

Christian Messenger.

HALIFAX, JANUARY 18, 1865.

"BORN OF WATER AND OF THE SPIRIT."

Two or three weeks ago we received from one of our correspondents the following exposition of John iii. 5. The text is one on which there has been a vast amount of discussion and difference of opinion among commentators, as to the exact meaning of the passage.

It is easy to make dogmatic assertions, and to state, as some assert, that the phrase here, to be "born of water" means Baptism; but we think it would be far more difficult to prove it, and to reconcile such view with other truths of the Word of God. Some of our high-church dignitaries make great use of this text for the purpose of teaching the doctrine of Infant Baptism, and others, that of baptismal regeneration. They make the administration of that rite to combine both water baptism and spiritual regeneration, and quote this passage in support of such teaching, strangely losing sight of the inappropriateness of sprinkling to represent the matter in any way. The appalling conclusion, however, that, according to such teaching, all who are not recipients of the rite, are not saved, does not deter them from such perversion of Scripture. Besides it is so convenient to have the term "born of water" preceding that of "the Spirit," so that it would seem to favor baptism before faith—infant sprinkling—notwithstanding that numerous other passages of Scripture teach that baptism is consequent on faith,—that believers only are the proper subjects of Christian Baptism. All the passages really relating to baptism teach or imply that it is to be administered to believers. In the absence of support for Infant Baptism, therefore, it appears fortunate to its advocates—those of them at least who have no scruples about perverting it into a saving ceremonial,—that a little support can be obtained from one text, although it should involve other and graver objections.

We think the consistent and safe view to be taken of the above mentioned passage is that it is a parallel one to that in Titus iii. 5. "According to his mercy he saved us by the Washing of regeneration and the renewing of the Holy Ghost," two statements of one truth, not one relating to material and the other spiritual, but both relating to a spiritual change. Without endorsing, in every respect, the views taken of the passage by the writer, we lay his communication before our readers for their consideration. If any of our friends feel inclined to further elucidate the subject, we shall be glad to hear from them:

JOHN iii. 5: "Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit he cannot enter into the Kingdom of God."

The Saviour had already taught Nicodemus that he must "be born again"; and as he inquires, in his amazement at so strange a thing, "How can a man be born when he is old?" the Great Teacher explains the matter, teaching him that it is Spirit which is born of Spirit, just as that which is flesh is born of flesh; and in the words before us, shows Nicodemus the means by which this second birth (which only can fit a man for the kingdom of God) is effected, viz: water, and the spirit, placing the birth of water (or work of water) first in order; and as it is the spirit which is born of the Spirit, so is it the spirit which is born of Water.

Now the birth (or work of) the spirit, consists in Conviction of Sin, sorrow for sin, a clear view of the plan of salvation by the blood of Christ, a surrender of all hope of salvation in any other way, and the acceptance of Jesus as Saviour and King, through whom the soul finds peace with God, and rejoices in hope of the glory of God. But this work of the Spirit, is not an independent work, but is performance in connection with, and following the birth of water—or in other words the work of revealed truth; which is, to enlighten the understanding in things pertaining to the soul and God.

Without this work, now that miracles have ceased, (with reverence be it said) the Holy Spirit cannot work, therefore Jesus places the birth of water first in order, and Nicodemus it as conversant with scripture, as a Master in Israel should have been, would have had no difficulty in understanding the figure. David having used it: "There is a river the streams whereof make glad the city of our God;" and Isaiah, "Therefore with joy shall ye draw water out of the wells of Salvation;" and Ezekiel, "I will sprinkle clean water upon you and you shall be clean." So that it is said "The law of the Lord is perfect converting the soul and of Jesus Christ, the light of the world, the source of wisdom and knowledge, "Come ye to the waters," "rivers of water in high places," "a fountain of living water," "a fountain for the house of David for sin and for uncleanness." So that Jesus saith of the knowledge which he gives "He would have given thee living water," "he that drinketh of the water that I will give him shall never thirst," "this is the water with

which our hearts are "sprinkled from an evil conscience," and of which the Apostle thought when he asked the disciples to pray "that the word of the Lord, may have free course and be glorified."

The Holy Spirit teaches in the word, enlightens by the word, convinceth of sin with the word, but works not at all, independently of the word, thus it is that "Except a man be born of water, and the spirit, he cannot see the kingdom of God."

THE CANADIAN BAPTIST REGISTER for 1865 has just come to hand from the Canadian Baptist Office, Toronto. It is a pamphlet of 84 pages and comprises an Almanac and a Summary of the Baptist denominational institutions, Associations, &c., of Canada; and the Annual Report of the Baptist Missionary Convention, with lists of ministers &c., &c. It appears that there are ten Associations. The following table will show their names and the numbers in the churches of each.

Table with columns: NAMES OF ASSOCIATIONS, Baptized, By letter, Total. Lists associations like Weston, Middlesex and Elgin, Grand River (South), Grand River (North), Ottawa, Niagara, Haldimand, Central Canada, Huron, Amherstburgh, and Danville, VT.

In the past year there were six new churches organized, and six new chapels dedicated. The following paragraph will be read with interest:

PROCEEDINGS OF THE ASSOCIATIONS.—Nine associations unanimously passed resolutions in favor of the Ministerial Education Society and the Canadian Baptist. The seven embraced in the field of the Convention passed resolutions in favor of the Missionary Convention West. Five of the associations urged on the churches the claims of temperance, and five recommended increased effort in Sunday schools. The Huron and Niagara brethren adopted resolutions expressive of sympathy with the North in the present civil strife in the States. The Huron and Central Canada Associations recorded their protest against the principle of separate schools and state endowments. The Grand River North Association commended to the liberality of the churches the French Canadian Regular Baptist Mission, and the Central Canada brethren commended the Grand Ligue. The Ottawa and Central Canada Associations urged on the churches the duty of increased ministerial support. The Niagara and Central Canada Associations appointed committees to petition Parliament in favor of strict Sabbath observance. The Huron brethren passed a resolution on the necessity of a revival of religion, and the Middlesex and Elgin brethren deplored the growing neglect of family worship. The Grand River North commended the book-room in Toronto; the Haldimand advocated lay preaching, evangelical exploration, and supply of vacancies; and the Ottawa urged the claims of the widows and orphans of deceased ministers. The Middlesex and Elgin Association passed a resolution against balls; the Haldimand against Freemasonry; and the Western against the use of tobacco.

We have received a copy of the 36th Report of the Nova Scotia Bible Society. From it we learn that there has been received by the Society from all sources the sum of £735, 24 of which £320, 29 was from Branch Societies. There have been circulated during the year 1701 Bibles and 1579 Testaments.

The following Resolution was passed by the Committee respecting the gratuitous circulation of the Scriptures.

Resolved, That all grants of Bibles for the future shall be on the understanding that they be paid for at half price. And that to country places on the recommendation of the officers of the nearest local Society only. It being understood that each member of the Committee shall be entitled to give an order for a Bible or a Testament to any person whom he may think requires it.

REV. DAVID NUTTER.—Many of our readers have known this now aged minister. We learn from a paragraph in the Visitor "that he is suffering from some disarrangement of his mental faculties. His memory fails to perform its wonted functions to such an extent as to affect seriously his preaching power. We trust the Lord will mercifully restore him, and enable him still to go forth as an ambassador of the Prince of Peace."

The Free-will Baptists of New Brunswick have just sent out a missionary, the Rev. J. L. Phillips, to India. He embarked on the 17th ult. in the "Eleusis" from Boston for Calcutta. He writes to the Intelligencer that two Presbyterian missionaries—Rev. Messrs. Kellogg and Myers—with their wives, were in the same ship with him, returning to their missions in Northern India.

NEWS SUMMARY.

OUR Canadian friends have of late had no small excitement awakened among them by the unfortunate occurrence of the St. Alban's raid, which has produced a great stir both on the British and American sides of the frontier. Several of the raiders first apprehended and discharged, after examination before a Magistrate, have been again taken up, and the matter is now under investigation in the superior tribunals. Several volunteer companies have been called out from different districts and stationed at prominent points on the Canadian frontiers, to prevent unlawful aggressions on the United States borders.

The Society, composed of numerous Irish emigrants to the United States, called the Fenian Brotherhood, have of late created a good deal of alarm in Upper Canada. Their object appears to be to form secret societies in Canada, and, if possible, cause mutual aggressions between the two countries, in hopes that hostilities may finally be the result. Of this, without doubt, under existing circumstances, there is much danger. A most causeless and unjustifiable bitterness appears to exist against England throughout the Northern States, which, without great prudence and forbearance in both Governments, may lead to a serious collision, as soon as the present civil contest is ended. We doubt not the Executive Powers of both England and the United States would be strongly averse to so vicious a measure; but unhappily the latter power is so greatly under the influence of mere popular feeling that it can scarcely be viewed in the light of a free agent.

The tide of success in the South as far as the season admits of active operations, seems still to run strongly in favor of Federal success. Some of the Atlantic and Gulf States are said to be making decisive movements in favor of re-union. It is probable that the Federal Government, having so strongly pledged itself for the abolition of slavery, would insist in carrying it fully out, unless the desire to conciliate the revolted States should induce them to retract or modify their later determinations on the subject.

Since our last nothing of importance has appeared from Europe. The China arrived at New York on Friday last, but the telegram merely stated "The political news is devoid of interest."

THE CONFEDERATION QUESTION is effecting some considerable disturbance in political circles. In our last we noticed the announcement of the Chronicle that the proprietor would "re-assume the control of the paper." That paper has since come out strongly against the Scheme prepared by the Delegates at Quebec, denominating it "The Botheration Scheme." On Monday last it contained correspondence between the Hon. J. McCully (the late editor) and W. Annand, Esq. (the proprietor), in which each gentleman is treated with as good as he gives; Mr. McCully making his letter a reply to Mr. Annand's and a taking leave of the readers of that journal.

Mr. McCully, however, has been called to the editorial chair of the Halifax Journal, with the new name: "THE UNIONIST AND HALIFAX JOURNAL." The paper, under its new title, made its first appearance on Monday. From the contents of the correspondence between these two prominent gentlemen, we suppose there will be a change—and perhaps a radical one—in the political position they will heretofore occupy towards each other and before the public.

In addition to the above a long letter has appeared in several of the secular papers from Archbishop Connolly, professedly called forth by a statement in the M. Chronicle, that there had been secret drilling of the "Fenians" in churches in Canada. The Archbishop denies the truth of this statement, and asserts that it is "simply impossible" that such a thing should have been in the Catholic Churches in Canada or elsewhere. He expresses a strong opinion in favor of Federation as a necessity arising from our position in contiguity to the United States. After stating that he is "no politician," he argues the case, that the possession of power by the neighboring nation is a reason for preparing to cope with it, as "the only possible means of saving us from the horrors of a war such as the world has never seen." This appeal to fear as a motive for confederation we think hardly creditable to that gentleman, to us, or to the times in which we live. We have no taste for raising an alarm. If prudential and commercial considerations indicate in favor of such a Union of the provinces, we think them the most convincing and powerful motives which can be urged upon intelligent men for such action as that contemplated. Meetings are being held in various parts of the country for the purpose of discussing the subject. The one at Truro on the 11th Inst., occupied about ten hours.

Notices, &c.

Foreign Missionary Board.

The members of the Foreign Missionary Board are respectfully requested to meet in Tremont, on Tuesday, the 31st inst., at one o'clock, P. M. CHARLES TUPPER, Secretary. Tremont, Aylesford, Jan. 7th, 1865.

Received for Foreign Missions.

Last winter two "Friends to Foreign Missions" contributed \$51 for the support of a native preacher in Burmah. These with another uniting with them in this good work, have now remitted \$49—together \$100—for the same object.

A letter is also received from a brother on Prince Edward Island, proposing to support another native preacher.

Rev. Joseph F. Kempton, who is now laboring as a Home Missionary in Cape Breton, has recently forwarded the following account of the sums received for the Foreign Mission, from the Churches and congregations visited by him, prior to meeting of Convention.—The gross amount has been already acknowledged.

Table with columns: Location, Amount. Lists locations like Milton, Liverpool, Brockfield, Kempt., Caledonia, Sabie River and East Ragged Islands, Locke's Island and Hayden Settlement, Port Medway and Mill Village, Bridgewater.

Eastern Indian Ministers' Fund.

The Treasurer of the Indian Ministers' Fund, for the Eastern Association, would hereby acknowledge the receipt of One hundred and Sixty six Pounds thirteen shillings and four pence, the same being the bequest of the late W. S. Jacobs, of Liverpool, N. S. to the above named Fund, which will be duly invested in Real Estate.

Letters Received.

Geo. W. Freeman, 5th, \$17, 2 subs. Rev. B. Taylor, 28th. T. H. Rand, Esq., 9th. D. Mosher, Esq., 9th, \$3, 2 subs.—former remittance of \$6, all correct. M. L. Witter, 9th, 50c.—Sent. Rev. D. W. C. Dimock, 9th. Rev. D. Freeman, 9th, and 12th, 1 sub.—N. P. paid 1864. W. J. Gates, 9th—one parcel sent by Captain Morine, and another by coach. G. V. Rand, 9th. W. Churchill, Esq., 7th, \$20. Rev. Dr. Tupper, 10th, \$14, and 12th, \$4. Rev. J. A. More, 3rd. W. Chipman, Esq., 10th, \$4. Rev. Isa. Wallace, 1 sub. W. H. Harris, Esq., 12th, 13.50. W. North, 10th.—In last week. J. Craig, Esq., 12th, 1 sub. G. O. Brown, 10th, \$2. Dr. J. Woodbury, 6th, \$14.—All right. A. Brown. C. Jost, Esq., 12th, \$24, 1 sub. J. Moser, 11th.—Rev. D. O. Parker, 11th, \$4. R. Chambers, Esq., 14th. M. Kinsman, Esq., 11th, \$5. Rev. Jas. Reid, 5th.—Geo. W. McElhinney, 7th, 1 sub. W. T. Waterman, 11th, 1 sub. M. G. Quigley, 10th.—Rev. J. C. Morse, 10th, \$2.50. Rev. W. Hall, 10th, \$2.05. B. Douglas, Esq.

General Intelligence.

Domestic.

The "ROSEBUD" BAND OF HOPE gave their Christmas entertainment on Monday evening, at Temperance Hall. The platform was beautifully decorated with evergreens, and the young lads and lasses equipped themselves in fine style. They were accompanied in some of the pieces, sung by a superior Cabinet Organ, (Mason & Hamlin's). The Artillery Brass Band was in attendance, and played several excellent pieces of music during the intervals. The crowded audience showed that a large number of parents and friends sympathize in the work in which Mr. Gray and his associates are so perseveringly engaged in behalf of the young Temperance folk. May the good influences extend over the whole land.

ANNAPOLIS COUNTY APPLES.—The following letter was received per last English Steamer by Thomas W. Chesley Esq., of Bridgetown.

Royal Horticultural Society, South Kensington, Dec. 22nd, 1864.—Sir, I have the pleasure of informing you that the Council of this society has awarded you a silver Bankside Medal for the fruit which you sent for Exhibition at its International Show.

Sir, your most obedient servant, ANDREW MERRAT.

A SOUP-KITCHEN has been established by a few benevolent gentlemen, at the Inglis School room, 143 Albermarle Street, where soup may be had every Tuesday, Thursday and Saturday at 3 cents per quart. We doubt not it will be a great alleviation to many poor families. Tickets may be obtained at the Book stores at the above rates for gratuitous distribution.

One of the crew of the steamer Merrit, lies at death's door, in the City Hospital having been found on board that vessel the other day, covered with blood, black with bruises, speechless and senseless. The poor fellow it is feared has been badly beaten; though some think he had a fall from the rigging, but no one can ascertain the facts as yet, as he is delirious and unacquainted by name.—Ch.

HORSE-STEALING.—A horse was stolen from the stable of David Stiles at Amherst on Monday night last. Our police were apprized of the fact by telegram and on Wednesday a man named McDonald alias Kelly, was found trying to sell it. He has been committed for trial.