

Sabbath School Convention at Wolfville.

MR. EDITOR.— By notice in your issue of last week I observe that there will be a Convention of the Sabbath Schools belonging to the Central Association, in Wolfville, on the 17th of September. This Convention met for the first time last September in Windsor. A large number were present; but the Sabbath Schools at a distance were not as numerous represented as could have been desired. A most excellent Essay was read and numerous speeches delivered, but the Convention was not at that time permanently organized. This was postponed until the present season, when the different Schools in the Association might send letters and accredited delegates—thus placing the Convention in a proper position to organize. A Committee was appointed to prepare the draft of a Constitution and Bye-laws, to be submitted at the coming meeting, and to invite the Sabbath Schools of the Association to send in representatives, with letters giving an account of their standing, together with their mode of operation. Persons were also appointed to read an Essay and deliver an Address. It is earnestly hoped that all the Sabbath Schools included, will take hold of this matter in time, and make the meeting in Wolfville a season of individual pleasure and profit; but more especially a means of elevating the character and promoting the efficiency of our Sabbath Schools. Our friends in the Western Association are doing wonders. Even the Eastern Association is ahead of us. Let us go into this work—the greatest work on earth next to the public ministry of the Gospel with vigor and zeal.

Yours &c., AMICUS.

Christian Messenger.

HALIFAX, SEPTEMBER 2, 1863.

"The Visible Church."

BRING out of town last week we did not see what our contemporary of the Presbyterian Witness had written, on this subject, till it was too late for our last issue. It will be remembered that we suggested to him that it would be better to give what he conceived to be a correct definition of the above term, than to heap abusive epithets on our correspondent for publishing what he believed constituted the visible Church of Christ. Our suggestion was adopted by our neighbour, and in his next paper he gave the following, from the Westminster Confession of Faith, as containing his views on the subject:

"The visible church consists of all those throughout the world that profess the true religion, together with their children; and is the Kingdom of the Lord Jesus Christ, the house and family of God, out of which there is no ordinary possibility of salvation."

We have no desire to quarrel with any person on account of what he believes, but when a gross attack is made upon Baptist institutions and a christian minister, simply because he thinks proper to state in print what he conceives to be taught in the New Testament, then we think we are called upon to ask for an explanation and to expose the hollowness and self-conceit of our belligerent contemporary. If this were a question merely respecting the meaning of words, we should treat it with the indifference it deserves, but the discussion of truth and the development of what is taught in God's word relating to the kingdom of Christ, is worthy of the serious consideration of every christian man and woman. Any one who would endeavor to hush up enquiry amongst his readers by raising the cry of "Narrowness!" "ignorant bigot!" &c., must expect to be asked for his reasons for so doing. Truth is simple and clear, but error is multiform and changeable, and loves darkness rather than light. It may appear at one time in one garb, be exposed and silenced, but again it assumes another and offers itself as truth, until again examined and brought to the light, when its incongruities appear, and it is obliged to seek some other means of hiding its deformities. So long as the Father of lies rules in men's hearts, we may expect to have the teaching of God's word questioned and opposed.

Those who are acquainted with the Scriptures, whether they belong to a Presbyterian or a Baptist Church, or any other, will not need to be shewn how loose and unsatisfactory the above definition is, or what constitutes the visible christian church. We are surprised that any

one pretending to hold evangelical views of Christianity, and of the constitution of the church, should be willing to shelter himself under so leaky a structure, and one that is, nevertheless, so exclusive, and moreover without any foundation. Whilst it erects a sort of fence around these it encloses within its boundaries,—

"all who profess the true religion"—it forthwith levels it with the ground for the purpose of taking in another class who have no claim but that of being "their children," in defiance of the fundamental principles of Christ's kingdom as given in John i. 12, 13: "As many as received Him, (Christ) to them gave he power (margin, right or privilege) to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name:—which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God." It should be borne in mind that we are considering, not the church universals—those, in all communities and countries, who are spiritually united to Christ; but the visible church—the institution distinct from the world and called Christ's body, observing his precepts and ordinances; and yet our contemporary here ignores the existence of church ordinances, and recognizes no act of submission to him, or of admission to the said visible church, but exalts that which makes them human beings and members of a civil community into an initiation to church relationship. This is, indeed, a broad church, almost equal to Universalism, and yet it does not hesitate to denounce those who are not in one of these conditions, and pronounces them beyond "the ordinary possibility of salvation." We should be sorry to be obliged to believe such an assertion and consent to all its consequences. It is a church without a fence, a flock without any fold, and a fraternity without any process of admission, except the accident of being children of professors. Baptism—a solemn rite connected by our Lord with faith and salvation—is, in this church nowhere—a troublesome subject—a superfluity. It is no wonder that the Synods are troubled on account of the fewness of infants presented for baptism. This visible church is broad enough to take in all the errorists, heretics, and criminals which deface society, and yet it shuts out all others who have far less responsibility resting upon them, and who possibly act more in accordance with their convictions.

We infinitely prefer the Church of England definition of the visible church. It is as follows, perhaps as distasteful to our contemporary as a Baptist one:

"ARTICLE 19.—The visible Church of Christ is a congregation of faithful men in the which the pure Word of God is preached, and the sacraments be duly administered according to Christ's ordinance in all those things that of necessity are requisite to the same.

As the Church of Jerusalem, Alexandria, and Antioch have erred; so also the church of Rome hath erred, not only in their living and manner of ceremonies but also in matters of Faith."

We might add also that the Church at Westminster, and those who adopt its teachings, have erred! If a comparison between the first paragraph of this and that chosen by our contemporary be instituted in connection with the passages of Scripture where the church is mentioned, there would be sufficient we think to satisfy the most determined Anti-Baptist, that Baptists have at least the support of the Episcopal church, as well as that of the Bible, for their views of what constitutes the visible church.

We were not surprised to find a correspondent of the Witness last week asking the editor "Are you not too severe on 'Brother A. Chipman,' the Messenger and Acadia College, and unjust to the Baptists of England?" It is probable that others amongst his readers look at the matter in the same way, somewhat differently to what he does himself. Being open to conviction they may be pleased to carry their enquiries a little beyond the Westminster Confession of Faith. Light might be obtained.

Having thus far examined the instruction afforded by our contemporary,—to use his own expression concerning Mr. Chipman—"trained" not "in Acadia College," but in the Free Church College at Halifax,—we may for the present conclude by reminding him of his own senseless boast that "Our Sabbath School children would teach this ignorant bigot what the 'visible Kingdom of Christ' is."

We may possibly resume the consideration of this subject. It is one of deep importance.

EPISCOPAL SYNODS.—The Church Record says in reference to the late judgement given against the Bishop of Capetown:—

"Whatever may have been our pre-conceived opinions, we must be henceforth governed by this important and definite sentence. On all hands it will be admitted to be a clear and unimpassioned exposition of the law, and whether it is satisfactory or not, it is exactly the know-

ledge of which we stood in need; and we can see nothing in it to deprave the existence or to interfere with the inherent powers of the Synod; it is now incorporated by the local legislature and recognized by this sentence of Imperial authority, and is left to exercise its proper functions by many or by few; and we entertain the utmost confidence that we shall have a sufficient number of wise-hearted churchmen, who will give themselves bravely and earnestly to the work, and create by their piety and discretion a moral influence more powerful to preserve the order and discipline of the Church than that which could be imparted by any legislative enactment, or be enforced by the strong arm of the law.

Baptist Convention at Amherst.

THERE is an appropriateness in holding the Anniversary of this body, which comprises the Baptist Associations of the three Provinces, after those annual gatherings. The three belonging to this province and P. E. Island, and one of New Brunswick having held their convocations, this more general body met according to appointment at Amherst, on Saturday, the 22nd and following days.

By the kindness of the steamboat and coach proprietors, and an extension of excursion regulations on the Railroads, facilities were offered for reaching Amherst which the delegates duly appreciated. The attractions of Amherst, and the well-known hospitality of its people, probably had some influence in securing a large assemblage from the remote as well as the nearer parts of the field embraced in the Convention. Brethren came from Nietaux and Yarmouth in one direction, Charlottetown, P. E. I., in another, and various parts of New Brunswick in the other.

Saturday afternoon was occupied in preliminary business and in the election of the officers of the Convention and the Boards for managing the institutions under its control. It having been the practice to hold the sessions alternately in N. S. and N. B., and to choose the President each year from the other province rather than that in which the meeting is held, the choice fell upon the Rev. I. E. Bill, and for Secretaries—S. B. Kempton for Nova Scotia, and Rev. Thos. Todd for New Brunswick.

Rev. J. Davis was elected one of the Governors of Acadia College in place of the late Rev. E. B. DeMill, and the Rev. W. H. Porter, in place of the same deceased brother, on the Board of Foreign Missions. In consequence of the death of Mr. DeMill, who was last year appointed to preach the Introductory Sermon, it was now necessary to provide a substitute. The Rev. I. E. Bill was called to this service.

On Lord's Day sermons were preached, in the morning by Rev. Dr. Pryor, in the afternoon by Rev. Dr. Tupper, and evening by Rev. D. M. Welton. The churches at Sackville were supplied by Revs. Dr. Cramp, S. Robinson, W. G. Parker and T. H. Porter, Junr. Other churches in the vicinity were provided with ministers of the Convention—Revs. John Davis, Jas. Parker, D. Freeman, S. W. deBlois and others. Exhortations were given after each of the services by quite a number of other ministers.

Dr. Pryor preached from 2 Thess. ii. 13, on the doctrine of Election as the foundation of holiness, and took occasion to expose and refute the misrepresentations of this subject, which say that it leads to fatalism and a disregard of the duties of religion. Instead of that it places the salvation of the believer in Christ on a firm basis—God's sovereign pleasure and abounding goodness. The tendencies of the doctrine were shown to be such as would lead to a recognition of God as the author of salvation and humble submission to his revealed will. History, biography, and experience were appealed to as corroborative of the fact that the brightest specimens of christian life have been found amongst those who have held this doctrine in its integrity. Dr. Tupper's sermon was on the necessity of christian humility and the dangers arising from cherishing a spirit of pride and self-sufficiency.

Rev. D. M. Welton from the words of the Psalmist, "I shall be satisfied when I awake with thy likeness," gave some of the characteristics of heaven as a place and state in which the highest anticipations of the believer on earth will be more than realized.

The combination of the Lord's day exercises was felt to be remarkably appropriate and excellent, and will be long remembered with gratitude by those who were present and participated in them.

The inspiring strains of music from the well-trained choir, aided by the fine organ and united in by the whole congregation at the close of the evening, as they sung,

"O for a sight a pleasing sight,
Of our Almighty Father's throne,
There sits our Saviour crowned with light,
Clothed with a body like our own."

to the tune "Old Hundred," was almost overpowering.

Having so recently had, in our columns, a capital description of the new Meeting House,

with a notice of the opening services, we need not attempt further details. In the centre of the village, it stands as the cathedral of the surrounding district, a very large building with a spire 180 feet high, it is the first object which attracts attention a long distance off in every direction. Its interior is no less striking and beautiful than its exterior is conspicuous and commanding. The organ occupies a prominent position on the platform behind the minister's desk. This with the choir on both sides, facing the congregation, are able effectually to command the musical department of the services, so as to offer, as with one voice, the sacrifice of thanksgiving and praise. The anthems performed during the various services of the Session indicated a very respectable amount of musical talent, as well as great diligence in the choir.

The meeting of the Sabbath School, before the morning service, was not without special interest. Not only has the congregation provided ample and excellent accommodations for this department, in the large vestry on the ground floor, but the Teachers appear to be a body of active christians who cannot fail to effect much good among the rising generation.—Addresses were given by several of the visiting brethren.

INTRODUCTORY SERMON.

On Monday morning the more public services commenced at 10 o'clock, when the Rev. I. E. Bill preached from Rev. vi. 2. He shewed that the text, in symbolic language, represented the triumphs and progress of the gospel of Christ, and the instrumentalities employed in its accomplishment. The Son of God is engaged in a warfare against the powers of earth and hell. The contest is now being carried on to decide whether God shall reign or Satan remain possession of the kingdoms of this world, whether good or evil, light or darkness, sin or holiness, shall prevail. Satan did invade God's territory and succeed in bringing man into subjection and making him his vassal.

Mr. B. noticed some of the organized forms of vice and depravity which exist in large cities and rural villages, by which Satan deceiveth men. He also referred to the forms in which infidelity appears. They are doomed to fall under the power of the captain of our salvation. The great instrumentality to be employed is the preaching of the gospel. Educational institutions are required as part of the organization for effecting the subjugation of men to Christ. The work might be done at once and in defiance of all opposition, but God has shewn that his plan is to do it in connection with the personal efforts of his people. All the promises and manifestations of God's power shew that the subjugation is to be complete and entire. Men may fall but not so this great work. One and another may be taken away from the ranks, both officers and men, but the conquest goes on—the Captain lives. At the close Mr. Bill made a touching reference to the death of Mr. DeMill, the former pastor of the Amherst Church, and appealed to the experience of those still living that their powers were soon to fall and be transposed to another sphere of action. He called upon all to engage in the service of the King of Kings.

STATE OF THE DENOMINATION.

On Monday afternoon a highly interesting report on "The State of the Denomination" was read by Rev. Dr. Cramp, and adopted. We shall publish this shortly. Additions had been made to the churches by baptism of 1659 members.

ACADIA COLLEGE ANNUAL REPORT.

The Report of the Governors of Acadia College was then read by Rev. S. W. deBlois, the Secretary. It shewed that institution to be in a very gratifying condition. Thirty-three students had been in attendance during the year. Eight had matriculated at the close of the last term, and several others are expected to enter at the beginning of the next. Sixty-eight volumes besides parliamentary and other documents had been added to the College Library. Additions had been made to the Museum by donations from Messrs. H. N. Paint, J. R. Willis, W. H. Kennedy, J. Chase, W. Atkins, E. M. C. Rand and A. Seaman.

A quarter of a century will have elapsed this year since Acadia College was first established. "During that period" the report says "she has sent forth into the various walks of life a comparatively large number of young men. Upwards of forty of these have become preachers of the gospel." "The expectations of those who founded this Institution in faith and hope have been to some extent realized. Notwithstanding many reverses and difficulties, obstacles from prejudice, and it may be some mismanagement, Acadia yet lives, and holds a warmer place in the affections of our people than at any previous period." The report closes with the following very appropriate paragraph.

"Men die, but God lives, and the cause for which he sent his Son to die shall prosper and extend. In this cause all our efforts, Missionary, Benevolent and Educational, directly tend. Let us carry them on in subservience to His will and they shall flourish even when we have passed away."

The Treasurer's account shewed that nearly four thousand dollars (\$3856.25) had been added to the Endowment Fund during the year. The income of the year with the balance of the previous one had been equal to the expenditure, leaving a balance in hand of £47 7s. 3d. The College buildings however are suffering for want of repairs which it had been hoped might have been done but want of funds had prevented.

It is proposed to hold some special public