

We leave Mr. Macgregor's letter to make its due impression, and we invite suggestions from correspondents on this subject:—

DEAR SIR.—

I rejoice in the question put by your zealous and much respected correspondent—"Why, as a Church, we have not taken up the Sabbath question? and the summoning together of the Synod's Committee, to deliberate concerning the matter?" I hail this as an auspicious omen, as the commencement of a brighter day, and fervently do I pray that the Lord, the Spirit, may enable us to embark in this cause with besetting energy, and to lift up a standard against the enemy, who threatens to trample under foot this Divine institution.

Let me state briefly, one or two reasons why, with all due deference to the opinions of my brethren, I think that the Church trusting to the promised countenance and aid of her Divine Head, should enter upon this path as that of her present duty.

First, the circumstances of the Church militant throughout the world, invite her to adopt this course.

The present age, as it has been often observed, is remarkable for a war of opinions. This contest has been waged with such earnestness and perseverance between the friends of the truth, revealed in the Word of God, on the one hand, and the supporters of the cunning inventions of the depraved and deceitful heart of man, on the other—between the spiritual and authorised worship of the living God, on the one hand, and the self-imposed and superstitious practices of idolatrous or formal ceremonies on the other, as to convince us that we have arrived at that "last time" foretold by the spirit of prophecy, when men should depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits and doctrines of devils. While this contest has raged with varied success in that department of the battle-field, on which the legions of infidelity, and the armies of the cross have been opposed to each other,—the governments of the nations, which have given their power to Antichrist, and the selfish worldlings who are hastening to be rich, but not towards God, have been no less active in another. The opponents of Sabbath sanctification, have not scrupled to array themselves in hostility to the authority of Christ himself, and the object which they undisguisedly seek to obtain, is the acknowledgment of their own right and title to a claim of propriety in that day, which God has commanded to be kept holy, and of which the Son of Man has declared His right to be the Sovereign Lord. As a witnessing Church, therefore, desirous of being found faithful in her contendings for the inalienable rights of her divine Redeemer, to which she has solemnly pledged herself, before God and the world, the Presbyterian Church of Canada cannot, without exposing herself to the charge of criminal indifference, in a cause of such mighty importance, remain an inactive spectator of this contest. It is her solemn duty to occupy no doubtful position, but to appear with all the resources at her command, and with all her men of might on the Lord's side. If through a deficiency of interest or zeal in the cause of her glorious Head, who is the Governor among the nations, she shall permit His enemies to prevail and trample His own day under their feet, how will she ever be able to answer in the day of enquiry and of judgment, when judgment will be instituted against the house of God? Oh! let her not commit so fatal an error, let her not incur so great guilt. Let her have due respect to the great recompense of reward, promised by the Redeemer himself to the Primitive Church of Smyrna, "be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life."

But secondly, the signal tokens of His approbation which God has vouchsafed to the efforts of those who have pursued this course, ought to stimulate us to be followers in the same track—These tokens have been vouchsafed often in the midst of great and bitter opposition, and after

many seemingly adverse and trying disappointments. Need I say that I allude here more especially to the success, which, after many defeats, has crowned the efforts of the friends of the Sabbath, in closing several important lines of Railway in Scotland, against the running of passenger and traffic trains on the day of sacred rest. This success was obtained after hope had nigh given place to despair. Nor will the decided advocacy of the sacred claims of the Sabbath, by so many individuals of the operative and labouring classes in Great Britain, in whose favour an exemption to observe it religiously had been ostentatiously and industriously claimed, be regarded as the least convincing token, that this has arisen from the movement of the Spirit of God upon the human heart, in connection with this blessed cause. The production of upwards of one thousand essays, respectable for the piety of sentiment, and the powers of literary composition which they display, by unlearned persons, in the varied walks of humble life, will remain a noble memorial of the influence of Divine truth in elevating the human mind, above the maxims and practices of a world living in wickedness. These all emphatically renounce the exemption ostentatiously claimed, and declare that the infraction of the commanded rest of the Lord's-day, by worldly recreation, or business, would vitally affect the most valued privileges and best interests of the writers. Wherever the fact now stated has become known, it has not failed to produce a powerful sensation on the Christian community. Nor should we overlook or undervalue that token which God has been pleased more recently still to give us for good. We observe this in the general, (I had almost said universal) outburst of alarm and righteous indignation at the attempt of Her Majesty's present Ministers, to violate the sanctity of the Sabbath, by opening the London Post Office on that day.—The movement so unexpected in point of extent, by the most sanguine of the friends of the Sabbath—has been countenanced and promoted by men in the highest official stations, and by not a few even, whose worldly interest we might have supposed, would have led them to adopt a different course. By such a token as this, we are assured that the seed which is sown in faith, will not be suffered to perish.

Thirdly, the reflective influence which the vigorous prosecution of the cause of Sabbath sanctification is calculated to exert, on all the other benevolent Christian objects at which the Church may aim, ought to lead us to its adoption. We need not here stay to point out how much the faithful working out of a single scheme of useful enterprise, is fitted to improve the character, and multiply the resources of a Church. Let it be distinctly remembered, that there is a peculiar blessing provided, not merely to the man who keepeth the Sabbath from polluting it, but also to the Church in its collective capacity, as was frequently experienced by the ancient Church of Israel, so that by giving to the cause of the Sabbath, that prominence in our ecclesiastical deliberations, which it justly deserves in the present aspect of worldly affairs, we might look up to God in confident expectation of His countenance and favor. Zeal for the Sabbath of the Lord is fitted to promote a revival of vital godliness among our people, and to advance the cause of pure and undefiled religion in the land.

The means for giving the cause of the Sabbath a prominent position in Canada, have been frequently stated in the Record. These are petitions to the Legislature for the more effectual protection of the Sabbath from desecration—the formation of alliances resembling the Sabbath Alliance of Scotland, or of associations in connection with the several Presbyteries of the Church at their respective seats, for holding public meetings, inviting the friendly co-operation of Christian brethren of other denominations, and disseminating tracts bearing upon the subject. My views on this point, are summarily expressed in the motion which I submitted to the Presbytery of Hamilton,

at its meeting, on the 9th of May, and is as follows:—(See Ec. & Mis Record, vol. v, page 35)

"That this Presbytery, considering the importance of the sanctification of the Lord's day, resolve to form, as soon as possible, a general Sabbath Alliance, (or Association,) in connection with the Presbytery of Hamilton, to hold meetings, and to disseminate tracts, as well as to put in operation other means to bring the claims of the Christian Sabbath more prominently under the notice of the public, as a divine institution, the best adapted to promote the spiritual and eternal interests of man; and that the brethren residing in the convenient country districts be recommended to form themselves into subordinate and subsidiary alliances, having the same great and glorious object in view."

But while we put in motion those means, which may exert an influence on our rulers and magistrates, to incline them to a more diligent and faithful performance of their duties in regard to the Sabbath, we should regard the moral power which they are fitted to wield over the sentiments and habits of the community at large, as far more to be desired to behold in full and effective operation. It is undoubtedly every way more desirable, that the sanctification of the Sabbath should flow from the conscientious convictions of the human mind, than from the most favorable decisions of a court of law—that it should rest not so much on the power of the sword of the civil magistrate, as on the power of the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God, that liveth and abideth for ever.

I remain, dear Sir,

Yours most faithfully,

JOHN G. MACGREGOR.

Guelph, Dec., 1849.

POLYNESIA.

We have been favoured by a friend, whose brother is labouring as a missionary in the "Islands of the Sea" with the *Samoan Reporter*, a half-yearly paper, printed and published at the London Missionary Society's Press, Leulomoega, Upolu, Samoa, South Pacific.

The *Reporter* is published upon a sheet of about half the size of our common newspapers, and is exceedingly well executed. The work is done by natives.

These dark places of the earth are still the habitations of horrid cruelty. The demon of war is ravaging the islands, breaking up the schools, dispersing the converts, and causing the missionaries for the present, reluctantly to leave their several spheres of labour. The war between the inhabitants of different islands, or different districts of the same island, is carried on with relentless fury; the contending parties seem to aim at the extermination of each other. They burn the houses, destroy the bread-fruit and cocoa-nut trees, and leave their track a desolate waste. The peaceful and unsuspecting inhabitants, men, women and children, are sometimes surprised, brutally murdered in cold blood, and their bodies eaten.

Mr. Stallworthy one of the missionaries reports that the church members and candidates of his charge, advised with him as to the course they ought to pursue in regard to the war. He counselled them to take no part in it, except when strictly defensive, and as a last resort, after reasonable means to avoid it had been tried. He exhorted them to be well persuaded in their own minds, as to the lawfulness of the course they should adopt. As the people were so much re-