

note some of the specialities of our annual meetings, and to lay before our readers the facts upon which the several societies base their appeals for sympathy and support.

THE BUILDING FUND

was the first to call its friends together.—This society, which grants loans without requiring interest, has rendered good service to many struggling congregations in their time of need. In erecting or enlarging chapels, committees are prone to sanction an outlay scarcely warranted by the means of their constituents. During the past year Baptists have increased their chapel accommodation to the extent of 10,982 sittings, at a cost of £76,319, of which £31,617 remain as an addition to our chapel debts. At this point the Fund offers assistance.—Instead of charging interest on loans, it lends money on the condition that it be repaid in ten equal annual instalments. Seventeen such grants have been made in the year 1868-9. One question refuses to be suppressed. Is it right to incur debts which exceed £31,000 in a single year? We rejoice in denominational extension, in the building of new and the enlarging of old chapels; but we doubt whether the loss from debt does not almost equal the gain from increased accommodation. Debt means difficulty and danger. Many a prosperous church has repented of large ventures. A small chapel out of debt is to be preferred to a spacious and beautiful building heavily mortgaged. When Episcopacy shall be disestablished and Dissent be delivered from its chapel debts, the Church of Christ in this land will be more at liberty than at present to do evangelistic work.

THE BAPTIST UNION

held the first sitting of its annual session on the 26th ult., in John-street Chapel. The morning was occupied by the Chairman's inaugural address, and a discussion of the vexed question of a Sustentation Fund—Clear in style, discriminating in thought, vigorously read, and eloquent throughout, Dr. Brock's address left nothing to be desired. While conceding full liberty to the thinker, and wide limits within which changes in the theological opinions and church practices are lawful, Dr. Brock grappled in a manly and trenchant way with the tendencies to change so perceptible in certain quarters, and contended earnestly for the authority of the Divine Word and the maintenance of the distinction between the church and the world. While admitting the desirableness of increasing the stipends of our ministers, and expressing the fullest sympathy with the objects of the proposed fund, the Union has resolved that the peculiarity of its organization precludes it from even nominating, or even authorising its officers to nominate, a board for the promotion of a Sustentation Fund. Time alone can prove whether a Sustentation Fund is possible to Baptists.

The adjourned session of the Baptist Union, held in Walworth-road Chapel, on Thursday morning, was attended by a goodly number of members. The chief feature of the meeting was the paper read by Mr. Clement Bailhache on Church Membership. Those who knew Mr. Bailhache were not surprised to find him treating his theme with vigor of thought and delicacy of discrimination—with breadth of sympathy and a truly catholic spirit, and yet with a manifest attachment to the "good old ways." The subject is just now exciting special attention, on account of the Broad Church proclivities of some men amongst the Independents, and the disposition they have displayed to break down well nigh all distinctions between the church and the congregation, and so to practically bring to an end church membership as it has hitherto been understood and carried out amongst evangelical Nonconformists. The theory that the "congregation is the church" is in our judgment much less inconsistent with Pædobaptist than with Baptist principles, but, at the same time, we do not believe that a large number of the Independents are prepared to sympathise with the laxity which a few have advocated. Innovators often get into great prominence simply because they are innovators, and not because their innovations are widely popular. Their prominence often leads them, and others also, to overrate both their power and their importance. Whatever be the truth with regard to the Independent body, it must be admitted that if Baptists fail to distinguish between the church and the congregation they will violate one of their most distinctive principles, and will prove what others have sometimes tried to demonstrate, that there is no need for them to have a separate denominational existence.

THE BIBLE TRANSLATION SOCIETY,

since its annual meeting last year, has made

considerable progress. On Monday evening the secretary reported an increase of £421 in its income, which is in part the result of the publication of a pamphlet entitled "The Baptists and the British and Foreign Bible Society." Once again the case against the professedly most catholic of our institutions was stated and argued. It would be difficult to make out a more complete case. The officers and speakers showed that the Bible Society supports even a Roman Catholic version—why not, then, a version used by baptists? that in many of its versions *baptizo* is translated, not transferred—why, then, insist that our missionaries should transfer and not translate the word? that it is the duty of translators to render into the language understood by the people, every word of Holy Writ—why, then, should such a rendering be prohibited in any instance? We are unfeignedly sorry to hear that the Bible Society has learnt nothing during the last thirty years, and still maintains its attitude of hostility to our Bengali version of the Scriptures. It appears that its Calcutta Auxiliary, with the full concurrence of missionaries of all denominations, recently recommended the parent society to support this Bengali version, with "alternative readings." Here was a compromise which promised the settlement of this prolonged controversy, and which, approved by the Calcutta auxiliary, ought to have been accepted by the committee in London. But the Bible Society has shown itself to be inexorable. The word into which *baptizo* has been translated must be expunged, and on none other condition will support be granted.

THE BAPTIST MISSIONARY SOCIETY

held its members' meeting on Tuesday morning. As we intimated a fortnight ago the financial position of the society is better than it was last year. The contributions of the churches for "general purposes" show an increase of nearly £1,000 on 1867-8. It is very satisfactory to find that the total income—£30,556—is not swelled by large legacies, only £513 19s. as against £686 15s. last year appearing under that head. It is also noteworthy that the expenditure, which has amounted to £29,594 19s. 10d., is less by some £961 than the income. A debt of £2,381 15s. 6d. still hampers the committee, and prevents the extension of mission work to regions beyond those already occupied.

THE BRITISH AND IRISH MISSION

held a most successful meeting on Tuesday evening in Bloomsbury Chapel. Both the Rev. C. Kirtland's report, and Mr. Woolley's financial statement, which showed an income of £3,902, with a balance on the right side, gave evident pleasure. Mr. Illingworth, M. P., filled the chair with ability and grace, and delivered an address in which he expressed a warm appreciation of the evangelistic work of the society, and a readiness to assist the denomination in its manifold labours. The Rev. F. Tucker surpassed himself. In a speech abounding with happy hits at Romanism and Ritualism, full of earnest Dissent and the most pronounced Protestantism, Mr. Tucker pleaded for increased zeal in prosecuting evangelising enterprises. The Rev. C. Williams followed with an address on the importance of paying more attention to the villages, contending that the agricultural labourer is sinking in the social scale, and pressing the claims of rural districts on the society and its friends. The Rev. A. Mursell was himself, depicting in a series of word-paintings the state of subjection to which Popery has reduced the Irish peasant, and predicting the downfall of Rome in the sister-island.—From Freeman, April 30 and May 7.

For the Christian Messenger.

HALIFAX PROTESTANT INDUSTRIAL SCHOOL FOR BOYS.

A few weeks since the Ladies' Committee of this Institution, and a few of their female friends, met together for the purpose of devising means for procuring the sum of \$1600, in order to enable the managers to pay off pressing liabilities, and get free from debt. A Bazaar was proposed—but abandoned—and the Committee believing that the Lord is the hearer of prayer, and desires that His people should honor Him with their confidence, decided to lay the matter before Him in prayer and in faith. This they did—knowing that "the silver and the gold are His"—That "He has all hearts in His hands"—and that "His God would supply all their need, according to His riches in glory by Christ Jesus."

The result exceeded their petitions—in a very short time they received \$1680—

which was liberally and cheerfully given as soon as the wants of the Institution were made known. They had asked the Lord for \$1600—and He had given that sum and \$80 over—which latter sum supplied a further need not anticipated at the time.

While sincerely thanking the several contributors for their generous help, the Committee desire that God alone should have all the glory—well knowing, that He who disposed their hearts to give, is able also to return a tenfold blessing. Names are purposely omitted. The praise of the Lord is better than the praise of men.—Communicated.

For the Christian Messenger.

A NEW WAY OF ADMINISTERING THE ORDINANCE OF BAPTISM.

We live in a fast age; an age remarkable for its many improvements, discoveries and inventions, both in Art and Science, and the introduction of quite a number of innovations that will agitate the political and commercial world, and perhaps the Christian Church for centuries to come. Every age has left an indelible impress upon the pages of history; but none have been able to chronicle so many remarkable events as will be the privilege of the present. Among the many startling occurrences is the introduction of another mode of baptism, making a fourth. The Apostolic Age is noted for the practice of immersion, as Wesley, Doddridge Chalmers, Tholuck, Whitby, Coleman, Neander, and a host of others bear witness. Subsequent periods for the adoption of sprinkling and pouring. The present century for what is termed semi-immersion. It was practised in Kings Co. for the first time I believe, last Sunday May 16th, and administered by a Congregational clergyman at Oak Point.

The afternoon was quite pleasant, and a congregation, of between four and five hundred people gathered at the water near a ship-yard owned by Mr. Bigelow. The service commenced at 4 o'clock about the time of high water. The Rev. gentleman made a few remarks upon the occasion. His arguments were as follows:—That the rite was not the baptism; the baptism of the Holy Spirit was the essential. It was immaterial how water was used, as the only doctrine that it taught was purification. The different ways of administering the rite and the controversies respecting it were on a par with the disputes among the early christians in regard to the observance of days and eating meats offered to idols, referred to by the Apostle Paul. He mentioned several times the probable opinion of the Apostle if he were here, concluding he would view the subject of baptism in the same light as he did the observance of days &c.

There were two candidates. The first being a woman was led down into the water by the Rev. gentlemen who first scooped up a handful of water and wet her face, then another and put it on her head, and finally repeating the words; "I baptize thee in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Ghost. Amen," immersed the candidate to the shoulders, the head, neck, and the top of the shoulders were above water. The second, being a man went down alone, following the minister about three yards in the rear, to a sufficient depth of water, and was treated in the same manner. The benediction was then pronounced and the congregation dispersed. This mode is quite a novelty in this part of the Province. The Originator, the time and place of its introduction, is as yet shrouded in mystery. Thinking probably this item will be of interest to your numerous readers I send it for publication.

ONE PRESENT.

The rite described in the above letter is highly suggestive. It suggests the impropriety of those who wish to be baptised placing themselves in the hands of an administrator, who, himself never was baptised, does not believe in baptism, and who consequently might be expected to treat the ordinance so as to bring contempt upon it and on those who practise it, and hence also, on the Saviour and his apostles who observed and enjoined it. To say the least, such a baptism ought not to be satisfactory to those who apparently expected to be immersed, but, who found themselves the subjects of a novel and a nondescript ceremony.

Your escape to Jesus must not only be prompt, it must be decisive and determined. "Look not behind thee," said the angels to Lot.

Christian Messenger.

HALIFAX, MAY 26, 1869.

CHRISTIAN HOPE.

The condition of man, without the gospel of Christ, is described in the Scriptures as "having no hope and without God in the world." The original relation of mankind to Jehovah has been broken off, and man has become alienated in mind by wicked works. This must be a terrible state. When only partially realized it takes away all peace, and brings distress and sometimes despair. We know not yet the full extent of its meaning, and, perhaps it is one of our greatest mercies that in this world our knowledge of this is so limited. When light shines into the mind of the sinner, it exposes to him his condition. Not only does he see this, but he is awakened to a sense of the consequences of remaining in a state of separation from God and holiness. The uncertainties of a continuance of life awakens anxiety to have a change effected.—Further light brings a higher appreciation of the work of Christ in man's redemption, and instead of misgiving and doubt, hope and love are awakened, and peace and joy arise. Hope comprises desire and expectation. This world becomes unsatisfactory and more abiding riches and righteousness are desired. These are partially obtained and fuller possession anticipated. Animated by the hope of eternal life, the christian regards no service he can render to the Saviour as a burden. A consciousness of his approbation is esteemed of greater value than all temporal good. A sense of safety arising from pardon and forgiveness is felt, such as the shipwrecked man experiences when feeling his feet first touch solid ground. He is saved! He is saved! Although he may know but little more than this, gratitude springs up in his heart, and his enquiry is "Lord, what will thou have me to do?" Whatever he now finds prescribed as the Divine direction he accepts, and the path of duty he is ready to follow. Whatever of difficulty presents itself does but intensify his resolve; and he becomes willing to give his life in return for this great salvation.

To make this ground of hope known to our fellowmen and inspire this gratitude and love is the noble work to which the christian is called. It was that which Christ came from heaven to make known; to seek and to save them that were lost. Let christians endeavour to walk in his steps and be found seeking to carry forward what he began, and what he is still effecting by their instrumentality. He will continue to work with them and so operate on men's minds until he reigns from the rivers to the ends of the earth.

MINISTERS' INSTITUTE.

Rev. E. C. Cady of Portland, St. John, N. B., has an article in the *Visitor* on the above subject, and concludes it by the following sentence, "Send in your opinions and suggestions to the *Visitor* and *Messenger*."

Whether Bro. C. has sent a copy of his article for insertion in the *Messenger* we know not, as we have not received any, but presuming that he would like it to appear in our columns, we venture to copy it from our contemporary.

MINISTERS' INSTITUTES.

These institutions are of modern date. The first of which I have any knowledge, was held at Chicago, five or six years ago, by the Baptists. Their design is the improvement of the ministry, and through them the churches. All the ministers in a given district, as far as possible, and as many from beyond as choose, assemble to hear Lectures on the various subjects which directly interest them in their work as preachers and pastors. Usually an hour is given for the delivery of the Lecture, and another hour for questioning the Lecturer, and a free expression of opinion on the part of all who wish to dissent from the views given, or who wish to throw additional light upon some point, touched upon by the Lecturer. In this manner a lively interest in the subject is awakened, the attention of all is secured, the mind is led to inquiry, to additional research and fresh investigation.

Usually three Lectures only are given in a day, leaving some time for devotional exercises, and free religious conference upon the state of religion in the Churches, in the ministers own hearts, and upon the best methods of producing the growth of piety and securing the conversion of souls.

These Institutes originally were held for two weeks, and in the State of Illinois, twice a year; once at Chicago, and once at Alton, the seats of the two Baptist Colleges. Ministers, in this way, were generally kept from their Churches but one Sabbath. It never was contemplated that the whole range of interesting subjects