

Christian Messenger.

HALIFAX, FEBRUARY 15, 1860.

Government.

RELIGION, POLITICS, AND SOCIAL LIFE.

IN this land of civil and religious freedom, it may appear to some unnecessary to discuss a matter so trite as the distinction between what should exist in the government of Churches, the State, and Voluntary Societies. Here Church-and-Stateism is an exotic which can never take root, and all parties have on their lips the demand for, and the praises of, liberty. Even here, however, it seems difficult for some parties to draw a clear distinction between the duties they owe to one and those which belong to the other, so as to prevent them from coming into contact one with the other. This being the case we think it well to endeavour if possible to throw a little light upon the subject, and thus try to remove wrong impressions where they may exist. We shall not attempt a homily or essay on Moral Philosophy, but shall give our readers a few general principles which may produce examination of the subject, and awaken interest and enquiry as to the views they should entertain on these important matters.

The body we represent recognize more clearly than many others, we believe, the duties we owe to each of those institutions, —the Church, the State, and Voluntary Societies, without allowing one to infringe on the domain of the other. Religious bodies, almost universally, from the Roman Catholic to the Puritan, when at different periods they have exclusively controlled the State, have been guilty of infractions, and have in turn proscribed each other, by which means the rights and liberties which belong to all have been interfered with. The adoption of the principles of religious liberty by these and all intermediate denominations, has been rather in spite of their acknowledged and cherished views than in accordance with them. It must not therefore be a matter of wonder if they do occasionally forget that the principles of true religious freedom are in advance of the prejudices which they may still hold of an opposite tendency. The evidence that these prejudices do still exist, may be seen by their sometimes seeking either to use the power of the State to rule in the Church, and proscribing men on account of the religious opinions they hold; or else by their endeavouring to call in the aid of the Church or its officers to accomplish political or state objects.

On the prevalence of correct views in respect to this subject depends much of our civil and religious freedom. Unless clear and distinct sentiments on the right of private judgment, and the duty of men to "render to God the things that are God's and to Caesar" only "the things which are Caesar's," are generally held, we may always consider our privileges in a state of insecurity.

It may be said that any attempt to violate the principles of religious or political equality would soon be put down by common consent, and that the general voice of the people being in favour of it renders its discussion quite unnecessary. We reply that genuine soul-liberty is what we contend for, —not merely the power of acting for ourselves, but the recognition of it, without having to submit to molestation, or being charged with ineligibility to occupy any position in the state on account of religious views. Any reference to such opinions in matters of legislation, either by way of favor or otherwise, is, we conceive, an infraction of equal rights to all.

We have no desire to enter the arena of party strife, still we feel bound to bring to the attention of our readers any and every subject which affects the well being of our constituents. The representatives of the people, chosen according to law may meet and combine into parties for the purpose of enacting laws, as they believe, "for their country's good"; but the Fourth Estate of the realm—the press, especially the religious press,—should stand far above the influence of these parties, and communicate facts and principles which will enable the people, especially religious men, so to deal with parties as to render them the means of securing the end of all good government—the good of the governed.

Politics, or the science of government, belongs to civilized man, and demands attention from every member of the community. Aristotle called man "a political animal"; and in all ages and conditions he has had, and must have, more or less to do with government.

Many of the precepts of the gospel cannot be carried out without giving some attention to this subject. Civil government is an ordinance of Divine appointment. Protection afforded to the life and property of each individual demands from him an effort to seek

the good of the whole, by the exercise of a wise choice of rulers such as he believes will be "for the punishment of evil doers and for the praise of them that do well." The spirit of contention and selfishness which frequently characterizes party politicians and the acrimony of their discussions, has thrown upon this subject a degree of opprobrium which does not necessarily belong to it, and has induced many of the most godly men to abstain from exercising their elective franchise.

Mere politicians know that by personal contention they can secure more attention than by sound argument. The contentions of men often command more interest than the ablest address of the most profound speaker, free from such characteristics. Men should distinguish between what too often influences them in the use of the elective franchise—blindly adhering to a party, and acting at the dictation of certain prominent men; and that of exercising one's own judgment, and making choice of such men as should be entrusted with the making of laws for the whole people, by which they and their descendants may be governed, to the remotest period of time. For the use of this trust every man is responsible to the Great Ruler.

It is not for man to choose any particular classes for whom he will, or will not, legislate, as was attempted by the Puritans in New England when they shut out the Baptists, the Roman Catholics and the Quakers from their community. Men have a right, as men, to participate in the benefits of good government. They, the Puritans, wished to make the laws of a Voluntary Society apply to a State, and so, although in the main good men, yet in consequence of taking an erroneous view of the province of civil government, and because they had the power, became the persecutors of them that did well, rather than their protectors. Each of the three subjects,—the Christian Church, the State, and Voluntary Societies,—has its own elements and laws; and should occupy very distinct and different positions. Each of these institutions has been made to suffer by having had applied to it laws which are not its own.

It may be well for us to refer briefly to the foundation of each of these institutions, we can then more easily describe the cases in which violations of their fundamental laws are seen, and what pernicious consequences result from such violations.

1. In matters belonging to *politics* or *civil government*, the people generally are the subjects. All have equal rights and are entitled to like protection from the encroachments of their fellow-men. The prompt administration of justice without partiality is the inalienable right of every peaceable subject of the realm. Politics should aim at securing these for all, and the enactment of such laws from time to time as are found necessary for this purpose. Any party which seeks to pander to any class, or ignores their rights, or would deprive them of their legitimate share in matters of government, violates the first principles of the social compact and forfeits all claim to public confidence.

2. *Voluntary Societies* rest on a very different basis from that of political combinations. Certain parties unite for the accomplishment of a given object, for example, the promotion of Temperance, Science, Home and Foreign Missions, &c., &c. In these cases persons are received who agree on the great object sought. The Society may consist of parties holding various religious or political opinions, so long as they act in accordance with the constitution of such Society. Mutual agreement is the only power which holds them together. A man may unite with or stand aloof from such society, but not so in his political relation to society. In the body politic he must be subject to the laws, whether he likes them or not. Any attempt then to exclude parties holding certain sentiments from participation in matters of legislation, and so apply the rules of private societies to matters of State, shews plainly that those who do so have yet to learn the first laws of human government.

3. The formation and government of Churches differs from that of the State or of Voluntary Societies in some very important particulars. Whilst in the former all men have equal rights and privileges, and in the latter only such as adopt the sentiments of the body are eligible for membership, in Churches the members have no option of receiving or rejecting such as have the characteristics of true believers in Christ and a willingness to obey his commands. They must receive them if convinced that their piety is genuine, whatever may be their age, mental capacity or circumstances in life. A Christian Church properly consists only of Christians,—those who make profession of faith in Christ. The restrictions of money contribution, &c., which regulate other Societies do not hold in Churches. A church cannot comprehend a whole nation or people, except as they are combined in bodies of individuals. Attempts

have been made from time to time from the days of Constantine to make the church a national institution. They have failed however in doing more than persecuting some of their best subjects and sacrificing the interests of religion at the shrine of Mammon, and Ambition. Hypocrites have invariably been exalted at the expense of good honest men. The idea of a State shutting out any class of Christians or even Jews or Infidels is now pretty well exploded, yet some politicians, with what amount of sincerity we will not venture to affirm, pretend to raise the cry of establishing a Protestant government. No greater injury is done to Protestantism than by such measures. Nothing gives Roman Catholics so much importance as to oppose them by an unjust exclusion from undoubted right. An Anti-Presbyterian, or Anti-Methodist, or Anti-Baptist combination would be no less a violation of Civil and Religious liberty. The effort to do this is an attempt to make the laws of a Voluntary Society or church apply to the government of a State, just as the Roman Catholic Church itself has done and is now doing in countries where it is predominant.

It is for Baptists to maintain as they have ever done the broad distinction which should exist between human and Divine government, or the government of the world and that of the Church; and as they have seen these principles secure so much prominence, and in every case promote the good of mankind; so they may be assured that when they become universal the Church of Christ will shine forth more gloriously for all the purposes of a church, than ever it has done while surrounded by the pomp of human splendor and invested with State power.

The meeting on behalf of the HALIFAX CITY Mission was attended by a large number of respectable citizens from various religious denominations. P. C. Hill, Esq., occupied the chair. Several ministers and others addressed the meeting with good effect.

The lecture by Mr. Garvie on "The lights and the shadows; or Christianity the ideal of our race" is before us. The lecturer carries his readers through the darkness and shadows of Paganism in several of its forms to the dawning and present development of the light of Christianity. The style is highly efflorescent. The redundancy of words slightly obscures some paragraphs, still there are other passages of great beauty. The whole evinces industry and research in the writer. We have a predelection however, for the terseness and nervous simplicity of composition in which Saxon chiefly prevails. About two thirds of the lecture are taken up with shadows—from the fire-worship of the East to the paganism of Greece and Rome, leaving only one third for the Light which was to chase away the preceding gloom. The latter part of the subject deserves more ample space for its elucidation. The lecturer has scarcely done himself justice by closing up his argument so briefly.

News Summary.

London papers to the 28th Jan. have been received by the English Mail, which arrived on Friday.

Everything wears a highly pacific appearance throughout Europe, although there are abundant elements of change and commotion lying almost on the surface of society in some of the Continental Governments. The matter which at present appears chiefly to engross the minds both of England and France is the conclusion of a new commercial treaty between the two nations. By this treaty, many of the high duties on articles of common use, brought from France into England are to be greatly reduced, and many prohibited articles are to be admitted upon the payment of duties. There can be no doubt that the measure will most materially and favourably affect the social and financial relations of the two countries towards each other, and cannot but render the prospects of collision between them much less probable. It is supposed that this new arrangement must necessarily lead to the removal, very shortly, of many other restrictions which have long existed on the trade of France, as the French Emperor is known to be thoroughly a Free Trader in his commercial views. He has, however, to contend with a large class in France who have long enjoyed extensive protection under the existing high duties or absolute prohibitions of the present system. The treaty, as regards France, will not come into full operation until July, 1861.

The meeting of the European Congress is still indefinitely postponed, owing to the differences of opinion existing among several of the Catholic Powers, and the refusal of the Pope to submit to any interference with the integrity of his temporal dominions.

Louis Napoleon's letter referred to in our

last has provoked the bitter opposition of the warm friends of the Papacy, while in the mean time the Emperor is doing all he can to renew his friendly relations with England.

Parliament met on the 24th ult., and was opened by the Queen in person. She speaks strongly of her intentions to afford her utmost countenance and support to the cause of freedom in Italy, and of the moral resistance which England will offer to any attempt to impose a Government on the Italians contrary to their own wishes. A measure of Parliamentary Reform is to be introduced by Lord Palmerston early in the Session. The general state of the country, both in a political and commercial view, is stated in the Royal Speech to be highly prosperous and satisfactory.

General Intelligence.

Domestic and Foreign.

THE NEW GOVERNMENT.—The following are the contents of a *Royal Gazette Extraordinary*, published on Friday, the 10th inst.:

PROVINCIAL SECRETARY'S OFFICE,
Halifax, February 10th, 1860.

His Excellency the Lieutenant Governor has been pleased to make the following appointments. To be the Executive Council of the Province of Nova Scotia:

Hon. William Young, *President*; Hon. Joseph Howe, Hon. Adams G. Archibald, Hon. Jonathan McCully, Hon. John H. Anderson, Hon. William Annand, Hon. Benjamin Wier, Hon. John Locke.

Also provisionally,—until the signification of Her Majesty's pleasure:

Hon. Joseph Howe to be Provincial Secretary of the Province of Nova Scotia, in the place of Hon. Charles Tupper, resigned.

Hon. Adams G. Archibald to be Attorney General of the Province of Nova Scotia, in the place of Hon. James W. Johnston, resigned.

Hon. Jonathan McCully to be Solicitor General of the Province of Nova Scotia, in the place of Hon. William A. Henry, resigned.

Hon. John H. Anderson to be Receiver General of the Province of Nova Scotia, in the place of Hon. Stanley Brown, resigned.

Hon. William Annand to be Financial Secretary of the Province of Nova Scotia, in the place of Hon. John J. Marshall.

To be one of the Members of the Legislative Council, Hon. John H. Anderson.

To be the Chairman of the Railway Board, Hon. Jonathan McCully, in the place of Hon. James McNab, resigned.

THE ELECTIONS.—Writs were issued on Friday, last for the election of representatives for Halifax East, Colchester South, and Hants South. Nomination Day, will be on Tuesday, the 28th instant.

FIRE.—Mitchell's Foundry, near Freshwater Bridge, was burnt down on Monday morning about 5 o'clock, Lawson's Brewery adjoining, and a barn belonging to A. J. Ritchie, were also much damaged. Insured for about £4,000. Mr. Mitchell, will however be a loser by the fire of about a like sum.

DEAF AND DUMB INSTITUTION.—Received from Rev. Abraham Stronach, Aylesford, £2, 11s. 1d. collected by him, in aid of the funds. JAMES C. COCHRAN, Secretary.

Feb 6th, 1860.

DISTRESSING OCCURRENCE.—On Monday, 30th ult., Charles Potter, aged 17 years, son of the late Franklin Potter, Junr., went out from the Light House for the purpose of shooting ducks, and it is supposed went on to a ledge, only a step from the main shore. The sea being very heavy at the time, it is supposed he was washed off and drowned, as the gun was found there. No tidings have been heard of him since. How mysterious are God's Providences, as viewed by us. His father was first removed, leaving a wife and six children. Shortly after, two children were taken by death, then the mother, and now the eldest of the children, leaving three orphan girls, separated from each other, with no kind mother's hand to soothe them amidst life's troubles.—Communicated by H. E. Payson, Esq.

New Brunswick.

The *Courier* presents a glowing picture of the present condition and future prospects of our sister province:

The Government will be able to render a faithful and pleasing account of their stewardship to the country. We do not remember a period when the political horizon of New Brunswick reflected so clear and calm an aspect. The finances of the Province are flourishing, the public undertakings are progressing favorably, the population are prosperous and contented, the season is all that can be desired for the successful prosecution of the labours of our lumbermen; and commercial men look forward with well founded expectations that the ensuing season will be one of activity and prosperity.

United States.

A tract of land in Baton Rouge parish, La., recently sunk to the depth of seventy-five or eighty feet, swallowing up a barn, from which the people had barely time to escape. The catastrophe was produced by the action of subterranean springs.

Southern Legislatures are everywhere called on by the plantation press to make stringent laws against Northern pedlars and travelling agents of every description.