

Evangelical Societies of Paris and Geneva, and sustains nearly twenty Missionaries and three laborers in France.

It is educating a number of young men for the work in France and South America. It has lately sent an efficient Agent into Italy, to occupy a central position there, and avail himself of all the opportunities which offer to promote the diffusion of the Gospel in that beautiful but oppressed country.

The Report announced that the Foreign Evangelical Society, the Am. Prots. and the Christian Alliance are about to merge into one Society, to be called the American and Foreign Christian Union, that shall carry on the operations which the three have been prosecuting.

After the reading of this report, eloquent remarks were made, showing the importance of the objects aimed at, and the encouragement to persevere.

The New-York State Colonization Society,

Held its anniversary in the Tabernacle last night, Anson G. Phelps, Esq., Chairman.—The annual report read by the Rev. L. B. Pinney reported that the receipts of this Society during the year amounted to \$12,516, and those of the Parent Society during the same time to \$58,000. Under the auspices of this Society, nine vessels with 870 emigrants have sailed for Liberia. Of these more than 100 were Christian communicants of various denominations, 7 were preachers of the Gospel, more than 30 had purchased their own freedom by extra industry, at a cost of over \$20,000; and 103, in one vessel, had learned to read, and 30 to write a decent hand; upwards of 600 had been voluntarily emancipated by their owners. The report stated that President Roberts had been favourably received in England, France, Prussia and by other governments, and had made treaties between them and Liberia on equal terms. Through the liberality of the well-known philanthropist, Samuel Gurney, Esq., \$10,000 had been pledged to him for purchasing the sea-coast between Liberia and Sierra Leone (about 150 miles.) The prospects of the Colonization Society are in every respect highly encouraging; and such as will excite the devout gratitude and increased liberality of its friends.

CHRISTIAN VISITOR.

SAINT JOHN, FRIDAY, MAY 25, 1849.

CHURCH COVENANT.

"We engage to watch not only against the most gross evils, but also against all foolish talking and jesting, which are not convenient—vain disputing about words and things which gender strife—disregarding promises and not fulfilling engagements—tattling and backbiting, spending time idly at taverns, or elsewhere, and vain, unnecessary worldly conversation on the Sabbath, and whatever else is contrary to sound doctrine, according to the glorious Gospel of Christ."

The tongue, as the Apostle James teaches, though a little member, is capable of great influences; and if any man offend not in word, the same is a perfect man, and able also to bridle the whole body. Rightly employed it may ever be honouring God and benefiting to men; but, under the sway of an evil heart, it is full of deadly poison. Therewith bless we God, even the Father; and therewith curse we men, which are made after the similitude of God. As a little fire may result in a great and destructive conflagration, so a word amiss, though not spoken in wantonness, may effect the most disastrous results. This is a matter of so much certainty, and of so frequent occurrence that none will doubt the propriety or necessity for such a covenant engagement between members of the church as that embraced in the above extract from the Covenant. In taking this vow we follow the devout Psalmist—"I will take heed to my ways, that I sin not with my tongue; I will keep my mouth with a bridle while the wicked are before me."

The habit of carefully watching and controlling our speech would soon be evident in the character of our thoughts. We are so constituted that except when alone it is most difficult to suppress speech. The mind is overtravailing with thought, and its utterance is a seeming necessity. If a determined restriction therefore is laid upon the utterance of one kind or character of thought, it must yield to other thoughts which may be expressed. By refusing to utter vulgar words or participate in such discourse the mind will employ itself in healthier exercise; so of idle

discourse and jesting; by refusing to tattle and backbite, or to engage in vain disputes; christian charity will have opportunity to discover and dwell upon excellencies in the character, or to consider duly the extenuating circumstances connected with the delinquencies of our brethren which otherwise are buried in obscurity. Thus this wholesome discipline secures its own recompense and whilst preventing harm to others derives many advantages to one's self. Levity, Passion, and Impurity, three great troubleers of our conscience, and disturbers of our peace, are dispossessed, and the mind may nourish itself with sober truth, and the heart be comforted by communion with God.

Christians find themselves unfitted for the social duties of religion by the transgression of this engagement, perhaps as often or oftener than by any other cause; and after indulging in improper discourse, the mouth is sealed by conscious inconsistency from the utterance of exhortation, admonition or praise; and the candle lighted for the benefit of all that are in the house, is hidden under a bushel or extinguished. What but this makes it so great a cross for those sustaining the most intimate relations in life, to speak with each other directly and specially of their religious feelings and exercises? and for parents to ascertain by particular enquiry the state of feeling in sons and daughters, who have come to years of discretion or maturity without choosing Christ? or after to conduct family worship in their presence? How many good things have to be suppressed, how many duties left undone to the danger and everlasting loss of souls as the result of not watching the tongue.

Spending time idly at taverns, or elsewhere, and vain unnecessary worldly conversation on the Sabbath are very properly classed under this head. Lounging in taverns and in stores, and at the corners of streets, and about wharves, is a direct result and almost universal concomitant of idle and vulgar discourse; and he who determines to indulge himself in this low habit, should consider that he puts at the greatest possible risk his personal character and christian influence. A man who does not more highly respect himself, cannot expect the respect of others; and children can hardly fail to discover the inconsistency of returning from a rendezvous of idleness, where the mind and tongue have been rioting in licentious anecdote or violent dispute to conduct a family's devotions or discourse of holiness and heaven.

A happy day will it be for the cause of religion when Christ shall be allowed to retain what is formally and professedly dedicated to His service; when men shall not feel at liberty to withdraw and prostitute their influence as though they had never acknowledged it to be the Lord's.

Our hope would be a miserable one indeed if we were deprived of that precious testimony that "the gifts and calling of God are without repentance," and that He gives, "not as the world giveth." How then can we reconcile the belief in God's covenant as a perpetual one on His part, and allow such sad violations of engagement on man's, so much obliged, so deeply indebted, so solemnly bound? But the great secret is exposed by the Scripture, "My people do not consider;" we dishonour the cause and do not consider; we rob our families, and do not consider, we rob the church, we rob the world, and we wrong even our own souls, and yet do not consider. Few therefore can really say, notwithstanding the solemn covenant which binds them; "I have purposed that my mouth shall not offend."

In the Montreal Register of May 10th, Rev. J. M. Cramp, D. D., announces his resignation of the editorial charge of that paper, which had been accepted by the Executive Committee of the Canada Baptist Union.—The name of his successor is not announced.

We notice in other papers the announcement that Dr. Cramp is to edit the government paper, the Pilot, which has been purchased by Mr. Rollo P. Campbell. No one will question the ability of Dr. Cramp to conduct such a journal; and although we cannot altogether suppress a conviction of incongruity in connection with this change, yet we have no idea that a clergyman of so established principles is to be lost to the cause of religion or of the denomination by such an engagement.

"SUNDAY SCHOOL GUARDIAN," Vol. I, No. 1, Toronto. We have received a very neat Monthly under this title, published under the supervision of the Methodist Conference

of Canada West. It is in a convenient form for binding and its mechanical execution very creditable. We should judge it might do good service to the Sabbath School cause.

STEAMER SAINT JOHN.

We took occasion a day or two since to inspect the improvements and accommodations of this fine boat, and were much gratified.—The enterprise of the owners is most commendable; and we see not what more is to be desired to make a trip to or from Fredericton by night or by day agreeable. With the known skill and respectful attention of the officers and stewards of this boat, Passengers can depend upon every facility on board for pleasant travelling. We wish the proprietors, as we doubt not they will secure, every success.

Correspondence.

[FOR THE CHRISTIAN VISITOR.]

SABBATH SCHOOLS.

No. VI.

Objects and Modes of Sabbath School Instruction.

Among the valuable aids put into the hands of the Sabbath School Teacher, are the question books published by the American Sunday School Union, and generally entitled the "Union Questions." These excellent manuals contain select and well-arranged scripture readings, with appropriate questions designed to assist the teacher in unfolding the meaning of the sacred text. Prepared by writers endowed with suitable qualifications, they possess, as far as could be expected, the qualities desirable for compassing the objects intended. The questions are for the most part marked by clearness, brevity, and pointedness, and are so disposed as to develop in their just relation the prominent truths comprised in the passages selected. At the same time, they are not so easy and minute as to obviate the necessity of the teacher's employing his own powers of reflection and sagacity. They in many cases rather indicate than fully elicit the topics of instruction. They point out the truths to be explained, and suggest the most direct process for stimulating the attention of the scholar and engaging his mind in the investigation of the subjects presented to him. They set before the teacher a good model of the catechetical mode of instruction, furnish hints to appropriate trains of thought and suitable illustrations, and exhibit a compendious view of the principal features of the lesson which it is his duty to explain. To him is left the task of following out the course of thought suggested, and of filling up the plan sketched before him in outline. It is incumbent on him to modify, when necessary, the more difficult questions, by changing the form of expression or by reducing a question of too general a construction into several of narrower compass. He will often find it requisite to lead the scholar step by step to the proper answer sought by introducing preliminary questions. There will always be ample room for the exercise of his own thoughts and discernment in discovering new views of the truths contained in the passages chosen for elucidation, in deducing important inferences, and tracing concealed relations. He will find that no written questions, however varied and well-directed, will suffice to exhaust a subject or to present it in the different aspects in which it should be viewed. He will frequently find, also, that in order to render an interrogatory clear to the apprehension of a youthful intellect, it must assume a different shape from that which has been given it; for, as different minds see objects through different media, it is necessary that the objects should be made to conform to these differences.

However efficient, therefore, may be the helps adverted to, and however great may be the advantages arising from their right use, they cannot relieve the teacher from the duty of employing his own faculties. Nor would this be at all desirable, since the mental exercise imposed by his office on the teacher is one of the many benefits he derives from his labour, and which are more than a compensation for all his exertions.

In many Sabbath Schools the use of the catechism forms a prominent part of the means of instruction. Although greater importance is sometimes attached to this means than its real merits claim, yet it may undoubtedly be employed to very good purpose. If the catechist, however, contents himself with

putting to his class only the printed questions before him, and requiring from each scholar nothing more than so much mental effort as is necessary to give the verbal answers, he will expend time and labour almost fruitlessly. The systems of religious doctrine comprised in catechisms are usually the result of profound investigation and protracted thought.—They are the productions of ripened intellect, and however strenuously the authors may have laboured to state the results of their researches in language, fitted to untrained minds, yet they have not succeeded to the extent necessary. The very nature of their task prevented. They were required to compress into a very brief space, the grand principles of scripture truth. These principles must be presented in the most general form of expression. They must be detached from the arguments, series of thoughts, the illustrations, the processes of induction, by which they had been discovered, established and explained. In this abstract and comprehensive form, they are rarely understood by children, or untutored minds. They must be simplified by explanations, by illustrations drawn from familiar sources, by the breaking down of one question into many. Otherwise the exercises in the catechism are of no further service to the scholar than to crowd his memory with words, mere words. The unobservant teacher may congratulate himself on the proficiency of a pupil who can volubly repeat all the answers in his catechism from beginning to end, but who has formed no clear conception of the sense of what flows so glibly from his tongue.

The same remark applies to a large proportion of the recitations practised still in some schools, but for the most part fallen into disuse. It is of little conceivable utility to the scholar to devote a large amount of time in qualifying himself to recite from memory pieces of religious poetry, hymns, and chapters from the Bible, which he is not taught or required to understand. Yet how few teachers deem it a part of their duty to give to this exercise an intellectual character, and to make it bear on the chief objects before them, the training of mind and the impartation of knowledge. How few take the trouble to ascertain that the sentiments conveyed in the graceful vehicle of poetic measures or the inspired language of sacred writ, have made their way to the intelligence of those who repeat them! The only faculty of mind that is brought into vigorous action by this most imperfect mode of teaching, is memory, and even its efforts are wasted on shadows, on words that are as little intelligible to the pupil as the sounds of the Sanscrit. If it is thought advisable that a part of the time devoted to Sabbath School instruction should be given up to the recitations mentioned, let the teacher examine his class, to see whether the lesson has been merely couched and learned by rote, or has conduced to the expansion of their mental powers and the increase of their knowledge. S. ELDER.

Fredericton, May 22, 1849.

Woodstock, 20th May, 1849.

MY DEAR BROTHER VERY,—You will, with the brethren generally, be happy to hear that after our long season of depression in this place, we have most encouraging tokens of God's kindness. Upon assuming the pastoral office, I felt constrained to remind the brethren of their duty, and to urge the necessity of their attending to the ordinances as they were once delivered to the Saints, to which they very cordially agreed, resolving that as early as practicable the Lord's Supper would again be administered. The number of the brethren and sisters was but small at first.—The church then appointed committees to visit all delinquent members, many of whom we had the pleasure of seeing return and confess their sins before God and his people.—Others, however, remained deaf to all entreaty, from whom it became the painful duty of the church to withdraw fellowship.

This truly was a season of sorrow and solemnity yet mingled with a pleasing consciousness of duty. The brethren acted in every instance in unison with their Pastor, with the utmost decision of character. Yet their spirit was replete with christian love and forbearance. At this trying period, when the church was passing through this purifying ordeal, fervent prayer was ascending to God from the hearts of the brethren and sisters for an outpouring of the Spirit of God. Their prayers were answered in a most signal manner, so that the church can now stand upon the mount of victory and sing with hearts of