

devil's victim; but one day a tract of the religious tract Society was put into my hands, and Jesus Christ was too strong for the prize-fighter that stands before you. My soul was in such a state that I groaned and wept; I could not eat or sleep. On Lord's day morning I heard Mr. Spurgeon preach; and as he lifted up Jesus as the refuge for the sinner's soul, I said to myself: 'That is what I want; He is a refuge for my soul;' and then and there my soul got liberty."

"Now," added he, "these hands work for Jesus, these feet walk with Jesus, this body is a temple of the Holy Ghost, this soul is the purchase of his blood. Men, which of you will keep back from Jesus to-night, when he has saved the prize-fighter before you?"

For the Christian Messenger.

REVIEW.

Church Polity: a Treatise on Christian Churches and the Christian Ministry. By Henry J. Ripley, late Professor of Sacred Rhetoric and Pastoral Duties in Newton Theological Institution. Boston, pp. 235.

This is a small volume. We wish it had been larger. Dr. Ripley's views are so sound in themselves, and so lucidly expressed, that his readers cannot help regretting the restraint he has put upon himself. He has used compression where they would desire expansion. Certainly, he is not affected by the *cacethes scribendi*.

The work is divided into two parts. Part first treats of "Christian Churches," and is divided into five chapters:—1. Scriptural idea of a Church:—2. Organization of the earliest Churches:—3. Duties and power of Church Officer:—Power of Churches:—4. Membership in a Church:—5. Mutual relation of Churches. Part second treats of "the Christian Ministry." 1. Divine appointment of the Christian Ministry:—2. Different classes of Ministers:—Mutual relation of Ministers:—3. Distinctive province of Ministers:—5. Introduction to the Ministry.—Various practical questions of an interesting character, are discussed in an Appendix.

Our readers will observe that Dr. Ripley's book is not a Church "Manual," or "Directory." We have no liking for such works. They are apt to become authorities, and to be appealed to in the settlement of disputes.—Baptists have only one law-book—the New Testament. The customs and modes of action adopted by churches in the management of their affairs may be good and laudable; they may even harmonize with the general teachings of Scripture; but they are not laws, and they cannot be binding. It is impossible to be too careful in this matter. When coordinate authority was given to the Church and the Bible—in other words, when Scripture and Tradition were treated with equal reverence—the foundations of the great apostasy were laid.

Dr. Ripley states principles; he does not prescribe rules. He preserves a happy medium between the conservative and the radical. His treatise may be safely consulted on all points connected with church government. It is at once satisfactory and suggestive.

We have marked some passages, which may be read with profit.

Power of officers.—"The power which belongs to the officers of a church, considered apart from the church, is very limited: in fact service, or duty, rather than power, is characteristic of their relation to a church. Should the proper province of a church, also, be duly observed, as relating to spiritual affairs and the extension of Christianity as a system for man's salvation, little occasion could ever arise for discussing the nature and extent of power belonging to a church officer in distinction from the members of a church." "Christian feeling was, at first, sufficiently pure and strong to secure on the part of the people proper respect and deference for the officers, as well as to preserve the officers from the dictatorial spirit of lordship." pp. 55, 56.

Independence of churches.—"Each is an independent body. Each one, owing spiritual allegiance only to Christ, is independent not only of any external power different in nature from itself, but also, so far as rights and authority are concerned, of every other similar body; that is, of every other church. No one of these can properly control another, as if superior to it in point of authority; no one of them is responsible to another, as if subordinate to it. They are alike responsible to Christ for their acts. Subordination in regard to one another finds no place among them. They are independent bodies; independent, in their appropriate sphere, of the civil power, independent of one another, independent of any human central authority vested either in an individual, or in an organized board, or in an assembly." * * * "One principle should not be allowed to overshadow another, nor to jostle it from its prop-

er place. Independence, for example, is to be maintained; so is fellowship of churches, which yet are independent. Independence must not be carried to the extreme of isolation, nor be an impediment to the interchange of expressions of fellowship. Fellowship, on the other hand must not be cherished in so sensitive a manner as to prove an impediment to independence." * * * "Questions which properly pertain to the internal affairs of a church, it is best for associations to leave to that church for its own settlement; and if a church need advice, it is proper to seek it in a less formal and public way than from such a body, thus avoiding the hazard of extraneous control, and cultivating their own ability for self-government." pp. 93, 103, 105.

Ecclesiastical Councils.—"In the case of ecclesiastical councils, since we have no scriptural precedents for such bodies in the present acceptance of the term, we must be governed in the same manner as in the case of associations of churches.

"It is, indeed, common to regard the assembly at Jerusalem in which the question of circumcision was discussed, Acts xv. 1-31, as an ecclesiastical council. But it widely differed from such a body in the usual acceptance of the term. It was not composed of delegates from several churches; it was a meeting of the elders, and brethren of the church in Jerusalem, and of the apostles then present, for deliberating and deciding on a question referred to them by the church in Antioch. The question was sent to the church in Jerusalem because that church was believed to be able to give the right answer, since it had from the beginning enjoyed the presence and teaching of apostles, and since some of the apostles were still at Jerusalem. The result, also, of the deliberation was returned in the name of the apostles, the elders and the brethren." * * * "Resort should be had to councils for the settlement of difficulties as seldom as possible. This method of seeking a settlement is liable to perpetuate and aggravate the difficulties, and to interfere with the self-reliance of churches. A church formed agreeably to the New Testament, and cherishing the right spirit, is ordinarily quite competent to its own guidance."—pp. 106, 204.

Lay-preachers.—"From 1st Corinthians, twelfth chapter, also from Rom. xii. 4-7, and from the very nature of Christianity, it is obvious that whatever abilities and opportunities for serving the cause of Christ a disciple may possess, his duty is thereby indicated. If he have the faculty of addressing men on religious subjects, and opportunities for maintaining the study of divine truth and becoming habitually imbued with its spirit, and for making himself useful in communicating it, it is his duty and privilege thus to act, whether in public religious assemblies, or in more private collections of christians and others for social worship, though he may not judge it his duty to be occupied exclusively, or mainly, in the work of the ministry. Thus in harmony with the activity of a special ministry, Christianity furnishes a sphere also for an occasional ministry, and for lay-preachers."—p. 126.

Baptism.—"A believer is baptized, not in compliance with the directions of a church, but in compliance with the direction of Christ to baptize those who become disciples, Matt. xxviii. 19. It is to Him, then, that the administrator is responsible, whether the evidence that the person has become a disciple is obtained directly from the person himself, or indirectly through the reliable testimony of a church or of others." * * * "It is not, then, an act for which a church pressible. So far from its being a church act, circumstances may often not only justify, but require its administration without consulting any church, as in the case of Philip and the eunuch, and the case of Cornelius the centurion, and many supposable and actually occurring cases."—p. 145. "While regularity might require, in ordinary circumstances, the limitation of this service to ministers, the deacons of a church, that is, the elders, who are not pastors, might, when occasion should require, administer baptism without violation of a scripture rule, or of the spirit of Christianity, and without violating the decorum which the gospel requires." * * * "Christianity is not a system of ceremonies, but of vital principles. The idea of official sanctity, or of the necessity that a religious act be performed by official hands in order to be acceptable to God and valuable to men, has no place in the New Testament."—p. 222. Right!

For the Christian Messenger.

Distressing Occurrence.

Dear Brother Selden,—

With deep grief I have to inform you, and the numerous other friends of our beloved Brother, Rev. Robert S. Morton, that on the 18th inst., he received a very serious injury

by a fall from the roof of his barn, occasioned by the giving way of the staging upon it. The spine is so much affected that he has no use of his lower limbs. Strong hopes of his recovery are entertained by his medical attendants; but the result is evidently precarious.

It is consoling to me to find him cheerfully submissive to the will of God, with an unshaken confidence in the Saviour whom he has long and successfully preached to his fellow men.

Yours fraternally,

C. TUPPER.

Aylesford, Sept. 21st, 1868.

For the Christian Messenger.

Central Sabbath School Convention.

The S. S. Convention of the Central Baptist Association met, according to appointment, with the Church at Canning on Thursday, the 24th inst., commencing at 10 o'clock A. M. After more than an hour spent in devotional exercises—the business of the Convention was taken up.

The managing committee reported, giving the order of business and exercises—which was adopted.

The names of Delegates present were then taken, and a Committee was appointed to nominate officers for the ensuing year.

On motion, Rev. Dr. Tupper and others were invited to sit in Convention with us.

The nominating Committee reported recommending Bro. J. E. Lockwood, Pres., Dea. John Lyons and Edwin Rand, Vice-Presidents, Geo. V. Rand, Sec'y. and Treas.—and asked leave to sit again. Convention adopted the Report.

Rev. S. W. DeBlois then addressed the Convention. On motion Rev. J. E. Balcom and Rev. E. O. Read were appointed to read the letters from the schools.

Letter and statistics were then read from Schools at Canning, Upper Canard, Lower Canard and Hantsport. Convention then adjourned till 2 P. M.

Convention met as per adjournment. After opening exercises, the reading of letters was resumed. Letters and statistics were read from Schools at South Rawdon, Dartmouth, Falmouth, Port Williams, Summerville, Waterville, Chester, Chester East, Marriott's Cove, Pereaux, Brooklyn, Cambridge, Canaan, Wolfville, Granville Street (Halifax) and Berwick.

An excellent essay was delivered by Rev. G. E. Balcom—subject "The essential characteristics of efficient teaching; which was followed by an address by Bro. D. R. DeWolf on "The Teacher being thoroughly prepared for his work."

The following subjects were introduced for discussion. "The abuses to which Sabbath Schools are subject" and effectively spoken to by Revs. Dr. Tupper, J. E. Balcom, S. B. Kempton, Bros. J. W. Barss, D. R. DeWolf, of N. Y. and Stephen Kempton. Convention adjourned till 2 o'clock P. M.

Convention met as per adjournment—after opening exercises the nominating Committee reported recommending that the next Annual Session be held at Berwick, and that Bros. J. W. Barss, W. A. Porter, Daniel Cogswell, Edward Parker and Harding Parker be the managing committee for the ensuing year. The report was adopted.

The following subjects were then brought forward for discussion: "The use of Question Books in Schools;" and, "Is a uniformity of Lessons desirable?" and was spoken to by Revs. Dr. Tupper, S. B. Kempton, J. E. Balcom and Bro. D. R. DeWolf. "By what means can the heart and conscience of the pupil be reached?" was spoken to by Rev. S. W. DeBlois, Bro. D. Cogswell, Stephen Kempton and D. R. Eaton.

Voted that Bro. Balcom be requested to furnish a copy of his essay for publication in the *Christian Messenger*.

Voted that the cordial thanks of the Convention be tendered to the church and congregation at Canning for their kindness and hospitality on this occasion.

The Convention then adjourned to meet at Berwick next year.

Delegates were present from twelve Schools, a spirit of harmony and great interest in S. Schools prevailed; and we trust much good will result from this session of the Convention—and that the next session may make it manifest.

GEO. V. RAND, Sec'y.

Dear Bro. Selden,—Our Sabbath School Convention met yesterday, we had a good time. The Lord was with us. We feel grateful to the friends for the interest manifested. To the young friends of Lower Canard Sabbath School especially, who, led by professor Miles, aided us much in our singing in the afternoon and evening. I trust

the effect will not soon be effaced, but that perennial Sabbath Schools will be cultivated where practicable, and that the churches will be awake in this matter. Our Superintendent, who had been opposed to the church having any control over the School, in his address, at the close intimated a change of sentiments on this point. We hope the members will respond to the sentiment, and that every church will regard the Sabbath School, as its own instrumentality, and make it what it should be,—the nursery where the young plants are trained for the garden of the Lord. Will our brethren pray for us that we may have a right spirit in this matter, for without the Spirit of Christ we are none of His.

Yours truly,

D. FREEMAN.

Canning, Cornwallis, Sept. 25th, 1868.

For the Christian Messenger.

"A Scripture Catechism."

A Scripture Catechism for use in the Family, the Bible Class, and the Sabbath School. By S. Selden.

Mr. Editor,—

I have examined with much interest this *Scripture Catechism*. I think it is well worthy the attention of parents and Sabbath School teachers, and I beg that you will publish for their benefit the imperfect notice which follows.

The *Scripture Catechism* is a neat pamphlet of 64 pages. The topics treated of are the following:—

PART I.—DOCTRINES.

- Section 1. Of the Holy Bible.
2. Of God
3. Of Jesus Christ.
4. Of the Holy Spirit.
5. Of Man.
6. Of the Law of God.
7. Of Sin.
8. Of Repentance.
9. Of Regeneration.
10. Of Justification.
11. Of Sanctification.
12. Of Death and Resurrection.
13. Of Heaven and Hell.
14. Of Angels and Devils.

PART II.—DUTIES.

- Section 1. Of Prayer and Praise.
2. Of Observance of the Lord's Day.
3. Of Obedience to Parents.
4. Of Civil Government.
5. Of Baptism.
6. Of the Lord's Supper.
7. Of the Christian Church.
8. Of Christian Ministers.
9. Of Love to others.
10. Of Moral Duties: Truth, Temperance, &c.

This book is strictly a "Scripture Catechism." Its plan is well set forth in the preface:

"The Holy Bible is the source of all correct religious knowledge, and the foundation of christian character. All religious instruction should lead to the Bible, and thence to Christ, the great subject of the sacred writings.

Catechisms on religious subjects commonly consist of questions, having answers in other language than that of Scripture, with prolix texts more or less appropriate affixed to them. In the use of such catechisms, the pupil is required to commit to memory the answer given, and refer to the passages of scripture, or perhaps read them. The references are, we believe, too frequently neglected.

In this Catechism the answers are given in the language of the Word of God; which, in many respects, is far preferable to any other. By learning these the mind becomes stored with important passages from the inspired volumes, and the pupil is thus prepared to enter upon a fuller examination of the Sacred Scriptures."

A careful examination of the questions and answers will, I think, lead many to an increased appreciation of the simplicity, beauty, and directness of Bible language. It will serve as an illustration of this statement, if I give a few specimens of the questions and answers. The Omnipotence and Omniscience of God are thus taught:—

QUEST. What does the Bible teach of God being present everywhere?

ANS. Am I a God at hand, saith the Lord, and not a God afar off? Can any hide himself in secret places that I shall not see him? saith the Lord. Do not I fill heaven and earth? saith the Lord. Jeremiah xxiii. 23, 24.

(Psalm cxxxix. 3-9. Ephesians i. 23.)

QUEST. Does God see us at all times?

ANS. The eyes of the Lord are in every place beholding the evil and the good. Proverbs xv. 3.

(1 Samuel xvi. 7. Hebrews iv. 13.)

I have heard many metaphysical definitions of "sin." Such definitions abound in Catechisms. On page 22 of this Catechism the Scripture definition is found:—

QUEST. What is sin?

ANS. Whosoever committeth sin transgresseth also the law; for sin is the transgression of the law. 1 John iii. 4.

(Psalm xiv. 2. Romans iii. 9.)

These specimens are sufficient to shew the method pursued. I believe it to be the only