

I consider this movement simply mischievous, having a direct tendency, (by putting forward a new shibboleth, a new verbal test of religious partisanship) to add a fresh element of discord to the already too discordant relations of the Christian world. I do not deny that care and caution are apparent on the face of the document I am called on to subscribe. But no nicety of wording, no artifices of human language, will suffice to discriminate the hundredth part of the shades of meaning in which the most world-wide differences of thought on such subjects may be involved; or prevent the most gentle worded and apparently justifiable expressions of regret, so embodied, from grating on the feelings of thousands of estimable and well intentioned men, with all the harshness of controversial hostility.

"I am, sir, your obedient servant  
"J. F. W. HERSCHEL.  
"Capel H. Berger, Esq."

Sir John Bowring also declines adding his name, stating:—

"It is not possible—nor, if possible, desirable—to prevent comparisons between the historical revelations of the past, and the scientific discoveries of the present time. The Bible must be brought into the broad daylight—out of the darkness to which ancient authority condemned it; must be tested by inquiring knowledge, and taken from the custody of contending ignorance; it must be cleared from its cobwebs, and purged from its corruptions. Nothing less ought reasonably to satisfy those who believe; nothing more can fairly be demanded by those who doubt; but this may be asked in the interest of all. There is no 'presumption' in giving to the world conclusions soberly, seriously, and reverently formed, be those conclusions what they may. The resting-place for 'faith,' or hope, or comfort, will, after all, be found in allowing to the intellectual faculties with which God has blessed us, their widest influence and action over the whole field of thought. By 'proving all things,' we shall be able to 'hold fast that which is good,' and we may be fully assured that the great verities which have stood the storms and shocks of agitated centuries will remain unbroken through coming ages.

I am, dear sir,  
your obedient humble servant.  
JOHN BOWRING."  
"Professor Stenhouse, F.R.S., &c.,  
London."

Christian Messenger.

HALIFAX, OCTOBER 19, 1864.

We have just received a copy of the Minutes of the Baptist Convention, printed in St. John, N. B. The pamphlet comprises several important Reports of our Institutions; the principal of these are the Report of the Governors of Acadia College, and the Report of the Foreign Mission Board. These will be read with interest by the friends and supporters, and we trust by many others who will shortly become such.

The Report on the State of the Denomination, which appeared in our pages with our Summary report of the Convention, shewed a diminution of 31 members and so appears in the Minutes, but this, we find, is not quite correct. The published Minutes of the N. S. Western Association, (which the chairman of that Committee had not received when the report was prepared,) shew a membership of 7516 instead of 7409, as appears in said report. This gives a net increase of eleven members in the churches composing the Convention, instead of a decrease of 21. Still there is abundant cause for the observations the Committee make in reference to this circumstance:—

"That the small amount of increase this year, smaller than in any previous year, since these Reports began to be issued, is a melancholy fact to be deeply deplored by all well-wishers to the cause of the Redeemer.

That it behoves the pastor and deacons, and the servants of God generally, to institute serious inquiry into the state of the Churches, with a view to ascertain, if possible, whether any obstacles have been thrown in the way of the truth, or whether by defective discipline or criminal inactivity, any have "hindered the Gospel of Christ."

and further  
"That it is incumbent on us to seek the Lord with all humility and earnestness, entreating him to "turn us again, and cause his face to shine upon us, that we may be saved;" and that therefore the churches be requested to set apart a day for this purpose, in agreement with the practice of former years.

The first THURSDAY IN DECEMBER has been named for the simultaneous observance of a DAY OF HUMILIATION AND PRAYER, in the Baptist churches throughout the three

Provinces, to seek from the God of Heaven a renewal of His merciful visitations, and a Revival of religion amongst us.

The whole history of the past may teach us that such special services, observed in a right spirit,—a careful enquiry amongst ourselves as to what may have proved a hindrance, and an urgent desire and prayer for the removal of whatever is not according to godliness, will be attended with a blessing from on-high, and an outpouring of the Spirit upon the people.

This is a subject which should command the earnest consideration of all, but more especially of the watchmen on the walls of Zion. We would suggest that it might very properly command their pens as well as their hearts and tongues. We shall be glad to receive, without delay, communications bearing on the subject.

DENOMINATIONAL.

TRUTH is the same in all ages, and is not affected by the favor in which it is held at any particular period of time, or in any one place. Men change in their opinions and relationships, but, by so doing they do not alter, or invalidate, the foundation of what God has established. His requirements are not dependent on the views entertained by feeble, erring mortals. We have various means placed within our reach by which we may discover truth—experience, diligent enquiry into the facts of history, and, above all, examination of the Scriptures—will show us our errors and direct us into the light respecting all necessary truth.

We publish on our first page an account of one of those changes of relationship, which we often find recorded in our cotemporary periodicals. Whilst we regard such avowals of conversion to Baptist principles as evidences of the force of truth, and as reasons why we should feel encouraged that it is making progress, yet, we would not exult over them, as, in themselves, proving that the views so adopted are more correct than those relinquished. We have enough in what we see in human frailty to humble us, and to teach us to place but little confidence in man. The repeated injunctions in God's word harmonize with the results of experience, in directing us to trust in God rather than in men, even though they be princes.

There has of late been considerable discussion in the Baptist press of England in reference to some who have gone out from the ranks of the Baptist body, for the purpose of becoming clergymen in the Church of England, and among the Independents. Efforts have been made to account for these changes. Some of the parties who have forsaken what we regard as the truth, in respect to baptism, do not hesitate to show, perhaps unintentionally, that they have done so for the purpose of improving their position. The treatment they have received and of which they complain in connection with their former adherents, has not in some cases equalled their expectations. Doubtless there have been instances in which the people have not come up to their duty, and this has been to their ministers a source of real trouble and vexation; and it is not surprising that they should seek a change. We doubt, however, if such relief is a permanent cure. When men get into a situation where they are not equal to the position, it is convenient for them to remove to another. Some have suggested as a reason for such defection that there is a deficiency of instruction afforded in the Baptist collegiate institutions in England, on the subject of baptism and the constitution and polity of the christian church. Others again have attributed them to the practice of open communion in many of the churches. These reasons may have had more or less to do with said changes of relationship, but we do not think it should be cause of alarm, that in such circumstances as many of the Baptist churches of England are, there should, from among the students in Mr. Spurgeon's College, be a young man or two who should become pedobaptists, whilst a hundred or more become useful preachers of the gospel holding Baptist principles, nor is it at all surprising that an unsuccessful minister should prefer a position of comparative ease in the Established Church to that of a laborious, self-denying Dissenting pastor.

We would not have it supposed by these remarks that we think it impossible for a man to become a pedobaptist from conviction, after having been a Baptist; but we should think that his education, as a Baptist, had, in such case, been somewhat imperfect.

EDUCATIONAL.

NEXT Tuesday is the day appointed by the new School Act for the first annual meeting under that law, to be held in every School Section in the province, for the purpose of

electing Trustees for the ensuing year, and for providing means, in accordance with said Act, for carrying on the School during the same period. This may be done either by subscription or Assessment, but the vote must be taken on that day, or the School is deprived of a participation of the Provincial Grant.

A new Era is to begin on the first day of November in the educational arrangements in Nova Scotia. Free Schools are thenceforward to be the order of the day. It will be for the inhabitants in each Section, to attend such meeting and see that fit and proper persons are put in the responsible position of Trustees of their School. Perhaps there is no service which good men can render the people in their several localities than those connected with this office. The whole efficiency of the law, to benefit the rising generation, depends upon the character of the Trustees chosen at that meeting. The Secretary of the Trustees, at least, should be one of the most intelligent, active, business men that can be obtained.

The condition of the School-house should also be taken into consideration at this meeting, and if it is likely to be condemned by the Commissioners or Inspector, it had better be condemned at once by the inhabitants assembled on this occasion, and steps taken by way of preparation for building a new one.

It is to be regretted that so little has been said in the press by way of reminding the people of their duty to attend these meetings on Tuesday next. This is the practical thing the School-law demands of all, independent of denomination or party, in Church and State. We have not heard of any thing being done towards carrying out the provisions of the law in the City of Halifax, except that the Inspector for the County, and a new Board of Commissioners have been appointed. We have not learned if the School Sections have been defined. If they have not it is time they were, or the City will stand a good chance of being without any portion of public money for the ensuing year.

The educational arrangements in many places in the rural districts, are far in advance of Halifax. The School-houses are better, the school furniture is superior, and the Teachers in many places, we believe, are better qualified for their work. This surely should not be. No exception is made in the Act respecting the City, and we see no way in which the Schools in the City can legally participate in the Provincial Grant, except by complying with the terms provided for them in common with other parts of the province. We see no reason why the youth in the metropolis should not have at least equal advantages with those of more scattered Districts. The Free Scholars at present at the City Schools are in a condition of degradation as compared with those capable of paying the fees. Such free tuition is injurious in every way, and should be brought to an end, but where all are free and payment is made the privilege and duty of all alike, the school becomes in reality a public institution, and its success a public benefit.

We have been reminded by a friend that we hardly did justice to the *Witness* last week, by the extract in condemnation of the arrangements of the Education Act we copied from its columns. Its complaints were of such a nature that we did not choose the worst part of them, and we beg pardon for the leniency with which we dealt with our irascible neighbor. We were not sufficiently acquainted with the gentlemen appointed to be Commissioners of Schools in the several counties, to know whether the editor's estimate of them was correct. On a second perusal of his remarks we think the serious charges he brings against the Commissioners of Schools should be exposed, and either substantiated or withdrawn. This, then is the character applied by the *Witness* to those gentlemen:

In the appointment of Commissioners the Council of Education seem to have been regulated by no uniform principle. In some cases the Boards are reasonably small, (Halifax city for instance,) in other cases they are inordinately large,—in many instances twice and three times larger than they ought to be. While the notoriously illiterate, and the confessedly vicious and profane, and appointed Commissioners of Schools, and some of the finest scholars, best educationists and most excellent men, in the province, who had for years held that office have been superseded. Such conduct is utterly without excuse.

If "the notoriously illiterate, and confessedly vicious and profane are appointed Commissioners of Schools", it would not be difficult to name them. Which of the Halifax Commissioners will answer to such a description? Will the *Witness* please give the information? It ought to be done if it be true. And if he will say this of the whole, he should be prepared to substantiate it, so as to have the gross error rectified. Every one of the newly-appointed gentlemen may sup-

pose the remark is intended to apply to himself. We shall see now if the editor has the courage to do what is right.

UNION OF THE COLONIES.—The Conference at Quebec are doing their business very leisurely. Dinners and a ball in the Assembly Rooms appear to be considered necessary adjuncts to these political gatherings. It is supposed that a similar round of entertainments will be given to the Delegates at Montreal and other places. A despatch from Quebec to the *M. Chronicle* on Monday, states that

"The constitution of the Federal Legislative Council is reported settled as follows:—Seventy-eight members for the Canadas; twenty-four each for Nova Scotia and New Brunswick; and ten each for Prince Edward Island and Newfoundland.

The Quebec Board of Trade entertained the Delegates at dinner on Saturday. There was a large attendance. A number of speeches were made.

Report says that invitations have been received by the delegates from Montreal, Toronto, Hamilton, and London, to public demonstrations, in their honor. They are unaccepted as yet, as the date of the rising of Conference is uncertain."

NEWS SUMMARY.

Our English mails arrived on Wednesday evening, bringing London dates to the 1st inst.

Considerable pressure has lately been felt in the English money market. A number of failures in different departments of commerce had taken place. The most important was that of the Leeds Bank, an old and extensive establishment. No fear, however, of any general interruption of monetary matters appears to be entertained, and the partial panic which at first prevailed, had in a great measure subsided.

The war with the natives in New Zealand is still going on, and although some very decided advantages had been gained over the insurgents, there seems no immediate prospect of a termination of hostilities.

In China the Government have been very successful in several actions with the Taipings, and had recovered the ancient city of Nankin, which for several years has been in possession of the rebels. It is, however, in a state of utter ruin. It was formerly the capital of the Empire, and was said to contain two millions of inhabitants.

A Treaty has taken place between the French Emperor and the Italian Government, by which the French troops are to be withdrawn from Rome within two years, and the Pope allowed to keep the remnant of his dominions. The seat of the Italian Government is to be removed from Turin to Florence, a chief central City of the new Kingdom of Italy.

Political matters throughout Europe are generally quiet.

The Prince and Princess of Wales had gone to Stockholm, on a visit to the King of Sweden.

Nothing of moment had transpired during the week on this side the Atlantic. The different armies in the south are in close proximity to each other, but no fighting has occurred. The great exciting question throughout the Union is the election of the new President. The strong probabilities are that Mr. Lincoln will be re-elected.

Notices, &c.

Meetings of the N. S. B. Home Missionary Board.

Wednesday, Sept. 7th, 1864.  
Present.—Rev. A. H. Munro, in the chair.  
Revs. Dr. Fryor, R. R. Philip, A. F. Porter, Brethren S. Seiden, John Steele and Secretary.

Letters read from Revs. D. W. C. Dimock, A. Chipman (2), D. G. Shaw, Ronald McDonald, and Bro. F. S. Cunningham.

Appointment.—Rev. D. G. Shaw, 2 mos. to the colored population, and 1 mo. to the white people in destitute places.

Wednesday, 20th Sept.  
Present.—J. W. Nutting, in the chair.  
Rev. A. H. Munro, Brethren Dr. Parker, Geo. Robins, S. Seiden, Alex. Robins, H. N. Paint, and Secretary.

Letters read from Revs. John Miller, N. Baker, and Bro. F. S. Cunningham.

Appointment.—Rev. John Miller, 3 mos. to Antigonish.

Wednesday, 6th Oct.  
Present.—Rev. Dr. Fryor, in the chair.  
Brethren S. Seiden, D. Thompson, Alex. Robinson, and Secretary.

Letters read from Revs. John Miller, Wm. E. Hall, R. R. Philip, Brethren Jos. Murray, and Elizabeth Archibald.

Appointment.—Rev. A. P. Shields, 8 weeks at New Ross, Lunenburg Co.

Amounts received by the Treasurer since last acknowledgement.  
From 2nd Cornwallis Church.....\$14.00  
" W. J. Gates, (Bridgewater)..... 2.00  
" Rev. A. F. Porter, (Guysboro)..... 4.00  
" 2nd Cornwallis Church..... 6.00  
R. N. Beckwith, Sec'y. H. M. Board.