

## CHRISTIAN VISITOR.

SAINT JOHN, FRIDAY, APRIL 20, 1849.

## COLPORTEUR.

Our brethren in Nova-Scotia are about entering earnestly upon the Colporteur Work.—We have received a line this week from the Rev. John Chase, informing us that he will be in this City next week, on his way to Boston, to make the necessary arrangements, and to effect purchases. Our brethren, we are assured, will never regret this step. The Colporteur Work is one of the most efficient agencies now employed in the christian world, and we only regret our want of means to prosecute it more vigorously among the more scattered population of these Provinces. Our friends are not aware how easily this work might be sustained, and how much more efficient it might be made if a few active Ladies in our different churches would exert themselves. The Colporteur now depending upon his sales for his support must traverse the more populous parts and make hurried calls, when if his support could be independent he might pursue his work where it is much more needed, and do more missionary work.

In one community not extensive there is now a Society of females contributing a penny a week for the Colporteur work in this Province, and four such Societies operating as efficiently as this would sustain a Colporteur, and we presume there are at least twenty villages where it might be accomplished just as easily.

It is hoped that some of our devoted sisters will act upon this hint, we present the chief articles of the Constitution.

1. "The object of this Society, (Female Mite Society) is to assist in supporting Colportage under the direction of the New-Brunswick Colporteur Committee.

2. "The Society shall consist of Members contributing ONE PENNY per week, to be collected weekly and paid into the Treasury.

3. "There shall be a Quarterly Meeting of the Society to receive the Report of the Treasurer, and to appropriate the Funds, and to attend to any other requisite business."

Collectors from among the young Misses appointed monthly, call on each member weekly; or any member can pay any sum in advance, and have it credited on the collector's books.

Donations would often be made by brethren to encourage the work, and when the Colporteur was in the vicinity the Society might be convened and hear from his own lips of his labours and success.

We think if this matter is properly represented, we may soon hear of the right kind of movement. Our churches might in this way redeem the pledges given at the Associations last year to aid the Committee in bearing the expenses of the outfit, &c. which still rests upon them.

Though we have no formal Editorial this week our readers will not complain of a lack of original matter. We are greatly cheered by the kindness of our correspondents. Their contributions, in addition to our selections, and the English news, will, we are sure, make the Visitor doubly welcome this week.

PAY.—We hope those who are expecting to avail themselves of the discount by advance pay will remember that it must be paid to the Agent previous to their receipt of the 14th number, if their subscription commences with 1st number of the volume. See Terms.

Directions in Bro. Francis' letter attended to. Remittance safe.

We take great pleasure in giving to our readers the letter of Father Manning to Bro. Robinson. We hope he may have health to greet the multitude of Delegates at the Jubilee at Horton, and impart his legacy of council with others who now commend the affections and confidence of the whole denomination.

A new Paper called *The Wesleyan*, and intended to advocate the interests of the Denomination, was published on the morning of Saturday from the press of Mr. Cunnabell, and is a creditable effort. The Wesleyans are sufficiently numerous to uphold a religious paper connected with their body, and we dare say it will receive from them a fair share of support. It is of imposing dimensions for the price, and will require a large subscription list to keep it free from financial embarrassment, and a still larger to make it profitable to the proprietors.—*Halifax Church Times*.

## Correspondence.

[FOR THE CHRISTIAN VISITOR.]

## No. III.

*The design of the LORD'S SUPPER, and the obligations of Christians to observe it stated as a command of CHRIST.*

It may not be improper for me in writing upon this subject to make some remarks on the frequency of administration of this sacrament. At its institution, Christ said, "as often as ye eat this bread and drink this cup, ye do show forth the Lord's death till he come." The word *often* I believe can never be reconciled to once a year or to once a quarter, or even to once a month, but to as often as a church can attend to it with decency and order; nor can I see any sufficient reason why we cannot as well attend to that delightful service once every Lord's day, as once a year, or once a month.

In Acts ii. 42, it is said of the first christians: "And they continued steadfastly in the Apostles doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread and in prayer. In Acts xx. 7, we read that the disciples at Troas, met on the first day of the week to break bread, and in 1 Cor. x. 16, we find the term breaking of bread applied to the Lord's Supper: "The bread which we break, is it not the communion of the body of Christ." In 1 Cor. xi. 20, the Apostle connects their coming together, and the Lord's Supper in such a manner as to leave the impression that one chief object at least, of their assembling was to attend to the communion of the Lord's Supper.

It may be noticed here also in proof of this point, that the same evidence usually adduced as authorizing the observance of the first day of the week rather than the seventh, as the christian Sabbath supports so frequent an observance of the supper: See 1 Cor. xvi. 1, 2; Acts xx. 7; 1 Cor. xi. 18—23.

What the first churches did with the approbation of the Apostles, I believe is agreed on all hands to be considered the rule for us. That they did meet on the first day of the week, is plain from the above quoted passages, hence our authority for observing the first day of the week as the christian Sabbath; so that they did continue steadfastly in the Apostles doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread; that they did meet on the first day of the week to break bread is as plain, and hence our authority for the frequent observance of this ordinance.

We would not by what we urge here be understood as restricting the observance of the ordinance to the Lord's day. The Supper was to commemorate an event which did not occur in the Sabbath; that is, as Christ said, "the LORD'S DEATH" which occurred on Friday. It was instituted by our Saviour on the evening of Thursday, "the night in which he was betrayed." Observing the Sabbath on the first day commemorates the resurrection of the Saviour; so as monuments they speak to the church and the world of two distinct events, the one of the death, the other of the resurrection of the Lord Jesus, and they are not therefore necessarily associated, but rather for general convenience and affect, affording to the greatest number of christians the benefit of the ordinance, and testifying to the greatest number of people the important fact.

Let me not herein be considered by any as intruding my sentiments, uncalled upon your readers to create discussion among them. I write at the request of several of my brethren in the ministry who are often pained by the absence of members from the Lord's Table, and who thereby so far as their influence extends counteract a minister's usefulness by justifying their children and friends and the unconverted generally, in neglecting at their caprice or convenience, their Pastor's teaching. Although I have hitherto defended the practice of our churches in the monthly observance of the SUPPER, and have conformed to it, yet I could not give a candid statement of the Bible argument on the LORD'S SUPPER, and omit the fact of its very frequent observance by the first christians, showing the importance and imperativeness of the command of Christ to commemorate his dying love; and having the practice of the church, at and for some time after its organization thus given, every christian must allow that the subject is entitled to his most serious and prayerful consideration.

A few quotations from some of the most eminent Reformers and writers, may perhaps be introduced to the notice of your readers.

Coleman, in his *Christian Antiquities* (page 305,) refers to the testimony of Justin Martyr in favor of Sunday as the Lord's day, giving two reasons; one is, that our Lord rose from the dead on that day; the other, that it was called *dies panis—the day of bread*, with evident allusion to the celebration of the sacrament on that day. He refers also in support of this to Tertullian, Cyprian, Ambrose, Augustine, and Chrysostom, and remarks thereupon that the weekly celebration of the sacrament was strongly recommended at the reformation. The testimony of the celebrated historian Neander, agrees with this as we see by reference to his history of the church (section 3, on christian life and worship (d). "Originally, the general celebration of the supper of the Lord was a mark of daily communion. When these daily assemblies could no longer take place, the supper of the Lord became an essential part of the Sunday worship. It was held necessary that all the christians resident in the town should constantly continue in union with the Lord and with his church, by partaking of this communion."

Calvin in his institutes (book 4,) writes "Let us remark that the Lord's Supper might be most properly administered, if it were set before the church very frequently, and at least once every week." Speaking of the Apostolic church he says, "The invariable custom was that no assembly of the church should be held without the word being preached, prayers being offered, the Lord's Supper administered, and alms given. That this was the order established among the Corinthians, may be fairly concluded from the Epistles of Paul; and it is well known to have been followed for many ages after." That every member was required to partake, he proceeds to show—"Hence those ancient canons, which are attributed to Anacletus and Calixtus, that after the consecration is finished all shall communicate on pain of expulsion from the church; and the ancient canons which are ascribed to the apostles say, that those who continue not to the end, and receive not the sacrament, ought to be corrected as disturbers of the church. In the council of Antioch also it was decreed, that those who enter into the church hear the sermon, and retire from the communion, be excluded from the church till they shall have corrected this fault."

Dr. Thomas Scott the celebrated commentator and Episcopalian, remarks on Acts xx. 7, as follows: "Breaking of bread or commemorating the death of Christ, was one chief end of their assembling. This ordinance seems to have been constantly administered every Lord's day." The distinguished John Wesley, after fifty years reflection on the subject, decides that christians should shew forth the Lord's death every Lord's day, (see sermon 106 on Luke xxii. 19.) and in a letter to America, 1784, published in the American religious papers, he says, "I also advise the elders to administer the Lord's Supper every Lord's day." John Brown of Haddington, author of the Dictionary of the Bible, a Presbyterian, a man whose praise is in all the churches, has written a treatise upon the subject to which we may refer the reader as neither time nor space will allow further quotations.

The great reformer John Calvin, from whom we have already quoted, presents what he considers the most appropriate way of celebrating the supper which we submit with what has been presented. After saying that it should be observed "at least once a week," he proceeds, "the service should commence with public prayer; in the next place, a sermon should be delivered; then, the bread and wine being placed upon the table, the minister should recite the institution of the supper, should declare the promises which are left to us in it, and at the same time should excommunicate all those who are excluded from it by the prohibition of the Lord; after this, prayer should be offered, that with the same benignity with which our Lord has given us this sacred food, he would also teach and enable us to receive it in faith and gratitude of heart, and that, as of ourselves we are not worthy, he would in his mercy make us worthy of such a feast; then either some psalms should be sung, or a portion of scripture should be read, and the faithful in a becoming order, should participate of the sacred banquet, the ministers breaking the bread and distributing it, and presenting the cup to the people: after the conclusion of the supper, an exhortation should be given to sincere faith, and a confession of the same; to charity, and a deportment worthy of christians; finally

thanksgivings should be rendered, and praises sung to God: and to close the whole, the church should be dismissed in peace."

In my next and concluding letter I will present the argument from the positive character of the ordinances of the New Testament and the covenant engagement of the members of our churches.

April 16, 1848. SAMUEL ROBINSON.

[FOR THE CHRISTIAN VISITOR.]

## SABBATH SCHOOLS.

## No. II.

*Sketch of the Origin and History of Sabbath Schools.*

Before dismissing the brief and very imperfect sketch of the history of Sabbath Schools, as given in my last communication, it may be as well to point out some of the defects of those at first established, and the improvements which greater knowledge and experience have introduced into the whole system of Sabbath School instruction. It has sometimes been alleged against the venerable Father of Sabbath Schools, that he aimed at the subordinate and comparatively unimportant object of civilizing the children of the lower orders, rather than at the paramount end of implanting in their hearts the saving truths of the Bible. This allegation has rested on the too literal interpretation of language employed by Mr. Raikes himself, in which he describes his enterprise as "an attempt at civilization;" and also on the fact of the instruction introduced in his schools being to a considerable extent secular. But if we remember what was the mental and moral condition of the children first brought under the influence of his system, and of what nature the earliest efforts to train them must necessarily have been, we shall not be surprised that he spoke of these efforts as an attempt at *civilization*. It is true indeed that the salvation of the souls committed to the care of the teachers did not command the attention deserved—(does it command it even now?)—nor were the means and instrumentalities employed well adapted to its attainment; but we have seen from Mr. Raikes' own words previously quoted, that *religious education* formed a prominent part of his design, and was by no means neglected. It should also be recollected that all human productions are imperfect, especially in their infancy, and that it would be unjust, therefore, to demand that the first designing and shaping of his simple but mighty scheme, should have exhibited the maturity of excellence. Still, while defending the character of Mr. Raikes from injurious imputations, it must be acknowledged that in the earlier Sabbath Schools too much of a secular, and far too little of a religious aspect was given to the studies pursued in them. It is stated that in some, not only reading and writing, but the rudiments of arithmetic and the keeping accounts were taught. These instances were however not numerous, and have long since ceased to occur.

Another blemish which marred the original institution and gave it a selfish character, as well as retarded its prosperity, was the system of *hired teachers*. We have already seen that the teachers employed by Mr. Raikes at first, received compensation for their labour. This perhaps could hardly, under the circumstances, be avoided, but it was unfortunately copied and generally acted upon for several years. Thus, the Sunday School Society established in England in 1785, expended during its continuance several thousand pounds in paying teachers. The effects of such a system are obvious: the teachers would feel a merely selfish interest in the performance of the duties, and would not exert themselves with the generous zeal and self-improving disinterestedness which would be manifested in the case of voluntary and gratuitous service. They would be induced to undertake their task from worldly motives, not from a sense of moral obligation. As the wages paid could never be high, the qualifications of teachers would be of an inferior description; and besides this, a far less number could be obtained. The evils of the practice became soon conspicuous, and in the year 1803 gratuitous teaching came into general use.

For a considerable time the want of appropriate books was severely felt, very few of those at first used being adapted to the class of minds for which the Sabbath School was intended. This disadvantage, however, has been rapidly diminished by the noble exertions of associations formed, for the purpose of creating a literature expressly suited to the young.