

shall we be made to rejoice in the abundance of peace, goodness and truth.
 May the Lord of hosts be with us! May the God of Jacob be our refuge and strength.
 "Peace be within thy walls, and prosperity within thy palaces!"

For the Christian Messenger.

Rev. Robert Wilson on Revivals.

DEAR BROTHER,

At a public meeting of the Congregational Body, held recently at Toronto, which was attended by the Rev. Robert Wilson, as "delegate from the Congregational Union of Nova Scotia and New Brunswick," that gentleman addressed the meeting with reference to the state of religion in this part of the world. He said that they "would understand from his communication and writings, that he differed somewhat from them with regard to the movements which went by the name of revivals, but which he (Mr. Wilson) called periodical excitements. He believed that in the lower provinces they had proved a great curse to the spirit of vital godliness." Having adverted to the course pursued during certain revivals in Maine, where the converts were generally required to wait several months before they joined the churches, he stated that "very different indeed was it the case in the lower provinces, for there every effort was made to get the converts under water at once; and it was much to be regretted that out of 50 or 60 who might join a church at one of those periodical excitements, by the time the next excitement came round, five or six alone remained."

These statements require some notice. 1. Mr. Wilson chooses to employ the term "periodical excitements" instead of "revivals," and not obscurely intimates that the latter word is inappropriately used. Indeed, it may be fairly inferred that he disbelieves in revivals—at any rate, in revivals in Nova Scotia. Be it so. Notwithstanding Mr. Wilson's ignorance, or his refusal to believe, there are thousands of Christian men in this Province who are ready to testify to the existence and blessed effects of "times of refreshing from the presence of the Lord."

2. Mr. Wilson asserts that these "periodical excitements," as he calls them, have "proved a great curse to the spirit of vital godliness." This is a grave charge. It is either true or false. If true, we ought to pray that there may be no more revivals: are the Christians of Nova Scotia prepared for this?—If false, (and false it is—we defy the speaker to substantiate his assertion) then Mr. Wilson is bound to ask pardon of his brethren of other Denominations for the grievous offence he has committed against them.

3. Whereas Mr. Wilson states that "every effort is made to get the converts under water at once"—I will not stop to expose his rude and uncourteous phraseology. He is evidently accustomed to that style. But it is important to remind your readers that at Jerusalem, on the day of Pentecost—at Caesarea, after Peter's preaching to Cornelius and his friends—and at Philippi, when the jailor and his family were brought to God, the converts were baptized "at once." As soon as there is satisfactory evidence of conversion, baptism should follow. It may very properly take place "at once" in many cases; in others, some delay may be preferable. Every church will exercise its own judgment in this matter. There can be no uniformity of procedure.

4. Mr. Wilson affirms that out of 50 or 60 who join a church during an "excitement," not more than five or six remain "by the time the next excitement comes round." I believe that every Baptist pastor in Nova Scotia is prepared to say, "I deny the fact." It is a gross misrepresentation. That we are sometimes deceived, is readily admitted; it was the lot of the Apostles themselves;—but the assertion that not more than one in ten of supposed converts holds out can only be regarded as a gratuitous slander.

The most powerful revivals in our churches have occurred within the last few years in the Western Association. Let me place before your readers the returns of four successive years, showing the number of baptisms, and of the four next years, showing the number of exclusions and restorations:—

	Baptisms.	Exclusions.	Restorations.
1855	463	—	—
1856	386	20	13
1857	296	60	14
1858	342	42	35
1859	—	28	36

Now, unless our churches have been astonishingly remiss in discipline (which is not to be believed) our converts have stood

quite as well as those of other countries. I observe that at the Jubilee of the Philadelphia Baptist Association, in 1857, the following statistics, embracing fifty years, were given:—Baptized, 20,659—Excluded, 5338—Restored, 810.

Mr. Wilson told his friends in Toronto that "in connection with the cause in the lower provinces he might also mention that progress had been much retarded for many years, by the class of men who had obtained possession of their pulpits—men who had not even a moral character. At Cape Cancer and Cape Riddle (so printed in the report) there had been six or seven churches, but now only two or three were left." This relates, I presume, to Congregational affairs, and cannot but call forth an expression of regret that it should be necessary to give so discouraging a statement.

It is to be hoped that when Mr. Wilson next describes the state of religion among the Baptists he will provide himself with accurate information.

Yours truly,
 J. M. CRAMP.

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Free Church Synodical Meetings.

On looking over the Report of the Synodical Meeting of the Free Church of Nova Scotia, recently held in Halifax, we were struck with the close corporate character of that body. It is "a reverend court," not a representative assembly, of delegates sent from so many individual churches. The accounts given of the state of religion in their several presbyteries in the Province seem to be, rather verbal expressions of the opinion of the ministers, than any united voice coming from the members composing the society or congregation. We must say, we vastly prefer the style in which such information is given by "the letters from the churches" to our Baptist Associations. Besides the greater agreement of the latter, as we think, with Bible principles, and their defined and authentic character, they bring before the associated body the whole membership of the churches more effectually, and shew that the connection formed in the Association is a union of the Churches, and not merely that of the Ministers or Presbyters. We have no desire to convey to our readers any other than a correct view of the Free Church mode of government as we understand it, but the satisfaction we feel with our own Church principles, as understood and applied by Baptists, was never greater than now, and we were never so much persuaded of their entire adaptation to produce the proper results of christian fellowship as we are at the present time.

The power possessed by Synods, whether Roman Catholic or Presbyterian, we think at least dangerous to the liberties of the people over whom they exercise control. A hierarchy may use its ecclesiastical authority for good, but how often has it been otherwise! How often the conscientious convictions of duty with regard to ordinances have been, by such authority, crushed, or the terrors of the courts brought before pious individuals to induce them to pursue a course contrary to that which they believed they had learned from the New Testament.

Where ecclesiastical power is possessed by a hierarchy, we care not whether called by one name or another, it offers temptations for undue exercise of power, which it is difficult for human nature to resist. Hence the greater safety for true religion in countries where the sects are on an equality and one does not much predominate over another.

We find by the Report, above referred to, that the subject of Union received considerable attention. Efforts have been made for some time past, on the part of the Free Church, to effect a union between that body, including congregations in Newfoundland, Bermuda, Prince Edward Island, and New Brunswick, and the Presbyterian Church of Nova Scotia, (formerly denominated the Antiburghers.) Committees have been appointed some two or three years since, we believe, by the two bodies to consider the matter. The result of this action has been a series of resolutions, brought in at the above Synod, adopting a Basis of Union. It is proposed that each body shall drop the name by which they have been hitherto known, and become "The Presbyterian Church of the Lower Provinces." This Basis of Union is "to be sent down to the Presbyteries and Kirk Sessions" for their concurrence. Whether all the "inferior

courts" will give in their adherence is as yet a matter of uncertainty. The framers of this course of proceeding, it appears, have also made arrangements to enable them to receive the Established Church of Scotland into their fraternity! The Editor of the *Witness*, however, seems conscious that some doubt exists as to the reception the subject may meet with in that body. He says, "A few prejudiced men in the 'Kirk' will be shocked at the proposed movement, but we feel sure that it will gladden the hearts of the more intelligent and pious among them."

The principle of Church and State hitherto held so firmly by the Free Church and as strongly condemned by the other body—the Presbyterian Church of Nova Scotia—we understand is to be kept in abeyance, at present.

Where a union of Christian men for Christian purposes is formed we must of course consider it commendable. If formed for the purpose of obtaining power and exerting influence over others than their own people, it may wear a very different aspect, and tend little to the benefit of the parties so united. It may even result in further division amongst themselves where great antagonist principles like those of Voluntaryism and Church-and-Stateism are held at the same time.

Protestant Alliance Lectures.

The Spirit of Popery, and the duty of Protestants in regard to Public Education. By Matthew H. Richey, Esq.

The Papal Supremacy examined. By Rev. Robert Wilson.

These are the last two lectures delivered before the Protestant Alliance. Perhaps we should not greatly err if we were to affirm that they are the best.

Mr. Richey's is an able production. He exposes in a masterly manner the Roman Catholic policy in regard to education, and shows the danger of truckling to Rome in that matter. His views on the subject of Government schools are briefly expressed; too little space is given to that branch of the discussion. The sentiments propounded harmonise very nearly with our own. We think that education wholly supported by public money should be merely secular; that when it is sustained, in whole or in part, by local taxation, and subject to popular control, Commissioners or Trustees, should not be allowed to enforce or prohibit religious instruction, but should respect the voice of the people, with this exception, that sectarian teaching should always be disallowed; that separate schools, in which denominational tenets are avowedly taught, ought not to be upheld by the public funds; and that in all cases a jealous vigilance over the rights of conscience should be exercised. No form of sectarianism should be permitted to appear. For this reason, as well as on the score of good taste, we object to the use of the Scotch version of Psalms in the Normal School. The difficulties attending the introduction of the religious element are confessedly great, and probably they are nearest the truth who affirm that there is no safe medium between the secular policy (nicknamed *godless*) and the denominational; the latter can only be worked on the voluntary principle.

Mr. Wilson's lecture is sound and salutary. We commend it to our readers. One of the introductory paragraphs must be extracted:—

"We disclaim all sympathy with those who would raise, on mere political grounds the 'no Popery' cry against our Roman Catholic fellow-subjects, or who would seek to deprive them of a single right as citizens or as members of the body politic, on account of their religious creed. With us the maxim is a settled one, never to be disturbed while reason holds its seat,—*That social proscription on ecclesiastical grounds is persecution, in whatever form it may exist, or whatever sect may be its victim.* Our protest, therefore, would be just as loud and as earnest against the proscription of Romanists as against the proscription of any of the Protestant Communities."

This is too just and liberal for many members of the Protestant Alliance. Had they all held these views the sayings and doings of certain ecclesiastics within the last two months would not have been heard of. Mr. Wilson is far in advance of some of the other lecturers. We trust that they will follow the light and overtake him.

The somewhat unexpected change in the English Ministry seems to have had a favourable influence on public confidence in the preservation of a strict neutrality, and in encouraging the hope of a more speedy pacification of the present disturbed state

of Europe. It is, however, quite impossible as yet to form any correct conjecture as to the course of coming events, until further developments shall appear as to the real intentions both of France and Sardinia, as regards their ulterior views. Should Louis Napoleon and Victor Emanuel act in any material degree in accordance with their latest proclamations in Italy, the consolidation of that noble country which has suffered so much from the long protracted thralldom of foreign tyranny, may be reasonably hoped for. Should, on the other hand, the designs of the Allied Sovereigns be merely the lust of adding kingdom to kingdom, the Italians will have little to expect but a change of masters with the certain prospect of future agitation and trouble within and without. In the latter case, it would be difficult, if not impossible for England to preserve her neutrality.

The state and tactics of the belligerent parties in Italy will be considerably altered by the successes of the Allies, as it is probable the Austrians will, for the present, confine themselves to their strong defences on the River Po and its lower branches, which are said to be very strong, and only to be reduced by siege operations. They will, however, most probably be embarrassed by the blockade of Venice, and perhaps by the landing of a French army in their rear.

The news from India is not of importance, except as it refers to difficulties which have arisen among some regiments of the European troops there, on account of the inequalities of the bounties on the new system enlistment. We trust however that nothing serious will grow out of it.

A most startling occurrence, but happily accompanied with but small loss of human life, took place just previous to the leaving of the English mail. The *Eastern Monarch*, a large East Indiaman from Kurrachee, laden, we believe, with cotton, and having on board 435 souls, chiefly troops returning to England, while lying in the English Channel off Portsmouth, caught fire from spontaneous combustion, and was wholly consumed. Most providentially all the Passengers and crew were rescued from the burning ship by vessels passing at the time, with the exception of one adult and five children.

General Intelligence.

Domestic and Foreign.

FATAL ACCIDENT.—The Yacht Race, on Tuesday last, was marked by an accident in the harbor which proved fatal to one of our most widely known and highly esteemed citizens. The day was fine, but there was a stiff breeze from the Westward which, at times, blew in heavy gusts. The yachts started at 12 o'clock, noon, from Dartmouth Cove, the course being round a buoy off the Engineers' Yard, round another off the Naval Yard, and back to the place of starting; consequently the first part of the race was a dead heat to windward. Shortly after the commencement of the race, one of the boats, the *Firry*, when a little to the East side of the middle of the harbor, was struck by one of the prevailing squalls and capsized. There were in her at the time, the Hon. Ernest G. L. Cochrane, Lieut. of H. M. Ship *Indus*, two midshipmen, Harding Stewart, Esq., of the Purveyor's Department, and Mr. John H. McNab, merchant of this city. Several other boats in the vicinity, from which the accident was seen, hastened to the rescue of the five gentlemen who were struggling in the water. Mr. Stewart was rescued by a whaler under charge of Mr. Fiebwick; Mr. John Wallace, in the yacht *Falcon*, succeeded in picking up the two midshipmen; and the yacht of Mr. S. A. White, in which were that gentleman himself and Jacob Miller Esq., arriving at the place of disaster about the same time managed to take up Lieut. Cochrane and Mr. McNab. The latter gentlemen was, it appears, the only one in the capsized boat who could not swim! and, as this was made known at the time the boat was upset, Lt. Cochrane told Mr. McNab to entrust himself to him. The gallant sailor made every exertion to save the life of his friend and kept hold of him to the last. When dragged into Mr. White's boat, both of them, we understand, were insensible, or nearly so. They were taken, with all possible haste, to the *Indus*, that being, as the wind then was, the most accessible point at which medical aid could be obtained for the sufferers. On arriving there every effort was made, under the direction of Dr. Domville, of the *Indus*, to revive Mr. McNab; but all exertions were unavailing—he was gone. The other gentlemen were found not to have suffered materially.

The remains of Mr. McNab were followed to the grave, on Thursday afternoon, by one of the largest funeral processions that ever appeared in Halifax. The Yacht Club, of which he was one of the most active members, met previously, and passed resolutions expressive of their regret at the untimely loss of their fellow-member. Mr. McNab was a man whose personal acquaintance embraced a very large circle and he was an almost universal favourite with those who knew him. Consequently the sudden and melancholy termination of his life has cast a gloom over the community.—Recorder.