

Christian Messenger.

HALIFAX, OCTOBER 27, 1858.

MANY of our readers are no doubt aware that some part of the present Austrian dominions were the chief centres of the early Reformation. The Kingdom of Bohemia especially has had the honour of contributing some of the most illustrious instances of devotion and suffering in the cause of Christ, such as John Huss and Jerome of Prague. When Luther sounded the trumpet of Gospel freedom to the nations of Europe, just then emerging from mediæval darkness, it was in Hungary and other parts of the present Austrian Empire that its sound was most gladly received and responded to, and numerous martyrs and confessors subsequently bore testimony to the call. The great reaction in favour of popery, which took place in the following century, aided by the strong hand of persecution, went far to suppress the movement, although to this day in the populous kingdom of Hungary a large body of Protestants have ever since existed, and to some extent retained their ancient rights. The late Concordat, or Ecclesiastical Treaty between the Pope and the Emperor, has operated to check, for a time, the strong Protestant feeling of Germany, although from recent events, its effects have by no means been such as to secure that end. The strong sense and sound feeling of the Germans have always submitted with difficulty to the Papal yoke. This feeling has been strongly marked by a late circumstance. Upwards of 500 of the Bohemian Bishops and benefited Clergy have signed a Memorial to the Higher Ecclesiastical Authorities at Vienna, for Reformation in religious matters. They complain greatly of the contempt into which the Priesthood have fallen with the laity, owing to the poverty of very many of them, and their irregular lives. They demand among other reforms the abolition of the rules enforcing the celibacy of the clergy, and rightly ascribe some of the worst evils of the church to this unnatural and unscriptural institution. Who can doubt the truth of their assumption in this respect? It is not, however, the first time that a movement of this kind, and with the same objects, has shewn itself in Germany. A forced Celibacy has always been the most fruitful source of crime and depravity among the Romish clergy in strictly Catholic countries. It can least of all bear the increasing light of the present age, and will, we trust, ere long follow the exploded customs of an early barbarism, engrafted by ignorance or priestcraft upon Christianity in the first ages of the Church. It is not at all probable that any immediate good result will follow from this remonstrance to the higher powers in the Austrian Church, as both temporal and spiritual despotism are too strong and predominant to be willing to relax their grasp on the people. It affords, however, a striking sign of the times, and one, we devoutly hope, which may foreshadow better things hereafter.

Free Church Troubles.

WE copy the following from the *Presbyterian Witness*, of Saturday last:

PRIVATE BAPTISM.—A correspondent calls our attention to the gross abuse of the ordinance of baptism which obtains in many sections of the country. He traces much of the prevailing immorality and irreligion to this source. The only ordinance of religion about which many parents are anxious is Baptism for their children—as if there was salvation in the rite! They are content to live ungodly themselves and to bring up their children in the same fashion. They break the Sabbath, neglect the public worship of God; they worship neither in the family nor in the privacy of the closet; they live much like the beasts that perish, caring for nothing but what they may eat and drink, and wherewithal they may be clothed. They are utterly ignorant theoretically and practically of the plan of salvation; and yet they expect their children to be admitted into the visible Church of God, publicly acknowledged as in covenant with Him. Should one minister refuse to administer the rite, another less scrupulous will be ready to do their bidding. Not long since we knew of a Presbyterian parent who brought his child to a Presbyterian minister to be baptized. On examination it appeared to the minister that the man was utterly ignorant of the use and nature of the ordinance. He therefore declined baptizing the child until the father studied his Bible and Catechism a little more; this intending to postpone the matter for a fortnight or so. The man was to be brought under instruction immediately. But this would not suit him. If a Free Church minister would not baptize his child he knew who would, and accordingly he posted off to the Church of England minister who at once baptized the child. The man with his family then left the Free Church and joined the Church of England. This is only a sample of what frequently happens. Not long since a

full grown man—a magistrate—desired to be admitted into the Free Church; but he insisted on being baptised privately, being too bashful to confess Christ before a whole congregation. The Free Church minister and Session justly refused his request and explained to him the path of duty. He however felt that he could not face any congregation, large or small. Accordingly he left the Free Church, and applied to a minister of the Church of Scotland to be baptised in private. He found the Kirkman (a weak minded man) more docile; and accordingly he was baptised in private. This is but another sample of what may often happen. It is a most injurious thing that one Church should loosen its hands, throw wide open its doors in order to admit fugitives from other and sister churches. It is as if the churches were rival Steamboat Companies trying which could have the lowest fare and which would snatch up the largest number of passengers regardless of their character. It has been a standing grievance in many Presbyterian churches that when parents are refused privileges for their children for purposes of discipline they run to the nearest church of England minister and are received with open arms. This cannot fail to be productive of much mischief to all parties concerned. The parent escapes wholesome discipline; the church loses a useful member; the English Church loses its reputation. We state these facts not for the purpose of exposing any body of christians, but simply with the hope that publicity will be but the first step towards improvement.

We pass over for the present the reference to the Church of Scotland, and what the *Witness* is pleased to call its "weak-minded" minister; "the standing grievance in many Presbyterian churches;" and "the private baptism of the full grown man—a magistrate;"—leaving them to the bodies to whom reference is made. We do not profess to understand the value of baptism except as a profession of personal faith in Christ and an act of obedience to him as our Lord and Master, but if there be virtue in infant baptism, we think it unjust to deprive a child of the rite, because of the ignorance of its parents. Is it not even more necessary for the child under such circumstances? Would not the child's fellow-members be more likely in such case to watch over him as he grew up, and thus make up for his parents' deficiencies?

The thing here complained of is, that a desire for the administration of the rite to their infants arises in the minds of many Presbyterian parents from an improper motive amounting to the Popish dogma of baptismal regeneration. Sometimes, however, and far more frequently, the difficulty is of quite an opposite character—that is, that pious Presbyterian parents are unwilling to bring forward their children to receive this initiatory ordinance because they entertain doubts about its efficacy and the propriety of their unconscious infants "being admitted into the visible church of God." Being acquainted with the word of God they are also dissatisfied that those of riper years should be compelled reluctantly to receive that solemn ordinance, while they shew no signs of "repentance towards God and faith in our Lord Jesus Christ."

Instances have come to our knowledge where gross profanity has attended the observance on occasions where boys of from 12 to 14 or 15 years of age have been made, by their parents command, the subjects of the administration of the solemn ordinance. A few days ago we were informed of a Free Church minister in Cape Breton who, on enquiring of one of his congregation why he had never been to the communion, was informed, that he had not been baptized. On the minister learning this he directed him to come and receive baptism. The man replied that he thought he ought to know more about a change of heart before taking so important a step as joining the Church. As the minister related the circumstance he said, "And then the man had the impudence to call my attention to the Bible for information on the subject." When he found the man firm in his position, the minister called him "one of these Anabaptists"!! and used efforts to deprive him of employment, in which we were sorry to hear he was but too successful.

Separate Schools.

THIS subject has been again brought before the public in two or three recently published documents, and as we consider it a highly important matter, far above the party squabbles of mere politicians, we shall not hesitate to speak out upon the question. It is unnecessary that we should reiterate our objection to anything of the kind and indeed to any favour being shown to one denomination, as such, above another; as it has been so fully expressed on several former occasions. Our sentiments are unchanged. As no one of the Protestant denominations must have provision made in the Common Schools for teaching their peculiar views, neither must the Roman Catholic body, or else the Schools cease to be alike Common to

all. If such were the case, we should probably then have a demand in some districts for Separate Presbyterian Schools, and in others Separate Methodist Schools, &c., while all other children might attend the Common School. This, it is evident, would soon produce results anything but favourable in an educational point of view, even to those bodies themselves, without benefitting education to any party.

On this subject, the Hon. J. McCully, in a letter to the *Morning Chronicle*, of Thursday last, says:—

"Now I must tell Doctor Cramp, that so far from agreeing to the 'Separate School' clause, I, for one, have ever set my face firmly and determinedly against it. When it was pressed by the Roman Catholic hierarchy, through their Catholic friends upon the late Administration, at a full meeting of the party, as is well known, I made a bold and decided stand against it. And I have further to inform the learned Doctor, of what he perhaps never before knew, that such men as Annand of Halifax, Archibald of Colchester, Chambers of Newport, the Hon. H. Bell, and others stood forward and backed me up manfully, and declared they would never be parties to a Bill, having a clause for 'Separate Schools,' but would resist it at all hazards and all consequences. At my suggestion, the Bill, then before the Assembly, was deferred for the session. That was the end of it. The credit of defeating it belongs to men now in opposition, and no where else."

John Tobin, Esqr., M.P.P., in reference to this statement, writes, in a letter to the *Evening Express*, of the following day:—

"I may, in the first place, open up the history of this celebrated Educational Bill, which was promised from the Vice-Regal throne in 1856, and out of which so much political capital is attempted to be made—so much mystification and subterfuge used to catch those that have not had an opportunity of being informed how it had been introduced—who were the parties present when it was introduced, and why it was deferred."

"The Liberal Government promised a measure on Education; and after the House had been some time in session, they were taunted by the opposition to bring forward their Bill, but strange to say there was no Bill prepared nor agreed upon by the Government, to be brought forward."

"On its appearance the question was taken up in detail, and after a full discussion in the presence of the whole party it was agreed that a clause for separate schools, so far as Protestants and Catholics were concerned, should be appended to the Bill. This proposition passed without a dissenting voice, the gentlemen of the Lower House named by Mr. McCully being present. Whether the Honble. H. Bell or Honble. John McCully were present I am not now prepared to say, but I have a distinct recollection that there were 36 gentlemen of the Liberal party in caucus, and there was neither dissension nor division, and the Honourable William Young, Adams G. Archibald, and the writer, were appointed a Committee to prepare the separate clauses. Having prepared them they were appended to the Bill, which was submitted to the House in due form,—read a first time without any debate, and referred to a Committee of the whole House, where it passed without opposition or discussion on its general principles."

"The Bill remained in Committee till towards the close of the session, when it was withdrawn by the Government."

"I was present at all the caucus meetings—took part in the discussion in the House when the Bill was in Committee—and I neither saw nor heard Mr. McCully, Mr. Archibald, Mr. Annand, Mr. Chambers, or Mr. Bell, either discountenance, denounce, or assail the Bill with or without the separate clauses."

We refrain from further extracts, as we are not desirous of entering into the party question. We have made the above quotations simply for the purpose of informing our readers, so that they may exercise their own judgment as to the correct paternity of the celebrated Separate School Clauses, and, also, the present position of the question.

The *Antigonish Casket* has pronounced in favour of Separate Schools by saying:—

"We never will give any support to a Government which does not recognise our full and unqualified right to separate schools. In this, we are certain that our course shall be approved of by the eighty thousand Catholics of Nova Scotia. In Canada, and the United States of America, our co-religionists are struggling for the same right."

On this the *Acadian Recorder* remarks, in an article under the above caption:—

"We do not know whether the essence of the above pithy extract from the *Casket* is intended as a threat to the existing Government—it looks remarkably like it—or whether it is merely a little bit of gratuitous information for the curious public in general. Whichever is the fact, we have a right to presume that the Government, the Opposition, the Catholics, the Protestants, the public at large, will take as deep an interest, or nearly so, in knowing what each of the other political journals of Nova Scotia may feel disposed to do in a certain event. Let us call the roll and see how we all stand. Well, then, let the *Acadian Recorder* 'testify.' We take this opportunity of laying it down as a maxim by which our journal shall be guided—at all events, under its present management,—that we never

will give any support to a government which does not recognise the right of any Church, religious sect, or denomination whatsoever, to have separate schools and participate in the public school-fund for their support. Nay, a little further; we shall do all that in our power lies in actively opposing any Government which shall carry, or attempt to carry through the legislature, a Bill which makes any provision whatever for Separate Schools."

Although we are also opposed to Separate Public Schools, yet that is no reason why we should abuse the Hon. Mr. YOUNG, Mr. ADAMS G. ARCHIBALD and Mr. JOHN TOBIN for preparing the Separate School Clauses for the Education Bill in 1856, nor yet the Editor of the *Casket* or Mr. Tobin for expressing their desire for such a measure now. They have as good a right to their sentiments as we have to ours. Neither do we oppose them merely because we are Protestants. The principle of an endowment of religion—a "national religion"—we consider essentially wrong, whether in India, Turkey, Rome, or Nova Scotia, and must do injustice to some parties. Those clauses we consider contain that principle and therefore object to them. We approved generally of the Education Bill introduced by Mr. Young, but objected then as we do now to the said Separate School Clauses.

Bishop Binney's Charge.

THIS week has been signalized by a great gathering of Church of England Ministers from all parts of the Province for the purpose of hearing their Bishop's charge—to attend their Synod—and to take part in the business of the Diocesan Society. There were, we would judge, about forty ministers in attendance. The Bishop delivered his charge to them in St. Paul's Church on Wednesday afternoon. The reading of it occupied two hours. It is customary, we believe, for bishops to do their speaking to their clergy sitting; at least Bishop Binney did so. The clergy rose to listen but he motioned to them to resume their seats, which they did. He commenced by thanking them for their kindness to him during the seven years he had been among them. He then entered into a defence of Synods and showed the necessity for introducing the lay element. He, however, expressed grave doubts as to the propriety, or at least the expediency, of the Synod's electing Bishops. By an extract from Chrysostom he showed how this power was abused by Synods in the olden time. He spoke at some length of the support of the clergy and stated that £7,000 now received from England would shortly be withheld. He therefore proposed that to supply the deficit and to strengthen the Church permanently, a capital sum of 25,000 be raised and funded. This would secure the ordinances of the Gospel to many weak settlements which must otherwise be unprovided for. He warned the clergy against false delicacy in urging their people to support the Gospel, and expressed a hope that weekly collections should be made in all the Churches. He denounced with energy the prevalent disposition among people to obtain the services of ministers at the lowest possible rate.

Sixteen ministers were added to the Church during the last two years. Some had gone to other dioceses; one had died; and he felt compelled to revoke the License of another. Three missions are now vacant. He expressed regret at the paucity of students at Windsor College, and urged the clergy to use their influence to increase their number. He would not like to admit any one into holy orders who was unable to read the Greek Testament. He expressed strong disapprobation of the proposed Separate Schools for Romanists—was dissatisfied with the present system—but while better could not be had they might avail themselves of it and do all in their power to supply its deficiencies. He regretted that no religious instruction was provided for by law. He strongly commended the Normal School; since their own had gone down it was well to attend that at Truro. He felt that it was mainly beneficial to the County of Colchester and to the Presbyterian and Free Church. He regretted that so few teachers were Episcopalian. He urged on them to visit frequently the schools within their reach—also to attend particularly to the Sabbath Schools. He then gave long directions as to how they were to prepare their people for the "Apostolic institution" of Confirmation; it was a supplement to Baptism, an introduction to the holy Communion. They ought to pay special attention to the Revival Seasons of the Church—Advent and Lent. He spoke with severity and contempt of the usual Revival meetings, Camp meetings and Protracted meetings. These created mainly mere animal excitement which passed away and did more harm than good. He did not absolutely condemn the Revival of last year; but he explained it very simply.

He then went into the subject of Crosses and Credence Tables. To "one of the sects" like ourselves all this seemed utterly childish. He, however, went into it with no weak fears as to whether it was ludicrous or not. He maintained that Crosses ought to be on all churches. He rejoiced that there was one in Halifax that was surmounted by a Cross. He could not understand how one who loves the cross of Christ could object to it on a Church or on a Book. He explained the state of the law in reference to crosses. He then showed at what special moment of time the bread and wine in the Communion ought to be laid on the Altar and showed the necessity for a Credence Table in every Church. He stated that the bread and wine were an Oblation. He cautioned them