

Retrospection.

When the gathering shades of twilight come creeping o'er the earth;
When is hushed the din of labor and the noisy voice of mirth;
When has ceased the anxious pressing of the day's encumbered care,
And comes stealing o'er my spirit the calm sweet evening air;

When the voice of choral songsters, with their notes of warbling glee,
Have resounded all day long through the wood and valley free;
When the music and the ringing of their merry notes have ceased,
Then comes breathing o'er my spirit a calm and tranquil peace.

Then better thoughts come sweeping through the chamber of my soul,
And my wandering fancy leads me back to cherished scenes of old—
Back to days and hours departed, ah! never to return—
And at times my spirit mourneth, and my heart with anguish burns;

For I think of those we loved with affection's deepest glow,
Who have passed from thence away—and we miss their presence so;
And I long, with heartfelt yearning, for their presence once again,
To lift from off my aching heart its load of grief and pain.

And one to me seems dearer as the months and years go by,
And more and more do I miss the glance of my noble father's eye;
I miss the presence and the power, the protection of his arm;
For we felt when he was with us to us could come no harm.

But my spirit groweth calm when o'er my feverish brain,
Cometh unto me a knowledge that takes away the pain;
For I know 'twas done in wisdom by the power of His will,
Who in an hour of peril great did "the angry waters still."

And when the twilight shadows gather deep and darker still,
And we feel the hush of evening o'er our troubled spirits steal,
Then I deeply feel the power of His all mysterious might,
And my spirit gladly bends to His, for "He doeth all things right."

Bayside, June 13. EMMA *****

Evangelism in Italy—by a Nova Scotia Lady.

We find in the *London Freeman* an account of a meeting, presided over by the Earl of Harrowby, which was recently held at the Young Women's Christian Association Rooms, 43, Crawford st, Portman-square, London, to hear details of the remarkable work carried on during a series of years by Miss Burton among the navvies and soldiers of Italy.

The details were given in an address by the Rev. John Williams (Trinity Church, Wallington, Surrey), who, during six years' sojourn in Italy, as English chaplain at Milan, had frequent and extensive opportunities of observing the need of such labours as those of this devoted lady, and the practical effects produced thereby. From a paper circulated in the room, it appears that her work commenced ten years ago, in Switzerland, among the Italian navvies (who cross the Alps by thousands for the construction of railways and mountain roads), by daily classes for their instruction in the Scriptures, continued ever since; and constant personal intercourse with them, accompanied by efficient colporteurs and evangelists, by whom many thousand copies of God's Word have been sold and distributed, and tracts without number. Abundant fruit has been produced from this good seed. For three winters Miss Burton laboured with success among the soldiers at Florence and elsewhere, where upwards of 1,500 were brought under her personal teaching, besides some thousands more to whom the Scriptures were carried by her colporteurs at Perugia and other places, to say nothing of the most interesting mission of her two colporteurs (one an old soldier) to the fighting army in the Tyrol, 1866, where thousands of the volunteers, as well as regulars, eagerly sought to obtain even a portion of God's Word, and where officers often paid more than the price of a Bible that their men might be supplied gratis. Numbers of the sick and suffering in the hospitals received consolation, and died in peace, resting in simple faith on that Word. The work Miss Burton has now on hand, and for which help is needed is as follows:—Two colporteurs, one (the soldier before named) itinerating with the Scriptures, who lately reports—"I find many now who formerly would only pay a few centimes a New Testament, will now have a good family Bible for five or six francs. The other agent is a young Evangelist of good education and superior qualifications, a member of the Church of England, now working in the neighbourhood of Lago Maggiore and Domo d'Ossola and here, as a great centre, he holds regular meetings every Sunday, and other evenings, when the average attendance has been not less than eighty—often two hundred; while he is encouraged by the most respectable families in Domo d'Ossola. Miss Burton has also taken

the expense of training a most promising young Italian, with the hope of his becoming an efficient evangelist to his countrymen. And she only waits to prove the Christian interest of her friends in England to put a colporteur on the new railway in construction over the Jura mountains. Such are the leading points on the interesting case laid before the meeting with the additional and important feature that this extended and extending work is at present imperilled by lack of adequate means, arising partly from the death of a general officer whose happiness it was to forward this lady's plans for the Italians seeing, as he did, God's blessing ever accompanying them, and a great and real work doing in a quiet, unostentatious way, and with the greatest regard to economy Miss Burton at all times, and at the greatest personal sacrifice, ever taking part in the daily instruction, or direction, of the agents employed by her. Mr. Williams heartily testified to the great worth and warmly appealed for support.

The noble Chairman, in a few concluding observations, cordially seconded the appeal, and expressed his admiration of the zeal with which Miss Burton—a Nova Scotian lady—has for so many years devoted herself to the best welfare of Italy.

Correspondence.

For the Christian Messenger.

Prince Edward Island Association.

ITS RELIGIOUS SENTIMENTS.

Dear Brother,—

The sixth Article of our newly constituted Island Association reads as follows:—

"The religious sentiments of our body may be described as those held by the so-called Calvinistic Baptists."

The article defines thus our doctrinal position as Island Baptists. We here say, in effect, We are not Campbellite Baptists. Nor are we Free Will, nor Free Christian Baptists. But we belong to the "so-called Calvinistic Baptists," with their profession as to the sovereignty of Divine Grace, with all its Scriptural consequences. And yet while our position is thus defined, it is left as little defined as possible. Here, in effect, we farther say,—We do not commit ourselves to any rigid interpretation of Calvinistic views. We are not Calvinists in the sense of the Westminster Confession. Neither are we Baptists in the sense of the "Articles of the Faith and Practice of the Baptist Churches in Nova Scotia." Certainly we hold generally with these; especially with the latter. But we put neither the one nor the other into our Constitution. We say to no church, as an Association,—If you would walk with us you must accept of such and such doctrinal definitions, as framed by human hands. Nor do we in any way suggest to the churches uniting with us, that they should exalt such and such human definitions into terms of church fellowship. Of course if any of them see fit to make use, in any way of the Nova Scotia Articles,—in the admission of members, for instance,—it is not for us as an Association, to interfere. But then again, as an Association, we do not recommend that they should make such use of them. And while we abstain from any such recommendation, we intend, by the very indefiniteness of our definition, to send our brethren and our churches immediately to the Word of God; that, by direct contact therewith, they may gather "the mind of the Spirit," and be delivered from the very appearance of learning their "fear toward God by the precept of men." See Isa. xxix. 13. Matt. xv. 9. From all which appears, why the above article was commended to the adoption of our brethren, and actually adopted by them.

The writer of this year's Circular Letter for the Association, that is your present correspondent, anticipating here in the probable action of his brethren, had prepared a portion of that document with a view to such action, and, in fact, in order to its vindication. Greatly to his surprise, however, this portion of his letter awakened strenuous opposition. He struck out a few sentences, and afterwards still other sentences. But nothing would satisfy the brethren except the striking out of the whole of it; and struck out it was. Under these circumstances, I send to your columns the greater part of what was thus rejected. With what special objects in view will appear hereafter. Meanwhile here follows the matter in question.

3. We pass to another point. In founding our Association we have adopted no articles of faith. We are Baptists. We are strict Baptists. We are, generally speaking, moderate Calvinists. We wish these things to be clearly understood, and have taken our measures accordingly. At the same time we think it is at least inexpedient for us to hold up in our front, as our Association, any creed of human origin, even though it expresses at all points, the things most generally received among us.

But more than this. We are not satisfied that it would be lawful for us to do so, no matter what the explanations with which our so doing might

be accompanied. For is it not thus written?—"Be not ye called Rabbi: for one is your Master, even Christ; and all ye are brethren. And call no man your father upon the earth: for one is your father, who is in heaven. Neither be ye called masters: for one is your Master, even Christ." Matt. xxiii. 8—10. Which words seem to us to mean this, among other things,—that, as disciples of Christ, we should neither bow, nor seem to bow to any human authority; and that, especially, neither as churches, nor as bodies of churches, such as an association is, should we, in avowing our religious convictions, permit ourselves to say after uninspired men.

Besides which, in apostolic times no creed was elaborately and formally laid down, nor formally imposed, either upon individuals or churches. No doubt there is the apostolic decree in Acts xv. 22—29. But then, that was a decree in favour of liberty, and not for the infliction of restraint. Again, in Rom. xiv. 1—6, we are instructed to receive all whom the Lord has received, irrespective of differences as to human appointments or traditions. There is no sign here of rigid creed-making, or of the rigid enforcement of creeds. Nay, all the indications look in a contrary direction. And when churches, enjoying a Christian freedom within their own borders, come together in associations, we cannot perceive why they should be bound up there by ties which they have been taught to repudiate at home.

And farther, we do not gather, from history or observation, that the enforcement of forms of words embodied in creeds of human origin is any security for uniformity of belief in the matter of those creeds. Notoriously, it is not so, and never has been so, with the churches of Rome, or England, or Scotland. On the other hand, Congregationalists and Baptists at home, both in their churches and associations, refuse to be bound by human formularies of belief. And yet these two bodies are, in the main, remarkably at one in their doctrinal views, those views being what we have already described as moderately Calvinistic.

We would quote here from the weighty sayings of Andrew Fuller. Thus he writes:—"The character of the preaching in our age contributes, more than most other things, to give a character to the Christians of that age." This is something like saying, that our preaching has more to do with the belief of the churches than our creeds. Our prayers certainly express our beliefs, and probably frame them, far more than our creeds. So too our hymnology. Dr. Watts has done more for our modern orthodoxy, as we deem it, by his Psalms and Hymns, than by all his theology in prose. Nay, may we not say, more than has been done by all the theology in prose, excellent as much of it is, produced by the great mass of our Puritanic and modern divines? It is the live theology of the prayer, the song, and the sermon, by which the masses of men are ever indoctrinated; not the dead abstractions of the creeds.

From all which it follows, that sound doctrine in our worship is infinitely more important than sound doctrine in our creeds. Nay, it matters not what our creeds are, if the truth be not in our pulpits, and, we may well add, if it be not reflected in the living Christianity of our membership, all the creeds in the world, though they may include all vital truth, and be compiled with the utmost skill and care, will not preserve our churches from the paralysis and decay of a spiritual death. Which several considerations are put forth to shew you why our Association has been formed, not upon the basis of any human creed, but rather upon a basis directly and purely Scriptural.*

Let me now ask, dear brother, Whether there be any thing in the above paragraphs, given in smaller type, at which any Baptist brother is entitled to take offence? Brethren here said that there was something of that kind in them; and hence, for the most part, their treatment of them as above indicated. And hence my present question. If the above paragraphs do really aggrive any one of my Nova Scotia brethren, let such a brother "speak; for him have I offended." But if none should speak may I not fairly conclude, that no offence is taken; and that Nova Scotia Baptists are not quite so sensitive as some here have allowed themselves to believe?

Might it now be permitted to me, with all possible respect and affection, to suggest to our Nova Scotia brethren the fitness of taking into consideration the matters thrown out as above? Many things which might have seemed harmless enough until their tendency had been practically tested have turned out to be full of deadly evil. The preservation of saintly relics may be mentioned as a case in point. We have here a remarkable illustration in Old Testament history. There was "the brazen serpent which Moses had made," and which was preserved until the days of Hezekiah. It may be remembered here how our blessed Lord ultimately adopted this historical monument as a significant type of himself. John iii. 14, 15. Well "the children of Israel" had turned this genuine and interesting relic into an idol, and had "burnt incense to it." It had thus proved a sore temptation to Israel, and a grievous provocation to Israel's God. Hezekiah, therefore, in his holy zeal against idolatry, representing the very natural feeling which might have pleaded for its preservation, and turning a deaf

*The term Calvinistic, in the article given as above from our Constitution, is employed simply as a convenient general term. As to the term Baptists, it is so nearly Scriptural, and so well understood, that though used in a certain sectarian sense, it scarcely requires any apology. And so I would maintain, that the phrase, Calvinistic Baptists, as employed in the above article, does not really come in conflict with the argument there insisted upon in defence of that article.

ear to all the plausibilities which might have been urged against his ruthless iconoclasm, "brake it in pieces," and "called it *Nehushtan*;" that is a piece of brass, and no more than that: and the deed is recorded to his honour; 2 Kings xviii. 4. Now what if it should appear, that some among us have made too much of our Nova Scotia Articles? What if some have been more concerned about a conformity to the Articles than about a conformity to New Testament teachings? What if the Articles should in some cases have been interposed between the minds of brethren, or of churches, and New Testament announcements, and thus exalted into a position of undue prominence and precedence? What if some should have paid, perhaps unconsciously, a greater deference to the teachings of Newton Brown, the original author of these Articles, I think, than to those of evangelists and apostles? What if there be no more than a danger in this direction, which even in a few instances has proved something beyond a danger?—a hidden rock, upon which some have now and then made shipwreck? Might it not become a duty to imitate here the godly zeal of Hezekiah?—to treat these Articles, in every way, as being, what indeed they are, with all their Scriptural excellency, the work of man, and not the Word of God?—and to rely upon them no more, nor even seem to rely upon them, nor tempt others to do so?—and therefore to dismount them from the lofty position which they now occupy, in the very front of our Nova Scotia Baptist host—the rallying point of their faith, and the exponent, if not the guide of their practice? Were there not herein an act of homage to the truth of God, well pleasing to the God of truth, and highly beneficial to his people? And would not a deed like this bring our brethren into a nearer conformity than that to which they have as yet attained with the spirit of our Lord's admirable and deeply suggestive petition,—Sanctify them through thy truth: THY WORD IS TRUTH?"

Let me say, in conclusion, that I hope, above all things, that none, in noting the practical tendency of my argument in this letter, may be betrayed into an utterance like that of Micah, the idol maker,—"ye have taken away my gods . . . ; and what have I more?"

Yours in the New Testament Gospel,
J. DAVIS.
Charlottetown, P. E. I., July 27, 1868.

Religious Intelligence.

MABOU, C. B., July 22nd 1868.

Dear Bro. Selden,—

I am glad to inform you that the Lord is visiting Mabou in mercy and leading souls to trust in His dear Son.

On returning from the Association at Pugwash I found brother William McPhee here in Mabou preaching to the people and exhorting them to flee from the wrath to come. He had spent several days in this way; and the divine blessing seems to have attended his efforts. The C. B. Quarterly Meeting commenced immediately after, and souls began to cry for mercy. Strong men were constrained by sovereign grace to bow before the Lord, and still the work goes on. At the close of the Quarterly Meeting there was such a manifest anxiety on the part of many that the special services should be continued that Bro. McPhee and myself concluded to spend a week or two at least in the place. And the power of the Lord is present both to wound and to heal.

Last Sabbath was a good day for the little church in Mabou. Three—all heads of families—were added to her number, by baptism—and the Lord's Supper was dispensed. These things, in addition to the proclamation of the Gospel, gladdened the hearts of the old disciples here. Many years have passed since so large a blessing was granted. All can say from the heart "The Lord hath done great things for us whereof we are glad," and all feel that He is about to do still greater things soon. Hoping to have more glad tidings shortly, I am, dear brother,

Yours in Christ,
J. F. KEMPTON.

JEDDORE.—Dear Brother.—I am happy to inform you that the gracious shower which began to descend on this corner of God's vineyard in January last has not ceased, but its power is still felt; softening the hard heart and preparing it to bring forth fruit to the honour and glory of God.

On the last Sabbath in June a large number assembled from far and near, to hear the glad