

The Christian Messenger.

A RELIGIOUS AND GENERAL FAMILY NEWSPAPER.

NEW SERIES.
Vol. XX., No. 39.

Halifax, Nova Scotia, Wednesday, September 29, 1875.

WHOLE SERIES.
Vol. XXXIX., No. 39.

Poetry.

THE MODEL CHURCH.

The following poem has appeared in many of our contemporaries and we are not quite sure it has not already graced our own pages. But in case it has not, we cannot call to mind that it has, we give it a place and commend to old and young for the beautiful sentiments it contains:—

Well, wife, I've found the model church,
And worshipped there to day;
It made me think of the good old times,
Before my hair was gray.
The meeting house was finer built
Than they were years ago,
But then I found when I went in,
It was not built for show.

The sexton did not set me down,
Away back by the door;
He knew that I was old and deaf,
And saw that I was poor.
He must have been a Christian man—
He led me boldly through
The long aisle of that crowded church,
To find a pleasant pew.

I wish you'd heard the singing, wife,
It had the old-time ring;
The preacher said, with trumpet voice,
Let all the people sing.
Old Coronation was the tune,
The music upward rolled,
Till I thought I heard the angel choir
Strike all their harps of gold.

My deafness seemed to melt away,
My spirit caught the fire,
I joined my feeble, trembling voice,
With that melodious choir;
And sang, as in my youthful days,
"Let angels prostrate fall,
Bring forth the royal diadem,
And crown him Lord of all."

I tell you, wife, it did me good
To sing that hymn once more;
I felt like some wrecked mariner
Who gets a glimpse of shore.
I almost want to lay aside
This weather-beaten form,
And anchor in the blessed port,
Forever from the storm.

'Twas not a flowery sermon, wife,
But simple Gospel truth;
It fitted humble men like me,
It suited hopeful youth.
To win immortal souls to Christ,
The earnest preacher tried.
He told the same old story o'er,
Of Jesus crucified.

And, wife, would you believe it true?
They keep the good old way
The martyrs and apostles went,
In early Christian day;
For then there gathered round the font,
A group all dressed in white,
To make the good confession, wife,
And keep the mystic rite.

Oh, yes, it made the years roll back,
When Jesus, 'neath the wave
Of sacred Jordan, bowed his head,
And sought the watery grave;
And early days, when you and I,
Obedient to the Word,
In holy joy and full of faith,
Were buried with the Lord.

Dear wife, the toil will soon be o'er,
The victory soon be won;
The shining land is just ahead,
Our race is nearly run.
We're nearing Canaan's happy shore,
Our home is bright and fair;
Thank God, we'll never want again,
There'll be no sorrow there;
In heaven above, where all is love,
There'll be no sorrow there.

Religious.

For the Christian Messenger.

AN ENGLISH ASSOCIATION.

My dear Sir,—

Through the courtesy of the Rev. John Stubbs, pastor of the Baptist church, Eythorne, Kent, I have received a copy of the Minutes of the "Kent and Sussex Baptist Congregational Association", which met at Folkestone, June 8 and 9 last.

An older body, the Kent and Sussex Association was formed in the latter end of the eighteenth century. The Circular Letter for the year 1813 was written by my father; subject, "the

wiles of Satan." I well remember transcribing it for the press: it was my first effort of the kind.

Afterwards I acted for several years as Secretary to the Association, and in 1829, when its fifteenth anniversary was held, it fell to my lot to prepare the Circular Letter; the theme was "The signs of the Times."

The district occupied by the Association being large, and travelling much more difficult than than now, a number of the churches seceded, and formed the "East Kent Association." Both these Societies fell to the ground after a few years, and "the Kent and Sussex Baptist Congregational Association" came in their room.

The plan differs in some respects from that of our own, as will appear from the following extracts from the "Rules":—

"2. That among the truths believed and held by the churches comprising this Association, the following are entitled to especial enumeration, viz:—

The divine inspiration of the Scriptures of the Old and New Testament, and their absolute sufficiency, as the only authorised guide, in matters of religion:—the existence of three equal persons in the Divine Essence, the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit;—eternal and personal election to holiness here, and eternal life hereafter;—the original depravity and actual guilt of mankind;—the atoning efficacy of the death of Christ;—free justification by his imputed righteousness;—the necessity and efficacy of the influences of the Holy Spirit in conversion and sanctification;—the final perseverance of the Saints;—the duty of all men, to whom the Gospel is made known, to believe and receive it;—the obligation of believers to obey all the moral precepts of the word of God;—the spirituality of the kingdom of Christ, and his supreme and sole authority in the church;—the resurrection of the dead, both of the just and the unjust;—the everlasting misery of the ungodly, and the everlasting happiness of the righteous."

"5. That the independence of the Associated Churches be inviolably maintained, and the right to interfere in the management of their concerns utterly disavowed; but that if advice be sought, the same be cheerfully given."

"6. That if any discord or offence should arise between any of the Associated Churches, and if it be deemed advisable to request the opinion of this Association, proof shall be given that the directions of Scripture, applicable to the case, have been followed, and all proper means employed to procure a private adjustment of the difference."

"7. That no church that refuses to dismiss members to, or receive members from, any of the Sister Churches in this Association, shall be permitted henceforth to become or continue a member of the Association; strict churches being left at liberty to decline to receive unbaptized members; and that none of the Associated Churches receive members excommunicated by any other Church in the Association without informing such Church of their intention to do so, assigning their reasons, and giving time and opportunity for any explanation which that Church may desire."

In the year 1813 the Association consisted of twenty churches: there are now thirty-three. The number of members is 2817. The number baptized last year was 246. Clear increase seven per cent.

The contributions to the Foreign Mission amounted to £247.19.1, or a little more than 24 cents each member. There are 45 "Local preachers" in the Churches, 4402 scholars in the Sunday Schools, and 450 Teachers.

In the columns of "Increase" there is one for "By testimony," and in those of "Decrease" there are columns for "Withdrawn" and "Erased." The other columns are like our own.

The Association met at noon on Tuesday, June 8th, and proceeded at once to the appointment of officers. The letters from the Churches were

read in the afternoon. In the evening a sermon was preached by the Rev. W. Barker, of Hastings. There was a prayer-meeting on Wednesday morning, June 9, at seven o'clock. At eleven the Association sermon was preached by the Rev. J. R. Hadler, from John xix. 30, after which the Rev. J. R. Smythe of Canterbury read the Circular Letter, on "the Efficacy and Importance of prayer." It is printed in the Minutes, and is a very instructive and useful paper. "The use and abuse of Lay Agency" is to be the subject of the next Circular Letter, to be written by the Rev. W. Barker, the subject as well as the writer being chosen by the Association. In the evening a Public Meeting was held on behalf of County Missions. After the reading of the Report, addresses were delivered by four brethren, on "the duty of immediate decision for Christ"

"The duty of confessing Christ"—
"The duty of working for Christ"—
and "The duty of living for Christ."

A public supper in the school-room followed, after which "several affectionate Addresses were given, and the Hymn commencing 'Come, Christian brethren, ere we part,' was heartily sung."

Several resolutions were passed during the meetings. The two following are of general importance:—

"That this Association regards with deep interest and devout thankfulness to God the revival of spiritual life in so many portions of the Christian Church, both in this and other countries; records its earnest feelings of gratitude for the realization of that revival during the past year in any of the Churches of its own body; and feels itself called upon by more fervent prayer and devoted effort to seek the wider and more abundant diffusion of the same spirit in its own midst during the year on which it is about to enter."

"That this Association, viewing with profound concern the efforts which are being made in this country, especially by the Ritualistic party in the Established Church, to promote the principles of Romanism; and being convinced that those principles are at once dangerous to the best interests of our country, fatal to the purity and freedom of the Church of Christ, and dishonouring to the Saviour Himself, earnestly calls upon all its members to offer the most determined resistance in their power to so dishonest and dangerous a movement."

I rejoice in the continued prosperity of this Association, and have pleasure in presenting the present record to your readers. The persons are unknown to me: I have "taken sweet counsel" with their predecessors in the places.

Yours,

J. M. CRAMP.

TEACHING BAPTIST HISTORY.

Rev. J. W. Wilmarth is giving in the *Baptist Teacher* a series of papers on "Denominational Teaching." In the October number of that excellent periodical, he, under this title, treats of "Baptist History" as one of the features of such teaching. On this he remarks:—

God has always taught men by history. In the earlier books of the Old Testament, his dealings and men's acts were recorded; and the lessons there found are repeated and enforced in the poetical and prophetic writings. The four gospels are a history of Christ. The Acts of the Apostles chronicle the early fortunes of the church. But since the Book of God has been completed, history has gone on—now for 1800 years. It must be that it has lessons of importance for us—Christ has been at work; his church has been toiling and struggling through all these centuries.

BAPTISTS HAVE A HISTORY. Beyond all question the Primitive Church held to the four distinctive principles:

1. The spirituality of the church, and of Christianity. 2. The sole authority of Christ in his church. 3. Immersion (of believers only.) 4. Communion restricted to the church. But corruptions entered; and the church at length became hopelessly perverted; that is, the nominal church—a remnant remained on the old foundation.

There is evidence that communities existed in all ages, even the darkest, true to the truth, holding firmly to these essential Baptist principles. (No matter what name they went by, Paulicians, Waldenses, etc.) Rome falsely styled them "Anabaptists"; persecuted them with fire and sword; and acknowledged that of all "heresies," theirs was the most stubborn and ancient, dating their origin almost a thousand years before the Reformation. Dr. Ypeij, Professor of Theology, Groningen, and Dr. J. J. Dermont, chaplain to the King of the Netherlands (Dutch Presbyterians), in their history of the Dutch Baptists (the result of an inquiry by royal authority) say:

We have now seen that the Baptists, who were formerly called Anabaptists, and in later times, Mennonites, were the original Waldenses. On this account, the Baptists may be considered the only Christian community which has stood since the days of the Apostles, and as a Christian society, has preserved pure the doctrines of the gospel through all ages.

They add that this fact—

Goes to refute the erroneous notion of the Catholics that their communion is the most ancient.

At the time of the "Reformation" of Luther and others, the Baptists came forth from their hiding-places, received large accessions from the emancipated Romanists, but were persecuted both by Papists and Protestants. An innumerable multitude of them, in all European countries, sealed their faith with their blood.

The more modern Baptists, after suffering bitter persecution, have grown prodigiously in numbers and power; have established religious liberty in America; wrung toleration from the state churches of a large part of Europe; and are engaged in this same conflict to-day in Sweden and Russia. But they have never persecuted. When they have gained power, they have guaranteed to all the same freedom they claimed for themselves.

Now, how many of our Sunday-school scholars, or even teachers, know of these facts—of these struggles of a thousand years with Rome, in the ages of darkness and terror; of these fiery trials after the Reformation, when our martyrs were slain by Catholic and Protestant alike; of these later conflicts and victories which have changed the face of the world? Has this history no lessons for us and our children? Are the names of our martyrs and heroes to be forgotten?

We insist that an outline of Baptist history, including sketches of sufferings and triumphs, ought to find a place in our Sunday-school teaching. We owe it to God and to truth.

How shall it be done. A few incomplete suggestions.

1. Let every Sunday-school worker buy Cramp's History of the Baptists, the best work yet extant for popular use, and familiarize himself with it. This and similar historical works will furnish stirring facts and illustrations for class use. By all means use them—impress Baptist principles by history.

2. Let all books—our Publication Society has quite a number of them—which truthfully set forth the facts of Baptist history, whether in the form of literal narration, or veiled under the garb of truthful fiction, be put into every library. And let us see that they are read.

3. Let our ministers give familiar lectures to their schools on this subject. We think this would awaken great interest.

4. Might not concert exercises and special lessons be used to impress the facts of Baptist history?

*Baptist History, by J. M. Cramp, D. D., American Baptist Publication Society.

We must begin at the beginning—with the young. No converted scholar (old or young) ought to be left in ignorance. The need of this teaching is obvious—but our facilities for doing the work, as well as these suggestions, are incomplete and imperfect.

We hope that this article may stir up our Sunday-school workers to do something; would that our leaders in thought and action might be induced to devise means whereby our Sunday-schools should get the full benefit of our glorious, instructive and animating history! And our God would thereby be glorified.

In the same paper we find the following brief but beautiful article on the evangelist John.

THE BELOVED.

BY SOPHIA EMILIA PHELPS, RHODE ISLAND.

Our lessons have now brought us into the very cream of the pure milk of the word. While the Divine Master infinitely loved each of his disciples, yet among them was one who was emphatically called the beloved of Jesus. Loftiest and sweetest title that ever mortal bore!

No one who lovingly studies the Scripture which is at present the subject of the International Series, can be surprised any longer at this blessed distinction of its writer. The entire quaternion is the purest gold; but John's Gospel is a radiant cluster of diamonds sent therein. Here, the very heart of Jesus is open to us, for who ever came so near it as the favored son of Zebedee?

Written long after the other three the penman of this gospel was like a gleaner, going over the rich harvest fields where the others had reaped; and oh, what sheaves of gold, missed by them, did he gather? How very much of the sweet words of Christ, sweeter than honey, has he alone garnered for us. Incidents, also, it is he only who has given us the lovely story of the Cana nuptials, which so hallows human love and joy, and so rebukes the gloom of asceticism. Only in his history has the important interview and colloquy with the inquiring ruler come to us. The charming story of the woman of Samaria, who, from a water-carrier, was so soon transformed into a preacher of righteousness to her people, he only records.

Another of the fragrant sheaves gathered by John is the blessed narrative of him of Bethesda, thirty-eight years waiting to find, not the troubled pool, but the serene Christ at last. The same is true of the glorious account of the man born blind, who found light and vision so strangely in the waters of Siloam. That most consoling narrative, which describes the unlocking of the vanquished tomb of Lazarus, is no where else.

Then, in that night hung so black with presages of the awful horrors that were to surge about Jesus the next day, and just before the bitterness that moistened the soil of Gethsemane with blood, what an inestimable legacy did he give us! Blessed John fills four entire chapters with this priceless testament alone. Does he not deserve to be called "the disciple whom Jesus loved"?

That touching scene, pathetic beyond all language, where the dying Christ commits the soul-pierced mother to the tender John, is only told by him.

After the awful tragedy has at last closed in blood and preternatural darkness, and earth throes that open graves an awe-struck universe is hushed over one Jewish Sabbath. Then such a sun rises over the world as it has never seen since the morning stars sang its birth. Now for forty days, what interviews, what transcendent surprises of rapturous joy, what teachings of intensest interest and value!

Very much of all this is only recorded by him who was the last man of the disciples apparently to stand at his cross, and the first man, out-running even the impetuous Peter, to gaze into the forsaken tomb.—*Baptist Teacher*.