

WESLEYAN
SATURDAY, MAY 10, 1879.

It is requested that any brother who does not intend to be present at the approaching Conference will kindly notify either of the Superintendents of the Halifax Circuits.

“LO! IT IS SPRING.”

As in human friendships, so in the circling seasons—

“Welcome ever smiles,
And farewell goes out sighing.”
Fierce as are its storms, and stern as is its aspect, even winter is not without its charms.

Still,—
“Like a fashionable host,
That slightly shakes his parting guest by the hand;
And with his arms out-stretched, as he would fly,
Grasping in the comer;”
so we bid adieu to winter and welcome its bright successor—

“Spring, spring, beautiful spring.”
Now, communion with Nature is one of the most ennobling exercises possible to the human mind. To cultivate a sense of kinship with the animate world around us; to foster a sympathy with the manifold works of God; and to cherish a subtle intercourse of spirit with these visible objects, is to discover a beauty and a harmony that purify and elevate the soul; for, according to the old poet, Nicholas Mitchell,—

“All that refines, sublimates humanity.”
And yet how little is this matter thought of. Who ever thinks of communing with Nature? A few whose bent of mind or profession in life, inclines them in that direction, study some marvellous forms of natural phenomena, for purposes of science; a few more cultivate a familiarity with the beauties of Nature as a pleasurable pastime or as an attractive accomplishment; but how seldom are they studied as a means of devout edification. Many justify such neglect by pleading a want of capacity; others again plead a want of leisure; but does not the real truth lie in this: that the spirit of the age is unfavourable to such an exercise? The age we live in, perhaps beyond any preceding age, is stern, matter-of-fact, utilitarian, and pre-eminently practical; and in so far as this spirit prevails, it is a material age. Everything is made to bend towards this point. Is it not so in science; in philosophy, in politics and in commerce? Where, then, is there room for communion with Nature? And how much is lost in consequence? The spheres murmur their music in vain. The woods are vocal with minstrelsy for nought. The fields unfold their beauties to no effect. The mind has no perception of “the light and beauty that dwell in nature.” And thus it is that—

“The world’s great altar-stairs,
That slope through darkness up to God,”
resound but rarely with the echoing footsteps of meditative thoughts, ascending and descending, like the angels upon Jacob’s ladder, in missions of Holy activity.

The return of Spring calls us to converse with Nature, and learn its lessons, and make it a shrine upon which we may offer the devotion of the mind that can look “from Nature up to Nature’s God.” “Lo! it is spring.” The fields are putting on their gay attire. Mayflowers have opened their blossoms and are shedding forth their sweetness. Surely these floral anticipations of Summer have something to say to us, if only one had ears to hear. If summer fruits speak to us of the rich resources of Providence and of the goodness that dispenses them: if autumn leaves remind us of fading, uncertain life; and if desolate winter prefigures death, it is only reasonable that spring, with its lightsome step and ruddy face, should have its lessons too.

Flowers are a study in themselves. Who has not heard of the poetry of flowers, and the language of flowers, and LONGFELLOW would seem to refer to the astronomy of flowers, when he calls them—
“Stars, that in earth’s firmament do shine.”
But, what is even more than these, is

there not the religion of flowers? Poetry has been defined by Wilmet as, “The natural religion of literature;” and are not flowers just as much the natural religion of the material world? Their beauty is their virtue; their fragrance is their incense, and their heliotropical tendency is the expression of their loyal attachment to the sun that gives them life. How they preach to us in their very looks and gestures! The snow-white lily bids us wear “the white flower of a blameless life;” and growing up as it does, not only in the retired nooks of the valley, but also from amidst the ooze of the Nile, in virgin purity, untainted by its deadly contagion; so we are to maintain a spotlessness of character, notwithstanding the corruption that is in the world. The CAMELLIA which is so symmetrical, and yet utterly without fragrance, admonishes us to seek the power as well as the form of godliness. And possessing this inward life, then we are to illustrate the modesty of virtue, and not be all show and shine, like the MAGNOLIA GRANDIFLORA of North America, whose scarlet flowers seem to set the hills on fire. The new-found TITANUM, the colossal flowers of Sumatra, which has an average diameter of thirty-three inches, calls us to grandeur of moral character, while the elegant ACACIA, which grows tall and sends its roots deep in the soil, teaches a high ambition together with a deep humility. And if the MAYFLOWER stands at the portal of summer to call our youth to an early consecration of themselves to God, the CERESUS, which flowers late, is equally eloquent in its appeals to the fruitfulness of age. And so of all the bright array of floral life, each has its lesson and each is an image of some noble truth. Especially should we emulate the heliotropism of flowers by yielding as ready a response to the truth and love of God, as the flowers yield to the sun.

We have only to add, as a finish to these moralizings, that such a use of spring cannot fail to refine and sublimate the mind. It will give a colour to the character, just as the rose lends its hues to the face that looks upon it. And as we turn from the flowers of Nature to Him who is the “Rose of Sharon,” we shall catch at once the aroma and reflections of His pure and noble mind.

OBJECTING TO THE TEN COMMANDMENTS.

Readers of the daily papers have seen bald allusions to a discussion which enlivened the proceedings of the Halifax School Board one day last week. To us it had a denominational interest. On the surface of the public reports there were the simple facts that negotiations had been pending for the use of the Cobourg St. Methodist Church, as a public school-room; that a commissioner had objected to religious prints or mottoes on the walls; and that certain remarks followed bearing upon religious pictures and images, as well as religious instruction associated with other schools supported by the Board. We were curious to learn what prints on the walls of this unpretending place of worship were so questionable as to offend the eye of a guardian of our public education. There had been, we were aware, active agencies in that neighborhood in the direction of Temperance. Was it possible that one of these bodies had left its emblematic pictures in a prominent part of the building? A promising Sabbath School is a good feature of the operations conducted through the Cobourg St. mission agency. Had it adopted any doubtful motto? The mystery was soon solved. The obnoxious print was that of the Ten Commandments! A commissioner had demanded that it should be removed; another commissioner positively declared that it should not. A compromise was suggested;—the Romish version of the Ten Commandments might be suspended beside it. This was a spark for the Puritan magazine, and it exploded. There was but one version of the Ten Commandments, it was asserted—a declaration, of course, fully justified by the historic fact that Protestantism alone holds the Ten, while

Romanism insists upon eliminating one altogether, and dividing another into two, by way of supplying the complement.

Compromises are often troublesome. They are sure to be that when attempting to harmonize irreconcilable elements. There are compromises of the crucible, which keep two antagonistic atoms in peace; but they are always critical experiments. Your novice in chemical study is forever endangering health and disturbing domestic comfort, by bringing opposite ingredients into contact. Social compromises, linking together principles opposite as the poles, cannot be free from occasional rupture. When Roman Catholic schools were admitted as part of the general public economy of education in Halifax, to be sustained out of the common fund, all semblance of a Free School system ceased at once. Methods, and books, and teachers, distinctively Roman Catholic, became from that moment an established feature of a certain proportion of the Halifax public education. To prevent this if possible—at least to preserve the system from excessive imposition, it has been necessary for religious papers and guardians to speak very plainly. The secular papers have helped at intervals. Much had been gained in these controversies. One after another, glaring inconsistencies had been checked. It was still believed that liberties were taken with school management to the extent of exhibiting images and even introducing religious ceremonies, where Roman Catholic teachers had full control. This was to be expected, perhaps, when appointments of teachers were left to both religious sections of the Board, each promising not to interfere with the other. But we little imagined that the camel which thus obtruded with its nose, was so soon to insist upon having its entire body admitted, even if the unoffending occupant should find it necessary to walk out of the house!

It was decided that Cobourg Street Church, plus the Ten Commandments, was to be hired by the School Board at a specific rate of rental. So we have been saved from a social disgrace. More than this, in all probability we have been deprived of witnessing what might so easily have ensued—a fair, manly, public interposition, which would have ended in placing Halifax on a level with other communities in Nova Scotia and New Brunswick. Why this anomaly should exist for a generation, which gives the agents or students of Romanism the power to dictate terms of educational management to an entire Protestant city, we cannot understand. With our views and feelings we could almost wish that one more indignity might be offered to our Protestant pride, if only it would result in securing for our children that perfect independence which their forefathers surely earned for them before Halifax was founded.

THE GENERAL BOOK COMMITTEE.

The Eastern Section of the General Book Committee met, according to announcement, on Thursday, 1st instant. It is generally known that much anxiety had been superinduced by circumstances arising from the serious depression in trade, affecting the interests of the Book Room to an extent beyond all anticipation. With a decline in sales, as well as in the other departments of the business, it became a question of no little perplexity what was to be done. The year’s operations, in marked exception to those of the quadrannium recently closed, were admonitory of caution. Especially was this the case in view of peculiar conditions which seemed to point in the direction of exceptional difficulties confronting the book trade, particularly our own. During four years previous to 1878, while business firms were tottering and falling, the Book Room went on increasing its volume of trade, until the sales went up from \$6,000 to \$18,000. At length the general stagnation began to affect even this concern. Since January 1878, there has been a gradual decline in sales, consequent upon several commercial disadvantages which all who

have trade relations in the Maritime Provinces understand too well. The Committee, therefore, were met by a grave difficulty. Every possible phase of that difficulty was discussed. Wisdom there was in the Committee, embodying as it did some of the principal business ministers and laymen of our church; and it was all needed, and all taxed to the utmost.

Certain conclusions forced themselves upon the minds of these brethren. Every contingency had been outlined in the debates of last June, when, both in Committee and in the joint conference at Sackville, the future interests of the Book Room were under consideration. The past, with the probable and possible future, were before them. With time to deliberate, by repeated votes, all of which meant the same purpose, it was resolved to appoint two principal officers. That decision guided the General Conference to a similar conclusion. Elections followed, by which two brethren were authorized to contemplate the responsibilities of office at the end of the ecclesiastical year. These having formally announced their acceptance of the trust, there remained but a single consistent duty—that of providing for them. To keep them both free from all extraneous obligations, that their undivided attention and energies might be given to official work, it was necessary that the Concern, and that alone, should pay them. A resolution to this effect was adopted.

On the general subject thus far presented, we have, personally, no opinion to offer. Our readers were informed at the time of our reasons for opposing the division of offices. Those reasons, as yet unchanged, were based upon what we regarded as an intelligent acquaintance with the Book Room, and the conditions by which it was nurtured. But from the moment when a clear majority decided in favor of two salaried officers, we have conscientiously endeavored to carry out the intentions of our brethren. In the decline of business this year, nothing has happened beyond what we predicted at its commencement; and the sales or profits of a single year may or may not be a criterion under any circumstances. With the actual condition of things now before us, we may, however—indeed we must—give expression to one or two very emphatic utterances:—

Our brethren elect need all the strength of the church, if their position is to become one of security, saying nothing of the great prosperity of the Concern, for which we all hope through this arrangement. Much will be expected of them. They both have special reputation. They are free from the complications and perplexities which hitherto have made the combined offices so laborious and burdensome. Contemplating—as we believe this plan fully does—the retention of the full staff of assistance in the Book department, we may naturally look for a very large increase of prosperity in every branch of the business. It will be seen at a glance that success is absolutely necessary if the Concern is even to hold its existence. Therefore—but need we express conclusions? As a matter of honour, leaving loyalty out of the question, those who voted for this experiment ought to afford very active, persevering, conscientious co-operation in its support.

CORRESPONDENCE.

MR. EDITOR.—A short time since we offered a few remarks bearing upon the connexional principle, particularly as it affects some parts of our financial economy. To say the least, it is by no means certain what length of time may yet elapse before the Missionary Society is in a position to equalize the salaries on the Missionary Stations, bringing all up to a minimum of \$650. Meantime some measure can surely be devised, and ought at once to be put into execution to permanently arrest the shrinking tendency of ministerial remuneration so painfully apparent during the past few years. Sometimes it is affirmed (by way of compensation for inequality in salary) that the revolutions of the itinerant wheel will eventually bring up those that are now at the bottom, and vice versa. Certainly this both sounds and looks well. Potentially it is correct. In point of fact, and in a

large proportion of cases, it is incorrect. A modern acquaintance with maritime Methodism will readily suggest not a few workers in the vineyard, who for several consecutive triennial terms have laboured on Mission Stations, and on the other hand, several, though much less numerous, who have similarly held what are considered first class appointments. Concerning causes which lead to this it is not our business to inquire.

What then can be done to remedy the evil complained of? What have other denominations done; what are they now doing? Four hundred and seventy four ministers and professors left the Scottish Establishment in 1843, and formed the Free Church of that country. Says one of its own divines: “The Free Church had obviously a very hard work to accomplish. If these ministers were to be retained in the office and in the service of the church at home, it was necessary to make provision for their maintenance. Some steps had been taken towards this, previous to the meeting of the Assembly, and a scheme had been matured and adopted for securing even to the poorest congregations the benefits of a Gospel ministry. It was arranged that all the contributions which might be given for the maintenance of the ministry should be put into one common fund, out of which an equal payment should be made to each minister of the Free Church. This has been called the Sustentation Fund, and it constitutes the chief means of support which the ministers of the Free Church enjoy. Each congregation is called upon to contribute to this Fund what its members may be able or willing to bestow; and at the end of every year an equal distribution of it is made among the ministers of the church. During the first year it yielded £100 to each minister, and since that period it has afforded to them an average stipend somewhat exceeding £120. This does not represent the whole income enjoyed by all ministers of the Free Church. A considerable number of them receive directly from their congregations a supplemental sum, which, according to a law of the General Assembly is appropriated to them out of the ordinary church-door collections.” And again: “The Free Church, mainly through the device of her Sustentation Fund, has been enabled to spread her ministrations over the whole kingdom. She has not merely occupied the cities and populous villages, but has penetrated into the most remote rural parishes. God has everywhere honored her testimony, and is making it an instrument in reviving the cause of religious truth and liberty over the earth.” (Paper by Rev. W. Wilson.)

Without making comment on the above, we hope, Mr. Editor, “by your leave,” to conclude in our next with a reference to the mode of ministerial support in the Wesleyan Methodist Connexion of Great Britain. J. W. WILSON.

JUDGE MARSHALL ON THE RESURRECTION.

DEAR SIR,—In a pamphlet which I lately published, one of the religious subjects therein discussed and explained, treats of the facts and events of the first resurrection, mentioned in chap. 20 of the sublime Book of Revelation. Since that publication, I have been reading the celebrated work on the Scripture prophecies generally, by Dr. Thomas Newton, a Bishop in the English Established Church; and I am much gratified at finding my views and explanations in the pamphlet concerning the Resurrection, agree with those on the subject contained in that standard work by the learned and eminent Bishop.

As this subject is now engaging considerable attention in religious circles, and as it is probable there are but few among our Christian laity who possess, or have read, the Bishop’s work, I will here, with your permission, give some of the most material passages of it, concerning that first resurrection:

They commence in page 660 of his book, where he refers to chapter 20 of “Revelation,” in which is first mentioned the binding and confinement of Satan in the “bottomless pit,” for a thousand years; and then the Bishop cites these words from verse 4 to 7 of the chapter:—
“And I saw thrones, and they sat upon them; and judgement was given unto them; and I saw the souls of them that were beheaded for the witness of Jesus, and for the word of God; and which had not worshipped the beast, neither his image, neither had received his mark upon their foreheads, or in their hands; and they lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years, verse 5. But the rest of the dead lived not again, until the thousand years were finished. This is the first resurrection; on such the second death hath no power; but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with him a thousand years.”
The Bishop then, in discussing the subject, makes the following striking and

most material conclusions:—“Wickedness, the reign of right, the administration is given to the saints and the martyrs and not only those who suffered any kind heathen emperors, fused to comply with the beast, raised from the dead, raised from the dead, lived not again until the thousand years were finished; so prerogative of the above the rest of such the second death. The second death is the punishment of the paraphrases and this very book (Revelation) it is declared to be burning with fire.”
Nothing is more prophetic of the first resurrection, even though to in a figurative thousand year, of Christ; or reckoned from the time of these periods, will answer the demand, the purity and happiness of prophecy, thereof fulfilled.

As to its being, it, without the presence. For with said, that some beheaded, lived a thousand years, lived not again, were finished, “living again” by a proper death.

If the spiritual sense, dead! really rise, same manner, between them.”
dom of heaven, earth, is the plain of Daniel, and all of St. John: and accomplishment kingdom some ties as to a contrivance of this first says:—“A pom might be produced from Jewish and then mentions the former, in the of Christian writings, in the second Millennium to his time. I dox Christians, ledge that there the flesh (meaning a thousand built and adorned Tertullian, third century, p kingdom prom earth; of their years. Lactantius the fourth century this subject, in Divine Institution. “In short, the was generally by and purest ages learned Dodwell was one principle of the primitive coveted martyrs takers of the pre-martyrs in the Requesting, a section of this journal as cony

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