

Christian Messenger.

A RELIGIOUS AND GENERAL FAMILY NEWSPAPER.

"Not slothful in business : fervent in spirit."

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Poetry.

The Right Way.

"He then led them forth by the right way, that they might go to a city of habitation."—Ps. cvii. 7.

Not always a pleasant way,
For the hills are rough and steep,
And many a time we are forced to stay,
And look in the valleys deep,
But always the way is right,
Darkling although it be,
It leads still on to the land of light,
Over the glassy sea.

Not always an easy way—
There is many a weary mile,
For the marcher's feet, and the short dim day,
Ere we see the Master smile ;
But after the work is done,
And the day's long march is o'er,
Our feet shall stand at the set of sun,
At the open and shining door.

Not always a lighted way—
For the shadows spread around,
And the night is longer than all the day,
And we walk amid gloom profound.
But the pillar of cloud by night,
We follow with eager feet,
Till we gain the gate of eternal light,
And enter the golden street.

Not always a plain straight way,
For the deviating lines
Of the careless to go astray
From the path where the one light shines.
But crooked although it be,
And hidden in folds of mist,
It ends where children the Father see,
And the praiseful lips are kissed.

Matters it though the way
Thorny should be, or long,
When it brings us home at the close of day,
In time for the evening song ?
Nay, we will gladly go,
Wherever shall please our Guide,
Rightly He leads us through paths below,
Safe to the other side.

MARIANNE FARNINGHAM.

Religious.

For the Christian Messenger.

"Distinct Schools."

No. 5.

Dear Brother,—

I come now to the consideration of the plan proposed by the Hon. Mr. Flynn's Bill. It is simply this—that where there is a religious minority in a section, a "Distinct School" may be established for the benefit of that minority. That School will have to be maintained at the public expense. There are serious objections to this scheme.

1. It is opposed to the spirit and object of the "Law concerning public schools in Nova Scotia," which is now happily in operation in this province, and has produced an immense amount of good. The design of the framers of that Law, and of the Legislature, was to make ample provision for the whole population, so that all the children of a School section might have the opportunity of obtaining such instruction as would fit them for life's duties, and might grow up together as members of a united family, enjoying equal rights and stimulating each other by a wholesome rivalry. The Schools are free to all, without exclusion or reservation, and the education supplied in them is of the best kind, the Teachers being carefully selected, and an impartial and healthy inspection securing full compliance with the requirements of the law.

Now, the Hon. Mr. Flynn's Bill will not "amend" the present system, but grievously mar it. Wherever a "distinct School" is set up, the spirit of disunion will be invoked.—The very children will be split into parties. Instead of studying together under one roof, and then joining in sports and amusements, they will be torn into discordant bands.—The "Catholic School" will be set against the "Protestant School," the "Church of England School" against the "Presbyterian School," and all the elements of sectarian animosity will be found mingling in wild uproar. Who would wish to see such a day in Nova Scotia?

2. In a financial point of view this new

measure will be contemplated with the greatest dissatisfaction. Already the burden of supporting the Schools has been felt, in some districts, to be very heavy, and numerous complaints have been uttered against the expensiveness of the existing educational system. But every "distinct" School will require a "distinct" School-house, and a "distinct" Teacher. In some sections there may be two or three such "distinct" Schools. The rate-payers of the several Sections will be called on to provide these additional School-houses, and to support these additional Teachers.—Will they bear it? I think not. The electors, I imagine, will narrowly watch the conduct of their representatives, when this Bill is before the house, and will be prepared to shape their votes, on a future occasion according to the speeches and votes of these Honorable members on the question.

3. The proposed arrangement is totally unnecessary. If it be considered desirable to instruct the children in the tenets held and professed by their parents, the School is by no means the proper place to communicate such instruction, for reasons already given. It will be easy in all cases to engage the co-operation of christian ministers, who will readily form such plans for the religious training of the children of their respective congregations as will be satisfactory to those among whom they labour. But to withdraw the children from the fellowship of other children and shut them up in "distinct Schools," where the general education they receive will probably be of inferior value, will not only be unnecessary, but will prove an injurious policy.

I shall be reminded that the Roman Catholics entertain very peculiar notions on this subject;—that they conscientiously object to any Schools in which their own religious views are not inculcated, and certain religious practices of theirs are not observed, accounting such Institutions "godless;"—and that therefore the establishment of "distinct Schools" becomes a necessity. To this I reply, first, that the facts do not warrant the statement or inference, as will appear before this discussion is closed; and secondly, that it is utterly unreasonable to derange and subvert our educational operations because they are not altogether congenial with the feelings and habits of certain parties. Conscientious objections are no doubt to be treated with the most respectful regard; but if those objections are in this case so strong as to preclude the possibility of the amalgamation of Roman Catholic children with Protestant children, in the same School, I must repeat the remark before offered, that the remedy is not a "distinct School," supported by the community, but a separate School, supported by the separating party. It is too much, to require the School Section to support, not only its own proper School, but as many "distinct Schools" as religious minorities may demand. Nova Scotians will not submit to it.

4. The plan will be ruinous. If the Roman Catholics are indulged in this matter, other denominations may be expected to present their claims. Concessions will be called for on every hand. It may even come to pass that the enemies of our provincial education may be so besotted as to stir up discontent and strife, in the hope that the whole system may receive a mortal blow. And the divisive tactics with which we are threatened will deal a "heavy blow and sore discouragement" to our educational schemes. It will be doubtful whether they will survive the shock.

5. The unfairness connected with the practical working of the now method of operation must be briefly noticed. It is provided by the Hon. Mr. Flynn's Bill that in order to the establishment of a "distinct School," a "combination of minorities" may take action;—that is, if there are twenty Roman Catholics in Section 1, thirty in Section 2, and forty in Section 3, those three Sections may combine. In which Section shall the School be established, and how shall it be supported? If the School House is placed in Section 3, that Section will be called on to pay for it, though children are sent there from Sections 1 and 2; the unfairness will be the same if the School House is located in either of the last-mentioned Sections. And in regard to the payment of the Teacher the grievances will be of the same kind. Why should Section 3 be required to pay for the services of a person which are equally enjoyed

by children from Sections 1 and 2? And so of the rest. It seems impossible to work this Bill on a fair principle.

6. But this is not all. The "combination of minorities" is in most cases physically impracticable. The Sections are so arranged as that no children shall be compelled to walk more than two miles to their respective Schools. If three Sections are combined for the purposes of this Bill, no such location of the School-House can be made as will not render it necessary that a large number of children shall walk double the distance—in some cases, more than is now required. It is obvious that this will operate as a prohibition.—A great many children will be deprived of the benefits of education.

7. The new Bill is inconsistent with the present law. According to that law, as has been explained by the Council of Public Instruction, no teacher can inculcate "the peculiar views which characterize the different denominations of Christians." But if these "distinct Schools" be established, that very wholesome provision will be partially nullified and the province will be covered with Schools, avowedly offering denominational instruction, and supported at the public expense. Then the Roman Catholic will be taxed for the dissemination of Protestantism, and the Protestant for the dissemination of Popery, and each denomination of Protestants for the dissemination of principles held by other denominations, should they or any of them acquire "distinct Schools." The discontent that will be engendered will be productive of deplorable consequences.

8. The measure now placed before the country is entirely without precedent.

My observations on this statement must be reserved for the next, which will most probably be the concluding letter.

Yours truly,

J. M. CRAMP.

Acadia College, Nov. 25th, 1868.

Ecclesiastical affairs in Spain.

It is very evident from the letters received this week from Spain, that a great Roman Catholic opposition to the revolution is in existence, and will shortly give a sign. Mother-church is rebellious. It is said to have begun its work at Seville, where great agitation now prevails. The mischief-brewers are strongest in the Basque provinces, the nest of Jesuitism. The clerical party has for centuries ruled the country, either openly or covertly. The revolutionary programme, declaring freedom of worship and freedom of education and especially freedom of marriage, puts it out of the future national court. To declare that every marriage shall be lawful which is contracted before the civil authorities, is to deprive the clergy of one of its most potent means of social influence. Over 500 ladies of Madrid have petitioned the President of the Council in favour of the preservation of all the churches and religious institutions whose destruction or suppression has been decreed. They simply ask, in fact, the maintenance of the *statu quo* in all that concerns religion.

The special correspondent of the *Times* urges that religious freedom must be a right and not a favour. Without unbounded freedom of faith and worship, there can be no other freedom. Such is the principle unanimously put forward by the Spanish people, as represented by all the Juntas which constituted themselves as the interpreters of public opinion on the very outbreak of the revolutionary movement. Whatever Spain is, the priests have made it. If Spain is to be anything different, the work of the priests must be undone; men must be allowed full freedom to undo the priests' work. There must be not only freedom of conscience and freedom of worship, but freedom of inquiry, freedom of propagandism, freedom of proselytism. All creeds must rest on a footing of perfect equality. He asks, whether Spain can bear so much light out of so much darkness? The Junta of Barcelona has intimated to the Archbishop that, as freedom of worship has been proclaimed, every religious ceremony out of doors must be discontinued; every sect and denomination must perform its rites within the buildings destined to its special uses. In Madrid and other cities the images at the

street corners, with the oil lamps dimly burning before them night and day are fast disappearing. It may be by mere accident, but I have not for nearly a month met the Holy Sacrament, with bell and book and candle, on my way along the Madrid thoroughfares. It is not long since the tinkling of that bell used to throw a whole neighbourhood into consternation, when the words "*Pasa Dios!*" were the signal for every man to get out of the way those who tarried behind being compelled to interrupt all business and traffic, to prostrate themselves on the ground, and even to alight from their carriages, give up their seats to the priests, and follow on foot. There is no doubt that the decree providing for the suppression of monastic orders is nowhere suffered to remain a dead letter. There are 15,000 workmen in the employment of the Madrid Municipality at the present moment, and few of them have any other task than levelling the old nests of monks and nuns with the ground. The work of destruction is not altogether unsparring and indiscriminate, but it will be so thorough as to prevent the possibility of the old edifices again rising from its ruins.

The correspondent of the *Times* thinks the Pope has not given up all hopes of a compromise with the Revolution. A Concordat with Spain, however revised, is still practicable, yet, devise whatever bargain you please with the Pope, a Concordat must to some extent curtail religious liberty. One of the Liberal journals has begun the publication of Renan's *Life of Jesus* in its *feuilleton*.—There is no doubt that the liberty of the press will be unlimited, and General Prim has declared that any agent of a Bible Society shall be allowed to walk about the Madrid streets with a copy of the Spanish Testament under each arm. Protestants and Jews will have their chapels and synagogues here as they have in Rome, and the Government may not deem it necessary to keep spies and gendarmes at the door to see that no orthodox sheep should stray into the heretic fold.

Mr. Spurgeon on the Headship of the Church.

On a recent Sunday morning Mr. Spurgeon preached at the Metropolitan Tabernacle on the headship of the Church. In the course of his sermon, he said:—We make no bones about the matter, kings and queens are no heads of the church to us. We will no more brook spiritual domination from an English premier than from a Romish pope; we are equally opposed to both—all human headship must go down. To our well beloved Queen all honor and reverence as to one of the best rulers in civil affairs, but in spiritual affairs in the Church of Christ she has no ruling power; what she may have in the *Church of England* is another question. To us it makes no matter whether it be man or woman, whether it be prince or priest, we will have neither czar, emperor, queen, pope, seraph or angel, to reign in the Church of Jesus Christ. The church hath no lawful governor or supreme Lord but Jesus Christ himself. Our Lord, as it seems to me, puts this so plainly in the word, that I marvel men who believe in the Bible should think the State could be at the head of the Church. The State-church party have placed a Bible with a crown and a sceptre upon their bills! It is suggestive that the Bible is closed, for if Englishmen were once to read it, it would be fatal to the cause which now claims it, since one of the truths they would read would be this, "My kingdom is not of this world;" and they would hear Christ say, "Render unto Cæsar the things which are Cæsar's"—that is, yield all civil obedience to the civil authority, "but unto God the things that are God's." Leave the Lord to rule in the kingdom of mind and spirit, and let Cæsar keep his kingdom of civil government; let the State do its work and never interfere with the Church, and let the Church do her work and never interfere with, or be interfered with, by the State. The two kingdoms are separate and distinct. Broad lines of demarcation are always drawn, throughout the whole of the New Testament, between the spiritual and the temporal power, and the mischief is when men cannot see this. Christ is the head of the Church, not any one who represents the State. Brethren, just think