

Correspondence.

For the Christian Messenger.

ONTARIO CORRESPONDENCE.

Ontario Baptist Missionary Convention. The Ministers' Institute. Interest and success of the Meetings. The Home Mission work of the year. Large subscription for Foreign Mission, &c.

The Annual Convention of the regular Baptists of Ontario in Woodstock, and the Anniversary of the various Societies which took place in connection with it, have just closed. I trust the readers of the *Messenger* are sufficiently interested in the welfare of their Baptist brethren and the progress of Baptist principles, in this part of the Dominion, to warrant me in giving some brief account of these meetings. I do so the more cheerfully, in the hope that I may thereby be able to contribute my mite towards bringing about that better acquaintance between the members of the body in the various quarters of the Dominion, which seems to be earnestly desired on all hands. The limited space that I can venture to ask for will enable me to give only a brief outline of proceedings in this letter. In subsequent ones I may, perhaps, be permitted to refer more at length to some of the more interesting features and events of the occasion.

The *Ministers' Institute*, which was summoned to hold its first session on the Thursday preceding the 20th Oct., the day appointed for the opening of the Convention, bids fair to be, to use an expression not strikingly original, "a great success." Its originators and promoters looked forward, not without many misgivings to the day of opening. They felt that the project was an experiment. They had experienced many difficulties and a good deal of discouragement in their preliminary labours. They knew the difficulty most ministers would find in arranging for the two consecutive weeks of absence from their Churches, which would be necessary for all who should attend the meetings of both the Institute and Convention, except those residing in the vicinity. The result was beyond their most sanguine expectations. At the appointed hour a very respectable number of ministers were in attendance. The large proportion of young men amongst them, and especially of *quondam* students of the Institute, anxious to lose no opportunity for improvement, augurs well for the future of the Baptists of Ontario. Some three or four of the Lecturers failed to appear, but enough were present to afford good employment to all concerned for the five days allotted for the meetings. I subjoin a list of the subjects, lectures, &c.:

1. *Inspiration*.—Rev. J. Crawford, C. L. Institute.
2. *Justification*.—Rev. J. Cooper, D. D., London, Ontario.
3. *Theories of Plymouthism*.—Rev. J. Bates, Woodstock.
4. *Composition and Delivery of Sermons*.—Rev. R. A. Fyfe, D. D.
5. *Sanctification*.—Rev. J. Cooper, D. D., London.
6. *The First Chapter of Genesis in its Relation to Modern Science*.—J. E. Wells, C. L. Institute.
7. *Pastoral Visitation*.—Rev. G. Wilson, D. D.
8. *Best mode of conducting Prayer and Church Meetings*.—(Brief paper and free discussion.)
9. *Free Conference of Ministers in respect to Difficulties and Encouragements in their respective Fields of Labour*.
10. *Methods of Study and Courses of Reading for Ministers*.—Rev. R. A. Fyfe, D. D.

The lectures were well attended and listened to with great interest throughout. Each lecture was followed by a free interchange of thought in reference to the subject and the views expressed. This, of course, often culminated in earnest discussion, but as the best feeling prevailed throughout, this was not the least interesting or profitable part of the programme. The nature of the discussions may be conjectured from one illustration. The first lecturer took strong ground for verbal inspiration, going elaborately and exhaustively into the arguments in favour of that theory. The earnest discussion of this question by several supporters and opposers for the space of two or three hours, in an assembly of christian ministers and friends, who knew how to combine christian courtesy and kindness with spirited controversy, could hardly fail to stimulate to inquiry and promote activity in the search for truth.

The Convention proper assembled on Wednesday, the 20th Oct. As my limit is nearly reached I will content myself with a brief epitome of the results in connection with the Missionary work, leaving other matters for a subsequent letter.

The attendance was encouraging, considerably larger, I learn, than it has been for years. The report of the Secretary of the Convention showed that the fears of those who thought the deep interest lately awakened in Foreign Missions would retard the Home Mission work, were gratuitous. During the year 37 Missionaries in all have been employed in the Home Mission work, of these 3 have preached in Gaelic or English as occasion required, 3 in German, 3 in Indian and one in English, through an interpreter, to the Indians. On the whole they have preached the gospel at 108 stations, to a total average attendance of 7,170 persons. They have preached during the year, 3,682 Sermons, made 6,026 pastoral visits, travelled in the discharge of Missionary duty 37,238 miles, and baptized on a profession of faith 184 persons. They have received from the Churches with which they have labored \$5,766.82 and from the funds of the Convention \$4,233.83, making an average of about \$350, to each. Further particulars in respect to this truly great work must be reserved for another number as also the very encouraging state of the funds shewing as they do a larger income than that of any previous year. I must also, against my will, defer some account of the very interesting Foreign Missionary Meeting at which Bro. McLaurin and his wife were "designated" for labour amongst the Telogosa. I may merely give your readers a means of judging whether the hearts of Ontario Baptists are really in this new Foreign Mission work; in the fact that at the meeting referred to the handsome sum of about \$1760, was contributed and pledged by voluntary subscription for this glorious work.

J. E. W.

For the Christian Messenger.

"HYMNS AND SPIRITUAL SONGS."

Mr. Editor,—

I have just finished a thorough perusal of the book of Selected *Hymns* you have recently published and I think it a timely offering to our Churches, who have long needed a concise and suitable Selection of Sacred Songs for religious worship, particularly for Social Meetings. Being of a cheap and convenient size and good clear type no excuse now need be found, for any one being without a book, to follow the hymn which is being sung at Prayer Meetings, that is, so soon as these are generally introduced, which I hope will speedily take place. But why not go a little further? why not make a larger "Selection" for our churches?—one of a smaller and cheaper size than the *Psalmist*? The *Psalmist* is, as you remark, an excellent collection but still it has its defects. Like most other Collections, it contains a great many hymns not fitted for public worship, and consequently never used. *Good Poetry* is not always suited for praise in God's Worship. Much of Milton's classic verse would sound oddly in song, or Cowper's, Campbell's, Pollock's and others, where choice poetry often cheers the Christian's heart, and which is fit for private reading but not for public worship. In the *Psalmist* are a large number of hymns of this class, more suitable for private use than public worship; and could be well dispensed with. I think probably not over 400 or 500 of the 1200 in that Book are ever used in the sanctuary; and then it must have struck many that the *Psalmist* with all its excellencies was prepared for the *United States* especially, and contains a large number of National Hymns in which we feel no interest: in fact some few are well calculated to stir up the feelings and ire of a British subject; read No. 1007 where the nation to which we belong (a nation characterized by its love for civil and religious liberty) is exhibited as a "tyrant." However much the Americans could thank God for breaking the *tyrant's* yoke, surely we could never join in such sentiments. However I do not intend writing a *critique* but simply refer to these facts, to ask if you could not get out a Hymn book of a more moderate size than the *Psalmist*, at a cheap price, so that all our families may be fully supplied? I have eight children, who attend Church, it would be better if they each should have a book than that there should be only one or two in a few. Could you not, with good assistance, select 500 from the *Psalmist* and 100 from other good sources and make a good and useful Book of sacred song for our Churches. These six hundred would certainly be quite enough to suit every variety of doctrines, seasons, and ceremonies, and those left out would not be missed; as they would be such as probably are never sung. A plain well bound volume in good fair type of this size ought to be furnished for 40 or 50 cents and would then be within reach of all who desire a book to use in public worship.

ENQUIRER.

Oct. 1867.

For the Christian Messenger

GRAND PRE SEMINARY.

No. 3.

Mr. Editor,—

Since writing my last Article I am happy to perceive many encouraging circumstances in relation to the Institution in whose behalf I write. Several young ladies have within the past few days arrived, and the prospects of securing a respectable and remunerative attendance are every day brightening, besides I was extremely gratified to notice in your last issue a generous offer by a "Friend of Female Education," of eighty dollars to be devoted to the erection of a new building. This leads me directly to the subject of this article.

I hinted in my last that the present building, besides being hampered by a heavy rentage, which would inevitably absorb any profits that might be derived from the management of it, was in no respect suitable nor adapted to the purpose of a Ladies Seminary.

True it answers in some measure for that purpose, but all in any way acquainted with the condition and prospects of this Institution, regard it as a temporary affair, and look forward to the time when the Baptists of Nova Scotia shall have a new and commodious building devoted entirely to the purposes of Female Education.

Two objects now demand attention, First, That every Baptist man and woman should feel that the erection of such a building is an *absolute necessity*. Does this require any proof? Is Education valuable? Will the founding of a permanent Institution for female Education confer any substantial benefit? Has Acadia College been of any advantage to our denomination and the province at large? I think every reasonable man would resolve these questions into positive statements. Well, if Education is valuable, and confers material benefits on our people, does it not follow that the establishment of institutions for its promotion is an imperative duty? I think all enlightened men recognize this conclusion, and that it is only a natural sluggishness, which affects more or less every man's mind and heart, that prevents its practical acknowledgement. The great desirability and the immense importance of immediate action in this matter is every day rendered more apparent, and I feel assured that no further persuasion is required to render those, in whose hands the matter more properly rests, fully sensible that effort in this direction is urgently demanded. A new Female Seminary ought to be built—must be built—will be built. And now comes the question. By whose efforts?

In the consideration of this inquiry, I turn to two classes. First, the *wealthy men* of our denomination. By such, I do not mean those alone who are worth five or ten thousand pounds, but I speak to a numerous body of men who have so far prospered in their business as to have accumulated a respectable competency. Two duties in my mind manifestly rest upon all these. First, to contribute freely according to their means to the erection of a new building, and secondly, after its completion to patronize it liberally by affording an opportunity to their daughters of attending it. Would not this be eventually a profitable investment? It appears to be most difficult to convince business men that liberal education is of great advantage to a country in the way of increasing its wealth and promoting its progress. But this is, nevertheless, undeniably true, as events will ultimately show. But, there are higher claims involved. Must not every christian man acknowledge it to be his bounden duty to afford every opportunity in his power to his children, of acquiring a liberal education? Was any money expended to this manner ever wasted? Did a father ever regret having devoted a portion of his wealth to the mental culture and enlightenment of his children? For the sake of poor frail humanity, I hope not one. A father had expended beneficently of his bounty in the education of a daughter. After having finished a long and difficult course of training, she died. Did the father, while weeping his irreparable loss, repent that he had unsparingly expended his means in her mental culture? Not at all. He was rather thankful that he had been able to adorn and beautify that which was immortal in her he had loved, and, now, for a time, had lost. Let christian men beware lest they bring upon themselves condemnation for neglecting to furnish their sons and daughters with the appliances and means of education. It is the common boon and birthright of every young person in our land.

We all rejoice that the present is a utilitarian age. The claims of humanity are more widely acknowledged, and the interests of humanity more generally respected now than ever before.

But we regret too that the present is also a mercenary age. Mankind as a whole, seem absorbed in self and every motive that leads to action is based originally on self-gratification and self-interest.

Noble disinterested benevolence is a rarity. This tendency in men's minds is hurtful and debasing, and needs in every way vigorous efforts for its correction. Let men see and know, and feel that life has higher purposes than self-aggrandizement, and let the conscientiousness of their duty to assist in every benevolent undertaking assail them at every turn. We want to see an exhibition of whole-souled generosity in this matter of building a Female Seminary. The prospects are encouraging. As said in the opening of this article, one has come forward already. Of course four will immediately arise to hold him to his bargain. The nucleus of a regular building fund will thus be formed, and will steadily increase until our denomination shall have a permanent Institution for female education, of which they may be as proud as they are to-day of Acadia College. Let the Governors not be backward in attending to this matter energetically. What hinders the handsome fruition of all our hopes and desires in this relation?

I see, Mr. Editor, I have not time to speak of the other class to which I look for aid in this matter. Of this next week.

PROGRESS.

Wolfville, Oct. 30th.

[We would say for the encouragement of "Progress" that the "Friend of Female Education" had placed his proposal in our hands before seeing any of this series of letters.

He will perceive therefore that the subject was assuming a very practical shape in other minds, as well as his own. We are not assured that the sum named—EIGHTY DOLLARS—will be given except on the condition named—four other persons giving an equal amount; and yet we think it quite probable that the person, who makes the proposal, will not allow the failure of others to be a barrier to his benevolence, but will appropriate said sum in some way on behalf of the cause.—Ed. C. M.]

Missionary Intelligence.

MISSION TO KARENS.

LETTER FROM MR. D. A. W. SMITH.—*Henthada Karens helping themselves*.—Mr. Smith writes, under date of Rangoon, June 13, 1869, that the chapel and school-house in Henthada needed to be re-roofed, and the Karens in Henthada themselves collected, entirely unprompted by the missionary, a considerable portion of the amount required. He adds—

As the chapel and school-house were not to be used the present rainy season, and as I knew the Union was laboring under debt, although the roof was badly broken up, I told the Karens at the Association that I did not feel able to re-roof it; that there was little within the buildings (no plastering, no paint, no nice furniture) to be injured by a little sprinkling, and there would be no school or meetings, etc., etc. They expressed their sorrow at my inability to keep the said buildings in repair; but felt that they could not press the matter with propriety. After the Association I came down here to Rangoon, and they returned to their homes. What was my surprise a month later, to ascertain that several leading pastors and assistants had stirred up the disciples and exhorted them not to suffer, for the want of a few rupees of their own, the fine buildings which had been given to them by foreign contributions at great expense, to go to ruin. Such negligence on their part would argue not only ingratitude, but that favors had been thrown away upon them, &c., and that in response to the call contributions had poured in, ample to re-roof the large chapel and nearly enough to put both the buildings in repair.

Religious advancement in Henthada.—Since coming to Rangoon, I sometimes receive a dozen letters from the Henthada field by a single mail, besides frequent visits from the pastors of churches. There seems to have been an interesting state of inquiry in nearly every portion of the field among the heathen. There have been frequent calls for preachers, accompanied by the avowal, on the part of the inquirers, of the intention to give up their old superstitions as soon as they could be provided with teachers, to show and to lead them in the better way.

My heart has often bled, from my inability, on account of my remoteness from the field and infrequency of mail facilities (fortnightly), to look after cases of interest and endeavor to foster gracious beginnings.

The preachers and pastors too, seem to have been as hearty and zealous as ever in their work. One wrote to me not long since deploring the apparently small results of his labors, and stating that he had been so burdened with the weight of souls upon him that he had often arisen from his bed at night, while all around were wrapped in slumber, to pray for the unconverted. In the same letter he informed me that two or three had been recently hopefully converted through his instrumentality.

Normal School in Henthada.—Some time ago I wrote, that one great sorrow to the Karens, growing out of the departure of their missionary,