

Correspondence.

For the Christian Messenger.

RELIGION AND POLITICS.

Sir,—

Every now and then a great outcry is raised about the impropriety of connecting religion with politics. If the Conservatives are in power, and any of their measures are condemned by the religious papers, they are horrified and disgusted: "Oh the wickedness of the religious press! Why can't they attend to their own concerns?"—If the Liberals are in power, it is just the same. I am not surprised at it. These men know that the censure of a religious paper is very likely to be a just one, and they fear its infliction. One of two things must be done: they must either gag the press, or make it their drudge, their slave. The pretence is, that a godly man should have nothing to do with politics.

You might just as well say that a good man ought to have nothing to do with buying and selling, or drawing leases, or making wills, or healing the sick, and a thousand other worldly avocations.

If we understand "politics" to be "the science of government," it is surely of the highest importance that well-principled men should study that science, and control its application. To leave it in the hands of those whose moral sense is obtuse is perilous in the extreme. "When the righteous are in authority, the people rejoice; but when the wicked bear rule, the people mourn."

Our Baptist forefathers were so accustomed to connect governments with hanging, and burning, and drowning, on account of religion, that they came to regard a magistrate as a kind of monster, and to conclude that no Christian could bear office in the commonwealth. Their error was pretty well exploded in Cromwell's time. Yet it now and then crops out again, and the arguments that are employed tend to the conclusion that the wicked must "bear rule," because patriotism is not a Christian virtue. The great Robert Hall lashed this nonsense most vigorously in his "Christianity consistent with a love of freedom." "These are notions," he observes, "rather to be laughed at than confuted, for their extravagance will correct itself."

I do not gather these notions from the Bible. I find that among the members of Christian churches in the past century there were soldiers, and magistrates, and merchants, and members of governments. And I learn that when a man becomes a Christian he is to "abide in the same calling wherein he was called"—to "abide with God." This means, I suppose, that his religious principles are to influence him in that calling, and that his whole conduct is to be ordered by a reference to God's will.

If this be true, governors, and magistrates, and legislators, and judges should be Christians, because then their proceedings will be characterized by a regard to right.

If this be true, the decisions or votes of such men will not be affected by party spirit. They cannot be so mean, so forgetful of their Christianity, as to assent to a measure, which they hold to be unjust, because it is propounded by a political party, even though it should be the party with which they are accustomed, generally, to act. They will do what is right, *coûte qui coûte*.

There is a sense, indeed, in which religion has nothing to do with politics. It is, when politics venture to deal with religion. Government is established for the protection of life, liberty, and property. When it interferes with religion, either by prescribing what is to be believed and practised, or by prohibiting any forms of belief or practice, it has travelled out of its sphere. We are bound in such circumstances to say to the legislature or the magistrate, "HANDS OFF!"

Further;—it is sufficiently plain that many forms of politics have nothing to do with religion. They are anti-religious. They are selfish. They are constructed in the interest of the haves and fishes. They are made up of mere partyism. Such politics should be eschewed by all Christian men.

If a journalist who records the decisions of a legislative assembly is justified in saying of the act of the majority, "that was a Conservative vote"—and of the act of the minority, "that was a Liberal vote;" or vice versa: and if it therefore appears that honourable members did not vote on this side or that because it was right, that is, that they did not decide on the merits of the case at all, but only in compliance with the wishes of a party, whose acts must be

sustained, right or wrong;—then, Sir, I maintain that those honourable members did more than stultify themselves. Perseverance in such a course will give them "seared" consciences—a moral condition of no small peril.

Authors and Editors are influential members of the body politic. They are capable of doing much good or much harm. They guide public opinion, to a great extent. And they should be qualified to do so, by sound judgment, integrity, and firmness. The religious papers, as they are called, should hold an even balance. Their mission, so far as politics, and general affairs are concerned, is to announce the verdict of religion,—to show the people, from the teachings of the Book, how certain doings or measures are to be regarded, and to advise accordingly, irrespective of all party-views, with which, in fact, they should take care not to identify themselves. They will be blamed on both sides, if they adopt such a course; but that is of no consequence.

I observe that the religious papers in England act in this way. Most of them are on the liberal side of politics. They sustain the present government. But they do not hold themselves bound to defend it at all hazards. They are at the present time exerting themselves to secure considerable alterations in the Education Bill now before parliament, and would rather that it should be lost than carried in its existing form.

Give me leave, in conclusion, to offer you a little friendly advice. A great clamour has been raised against you of late because you have thought fit to condemn the action of the government of this province in the case of Mr. Rand. "The religious press!"—they exclaimed—"what a shocking thing that the religious press should be so political!" If you had taken the other side, these persons would not have blamed your politics in the least; they would have applauded the correctness of your sentiments. I believe, Sir, that you did right, because you condemned what you honestly believed to be wrong. And I counsel you to persevere. Don't dabble in party-politics. Be free, impartial, and bold. Approve the right, wherever you see it. Denounce the wrong, by whomsoever committed. Fear no one. Flatter no one. You will not, I know follow the example of those journalists who indulge continually in abusive personalities and substitute ridicule for argument. You have been taught.

Upright men will sustain you. The timid may be frightened, and the prejudiced may revile. You will "keep the even tenor of your way."

Yours,

A LIBERAL OF THE OLD SCHOOL.

For the Christian Messenger.

SAYINGS AND DOINGS AT OTTAWA.

This is the seventh week of the present Session of Parliament, and I regret to say that not much progress has yet been made, in the despatch of the public business of the country.

The new Banking Bill may be said perhaps to be as good as passed by the Commons, although it has not yet arrived in the Senate. It does not seem to give universal satisfaction. The Bankers, many of them assent reluctantly to its terms, for fear of being overtaken by some more objectionable policy. But the principle of the scheme, cloak it as can best be done, reveals nevertheless, the startling fact,—a currency of paper, to a large extent paper based upon government promises to pay. If the government should at any time be required to redeem these promises, they would not have the means, except they issued other promises, in shape of Debentures to be placed in the world's market, to be disposed of; for such prices as could be obtained, in the precious metals.

The other view of the case is, that government promises, in shape of Bank notes *made legal tenders*, can be made to circulate throughout the Dominion without keeping gold idle and locked up to respond, to a greater extent than one to five, ay, one to ten,—and in this way, without paying interest on borrowed money, the Dominion has the use of money to the extent of its capacity to liquidate such amounts as the law will authorize them to issue their paper.

How this new law will affect Nova Scotia, it is difficult yet to predict. As Nova Scotia Banks now only issue \$20 notes, and as the Government issue is only for small notes below that amount, and as low as *twenty-five cents*, it seems—the effect upon metallic currency, the British silver and the sovereign, remains to be seen. The present impression here is that the Currency of Nova Scotia will probably be

allowed to remain as it is for another year. Great and strenuous efforts have been made by St. John members in both Houses, to rob Nova Scotia of its decimal Currency—the *Cafadians* however seem to care but little about the matter. But the Nova Scotians do battle manfully for their decimal Currency whenever, and wherever the question arises. They are a unit upon that point. The real difficulty if any occurs along the border counties, and the St. John Merchants, are anxious to control a portion of the trade of Nova Scotia, not willing to take their pay in Nova Scotia Currency, at the face, yet refuse to forego the temptation of trading with the farmers and dealers, from Cumberland, Kings, Annapolis and Digby. These latter when pay day arrives retort upon the sellers, by saying, why if you undersell the Halifax merchant but then insist upon a discount of three to five per cent upon our Money, we might as well do our business and buy and sell in our own Province. And yet rather than lose their custom the St. John merchants continue the trade, hoping all the while, to get the Currency equalized and so receive their pay in Sovereigns at \$4.86 instead of \$5.00.

The new Election Law has been before the Commons. But it is not viewed with favour. I am inclined to think it will be abandoned for the present Session. The Bill as it is before Parliament, is not regarded favorably by any large party or any Province. The prospect of the Imperial Parliament adopting the Ballot this Session, is very strong. And if that should take place, it is far from unlikely that it will yet be the policy of the Dominion. New Brunswick is decidedly favorable to the Ballot after a fair trial. The Legislature of Nova Scotia, will probably adopt it, and if it is well guarded, as it is in Australia, I can see no reasonable objection to its adoption. Abolish Nomination and Declaration days, require Candidates to register their names a week before the Election, and pay all fees in advance to the Sheriff or returning officer, and all that is requisite has been accomplished equally well, and infinitely better than by the loss of time required, and the scenes of drunkenness and folly enacted under the prevailing system. It is coming to this. By and bye people will wonder why it ever was otherwise.

But the all absorbing topic at Ottawa, indeed throughout a large portion of the Dominion, just now is, the Red River difficulty, and the murder of Scott.

In the Senate Mr. McCully, and in the Commons Mr. McKenzie have been interrogating ministers recently on the subject. The deep and decided interest taken in this matter, now that blood has been shed, appears likely to awaken echoes of revenge, from one end of the Dominion to the other. Already indignation meetings have been called in Ontario and fierce denunciations are uttered on every side, against the chief actor, in about as brutal a murder, as ever disgraced the annals of crime. Riel it is supposed, is looking for countenance and support, to men of the same nationality and religion as himself, to the subordinate employees of the Hudson Bay Company, and as a last resort to Fenian or American sympathizers, none of these are likely to come to his rescue. He has put himself without the pale of civilization. He is a murderer, a coward, and a drunkard combined, all this by the common testimony of the highest and best authorities, and at the most recent dates. Now that the means of access, to and from Winnipeg, are tolerably good via St. Paul and St. Cloud, the snows of the plains having largely disappeared—one may reasonably hope for advices of more recent dates as to transpiring events.

The inquiries instituted in the several Branches of the Legislature above referred to, did not elicit much information from Ministers. They, however, extracted remarks alike in each House denouncing Riel's conduct in the very language used by poor Scott as he was led out to execution as that of—*a cold blooded murderer*. No further communication, it is thought, can now be held with Riel, or any of his murderous crew. If a roll-call were made in Ontario to-morrow, the general opinion is, that thousands of Volunteers would cheerfully respond. Scott was well known by many persons here at Ottawa, as well as at Belleville. The Toronto *Telegraph* of the 5th of April came out, I notice draped in mourning, and the *Globe* belches forth defiance and fury. And this is but the beginning. Ministers will require to move, and that very promptly and very energetically, or the volume of gathering indignant public opinion, as it now portends, will sweep over them.

The ordinary business of the Legislature is dwarfed just now, as it stands contrasted with the exigencies of action to vindicate the untimely

death of a Canadian, whom his fellow-subjects seem determined to regard and avenge as a martyr.

The Session is likely to be prolonged until the first week in May. The Supreme Court Bill of the Dominion has again been revised and printed and laid upon the tables of both Houses. There is a good deal of speculation afloat among the gentlemen of the long robe as to who are likely to be the recipients of office under its provisions; whether selected from the Bars of the respective Provinces as some say is likely, or from the Benches. Vacancies and promotions must necessarily ensue. The leading lawyers of Ontario it seems are in receipt of emoluments far more remunerative than the salaries of their best paid Judges, and actually declined the proffered dignity of Judgeships. Whether the Bars of the Maritime Provinces regard promotion in the same light remains to be proved.

The subject of Interest is under consideration by the Commons. The French members to a large extent regard this matter as they do Disputes, and from a religious stand point. They consider interest as one of those matters which is divinely provided for, in some way, and that six per cent is of heavenly origin. Ontario has at present free trade notions as regards interest. But the odor of usury is so profane, so revolting to some who have so long breathed even a Nova Scotia atmosphere, that I am quite prepared to find a retrograde policy adopted, and a *cast iron* rule of some kind enacted for the Dominion. The prevailing opinion is, that Incorporated Companies of all kinds, by right divine, will be found entitled to demand and receive 7 per cent, but individuals—unincorporated, by equally binding authority will be restricted to 6—England the United States, and other mundane authorities, to the contrary notwithstanding.

Ottawa, April 6, 1870.

Com.

For the Christian Messenger.

IN MEMORIAM.

REV. S. BENNETT TAYLOR,

son of Bennett and Elenor Taylor was born Sep. 8th, 1812. On the 16th of Feb. 1832 he was united in marriage to Sarah A. Chute, and they became the parents of 16 children. Quite early in life he professed faith in Christ, and united with the Baptist church. In the Spring of 1840 or about that time while living on Cornwallis Mountain he began to preach. Having spent some time at Bear River and elsewhere, preaching as a licentiate, in the Spring of 1842 he removed with his family to New Germany, in the County of Lunenburg. To a Baptist Minister, the prospects then, in this County, were, humanly speaking, not very inviting. The roads in all this region were *extremely* bad. All traveling had to be done either on foot or horseback. Still it was necessary for a minister to travel long distances, either to receive a support or to meet the wants of the few Baptists in the county.

To give your readers a better idea of this it may be well to state our strength at that time. A church had been organized at North West, Nov. 3rd, 1809, consisting of ten persons seven male and three female members. Under the pastoral care of the Lunenburg Apostle, Father Joseph Dimock, the little band steadily increased. But afterward grievous wolves entered among them, not sparing the flock so that in 1838, only 30 members remained connected with our communion. That little number comprised the Baptists in the Townships of Lunenburg and New Dublin, and was the nucleus of the six churches now occupying the same ground. When Bro. Taylor came to Lunenburg he was not ordained. To meet the wants of the people, an ordained minister was needed. Consequently a Council was called at Chelsea, July 13, 1842, consisting of Revs. Joseph Dimock, David Harris, T. C. DeLong, and R. B. Dickie, and on our brother were laid "the hands of the Presbytery." On the 1st of Jan. 1843 he took charge of the church at North West, where he remained ten years. During those ten years his ministry was blest in gathering in many. In fact the early part of his ministry was his harvest season, as for some years past he has only been engaged in the work a part of the time. Since coming to this county I find he has buried 110 persons; married 156 couples, and baptized 127.

Three years ago he was severely attacked with acute rheumatism and since that period, pin by pin, the "earthly house" has been coming down. At times quite free from pain, and again in extreme agony, sometimes trustful and sometimes in the dark. It was not till the morning of the 28th of March, that God released him from suffering, and took him to rest.

During six years of acquaintance I have had many pleasant interviews with Brother Taylor, and have always found him a friend. His funeral was attended by Bro. March, Bro. Needham, (Wesleyan) and the writer. At the urgent request of the writer, Bro. March preached from Phil. 1: 21. "To die is gain." The sermon was truly appropriate. May God bless and save his survivors.

Com. by Rev. Wm. E. HALL.

The Baptist papers of the Dominion will oblige the friends of the departed by copying the above