

tistry at Mellafount, Co. Louth. Mellafount was originally one of the most important and magnificent ecclesiastical edifices ever erected in Ireland. The following is a brief description of the baptistry:

This building has been an octagon, only four sides of which remain at present. Each side was perforated with an arched doorway, and the exterior angles were ornamented by a reeded pilaster. A projecting cornice is continued around at half the elevation. The doorways are arched and pillared. The arches are semi-circular, and together with the pillars, are a perfect model of exquisite workmanship. They appear as if moulded in stone, not cut; and all together they are uniform in their general appearance, yet no two are exactly alike in detail, and are highly valuable as a specimen of the fine arts in Ireland prior to the English invasion. The ornamental parts are composed of red granite, and were formerly painted and partly gilded.

That a Bishop then was simply the pastor of a single church or congregation, Dr. Carew of Maynooth, in his ecclesiastical history of Ireland, (perhaps unwittingly), admits. He says:

In effect, the system which the Irish Church adopted with regard to Episcopal sees, was entirely similar to that which was followed in those churches which were founded immediately after the time of the apostles. According to this system, every town where the converts were numerous, was honored by the appointment of a Bishop, who resided permanently there, and devoted his pastoral solicitude exclusively to the care of the inhabitants. This ancient usage, the fathers of the council of Sardica thought it necessary to modify. To maintain the respectability of the Episcopal order, the Council ordered that, for the time to come, Bishops should take up their residence in the more important towns.

Thus the "ancient usages" are set aside, and the Romish system substituted. By such usurpations, the ancient system was gradually displaced, until the innovations and inventions of priestcraft ripened into the great apostasy.

AN IRISH-AMERICAN BAPTIST. — Watchman.

For the Christian Messenger. Convention Work.

Mr. Editor,—

It is not necessary for me to criticise the criticisms which the Chairman of the Finance Committee has made on a communication which I sent you some time ago on "Convention Work." It is enough to say that he has quite misapprehended the purpose of the article. There is nothing in it that should have been understood by any one as coming from any other than a friend of the "Convention Scheme." The writer wished that the "Scheme" should be worked out more thoroughly and fairly. Notwithstanding the criticisms on my communication, the substance of it remains unaffected:—the body of our people have not yet intelligently accepted the "Scheme" in its true intent, and there are no indications that adequate means are being employed to bring our churches to comprehend the plan marked out for them, and to act in harmony with it. Let us gratefully admit that the Committee have done all that has been claimed to promote the plan. But, when we consider the numerous and severe labors that must be borne by the members of this Committee in their respective stations, no one can for a moment believe that the fragment of time which one of them may possibly exempt from the claims of all his other services, will be enough to permit him properly to superintend the collection of all the benevolent funds that ought to be raised by all the churches of Nova Scotia, or that a similar portion of his time would permit another member of the committee to perform a like service for all the churches in New Brunswick. However strong those brethren may be, they will be ready to acknowledge the limitations that lie in the nature of things. Let it be admitted that the ministers ought to teach and guide the churches in regard to the special objects of the Convention; and, besides this, let it be granted that they are doing much in this respect. But will they do much more than they have done in the past? Will pastors leave their own fields to rouse and guide indolent churches? Shall we expect by such agencies to quicken into activity, churches that have been resting these many years, about as calm as a frozen sea? The labors of most of our ministers in their own fields are so constant, and the demands on their sympathies made by the varying events within their own charges are so exhausting, that few of them can find the time to study the claims of the various objects

of benevolence. The best of them will feel the need of intelligent and sympathetic assistance in this regard, and will be thankful if they can receive it. Experience has made it clear, that, in the actual condition of our churches, their energies can be directed towards special and common ends only by the employment of special agencies. I still hope that the Committee will adopt some such means for the accomplishment of the purpose for which they were appointed.

The "Convention Scheme" not only involves the idea of raising a certain sum of money, but also it declares that the money shall be appropriated to specified objects according to a fixed scale. This feature of the plan is very generally overlooked, and thereby the benefit designed in the plan is to a large extent lost. If the increase in the contributions is largely for the benefit of one or two of the funds, harm comes with the good. The design of the Convention was that a proportion in the amounts given to the different objects should be preserved. It is to be feared that sufficient attention has not been directed to this view of the subject. In various ways encouragement is given to discrimination favorable to one or another object. The Convention advises the churches to send in their collections without designation, and forgets sometimes to follow its own advice. The Associations permit similar departures from the "Scheme" which is supposed to be their guide. The Ministerial Conferences are generally missionary organizations, and naturally make their collections for special purposes. The Mission Aid Bands are industrious in gathering all they can for Foreign Missions. Missionary concerts still take collections for a particular fund. Sabbath Schools, churches and individuals still contribute for specific objects in the foreign field. The men employed by the Home Mission Board naturally keep the wants of that Board before the people with whom they labor. By all these and other means a large amount of designated money is sent for Missions. The other Boards are not expected to appeal for special contributions, and a disproportion at once appears. After all the designated moneys have been subtracted from the total of the contributions, the percentages are struck from the remainder. The result is, that the College Board, for example, which by the scheme is promised twenty-five per cent. of the contributions, is said to receive only nine or ten per cent. It may be assumed that it is this discrimination against them (unintended but yet actual) which has moved that Board to its recent action to protect the interests committed to it. The editor of the Visitor says in an editorial article in his paper this week, that if an average of fifty cents a member could be raised this year, it would give the College \$4,500. Instead of that, as things have been moving, the College would receive \$1,700,—an important difference, especially in view of the fact that the Provincial grants will cease in a month or two.

It would require too much space for me to show how the present system works to the disadvantage of the Ministerial Education and the Infirm Ministers' Boards. But it is easy for any one to see that two and a half per cent. of a sum of money, and two and a half per cent. of half of that sum of money are quite different. The case, Mr. Editor, seems to me not unlike one which arose in the early history of the church, when the Grecians complained that they were neglected in the ministrations from a common fund. A similar remedy can be applied. If we cannot find a man or men who possess the Apostolic requirements in full measure, let us cordially accept any who may be appointed to the service of caring impartially for all these objects to which the Convention is pledged, and, as far as in us lies, strengthen them by hearty cooperation. Yours truly, A MEMBER OF THE CONVENTION.

For the Christian Messenger. Home Missions.

The Home Mission Board held its regular monthly meeting in the vestry of the First Baptist Church, Yarmouth, Monday the 13th inst.

Treasurer reported receipts of the month £214.83. Reports were read from brethren Archibald, Thompson, Hayward, and Coldwell. Grants were made as follows:

- 1. To Westchester Church, N. S., \$30.00 for one year from Aug. 1, 1880.
2. To Sackville, Bedford and Fall River, N. S., \$75.00 for one year from Dec. 1, 1880.

3. To Weldford Church, Kent Co., N. B., \$65.00 for one year from Jan. 1, 1881.

4. To the Annapolis field, \$100.00, viz: \$25.00 to Annapolis Church, and \$75.00 to Greywood and Millford, for the year beginning Aug. 1, 1880.

5. To Knowlesville, Glassville, &c., \$75.00 for nine months from Nov. 1, 1880.

6. Rev. I. Wallace, a mission of 3 months to destitute sections in the eastern part of the province. Places to be named by the Board.

Omission.

I find that I omitted to mention in my last report the appointment of Rev. D. Freeman to a mission of 6 months in destitute sections in Kings Co. and New Ross in Lunenburg Co.

Need of Money.

We are still hard pressed for money to pay our missionaries. More than \$800.00 is needed to pay the order already drawn.

We are glad to know that many of the Churches aided by our Board are endeavouring to work up the Convention Scheme. We hope that all will take hold of it.

Lecture for Sale.

The Corresponding Secretary is prepared to furnish the excellent lecture on "Church Membership" delivered before the Hants Co. Auxiliary Board, by Rev. J. W. Manning, at \$1.50 per one hundred copies, or at the same rate for any number of copies.

A. COHOON, Cor. Sec'y.

Hebron, Dec. 14, 1880.

For the Christian Messenger. Our Foreign Missions.

Dear Bro. Selden,—

The Foreign Missionary Board has recently received letters from Messrs. Churchill and Sanford, containing some items which will be of interest to many of our readers.

Bro. Churchill, under date of Oct. 13, writes that he had been lately subjected to two or three severe attacks of sickness, but at the time of writing, he was again able to attend to the tedious and perplexing work of building.

He reports the mission-house as rapidly nearing completion. When that is finished he will be relieved from any further care in building, since providentially, he was enabled a short time since to purchase a house admirably situated for the two-fold purpose of providing a most convenient pulpit from which to preach the gospel to the masses, and also to furnish the station with a suitable school building. Mr. C. says:

"I could scarcely better the location, if I had full choice of the town. It is on the best street midway between the morning and evening bazaar. The front verandah comes right out on the street, and will make a good place from which to address the crowd that can always be gathered in a few minutes, or it is a good place to sit down and talk to a few in a more private way."

Mr. C. made some slight alterations in the building, and Mrs. Churchill has already opened a school there with over forty pupils in attendance. Mr. C. says:

"I do not feel ready to leave Bobbili yet, and do not know as I ever shall, but really I do wish to do something more than get a place to live in before I have to go. The desire to see familiar scenes and faces, at times is strong, but the desire to stay here awhile is stronger, and I hope we may be allowed to stay, and not in vain."

Oh! the work to be done, and scarcely a commencement made as yet. I do not know of any one yet to help me in the work here.

There is great need of a good man, or, rather three or four to go out into the towns and villages all around the country to preach and to distribute books and tracts. I hope to go out some this cool season."

Mr. C. is very anxious that the mission should be immediately reinforced, and remarks that,

"Surely there can be no trouble in finding a man to come. There ought to be a good man at Chicacole—not that the work is not being well attended to by Miss Hammond, for I believe it is; but it is too much for her."

Another vacancy may be not far ahead, and who is to fill it? Surely our Mission, now that we are nearly through building, ought to support three stations with a spare man for emergencies. I had rather decline the addition to my salary, which has been so kindly recommended, if by so doing another man would be at once put into the field. . . . The young Rajah came of age a few weeks since, but there is a quarrel between him and the Ranees who refuses to deliver the estate to him. The case is in court and may not be settled for some time."

Mr. Sanford, under date of 28th Oct. furnishes several interesting facts and suggestions. Having completed the

Mission premises at Bimlipatam, he gives a statement in round numbers of the relative cost of the buildings:

- 1. A spacious Mission House designed for two families. Rs. 7000
2. Girls' School House " 1500
3. Store rooms and work house " 500
4. Stable and waggon house " 250
5. Native helper's house " 500
6. Cost of land " 500
7. Walls and hedges enclosing compound " 250

Total.....Rs. 10,500

He says:—

"I have made no account of the heavy expense for levelling, though we removed not less than an acre of land six feet in depth. The stone obtained from the excavation was required in the building, and nearly offset the cost of levelling. Besides, we supplied the town with seven thousand cart loads of earth and rubble for which we realized over Rs. 400. This is also reckoned as an offset. I consider your property here, when valued at the market rate, is worth Rs. 15,000."

The leading natives and Europeans, experienced in building, assured Bro. S. when the mission premises were in course of erection, that they could not be completed short of from Rs. 15,000 to Rs. 20,000. Mr. S. says "The secret was this; we pitched upon a place partly on the hill side and by digging and levelling, found nearly all our building stone. No cost for cartage. We also burned a considerable of the lime used. To this may be added the fact that we planned and executed our own work."

I am heartily glad we have accomplished the task. The buildings present a good appearance. They are substantial and well adapted to the purpose of our mission.

It seems now as though we are in a position to take hold of our work in the right way. The task in hand is to do what we can under the Divine guidance in planning and executing a campaign in the interests of Christ's kingdom throughout this wide field of spiritual darkness. But how great the difficulty! It requires superhuman wisdom and strength. We can meet the arguments of those who oppose. That does not cause much apprehension. But how to organize success amidst such a maze of conflicting forces is a matter which can be accomplished through divine guidance alone. It is one thing to beat the air; it quite another to go forth as an host armed with that living power of the gospel which slays.

Some seventy-five years have passed since christian missions were established in this, the Vizagapatam district. Good men have labored and gone to their rest. Apparently the spiritual results of these labors have been extremely meagre. The people are hard and dead in heathenism. There is considerable knowledge in many cases, but the heart is unmoved. The melting fire is needed. I believe that what is prerequisite on the part of those engaged in the Master's name to save souls, is a confidence which takes hold of His strength and a yearning love which takes hold of men lost in sin. And this is not for missionaries alone. It is for all who have part in this work. . . . It is our high privilege to attempt much, and to expect much. Our adorable Redeemer and Lord who counted us worthy of a trust in common with his saints has not sent us upon a barren enterprise. His blessing will far exceed our efforts in every case. To Him be honor everlasting! I expect to baptize next Sabbath morning."

We trust that the friends of Foreign Missions, seeing how anxious our brethren in the field are for the success of the work in India, will unitedly pay in behalf of our Mission, and especially that suitable persons to reinforce the Mission may soon present themselves. Yours, in Christ, W. P. EVERETT, Sec'y F. M. Board. St. John, N. B., 18th Dec. 1880.

The Christian Messenger.

Halifax, N. S., December 22, 1880.

CHRISTMAS REFLECTIONS.

It becomes us to be thankful that we have an authentic record of the entrance of our Lord into this world as the Prince of Peace, and that we can see over again the Star which preceded the wise men from the East to the humble dwelling first offered to the Son of God on earth at Bethlehem. We may also hear the delightful sounds of the Song of the Angels—perhaps not the tones and cadences just in the same order, nor the harmony as perfect, nor the symphonies as rich and varied and grand, nor the chorus as full; but we may use the same expression of "Glory to God." And if we feel that we have been lost and without hope we can sing of redeeming grace and dying love; which things they, the angels, desire to look into. We can, too, like them, rejoice in being allowed to make known to lost men the same "Good tidings of great joy to all people." We can also hearken to the

multitude of the heavenly host who joined in praising God, and making known the marvellous news of "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men." This grand summary of the gospel, is being repeated by thousands of hearts and it dwells on tens of thousands of youthful lips as the most delightful revelation that ever came from heaven to the children of men on earth.

We have no sympathy with the austerity that would banish from our nineteenth century observances the institution of Christmas. Although we have not yet found the precept or example in the New Testament for publicly observing the day as the anniversary of our Lord's birth, yet, as we rejoice in the great truth that "God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish but have everlasting life," we can let this inspire our songs of praise, in the household and family, and enjoy the gifts with which we strive to surprise each other, without doing violence to our religious scruples. And we can think afresh each year of the time when the old prophecy—"Unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given," was fulfilled.

Whilst we see no obligation to the church to observe the day, we regard it as peculiarly a religious, family festival. One of the titles of our Lord was the Everlasting Father, He is mindful of the wants of his children. His gifts are costly. Indeed so costly and precious are they that He who was rich, for our sakes became poor, that we might be made rich. He emptied himself that we might be filled. He looks with the tenderest love to each member of the family and proffers such blessings as may render us, even on earth, happy beyond all expression. It is but for us to accept his gifts of pardon and peace, and he will give us Himself—the child, the man, the sacrifice, the friend and brother, with the assurance that such blessings and relationships are to be—not transitory for one season of the year—but permanent and indeed everlasting.

Our next issue will complete the 44th yearly volume of the CHRISTIAN MESSENGER, and the 25th year of our connection with the paper. For a Quarter-of-a-Century have we continued week after week to speak to our friends, to their children, and to the teachers of their children on various matters of utmost importance to them and the world at large.

For 52 weeks each year, have we continued to send to our readers forty full columns of varied instructive matters, embracing Religious and General News, Parliamentary proceedings and Poetry, History and Current events, Agriculture and Science, Health Hints and Household Matters. Correspondence from our best and ablest writers in the three Provinces, and not a few letters of much interest from more distant countries.

We are not accustomed to indulge in boasting, or making empty promises, but hope to do as in the past, and as much better as possible in the future.

Our best thanks are due, and are hereby tendered afresh to our prompt advance subscribers. The kind words that so often accompany their subscriptions, are a source of strength in many a day of difficulty. Our ministering and other brethren who render such valued aid as Agents, who embrace opportunities of speaking to their people and friends on behalf the Messenger will also please receive our hearty acknowledgments. For reward we can with confidence refer them to the lasting results of their kind endeavours in the families to whom the paper has been sent through them. It is often remarked by Pastors, that they at once find by the intelligence of the members, where the MESSENGER is taken, and where it is not. Without any disparagement of more extensive reading, we may assure our subscribers that constant readers of the MESSENGER must have a pretty good general view of what is going on in the church and in the world.

The thought has just occurred to us that the 25th Anniversary of married life is the Silver Wedding; and we would now say to those friends who have forgotten to send on their subscriptions during the past year, and some for a longer period: If you would all kindly favor us by sending on, so as to reach us, on, or before, New Year's Day the full amount of what is due it would be a happy thought for you all, and a most satisfactory Silver Wedding for us. We ask only for what we have a just right to expect.