

## SABBATH BREAKING.

The following is from an *Occasional Paper*, by the Committee of the "CHURCH PASTORAL-AID SOCIETY," in England. The object of this Society is to supply the destitute with religious instruction, by public preaching and otherwise. The extracts below, show the importance they attach to keeping the Sabbath, with some of the awful consequences of its violations. [Ed.]

In their last Paper the Committee presented an awful picture of the irreligion which prevails; the Christian may well be startled at the contemplation of such ignorance and wickedness in this highly-favoured land. It must be acknowledged that much of this iniquity is to be attributed to the desecration of the Sabbath, which generally leads to the commission of every crime, while, on the other hand, its due observance is almost invariably associated with order and morality. The Committee believe that the cause of Sabbath observance is one which concerns us, not as individuals merely, but as a nation.

If any should doubt the criminal tendency of Sabbath-breaking, such doubt might be easily set at rest by referring to the reports of the Chaplains of gaols; it may be mentioned that there are in and around the metropolis thirteen prisons for the punishment of criminals, the annual expenses of which are between £60,000. and £70,000. a year; the daily average of prisoners in England and Wales is about 18,000, supported at the cost of more than £20 each per annum. The Chaplain of the House of Correction at Westminster, in his last report, states that many condemned malefactors declared in their dying moments—

"That their unhappy end might be traced back, step by step, to this fruitful source of all evil; that their career in vice commenced with the neglect of public worship and profaning the day of rest; and that this violation of religious duty led them by almost imperceptible degrees from crime to crime, till their very lives were forfeited to the outraged laws of their country." Statements to this effect have been repeatedly made, with every mark of sincerity, by persons under sentence of death, and by many others doomed to banishment from their native land.

In another instance, before a Select Committee of the House of Commons, it was remarked:

"I do not recollect a single case of capital offence where the party has not been a Sabbath-breaker; and in many cases they have assured me, that Sabbath-breaking was the first step in the course of crime."

And the Rev. J. Kingsmill, Chaplain of the Model Prison, Pentonville, in an interesting work entitled "Prisons and Prisoners," states:

"That out of 500 prisoners, 141 regularly attended some place of worship some time of their lives, but only 3 a short time previous to the crime."

Mr. K. proposed to a number of convicts under sentence of transportation, the question, "What was the first cause of all your troubles?" The following are samples of the written replies received from a hundred individuals:

"My negligence of the things that belong to my everlasting peace, going a pleasuring on the Lord's day, neglecting the Bible and a place of worship."

"Seeing pleasure on the Lord's day, in roaming about to gardens, and going out in boats, and breaking the Sabbath in everything."

"The first cause of my trouble I can trace back to a disregard of the Sabbath-day, by following the counsel of bad youths, who enticed me every Sunday to come with them."

"Breaking the Sabbath, which is a breach to the rest."

It is a solemn and an awakening fact, that there is a growing increase of Sabbath profanation.

The criminal and miscellaneous statistical returns of the Manchester Police for 1852, present the following example of the devices of Satan "transformed into an angel of light:"

"The population of the borough of Manchester was 398,353 by the census of 1851; there were in the borough for this population 481 public-houses, and 1,298 beer shops, or 1,779 places for the sale of intoxicating drinks, or one such place for every 170 of the population: twenty-eight of the public-houses and twenty-one of the beer shops has music on Sundays! Sacred music is played in them on Sunday evenings, which operates as an inducement to teachers and scholars in Sunday-schools to frequent these places on these evenings, who reconcile their consciences to such a proceeding on the ground that they are listening to psalmody."

And how active is Popery: from the statements put forth by the Romanists themselves, and believed to be authentic, it would appear that the efforts of the Romanists in England, since the passing of the Emancipation Act in 1829, have been of a nature and extent, if not to justify the alarm, at all events to call for the most active exertions of all the true Protestants.

"The increase of (papal) churches and mission in England between 1829 and the present time is stated as follows,—Total increase, 501; being from 382 in 1829, to 583 in 1850."

As to infidelity, its alarming increase, and the extent to which it has of late proceeded among the working-classes, especially in large manufactories, almost surpasses belief. The following extract is taken from the report of the Chaplain of the House of Correction, at Westminster.

"J. P., a bootmaker from Ireland. His age is thirty-four, but dissolute habits have given him the appearance of a person of fifty or sixty. He was trained by his parents in strict Presbyterian principles, and by his own account was, before he came to England, moral and religious in his conduct, and strict in his attendance on Divine worship; 'But the bad society of London,' he says, 'destroyed in two or three months all my religious principles. At first I was quite astonished at the profane conduct of my shepnates. I did not suppose before that there were such

wicked people in the world, for they were, without exception, all infidels, and nearly all blasphemers and drunkards; indeed there was hardly a decent character among them.' These are his own words. But though shocked when he first came in contact with such profligates, they soon undermined his good impressions, and made him as bad as themselves. He says they were not only unbelievers in religion, but made a profane boast of their infidelity, and prided themselves upon their emancipation from the shackles of religious obligation, and their common talk over their work was to that effect. Thus did these misguided men go on mutually corrupting each other, and as far as the sphere of their operation extended, spreading the pollution of their own hearts, and poisoning the minds of every new comer."

Whilst mourning over the spiritual destitution of our country, and the condition of the thousands in it who do not "call the Sabbath a delight, the holy of the Lord, honourable;" still it must be confessed that there is a bright ray amidst the prevailing darkness, in the national recognition of the Lord's day, and in this particular the Christianity of England was doubtless admired, and its superiority to other nations acknowledged by many of those who visited our shores last year.

The following, from the pen of the learned and pious Dr. Merle D' Aubigne, is a striking testimony of the impression which the observance of the Lord's day in England made upon him:

"One of the features which most completely brings out the character of British Christianity, is the observance of the Lord's day. It is the custom of continental travellers, even of Christian ones, to complain loudly of the servile and exaggerated observance of the day of rest in Britain, and of all the annoyances it causes them; but I do not hesitate to say, that this submission of a whole people to the law of God is something very impressive, and is probably the most incontestible source of the many blessings that have been showered on the nation. Order and obedience, morality and power, are all in Britain connected with the observance of the Sunday. Amidst the activity which pervades all things, the bustle of the towns, and the energy with which the inhabitants pursue their earthly callings, what would become of them, had they not a day of rest in which to recruit themselves, and laying aside things temporal, which are seen, to look forward to things eternal, which are unseen?"

## THE RELIGIOUS INTELLIGENCER.

SAINT JOHN, N. B., JUNE 1, 1853.

## STATE OF RELIGION IN ENGLAND.

A Convention of ministers of the Congregational body recently met in Chester, England, in order to consider the aspect of religious affairs among them, and to remedy the decay of piety that has taken place in that country. Several subjects were discussed in the Convention. The actual state of the churches; their success as Ministers; the forms of prevailing error, and the most effectual way of dealing with them; the success and dangers of protracted meetings, and their adaptation to advance the conversion of souls, were among the number. The expression of feeling was very unanimous in respect to Sabbath Schools and Bible Classes. From these nurseries many additions had been made to the churches, and on them had been depending greatly the conversion of sinners.

We would call the serious attention of our readers to the following grounds of solicitude, and causes of complaint which were noted in the Convention; especially the two first. We do so because we fear these and similar evils are invading us, and timely prevention is much easier than cure:—

1. The havoc that the commercial spirit is making with the devotional habits of Christians and with their conscientiousness. On both these points there was one deep and general expression of opinion from the most experienced pastors present. There were painful evidences of the neglect of personal retirement; and then came compromises of conscience and violations of integrity, whereby not a few were making shipwreck of their faith.

2. The mode of admitting members to the churches. At a time when the adoption of the Christian profession demanded no sacrifice the door of communion was thrown too widely open. Professed converts were not sufficiently trained in what related to vital godliness, and thus a tide of worldiness was putting in great peril all that was holy in the churches.

3. Mixed marriages were becoming most painfully common. The sad sight was now only too often witnessed of professing Christians contracting marriages with the unconverted, and leaving the Scripture testimony against these unions altogether out of the question.

4. The chilling influence upon spiritual life that had followed prosperous circumstances, and the possession of municipal privileges. While delightful exceptions were acknowledged, the sorrowful fact was yet dwelt on, of some once eminent Christian men, who, through these causes, had been betrayed into worldly habits, a costly mode of life, and then a cold indifference for the conversion of souls around them, and for the increased devotedness of the people of God.

5. The neglect on the part of pastors of domestic and strictly spiritual intercourse with their flocks. The most perfect union prevailed in the Conference on this point, that no claims of the pulpit, or other public engagements, should be permitted to interfere with this domestic pastoral instruction.

6. The irregular attendance of the wealthier families of Professors upon the services of religion. Three causes of the neglect of the week evening services, in large towns,

were especially dwelt upon. 1st. "Concerts, everlasting concerts," with their paralysing and deadening influence upon personal and domestic piety. 2nd. The change from an earlier to a later hour of dining, which precluded in many cases, attendance at prayer-meetings and the weekly worship. 3rd. The retirement from the towns, the moment wealth was secured, into localities in the country, at inconvenient distances from the services of religion; a practice which was damaging greatly to the spirituality of many.

The proceedings of the Convention will shortly be published in cheap form. The venerable John Angel James remarked in one of the meetings: "We need a better world; we need a better church to make a better world; and we need a better ministry to make a better church."

## A THANK OFFERING.

The following circumstance, so much like pure religion, we insert for the benefit of our readers. Alas, how few ever consider that some offering to God, and his cause, of that which we have received from him, would be a greater proof of our loving him than all the zealous protestations that can be made. Honor the Lord with thy substance is a command which too many disregard. It was only when Abraham had laid his beloved Isaac upon the altar, that the angel said unto him,—Now I know that thou fearest God, seeing thou hast not withheld thy son, thine only son from me. How few there are, who prove the sincerity of their professed attachment, by correspondent offerings. READER, DID YOU EVER GIVE A THANK OFFERING TO GOD?

George Douglas, Esq., of Long Island, N. Y., recently gave TEN THOUSAND DOLLARS to the Bible Society, under the following circumstances:—

"Early the past autumn the eldest of his two sons, a promising youth in his 13th year, was arrested by disease, which soon assumed an alarming character. The possible loss of such an inmate of the household was deeply painful to his parents; but more painful still the thought that though an obedient Bible-reading youth, he might not be prepared for such a removal. But as he drew nearer the close of life, evidence rapidly brightened, that he was renewed in heart, and united by a firm and living faith to Christ. He was full of peace and joy, expressing his readiness to depart, and desiring, if it pleased the Lord, that his departure might be on the Lord's Day. This favor was granted; his spirit passed away on that sacred day on which his Saviour arose. Few deaths, even of adult believers, have been so full of faith, gratitude, and triumph. Such a striking and unlooked for manifestation of the Divine goodness, in the clear conversion of this dying son, led the father, as he saw him repeating, and trusting in the promises of the Bible, to resolve at the time, that he would devote the sum above named to the service of the Lord, through the American Bible Society, as a thank offering; that many now destitute of that Book might in this way have its light to cheer their passage through the dark valley."

Soon after the death of the son a meeting was held in New York, in relation to the sufferings of the Madial family for the Bible's sake. This led Mr. Douglas to feel that no time was to be lost in giving circulation to that Book, so full of comfort to the humble believer, and so dreaded by tyrants. He consequently paid over the TEN THOUSAND DOLLARS on the next day.

## LETTERS RECEIVED.

## LETTER FROM DISTRICT MISSIONARY.

CARLETON, St. John, May 26, 1853.

BRO. McLEOD,—I presume your readers are expecting to hear from me through the *Intelligencer*, especially those brethren and friends that reside in this District, among whom I have commenced labouring as a Missionary. And I write the more readily, as I conceive it to be a duty I owe the churches to keep them informed of my labours in the Vineyard of the Lord. It is certainly cheering to the friends of Zion to hear of her welfare, although it may not be in their immediate vicinity. And, again, when a medium of communication is opened, (as is in the *Intelligencer*.) for brethren labouring in the same common cause; they cannot do better than contribute their mite to the common storehouse; improving the medium; rendering themselves useful in the cause of God; and binding their hearts more closely in bonds of amity and love. The private member in God's Israel comes in for a share of the benefits of this communication; his heart is quickened, his faith is increased, his hands are made strong, and with renewed vigor he girds up his loins like a man to do battle with the powers of darkness, and to make his calling and election sure. It is not to be doubted but that a sanctified press is a grand instrument of doing good, and happy will it be for us, who wish to do good, if we improve our privileges. But I did not take my pen to write an essay, but rather to inform your readers of my labours; and begging pardon for the above digression, I will come to the subject. The last of April I arrived here with my family, and as noticed in the *Intelligencer*, remained in the City for the two Sabbaths next ensuing; after which I visited the church at Long Reach, (where brother French resides.) I remained there for two Sabbaths more, attending meetings almost every evening, preaching to the people the word of life. There are signs