



eldress of their own sex, and every member seeks to earn his or her bread honestly, in the fear of God.

Matrimony is not observed as a sacrament, but as a divine institution, and the duties of the relation are often taught and enforced from the scriptures. The rules established by the Brethren as to marriage-contracts, appear upon a fair and candid investigation, to be little more than those established by the civil authority and other religious communities, who faithfully adhere to their respective regulations.

The intentions or bans are announced to the elders and heads of the choirs, and their consent is required. If any lawful impediment appears, it may then be declared. A prudent check upon levity and the indulgence of indiscreet fancy or forming precipitate alliances is guarded against. When a man's circumstances appear to require an help-mate for him, it is mentioned, and if he approves, a partner is pointed out whom he may refuse.

The most venerable members of the Brethren's Society receive wives according to these rules. They appear to be instituted in the first place, for the sake of propriety and order, but secondly, to avoid mercenary matches and connections arising from the institution being converted into a mean to ennoble families, by matrimony, where affection and discretion as to the tempers, disposition and character of the parties are not duly attended to, in order to secure felicity. They are not
married

married as total strangers, taken from cloisters, where they have been secluded for years from human society, and the sight of each other. It is scarcely to be imagined, how a people can be better acquainted with each other, from infancy to old age, than these people are, and preserve decency and decorum. Well bred and prudent parents, and candidates for marriage in all countries, observe rules as strict as those of the brethren, previous to the parties entering into that holy estate. Fancy is as often gratified, as in those countries or societies where greater indulgence is given.

Alliances of necessity are guarded against by these rules. If they take place, it is not owing to the omission of the society to establish prudent rules, to guard the morals, and felicity of their children.

Conformity to these rules, is too valuable, in the estimation of most of the Brethren's Society, to be departed from, by candidates for marriage. Obedience to the discipline of the church, secures the affection, confidence, support and protection of its members in all conditions, relations and countries.

The aged, sick, young and poor, are amply provided for, by the regulations of the society.

Particular attention is paid to education and schools, in all congregations that the children may be brought up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord.

A good education is esteemed by them as the best earthly treasure, which parents can bestow. In their institutions for this purpose,
parental

parental and domestic care are assisted and enforced by the aid of the wisdom and property of the society. The greatest concern is to preserve youth, from physical and moral evil, from being seduced into errors. The great object evidently to be found in all discourses and instructions to the young, is to enforce the love of God as taught by inspiration, and to make virtue amiable. That as they are the property of the Lord, who has created and redeemed them, they may live to his honour, and become benefactors and blessings in human society.

Both boys and girls are as early as possible, instructed in Reading, Writing, Arithmetic, Grammar, Geometry and History. The boys are generally taught the rudiments of the Latin tongue.

In some congregations, schools are established for the education and support of orphans, and the children of poor parents, or of the missionaries. Such are taken care of and instructed with almost parental faithfulness.

Such boys as appear from their talents qualified for higher pursuits in study and learning, are sent to higher schools, such as the *Pedagogium* at Nazareth.

The children are brought as soon as possible to baptism, in a public meeting. In some places, five and in other three witnesses or sponsors are present, who lay their hands upon the child on this occasion and bless it. The water is commonly poured upon the breast of the child.

To

To keep and preserve order, discipline is necessary. The Brethren have established the bounds of love as the great rule, which unites all the members of a congregation as one family. In this they take as their guide the command of Christ, in order to preserve order and peace. "Ye shall love one another."

It has been the constant endeavour to restore true and original Christianity. In conformity to this, they have established their regulations, as far as possible. The constitution of Christ's Church as established by him, and the practice of the Apostles being their guide, by which to unite and regulate Christians. In their rules they have endeavoured to form such, as will preserve their outer welfare, remove evil and all occasion of sin.

Offenders are disciplined as far as possible according to the ancient rules in Scripture and the times of the Apostles. If he who has fallen under censure is penitent and obedient to the exhortations to amendment, the offence is buried in silence; but in cases of obstinacy, he is called before the board of overseers to receive admonition. If this has not the desired effect, he is informed that he can dwell no longer in the congregation. "No loss of temporal honour, dignity or fortune attends this exclusion."

The Brethren as a church, have agreed upon certain rules and orders, which they have endeavoured so to calculate, as to remove every offence, in as prudent and certain a manner as possible. These rules and orders received and subscribed, by all male inhabitants of suitable

age,

age, are presented to all such as offer themselves for admission, into the congregation.

Upon acceding to them, without compulsion, they promise to observe them, by subscribing them. "If they afterwards alter their minds, they may leave the congregation, and are no longer bound by its regulations."

These rules are summary. They are to be subject to the magistrates and higher powers, with all their hearts. Every member of the congregation shall work, and eat his own bread.

"Even those brethren and sisters to whom God has given a good share of this world's goods, shall not spend their time, without some useful occupation, for the good of their neighbours; remembering the words of our Lord, give to them who beg of thee. Give and it shall be given to you. Their rule is, we will support the needy and particularly the widows and orphans, and such who on account of their age and infirmities require our help, as much as possible."

These rules they appear to observe scrupulously and willingly.—On a visit to the * Bishop, I found him employed in making wafer boxes. He informed me, he had so far lost his eyesight, that he could not read constantly, and idleness was disagreeable, he had therefore adopted this occupation, at intervals. I was also informed, that his daughter made wafers, and these united labours were sold to the merchants in New-York and Philadelphia. No reflecting

* The late Reverend John Ettwein.

reflecting mind, but must on this occasion, recollect the zeal, industry, disinterestedness and good example of the blessed Apostle, who followed the business of tent making and wrought willingly with his hands, that he might not be chargeable, and might have wherewith to administer to his own and others necessities, and preserve himself from irksome idleness.

This excellent example of the Bishop at Bethlehem, is also in imitation of the industry of the fishermen who were the first Apostles, and were principally trained to mechanic and other industrious professions.

Such examples are too noble not to be admired. At this moment all the pomp and splendour attending rich prelates and dignitaries, appeared insignificant and of little worth, compared to the greatness of this venerable man, employed to set a good example, to maintain himself and assist the poor, when his community had provided for his support in an asylum, amidst the wealth and affection of many Brethren. Should this small work fall into the hands of himself or his friends, they will excuse the liberty taken in recording the fact.

The nobleness of the rule and principle, and the proof exhibited of conformity to it, among all classes, demand of them the privilege of extolling this obedience and conformity, on the part of their Bishop, father and superior.

Bound to seek peace with all, the Brethren are particularly to be careful, that they do not entangle themselves in political contentions, and the altercations of parties. They are to be obedient

obedient to their teachers, and follow them, as they watch over souls and must give an account.

After this statement of the progress and regulations of this society in America, it may not be unacceptable to add some further information, taken from their historians as to their society.

Saint Paul informs the Romans that he had planted the gospel unto Illyricum, and from the epistles to Timothy, we learn, that Titus visited Dalmatia for the same purpose. Both of these were Slavonian provinces. Jerome, a native of Illyricum, translated the bible into his mother tongue.

The Slavonians who rent those provinces from the Grecian empire, found christian churches there, and by degrees became converts to the faith.

Slavonian Bishops were expected at the sixth council held at Constantinople, in the year 680.

The Slavonians received the gospel by means of the Greeks, and were initiated into the Christian religion with the Grecian rites and forms. This was done by the administration of Greek priests, who came into the country, in the year 860.

In 1176 the Waldenses arrived in Bohemia, and joined those who were tenacious of the rites of the church.

These ancient christians the Waldenses date their origin from the beginning of the fourth century.

Rieger

Rieger goes further back, and considers them as the remains of the people of the Vallies, who were converted to christianity, when the Apostle Paul passed over the Alps into Spain.

These United Waldenses and Bohemians preserved their connection with the Waldenses at home, and sent them ministers from the Seminary of the Brethren in Italy, whither as an university, they sent their youth from Bohemia.

John Huss, master of arts and professor in the academy at Prague, and minister of Bethlehem church there, became an advocate for the Brethren. He was born in 1373, took his master's degree, and was made a professor at the age of twenty years.

In 1400 he was made minister at Bethlehem church, which was erected purely for preaching in the Bohemian tongue. He defended the tenets of Wickliff, the first of the English reformers, who had addressed the Brethren in Bohemia and Moravia, in the year 1387—and exhorted them, after the example of their forefathers, to stand firm and unshaken by the faith of the gospel.

Confusions existed at this time between the Greek and Latin churches, and those called reformers; but, in 1450 the peaceable and moderate men of each party united in the tenets, in which all agreed, and gave up the distinction of parties.

Permission was given them to withdraw to the Barony of Lititz, in the mountains of Silesia,

lesia, and to enjoy their religion according to the dictates of their own consciences. These emigrants were composed of many citizens of Prague, Bachelors and Masters of arts, commons and nobles,—of learned and unlearned, from all parts of Bohemia and Moravia.

They erected villages and received ministers from the Calixtines, who lived in Apostolic simplicity. They united more and more in one mind and spirit, and on the first day of March 1457, formed themselves into a congregation, calling themselves at first *Fratres Legis*.

Ignorant people from this considered them as a new order of Monks, and they in consequence called themselves simply Brethren; others joining their congregation, they adopted the name of *Unitas Fratrum*, or United Brethren.

Solicitous to maintain their discipline and order, they sought to secure the succession of the priesthood, and a gospel ministry. This important matter was discussed in a synod of the Brethren from Bohemia and Moravia in the year 1467. Three Presbyters were selected for Bishops, and sent to the Waldenses, from whom they had formerly received the Episcopal office. Consecration was received accordingly from the Superior of the Waldenses, by laying on of his hands, and the assistance of his Co-Bishops.

War and the contentions between Protestants and the Romish Church, often convulsed them. At the beginning of the sixteenth century, they had

had two hundred congregations of the Brethren in Bohemia and Moravia.

About this time also, many learned laymen and Priests from the Calixtines, and several counts, barons and nobles joined them. They translated the bible into the Bohemian tongue, and established printing-presses for the purpose of printing this work.

A variety of preparations towards a reformation had been made in Poland, as early as the year 1440, by means of the Hussites from Bohemia, and afterwards by the Polish Students, disciples of Melancthon, when the expelled Brethren from Bohemia in 1548 made Great Poland their asylum.

The Brethren as they passed through Poland settled a congregation at Posnania. Forty congregations were gathered not long after, and in 1553 at a synod of Protestants held in Cosminia, the confession of the Bohemian Brethren, their church discipline and other writings were read, examined and approved, and a coalition was formed and ratified.

The confusions which subsisted during the times of Luther, Calvin, Beza and others, involved the Brethren in many difficulties.

The civil magistrate often opposed and banished them. Comenius their Superior, then looked upon himself as the last Bishop of that church, but he lived to see the succession continued by a Polish branch of the Brethren.

A small remnant of the Brethren's church was preserved in Moravia and Bohemia, but, in the confusions of the times, they found themselves