

A
SERMON

ON THE

EDUCATION OF THE POOR, THE DUTY
OF DIFFUSING THE GOSPEL,

AND, MORE PARTICULARLY, ON THE

IMPORTANCE OF FAMILY RELIGION

PREACHED BEFORE THE
DIOCESAN COMMITTEE OF THE SOCIETY FOR

PROMOTING CHRISTIAN KNOWLEDGE,

IN THE

CATHEDRAL CHURCH

OF QUEBEC,

ON THE 24th FEBRUARY, 1822.

UPON OCCASION

Of the Annual Collection.

BY THE REVEREND

G. J. MOUNTAIN, D. D.

ARCHDEACON OF QUEBEC.

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1822.

TO THE
CONGREGATION
OF THE
CHURCH OF ENGLAND,
AT QUEBEC,

(among whom some wish for the Publication has been expressed)

THE FOLLOWING

S E R M O N

IS DEDICATED,

By their affectionate Servant in Christ,

G. J. MOUNTAIN.

ADVERTISEMENT.

THE principal reason for the publication of this Sermon is the hope of giving more durable effect to the recommendations of *Family Religion* which it contains, and the desire of furnishing some slight hints and references upon this point, (appearing in the shape of notes,) which could not be introduced, with any sort of propriety, in the delivery, nor retained with any sufficient accuracy by the Audience.

It is proper to take this opportunity of acknowledging the honor done to me by the Clergy of this Province, with the Bishop of the Diocese at their head, in desiring the publication of the sermon preached at the Visitation held at Montreal, in the year 1820. I ought not, indeed, to have suffered so much time to elapse in deliberation upon my compliance with this desire, as to leave the *occasion*, at last, so far disjoined from the time at which the *publication* could have taken place, that no appearance of their connection would have been preserved. I have only to plead in excuse, that the Sermon in question formed part of a *Series*, addressed to my first flock, which, if I enjoy sufficient leisure for the task, I may possibly one day revise and prepare for the press.

A SERMON.

PSALM 34. 11. Come ye children and *hearken* unto me: I will teach you the fear of the LORD.

THE subject to which I called your attention a week ago from this place, was the necessity of uniting religious practice to our religious knowledge; and we concluded by some reflections upon the blessedness of *Christian knowledge*, as well as its necessity *in order* to practice, with an allusion to the present occasion, upon which you are invited to promote the work of spreading that knowledge among your brethren.

It is my business to recommend to you, (so far as it shall please God to bless my endeavours,) the Association which has been formed among us for some years past, for this purpose.

The resources which we have at command are divided into *two principal channels*; the general

diffusion of Christian knowledge, to all points which the effects of our contributions can reach; and the education of poor children, with an express provision included for their instruction in *Christian principles*.

The text which I have chosen presents the subject, under either aspect, to our thoughts. “Come ye children and hearken unto me—I will teach you the fear of the Lord.”

These words, in their *direct literal* acceptance, may serve as the very motto for that branch of our endeavours which relates to *Education*. What these endeavours have been, and what their fruits, we need not shrink to enquire. We have laboured, indeed, under some discouragements; we have had to struggle with some disadvantages of a local or accidental nature;—we have experienced from the large proportion of transient persons in the poorer population, much fluctuation in the materials upon which we had to work, and we have not yet reached that complete establishment and perfect operation of the Madras system, with that regular provision for its continuance which we hope, with due support, to attain.

But, my brethren, I trust that we have done good. I trust that it is for a decidedly good purpose that the appeal is made to your bounty on this behalf. In undertakings of this nature, whatever

occasional obstacles or disappointments we may encounter, they should operate, not to dishearten but to stimulate our zeal, so long as we can even *hope* that, upon the the whole, we are doing good. Much more, then, should we be encouraged to persevere when we have reaped a fair harvest of good fruit, and enjoy the prospect of an improved blessing upon our labours. And is it not a fair harvest when we have opened the sources of common useful knowledge to nearly one hundred and fifty children at one time, to the greater part of whom, perhaps, all access would be otherwise denied? And is it not a grateful sight to behold a portion of them collected in the House of God, who would else perhaps be idling in the streets, and learning the easy lesson of vice? And is it not a pleasing sound to hear them hymn their Maker's praise, and verify the description of the Prophet,—“ Out of the mouths of babes and sucklings thou hast perfected praise”? What if, in some instances they perform these things as a mere task? if they utter their part mechanically, and betray the absence of real comprehension or serious feeling upon the subject?—it is a point which we need not rigourously scan,—for at least their memories are beneficially exercised—at least they are furnished with stores which (according, in fact, to the usual process of education,) may be laid up in the mind and brought out for future use—at least

they are moulded to habits and made to imbibe associations which to themselves and to the community in which they live, may be of infinite advantage in after-life: And I appeal to you who have honoured with your presence the public examinations;* to you who have immediately shared with me the inspection of these children† whether there are not many of them who upon that occasion, and in their attendance also upon the Lord's day, in the questions with which they are there exercised, have manifested both a general promptness of intellect which it would be sin and pity to suffer to run to waste, and an acquaintance with sacred subjects which in some points would shame the deficiency of older and more educated persons? O far be it from our views, and alien may it always be held to Christian principles, to turn them loose upon the world that they may choose, in matters of Religion for themselves!—to send them into the thickening warfare of temptation, unprotected by the “shield of Faith,” unfurnished with the “helmet of Salvation,” and the “sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God,” We make, indeed, an exception, in this point, for those who are claimed by their Parents as Members of other regularly constituted folds—our local Rules in that respect

* His Excellency the Earl of Dalhousie, and the Countess, with several of the principal Inhabitants of Quebec have been present at the Examinations.

† The Ladies who act as Monthly Visitors.

are public.† We are willing—we are glad—to give them education without meddling with their tenets, or religious discipline—but utterly do we renounce the maxim which would forbid it to Religion to have her share in the public training of Youth, or would divorce her from the *national* Establishments for the education of the different classes in the *nation*. The Madras system has been called *exclusive*—but I know of no exclusion so injurious as the exclusion of Religion. And, unless we mean to subvert the whole Constitution of the Country both civil and ecclesiastical, in what shape shall it be introduced, (for it would be a perfect Babel of confusion were we to open the door to all at once,) in what shape but according to the received form of the Country itself? Are we to be so afraid of training children to be Churchmen, that we will not contribute to their chance of being Christians? We are very wise—very enlightened—we have undeniably made great strides in Science and civilization, but there is a Wisdom in which we have gone back from our venerable fore-

† The following are the two first Rules in the printed Regulations:—

1. The general regulation of the Schools shall be in strict conformity with the Instructions of Dr. Bell, except where a deviation may become necessary from local circumstances.

2. The children of Roman Catholic Parents, and of those who are Members of the national Church of Scotland will be allowed to attend their respective places of worship on Sundays, instead of going, with the other children, to the English Cathedral—and the former (and if the Parents should desire it, the latter also,) will be exempted from learning the Catechism of the Church of England.

fathers by full as many steps as those by which we have outstripped them in another field. But the blessings of Education and the peculiar advantages of mutual instruction have been recommended to you upon former occasions at length—these fallacies of a specious Philosophy have been combated also by abler hands than mine. The impression, I hope, has not been worn away ; and I shall draw this part of my subject to a close by simply observing that although the fallacies in question are often unguardedly *adopted* by well-disposed and well-informed persons, I cannot avoid thinking, for my own share, that their *root* is to be *traced* to a deliberate scepticism ; they spring *originally* from the supposition that the Gospel may be false. For if the Gospel be of GOD, it *must* be matter of deep, earnest, universal, concern ; and we need not be afraid to sow the seeds of it too early, or to provide for its due culture over too wide an extent. Let it then,—we might argue thus with our opponents,—let it then be disproved. We are ready to meet the enquiry. We cloak nothing in our Religion—we keep nothing back. You may search it through and through—the closer you search the better. But we cannot allow you to call us *dogmatists*—we cannot allow you to reserve to yourselves the credit of true philosophy, because we insist upon teaching what we are prepared to support, and what you do not venture to impugn.

You would indeed be more consistent if you did. Yes—if the Gospel be of God, the question is at rest. “Come then, ye Children and hearken unto us:” We will do more for you than enabling you to converse with books, and to handle “the pen of a ready writer:”—“We will teach you *the fear of the Lord*.” Let this be the blazon of our Society—let it be written over the gates of all our Schools—let us, even at this distance, (but why distance? for our Saviour is always near us,) put in force, and preserve inviolate the injunction received by his immediate disciples,—“Suffer the little children to come unto me, and forbid them not, for of such is the kingdom of Heaven.”

“Of such is the kingdom of Heaven.” The nearer we are to the innocence, the simplicity of childhood, the farther removed from that selfish, scheming, ambitious spirit; that practiced demeanour; that hard familiarity with Vice; that disdain of correct principle and tender feeling; that high-toned assertion of our own pretensions, which are learnt too well in the traffic of the World,—the fitter subjects do we become for the reception of the Gospel. “I thank thee O Father, Lord of Heaven and Earth, *because* thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and revealed them unto BABES;” *because*, if these treasures

are despised by the proud disciple of the world if they are sealed against him who rests in the conceit of his own sufficiency,—they are open to the modest and lowly in heart, they freely impart themselves to him who is humble and willing to learn. “It is not the will of my Father that one of these “*little ones* should perish,”—the salvation of all these humble, and simple, and perhaps illiterate believers is provided for by God, and woe is denounced to those who offend them ; i. e. who throw impediments in the way of their salvation.

Here then, while we learn the character and temper of mind which, as we value our souls, we ought to cultivate in ourselves—we are led also to the other branch of our subject, and the corresponding application of our text—“Come ye *Chil-* “*dren* and hearken unto me : I will teach you the “fear of the Lord. Come forward all you humble believers—ye “babes in Christ,” as the Apostle speaks—ye who “desire the sincere milk of the “word,” and are conscious that your growth in Christian knowledge has not fitted you for the use of “strong meat,”—we “will teach *you* the fear of the Lord,”—we will give you the means of improvement in the “wisdom which is unto Salvation.” Yes—if to *offend* these *little ones* be so high and grievous a sin, it is only a step removed from it to *neglect* them ; and the *neglect* indeed often *constitutes* the *offence*. It is our clear duty there-

fore to contribute according to our means, to the diffusion of *Christian knowledge*; to open every proper channel for the free passage of the waters of life; and let them in upon every destitute corner to refresh the parched sterility of the soil. “To the poor the Gospel is preached,” is one of the marks which characterize the kingdom of the Messiah; one of the tests of his own title to that name and office to which he referred the Messengers of the Baptist, for satisfaction in the subject of their enquiry: “Blessed” St. John the Apostle tells us,—“blessed is he that *readeth*, and “they that *hear* the words of this Prophecy and “keep those things which are written therein:” Words applicable in their full strength to the whole volume of inspiration, & descriptive of a *blessedness* the facilities of diffusing which, in our own day, surpass infinitely those means to which the allusion is made “Blessed is he that READETH & they that HEAR.” The art of Printing was unknown, and the means of education confined comparatively to few persons: the written copies of Scripture, although they were zealously multiplied among the early Christians, could never amount to a number which would make them familiar to the Congregation at large, except by the means of HEARING them READ. It is the object of our Society to improve our advantages in both points—to multiply the number of *readers* by providing the means of education,

and to administer our quantum of aid to those funds which have been employed for more than a Century in sending the Bible abroad over the world, with the humble handmaids in its train, of human Piety and Learning.

But this Charity—and it is of a high order—this Charity, in a very improved application of a proverb which expresses usually no very laudable sentiment, must *begin at home*. It is a lamentable inconsistency to concur in the important work of spreading the Gospel in all quarters, and to fail to bring it home to our families and to ourselves—to neglect the maintenance of its honor by the means of *personal example* and *immediate personal influence*. It was the complaint of the Prophet that when he ascribed the errors of the lower classes to their Ignorance, and looked for more conformity to the rules of Duty in those who enjoyed higher opportunities of knowledge, he found that these had only profited by their elevation to shake off all the restraints of Religion. “Therefore I said, surely *these* are *poor*—they are foolish, for they know not the way of the Lord, nor the judgment of their God:—I will get me unto the *great men*, and will speak unto *them*, for *they* have known the way of the Lord, and the judgment of their God”—but, what was the disappointment of his expectation!—“these have alto-

“gether broken the yoke and burst the bonds.” My brethren—my *Christian* brethren, let us be ware how we lie open, under a better dispensation, to *any degree* of similar reproach ! Let it not be said that while we are ministering the means of light to others we suffer our own lamps to go out. Let it not be seen that we undo by our careless lives, any portion of the good which we promote by lending our names, or our purses, or our time to works of Charity and Religion. Let it not be forgotten that we have our own souls to take care of,—that we have, to a certain extent, a responsibility for the souls of those belonging to us,—while we are contributing to benefit the souls of strangers. Let us ascertain by experiment upon ourselves and our families, what it is that we are seeking to engraft upon the constitutions of other men. We shall at least be better judges of the expediency of the plan—more competent to decide whether we can forward it with unreserved satisfaction. For the result of such a trial my anxiety would be very small.

Suffer me then to urge, in some little detail, such an employment of the resources which our Society affords. I might choose indeed a more popular method of recommending the object to your favour. I might paint only some remote effects where all blemishes should be lost in distance—I might set before you a fair landscape where the flocks should

be grazing in the “green pastures” of the mighty shepherd, and no near unsightliness in the homestead should be suffered to obtrude itself upon the eye. But we must, in the annual recurrence of this occasion, make all points of the plan prominent in their turns—and, as it *is* a part of the plan to furnish assistances to *family-religion*, I could not be justified to myself if I were to lose the opportunity of this full audience, to press so highly important a duty.

The heads of every household feel it incumbent upon them to supply the temporal wants of the members—to provide for their comfort & to attend to the preservation of their health: “If any man provide not for his own and specially for them that are of his own house, he hath denied the faith, and is worse than an infidel”—because, this duty is clearly recognized even where the Gospel is not received. But where the Gospel *is* received, is there no new order of duties superinduced?—and have we done *all* that is to distinguish us from the infidel when we have manifested some improved consideration for the ease and bodily comfort of our dependents?—Shall the health of their immortal souls be interdicted from our concern?—shall the promotion of their *eternal* well-being be driven out of the circle of our cares? Shall we deem it too great a condescension to be

tender of the consciences of those “weak brethren” who may form the inferior members of our household?—shall we pronounce it to be quite an extravagant expectation, that we should take the trouble of setting them forward in the way to Heaven, and furnishing them with assistance for the road? O think upon that day when we shall all stand upon a level before our Judge—and when the fruit of our opportunities—the employment of our authority—the effect of our influence and example, will be sifted in the scrutiny of GOD! Where shall we hide our heads if it shall be found that these,—the talents for which we are to account,—have borne only with an evil influence upon the soul of “our brother for whom Christ died?”

How many complaints of rebellious children, how many exclamations of astonishment at the perverseness and ingratitude of dependents might justly be charged back upon the heads of the Parent and of the Master! Trust not to their love for you—nor count upon their fear or their fidelity,—if you have failed to plant in their hearts the fear and the love of their Father in Heaven. “How can I do this great wickedness and *sin against God?*” was the question dictated within the breast of Joseph by the force of religious principle, which preserved him true in the hour of trial, and withheld him from dishonouring his Master. We may

take from our own times an example on the other side. The story is very probably not new to you, it offered itself to my notice, I believe, in one of the common journals of the day—but it is striking and remarkably in point. It is related of an irreligious Poet who flourished in the last century, that he was in the habit of scoffing at the faith of Christ, and placed no guard upon himself in this point, on account of the presence of his household.—His servant robbed the house; but was taken with his booty, and brought before his Master.—He was upbraided with his wickedness, and asked what had induced him to commit so daring an act? “Sir,” said he, “you had removed my fears for the other world, and therefore I thought it but wisdom to provide myself well in this.”—“But I never,” replied his Master, “removed your fears of the sentence of death in an earthly Court.”—“That calculation,” said the man, “was my concern—you had removed the greater fear, and I risked the less. You had silenced my conscience—the rest of the question was but the policy of the game.”

To Servants, then, to Apprentices, to Labourers retained in our employment, to all our dependents, to all who feel our influence, (especially if they are young, and wholly withdrawn from the charge and inspection of their own friends,) but far above all

to our children, we owe it as a sacred duty to think of the furtherance of their salvation. Mothers!—how much depends upon you!—and how blessed are the fruits which may spring from your judicious care!—We have a beautiful instance in Scripture of the transmitted effect of maternal Piety : It is the testimony given by St. Paul, in his 2d Epistle to Timothy, expressing his earnest desire to see this favourite pupil of his own, “ when “ I call to remembrance,” says he, “ the unfeigned faith that is in thee which dwelt first in thy “ grandmother Lois, and in thy mother Eunice, “ and I am persuaded that in thee also :”—More honourable distinction than if they had sparkled in scenes of gaiety ; than if they had occupied the van of the ranks of fashion ; than if they had surpassed in display the proudest daughters of the East—yet a distinction not inconsistent with grandeur, not at war with social elegance and cheerfulness ; for it is the property of our Religion, while it humanizes the ruggedness of the coarsest orders in the community, while it eases the burthens of Indigence, while it is the stay of the wretched, and companion of the recluse, to shed a grace of its own also over the brighter scenes of existence ; to charm away the maladies of abundance, and draw out from the fulness of Prosperity the irritating venom of Sin and Pride.

But we are rambling over too large a field, and must marshall our excursive thoughts into more order & arrangement. We must endeavour to mark down some definite portions of duty for the practical application of our doctrine; to state some specific instances of the mode in which *family-religion* may be promoted, & promoted by means of our Society.

Without dwelling then upon the obvious propriety of so distributing our domestic arrangements as to leave every practicable opening for the religious duties of our dependents; for their becoming employment of the sabbath, & their attendance upon the public worship of God; let us consider the neglected practice of *Family-Prayer*. Let us remember the promise of our Saviour Christ, that “where *two or three* are gathered together in his name “there will he be in the midst of them;” & let us contemplate the picture of a Christian household, in the faith of this promise, led on by him, who, in some sense, is a Patriarch and Priest within the limits of those walls, to “lift up holy hands,” and discharge the morning and evening sacrifice of Prayer:—Tell me now, my brethren, what is there in such a duty which should prompt us to excuse ourselves from the performance?—which can furnish any colourable plea for the neglect? What will it imply, what confession will it necessarily involve, if we are obliged to own that we feel any

disdain, that we are conscious of any disinclination for such a task? Can it possibly imply any thing but that we have some secret dislike to Religion, or that we cannot bring ourselves to part with some habits which would seem to make a mockery of so much seriousness? And is not this an alarming acknowledgment, and one which should rouse us to feel the necessity of a change? Is it not, in fact, one of the strongest arguments in favour of family-worship that its absence proceeds from some indefensible indulgence? Or if we *have no* repugnance to the duty, why do we not perform it? “We have no proper forms or serviceable hints and assistances at hand.” We will cut off that escape; they shall be furnished to you immediately. Our Society will supply you, will give you choice.* And having brought you to this point, cannot we venture to recommend also the addition of a selected portion from Scripture read and explained to all the Members of the household? Or if the pressure of necessary occupation do really forbid it as a *daily* exercise, if such a plea can in any case be urged, may it not be done at inter-

* Besides the Tracts drawn up expressly for this purpose there are forms of Family Prayer, contained in the following and other books upon the Catalogue of the Society, and usually to be had at the Repository, No. 2, Hope Street:

Crossman's Introduction.

Great Importance of a Religious Life.

Pious Country Parishoner.

Bishop Wilson's Knowledge and Practice, &c.

Nelson's Practice of True Devotion.

Essay on the happiness of a well-ordered Family.

Burkitt's help and guide to Christian Families.

vals?† It is the unquestioned duty of all men to read the Scriptures who can read at all—and why others should not benefit by it at the same time it would be difficult to say. The Society in whose cause I am an humble Advocate, offers her aid also in this case. She holds the Bible in her right hand, and she has a key in her left. She bids you unlock the treasures of Truth, and she instructs you, as “a man that is an house-holder,” to “bring forth,” for the use of your household, “things new and old.” She provides, (in addition to some lesser aids towards the study of the Scriptures,*) a *Family-Bible*,—a Bible to be *used in families*,—rich in exposition which she warrants to be unexceptionable and sound, and furnished with every appendage of information which can facilitate the knowledge of Scripture, and quicken the interest of Scriptural research.

There are many other occasions in families, and among dependents, which may be met by the supplies of this Society. Is there a want of common Bibles for their private use? Of Prayer-Books for public worship? Of plain Formularies for their retired devotions? Of preparatory helps for the Sacrament, or arguments to remove their scruples

† If the heads of the household feel themselves incompetent to the task of explanation, it is easy to choose portions of Scripture which are plain. The four Gospels are the most important part of Scripture, and they are also the plainest.

* Such as Trimmer's *Help to the Unlearned*; Bishop Mann's four Gospels, each 1 vol. 8vo. Ostervald's Chapters, 2 ditto. Sellon's *Abridgement* 12mo. and Ostervald's ditto, a stitched Tract.

upon the subject? ¶ Are they addicted to particular vices? Are they exposed to solicitations urging the change of their religion, and shaken at all in the firmness of their Protestant principles? Or are they so unhappy as to be unsettled in their belief of Christianity itself? Perhaps they are called upon to perform the duty of *Sponsors* at a christening, and know nothing of the office or its obligations: Perhaps, (for such a thing is possible,) the family is at a loss for some form in which to acknowledge at their daily meals, the bounty of Him who “openeth his hand, and filleth all things living with plenteousness,”—a duty clearly pointed out to us in Scripture, § and practised even by Heathens towards their imaginary Gods.‡ Perhaps—but why should we enumerate all possible cases? all these, however, and many others may occur, and they ought not to escape the watchful eye, nor miss the mindful care of those who are clothed with influence and authority over the parties. For all these demands, (besides the Books for Schools, and the

¶ Or their objections against a *frequent* participation. It is not necessary to specify the titles of the Tracts upon these subjects, because they can be furnished upon mentioning the subject itself.

§ 1 Tim. iv. 4, 5. Acts xxvii. 35. Math. xiv. 19 and xv. 36. 1 Sam. ix. 15. “The people will not eat until he come because he doth bless the *sacrifice*,” i. e. in this passage, the remainder of the victim, upon which the person who offered it feasted his friends. V. 19 of the lxviii Psalm (with the *Christian* addition, proper in thanksgiving as well as prayer, which expresses the mediation of Jesus Christ,) may supply a form for grace at meals.

‡ Nec prius aut epulas, aut munera grata Lycei
Fas cuiquam tetigisse fuit, quam multa precatus

In mensam. Sil. Italicus. See a work on Family Prayer, &c. by the Hon. and Revd. C. Stuart, D. D. Visiting Missionary in this Diocese. pp. 116 & 126. Sold by J. Neilson, at the Printing Office, Mountain Street, Quebec.

miscellaneous supply of religious Tracts, all of which, it should be observed, are inspected and approved before they pass, and stamped, as it were, for sterling doctrine,)*—for all these demands the Society for promoting Christian Knowledge is prepared:—prepared, according to circumstances, either to disperse them gratuitously, or to furnish them at those reduced rates which the resources of the Parent Society render practicable and proper.

* The Incorporated Society for the propagation of the Gospel has laid it down as a Rule for the guidance of the Missionaries that the Tracts which they disperse shall be taken from this Catalogue.—There are probably many persons to whom such restrictive provisions may appear rather in the light of an *objection* than of an *advantage*, but they might be led perhaps to view the subject very differently if they saw it more in its details.—Among the religious wares which are circulated in these days with an unwearied zeal, there are too many which are unsound, and the practised hand can readily detect in what forge they have been fabricated, and what peculiar interests they have been calculated to serve. And hardly is there a more imperative point of duty in the work of promoting Religion, than to guard against the insinuation of adulterated materials. I had intended to exhibit some specimens of this nature, and to have left it to the judgment of the reader to pronounce whether a Clergyman, at least, may not be pardoned for some jealous anxiety with respect to the quality of the food which is to be given to his flock. But I should have swelled this note too far, and upon this occasion I forbear. Volumes indeed might be written to point out the hurtful effects which arise from the manner in which particular doctrines, (relating chiefly to conversion, regeneration, and what is called *assurance*), are warped; upon the danger of mixing in, with things spiritual and unseen, the gross alloy of *physical causes*, and the meretricious excitement of the Imagination; upon the temerity, pregnant with mischiefs to the cause of Religion, which seats itself in the chair of Inspiration, and challenges to enjoy those favors which were peculiar to the times of visible interposition, and direct Revelation from on high. Volumes might be written upon the *shades* and *gradations* of these mistakes in Religion—upon the effects of adopting a certain turn of phraseology, and wearing the marks, as it were, of *affinity* to this School, of Doctrine—upon the system of precisely *identifying* the success of this School with the extension of the *Gospel*. But let it be well remembered, on the other hand, that there is a far more usual and less excusable manner of promoting error or extravagance in Religion. It is by turning our own backs upon it—by coldness and indifference to the *characteristic* doctrines of the Gospel. The comforts of the Gospel *will* be sought, and if food be withheld in one quarter it will be asked for in another.

I am aware that such observations as the foregoing often bring upon the Clergy the charge of broken Charity. And I take the risk. I do more—I boldly plead *not guilty*. We are the special guardians of sound doctrine; we are pledged in the most solemn manner to execute our trust in this point. Charity in religious matters is not *indiscriminate approbation*. Charity has no field where this exists, no subject of trial. It is the delicate part of true Charity, while she "*earnestly contends*" for a sound Faith, to go fearlessly on to her mark and to keep clear, at the same time, from all animosity of feeling, from all harshness of thought or expression, from all spirit of misconstruction or ill-will. And, at least, it is no worse Charity in us to uphold vigorously what we conceive to be a right system, than in others sedulously to undermine it.

But our own local supply, and the flourishing state of that branch of the Society which we have established in this Diocess, must depend upon the degree of encouragement which, upon this and other occasions, by this and other modes of contribution, you feel it right to bestow.

I have now, (as this is the second time that I have myself brought the subject under your notice,) confined myself chiefly to those effects which are more immediately under our own view; but you are aware that the *Society for promoting Christian knowledge*, promotes it in every quarter of the habitable globe; and has long circulated the Scriptures in a vast variety of tongues: You are aware that a fixed proportion of all our contributions is reserved for these *general designs*. The *Reports* of the Parent Society are in your hands—You see the nature and extent of their labours. You may observe also that they are conducted under the most unquestionable auspices, and in strict connection with all the authorities of the country.

I ought to mention also that we have many applications to answer from Missions newly formed in *this Diocess*; from Congregations who, having made struggles and sacrifices to provide for the ordinances of worship, are ill able to raise farther means for the advancement of Religion, and are

more in a condition to *receive*. *We*, then, ought to remember that it is “more blessed to *give*.” To-day we are to collect your bounty. To-morrow we are to take advantage of the opportunity which offers itself to order supplies from home in proportion to our means, and to recruit our now exhausted stock of books.

But let us dismiss the subject, (and you will deem it, I fear, high time,) by concentrating our reflections upon one single point, & simply considering the GENERAL OBJECT of this Association, abstractedly from any subdivision of its plans and purposes, or separate application of its means. It is a “*Society for promoting Christian knowledge*.”—What is it, then, at which we aim? *What is this Christian Knowledge* which we seek to be instrumental in promoting? It is the knowledge of the One True God, and of the clear system of our duties, as beings accountable to him: It is more—ininitely more—it is the knowledge which unfolds to the peasant and to the child, the origin of this world—the introduction of sin and misery and death—the work of Divine Wisdom and Love repairing all this desolation, providing for our Reconciliation by the blood of Christ, renewing the lapse of Nature—re-instating us in our forfeited privileges and rendering back the Charter of Immortality. It is that “thing which the Angels desire to look into.” It is the discovery of those wonders which

before the "fulness of time" was come for their accomplishment, "many Prophets and Kings desired to see, and did not see, to hear and did not hear." It is that knowledge which clears up the perplexities of this mingled and conflicting scene of existence; of this defiled and distorted image of human nature, which yet retains the traces of a godlike origin. It is the developement, (so far as can be, or need be, developed to us mortals,) of "the Mystery hid from ages and generations;" it is that result for which the Apostle said in his day "that the whole Creation groaneth and travaileth together until now." The world indeed had every where made itself a Religion. The wisdom of men had done its very best. They had "Gods many and Lords many." They had peopled with Deities, Earth, Sea and Sky. They had ransacked the stores of Fancy and borrowed from the works of Creation to supply themselves with objects of worship, and had called in, to complete the Catalogue, the skill of the Artificer. They had costly sacrifices, gorgeous temples, pompous oracles and auguries, famous systems and sects of philosophy. But *all* was vain and disappointing, and how much was merely childish! how much was disgusting and barbarous and impure! How strong were the marks of some malignant influence delighting to actuate these fruitless and bewilder-

ed efforts in Religion ! They “ spent their money
 “ for that which is not bread, their labour for that
 “ which satisfieth not.” But God made procla-
 mation to his people. “ Ho, every one that thirst-
 “ eth come ye to the waters, and he that hath no
 “ money, come ye buy and eat : yea come buy
 “ *wine and milk* without money and without price,”
 spiritual refreshment for the aged, and sustenance
 for the young. Happy if we imbibe this saving
 knowledge (for it is by *appropriation* of the pro-
 mises, by sense of personal interest in the Gospel,
 that it can alone be of any value.) Happy if it pe-
 netrate to our *hearts*, and flow freely through the
 whole system of the inner man ! Happy also if we
 impart it !—if we carry the words, in their literal
 sense, into effect, and enable our destitute bre-
 thren to reach it “ without money and without
 price.”



ERRATUM.

Page 6, last line but one, for “ on this behalf ” read “ in this behalf.”



