

Vishnoo or Budh should hearken to English or American strangers imperfectly stammering in Hindostanee or Burmese—nay—on some accounts more unlikely—for our early Baptist fathers, met those who were prepossessed with the idea that they knew the Gospel already, and had nothing to learn—and to overturn their system was in their view to war against the very truth the preacher professed to teach. Hence he must be an enthusiast—a fanatic—a mischief-maker. But despite all this, these men of faith and prayer persevered and prevailed.

And to how great extent were they enabled, to win success! I have not now at hand the needful records to evince in numbers their marked success, but it strikes me an examination of the Minutes of our associations for the last fifty or sixty years, would show a much larger proportional increase during the first ten or twenty years since the origin of the Baptist Churches in Nova Scotia, than appears in the last ten or twenty.

If this is so, it suggests matter for grave consideration and inquiry. Whence this recent failure of proportional progress? Is it all to be laid to the account of the novelty of Gospel Truth, as Baptist preachers present it, ceasing—to the soil being worn out by repeated cropping—the portion of the community impressible by the truth being gathered in, and leaving largely the harder cases to be dealt with? or is it that there is a deficiency of the faith that removes mountains, and the melting agonizing love that in seeking souls wrestles with God in prayer that will not be refused?

It may be difficult satisfactorily to answer these questions, but I believe they ought to be asked, and seriously weighed; and especially is it our duty most earnestly to ask ourselves, whether the pride of growth—of being a strong Denomination—and of wealth, men so much more abounding among us—and especially the pride of knowledge—of mental improvement, may not be to some extent sapping our foundation—separating between our souls and God—and so, entangling our power of faith and prayer, without which, Baptists, by their avowed principles, must of all churches be the feeblest—for we profess no system but that of prayer and faith—no mere human economy that may stand and make a shew after all life shall have left it. If we cease to be vital christians, we avowedly cease to be any thing.

But increase, and wealth, and mental cultivation are good gifts of God. They are gifts essential to a certain measure and kind of progress. They come to a certain extent in lieu of what the power of miracles wrought in the early day of the church—in lieu of speaking with tongues as the spirit gave utterance—in lieu of the astounding argument of the blind made to see, the deaf to hear, the dead to rise. The world is to be conquered and possessed for Christ by those “many” who in the latter day “shall run to and fro, when knowledge shall be increased.”

Baptist worthies were remarkable for the clear view with which they saw, and enforced this truth, and the unselfish freedom and earnestness with which they gave their aid to the new order of things, in which the increase of knowledge among the Baptists by their own schools and colleges, might naturally seem to threaten the older labourers with a diminution of the reverence with which they were regarded, when the people should come to know more than they of human learning, and educated ministers should be more frequent among us.

There are some still living in all parts of our country, that must remember the numerous gatherings in which education, as a necessity, was placed in the fore-front, and in which such men as Handy Chipman—and Edward Manning—and Joseph Dimock—with streaming eyes testified to wondering hundreds, how bitterly they had felt the want of learning, and how high a duty it was to aim at the possession of it as an offering sanctified to the service of God—out of those tears and those testimonies, sprang—our beloved seminaries in Nova Scotia and New Brunswick—and without such aid from the honored leaders of that day, our present educational success must have been impossible. But I forbear till another opportunity, and

Remain yours, &c.

“OLD EYES.”

For the Christian Messenger.

The Letters to the Eastern Baptist Association.

DEAR EDITOR,—

Through the C. M. I would address the officers and other members of the Churches composing this Association most likely to be interested, on an important matter connected with our approaching anniversary.

The “blank forms” ordered last year have

just been distributed, and it is hoped that you will take sufficient interest to see that all are properly filled, and duly forwarded to the Association. It is very desirable that every Church be heard from, whether enjoying the services of a Pastor, and otherwise prosperous or not. All have, therefore, been supplied with a Circular, each of which it is expected will be returned, conveying the usual letter and the required statistics and facts in the place and order therein assigned. And to effect this is not a matter of difficulty, if undertaken in season and in earnest. Should any church be unable to send delegates, all that is necessary is to enclose the document, when ready, in an envelope directed to the Clerk of the Eastern Association, North Sydney, C. B., pay the postage, and mail from the nearest post office early in July. Any *notes* can be transmitted by means of a P. O. order. Will you not, then, dear brethren, do your part toward making our statistics this year as full and correct as possible.

It is thought that no explanation will be required unless it may be with reference to the item headed “First day of the week fund.” The whole matter, as now before us, is contained in the report on Union Societies, Appendix D., of our last minutes. This report—which was unanimously adopted—virtually substitutes for the Union Society scheme the system recommended by the Apostle in 1 Cor. xvi. 2. Yet, notwithstanding the superiority of the latter method, it is to be feared that few of our churches have yet adopted it. May I not urge upon those who have not, especially if they have no regular system of beneficence, to make trial of this during the few weeks that will elapse previous to our meeting, and forward a statement of results. I would hardly recommend an attempt to raise *this* year's contributions in such a way, as the plan pre-supposes that the whole fifty-two weeks will be found necessary for doing the work of each year;—although I am by no means certain that *much* could not be accomplished during the coming month. To any who may be in doubt as to the best mode of putting it in operation, I would just say that nothing can be more simple. Get a box made, and labelled “First day of the week fund.” Put it in some convenient place near the entrance to your house of worship. If practicable, pass a resolution in your Church, pledging all the members “on each first day of the week” to lay by in store “as God hath prospered” and contribute the result through the box. Explain the whole matter publicly, and request the congregation to render assistance, if so disposed. At any rate, give them to understand that none will be debarred from the privilege. Then let each individual make himself familiar with the Scriptural requirement before referred to, and earnestly and frequently, with direct reference to this matter, offer the petition “Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?” and be guided by the answer. The amount thus raised can be taken in charge by some one appointed for the purpose, and at stated times appropriated to such objects as a majority of the church declare to be most worthy and most in need. Should any one desire to appropriate his own contributions, he only needs to enclose them and direct in accordance with his wishes.

This system of benevolence has the following advantages over every other with which the writer is acquainted.

1. It is simple, economical, and equitable. All can understand it, and it requires no outlay of time or effort in collecting. It does away with a great deal of cumbersome machinery, and tends to equalize both the contributions and the labor of securing them.
2. It extorts no pledges to be or not to be redeemed, stimulates to a constant and proper supervision of one's personal affairs, and keeps in fund a continuous supply.
3. It is unostentatious, allowing literal conformity to the requirement contained in Matt. vi. 3.
4. It links worship and work, thereby uniting “what God hath joined together.” It is not so much a plan for exacting money, as a help to the performance of an important christian duty. Its tendency is to elevate the act of giving into a systematic, constant, and pleasurable service, smoothing its too frequent repulsiveness, and calling into active exercise all the higher, nobler feelings of the heart.
5. It meets the requirements of the so-called “Muller system” of support, without encouraging its extravagant pretensions, or lessening the feeling of individual responsibility.
6. It permits the largest generosity and encourages the bestowal of the “Widow's Mite;” and while it accords perfect freedom, at the same time lays a sense of personal obligation heavily upon all.
7. Rightly understood, it interferes with no other method of raising funds, should it for any reason be thought advisable to adopt

or continue such for a longer or shorter period.

8. It is eminently scriptural, being inculcated and encouraged, at least indirectly, throughout the entire Bible.

9. And lastly, it is of universal adaptation, thereby proving its high origin, and taking rank among the unchangeable principles and requirements of the Divine Lawgiver.

Hoping that, as this system, so well suited to the desired end, has been cordially adopted by our Association; it will eventually be made the standing rule in all our churches, and that *this* year will witness no diminution in the amount raised among us in support of our various denominational interests, I beg to conclude, with the promise of more anon.

CLERK.

Christian Messenger.

HALIFAX, JUNE 6, 1866.

MINISTER'S DUES.—There is, we believe, great remissness in many places in paying ministers their just dues. It arises in many cases no doubt from want of consideration, but is to them often a pretty serious matter, affecting their character as well as their peace of mind, and it is surprising that with such scanty supplies they get along so well as they do. There are many churches we know, where no such charge can be laid, but it is well for all to have their “pure minds stirred up by way of remembrance.” We lately noticed a remark in a contemporary that “preachers should be well supplied with books, and a liberal allowance of good beef should not be withheld; their people might then fairly expect to profit from their ministry.” We believe there is more truth than poetry in the statement. Where the physical man is stinted, and he finds it necessary to curtail his means of obtaining information, for the sake of feeding himself and family, the people will soon become dwarfish, and losing their benevolence will eventually lose their self-respect and perhaps their souls. An open-handed hearty appreciation of the minister, is very likely to increase the appetite for the truth he dispenses. We recommend any christians who have not experienced this relish for the truths of the gospel, to try the experiment of first increasing, and paying promptly the amount of their contribution, and then praying for God's blessing on the ministry of the word. By this means we believe one great design of continuing the people of God upon earth will be accomplished. Where these things are faithfully done, and the christian life is in harmony therewith, there will be no lack of personal effort for the salvation of others.

We have had these thoughts suggested to us by reading the following from a worthy christian minister living at a distance—not in Nova Scotia. He says,—apologizing for being in arrears,—“perhaps if you knew how irregularly and sparingly my wages were dealt out to me by my people, you would conclude that I had no business taking the *Messenger* or any other paper. However, if you can possibly grant me the great privilege, I shall like the *Messenger* to be sent to me as long as I live, and wherever I may be located; and I will promise to pay you if I have to sell my hat for the money.”

The practical application of this should be—not curiosity to learn who is the writer; but, do I attend to my own duty in reference to my minister?

The *Provincial Wesleyan* in an article entitled “Our Conference of 1866,” institutes a comparison between the ministry of the Conference of Eastern British America of 1861 and 1866, and states that in that body during the past “five years there were forty young men ordained to the work of the holy ministry, but that so many have been the casualties of our Minister's life that this comparatively large number of ordinations has resulted in a net increase of only eight ministers. In 1861 the number was 133, in 1866 it was, omitting the students, not more than 141.” Eight who were in the Conference of 1861 have since died. After giving various explanations and notices of the removal of ministers, some to “the better land” and others to Great Britain and the United States, the editor proceeds: “The number of Members in our Societies in 1861 was 15497. Five years later the number was 15,023, being a diminution of 468” and again, “The districts which have returned fewer members last year than five years previously, are Halifax, St. John, and Fredericton. In other districts there was an increase, and this must be noted with grateful joy.” This state of things has caused serious enquiry and anxious concern.

This diminution in statistics does not arise we are informed and fully believe, from any loss of power in the body. The congregations are more numerous and the places of worship

have increased in number and capacity. One reason may be given which it is suggested is a source of joy to the body. We give it in our contemporary's own words: “Were our discipline less strictly administered, were our church less pure, the case would be different. That our numbers do not rise more rapidly is a part of the price our connexion pays for its strenuous endeavours to keep its members ‘out of the world.’”

We notice these things, not only for the information of our readers, but for the purpose of affording encouragement to such churches as may not enjoy the pleasure of receiving accessions to their numbers. If diminutions are occasioned by the exercise of discipline, the consolation deriv'd from considerations of the greater purification of the church thereby, are very proper and legitimate.

Those who have taken an active interest in our institutions of learning, we doubt not, have had a rare treat at the Anniversary of Acadia College yesterday. As our Western railroad has not yet proceeded beyond Windsor, we are unable to give any account of the proceedings in our present issue, but must ask our readers to wait till our next, when we hope to give them all the particulars. It is not necessary at the present day to do more than offer suggestions as to the great importance of giving encouragement to every effort for the advancement of the cause of higher education. Learning is the handmaid of religion, and whatever may be said of it as a common blessing, it becomes infinitely enlarged when employed in the work of scattering christian truth over the nations. In these days, ignorance is but a comparative condition, but wherever it prevails and assumes a controlling power, it is a tyranny which becomes most demoralizing, and an intolerable burden. The slaves of ignorance are to be more pitied than those who are merely deprived of physical freedom. Whenever it so far obtains the mastery as to govern those in authority, the condition of the governed is most degraded. It rests with every community to decide whether they will prefer the freedom which knowledge confers, or the slavery arising from ignorance. It is not difficult for a people to lapse into a state of barbarism. Like religion, learning only needs neglecting to allow its antagonist to reign supreme. But like religion its true friends are we believe increasing, and its future is not to be like the past, but they are to increase in number and power, and those who espouse these great instruments of reformation and blessing will eventually attain true honor and nobility.

What is it which distinguishes between the lowest type of mankind and the enlightened man of science and art but education? Add to this a knowledge of the true God, and we have the highest style of man—the christian student. All the distance between him and the barbarian is but the effect of knowledge. Our Colleges are the very fountains of civilization, and safe guards from a return to primitive ignorance.

Notices, &c.

Ministers and Delegates attending the Baptist Associations, will be allowed to pass to and from on the railway for one fare. A certificate from the Moderator will be required by the Ticket master on return.

Delegates to the Western N. S. Baptist Association to be held at Lower Granville, on the 9th of June, are hereby requested to call upon one of the following Committee, who will direct to suitable lodgings.

ROBERT DELAP.
W. M. WEATHERSPOON.
ISAIAH WALLACE.

Lower Granville, May 22nd, 1866.

Baptist Anniversaries.

The WESTERN NOVA SCOTIA ASSOCIATION will meet on Saturday, June the 9th, at 10 o'clock, A.M., at Lower Granville.

The CENTRAL NOVA SCOTIA ASSOCIATION will meet on Saturday, June the 16th, at 11 o'clock, A.M., at Hantsport.

The EASTERN NOVA SCOTIA ASSOCIATION will meet on Saturday, July the 21st, at 2 o'clock, P.M., at North Sydney, Cape Breton.

The EASTERN NEW BRUNSWICK ASSOCIATION will meet on Thursday, the 12th of July, at—

The WESTERN NEW BRUNSWICK ASSOCIATION will meet on Thursday, the 20th of September, at 2 o'clock, P.M., at Newcastle, Miramichi.

The BAPTIST CONVENTION OF NOVA SCOTIA, NEW BRUNSWICK AND PRINCE EDWARD ISLAND, will hold its 21st Annual Session in the Brussels's Street, Baptist Church, St. John, N. B., commencing on Saturday, the 18th day of August, at 2 o'clock, P.M.

Letters Received.

S. F. Whitman. W. J. Gates. E. Lamont, \$4. 1 sub. H. J. Ganser. will write. R. S. Williams. Dr. J. Woodbury, \$4. Rev. H. Eagles. M. Sears, \$5. Rev. Dr. Tupper, \$3, 1 sub.—Pd. J. B. \$1, &c. M. E. C.—Send the answer. Rev. T. H. Porter, Jun. R. A. Layton. E. A. Layton. Jas E. Masters.