

THE CHRISTIAN VISITOR.

SAINT JOHN, AUGUST 9, 1848.

MINISTERIAL SUPPORT.

This subject is commanding great attention at the present time, as we see by the papers not only in this Province, but as far as we have intelligence. Great solicitude is felt by those who are watching the signs of the times, and, doubtless, with reason. Men though professing the consecration of themselves and their substance to the cause of God seem to hold on to their property with great tenacity, and the demand for increased missionary operatives abroad, which is far greater and more imperative than ever before, meets a most reluctant response, whilst the pre-eminence given to the subject of Ministerial support is evidence that Pastors at home are not suitably provided for.

It is lamentable indeed, that these important agencies so necessary, according to the divine economy for the conversion of men, and for the extension of the Church of Christ over the earth, should be so lightly regarded, and their support considered so burthensome.

There is one aspect in which we view this subject which fills us with sorrowful apprehensions, that is its effect forbidding the entrance of many who might otherwise follow their convictions of duty in that direction, upon the ministry.

Important decisions affecting our happiness and usefulness for life often depend upon, and result from, very trivial circumstances. Christians are exhorted by the Saviour to pray for the increase of the Ministry; this increase is one of the imperative wants of the Church of Christ, and God will be enquired of to do for us all that we want. The whitened fields upon all sides, ready to harvest, show how extensive this want is. Hundreds are wanted at home, and thousands abroad for the lack of them, while districts teeming with busy populations are living without hope, and entirely indifferent to the concerns of the soul, and the great structures of idolatry and superstition, which have long appeared to totter with decrepitude, yet cast their baleful shade over perishing millions. "How can they believe in him of whom they have not heard, and how can they hear without a Preacher?"

Our prayer for an increase of the ministry belongs to that class of petitions which the Lord will have us to answer ourselves, not, of course, without his direction and blessing, but equally true, not without our liberality and activity.

While the Church offers this prayer, it must look after its gifts; they are its property, subject to its control. These gifts, or those endowed with them, must be called forth and encouraged, no obstacles must be thrown in their way, everything should be done to secure a calm, dispassionate consideration of duty.

This question cannot be considered aside from that of temporal support. Every man must have the means of living, and when the Church becomes so remiss in the duty of Ministerial support, that a Minister's services cannot command a maintenance their attention must be turned to other pursuits, and this of itself will relieve them from any apprehension of woe if they preach not the Gospel of Christ.

It is sad to consider how few of the multitudes who have been gathered into the Church of late years, are coming into the ministry; how large a proportion of intelligent, enterprising, healthy young men are crowding other avenues and choosing other pursuits.

Surely, for this there must be a cause, and that we are assured no arbitrary decree of Jehovah restricting the provisions of his house! No. Who can say how far this is the result of the evil we deplore, a lack of readiness and liberality in supporting the ministry? If the Church cannot support, or will not employ those already in the field, how can others be made to feel that it is their duty to enter it? An impression of duty must be exceedingly strong to overcome so tangible a fact.

No one can fail to see the inconsistency of praying for an increase of the Ministry, if, at the same time, we are throwing obstacles in the way of such increase, of praying that God would thrust into the harvest more laborers, whilst we refuse to employ or support those whom he has already prepared.

There can be no doubt that men wander from duty in regard to this office, as well as any other. Many are in it who are incompetent to its duties, who have neither the disposition nor ability to prosecute its labors with diligence and success. Again many are in other pursuits, who have every endowment to ensure success, with the blessing of God if they were thus engaged. An unworthy notion, operating but momentarily may turn a man from the true course, and it is far easier to wander than it is to retrace our steps. A desire for a competent

support, for ability to maintain and educate a family respectably, motives which no prudent or honest man can entirely disregard. However disposed to yield himself to the cause of Christ are doubtless the occasions of suppressing the inquiry when it obtrudes upon the mind in regard to this duty.

This view is wholly aside from those usually presented when urging the necessity and duty of sustaining the ministry, but we cannot but feel that it deserves serious consideration, and that those who really love the cause of religion and appreciate the worth of souls will be effected by it, to a more careful discharge of this duty.

ENCOURAGING PROSPECTS.

It will be gratifying to our readers, especially those who have formed an acquaintance with our respected Brother Miles and his people, to understand that the good work which commenced among his charge at the opening of the new Chapel at Newcastle, is still progressing.

We are informed that present appearances would justify the belief that a large harvest will be gathered in that place to the Church of God. Eight persons were baptized last Lord's day by the Pastor of the Church.

Bro. Francis who has just returned from visiting the Churches on the River this side of Fredericton, states that the aspect of things in connection with the congregation at Maudersville, especially among the young, is very encouraging, and warrants an expectation that at no distant period the Church would receive accessions to their number. It is to be much regretted that the Church is, under these circumstances, without a pastor, Brother McGee having removed to another important field.

We sincerely hope that the brethren here will be able without much delay to secure the entire services of an efficient Bishop. It is to be greatly lamented, that such Churches as those of Maudersville, Dorchester, and Hillsborough, with others that might be mentioned, are now deprived of the instructions and watch care of a pastor. This deficiency does not arise from a lack of earthly means on the part of the congregations, though in some instances a want of system may prevent its appropriation, but is principally for the want of men. A. M. D.

The Association Minutes for Westmorland and Albert Counties, have not been called for, though they have been in readiness some time. The earlier such matters come to hand, the more the interest felt in the objects recorded. They can be had at this office, or can be forwarded to any other place in the city, according to instruction.

BOY MISSING.—On Friday the 28th July, Robert Jordan Roberts, son of Mr. Robert Roberts of this city, left his father's house on an errand, since which, although every exertion has been used, no tidings of the missing youth have been received. He had on, when he left, a blue cloth cap trimmed with fur, check cotton coat, a pair of close checked homespun trousers, and a pair of boots. He is about twelve years old, rather full featured, brown hair, and when examined closely has a small mole on one cheek. Any information that can be given by any person regarding the boy would be most gratefully received by his father.—*Courier*.

MAN MISSING.—A deranged man, named Jas. Duggan, left his residence in Church-Street during the night of the 11th ult., and is supposed to have wandered into the country. He is a carpenter by trade, is tall, slight made, long face and sandy whiskers, and had on a blue frock coat, blue satin striped vest, dark striped pantaloons, and black hat. Any information respecting him, communicated to Mr. Corkery, Butcher, will confer a favor on his anxious wife and friends.—*Id.*

A FIRE broke out about 1 o'clock on Sunday morning in a two story house owned by Mrs. Appleby, opposite the new Methodist Chapel, and before it was got under, nearly destroyed the building. It was occupied by Capt. Gillies and Mr. F. Neil, both of whom lost a considerable portion of their furniture. Capt. G. is unfortunately from home, being now on his passage to England. We learn that there was no insurance on the house. Fortunately the night was calm, and through the exertions of the Engine Companies and the Military, who were early on the spot and rendered good service, the flames were prevented from spreading to the neighbouring buildings. The fire is said to have been the work of an incendiary.—*New Brunswick*.

MELANCHOLY ACCIDENT.—An Inquest was held on the 22nd ult., before J. Crandall Esq., Coroner, on view of the body of Israel Price, son of Mr. James Price of Salisbury, who was accidentally drowned in a mill pond the previous evening. Verdict accordingly.

CORRESPONDENCE.

THE LORD'S DAY.

"It is written, Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve."—Matt. vi. 10.

To prevent misapprehension, I will state at the commencement the proposition which it is my object to maintain, it is the following: That a portion of time ought periodically to be set apart from secular engagements, and devoted to the worship of God and other devotional exercises. This is the principal point and contains the marrow of the subject: in conjunction with this, it may also be shown, that the seventh portion of time at least should be thus employed, and that the first day of the week is that portion.

The mention of periods and days is not intended to limit the time to be allotted to devotion, nor to give occasion to cavillings about days, if any think that worship should be rendered on the seventh day, let them hold their opinion and act accordingly.

The argument with respect to the Sabbath is analogous to that which may be urged for the consecration of property to the service of God; in the first place, the general principle would be laid down, that some part of each man's substance ought to be employed directly for the promotion of the glory of God, and the well-being of man; then if any should ask, what proportion of a man's property ought to be thus expended, it might be replied by a reference to the tenth part enjoined under the law, without intending to confine the liberality of the generous spirit within that limit; a man might also be reminded of the fitness of dedicating the first fruits of his success to God, without being led to infer that any other part is not equally acceptable to him. So in relation to the service and worship of God, the seventh portion of our time, and the first day of the week, may lay claim to the continued regard of the church, as they have done since the commencement of the Christian era, but the main stress of the argument rests upon the fundamental principle, that some portion of time ought periodically to be devoted to the direct worship of God.

For the purpose of confirming this proposition, it may be remarked—

- 1st. That the claims of God imperatively demand it.
- 2nd. That the law of God enjoins it.
- 3d. That the necessities of man require it.
- 4th. That humanity to dependants calls for it.
- 5th. Finally, passages of Scripture, which have not been referred to under the previous heads, may be adduced to sanction it.

These various points are laid down for discussion because they all have a bearing upon the subject, though not equally forcible, at the same time I am not insensible to the danger of spreading the argument too widely, and so exposing it to the fate of a reply to some indifferent point, the confutation of some accessory observation, which leaves the main question untouched, upon the strength of which reply a triumphant parade is made, as though the whole argument had been refuted.

This is a very common artifice with the sophist. Let it be observed then that the first observation—the claims of God—is the basis of the argument, upon which its entire weight rests, this must be denied or overthrown before the argument can fall; the proof that a law upon the subject has been promulgated and still exists in force, may be considered defection to some minds, the other considerations may be thought to have little weight; this matters not, overthrow the reasoning upon these points, there is still another barrier to the neglect of worship which remains to be cast down; upon that we take our stand, and risk there the issue of the whole argument.

Nor must the course of the argument be diverted by lengthened observations upon the nature of that worship which alone can be acceptable to Him who knoweth the secrets of the heart; it is sufficient now to remark, that when mention is made of worship, sincere, humble, spiritual worship is intended, such as is offered by one who is in earnest to do justly, love mercy, and walk humbly before God every day of the week.

It is but fair to assume that nothing has hitherto been advanced which the most strenuous advocate of the doctrine of the Sabbath would deny; for a denial of the principles just laid down could only be consistently made by an Atheist, and there is no justice in branding as Atheists those who profess to desire the progress of spiritual religion; it cannot therefore be supposed that they would deny what has been advanced.

Let no one imagine, however, that I use any argument, with the validity of which I am not myself fully satisfied, for this is not the case, but these

remarks are made to guard against that sophistical mode of dealing with an argument mentioned above.

I. The claim which God has to our worship, as well as every kind of service and obedience, arises out of the relation he bears to us as the Creator who formed our bodies and breathed into us the breath of life, the all pervading Spirit in whom we live and move and have our being. This relation of creature to Creator imposes upon us the obligation of adoration, praise, and thanksgiving to our Maker, and to present our supplications both for the obtaining of good, and the averting of evil.—But we do not occupy the position of sinless beings, we are transgressors, there is therefore another bounden duty which we owe to God, and that is, to seek him with humiliation, to confess our sins with a contrite heart, and submit ourselves to his pleasure. These are duties attaching to all men, which they may deny, neglect or spurn, but from which they cannot free themselves. No one can evade the relation of a created being, he may denude himself of every other, but of this he cannot; during the whole of his existence, he must exist as the work of the hand of God; no one therefore can cast from him the obligation to worship God, which that relationship of necessity involves.

Our rebellion cannot absolve us from our allegiance, although it renders the intervention of another necessary for our restoration; and as the Son of God has interposed to bring us right to his Father. This imposes additional duties upon us, especially upon those who have believed in Jesus Christ unto life eternal, they owe to their Redeemer the sacrifice of grateful praise, devout adoration and confiding service. In the words of Paul, "Ye are bought with a price, therefore glorify God in your bodies and spirits, which are God's." None but an atheist will deny these truths. But there is another step; this obligation rests upon men in all the conditions and relations of life, it is coextensive with his existence in all its phases; as an individual, as the member of a family, as joined in community with others, he is bound to worship God.

To render personal service, does not exhaust the just demands of the Creator; for the joys and blessings of the family relation are the gift of God, and he who is the head of a family is living in strange ingratitude and forgetfulness, of the Divine Being, who fails to serve the Lord in his family, and maintain the worship of God among his children and domestics.

The same remarks are applicable to public worship, for it is most meet that his people should openly avow their allegiance and acknowledge his authority before the eyes of men, that others also may be led to reverence him.

To deny, that private, family and public worship are due to the Most High, and yet to admit that he has an inalienable claim to the worship of his creatures, is to admit the whole and deny the parts of which that whole is composed; than which nothing can be more absurd; it would be as reasonable to grant that the whole Province of New Brunswick forms part of the British Empire and yet deny this of every country in detail.

The question may be started, how often ought such worship to be paid, but turn aside for the purpose of answering every such petty question would soon lead us away from the main subject; if a man admits the authority and prerogative of God in this matter, let him act accordingly, under the guidance of a sound judgment and enlightened conscience, he will then find no difficulty in answering the question for himself.

It would, however, be far more satisfactory, if the treatise upon the Sabbath, recently published, contained some admission of the divine claims, or some reservation from which the inference might be drawn that the writer acknowledges them; a careful perusal has not been able to discover a single sentence, indicative of such a view in the writer's mind.

This is the more to be regretted because unless the first principles upon which reasoning is to be based, be agreed upon, the contest is carried on with uncertainty; one knows not where to expand and enforce the argument, because the exact point where admission terminates and denial begins, is not avowed.

In the present instance, however, no contradiction can be as yet fairly anticipated, because that would lead to the monstrous conclusion, that views entirely subversive of God's prerogative were covertly introduced under a pretence of promoting spiritual truth. Concluding, therefore, that I have not yet advanced a proposition which admits of denial, with consistency, by a spiritual man. I shall, in my next, carry forward the argument to a point where, probably, the issue will be joined.

CHARLES SPURDEN.