

THE SABBATH.

It is of the utmost importance that the public mind be leavened with correct views of the Divine institution, and value of the Lord's day. The character of individuals may be, to a very large extent, determined by the measure of respect which they pay to this ordinance of God. So the character of a people may be known from their national recognition or disregard of it. We regret to say that, although in Canada we have hitherto had but few public works, on these the Divine law has not been observed, as for example, the Sabbath traffic on some of the canals. The post-office labor, and carrying the mails both by land and water, on the Sabbath, have been causes of deep regret to many of the best friends of the country. But in a short time we expect to have extensive public works, and the question cannot be too soon settled, that on these works the day of rest shall be observed. It is a striking fact, that among all the addresses made by the aspirants for Parliamentary honors, before the late general election, no notice was taken of the Sabbath. It did not form a plank in any one's platform. We account for this by supposing that those who were indifferent to the claims of the day never thought of it; while they who felt the force of the Divine command, "Remember the Sabbath day to keep it holy," considered that there could be no additional weight be given to the obligation already imposed, and that it was no more necessary to particularize the fourth commandment than those of the second table of the decalogue.

Our attention has been called to an able article on the Sabbath, from the pen of Dr. Berg, editor of the *Quarterly Protestant Review*, Philadelphia, in which he illustrates the following heads, viz.:—"That our physical constitution requires the repose of the Sabbath—that the moral necessity of the Sabbath is equally urgent, and that the Sabbath is indispensable to our spiritual welfare." We are glad to find such bold and frank avowals of the national obligation to protect the Sabbath as the following, from this able American divine:—

"The fibres of this institution are interwoven with the whole texture of our liberties, and cannot be torn out without rending it into shreds. The men who labour to destroy the Sabbath, and who, under cover of 'a plea for liberty of conscience,' inveigh against Sabbath conventions and profess to regard all legislative actions in defence of the Lord's day as oppressive and unjust, are, in nine cases out of ten, the enemies of all law, and the advocates of principles which tend to anarchy in its worst form."

"Trust not the men who take as their watchword, 'No Sabbath!' They are the same who set their mouth against the heavens, and cry, 'No God!' These, verily, are spots in the feast of charity. They are enemies to human happiness, enemies to all moral order, enemies to all good government, who would seek to persuade men that the observance of the Sabbath infringes upon the liberty of a freeman. God's providence has proclaimed throughout the Christian world, that if men would have his favour, if they would secure for their persons, their families, and their civil government, the blessing which maketh rich and addeth no sorrow, they must remember the Sabbath day to keep it holy."

"Much has been said against legislative interference in defence of the Sabbath. It has been denounced as an infringement of the law of liberty, and of the rights of conscience. We deny that it is either. The infidel makes liberty of conscience consist in the right to think as he pleases. Admit his premises, and does it not follow that every man will have an equal right to do as he pleases? What then becomes of government? Wherein then will man differ from the brute, excepting that he has greater capacity for mischief? The infidel rejects God's law, treads the Bible under his feet, and then whines about liberty of conscience! Why, the man has no conscience. It is dead, or he would not be an infidel. You may sear it with a hot iron, and it will not feel. And yet he will declaim to you by the hour about liberty of conscience! The right to worship God according to the dictates of conscience is conceded—but the very concession implies the existence of an honest desire to know, and to obey God's will. Has God ever given to man the right to despise his law? If so, when, and where? Has he ever delegated authority to states, legislatures, governors, or presidents, to set aside the precepts of his own moral government? Would any human court or tribunal thus invite public mockery of its acts or decisions? If courts may punish, may they not use the power which the state has put into their hands, adhering strictly to the letter of their statute book in order to prevent the necessity of punishment? Surely they may; assuredly they ought. We want no new laws respecting the Sabbath, we invoke no additional legislative aid, but we do ask, that the Sabbath, as a divine institution, essential to individual and social happiness, and, therefore, to civil prosperity, may be protected.

INDUCTION.—On Wednesday, the 19th Nov., the Presbytery of Montreal, in connection with the Presbyterian Church of Canada, inducted the Rev. R. C. Swinton, into the pastoral charge of the associated congregations of St. Louis and North Georgetown. The services of the day were conducted by the Rev. Messrs. Troup of English River, and Fraser of Montreal. At both churches the people cordially welcomed their young minister. This settlement is a most harmonious one, opening, to a laborer of tried fidelity, a wider door of usefulness. We sympathise with the congregations which have lost the services of Mr. Swinton, and whilst we wish him much comfort and success in his new sphere of labour, we hope the field he has left will soon be occupied by one of kindred spirit and missionary zeal.

RED RIVER MISSION.—It is with much pleasure that we record how providentially Mr. Black was relieved from his difficulties at St. Pauls, and enabled to proceed to his destination, through the considerate kindness of His Excellency, Governor Ramsey, of the Minnesota Territory, who permitted our missionary to travel under protection of a well equipped party he was conducting in person toward the Red River settlements, and caused Mr. B. to be supplied with every needful accommodation on the journey, free of charge. The Convener of the Home Mission Committee has thought it his duty to address a letter of thanks to Governor Ramsey, acknowledging the obligations under which he has placed that Committee and the Church at large, by his generous conduct on this occasion.

MINISTERS' WIDOWS' AND ORPHANS' FUND.—The Synod's Committee met in Toronto, agreeably to notice, on the evening of the 24th Dec., and again, by adjournment, on the 25th. Present—Rev. Dr. Burns, Messrs. John McMurrich, George Elmslie, George Blain, and John Burns. In the absence of the Convener, John McMurrich, Esq., was called to the chair.

The minutes of the last meeting of Committee held at Hamilton on the 13th August, were read and sustained. The Committee approved of the actings of the sub-Committee in reference to the directions given by them to the Treasurer, for the investment of the capital which had been paid in, and the payment of allowances to Widows.

Certain regulations for the present administration of the Fund, were considered and unanimously agreed to; and all cases not therein provided for, are to be settled at the discretion of the Committee, or reserved for the decision of Synod.

The Rev. Dr. Burns, Rev. A. Gale, and Mr. John Burns, were appointed a Committee to correspond with, and obtain reports from the several deputations appointed at a former meeting, to visit the Presbyteries on behalf of the Fund; and if, in any cases, the duty has not been fully performed, to urge the parties to its speedy discharge.

TORONTO FEMALE ASSOCIATION FOR RELIEF OF COLOURED FUGITIVES.—We are glad to hear of the active and most useful labours of this Association. We are informed of much misery relieved, and much suffering mitigated, by the providing of clothing, fuel, &c., to poor fugitives. The Society is also most careful to stimulate habits of industry, and assists in finding work for the labourers' hands.

We gladly notice an important meeting to be held on the 8th of January, in St. Lawrence Hall—the proceeds of which are to be applied to the objects of this Society. We refer to the Soiree, or Promenade Concert, for which our lady friends have been making busy preparations for these two weeks past. The meeting will unite innocent gratification with the means of intellectual improvement. Mr. Ward, the eloquent coloured preacher, is expected to be present, also the clerical and other heads of the Anti-Slavery Society. The Mayor has kindly granted the use of the spacious Hall; and eminent professional musicians have agreed to give their services.

Subscriptions will be received by Mrs. Willis, Mrs. Henning, Miss McNally, and the Secretaries.

THE POST OFFICE.—Great improvement has been made in this department. Papers "refused," or "not called for," at the different offices, were formerly sent to the dead letter office, without any intimation to the publisher. It was a step in the right direction when they were returned to the publisher, even although, as was often the case with us, postage was charged; but an excellent plan has now been adopted, which obviates all the difficulties, viz: the Postmaster sending a notice to the publisher, that a paper addressed to a certain individual remains in his office, stating the reason. We do not know why seve-