

For the Christian Messenger.

The Associations.

Dear Brother,—

Our Association Anniversaries are drawing near. There are indications, I think, that the reports from the churches will be more favourable than was at one time feared.

I have often heard the expression of regret at the comparative absence of the religious element from these Anniversaries. After the delivery of the appointed sermons, the brethren attend to the business affairs of the denomination, which of course must be transacted, but need not occupy all the time.

Would it not be an improvement to take an additional day for the Association, so that religious services might be interspersed with business arrangements? Why should not our Associations be seasons of conversion, as well as feasts of holy fellowship?

I beg to suggest the desirableness of special prayer, throughout the churches, that "the wisdom which is from above," and which is "first pure, then peaceable, gentle, and easy to be entreated," may be plentifully bestowed.

Yours truly, J. M. CRAMP.

May 14th, 1868.

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Christian Messenger.

HALIFAX, MAY 20, 1868.

This month is a season of religious Anniversaries in Great Britain, and, to some extent in the United States. Hundreds and thousands of the principal men in the various denominations of Christians will be gathered together to recount the blessings conferred, and the marks of Divine favor received during the past year; and to gather fresh strength for more vigorous action in the time to come.

We would respectfully call the attention of the brethren on the Central Association to the Report on "Arrangement of business," on page 19 of Minutes 1867. Also, the Western brethren to the resolution on page 10, and to the Report on page 39, of Western Minutes 1867. Also the Eastern brethren to a Report on page 34, Eastern Minutes 1867.

Editorship.

The powers and functions of editorship, are nowhere very distinctly defined. The peculiarities of the office, and the variety of its relationships are so great, that rules of action applicable to the chair of one editor, can hardly be held to apply to that of another.

In Great Britain there has long been a sort of claim set up by newspaperdom that the press is the fourth estate of the realm,

and its prerogative it has been to initiate various reforms, and modifications of laws and old established customs. While such powers are claimed and exercised by the press it is important that responsibility should rest somewhere, and that some one individual should be recognized as answerable for what appears in a paper in case of its infringing on the rights of others.

The policy of a christian denomination can hardly be safe in such hands. Much more is it so when one editorial writer flatly contradicts by his acts what has been enunciated by his coadjutor. Then, however powerful the mind employed in its articles, it becomes subversive of all honorable dealing, and ceases to command the confidence of practical, common sense men and women.

THE LEGAL PROFESSION is undoubtedly one of the most important in human society, and that by which our liberties are secured, and on which much of our well-being rests. And yet, an appeal to the law often fails to meet the requirements of justice and equity.

The highest position in the profession is, perhaps, that in which a legal gentleman appears as an advocate. And here it might be supposed that injustice would hardly be done, whilst uninterested men are sitting at the tribunal and watching for the very purpose of preventing any improper bias.

And yet—notwithstanding all the checks the law supplies for the prevention of injury to individuals—the fact that each advocate is so entirely wrapped up in his client that he entirely ignores the claims of his opponent, and so it often arises that the law itself may be come the instrument of doing a man grievous wrong.

The definition given by the late Lord Brougham of the position of an advocate is a very remarkable one, and yet it is one that is probably unquestioned. It is as follows, and was given by him in his pleading for Queen Caroline at the bar of the House of Lords:—

"An advocate" says his Lordship "by the sacred duty which he owes his client, knows, in the discharge of that office, but one person in the world—THAT CLIENT AND NONE OTHER. To save that client by all expedient means,—to protect that client at all hazards and costs to all others, and among others, to himself is the highest and most unquestioned of his duties, and he must not regard the alarm—the suffering—the torment—the destruction which he may bring upon any other. Nay separating even the duties of a patriot from those of an advocate, and casting them it need be to the wind, he must go on reckless of the consequences if his fate it should unhappily be to involve his country in confusion for his client's protection."

This will be read by many with some surprise, and yet we presume it is the true and correct view held by the legal profession. Whether it is the one best adapted to secure the ends of justice may be questioned.

Notices, &c.

Our Anniversaries, 1868. The Annual Sessions of the N. S. Baptist Associations will be held as follows:— The Central with the 2nd Horton Church at Gasperaux, commencing on Saturday the 13th of June, at 11 o'clock, A. M.

quite equal to anything that secular oratory has achieved in modern times. Edward's on Justification by Faith, Hall on Modern Infidelity and Thoughts upon the Present Crisis, and Wayland, on Missionary Enterprise, and many others might be referred to in support of this assertion. So far from the press having thrown the pulpit into obscurity the most popular of its issues are those which the pulpit itself supplies.

The truth is that the pulpit is one of several divine institutions, not many in number but of priceless worth to mankind, including in their category, marriage, the family, and the Sabbath, as well as the foolishness of preaching; all in our day bitterly assailed and contemned, but destined not to decline and die, but to endure and grow with the growth of all that is good and for the promotion of all that is beneficent till the end shall come.—Each has the seal of its Heavenly origin in its wise and gracious adaptation to the wants of humanity and none more remarkably than the pulpit.

M. A. H.

For the Christian Messenger.

The Scriptural Principle of Church Government.

No. 6.

At the end of forty days from the resurrection, the period of personal intercourse with Christ suddenly terminated, as the astonished disciples gazed into the trackless heavens through which he had passed and vanished out of their sight. Disappointed and dejected, they return to Jerusalem, where they wait as directed by their Saviour who had left them. Thus was the infant Church cast alone upon the world, unorganized and without full and specific laws and instructions for their future guidance.

While gathered in the upper room for prayer, Peter became powerfully impressed, that some one, who had been associated with them during the whole time that they followed the Lord Jesus Christ, should be appointed to take the place, left vacant by Judas, to be a witness, in his stead, of the resurrection of Christ. The original choice of the twelve apostles from the body of disciples was made by Christ at the dawn of day after a night of prayer in a mountain. Such a step could not be taken by the Saviour without this solemn midnight preliminary. This important appointment was made directly by Christ himself. "I have chosen you twelve but one of you is a devil."—The apostate had fallen head-long, and his place must be filled. Upon whom is the responsibility of the election to fall? As the first appointment was made by the Saviour, we should naturally expect a vacancy would also be filled by him. In this the Lord's ways are not our ways.—The infant Church is to be thrown upon its own resources and taught to exercise its understanding and strive to follow the path of duty, guided by the influences of an invisible agent. But if called upon to bear the responsibility of appointing a man to the place of Judas, we would look for the right of making such a choice, to be limited to those who were already apostles. In this we are mistaken. At this early period the dignity and equality of all the members of the new fraternity are to be vindicated. The number

of the names together was one hundred and twenty. Before these Peter stood up, and rehearsed the fall of Judas, and pressed, by quoting the divine prediction, the importance and necessity of filling the vacant place.

It is with the mode of the appointment, and the persons engaged in it, that we are now particularly concerned. The account is plain, Acts i. 15. They—the hundred and twenty—appointed two, Joseph called Barsabas who was surnamed Justus and Matthias. The final decision was made by lot. "The act here is that of those addressed (the hundred and twenty) not that of the apostles merely."

"And they placed their lots in a vase or something similar, or perhaps, gave them to those whose business it was to collect them."

"The two names were written probably on slips of parchment. The first one drawn out decided the choice" Dr. Hackett.

The fact that the whole company of the disciples engaged in this election, is very significant, and foreshadows the polity of the rising church. It is a light which is thrown, not only into the future, but it also falls upon the past, and enables us to read, with a degree of assurance, the instructions, unrecorded though they be, of the Lord Jesus Christ—instructions which bare upon the nature of the government which He designed for his churches under this dispensation. In previous articles, reference has been made to some intimations, found in the gospels, of the introduction of a polity, radically different from any thing with which the Jewish mind was familiar. All that is found in the history bearing on this point, would not have been sufficient to overcome the early prejudices of the apostles, and lead them to adopt a principle, so opposed to any thing that they had even known in ecclesiastical transactions. But as they were induced by some influence to adopt the congregational polity, there seems no natural escape from the inference, that their instructions had been far in excess of what is found in the records. Something bearing upon this may have been included in the things which Christ spoke to his disciples "concerning the kingdom," during the forty days previous to his ascension. By some means the apostles were turned from a course in this transaction that they would naturally have followed, and led into one that is in singular harmony with the government which the churches as they sprung up adopted.

But the transaction is more important in its forecasting significance than it is in inferences drawn from retrospection. Nothing like this is recorded of Paul's appointment. He received his commission from heaven and not of men; although he was not called into the field till some time after this election at Jerusalem. Before he was appointed, the Church at Jerusalem had been organized, and, no doubt, its polity firmly settled, so there was not the demand for another extraordinary example. We say extraordinary example, because the apostolic office was extraordinary, and only for a generation; and had the appointment been made by Christ himself, or by the eleven, it would not have been a decision against the congregational polity. As the apostles invited the whole company to share with them in the election of Matthias, a precedent was made and an example given of so clear and peculiar a type, that, in the light of it, the Church subsequently may have been largely guided in matters of government. So pregnant was this act with instruction, that the succession of rising churches no doubt silently learned and put into practice the lesson; and this may account in some measure for the little that is found in the Acts and the Epistles upon the subject of Church government.

In Matthew xi. 9-11. Christ elevated John above all prophets and above all those "born of women" but concluded by saying "that the least in the kingdom of God was greater than John." The members of the new connection are treated at the very first, according to what Christ had before said of them. The "least" as well as the greatest are called upon to give their suffrages in electing an apostle. No prophet, or man had ever been called upon to perform such a duty. God had hitherto chosen prophets either directly or through the medium of some distinguished leader. Under the new dispensation, it is provided that each member shall be regenerated and enlightened, and the duties and dignity correspond with these peculiar gifts. Says Olshausen "We do not find any respect at all paid to richness of natural endowment in the choice of the apostles. The majority of those who were chosen by Christ himself appear to have been in no way preeminently distinguished by talents. Integrity, truth and experience were the only qualities that were looked to, and these qualities are still of most importance in the Church of Christ."

EDWARD MANNING.