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Miscellaneous Articles.

“NOTHING MINE BUT GOD.”

IN recently looking through the memoir of Mrs. Savage, the sister of Matthew Henry, the commentator, we noticed this entry in her diary, “*Resolved to call nothing mine but God.*” This reminded us of the Saviour’s requirement, “whosoever he be of you that forsaketh not all that he hath, he cannot be my disciple;” and also of the Apostle’s representation of the Christian possessions, “all things are yours.” Truly, if this be so, “he that loseth his life shall find it.”

It seems like a great sacrifice to give up all for God. Men of the world so regard it. And sometimes Christians so feel, when called to part with time or property for Christ’s cause. But listen to the benediction that Melchizedek pronounced upon Abram. “Blessed be Abram of the Most High God, possessor of heaven and earth; and blessed be the Most High God which hath delivered thine enemies into thy hand. And he gave him tithes of all. Gen. xiv. 19—20. God has the glory of Abram’s achievements, and Abram has the benefit of God’s being “possessor of heaven and earth.” The giving tithes to the priest of the Most High God was an expression on Abraham’s part, that he “called nothing his but God;” that he had entered into a covenant with God in Christ, in which he had taken the Lord God to be his God, and portion for ever, and on the other hand, had given himself and all that he had, to be the Lord’s. This is implied in all the requirements of religion. It is a professing “I am not my own;” “resolved to call nothing mine but God.” My time is not mine, but God’s, therefore I give tithes to him. Turning aside from my worldly avocations, I devote “one whole day in seven,” to be a holy Sabbath to God, in token that *all my time* belongs to him, and that whatever he requires I am ready to give.

national counsels to prosperity and honour, has also been instrumental, under the same Divine guidance, of conducting many of our youth to learning, religion, and usefulness.

We have thus endeavoured to bring before our readers, and we trust without offence to any denomination of Christians, certain incidents which establish an interesting relation between "*Washington and the Presbyterians.*"

Household Thoughts.

SABBATH EVENINGS IN FORMER DAYS.

AMONG our Presbyterian forefathers it was not customary to have public service on Sabbath evenings. That time was usually devoted, in England, and especially in Scotland, to the instruction of the household. In addition to the family worship, which at these seasons was more solemn and more extended, the domestic ordinance of catechizing was observed with great punctuality and zeal. From the very beginning of the Reformation in Scotland, the greatest stress was laid on the religious instruction of the young, and this continues to be characteristic of that favoured country. Not only was there a school in every parish, in which the principles of religion were fully taught, but it was made the duty of Presbyteries to see that the work of catechizing was faithfully carried forward. In their stated domiciliary visits to the congregation, the ministers and elders were accustomed to call the family together, and to examine both parents and children, together with the servants, as to their knowledge of Divine truth. But all these methods would have been incomplete if they had not rested on the broader basis of household instruction.

Soon after the production of the two Catechisms by the Westminster Assembly of Divines, these formularies were adopted by an act of the General Assembly of the Kirk, and came at once into universal use among the Presbyterians of Scotland. This place they have maintained ever since. Amidst all the secessions and disruptions of the original body, these venerable manuals have remained unaltered. The consequence has been, that all the Presbyterians of Great Britain, Ireland, the colonies, and the United States, have imbibed their doctrine from the Larger and Shorter Catechisms.

After the evening meal of the Sabbath, the whole family was gathered, not excepting the domestics, some of whom were grey-headed servants of Christ, who had grown up under the roof. In

our day of restlessness it is thought enough to despatch a few questions and answers; but the Scottish method was to go through the whole Shorter Catechism, without omission or abridgment. The presiding person, in this exercise, was the master of the house; and we know families, in which, even now, this service is constantly performed without book. We were lately told by a lady, that, after her father's death, the catechetical examination was faithfully carried on by the mother; and no doubt, this has happened in thousands of instances. Though the Larger Catechism was extensively taught, as was the case in a family from which the writer is descended, it was the Shorter Catechism which every youth, without exception, was expected to know. Any one who chooses to try the experiment, may easily satisfy himself how deeply this form of sound words is impressed on the memory of all who have enjoyed a regular Presbyterian training. After attaining a perfect knowledge of the text, children were made to learn a sufficient number of Scripture proofs. This was in itself a theological education. By weekly repetition, it was not merely taught, but inculcated, in the proper sense of that term; so that scarcely any lapse of years could entirely eradicate it from the mind. Whatever may be said about the tediousness of such a discipline, we believe all who have passed through it agree in looking back to those evening exercises as serenely delightful; and in regretting the seeming necessity of denying the same to their own children.

In the Presbyterian houses to which reference is now had, Holy Scripture had its place, in the looking out of passages quoted by the preacher, and in repeating psalms and paraphrases. Expositions of a familiar kind were not unfrequently given, which left their impression on the youthful mind. In days when books were scarcer than at present, many an hour was spent in reading aloud from such works as Rutherford's Letters, Boston's Fourfold State and Crook in the Lot, Erskine's Gospel Sonnets, Guthrie's Interest, and the Sermons of Binning and Andrew Gray. Does not the heart of some reader bless God for these golden opportunities?

There are many congregations among ourselves, in which the evenings of the Lord's days are vacant. It is a very serious question for parents and householders, how far they may employ this sacred season, stately, for the benefit of their families. Thorough and effectual catechising demands at least a weekly exercise; and where there is no other engagement, the best time for these is the Sabbath evening. Religious instruction, at such a season, is sanctified by the hallowed day, and sweetened by the flow of home-feelings. The service need be neither tedious nor burdensome. A little management may render it delightful. Next to the house of God, there is no place so favourable for the conversion of children as the happy fireside. Let not the subject be laid aside, without some careful recurrence to the past, some candid self-examination, some deliberate planning, some resolved purpose, some self-denying and courageous endeavour, and some prayer to God for his blessing.

C. Q.