made this glass? No. Did you see the silk-weaver, who wove this pulpit curtain? No. Or the man who hammered out the iron and made those pipes? No. No. You never did, and yet you know that all these lived, because you see what they have done. And this is good proof.

And it is in just such ways that we know there is a God; for he made the clay, which had only to be altered by the fire, and it is brick. He made the wood, which has only to be altered in its shape, and it becomes pews and seats. He made the iron, which has only to have its shape altered by melting, and it is these stoves. The sand which he made has only to be melted, and it becomes glass. He made the little worm which spun the silk of which this cushion was made. And he made the light to shine through those windows, and your eyes to see it after it comes in, and ears to hear voices and sounds. He made that mind of yours, so that it can understand what I say, and your memory, so that you can lay it up and keep it, and talk it over after you go home.

I once saw a painting of a dead rabbit and some large birds. They looked just as if they were a real rabbit and real birds; and a little dog, coming in, jumped up to catch them in his mouth, thinking they were real. Now, could any one doubt but a painter had been there, who made that picture? No. Nor could any one doubt but there is a God, who made the rabbit and the birds.

A painter once painted a large sheaf of wheat for a baker's sign. A cow came up, and mistook it for a real sheaf, and tried to eat it. And another painter painted a horse which looked so natural, that another horse came up, and neighed to it, thinking it was a real horse. Suppose you had seen these pictures, and nobody near them; would you not at once say, Somebody must have made those pictures? Yes; and when you see the wheat in the field, and the horse in the street, you know that somebody made them; and that some body is God.

Why do you love to hear a new and curious story; Is the ear pleased? No. The ear feels no pleasure. Why do you love to see something that is new, and curious and strange? Is your eye made glad? No. The eye knows nothing about it. But your *mind* feels glad when you hear a pleasant story, or sweet music, and when you see a new sight. The mind is glad. But how came that curious mind within you? Did it come there by chance? No; no more than this house came here by chance. The body is the house. The soul lives in it; and God has made the ear to let sounds into the soul; and the eye, so that the light may go in as through a window; and a tongue, so that the soul may speak out and tell its feelings; and the feet to carry it about any where; and the hands to be servants, and do any thing the soul wants done. And then the body needs food, and God has made it, the fire to cook it, and the teeth to chew it. It needs drink, and so he has made water, and the cow to give milk. It gets sick, and so he has made medicines to cure it. It needs clothes, and so he has made the cotton to grow out of the ground, the leather on the ox, and the wool on the back of the sheep, and the worm to spin the silk. It needs tools, and so he has made the iron and lead, the silver and the gold, and the wood. It needs to be warm, and so he has made and hung up the sun like a great fire to pour down his light and heat. The world is full of what God has done. Can you not see his doings every where?

You see this little book in my hand. It is full of leaves, and maps, and printing. It is a Testament. Here are the chapters and verses all marked out plainly and correctly. Every word, every letter is right. Now, you never saw the man who made this paper, nor the man who

put up these types, nor the man who pressed the paper on the types so exactly, nor the man who bound it all up in this bright, red leather. And yet you know that such men were alive a short time since; for the book was printed this year. You never will see these men, and yet you know they are alive somewhere.

Just so you know that God lives. For he made the cotton, which is here altered into paper; he made the oil and the wood, which are burned to make this ink; he made the skin of sheep, which is dressed, and colored, and is here in the shape of the morocco binding.

God knew you would love to see the light, and so he made the sun and the moon. He knew you would love to see beautiful things, and so he painted the rainbow in the dark clouds, and spread the green grass over the ground, and pencilled the flowers, and planted the trees, and hung apples on one tree, and plums on another, and grapes on the vine. He knew you would love to hear sweet sounds, and so he gave your parents a pleasant voice, and filled the air with little birds, whose great business is to sing. He knew you would want houses and fires, and so he made the wood and the clay for the brick. He knew you would have reason, and yet not enough to lead you to heaven, and so he made the Bible. He knew you would have wicked hearts, and so he has given you the Sabbath, and Saviour, and the Holy Spirit, to help you to be good. He knew you would want to live for ever, and so he made heaven, where you may live for ever, and never die, if you are good and holy.

A D D R E S S .

DEAR BROTHER OLIPHANT:—It is now nearly three years since the *Witness of Truth* began to bear its testimony to the good people of this Province in general, and the Brethren in particular. And although its pages have recorded scarcely any of our sayings or doings, nor chronicled as few of our cogitations; yet we are unwilling to be rated as indifferent spectators of its efforts to assist in the good cause—that is the great work of Religious Reformation. The self-denial which you must have exercised, in conducting and sustaining the *Witness*, amidst the very unfavourable circumstances in which it has been placed, justly claims the expression of our christian approbation.

As brevity is much recommended and practiced by you in the columns of the periodical, we will proceed with our intended subject, without any further prefacing. It is

AN ADDRESS TO THE BRETHREN IN CANADA,

UPON THE PROPRIETY OF SUSTAINING A RELIGIOUS PERIODICAL AMONG US.

Beloved Brethren:—Having learned from a source, upon which we can rely with confidence, that the Conductor of the *Witness of Truth*, feels almost entirely discouraged with the manner the said periodical is treated. There being by far too few subscribers to sustain such a work, with the never failing accompaniment, of the want of punctuality in remitting payment. And what is perhaps still more discouraging, the general want of correspondence among the Brethren, to enrich and enliven its pages.

We say, having learned these things, we would earnestly ask, Are you disposed to allow the only periodical in this Province, to which we can lay any claim, or can find a ready access to its pages, to go out of existence, and be numbered with the things that were?

Is it really possible that the Disciples in Canada are so far behind the age in which they live, or so insensible to the advantages to be derived from periodical literature, as to suffer their *monthly* to make its exit, at the very time the cause needs it the most? such a thing is surely impossible.

Beloved Brethren:—It may be the *Witness of Truth* was got up in a way in which some may not approve, or it may not have been conducted exactly in the manner in which some would like it—although we are of opinion that it would stand a respectable comparison with any of the periodicals published by our Brethren in North America, the *Harbinger* alone excepted. Still allowing these things to be correct, are we to be without a MONTHLY? Is that mighty engine, the Press, that has done so much to enlighten mankind, to revolutionize kingdoms, and advance the civilization of society; is its power to be employed by all but the Disciples of Jesus Christ? Brethren, we hope better things than this of you.

Brother Oliphant may have sacrificed a great deal, in connection with the *Witness*, and a large debt of gratitude be due him by the Brethren. Upon this we say nothing—or rather we would say, whenever the interests of an individual run counter to the advancement of Divine truth, the claims of the former dwindle into insignificance when compared with the latter.

Therefore, the practical question for you, Brethren, to determine, is: Whether the *Witness* is to be the periodical for the Disciples in Canada or not, and whether D. Oliphant is to be the Conductor? Or, are we to have one at all, and if one, how and by whom conducted? Brethren,

speak out, and act with energy. But as we have something further to say in connection with the subject of our address, that you may the more clearly understand us, we will divide what follows into two heads:

1st. The importance of having a periodical in Canada among us. "Many will peruse a monthly pamphlet of from twenty to thirty pages, who, if the whole were collected in a book, could neither find time, nor afford patience, to read the hundreds of pages these periodicals make when summed up in a volume. A book got up in the usual form is the work of one mind; a periodical has the advantage of being enriched with correspondence." This consideration has all the philosophy and advantage connected with it, in being adapted to man's spiritual wants and mental nature, that the primitive practice had, namely, the church, edifying itself by the exercise of its various gifts. Besides, a work thus produced will embrace a great variety and range of subjects, suited to the wants of the Brotherhood and to general society; because suggested and brought forward by the movements and operations of society. The opportunity afforded, by a periodical being in existence, of Brethren becoming acquainted with each other, in strengthening each other under the various difficulties to be encountered, while contending for the faith; the state and progress of churches being recorded. A Brother changes his locality, wishes to hear from the church he left, or is disposed to address his Brethren, and so forth.

These reasons alone, besides many more that will suggest themselves to each one's mind, are sufficient to arouse our dormant energies and kindle our flagging zeal, to place upon a permanent basis a monthly periodical, worthy of the position we seek to occupy, while exhibiting to the world the nature and power of the pure and benign Gospel of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.

Let this suffice for the first head. Upon the second we would remark, if there be any truth and practical importance in what has been stated; that is, if the edification and perfection of the saints, or the holding forth the word of life, are any way dependant upon, or if they would be assisted by a periodical, then we all have a duty unquestionably to perform. It is in order that this duty may be promptly and efficiently discharged we would seek to tax your patience, by making a few more suggestions:

Let the Brethren in each church or locality set to work in earnest, and consult each other, that some determination may be come to among yourselves, in reference to the following questions:—Whether you will have a periodical to be the property of the churches, or that of an in-

dividual ; such as the *Witness* is that of Brother Oliphant's ? How you will have it conducted, and who shall be the conductor ? How many Brethren in each locality may be calculated upon to take a copy ?

If each congregation will feel it to be a christian and moral obligation resting upon it, to stir up and exhort every Brother under its control—who is at all capable of writing to advantage—to correspond in the pages of said periodical. These questions are susceptible of a definite answer from every one ; if only two or three in a church should agree to support a periodical in Canada, they can communicate and state their minds.

We have not the least doubt but that Brother Oliphant would receive the communications with pleasure, and make the *Witness* the medium of publication, that we may understand each other's mind and purposes.

Remember, Brethren, the season of the year is far advanced. If the *Witness* is to be our periodical, the Conductor would require to know soon ; if another monthly is to be the choice of the Brethren, then there is no time to lose.

May we all, Brethren, be constrained to act with energy, that God may be glorified, and the interests and honour of Zion's King promoted.

Your Brethren in Christ,

Eramosa, Sept. 22nd, 1848.

JAMES KILGOUR,
L. PARKINSON.

SIX FEARS.

A pastor in a Congregational paper has the following fears : the first six respecting himself, the other six respecting his brethren :

1. I fear that I am not sufficiently thankful for the privilege of preaching the Gospel.
2. That I think too much of the trials of the ministry.
3. That I am not entirely devoted to my work as a minister.
4. That I have given my people occasion to utter just complaints respecting my sermons.
5. That I have needlessly caused them to feel dissatisfied with my prayers.
6. That I have not visited them as I ought to have done.

SIX MORE FEARS.

1. I fear that some have entered the ministry not being called.
2. That some who have been called, have not entered.
3. That some who were called, and did enter it, have left it without permission.

4. That their influence, in leaving, has been evil, and only evil, to the ministry.

5. That some now in the ministry, are more intent on acquiring the world than on saving souls.

6. That merchandize, agriculture, animal magnetism, electricity, and a thousand other secular interests, are carrying captive numbers of the watchmen of Israel.

SPECIAL NEWS.

Notawasaga, Lord's day, Aug. 13th, 1848.

DEAR BROTHER OLIPIANT:—Last Lord's day, about ten o'clock A. M., I was on the bank of Mad River, in this Township, with a number of persons congregated around. Above our heads rose in primeval majesty the lofty forest, forming a magnificent canopy, impervious to the sun. It most probably was never before made vocal by hymns of praise to its Creator—it was made vocal then. Prayer was perhaps never offered up before—it was offered then. The glad tidings of salvation were never before proclaimed—they were proclaimed then. And after this I stood in the wave of this now Canadian Jordan, and received the confession of their faith, that Jesus Christ was the Son of God, from two intelligent and interesting females (one of them a brother's wife), both mothers of families, whom I immersed for the remission of sins.

In the afternoon I was in a room in my brother James' house, about one and a half miles from the river, and on a table was bread and wine; and around, some ten individuals, who for the first time in this place, had met together to "show forth the Lord's death till he come." All seemed happy in their obedience, and resolved hereafter to walk in all the ordinances, and commandments of the Lord blamelessly.

This morning, I was again on the banks of Mad River—again the song of praise; the voice of prayer and proclamation was heard; and again I stood in the stream, and heard the confession of faith from two young and interesting females, daughters of the two mothers who were there last Lord's day; and they also were buried with their Lord by immersion unto death; to walk in newness of life.

Last week in going to and returning from Owen's Sound, I passed through the Township of St. Vincent, in which is the residence of brother George Jackson, formerly of Toronto, and also that of brother Wm. Trout, formerly of Norval; and they, with others, have formed a congregation of some two or three months standing. And I was informed while there that another who had repented was to-day to be immersed and added to the congregation. Thus you see within a short time of each other two lamps have been lighted in this new country, and may they never give cause that their "candlesticks" should be taken out of their place.

It may be observed that there are several brethren, formerly of the Norval Congregation, in each of the above. And now, with an earnest prayer for the progress of truth and righteousness, I am, dear Brother,

Yours, most fraternally,

W. A. STEPHENS.

POETRY.

[Almost two years have transpired since receiving the following lines, written by a devoted brother, a servant of the Lord, in Ohio. Apologies, in this climate, are generally of a pale color, and not much admired; however, we may be allowed to say, that, on our return from the embryo journey to Scotland in 1846, we found such a pile of letters, periodicals, and documents—private, public, and mixed—that more than one half of them, from necessity, were either partially or wholly neglected. To atone in part for past apparent delinquency, these stanzas appear even at this late day.—D. O.]

A TRIBUTE TO MY MOTHER.

My Mother, Ah! that sacred name;
 Entwined with many a pleasing thought,
 That calls me back from whence I came,
 And brings to view things once forgot.

How firmly 'graved upon the mind
 Are scenes I first experienced here;
 Ere evil thoughts my heart inclined,
 While filled with love without a fear.

'Twas then I had "a mother kind,"
 To guide me in the way of truth,
 Who deeply planted in my mind,
 The rules that led me in my youth.

How often then, when day had sped,
 And nature lay in silence deep;
 "My mother" coming, gently, said
 "My son I lay thee down to sleep,"

Since now I've left a mother dear
 And many cares enclose me round,
 Shall I forget a mother's tear,
 Amid the toils in which I'm found?

Ah! mother when I thee forget,
 No more my hand its cunning keep,
 My tongue be dumb and palsied; let—
 Yes,—let my heart refuse to beat!

L. C.

From the Christian Luminary.

OBITUARY.

Died in Clark, C. W., August 17th, 1818, Phebe Jane Darling, wife of William Darling. The deceased was born of respectable parents in the United States; some of her connections live near Picton. It may be truly said of her, that she died in the Lord. During the last few months of her life, she suffered much by a decline, or consumption. In early life she sought the Lord, and found, to the joy of her soul. The deceased has left a husband and eight children to mourn the loss of a pious companion and an affectionate mother. Previous to her death, she made choice of the writer to preach her funeral sermon, which was done on the 18th, at Orono, from Psalms lxxxviii. v. 18. "Lover and friend, hast thou put far from me, and mine acquaintance into darkness."

THOMAS HENRY.

Will the *Witness* please copy the above, in the request of

W. D.