

# Christian Messenger.

A REPOSITORY OF RELIGIOUS, POLITICAL AND GENERAL INTELLIGENCE.

"Not slothful in business: fervent in spirit."

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## Poetry.

### Distractions in Prayer.

I CANNOT pray; yet Lord! thou know'st  
The pain it is to me  
To have my vainly struggling thoughts  
Thus torn away from thee.

Had I, dear Lord, no pleasure found  
But in the thoughts of thee  
Prayers would have come unsought, and been  
A truer liberty.

Yet thou art oft most present, Lord!  
In weak, distracted prayer;  
A sinner out of heart with self,  
Most often finds thee there.

And prayer that humbles, sets the soul  
From all illusions free,  
And teaches it how utterly,  
Dear Lord, it hangs on thee.

The soul that on self-sacrifice  
Is dutifully bent,  
Will bless the chastening hand that makes  
Its prayer its punishment.

Ah Jesus! why should I complain?  
And why fear aught but sin?  
Distractions are but outward things;  
Thy peace dwells far within!

These surface troubles come and go  
Like rufflings of the sea;  
The deeper depth is out of reach  
To all, my God, but thee!

—Faber.

## Nova Scotia Church History.

For the Christian Messenger.

### The Baptists of Nova Scotia.

PERIOD VI.

From A. D. 1838 to A. D. 1850.

LETTER LVII.

OMITTED ORDINATION. UNION WITH CANADA. PURITY OF DOCTRINE. FREEWILL BAPTISTS. INDIANS. ACADIAN FRENCH. PUBLIC EXCLUSIONS. MORMON BAPTISM. FEEBLE CHURCHES. SABBATH SCHOOL UNION. UNION SOCIETIES. FINANCIAL COMMITTEE.

My Young Friend,

I regret to learn that there was an omission in the list of Ordinations given in my fifty-fifth letter. Immediately after the account of J. C. Morse's ordination the following should have been inserted:—

May 19. JAMES PARKER. At Upper Wilmot. Sermon by R. W. Cunningham, from 1 Tim. iv. 16.

Union with New Brunswick and with Canada was discussed in 1846. The Convention was the ultimate result, with regard to the first-named province. Mr. Cramp, then President of the Baptist College, Montreal, being on a visit to these provinces, on an agency for the Grande Ligne Mission, to which object many of the churches contributed very liberally, attended the Association, and arrangements were made for friendly correspondence with Baptist brethren in Canada. It fell to the ground, however, after a year or two.

Among the resolutions passed in 1846 was the following:—

"That whenever any minister declares his rejection of those doctrines the belief in which distinguish us as Calvinistic Baptists, he be no longer regarded as a minister of the gospel in connection with this Association."

This was a very distinct utterance, explicitly stating the doctrinal grounds on which the Association was based. It was intended, no doubt, to operate as a protest against any lowering of the standard. It was a declaration of the unswerving regard held by the Baptists of this province to those views of the Sovereign grace of God in the work of salvation, and of his power and faithfulness in executing its designs, by which our denomination has been ever distinguished.

Some correspondence had taken place the year before with the "Elders' Conference" of the Freewill Baptists in this province, with a view to their co-operation in the support of our institutions, and of other objects of general usefulness, and the cultivation of "christian acquaintance and friendly intercourse." In their final reply the brethren composing the Conference said:—"We are not prepared to contribute to your Institutions, yet we wish

to cultivate good feeling and christian sympathy as extensively as possible with your denomination." No further attempt was made in that direction.

The state of the Indians was brought before the Association in 1847, when it was resolved, "That inasmuch as the mind of our beloved brother Rand has been directed to seek the enlightenment and salvation of the Indians located in different parts of these provinces, and as he has already made some advancement in obtaining a knowledge of their language, it therefore appears to be the mind of God that the Baptists of this province should make immediate and systematic effort to convert from error and sin these natives of our country." A similar resolution was passed in 1848, with this addition, that the Indians "should be considered as composing an important part of the Home Mission field."

Direct effort on behalf of this object was commenced in 1849. The feelings of the brethren assembled at Horton at the "Jubilee Session" of the Association were thus expressed:—

"Resolved, That on this impressive occasion, the fiftieth year of our existence as an Association, it becomes us to acknowledge, with the deepest prostration of soul, our sinful neglect as a denomination, in allowing so long a period to elapse without having made any systematic exertion to rescue from temporal and eternal destitution the Aborigines of our country—whose souls are rational and immortal like our own; who are sunk in the grossest ignorance, superstition, and vice; of whose means of existence we have, as a people, almost deprived them; towards whose moral and physical degradation we have, alas! contributed; and of whom hitherto, it may truly be said "No man hath seemed to care for their souls." We rejoice in believing that a door of access is now being opened for the deliverance of some of them; we acknowledge our everlasting obligation to preach the gospel to them, and to every creature—we pledge ourselves to sustain by our sympathies, our contributions and our prayers, our beloved brother Rand, in the mission, which, under the direction of the Home Missionary Board, he has undertaken among them."

A practical demonstration followed, in the shape of a contribution for the Micmac Mission, amounting to twenty pounds.

The religious public generally manifested great interest in this mission, and rendered liberal aid. The Association resolved in 1850, "That the encouragement vouchsafed in the good providence of God to this interesting mission warrants a cheerful continuance of brother Rand in behalf of the Association of this province in this very interesting field, hoping for a perpetuation of the friendly sympathy and aid of those who have proffered their services during the past year."

Another object was presented to the Association in 1847, and was reported on favourably. The resolution was to this effect:—"That as the Acadian French of these provinces have not, in the view of this Association, the amount of scriptural knowledge which it is desirable they should possess, it becomes therefore the duty of this body to adopt measures as soon as practicable, to send to them colporteurs, who may circulate among them copies of the word of God, religious tracts, &c." I regret to state that several years elapsed before any effort was made in furtherance of this resolution.

In reply to a question in one of the letters, the Association recorded its decision that exclusions of a member on the Lord's day before the whole congregation "is not necessary," while it was admitted that circumstances may "in some cases render it expedient." But in the majority of cases it would assuredly be very inexpedient. There is no difficulty in giving due publicity to the action of a church on such occasions. The expulsion of a member cannot be kept secret.

Another question was asked by one of the churches, and the answer was couched in these words:—"In relation to the question whether baptism administered by Mormons should be considered valid by our churches, when those who have been members of Mormon churches present themselves to Baptist churches for admission.—It is the opinion of the Committee" (and it was adopted by the Association) "that inasmuch as the Mormons cannot be

recognised as a christian denomination, it would be improper to admit into a Baptist church an individual on his baptism by a Mormon." The Association did not discuss the general question—whether the validity of baptism depends on the faith of the candidate or the fitness of the administrator. They limited their attention to the particular case submitted to them. Had the more general inquiry been proposed, it might have elicited a very interesting discussion. It was a bone of contention between the churches of Rome and of Africa, in the third century. Gyprian of Carthage and Stephen of Rome growled at one another amazingly about it.

A Report presented by a Committee in 1848 may be re-produced here, on account of its appropriateness and importance. "The Committee on the guardianship of feeble churches, and suggestions as to ripeness for organization, beg to report;—

"That there are within the limits of this Association a large number of churches, whose circumstances especially require the fostering care and religious sympathy of the denomination, without which there is but little reason to hope that they will advance, or even maintain their present position. Our most efficient means for aiding them are the labours of wise and judicious missionaries; competent not only to preach the gospel to them; but to give them counsel in all matters affecting their interests. We would affectionately press upon our older churches the necessity of more zeal and benevolence in the home missionary enterprise, that the Missionary Board may be able to meet the increasing demands that are made upon them by such young and feeble churches as have not the means of sustaining christian pastors to preside over them.

"In reference to ripeness for organization, we would suggest that there should be, on the part of those presenting themselves as candidates for church fellowship, a cordial reception of the sentiments contained in the articles of our Faith and Practice as a denomination, and a disposition to co-operate in advancing the cause of the Redeemer, and a sufficient amount of religious knowledge to enable them to maintain with propriety the public worship of God together."

The recommendations of the Committee are still needed. Our home missionary enterprise is too feebly supported. If one or two missionaries were continually employed in visiting "feeble churches," and if others were appointed from time to time to central stations, where their labours could be effectively employed, and whence they might operate on surrounding districts, more good would probably be accomplished than can be looked for on our present plan. But if missions of a few weeks' duration are yet to be tolerated, would it not be preferable to secure the services of some of our most able pastors, whose churches might well spare them for a short time, with such an object? Their places might be supplied by Licentiatees, to whom such engagements might be rendered both pleasant and profitable.

Systematic efforts for the advancement of Sabbath school instruction were commenced in the year 1837, when it was resolved "that the Association resolve itself into a Sabbath School Union," and a Committee was appointed "more fully to organize such Union." The churches were at the same time requested to include, in their letters to the Association, statistical notices of the Sunday Schools connected with them. The Committee reported in 1838, but nothing was done. "The subject was deferred for the present."

The organization did not take place till 1840. At the meeting of the Association that year the "Nova Scotia and New Brunswick Sabbath School Union" was formed. It was to "embrace persons of all denominations." Members were constituted by annual subscriptions of five shillings each; life members by donations of ten dollars; and life directors by donations of five pounds. Members were to have the privilege of purchasing books at cost and charges, to the amount of half their subscriptions. Every Sunday School joining the Union might send one delegate to the Annual meeting, which meeting was to be held in connection with the Nova Scotia Baptist Association, on the day after its annual session; and on that occasion a sermon was to be preached "in favour of Sunday Schools."

I. E. Bill was appointed President; Isaac L. Chipman, Secretary, Treasurer, and Depository; and David W. C. Dimock, Agent.

The first sermon on behalf of the Union was preached by the Rev. John Pryor, in 1841; the second, in 1842, by the Rev. Charles Tupper; the third, in 1843, by the Rev. Dr. Babcock. Mr. David Dimock's agency, during the first year, was very serviceable. The principal object of the Society appears to have been to supply Sunday Schools with suitable books, at a cheap rate, thus imbuing the youthful mind with an earnest desire for knowledge, and creating an appetite for christian literature. To encourage the formation of Sunday Schools, and to aid in their efficient organization, furnished ample scope for agency; if means could have been provided, the constant employment of such agency would have been beneficial, in the highest degree.

The annual sermon was discontinued after 1843, and the society's operations became languid. The Officers and Committee were re-appointed from year to year, but no report was issued. The great difficulty was, to find a proper person to fill the united offices of Treasurer and Depository, and take occasional journeys on behalf of the Institution. Isaac L. Chipman did all the work the first year, but was afterwards compelled, for want of time, to confine his attention to the Secretary's department. Probably the next difficulty would have been of a pecuniary kind.

Although resolutions in favour of Sunday Schools were passed every year, there is no reference to the Sabbath School Union after the year 1846. It is to be presumed, therefore, that it died a natural death. Its term of existence was short, but it did not live in vain.

An important denominational movement was commenced in 1842. I refer to the establishment of Union Societies. That name was given them, I suppose, for two reasons:—first, because, instead of presenting separate applications for the various denominational Institutions, they were all united on one paper, and each person could signify how much he would give, and apportion his contribution as he pleased; secondly, because the rate of subscription being low, all might unite in the effort, by which means much larger sums would be collected. It was arranged, too, that in case the subscriber did not specify the funds to which his money was to be appropriated, it should be divided among the societies according to a scale previously agreed on. Thus—the annual subscription being six shillings, two shillings and sixpence went to the Home Mission, one shilling and sixpence to the Foreign Mission, one shilling and sixpence to Ministerial Education, and sixpence to the Infirmary Ministers' Fund. This was the fourfold division ultimately adopted; but at first the Bible cause and the Education Society were included in the list, as it was often convenient for persons to pay to the same collectors their contributions to all objects. In this way, the poorest could join in our benevolent plans, and the more wealthy might gratify their liberal propensities by constituting every member of their respective families an annual subscriber, or by giving extra donations to any of the societies included in the general scheme.

I have referred to the origination of the Union Societies to the year 1842. At the meeting of the Association that year it was resolved, "That the great body of the Baptist Denomination, now convened at Wilmot, form itself into a Society, to be called the Associated Society of Baptists of Nova Scotia, and that for the practical working of which there be Branch Societies formed in each church, for the furtherance of the cause of Education, Foreign and Domestic Missions, Sabbath Schools, and for the support of supernumerary ministers and their families." A Committee was appointed to frame a constitution. Dr. Sawers of Halifax was the only layman on that Committee; it was with him, I believe, that the plan originated. It may be observed, that Sabbath Schools were omitted in the subsequent arrangements.

In 1843 Dr. Sawers was appointed "Central Secretary of the Union," and he was requested "to open a correspondence with the Clerk of each church, or the Secretary of each Society formed in the province," who were to communicate to him, from time to