

For the Christian Messenger.
THE SINGING BIRD.
 A WORD TO THE WEEPING.

Do you see that sweet bird as it flies gaily from branch to branch, and from tree to tree, partaking so largely of the blessings provided for it? Come let us listen to its cheerful song, for it sets us an example worthy of imitation as it warbles forth its Maker's praise. Neither regretting the past, nor fearing the future, it is highly exercising the abilities with which it became invested from His hand, without whose knowledge it cannot fall to the ground; and, "Are ye not of more value than many sparrows? oh ye of little faith."

While nature is smiling all around, shall we, alone, of all God's works forbear to render to Him the tribute of gratitude? Shall we, whom he has so highly favored—whom he has made a little lower than the angels—shall we go mourning all our days, and bow down our heads like the bulrush, when even the faint sighing of the zephyr in the grove whispers "praise," and the vast system of worlds which He sustains, calls loudly upon us to join in their grand symphony.

O! no, dear world-weary fellow traveller; let us rather be glad and rejoice, for surely He is good who has created

So fair a clime for our present abode,
 And a bright future home, after walking with God.

Let us lift up our eyes "to the hills whence cometh our help," for there "He sits as a refiner and purifier of silver." His watchful eyes are never withdrawn, and though the furnace be seven times heated, still let us rejoice that He has called us to suffering and that within it we may "See one like the Son of Man." Like a skilful and careful refiner He only waits to see his own image,—that moment He sees it reflected in our hearts, the purging fires are quenched and the metal "precious in his sight" is preserved to be, "His, in the day when He maketh up His jewels."

ALEX. WILFROD.

The Sabbath Question.

We continually hear the Fourth Commandment quoted, as though it were really an expression of God's will for this age and dispensation, and as if, our Sabbath rested upon its authority. This, few of our readers will be prepared deliberately to maintain.

The Fourth Commandment was delivered to the Jews as a law to them, and there the direct application of its injunctions and prohibitions stops. Indirectly, however, like all the rest of the Decalogue, it concerns us in this way. The thing is right not because it is there, but it is there because it is right. Let none call this a distinction without a difference. It reaches the heart of the whole question. The moment we regard the Awful Voice of Sinai as engaged in legislating for the world we become involved in difficulties inextricable. But if we think of it as *republican*, in a form adapted to the special position and calling of Israel, the great universal laws which were duties as much before those thunders broke the silence of the wilderness as they could be afterwards, and which were engraved on the constitution of human nature ages before their inscription on the tablets of rock, we are guided to a clear and consistent view of the whole case. It is not the Sabbath of Mount Sinai, but the Sabbath of Creation, that we profess to keep. Everything external and Jewish disappears. The "neither thou, nor thine ox, nor thine ass," &c., falls into precisely the same category as the promise of the Fifth Commandment, "that thy days may be long in the land." The great general law alone remains, to be obeyed from christian motives, and to be interpreted according to the principles of christian freedom. There are, then, no rules for the manner of Sabbath observance,—nothing but the law, as ancient as Paradise, which commands us to imitate Him who "blessed the seventh day and hallowed it."

We believe that the seventh day of the Fourth Commandment designates the last day of the week alone,—our Saturday; and that professed obedience to the statute of Sinai logically requires the consecration of that day. We believe, also, that the "seventh day" of Creation must necessarily, from the nature of the case, be interpreted with a greater latitude, that it is no forcing of the words to continue them as meaning "one day in seven," and that the primitive church had a perfect right to ordain the celebration of the feast on the first day of the week. In that age no further warrant was needed for any ceremonial change than the formula employed in the letter from Jerusalem to Antioch, "It seemed good to the Holy Ghost and to us." This power they exercised, with what result we know. It was natural that Jewish converts should combine with the observance of the new festival, a maintenance of the old. Controversy on this matter soon arose. Therefore, says Paul, "Let no man judge you in respect of Sabbath days;" words which it appears to us disingenuous to interpret of feast-days generally,

and which, if interpreted in the way above suggested, give a perfectly natural sense. The Reformers, as we know, held that the church retained the same power. Calvin at one time was inclined to propose that *Thursday* should in future be the Rest-day,—the Sabbath of the Protestant churches, to mark still more strongly their divergence from Rome. The proposition happily was not pressed, nor do we believe that it could have succeeded.—*Freeman.*

Christian Messenger.

HALIFAX, AUGUST 6, 1856.

THERE probably never was a time when Baptists had gained so many concessions to their principles or when the facts connected with their history were so fully made known as the present. There has been amongst us too much of resting satisfied with a conviction, that the Scriptures teach us all that we require to know on the subject of church polity and order. Whilst we are content to know that the Bible is a perfectly safe book for Baptists, we have been too much disposed to forget the glorious line of predecessors we have in the martyrs of history and have lost sight of the vast blessings which we enjoy in comparison with those who have lived in all former ages, from primitive times down to this nineteenth century.

We are unfaithful to our trust unless we maintain firmly our distinctive principles and use such means as are in our power to transmit them to posterity. Whilst we see no necessity for making ourselves obnoxious to those who differ from us in opinion, we have no respect for those who would keep in obedience any portion of truth for the sake of present popularity or possible gain. If the doing of this is the sign of weakness, and reprehensible in men generally, it must be far more so in those who are the exponents or representatives of any christian body either in the pulpit or in connexion with the press. We believe that a full exhibition of principles will command more respect even from opponents than any doubtful course for the sake of expediency. Whilst we cannot expect to conduct a religious journal so as to give entire satisfaction to all parties alike, we may pursue a course which will commend itself not only to those who entertain similar views to ourselves, but also to others who hold sentiments opposed to us, while a course of proceeding which attempts to keep back the honest conviction of either preacher or editor must produce a want of confidence and ultimately injure the cause which it is intended to serve. It has afforded us much satisfaction to find that the unmistakable course we have pursued has met with so general an expression of approbation amongst our people and that there has been a steady growing increase in our list of Subscribers, of such persons as we believe may be depended on for the future. We have endeavoured to steer a straight course, and present to our readers what we believe to be the truth, together with such facts as are brought to light, and such changes as are taking place in the church and the world, as may keep them well informed of the real progress of Christ's kingdom and of the cause of civil and religious liberty.

Whilst all other communities are using every effort to render themselves and their families familiar with the onward progress of the age, it surely becomes us to embrace every opportunity of acquiring information, and thus becoming an intelligent and reading people. The works of our best authors may now be obtained more easily than at any former period, and if we may take the reports of Committees on Religious publications at our Associations, as an index of the want of such works in the families of our people, we may consistently urge the necessity of greater attention to this particular, for some time to come.

THE Circular Letter on another page, although addressed to the Churches of the Western Association, by that body in their associate capacity, will, we doubt not, be read with profit by the members of all our churches; as describing a state of feeling and operation which it is highly important to maintain. A state of revival is too often looked upon as one not expected to be continuous, consequently a relapse often follows, a period of proper and wholesome christian activity. It is very easy

for some persons to give attendance at special services for days or even weeks together, and to press others to do the same for a time, but who after continuing a while grow weary in well doing and return to their former state of coldness and comparative indifference until some fresh excitement occurs. If this be the only effect of such revivals but little good may be expected to follow. The aim should be to keep up attendance and earnest solicitude for the welfare of souls at ordinary meetings. When the healthy state described by the circular letter, is attained, we shall see more readiness to embrace opportunities of meeting together to pray and to examine the Word of God; so that believers may encourage each other and not let their love wax cold because of the abounding of iniquity. They will not then be paralyzed by seeing the indifference of their families, but will be aroused to more activity and prayer first for themselves and then for those who are without hope and without God in the world.

General Williams.

THE Hon. J. W. Johnston has given in a morning paper some extracts of a letter he has received from the hero of Kars in order to remove the impressions that he, Sir William F. Williams, will shortly visit this Province. We copy the letter.

SIR,—Allow me through the *Colonist* to correct a mistake as regards General Williams' expected visit. By the last mail he requests me to contradict the report that he had obtained leave of absence, and would immediately visit this country. This he says is not the case. The command at Woolwich, which her Majesty had been graciously pleased to confer on him, and which imposed duties that required his immediate attention in consequence of the return of the Crimean Army, made it impossible for him to leave England. He concludes with the hope, that next year may afford him the happiness of revisiting his friends here. As the pleasure we anticipated of soon meeting our esteemed countryman is thus postponed, it will not be inappropriate for me to make public his feelings on hearing of the acknowledgement rendered to his eminent services by the Legislature of his native country at its last session.

In a letter dated at St. Petersburg, May 14th, he writes to me:—

"Baron Plesseu, the Danish Minister, called yesterday, and gave me the packet containing your kind and acceptable letter of the 27th March, together with the Gazette which gives the resolutions of the House of Assembly *propos* to the sword which it has done me the honor to vote.

"Although I believe my friends in England and America have frequently written to me since they heard of my captivity, yet yours is the only letter which has reached me. When the fitting moment arrives, I will endeavour to express my feelings on this occasion, but those who moved and seconded the resolution need not, I am sure, be told the nature of those feelings, nor that I would willingly endure greater trials for a title of those flattering and encouraging words uttered on that occasion.

"You will be glad to hear of the flattering reception I have met with in all parts of this vast Empire through which I have passed, first as a prisoner, and more recently as a guest. I got here just in time to see the grand review of 50,000 of the Guards—day before yesterday. —Before it began, I was presented to the Emperor at the palace, and being mounted on one of his Majesty's horses, followed him with his staff. When the troops were about to pass the Empress, who received the military honours of the day, His Majesty called me to the front, presented me to the Empress, and kept me by his side, and explained the nature and history of each corps as it went by. I will not repeat all he said to me on the defence of Kars, nor the still more flattering words addressed to me by the Grand Duke Constantine, supposed to represent the Old Russian Party. I scrawl these lines surrounded by visitors."

I am, Your obedient servant,
 J. W. JOHNSTON.

The *Liverpool Transcript* in an article on Provincial Education, speaks in terms of the highest laudation of the appointment of the Rev. Mr. Tomkins and Rev. Mr. Cornish, late of Gorham College, to Professorships in Dalhousie College, Halifax. After referring to the vast amount of influence the Normal School at Truro is calculated to exercise on the rising generation, the editor informs his readers "that notwithstanding the deficiency in the qualifications of teachers in the Western parts of this Province not a single applicant has been admitted to the Normal school, resident west of Lunenburg county." We presume our contemporary means that there has been no applicant from those more western parts of the pro-

vince, and not that there have been applicants who were not admitted, as we think the Teachers as well as the people of the western counties may compare favourably with any other parts of the Province. The fact which he states cannot arise from any inferiority which exists more in Queen's and the other western counties, to those counties from which the students at Truro have come. There must be some other cause operating, and we think it unfair to institute such comparisons, and conclude that that circumstance arises from the deficiencies of the people and the teachers.

Dalhousie College.

The late appointments at Dalhousie College call forth the following remarks from the Presbyterian Witness:—

"We learn from published extracts of the minutes of a meeting of the Governors of Dalhousie College held on the 21st ult., that the present income of that institution is about £800 currency; that £1200 were spent in repairing walls, &c. within the last eight years; that the number of pupils under Messrs Reid, D'Ussay and Woods is increasing, and that the salaries of these gentlemen are respectively £300; £190 and £150 stg; also that two more Professors are now added to the number; viz., the Reverend Frederick Tomkins, Master of Arts of the University College, London, Great Britain; and the Reverend George Cornish, Bachelor of Arts of New College, London University also in Great Britain. The terms on which these last named Professors are admitted are very like those solicited by the seven women of old who wished to be called on one man, but were willing to wear their own raiment and eat their own food. Messrs Tomkins and Cornish being good Independents are to be independent to the end of the chapter; they are to be supported by the funds of the defunct Goreham College."

After quoting from the published minutes of the Governors meeting, he adds, "We remark on the above that it offers Presbyterians nothing worth having."

"Dalhousie College was endowed as a University for the Province; but the Board of Governors have taken the endowment and devoted it to the support of an ordinary High School for the City of Halifax. What right have the Governors to spend the sum of £800 of money belonging to the Province on a School for the children of the wealthy in Halifax? Our worthy citizens are well able to pay for the schooling of their own children; this Province need not therefore pay Mr. Hugo Reid £300 stg. per annum to teach these children the elements of Geography, or Chemistry, or English Grammar."

From the best judgment we can form on looking over the Northern Papers of the Union, it would seem most likely that Col. Fremont, the Republican Nominee, will be the successful candidate for the Presidential chair. State Elections often turn upon very critical and sometimes very trivial events, and in case the Southern States hang together as one man, which is not at all improbable, they may with the Democrats of the North give the victory to Buchanan. Kansas appears as unquiet as ever. It is at present occupied by three armed parties. The United States Troops under a Col. Sumner, the Free Soilers, and the armed Freebooters from the neighbouring State of Missouri. No reasonable conjectures can be formed as to the final issue of this state of things. In California the Vigilance Committee still hold authority in San Francisco, having superseded, both the Municipal Authorities and that of the General Government.

Solouque, the black Emperor of Hayti, after attacking the Western part of the Island where the Spanish blacks are established as a Republic, and meeting severe losses, is about concluding a treaty of peace and amity with his opponents. This rich and noble Island, which was given up to the Slaves during the first French Revolution, has been almost ever since a scene of bloodshed and revolution.

The Queen has agreed to the Act for the Election of a Legislative Council for Canada, by which Forty-eight new Councillors are to be added to the present Council. Twelve are to be added every two years, to hold their seats for eight years. The former Councillors, it is said, are to remain for life.

Telegraph Despatch.

Merchants' Reading Room, August 4th, 1856.

American Steamship "Atlantic" arrived at New York this evening.
 Dates from Liverpool to 23rd July.
 Cotton Market unchanged.
 Breadstuffs—market firm.
 Flour, trifle higher.
 Wheat firm at previous prices.
 Consols 95½.
 No political news of interest.

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