

speakers on the above occasion. Both of them published in December last, and their respective works (Macaulay's History and Noel's Church and State) have been more extensively read, and been more rapidly sold, than those perhaps of any other living author. The first editions were all disposed of on the day of publication, and successive additions disappeared as soon as they were ready.—*Glasgow Saturday Post.*

CHRISTIAN VISITOR.

SAINT JOHN, FRIDAY, APRIL 27, 1849.

CHURCH COVENANT.

Few, we presume, question the expediency of a covenant, definite and intelligible between members of a church, and the open acknowledgment of the Covenant into which they enter with the great Head of the Church. Most of those who consider the Bible as superseding the necessity of Church Creeds make no objection to Church Covenants. With the great varieties of opinion as to Church constitution and discipline we naturally expect to find diversity of views in regard to the object of Church relationship, and the peculiar obligations incident to Church membership. To say of a man he is a member of a Church is no warrant, perhaps in any man's estimation, of the character or integrity of an individual. What Church? we naturally ask; not because a mere name is any more of a guarantee, but we would know what principles are involved in such membership: what are the covenant obligations of the Members? or, is it a so-called Church in regard to membership in which there has been no voluntariness? Now a Church to be true to itself will make its Covenant a pass to its Members. This may always be effected by just and wholesome discipline. A Church member too should feel the importance of keeping his covenant engagements so inviolate as not to disgrace the Church and belie its profession, for the Covenant is nothing more nor less than the utterance of a profession on the part of the Church collectively, and its credit and influence must depend upon the conformity of the body to its published principles.

Presuming that a series of Articles upon the several topics embraced in the Covenant would be read with interest, and may be of service (for we fear many do not well consider the extent of their engagements,) unless we can find some one to do the subject better justice, we propose to assume the task.

We are obliged to defer the Circular of the American and Foreign Bible Society to make room for brother Burpe's Letters. We hope the suggestions given in brother Crandal's letter last week to the ministering brethren will be heeded. The time for the meeting of the Associations is drawing near, and unless Pastors take up the subject of the Union Fund and exert themselves, we fear this year's Report will be more mortifying than that of last year.

We see by the Christian Times that another important secession has occurred from the Established Church. Rev. John Dodson, Vicar of Cockerham, near Lancaster, and for fourteen years a devoted Pastor, has resigned his living to the Bishop of the Diocese. The evidence of his sincerity and conscientiousness may be inferred from the amount of income resigned with the living, which was £650 per annum. The poor it is said will sustain a great loss, as he has always proved himself their friend.

The reading of Mr. Noel's Essay, in connection with the persecution of Rev. Messrs. Shore and Gorham, by the Bishop of Exeter, have been the more immediate occasions of this act.

Stoke Newington has been the scene of considerable excitement on account of recent Distributions for church rates.

At Southampton there are three thousand defaulters on the score of church rates. Rev. Mr. Parsons, curate of the Rev. Earl of Guilford, has recently instituted proceedings against several gentlemen, and if the rate proves valid the whole three thousand will be proceeded against. The position of the curate will in such case certainly be no enviable one for a Minister of the Gospel. We should think after such a fleeing but little of what is lamb-like would be left.

A Mrs. Watson is incarcerated for not taking an oath before the civil magistrate in Exeter. A bill to relieve such ones who object on conscientious grounds is now before Parliament, and it is supposed will pass.

Mr. Bouverie's bill to relieve seceding clergymen from the oppressive canon law under which Rev. Mr. Shore is imprisoned, has been referred to a select committee; and since its reference and the remarks which led to it, its friends fear if it is adopted it will be in a mutilated form, so as to leave such clergymen still under embarrassing disabilities.

Bro. Taber, writing from Pleasant Valley, Nova Scotia, informs us that 30 have been baptised in that place, and that the work appears to possess increasing interest.

Eight were received for baptism in Billtown, on Sabbath 15th inst.; about 80 had been previously baptised.

LETTERS RECEIVED.—Rev. W. D. Fitch; J. V. Taber; Alexander Stevenson; J. S. Trites, with remittance; J. C. Smith, do.; George Bishop, do.

Correspondence.

[FOR THE CHRISTIAN VISITOR.]

No. IV.

The Nature and Design of the Lord's Supper, and the duty of all Christians to observe it as a positive command of Christ.

There is a difference between moral and positive institutions necessary to be observed. A moral precept or institution is something right in itself, and would be so if there was no express command for it, such as love to God, and love to our fellow men. A positive precept or institution is something right, because it is commanded, and our duty does not depend upon the fitness or the morality of the thing but on the express command of Christ.

A moral institution is commanded because it is right. A positive institution is right because it is commanded.

There is also a difference between a mere ceremony and a positive institution; a ceremony is rather a formula about observing a law than a law itself. God commanded us to worship him; a ceremony has to do with the form in which that worship is performed. The New Testament does not lay down a ceremonial like the old typical dispensation; but it lays down certain given principles to which we must apply every thing we perform as acts of divine worship. Not so with a positive institution, it is the words of the law and the will of the law giver, by which we are to be governed.

The Lord's Supper is a positive institution of Christ, and is right because it is commanded. Not a moral precept which from the nature of things would be duty if no command was given; not a mere ceremony about the manner in which a thing is to be done. But a positive institution presenting to us in symbols the great work of atonement in Christ's death, and of the sovereign right of God to command, and a test of our obedience acknowledging that command.

There are no non-essentials about any of the divine commands. Acts which may in themselves be trivial, involve when made tests of our submission to his divine authority all that is dreadful in transgression, and all that is blessed in obedience. The eating of a fruit was in itself a trifle until forbidden of God, then it became a test of obedience, involving the weal or woe of the whole human family.—Gen. ii. 16.

Nothing could be more trivial or more natural than the circumstance of looking back in flight from danger, but God forbid it to the family of Lot, and made it a positive command; (Gen. xix. 17 to 26,) and disobedience to it was followed with an awful punishment. To support the tottering ark on its return from its captivity might have been regarded even as an act of piety, but God had given no authority to any to approach it except the Priests. Its touch by any other was a sin. The death of Uzzah admonishes us that it is a fearful thing to trifle with a command of God.—2 Sam. vi. 6. The way by which "a man of God" should return to his home was, so far as we can see, a thing indifferent in itself; and the participation of the hospitalities of his friends was certainly right, if there had been no law forbidding it; but God had given a positive command that he should eat no bread nor drink water in Bethel, nor return by the way that he came. The Prophet disobeyed, and his sudden and awful death is recorded as a

lesson to all future time on the sin and danger of disobeying a positive command.

There was never a command given by God more clear or more positive than "This do in remembrance of me." To treat it with neglect as a trifle or as a non-essential will incur the divine displeasure upon us, and leave us in darkness of mind, and with hardness of heart.

Church members should ever remember that whenever they unite with the Church of Christ, they enter into covenant with God and their brethren. We pledge ourselves to hold communion together in the ordinance of His church, and we can never neglect this ordinance without breaking our promise to God and our brethren. Many members of our churches who would not break an engagement in worldly matters for any consideration, can live for months in open violation of a covenant and promise of the most solemn nature, without remorse or trouble. To all such I would say, the oath of God is upon you, break what promise you may never break that solemn promise you have made to Christ and his people when you voluntarily united with the Church of God.

Holy and uncompromising principles have to do with a fulfilment of our engagements to God and his Church in matters of religion, as much as with any business transaction with our fellow men. If we want to find out the man in whose promise we can confide in the business of the world, let us find the man who faithfully fulfils his promises to the church to which he belongs; for we may rest assured that the man who is not faithful to his God, will not be faithful to his fellow men. As a general rule we can ascertain a man's principles better from the subscription list of the church to which he belongs than we can from the tax-collector's book, for a debt which the law will compel him to pay. So except the mind is darkened by ignorance or prejudice the christian man who can neglect the positive institutions of Christ cannot be said to be in possession of that moral principle which will induce him to perform faithfully the duties of life. We would consider the man who was neglecting his fields, but fervently praying for a crop, strangely inconsistent. So we have the same reason to consider that the church is as inconsistent which is praying for a revival of religion, and yet living in the habitual neglect of the last command ever enjoined by Christ before his death. It is said, (John ix. 31.) "If any man be a worshipper of God and doeth his will, him he heareth."

While we cannot get to heaven for our works, "for by the deeds of the law no flesh living shall be justified." Yet the Scriptures are very clear on the necessity of Gospel obedience: obedience springing from a living faith. Paul tells us that Christ has "become the author of eternal salvation to all them that obey him." Peter declared to the first christians that they "had purified their hearts in obeying the truth." James assures us that "as the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without works is dead also." Christ the great Master and Lord said, "Why call ye me Lord, Lord, and do not the things that I say." And again, "If ye love me, keep my commandments." "Blessed are they that do his commandments, that they may have a right to the tree of life, and may enter in through the gates into the city."—SAMUEL ROBINSON.

Saint John, April 21st, 1849.

[FOR THE CHRISTIAN VISITOR.]

SABBATH SCHOOLS.

No. III.

Objects, and Modes of Sabbath School Instruction.

The necessity of an intelligent acquaintance with the objects to be aimed at in any undertaking, is too manifest to need demonstration. This knowledge is necessary to success. No one can be expected to succeed in any enterprise, the proper end of which he does not perceive. His labour will be often misapplied, his efforts put forth at random, and as frequently fitted to defeat as to secure the purposes to which they should be directed. A happy chance, and the intervention of favourable causes not ordinarily to be looked for, may occasionally conduct blind, unforeseeing labour to great issues; but in general no such fortunate intervention occurs, and consequently the great results are not forthcoming. If, on the other hand, appropriate objects are regarded and kept in view, effort will naturally have a purposed reference to them, and choose the shortest way by which to reach them.—The means selected and the modes of opera-

tion will be adapted to the end; and, instead of being wasted in fortuitous attempts, energy will be brought to bear immediately, and with concentrated force on the design to be achieved.

A clear perception of proper objects gives to labour greater power and steadiness. This is emphatically true when the objects are valuable. The prize that shines above the goal inspires the exertions of the racer, and sustains the fleetness of his career along the course. When something is to be gained, and that something is precious, the duller minds are capable of enthusiasm, vigorous effort, and perseverance. But independent of the value of an object, the greater or less degree of definiteness with which it is presented will exert a corresponding influence on the power put forth to obtain it. A result of even inferior importance when exhibited plainly, will arouse far more of energy than if it were vaguely comprehended. A hill sharply defined against the sky and bathed in the sunshine, is far more attractive than the mountain veiled in mist.

From these, as well as from other considerations which need not be mentioned, it is apparent that no small importance attaches to a just understanding of the objects of any enterprise. It is of equal consequence to know the best means and modes of operation for obtaining those objects. It is as essential to understand how we are to arrive at a given end as to know what is the end itself. This is so obvious that it may be left in its simple truthfulness to the good sense of the reader.

A very large proportion of human action is aimless, or nearly so. We may daily see persons assuming the most responsible offices without any previous consideration of the final purposes which they are required to accomplish. They seem to regard it as quite sufficient if they are familiar with the mere routine of duty, the daily round of employments which they must pursue; and leave results to follow as they may. Many remain thus as uninterested in the general working of the institution to which they belong, and as unintelligent of the remote end, it may be, grand designs for which it was formed, as the hod-carrier does in regard to the plans of the architect who employs his labour. This reproach attaches to too many of those who have assumed the grave and responsible position of Sabbath School Teachers. They are contented with the formal labour of appearing for an hour or two on the Sabbath in the room appropriated to the Sabbath School, and there listening to the reading and recitations of their class, and giving such instructions as may happen to be suggested by present circumstances. They have never thoughtfully pondered the ultimate end to which their efforts should be directed, nor considered the reasons for the establishment of Sabbath Schools, nor the relation between the general plan of teaching and government which regulates the whole institution, and the all-important consequences of its right execution. Not a few teachers, if asked to describe definitely the final scope of their exertions, would betray by their hesitation or confused answers, the very imperfect ideas they have as yet entertained on this subject, if indeed they have devoted to it any thought at all. With these remarks designed to bespeak thoughtful attention to what follows, I proceed to state the objects and modes of Sabbath School Instruction.

The objects of Sabbath School instruction may be defined as two-fold—*Mental and Moral cultivation.* By *moral cultivation* is not meant simply the culture of the principles and habits of common morality, but also of those that are in the high and scriptural sense religious.

1. Mental Cultivation.

The object of cultivating the mind, as contemplated in Sabbath School instruction, differs in its nature in some important respects from the object of secular education. The latter aims generally at nothing more than mental improvement, independent of spiritual results, and it employs accordingly means that are not suited to produce distinct religious impressions or to communicate religious knowledge. Not that it is opposed to religion or necessarily designed to foster in the mind principles adverse to piety; on the contrary, the system of secular education as developed in many of the schools and colleges of christian countries is favourable to moral purity, and contains elements which are intended to prepare the heart for the reception of the truths of the Gospel. In fact, right mental cultivation is always productive of good in some degree, and can never conflict with religion. All therefore that is meant by distinguishing between