

For the Christian Messenger.

**The Poet Robert Burns.**

DEAR EDITOR,

I noticed in several numbers of the late papers an account of a meeting, the intent of which was to celebrate the Centenary of the birth of Burns. To do the Scottish bard justice, we must acknowledge he possessed strong natural abilities, and if his talent had been properly cultivated and turned into a moral and religious channel, under the influence of the Divine spirit, his labors might have proved a great blessing in enlightening and benefitting mankind to a very great extent, and might have claimed to have ranked among the best Poets of the age. But may we not well be astonished when we reflect and consider the vitiated taste and corruption of the present age. We pass silently by those truly divine and evangelical poets, such as Milton, Addison, Wesley, Watts, Cowper, and many of like kindred spirit, whose praise is in all the churches, and celebrate with gusto and many toasts, speeches, and orations, the memory of a poet of very questionable morals, in confirmation of which I would shew the sentiments of the late John Young, Esq., in quoting from his book entitled "Letters of Agricola," page 261-2. Thus says he:

"In the year 1806, I was one afternoon leaning over the grave of Burns, and reading the plain inscription on his tomb-stone, erected in the church-yard of Dumfries. This town was the concluding scene of the Scottish Bard; and here terminated his follies and his crimes, the last breathings of his muse and of his life. I was indulging in one of those moods, in which pain and pleasure are so equally blended, that the mind is thrown into a sort of delightful melancholy: for while I retraced many gay and lively recollections, I was forced by present objects to check the rising emotions and embitter them with grief. His enchanting and splendid verses were contrasted in the eye of fancy, with the dark shades of his character, the strength and manly independence of his intellect, with the silly and inconsistent waverings of his moral perceptions; the bright and promising morning of his life with the ominous and black cloud, which settled on the evening of his days, I was rivetted to the spot; tears filled my eyes; my whole soul was absorbed in contemplation; it was a moment of rich enjoyment. A slow and faltering step struck my ear, and turning round I discovered an emaciated, but venerable figure approaching in the last decrepitude of old age.

"Stranger, said he, you are paying the tribute of respect to the memory of our poet, and I must beg pardon for this abrupt intrusion.

"There was such an air of good nature in the old man, heightened by the sense of his helplessness, that I addressed him frankly in reply, and shewed no reluctance to engage in conversation. He sketched to me with all the loquacity characteristic of his years, the habits, the faults, the drunken broils of the man, while at the same time he appeared an ardent admirer of the faithful colouring, the playful wit, the winning sprightfulness of the writer. "Come," said he, "along with me to the hillock where Burns alternately brutified his senses, or exalted them by the varied inspirations of his lyre."

"I accompanied him, and we ascended together the mound of earth, on the top of which is the seat, once the favourite haunt of this immortal and extraordinary genius; and alike remarkable for witnessing his fits of intoxication, and in favoured intervals his effusions of poetic rapture."

Now, with such authority and testimony as this, may we not fear that such honor being done to such an author may tend to vitiate and demoralize the minds of the young and rising generation.

AN ADMIRER OF THE SACRED POETS.  
February 7th, 1859.

**Christian Messenger.**

HALIFAX, FEBRUARY 16, 1859.

**Have we an Established Church in Nova Scotia?**

In an article of the *Christian Instructor* for the present month, it is said, "The Acts of the Province recognize the Church of England as the Established Church, while Roman Catholics are only tolerated." We should be glad to be informed, where those Acts are to be found, or by what law of Nova Scotia any Church is recognized as Established or set above any other, or by which any such thing as *toleration* is either mentioned or implied. In fact the above is a pure fiction. The last Act of the Province having any semblance of

giving preference to the Church of England, and which had long been almost obsolete was repealed some years since. It was enacted at an early period of our Provincial history and rendered all who were not connected with any other Denomination, liable to be taxed for the Church of England—but, as stated above, it had, long before it was taken off the Statute Book; become a dead letter. We esteem it little to the credit either of the right feeling or information of the *Christian Instructor*, to speak as it has done of an *Establishment* or of *Toleration* in Nova Scotia, when it is perfectly well known that were either of those terms to be used in a way derogatory to the denomination which they represent, every organ of that body would raise a general outcry. And we say, very justly too.

We were not a little surprised to find this organ of the "Presbyterian Church of Nova Scotia" *par excellence* (the Antiburghers) in discussing the recent appearance of Church Dignitaries with members of the Government and Legislature at His Excellency's Levee, using such language as the following:

"As long as these were all the favours the ministers of that body receive by virtue of their position it is scarcely worth while raising an agitation to deprive them of them."

It is only by small doses the greatest corruptions have been engrafted on the Christian Church, and we think this body ought to be the last to make such an admission. Even the position of a flag—its being a foot or two too low, on the flag-staff for an hour or two, if done by authority, is enough to raise a violent agitation, and especially amongst those who owe their very existence to an opinion respecting Church and State, which is not at all likely ever to be a practical question in this part of the world.

We think the Editor of the periodical alluded to, by the above statement does an injustice to the Church of England. To attempt to cast the stigma of their being alone "recognized" in Nova Scotia as "the Established Church," is placing them, whether intentionally or not, we cannot say, in an invidious position unsought by themselves, and not likely to be very satisfactory either to members of his own, or of the Episcopal bodies.

If Roman Catholics are only tolerated surely Presbyterians, Methodists, Baptists, &c., &c., are "only tolerated." What say you, Mr. Instructor? Is it so?

We will only remark that we love orthodoxy and hate error as much as our contemporary. We do not, however, think that either virulence or misrepresentation are the best means of promoting the one or resisting the other.

It is not our desire to participate in any of the squabbles of our political parties, and we were greatly surprised to find that the *Christian Messenger* had been honored with so much attention in the House of Assembly during the past week. On Monday, the 7th inst., in the course of the debate on the Address, Mr. Chambers, the Member for Newport, referred to the *Christian Messenger* and Baptist Ministers as being under the control of the Hon. Attorney General. We find, however, that, perhaps for prudent reasons, that portion of Mr. Chambers' speech is not published.

The next day we addressed to Mr. C. the following note:—

Tuesday, Feb. 8th, 1859.

TO WILLIAM CHAMBERS, ESQ.,

The Editor of the *Christian Messenger* begs respectfully to present his compliments to Mr. Chambers, and will be glad to learn from him what authority he had for making the statement he did yesterday in the House of Assembly, that the *Christian Messenger* is under the control of the Hon. Attorney General, and that the Editor dare not publish anything without his sanction.

Being desirous of correcting misapprehension, he will be much obliged if Mr. Chambers will favour him with any information in his possession on this subject, and promises in return to afford him all the satisfaction in his power in reference thereto.

As no notice was taken of this, on the next day we sent, by one of the hands in our office, the following:—

Wednesday, Feb. 9th, 1859.

DEAR SIR,

As I have not yet received from you a reply to my note of yesterday, I fear that either it did not come to hand or has been overlooked. Have the goodness to send reply per bearer, and oblige

Yours, &c.,  
EDITOR OF CH. MESS.

And, in reply, we received a message from Mr. Chambers that "he would send an answer when it suited his purpose."

We accidentally dropped into the gallery of the Assembly in the afternoon of Thursday, and could hardly believe our ears when we heard Mr. Chambers again speaking about the *Christian Messenger* and the complimentary note he had received from the Editor.

We will not inflict on our readers his speech, but simply remark that he reiterated the same

statements, and said he would be willing to alter his opinion about the Hon. Attorney General having control over the *Messenger* if we would publish some documents he would mention. The first of these was the *Roman Catholic Synodical* letter; secondly the letters by the Roman Catholic Bishop O'Connell, (he meant Bishop Connolly;) and thirdly an article from some paper, published, we believe, in June last. This of course excited a good deal of merriment in the House. We could not understand the reason of Mr. Chambers making these remarks in the Assembly, sometimes addressing himself to us as "the Editor of the *Christian Messenger*" and at others as "that honorable gentleman." However, when we returned we were enlightened on this point, by finding the following note, which we give verbatim:

Halifax 10 59

DEAR SIR,

In reply to your note if you can attend the House to day you will have the answer so much desired

Yours

CHAMBERS.

Mr Selden

Being desirous of removing from the mind of Mr. Chambers and also from the other members of the Assembly the false impression given of our holding any connexion with either political party, we wrote the following on Friday:—

Christian Messenger Office,  
Halifax, Feb. 11th, 1859.

TO W. CHAMBERS, ESQ., M.P.P.,

Sir,—I was much surprised to hear your remarks in the House of Assembly yesterday; but my surprize was removed when I returned and found your invitation and request that I would attend at the House to hear you there give an answer to my note.

You, Sir, have taken a strange method of meeting my request for the authority you had for making such statements as you did on Monday last. Is it not extraordinary, I will not say absurd, that you should take advantage of your position in the Assembly, and shelter yourself by attempting to make a speech there, instead of giving a manly reply to a plain question, and then call upon us to publish two or three long *Roman Catholic* documents and some article from an old newspaper—probably of the same stamp, by way of disproving your assertions. How consistent for a legislator, is it not?

Statements such as those you have repeated have been made only in newspapers whose editors find it convenient to write in an assassin-like style what they dare not publish over their own name.

As you refuse to name any authority for your remarks, I now take it for granted that you are yourself the author of these misstatements, with which you also coupled a libel on a large body of Christian Ministers, without a shadow of foundation. How truly magnanimous and gentlemanly! Is it not?

Allow me to inform you that much as I esteem the Honorable Attorney General, he has nothing more to do with the *Christian Messenger* or anything which has ever appeared in it than you have yourself, and never had, as far as I know.

Now, Sir, as I desire to entertain respect for gentlemen exalted to be Representatives in Parliament, and wish to believe them above a dishonorable action, and willing to make amends on finding they have indulged in misrepresentation, I trust you will, on the floors of the House of Assembly, contradict the statements you made respecting the *Christian Messenger*, and by that means, to some extent, repair the injustice done to THE EDITOR.

Many of our readers will doubtless think this an exceedingly small matter for our pages. If so, we quite agree with them in that opinion. We should not have noticed it, but, as we find some parties trying to use such statements for the purpose of giving us a position in party political affairs which does not belong to us, and, by thus hanging on our skirts, endeavouring to drag us into the discussion of these matters, we have thought it as well just to stop a moment and shake them off.

Whilst the mariner keeps his eye on the heavens and directs his course by the compass, he must also watch the surface of the surrounding ocean, and observe the smallest speck of rock which rises up in his path, and then, by 'heaving his lead,' bring his skill and experience to avoid the hidden danger, instead of proceeding recklessly on without heeding what may be lurking beneath. In Britain's recent contest with Russia, our brave Admirals did not think it a small or unnecessary work to suspend other operations for the purpose of removing the infernal machines which the enemy had sunk in their path, with the intention of destroying our fleets. In like manner, we would prefer spending a little time in touching off this conglomeration of combustible material before it has time to interfere with our course.

We desire to steer our bark in the deep waters of truth, and be the *Messenger* of good to all our readers, whether Liberals or Conservatives, we may then be prepared for whatever storms of error may arise; whereas, if we should allow ourselves to be drawn into the dangerous shallows in which our mistaken friends may choose to sail, we might find it

difficult to weather such storms, and might then be deceived by some false beacon-light raised by miserable wreckers on the coast, who would gloat over our destruction and fatten on the spoils.

This will be enough for the present. We hope that we shall be permitted to sail on in our plain straight-forward course without molestation or interference. If not, why, we can only do our best, without any desire to "pour in a broadside" upon any of our assailants, and we are well satisfied that by so doing we shall have the sunshine of our readers' approbation, and commend ourselves to the better judgment of the more intelligent and respectable of both parties.

THE Literary circles of this Western Continent have to deplore the loss of one of their brightest and most eminent ornaments in the recent death of William H. Prescott, the historian. Mr. Prescott's works have been for some years in the hands of the public, and have on both sides of the Atlantic deservedly obtained a reputation and standing which have placed their author among the first historians of modern times. He was a native of the State of Massachusetts, where he resided, we believe, the greater part of his life. His historical labours were entirely connected with certain epochs of Spanish History, and for the accomplishment of which he appears to have spared no pains or expense. Although almost wholly deprived of the ability to read, through an affection of the nerves of the eye, yet, with unweary perseverance, he accomplished, with the help of amanuensis and other aids, what few with the full perfection of all the senses would ever have been able to perform. His hours and methods of study and preparation for his work were most rigidly adhered to, and afford a striking example how far determined purpose can surmount the greatest obstacles. The work on which Mr. Prescott was last engaged was the History of Philip the 2nd, of which 3 volumes have been published. His previous publications were the History of Ferdinand and Isabella, and the Conquest of Mexico, all of them works of the most sterling value, and which will remain a monument to his memory and genius coequal with the language in which they are written.

**Mr. Maturin's Pamphlet.**

We have deferred our review of Mr. Maturin's pamphlet, as we learn that Dr. Cramp is preparing a Reply which will shortly appear in similar form to that of Mr. M's. Dr. C's intimate acquaintance with the Roman Catholic controversy and all the details of Ecclesiastical History on which Mr. M. so much relies, gives him many advantages in dealing with this subject. We may therefore expect from him a thorough examination of this recent exposition of "the Claims of the Catholic Church."

In our own House of Assembly the debate on the opening speech, and vote of want of confidence in the Government based upon it, has almost wholly occupied the time since the discussion commenced. Brief speeches, it would as yet appear, are not to be the characteristics of the session. We give on other pages all our available space to Parliamentary proceedings.

Our late European news by Telegraph from New York, afford nothing of particular moment. It is reported that an Alliance, offensive and defensive, has been formed between France and Sardinia. If such be the case, little doubt can be entertained that a rupture with Austria is intended. European funds are still suffering depression under the apprehension of such a contingency.

The Russian Czar is still intent on his plan of emancipating the serfs, although he is said to meet with serious obstacles and little sympathy on the part of the nobility.

The Cape of Good Hope has been finally fixed on as the place of imprisonment of the King of Delhi. As it was determined to spare the life of this worthless old assassin, it was of course most advisable to remove him from the scene of all former associations. Nana Sahib is reported to have been abandoned by his followers and to have taken refuge in the jungle. He can scarcely escape much longer a meet punishment for his atrocities.

Our English mail has been long delayed, by prevailing winds and heavy weather in the Atlantic. The *America* arrived at Cunard's wharf on Monday evening about 10 o'clock, with European intelligence to the 29th ult. We give in another page some of the principal items of news.

The birth of a Prussian Prince, grand-son to Her Majesty Queen Victoria, is one of the principal events.

The probabilities of a European war causes much uneasiness in commercial affairs and in the diplomatic relations.