

For the Christian Messenger.

Discipline in the N. S. Eastern Churches.

MR. EDITOR,

I occasionally see a copy of the Christian Visitor, and have just had the opportunity of perusing the number for Thursday last, July 21st. I find therein a letter from Rev. J. Davis of Charlottetown P. E. I., giving an account of the last session of the Eastern Nova Scotia Baptist Association held at Truro. As I was present at the Association and had seen in the Ch. Messenger an account of what took place there, I examined the said letter rather to see in what respects the two accounts differed, than for information. One passage appears in the Visitor which I cannot help thinking was written without due consideration. As I feel that such a statement is likely to damage the character of the Baptist churches in public estimation, and especially in New Brunswick, where the true character of the N. S. Churches is less known than in this province, I shall be glad to have the opportunity of expressing my entire dissent from it. But perhaps I ought to let Mr. Davis speak in his own words; I will therefore take the liberty of copying a few lines from his letter. He says:—

"The letters were followed by a brief season of prayer and conference. In the address of the brethren the want of more pleasing results from the labours of the the past year was deplored; and reasons were suggested why, notwithstanding the state of things revealed by the letters, the Churches should hold on to their work with thankfulness and hope. There should seem to be a neglect of Christian discipline in some of the Churches; a neglect which is fatal to healthy religious progress. If Baptists want to perish out of the land, let them indulge in such neglect, and that end will infallibly be reached, as it ought to be; and the sooner the better. Unholy professors—Christians without Christianity—having a name to live, while they are dead," are the abhorrence of heaven, the curse of earth, and the peculiar delight of hell. From such Christians, 'good Lord deliver us!'"

Now, this language I think such as there was nothing in any of the letters, or remarks of our brethren, to justify. I do not believe that the churches of the N. S. Eastern Association are more lax in discipline than the Baptist Churches in other parts of the province, or, as far as I am acquainted with them, in any other countries in the world. If in the knowledge of the writer (Rev. Mr. Davis) there are one or more churches who neglect the important duty of discipline, is it fair to put that in the ambiguous term, "some of the churches," and publish it in the shape he has done? I think not. If I am a member of one of the Eastern churches I may suppose he means that one, and so also may a member of any of the other churches.

Whilst I would not claim perfect exemption from "neglect," for myself, or for the church with which I am associated, yet, I believe Mr. Davis or any other minister or member of one of the churches might acknowledge the same before God and his brethren, no less truthfully; but to publish such a statement before the world is I think somewhat slanderous and certainly injurious. I think, Sir, we ought to be exceedingly careful to avoid doing for our own body what we would dislike to have done for us by our foes, and rather write their errors in the sand, while we seek to correct them by the proper scriptural process, than indulge in such indiscriminate and unwise public censure. IOTA.

Christian Messenger.

HALIFAX, JULY 27, 1864.

THE EDUCATION LAW &c.

In our remarks last week, on the new Educational enactments, we intimated that we should return to some further consideration of the subject. There are a number of points on which we might make some remarks, and give an expression of our opinions, but as we are rather desirous that our readers should have information than opinions, we shall take the liberty of copying from the "Comments" and "Explanations" of the Superintendent. These comments the Witness facetiously chooses to style the "Targum of Onkelos." He adds that "it differs widely from the 'Targum of Jonathan' but it is very good for all that."

The ancient "Onkelos" with whose writings our brilliant neighbour professes some acquaintance, kept closer to the text than the other Targum writers. So much by way of compliment to the Superintendent. If the Editor had informed us which "Targum of Jonathan" he intended by his allusion, we should have been able to appreciate his remark more fully. There are two Targums

of Jonathan—one called the "Targum of the Pseudo-Jonathan" and the other the "Targum of Jonathan Ben Uzziel," both of which are so full of idle Jewish legends that the text of the Hebrew Scriptures was entirely obscured by them; and, as our Saviour said, probably of those very writings, they made the commandment of God of none effect. The fabulous tales and allegories of the "Targum of Jonathan Ben Uzziel," may be imagined when we remember that the Jews, in order to attach more authority to it, make the writer out to have been contemporary with the prophet Malachi, Zachariah, and Haggai; and assert that he received his "comments" from their lips, and further maintain that while he (Jonathan) was composing his paraphrase there was an earthquake for forty leagues around him; and that if any bird happened to pass over him, or a fly alighted on his paper, while writing, they were immediately consumed by fire from heaven without any injury being sustained by his person or his paper." Now, tell us friend Witness what you mean by the modern "Targum of Jonathan" on the School law.

We take exception to the remark of the Witness that "if the Act had been lucid, simple, well arranged, these forty-eight pages would be superfluous." In the first place there are but twenty-five pages of Comments in the pamphlet, the first thirteen being the Act itself, and secondly they are but on matters of detail, such as could not appear in the Act itself, or, if they did, would have taken up about the same amount of space as they do now. Professions of friendliness to the measure are plainly inconsistent with such depreciatory remarks. As well might the plans of schoolhouses and descriptions of them be included in the law as these comments. What a pity a man of such profession does not adhere to the truth. His wit would surely be sufficient to serve him without imposing on his readers such a fabrication, as that "The brilliant Editor of the Messenger confesses that he did not feel able to tell his readers what the law meant till this pamphlet appeared." We waited only for a correct copy of the law before we expressed our opinions fully upon it. If our contemporary had done this he would have escaped some of his blunders.

Our opinions on the principles on which the Act was framed were formed long since, probably before our contemporary was in existence, or its editor had left the first form in school. But enough, we agree with our neighbour that "our Common Schools and Colleges are too important to be made the football of political parties or the pretence for sectarian crusades," and must proceed with the performance of our promise. As our readers are probably more interested in the question of, How the schools are to be supported, we this week give the section of the "comments" on that subject:—

METHODS OF SUPPORTING COMMON, SUPERIOR, AND ACADEMIC SCHOOLS.—1. The Annual School Meeting of the Section is to be held on the last Tuesday in October. This meeting must make provision for the support of the School for the next twelve months, or for whatever period it may purpose to support the school during that time. (See Time in Session, 1) The Trustees shall make a full report at this meeting, "as to the state of the School, and the funds required for its support in the ensuing year." At the first meeting (Oct. 1864), there being then no legally appointed Trustees, the trustees whom the meeting may elect must immediately proceed to determine the requirements of the School, and the sum necessary for its support during the next year, and report forthwith to the meeting. Some preliminary arrangements on the part of those deeply interested will go far to ensure the presentation of proper and adequate estimates.

2. The Act prohibits all payment of fees for pupils. All Schools, Common, Superior, and Academic, are to be maintained either by assessment or subscription, as a majority of the ratepayers present at the annual meeting may decide. When the subscription is not realized by the end of the first quarter, or at whatever time it be agreed upon, the Trustees are empowered to raise the balance by assessment.

3. In consequence of this arrangement, every school is declared to be free, i. e., it is open to every child, rich and poor, in the section. This is a noble provision, and one that must be hailed by every patriot and philanthropist as the dawn of a brighter day for our Province. In future it cannot be said that the appalling ignorance of the land, is justly laid at the doors of our Legislature. It is earnestly hoped, however, that even the poorest will conscientiously contribute to the support of the school according to their ability.

4. If at the annual meeting a majority of the ratepayers shall determine to raise the entire school expenses for the year by assessment, they shall appoint at the same meeting, three assessors and a collector. Having obtained from the Clerk of the Peace the assessment roll for the year, the assessors shall forthwith levy the amount upon the inhabitants of the section by an equal rate. A list of those assessed shall then

*The Council requests that the people and the Trustees arrange that the collector and the secretary of the Trustees be one and the same person.

be furnished by the assessors to the collector who shall, under warrant signed by the assessors, proceed to collect the sums levied, and pay the same as soon as collected to the Secretary of the Board of Trustees. In the case of persons refusing to pay the sums assessed, the collector is to proceed to collect the same according to the provision of the Act "Of County Assessments."

5. If the ratepayers at the annual meeting determine to raise the the sum required for the maintenance of the school for the year, by subscription, the Council of Public Instruction recommends that the following course be pursued:

(1.) That the inhabitants of the section then present subscribe the sums they purpose to give, and that the Secretary of the Trustees visit the absentees within one month thereafter, to obtain their subscriptions.

(2.) That the half of said sum be paid to the Secretary by the end of January; and the balance, by the end of July.

(3.) That on the second Wednesday of February, and on the second Wednesday of August, there be a meeting of the Trustees; and if they find that the adequate sum is not realized, they, as empowered by the Act, proceed in the regular way to raise the balance by assessment.

Those who have paid by subscription their due proportion of the original sum as if assessed, shall not be required to pay any more; but those who have paid only a part by subscription, shall be required to make up their deficiency by the assessment, while those who have overpaid shall have the overplus refunded.

6. So many and so great are the advantages attendant on supporting schools by assessment rather than by subscription, that the Council hope to see the former mode very generally adopted. The principle when viewed in all its bearings, will be found admirably adapted to further the best interests of each community, and in perfect consonance with the principles of equity and justice, as well as with the principles and ends of civil government.

Every Common (and Superior) School that adopts this mode at its annual meeting, and faithfully carries it out, shall receive one quarter more Provincial aid direct from the Treasury than if supported by subscription. This sum is offered as a premium upon the best mode of supporting Schools.

We find one of our evening papers, of Thursday last, has made a slight mistake respecting the amount of remuneration to be given to Teachers, stating that "Common Schools are to be divided into three classes or grades—the amount of support awarded to each from the Provincial fund, by the instructions being \$240, \$180, and \$120 for male, and \$10, \$120, and \$90 for female teachers." We wish to have our readers correctly informed and not led into further misconception. It is bad enough to have, as the Witness asserts there are, "obscurities and oversights in the law," but when there are full "Explanations" on these details, such errors cannot to be "excused." We therefore take the present opportunity of inserting the authorized "explanation" itself on this point which is as follows:—

The Teacher is selected and engaged by the Trustees. They pledge him on behalf of the section the payment of a certain salary. The amount of salary will depend in a good degree upon the class of Teacher engaged. Both male and female Teachers are divided into three classes. The relative proportion of the Provincial grant received by each class is stated in the Act. (See clause 18*) For scale fixed for female teachers, see "Duties of Commissioners." (8)† The law instructs the Commissioners to distribute to the three classes in each group, their respective proportions of the public funds, so that Teachers of the same class shall receive at the same rate. It seems but proper, therefore, that, as the very lowest scale, the people should pay, irrespective of Provincial Aid:—

Table with 2 columns: Male and Female, and 3 rows: 1st Class, 2nd Class, 3rd Class.

This, in our opinion, should be the minimum emolument from the section. The Council does not, however, for a moment suppose that sections able to raise larger sums, fail to do so, as by this means alone, the services of the best Teachers can be secured. Every Teacher should receive whatever his services will command in the educational market. Let section vie with section in providing a competency for the worthy Teacher, and soon there will be found no lack of the best talent of the land in the teaching profession.

†As before stated, it is highly desirable that the collector and secretary of Trustees be one and the same person. In that case, no transfer of money will be needed.

*One fifth of the whole sum appropriated for Common Schools shall be applied to aid poor and scattered sections, in addition to the amount to which they may be otherwise entitled, on such terms as the Commissioners shall decide; the remainder to be distributed among the sections where suitable school-houses are provided, in such manner that teachers of the same class shall receive at the same rate; that second class teachers shall receive not more than three fourths of the amount paid to first class teachers; third class teachers one half of the sum given to first class teachers, unless in cases where the Inspector shall report that the teacher has not sustained the standing as a teacher indicated by his license, when it shall be competent for the Commissioners to withhold the Provincial grant in whole or in part.

†Teachers of the same class shall receive at the same rate; first-class Females shall receive the same as second-class Males; second-class Females the same as third-class Males; and third-class Females one-half the sum given to first-class Females.

‡Not of its special, but of its Common School grant.

The managers of Schools in the city are feeling some concern as to what action is to be taken respecting the application of the law to the Halifax Schools. The partial exemption of the City, under the former Act, has raised a barrier in the way rather than prepared them for the organization contemplated by the new law. We see no reason why the city should be in a worse position than the rest of the Province. To apply the law in all its provisions would of course effect a revolution; but if it would provide improved schools and more efficient supervision the sooner it is done the better. Objections will doubtless be raised in some quarters, but when the advantages are perceived they would soon subside.

AMERICAN BIBLE UNION.—The Bible Union Quarterly for July 1864 informs us that the New Testament complete as Revised by the Final Committee will be issued by the time of the Anniversary.

A meeting of the Bible Union was lately held at Philadelphia. The following are some of Rev. Dr. Conant's remarks on the occasion:—

Dr. Conant spoke of the revisers' task. He said that the Common Version was made from very late and imperfect manuscripts. It was made about one hundred years before the first earnest attempt was begun to ascertain the true text of the original Scriptures, by the aid of the oldest and most reliable manuscripts. Our means for ascertaining the text are better than were ever enjoyed before. We are now able to go back in our investigations very near to the age of the apostles. We can approach very near to the divine originals. Scholars go there. For them the Bible is there. They have one text, the common people have another. But this should not be. Whatever the scholar finds there, should be presented in the people's version.

Dr. Conant referred to various objections, answered numerous inquiries addressed to him, with great brevity, clearness, and force. It was one of his happiest efforts. The prejudices of many were swept away, who have since expressed their purpose to aid and pray for the prosperity of the Bible Union.

That precious book which we call the Bible, he remarked, was originally written in the Hebrew and Greek languages, on parchment, many centuries before the art of printing was discovered. As new copies were needed, they were also written. And then other copies were made from them. Thus the work went on, generation after generation, and century after century, until hundreds and thousands of copies were written. And, as in copying a letter, even careful writers may unavoidably make mistakes, so in copying the sacred writings, errors in transcribing would occur, and these errors would be repeated, and others made, until the number would be great, and continue to increase more and more, the further you get from the original copies. To correct these mistakes, therefore, in the late manuscripts, has been the first, and, indeed, the most laborious work of the Bible Union. This has been done at a great expense; for, it was necessary to search through the world for the oldest manuscripts; to go as far back as possible toward the time of the apostles themselves. God has graciously preserved some few very ancient manuscripts, which have withstood the ravages of fire, and war, and time; and since this Bible Union was organized two of these invaluable treasures for the Church have been brought to light, copies of which are now in the hands of the Final Committee. The revisers go back to these ancient manuscripts for the word of God. Whatever they do not find there, they can not accept as the inspired word. If, therefore, in the revision you do not find a precious line which you have been accustomed to read in the Common Version, remember that that line is not found at all in those ancient copies that come to us from the earliest ages.

The letter of the Rev. J. Davis to the New Brunswick Christian Visitor noticed in the communication of "Iota" in another column, contains a few lines respecting the meeting of the S. School Convention, at Truro. In our report we scarcely expressed an opinion on that meeting. Brother Davis will doubtless castigate the compositor for perverting the name of the President, by putting a G where there should be an S. Bro. D. Says:—

"In the evening we had a meeting in connection with the Nova Scotia Sunday School Convention. It was one of the first order of excellence. Brother Golden, the President, took the chair. Brethren T. Higgins, McKoen, and DeBlois, delivered admirable addresses, carefully prepared, while other brethren added to the interest of the occasion. Our Sunday School Convention, in the collection of statistics, the diffusion of intelligence, the rousing of a devout and active concern, has already wrought much good. A similar organization, simple, inexpensive, but efficient, would be useful in your Province. Will no one among you look to this thing?"

Respecting the Temperance Meeting held in the evening, after we left, we learn from the same source:—

"It was attended by a goodly number. We had a serious and earnest time of it. The Temperance cause was pleaded on a solid Bible basis—the basis upon which it must repose, commanding and receiving the support of the avowed