

church in the world. And to what shall we ascribe it? Simply to the circumstances of the education of these people to comprehend and love the art which they so fully illustrate in this manner. Therefore, if we are to have congregational singing, let us have uniformity in the tones of our devotional style. In a case of this kind, the church deciding to adopt this style, must take the first step itself. Till such a step be taken in conjunction with those features we have already suggested, nothing in this department can be done. Should any church or society, however, contemplate combining with their choir the congregational style, there are those who are able and ready to advise them on this point.—N. Y. Methodist.

For the Christian Messenger.

NEW ACADEMY BUILDING.

Dear Editor,—

The following subscriptions have been received from the Canard Church and congregation. Taken with what has already been acknowledged and remains to be acknowledged from the same source, they amount to one thousand dollars:—

Table of subscriptions with names and amounts, including D. R. & C. F. Eaton, Rev. S. B. Kempton, Canard Church collection, etc.

For the Christian Messenger. D. M. WELTON.

THE CONSTITUTION AND ORGANIZATION OF BAPTIST CHURCHES.

On this subject permit me Mr. Editor to offer a few remarks indicative of the views I entertain. Of course, these views are my own, and such as my general reading as well of the Scriptures as of ecclesiastical history have matured. I have no wish to thrust them on others, yet if I prove to be in error, I shall cheerfully submit to be corrected.

A Baptist Church may be regularly constituted in one of two ways. A number of baptized believers never having been members of a Church may associate themselves together with a view of being organized into a Church, in order to enjoy the advantages of Church fellowship, the administration of Gospel ordinances, &c., &c. I do not underrate the desirableness of their inviting the aid and assistance of neighbouring Churches, if such there be, and that for many reasons—but I am not prepared to say that this is indispensable. Though a Church may be constituted, and the members having entered into covenant with each other, and with the Head of the Church, their power to choose officers and administer the ordinances and do all other acts appertaining to a Church of Christ is, I think, unquestionable and complete. I refer, of course, to Baptist Churches—those of the faith and order, we, as a denomination, fraternize with in Association. But Churches may, I apprehend, be formed in another way. Whenever and as often as it shall appear desirable to any given Church, that a portion of its members should be set apart, at their own wish, with a view of constituting a separate Church, then according to my view of the case, after due notice to the whole Church given in such a way, as is adapted, when

matters of an important and weighty character are to be considered, the Church called together, the subject submitted and the opinion of the Church taken. The first question would be as to the desirableness of such a proceeding. If the voice of the majority were favorable, the localization being satisfactory, then those who publicly volunteered to assist in forming a new Church should personally signify it, and their names being given in to the Clerk, he should make a proper entry of the fact. Such preliminaries having been complied with, letters of dismission to form a new Church ought then to be given to such as thus desired to unite with the contemplated organization.

And here, again, a Council would be very desirable and proper (perhaps not indispensable), to be composed as well of members of the parent Church, as of surrounding Churches, and for the same reasons as in the case above referred to.

This is a second mode of forming a Baptist Church. I know of no other. It is not my design to enter here into further details. I am dealing with principles only.

If any of your correspondents take exception to anything I have advanced, nobody will give more earnest heed to the criticism, than

Your humble servant, LUCAS.

For the Christian Messenger.

Mr. Editor,—

Sir,—Had I been made aware that the Editorials of the Christian Messenger were records of the "action of the Board" of Foreign Missions, it certainly would not have been necessary to procure and publish an official copy.

J. McCULLY, President of the Convention, Halifax, 12th July, 1875.

For the Christian Messenger.

THOSE TELEGRAMS.

I am surprised that Dr. Cramp should stigmatize as "impertinent curiosity" the desire of one individual, or of many to peruse the telegrams recently forwarded to the foreign missionaries.

I cannot see why those telegrams should be at large, and should the Board pass a vote of censure, it will be time enough for me to defend my action in the matter.

I am quite certain that the friends of the mission and the relatives of the missionaries as well as the brethren in the Upper Provinces, who, equally with ourselves, are interested in the matter, will return me their warmest thanks for my unofficial action.

D. A. STEELE. Amherst July 9.

The Christian Messenger.

HALIFAX, N.S., JULY 14, 1875.

A FEW THOUGHTS FOR OUR WESTERN CHURCHES.

By an examination of the Table of Statistics of the N. S. Western Association, we find that during the past year 354 were added to the whole of the churches by baptism, 141 added by letter, &c., and 32 were restored; whilst 215 were dismissed to other churches, 73 were excluded, and 120 members of those churches died. The net gain in the 68 churches is therefore 110,—which is less than two to each church. The total membership being 9567, the gain is but a little over one per cent. Allowing for the 120 who have died, or taking the 354 baptized as clear gain, there have been but two or three conversions amongst each hundred members during a whole year. Is this satisfactory? We would ask, does not such an exhibition demand prompt and earnest enquiry in every church, in every family, and in every heart? Ministering brethren, are you content that a similar state of things shall remain during the current year? Will you not make it the subject of conversation with each other, with your deacons and members, and of earnest prayer to God, that he would send down his Spirit to make you more fruitful in the coming year than in the past? The Introductory Sermon preached before the Association and published in our last issue, although not on any exciting topic, yet was a very timely discourse, and deserves very careful reading, and should be made intensely practical. And, if it should result in producing "Christian fruitfulness" in the year

on which we now entered, it will be a great thing to the churches and to hundreds are now among the unconverted unsaved. Brethren think on these things.

OUR ASSOCIATIONS.

COMPARISON.

Each of Nova Scotia Baptist Associations a character of its own, in some respects differing from the others. Whilst all three are harmoniously united in the general work of the denomination, and the churches and their membership are equally attached to principles by which we differ from those of professing Christians around, yet there are some features in each one which do not appear in the others, or at least are less apparent. These may be accounted for in some measure by the situation and surroundings, or perhaps more by the early association with, and influence of, ministers who labored among them years gone by.

In the Western Churches we find an amount of fervor and warmth of feeling which do not appear in either the Central or Eastern. The social element of Christian life is largely developed in them, the emotional in religion being then very prevalent in their meetings. In many of the churches it may be observed that the heart largely outpulses the brethren and sisters—a blessed influence—and love draws together the congregations, making them set a high value upon Christian ordinances, and opportunities of worship, especially in the more social gatherings.

In the Central Churches whilst we see a piety that is, perhaps, less impulsive, there is with it a high appreciation of the ministry of the word, and a demand that the men in that office shall have all needed preparation for their work. If the heart-work in religion is not so fully developed, it is made up by mental training and the exercise of thought in preparation for preaching the gospel. There is, too, with the Central brethren a jealous concern as to the future necessities of the body. Whilst the sympathies are less apparent, there is a deep resolve to maintain the position which has been already attained. Education is held in high estimation, believing that by its aid to maintain the church a better permanently carry on the great objects sought to be effected by the gospel of Christ. There is also great regard for order and propriety in church matters. In some cases perhaps even to the extent of injury to the life and activity of the churches.

The Eastern Association extending over a wider extent of country, has a larger number of small churches to care for than either. Whilst the 68 Western Churches have 9567 members—an average of 140 to each church; the Eastern 57 churches have a membership of but 3843—only about one-third as many—or an average of but 67 members to each church. With a due amount of love for the cause of Christ and of concern for their own members, and a strong desire for mental cultivation for themselves and their ministers, yet, in proportion to their numbers and means, they have a larger interest in missionary work than either the West or Centre of the province. Many of the churches of this, need the aid of both the other Associations. Feeling this need of missionary work being done at home, they have strong sympathy with the same work abroad. The fact, too, of several of our foreign missionaries being from the eastern part of the province gives them an additional cause for interest in that work. Here in the East, too, the churches being more surrounded by other denominations, when men and women become Baptists it is from strong convictions of duty and of what the Holy Scriptures demand from them. Baptist Principles are of more recent date in the East. Whilst in the West and Central there are three or four churches dating from the past century and several within the first ten years of the present, in the Eastern there is but one church that was formed before 1822—Onslow in 1809—and only two or three before 1830.

United with the Central Association in Home Missionary work for nearly twenty years and receiving a large amount of aid, the Eastern churches have grown from being one Association of 45 churches and 2062 members, into to Associations, having 71 churches with 4803 members.

The following table will show that in the matter of growth, the Eastern—

taking the returns of 1874 for the two latter—has made the more rapid progress of the three.

Table comparing church membership in 1850 and 1875 for Western, Central, and Eastern churches.

With these preliminary thoughts we are prepared to go to Great Village to attend the 25th Annual Session of the N. S. Eastern Association.

The N. S. Eastern Association met at Great Village, Londonderry on Saturday last. The distance it is always necessary to travel from some of the churches usually prevents the annual gatherings at this Association being as largely attended as either the Western or Central. Yet the same affectionate greetings are given and received, perhaps even intensified by the ordinary isolation of quite a number of the Churches. The brethren on the Island of Cape Breton have a long journey to make to reach Colchester County.

The Association assembled on Saturday morning at the hour appointed. As the Baptist Meeting House was not sufficiently commodious, the Presbyterian House was kindly lent and opened for the purpose.

After the Letters had been called for, the Association engaged in devotional exercises. The list of delegates from the letters having been obtained, the officers of the Association were elected as follows:—

Rev. J. E. Goucher, Moderator. Bros. J. C. Archibald, J. J. Armstrong, Secretaries.

Bro. Amos Fountain, Treasurer. Bro. L. J. Walker, Assistant Treasurer. The Committees were appointed as usual, and arrangements made for preaching on the Lord's Day. The preachers in the Baptist Church at Great Village were, Rev. James Meadows, Rev. G. N. Ballentine and Rev. D. W. Crandall; and in the Presbyterian Church, Rev. A. W. Bars, Rev. S. Thompson, Rev. J. E. Goucher.

There was also preaching in nine other places by ministers of the Association.

An invitation having been given by the church at River Hebert for the Association to hold its next Annual Session there, it was unanimously agreed that that invitation be accepted, and that the church be considered in the aggregate to about four hundred.

On Saturday evening a lively Temperance meeting was held. Speeches were delivered by Revs. A. W. Bars, G. N. Ballentine, J. Meadows, D. W. Crandall, and Mr. G. E. Good; with Rev. M. P. Freeman in the chair.

A resolution of warm sympathy with all Temperance effort was adopted. On Monday morning the Association sermon was preached by Rev. James Meadows from Psalm lxxv. 5, on the church's duty—to "Expect great things from God, and attempt great things for God."

The Circular Letter had not arrived, and the Report of the Committee on Education was called for, and was read, and partially discussed when the hour of adjournment arrived. Rev. D. A. Steele, John King, Esq., and Rev. David Freeman addressed the Association on the subject with much force and appropriateness.

In the afternoon the discussion was resumed by addresses from Rev. D. M. Welton, W. Faulkner, Esq., and others.

In our notice of the Central Association last week, we omitted to mention that on Monday afternoon there was a very interesting meeting of the members of the Women's Missionary Aid Societies in the Vestry of Granville Street Church. Quite a number of the Sisters were present. Miss DeWolfe gave some account of the work in Burmah, and other ladies spoke of the need of the societies continuing to render assistance.

THE PUBLIC GARDENS.—An investigation was held last week on a charge made against some of the Aldermen of taking plants from the Gardens to improve their own gardens or adorn their houses. The expose will be a wholesome check against making private appropriations of public property. There should be a large revenue derived from the sale of the garden products.

The City Council want to borrow \$10,000 to pay an over expenditure. What a pity they spent the \$1000 on the celebration of the 21st of June!

Our English brethren enjoy attendance at their Associations. The fact of the Baptist papers being published in London, brings the minds of their writers to perceive a stronger contrast between the city and country than appears between our capital and the localities where we are accustomed to meet in Association. The editor of the London Baptist, in an article on "Our Associations," says:—

It has been said that these local gatherings come somewhat too soon after the greater assemblies in the metropolis, (the May meetings). We do not share in that opinion. If the meeting be held in the country—and it is with us an article of faith that Associations should always be held in the country—the assembled brethren greet each other at a time when everything speaks to them of joy and gladness. The long dreary winter is gone, the time of the singing of birds is come, the fields are clad in their freshest, brightest green, and the hedgerows—ah, the hedgerows! it is something to see them in the spring sunshine, attired in robes of modest grace and beauty, which "Solomon, in all his glory," might have emulated in vain. No wonder if the assembled brethren yield to the influence of the spirit of joy and hope which breathes all around them. We have known ministers to indulge even in a frolic at an Association in the spring. They could not have done that in the winter! On rare occasions, we have heard of some who had gone so far as to leave behind them their white neckerchiefs, which, at any other season, and under any other conditions, it would be almost like breaking an eleventh commandment to dispense with even for a day. The solemn assemblies for prayer and conference are influenced, though not unduly, by the outside gladness and freedom from restraint. The very hymns are utterances of joy and hopefulness. Whoever heard of hymns about "howling wildernesses" being sung at the spring meeting Association? The prayers, too, are the prayers of men confident in the assurance that the God who has wrought so wonderfully in nature, will work equal wonders in His kingdom of grace. If we cannot say exactly the same thing about all the sermons and the circular letters, it must be remembered that these have been too often painfully prepared in winter, before the preacher or the writer had seen a cowslip or plucked a primrose. But, on the whole, we give all our votes in favour of the Association being still held in the spring. We rejoice, as we write, in the thought of the happiness that so many of our brethren are now enjoying, or are likely to enjoy soon. Alas, that it should be so brief! But we are very sure that they will go back to their work, even though it be in dingy places where not a flower is to be seen, animated with new hopes, and encouraged for new endeavours.

Now writing, are no modern institutions. We observe that in the "Handbook" the date of the Norfolk Association is fixed at 1603, and that of the Northern at 1690. The London Association as at present constituted, dates only from 1865. There was an Association in London in 1644, though we have no means of determining what was the extent of its activities. There was a Somerset Association formed in 1653, and it included the churches of Somerset, Wilts, Devon, Gloucester, and Dorset. The truth is, that our Baptist Associations date from the time of the Commonwealth. The Midland Association, which has had, we believe an unbroken existence, dates from 1655, two years after Cromwell was made Protector, and five years before the Monarchy was restored in the person of Charles the Second. Thus, our Associations have antiquity on their side. It was said by a great German theologian and philosopher, "There is a future for you Baptists." We answer thankfully, "We have also a past."

Still, we must not depend upon the past. Our Associations, however valuable they may have been in the past, must adapt themselves to modern requirements. Happily they know how to do so, and they have the power. There is one practical suggestion which we venture to make, and that is, that the old circular letter should be at length abandoned, and that the president's address, which ought always to be on present-day questions, should take its place. We believe that, in some of the Associations, such a proposal has already been received with favour. There are other suggestions which we could wish to make, but they must be postponed for another opportunity. We can only now repeat the expression of our confident hope and anticipation, that the meetings of 1875 will not only prove to be refreshing to the brethren who attend them, but also sources of richest blessing to the churches whom those brethren represent.

THE CITY SCHOOL BOARD AND THE CLERGYMEN.

The Halifax School Commissioners decided recently to invite a number of clergymen and other gentlemen to examine the City Schools before the Summer Vacation. These invitations were sent by the Secretary, but in consequence of the Legislature proscribing clergymen from being made Commissioners, they, or several of them, have declined the honor of being public examiners at the request of the Commissioners. Rev. G. M. Grant has published his reply in the Chronicle and Herald. It is decidedly spicy. A paragraph or two will show our readers how it reads:—