

THE OECUMENICAL COUNCIL AT ROME.

The following are said to be the subjects that will be discussed at the Oecumenical council:—1. Pantheism, Naturalism, and Absolute Rationalism. 2. Modified Rationalism. 3. Indifferentism and Tolerance. 4. Socialism, Communism, Secret Societies, Bible Societies, and Clerical Liberal Societies. 5. Errors with respect to the Church and her Rights. 6. Errors with respect to Civil Society in itself, and in its relation to the Church. 7. Errors with respect to Natural and Christian Morals. 8. With respect to Christian Marriage. 9. With respect to the Sovereignty of the Roman Pope. 10. With respect to Modern Liberalism.

Opposition to the movement is being strongly developed, especially in Germany. The *Cologne Volkszeitung* says that the following questions have been submitted to German bishops by the authorities in Rome:—"What are the relations between the Church and the State? What difficulties do the law or other circumstances place in the way of the free exercise of ecclesiastical authority, the observance of ecclesiastical law, the progress of Catholic institutions, and the prosperity of the Catholic religion in general? What are the relations of the State to the church with respect to the education of youth in public schools and religious seminaries, the presentation to benefices, the acquisition and possession of ecclesiastical property and monastic institutions? What evils arise from the relation of the various confessions which are tolerated or possess equal civil and political rights in the various states?" These questions are (says the *Weekly Review*) ominous, and there is no doubt that the result of the council will be to bring the Papacy and its faithful adherents among the bishops into conflict with all the Liberal Governments of Europe. There is a very strong party in the Romish Church in Germany opposed to the extreme claims of the Papacy, and it is not unlikely that if the Papal authority is hardly pressed this party may break off altogether. Archbishop Manning is said in the German papers to be one of the Pope's most determined counsellors to take the highest ground. The jurisdiction to be claimed by the Pope and the Jesuits extends to marriage, family, education, science, and legislation, and the subject is sure to stir up the fiercest conflict in all the Liberal States professedly adhering to the Church of Rome.

For the Christian Messenger.

COLPORTAGE IN NOVA SCOTIA.

BOSTON, Aug. 11th, 1869.

Although there was no regular organization, or provision made, to continue the work of Colportage in either province after 1856, yet the American Tract Society occasionally sent students, from some of our Seminaries, to labor during their vacation in the field thus left vacant. But so impressed were some good men in Nova Scotia, with the simplicity and adaptedness of this method of personal effort to reach all classes, that a Christian merchant of Cornwallis, sent to the writer of this letter for a large supply of religious publications,—paying for them himself,—and then employing Colporteurs at his own expense, to visit the scattered population upon the mountains, and in some portions of the Annapolis valley. In 1861, the Tract Society employed a permanent Colporteur in Prince Edward Island; who remains there until this day; and who has labored with great acceptance, and we doubt not has proved a rich blessing to the dwellers of that Province. In the summer of 1863, the same Society secured the services of Rev. Alexander McBean, a native, and citizen of Nova Scotia—who was then a recent graduate from the Theological Seminary at Princeton, New Jersey. The duty assigned to Mr. McBean was to explore thoroughly the field, and ascertain its religious necessities, and then so far as it should be found practicable, and be in harmony with the wishes of pastors and churches, to introduce Union Missionary Colportage. In carrying on this work, the intention was to secure competent men upon the field, who were worthy members of evangelical churches and identified with the interests of the Province in all respects, and who had a reputation for earnest piety, and commanded the confidence of the communities where they resided. From July 1863 to January 1868, thirty different brethren were employed as Colporteurs—including several students from Acadia College. The amount of labor they performed was

equal to the service of one man for twenty three years ten months and thirteen days. During this time religious publications of the highest excellence—including Bibles and Testaments—were circulated to the amount of \$23,142.57, or, if bound in one volume of three hundred pages each, would number forty six thousand ten hundred and eighty five—besides thousands of religious papers for adults and children distributed every month. In connection with the circulation of these publications, sixty thousand nine hundred and sixty three families were visited. Allowing the usual estimate of five persons to a family, more than three hundred thousand individuals were thus reached—a number nearly equal to the entire population of Nova Scotia. This was the work done under the immediate supervision of Mr. McBean, and does not include Colportage in New Brunswick and Prince Edward Island. In a large number of the families visited there was personal conversation and prayer. Who can estimate the influence for good that has thus been exerted by the labors and prayers of these thirty Colporteurs, and the more than fifty six thousand volumes of religious truth circulated in the families? Ought not every Christian heart to rejoice over such blessed missionary work? Who can tell how many pastors, churches and sabbath schools have been quickened and encouraged by these wide spread labors? In 1867, it was deemed expedient and wise that Nova Scotia should have her own Tract organization, and that it should be constituted upon such a broad and liberal basis, that the whole of British America might eventually participate in its management and labors, and enjoy its benefits. "The Kingdom of God cometh not with observation"; and so the organization of the "British American Book and Tract Society," was almost unknown and unnoticed. There was no outward display—no public ceremony that would attract the multitude and excite their enthusiasm; but a few Christian gentlemen quietly met together, and with faith and prayer inaugurated the vitally important religious enterprise; which if conducted with wisdom and energy may prove of greater real power and lasting advantage to the province of Nova Scotia, than the most successful commercial enterprise which its merchants have ever initiated or the greatest development of material resources which the skill and industry of its citizens have produced.

Next to the Church and Gospel Ministry—and simply out growths from them, to be employed as subordinate agents, are our SABBATH SCHOOLS, TRACT SOCIETIES AND CHRISTIAN ASSOCIATIONS; and these three organizations, though separate in form, are yet so interwoven with each other in practical labor as to form but one complete whole. They cover the whole field at home and abroad, they furnish appropriate work for every Christian disciple, they meet the religious wants of every age, every condition in Society, every class of mind and furnish a perfect solution of the question of organized church labor, so ably presented in a recently published Circular Letter in the *Christian Messenger*.

If there are any doubts existing on these points, carefully examine the plan of this new Tract organization; its methods of labor, its simplicity of presenting Scripture truth, its direct personal contact of man with man, its use of the press as well as the living voice, its harmony and complete affiliation with all other modes of "preaching the Gospel to every creature," and we believe you will hail it as one of the noblest auxiliaries ever yet tendered for the use of the Church, by which the way of salvation is to be made known to the entire human race.

Very sincerely,
N. P. KEMP.

Christian Messenger.

HALIFAX, AUGUST 18, 1869.

THE APPROACHING CONVENTION

is in many respects a gathering of much interest to the future of the Baptist churches in these provinces. The work of evangelization, at home and abroad, in which they are engaged, under this organization is one of the noblest in which Christian men can combine. The government of a province or of a country is not to be compared with it. Whatever relates to the salvation of souls, the recovery of men from the thralldom of idolatry and sin rises far above all temporal interests. The preparation of laborers for the work of Christ, and the sending them forth in the Lord's vineyard,

may well command the serious attention of all who offer up the pray "Thy Kingdom come, thy will be done on earth as it is done in heaven."

The promotion of higher Education and Foreign Missionary work are the great objects which come before the Convention. The are both of them parts of the great Commission left by our Lord for his disciples. When He said "Go ye into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature," he embraced more than the mere proclamation of the Word and the calling of men to a reception of gospel verities.

Questions of grave import in relation to each of these subjects will be brought before the body now about to assemble. It will be necessary that much wisdom be brought to bear upon them, and a spirit of self-sacrifice and forbearance cherished. It is not likely that all will take exactly the same view respecting the best means of bringing about the ends desired, but a spirit of generous frankness, and a willingness to receive suggestions from others as well as to give opinions ourselves will doubtless prevail. There will be a large number of intelligent men present and lengthy dogmatic speeches will not be required. Talk that means nothing is always out of order on such occasions. The time being so limited will forbid the indulgence of unmeaning harangues, and demand a condensing of thought into the smallest compass to allow a general participation of the many in the deliberations of the whole.

Not only will the benevolent operations of the churches on the subjects in charge of the Convention for the coming year, be largely influenced by the decisions of the brethren, but the future well-being of our institutions for many years to come will be affected by the measures adopted during this session. With all these considerations before us, and knowing how liable we are to err in judgment and in spirit how necessary it is that we should seek Divine direction, and cultivate a feeling of dependence on the Most High, without whom nothing is strong or wise. With his blessing we may confidently look for large success in all our endeavours.

A spirit of united earnest, believing Prayer has heretofore characterized our annual gatherings. This is no less needful now, and will we trust prevail in all the meetings. There is danger in the city that other objects may divert attention from the devotional meetings and so detract from the good which might otherwise be obtained. On the other hand there are facilities, arising from brethren staying within reach of the place of meeting, which will enable them to join in such gatherings more than is sometimes possible in the rural districts, and we hope they will regard this circumstance as calling upon them to be present at the meetings for prayer and exhortation. A diligent improvement of time with a realization of the great responsibilities resting upon us, and a spirit of earnest piety brought into active operation, may render this session of our body one of the most memorable that has yet been held; and one from which an amount of influence for good may go forth not hitherto experienced.

PROSPECTING WESTWARD.

Our Ontario correspondent a week or two since alluded to a Baptist missionary deputation to the Red River country—the North West Territory, or the far west of British America. We find in late number of the *Canadian Baptist*, a letter from Dr. Davidson, one of the deputation, giving an account of their journey, which, we believe, our readers will like to see:

DEAR EDITOR:—You and your numerous readers will rejoice to learn of our safe arrival in this place—the town of Winnipeg, near Fort Garry, where we now are. We crossed the Assiniboine River at Mackay's Ferry the day before yesterday, June 30th, at 11:40 a. m., just two weeks to a minute from the time we took the cars at Ingersoll on the 19th ult. We have made a splendid run, travelling the 1466 miles in so short a time. Our journey over the prairies from St. Cloud, where we hired a team of mules to this place, had a good deal of the romantic about it to us. We pitched our tent at Coldepring, 17 miles from St. Cloud, the first night, in great haste, as a violent storm was coming on. Our tent cloth being new, did not shed the rain well, and we felt rather damp as we lay down to rest that night. The storm passed over in a few hours, and the morning found us all right and in good travelling trim. Our route along the Red River Trader's trail, through the valley of the Sauk River, was lovely and picturesque. The Sauk River runs through one of the finest portions of Minnesota, but except on the banks of the river there is a noticeable lack of timber. This region is fast filling up, and the American Government is giving land to emigrant settlers on most favorable terms, so that many are removing from

Wisconsin to this northern State. We passed scores of these on the way.

After passing Alexandria and Chippewa River, we came to an uninhabited region of surpassing beauty. Rolling prairies and beautiful lakes, the largest and loveliest of which was Pelican Lake, so named from the flocks of Pelicans that live in and around it. We saw a large flock of these immense birds, and the whole scene was like a dream of fairy land.

I cannot detail our daily experiences and impressions as we passed along, nor is this necessary. As we drew near Fort Abercrombie on the Red River of the north, we crossed over the belt of country that was desolated by the Indians four or five years ago, and the site of the projected Town of Breckenridge was pointed out to us, where the people were massacred and their dwellings burnt to the ground. When we came to the Red River at a point known as Connelly's, and saw the waters of that noble stream, we felt like shouting for joy. The banks are lined with belts of timbered land, varying in breadth from a few rods to two miles on the "points" formed by the windings of this muddy, but majestic river, which receives the waters of all the streams running from the east in Minnesota and the Red River Territory, and from the west on the Daotah side. No less than ten rivers empty their waters into it from the east, amongst these, the largest are the Swamp River, Red Lake River, Two Rivers or Bois Perce, Rivière Aux Roseaux, the Rat and the Seine Rivers.

We crossed the Red River at Georgetown, half between St. Cloud and Fort Garry, and pursued our weary way to Winnipeg. Decatur Territory westward, is the home of Indian tribes, and here we began to feel as we never felt before, our loneliness, and isolation from the houses of civilized men. For 163 miles we never saw a human habitation, and only passed three half-breeds and seven ox-carts. One night we thought our guides and companions were afraid of the Indians coming and stealing their horses, for they hopped them as they had not done before, and pleading that the flies were tormenting the animals so that they could not eat, they roused us up at two o'clock in the morning and drove us off 18 miles before breakfast. We saw no Indians, however, and received no injury in any way.

From Georgetown to this place we crossed the Elm, Goose, Turtle, Swamp, Big Salt, Little Salt, Pembina, Scatchling, Stinking, and Assiniboine rivers. Salt rivers were new to us. They were foul filthy streams, while the Scatchling river, (so called, because bathing in its waters causes the hapless wight who does so, has to scratch himself vigorously,) and the Stinking river, are streams on whose banks few will wish to settle. The waters of all these rivers save two or three, are muddy, and of the waters of some of them, the man who drinks does so at the peril of his health, if not of his life. Lake Winnipeg, the common receptacle of the waters of all those I have named, and several more, is a muddy looking sheet of water 264 miles long and about 35 miles in breadth, and covering over 9000 square miles, is exactly what its Indian name imports—muddy water.

It was a pleasant relief to us when we came two miles north of Pembina, to the International Boundary line. We saw the great square oak post that marks the line, standing on the prairie plain, nearly half a mile from our trail. We drove over to it. Its sides are indicative of East and West, North and South, and each is marked 94°. On the North side are the letters "U. S.," and on the South side "H. B. Co." (Hudson's Bay Company.) Bro. Baldwin took his pencil and wrote in a bold hand the word "CANADA," and I pencilled my name. We then mounted our waggon, gave three rousing cheers for Her Majesty, and sang, with tears starting to our eyes, "God save the Queen." The Settlement on Red River, south of this, is scarcely worthy of the name. The people live only on the River side, and are half-breeds, who live by fishing, &c., not agriculture.

Since our arrival here we have not been idle by any means. We delivered the letters of introduction which we had, to Rev. Geo. Young, Wesleyan Minister, who received us cordially and joyfully, and for whom one of us is to preach here on Sabbath next; to the Rev. J. Black, Presbyterian minister, who lives in the Scotch Settlement, five miles from the Red River, where he has a Chapel and a Parochial School, his congregation being composed of the descendants of the Selkirk men, who came originally from Sutherlandshire; and the letter we bore from Dr. J. G. Brown, M. P., to his brother, Dr. Walter R. Brown, who is Editor and Proprietor of the *Nor' Wester*, the only paper published in this Territory. Dr. Brown received us with great cordiality, and introduced us to a number of parties who have been for service to us. Prominent among whom is Dr. Shultz, a man of mark here, and a Canadian, formerly from Amherstburg, who kindly lent us his horse and buggy to go to Kildonan Settlement. We have met a goodly number of Canadians since coming here, some of them settlers, and the others tourists, who have come to see the country and settle if they like the appearance of things. We passed about 30 Canadian emigrants on our way, who had left their former homes in the counties of Bruce and Huron. We have not, as yet, met a single Baptist, but have heard of two or three, on whom we shall call.

We went down to Fort Garry yesterday to see the H. B. Company's officials. Governor McTavish had gone to the Norway House, so that we did not see him, but we had a pleasant interview with Dr. Cowan, the officer in charge of the Fort. The ground enclosed embraces about three acres. The wall, which is ten feet high, with strong stone towers at the corners, is built partly of stone and partly of hewed oak logs.