

THE PRESIDENT'S ADDRESS. The President then ascended the pulpit and delivered his address, the subject of which was

OUR UNION IN CONNECTION WITH THE FIRST PRINCIPLES OF DIVINE TRUTH.

He said he had selected a topic which, though partly doctrinal, is not controversial, and one to which their attention had not been recently called. We assume that, notwithstanding the variety of religious thought and even of settled opinions which exists among us, there are some truths in which we have a common interest, and to which we are ready to give a cordial and intelligent assent. That, besides the baptismal rite which gives us our designation, and forms the basis of our constitution, in addition to those important organisations, which of themselves would justify our union, there are great religious truths in which we have a common interest, and which are most assuredly believed among us. These first principles are to be found in every department and system of knowledge. Men of science review first principles not unfrequently, and ascend from these investigations to higher discoveries. Of still greater importance is the review of the things that are Divine. Our design is not to magnify our differences, not even to give them prominence, but to show our agreement and where we are one. The effect of this will be to justify our professed union; to show its reality; to satisfy our own minds, proving that the Saviour's prayer "that they may all be one" has had its partial fulfilment. The first point of union are the views which we hold of the character and perfections of God, and our relation to him. This is indeed the foundation of all the sentiments we hold and the practices we observe. The errors which have swayed the minds of men on this subject—whether of older or, more subtle still, of modern infidelity—shake not our faith one jot or tittle in the verities of the Divine existence or the permanence of the Divine throne. We perfectly agree with those who hold the universal Fatherhood of God. He is the "Father of the spirits of all flesh"; but this common Fatherhood of all mankind does not supersede the higher relationship into which we are introduced by faith in Christ.

The doctrine of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, commonly called the doctrine of the Trinity, is essential to our common faith. It implies personality as well as unity. When we worship the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, we worship one God, and none other than He.

Reverence for the sacred books of the Old and New Testament forms another bond of union. We hold that the Church is the pillar and ground of truth, not because it is infallible in its decisions, but because to her are committed the oracles of God. These we guard with a sacred jealousy. We see the light of the Old Testament shining forth to meet the brighter splendour of the New. Moses predicts Christ, and Christ honours Moses as a true prophet. This is the standard of appeal, the subject-matter of our ministry, the instrument of our regeneration, the pulse of our experience, the rule of our practice and obedience.

The Cross of Christ is another bond of union. We are one in our apprehension of the Person of our Lord's humanity which was susceptible of suffering and death. We have the Divine nature united to that humanity, capable of imparting an inconceivable value to all that the human nature could suffer or endure. Brethren, we meet at the cross, and if we have any glory or hope it centres there. When we attempt to define the terms by which the inspired writers describe the precise nature of this great transaction—such as "atonement," "propitiation," and "redemption"—there may be some discrepancy in our definitions, but we shall for the most part agree as to the sacrificial character of the Saviour's death—that it was the substitution of the innocent for the guilty; that it was a satisfaction to the Divine government; that it was an extraordinary manifestation of God's perfections, emphatically of His love, and that final and highest act of obedience which completes that perfect righteousness by which we are accepted before God.

In connection with the Redeemer's sacrificial work is the gift of the Holy Spirit. The fallen condition of our nature, and the alienation of the human heart from God, render this Divine influence necessary. The necessity of the Spirit's work in salvation, the effectual working, mighty power, is one of the first principles of the Gospel of Christ. We believe in God's special

care of His people, and that in watchfulness and prayer, and the use of those means He has enjoined, we shall finally attain eternal life. The illustration of a celebrated preacher of the last century is worth remembering:—"I am like a man standing on the brink of a broad and deep river. I see the two extremities of the chain, but the middle links are hidden in the waters. So it is with the mysteries of the Divine Sovereignty and human responsibility. I see the extremities of the chain but cannot see the connecting links. If the water of the river is lowered, or the chain lifted up, the connection will be seen and the obscurity dispelled." Patience, brethren; more light, more faith, and we shall see eye to eye on these the deep things of God, and unite in such an interpretation of Scripture as shall leave human responsibility unimpaired and the Divine Sovereignty unchallenged.

Our union is identified with the kingly offices and prerogative of our Lord. Our connection as the subject of the same kingdom, under the same laws, and enjoying the same privileges—withal as those who must appear at the same tribunal in the day of final account—unite us to the Redeemer's throne as well as to His cross.

Two subjects of controversy have engaged the attention of the Churches of Christ. These controversies have turned as you are aware, upon the Redeemer's reign on earth and the circumstances connected with His second coming. Certain sections of Christians remarkable for their zeal in making converts to their peculiar views, have brought the Doctrine of the Second Coming of our Lord into the forefront of Christian teaching and have represented it as an event immediately at hand. Young converts to the Saviour, and persons of enthusiastic tendencies, have been captivated by new theories and speculations, and the effect has been proselytism rather than evangelisation. It is probable that a diversity of thought may exist among us on this subject, which, without doubt, has a very prominent place in the Divine records. It is not my province now even to state the diversity of views which have been held, but to assert that, for all practical purposes, faith in the simple doctrine of our Lord's second coming is sufficient. The order in which these events will transpire, the reign of the Redeemer on earth, whether personal or spiritual, are not essential to our unity of faith in the doctrine. "We wait for His appearing."

In connection with the kingly office of Christ in His claim to legislate for His church, and to direct his interests apart from, and in opposition to, all civil interference and control. There may be differences of opinion amongst us of to the political aspects of this question, and how far if the legislature should declare the union of Church and State null and void, it would influence private interests and political parties. We can recollect, half-a-century ago, when it was first announced by advanced Nonconformists that the separation of the Church from the State was an object to be pursued. Since that time the public mind has been enlightened from the pulpit, the platform, and the press. State Churches have been felt to be incompatible with a kingdom of righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost, and, therefore, not of this world. As a denomination, and as represented by this Union, we have been deep and earnest in our protestations against State interference in spiritual matters. The love of liberty and true loyalty are perfectly compatible, and even closely related. We have shown a firm attachment to the Throne and Constitution, but withal an unshaken fidelity to the authority of the King of kings. A few, indeed, have left our ranks, and the ranks of Nonconformity generally, and have found a refuge and secure dwelling-place in the gilded palaces of endowed Christianity. These principles have been handed down to us by our suffering forefathers and we cannot forget that there have been occasions when other religious communities have been exempt from civil disabilities whilst the hand of persecution still rested upon our brethren; nor can we cease to remember under what circumstances the goal of Bedford was consecrated and illuminated by the genius of our own Bunyan.

We are united in the persuasion of a future state of existence. With regard to the future condition of the saved, the Scriptures are too clear to admit any discordance of thought. Surely consciousness of being can neither be impaired or destroyed by the stroke of death? To be present with the Lord is

not a deferred event, but an immediate enjoyment and myriads of the Lord's people have passed into eternity with this hope. We may differ in our conceptions of the nature of this intermediate state, but we rejoice in the conscious blessedness of departed believers.—The resurrection of the body is a truth connected with all the triumphs and verities of Joseph's tomb. The "Lord risen in deed" is the watchword of our faith. The doctrine comes to us through the dim light of the old Testament dispensation, and the brighter radiance of the New. It is suggested by the processes of nature, and the unmistakable testimony of the Saviour Himself.

The doctrine of the final destiny of wicked men is a subject which has of late years opened a controversy upon which much learning has been employed, but a controversy which has thrown out little light for our guidance, and has not relieved this confessedly solemn subject from any difficulties which might disturb our faith. It is our privilege, as well as our duty, to accept the plain statements of God's Word, and wait with patience for further light. The time is at hand, we know, when that which is now inscrutable to us will be made simple to our understandings and satisfactory to our reason and we shall be permitted to join with all the perfect and holy in the glorious antem; "Just and true are all Thy ways, O King of saints!"

We are united in the belief in the nature of the Divine Ordinances as to the mode of their observance. We are not in any danger of lapsing into a superstitious or idolatrous observance of the Lord's Supper. Ritualism is a dogma foreign to our principles. Our danger lies in another direction—in not making the observance of the Lord's death a matter of frequency and of sufficient importance. The celebration of the Supper every first day of the week, although not absolutely and literally enjoined, is certainly in perfect harmony with the spirit of the command, "Do this in remembrance of Me!" It is a matter of thankfulness that the transubstantiation of Rome and the consubstantiation of Germany are not recognised or received by any of us. "We simply show forth the Lord's death till He come."

There is no divergence of thought amongst us as to the precise place which baptism is to occupy in our ecclesiastical polity, and in its connection with the other ordinance, which we are thankful to observe. In recognising this difference we must give each other credit for honest sincerity; but that Christian baptism is, and can only be, the immersion of believers, is our recognised basis. Our views of the nature of religion in its spiritual power and experimental influence preclude the idea of any acceptable service which is not personal and spontaneous.

Of the nature of baptism our declaration is explicit. We are not inclined to re-open a controversy on the meaning of the Greek word used to designate this important rite. The meaning of that word has been settled by the most competent authorities; that most learned men of various sections of the Church have given a decision which is not to be impugned by modern fancy or modern criticism. It has been predicted by others rather than ourselves that we are destined to have a distinguished future. We accept the prophecy. If the past is any indication it will be so. In the establishment of missions for the spread of the Gospel and the conversion of the heathen; in the faithful translation of the Scriptures into the Gentile tongues; in the great struggles for the liberties of the down-trodden and oppressed; in the political conflicts in our own country for the rights of conscience and religious freedom—we can say, not with pride, but humble thankfulness, we have taken no insignificant part. And we owe our position and success, not to the scholarship, the mental power, or the worldly rank of our godly forefathers, though mental qualifications of the highest order were possessed by some of them—not to all this chiefly we attribute our position and usefulness, but to their love of the truth, integrity of purpose, and fidelity to the principles they professed. These have won for us a name and memorial not to be effaced, and if our future should be as great as the past we must manifest the same boldness and display the same "banner because of the truth." A crowd of worthies, many of them honoured by Christians of every name, have, during the present century, so fast speeding to its close, served their generation according to the will of God, and passed away. Their names are not written in the

sand, but on the imperishable monuments of the churches' love.

Let me, then, entreat you to consider more than ever the Superlative value of Divine truth. The whole truth—truth in its order and proportions—we should pursue and earnestly retain. It is part of the light in which we are to walk as the children of God. As the grains of gold which fall from the goldsmith's hand are all precious, so each little grain of truth should be treasured in our memories and our hearts. As the smallest pivot wanting in an ingeniously constructed machine will interfere with the proper working of the whole, so the absence of a single truth from our minds may disturb other truths and cloud our Christian experience with doubt. The higher we rise in our conceptions of the grandeur and value of revealed doctrine, the better will our minds be prepared to receive it.

Further, brethren, let us conduct our religious controversies in the spirit of the Gospel of Christ. I trust it will not be supposed from the line of thought thus far pursued that we consider our differences of opinion of trifling importance. I cannot subscribe to the suggestion sometimes expressed that the variety of sentiment existing amongst the followers of the Redeemer is, to a certain extent, beneficial. As the Church of God realises the fulfilment of her Lord's prayer for the oneness of His people, and as she approaches the perfection which it is promised she shall enjoy, these differences will melt away in the sunlight of higher manifestations, and we shall be one both in the Spirit we imbibe and the Doctrines we embrace. When we meet with those who differ from us upon points of religious doctrine or practice, let us not brand them with bigotry or treat them with scorn; firmness is not bigotry, and consistent adherence to truth is perfectly compatible with candour. Error is not to be withstood by railing, but by argument and persuasion. If we give others credit for sincerity in the opinions expressed by them, surely they are entitled to respect. The controversies of the past century were marked by the want of moderation and temper, and were the utterances of indignation rather than the voice of persuasion.

Finally, let us look with confidence, amid all our perplexities, to the revelation of a future state. Here our prejudices, the weakness of our faculties, our association with others, our friendships, our worldly interests, and perhaps, our indolence and want of earnestness in the pursuit of truth, lead to imperfect conclusions and defective thought. These influences for evil will be entirely removed in the light of a future world. And not only the perfection of our nature, but our nearness to the throne and to the manifestation of God through the person of our adorable Lord, will remove from us all doubt and mistake.

Permit us to express the hope that those who have riches may so avoid all useless expenditure, self-indulgence, and worldly conformity that they may have means to communicate to their less prosperous brethren, and to sustain with efficiency Christian efforts for the evangelisation of the world.

We mourn the loss of valued and faithful men; we desire to lay it to heart. Death often seeks a splendid mark. The field of our conflict is strewn with the arrows of the last enemy. We mention not the names but we recall the memories of the departed, and over their slumbering ashes we afresh consecrate ourselves to the service of our Divine Lord, "both theirs and ours."

The report of the executive Committee of the Union was presented. It showed that a very substantial increase on the returns of the past year. And it is a very satisfactory feature that the increase year by year is not large, is steady; steady indeed with the progressiveness of growth. There is this year an increase over last year in chapel sittings of 24,000, of church members 5,700, of Sunday-school teachers 3,800, and of Sunday scholars 31,600; while thirteen new churches have been formed. Thirty seven new chapels are reported as having been built, at a cost of £39,800; twenty-four new schools, at an expenditure of over £6,000, while eighty-six chapels are returned as having been enlarged and improved at an outlay of £24,500; and upwards of £64,000 is reported as having been paid off the debts existing on our chapels. These figures call for gratitude and praise. And yet the committee cannot but solemnly ask, Do they not call for something more? Two thousand five hundred and sixty-five church-

es return a net increase of membership of 5,700, i. e., about two and a quarter per cent. Let all allowances be made for removals by death, emigration, withdrawal, and other causes. Yet the question ought to be solemnly pondered in such an assembly as this. Ought the churches to be satisfied with such a small increase? Remembering the Divine promise that when we labor and pray, God will give the increase, ought there not to be great searchings of heart among us at such a condition of things?

The election of Vice President is always a matter of importance, as, after holding that position one year he becomes the President of the following year. Rev. Dr. Landels in a brief appropriate speech nominated Rev. John Jenkyn Brown for the office, which was unanimously adopted. This closed the first sitting of the Union. We shall be able to give our readers something respecting the subsequent sittings in our next.

The Christian Messenger.

Halifax, N. S., May 18, 1881.

MEMORIALS OF ACADIA COLLEGE AND HORTON ACADEMY FOR THE HALF-CENTURY, 1828-1878.

Memento dierum antiquorum cogita generationes singulas.

The Memorial Volume has at length come to hand. A prefatory note explains that "it has been delayed by the cares and labors connected with the rebuilding of the College." "The book contains matter that is of permanent value," and it is well that it has been put into a volume that will be welcomed and carefully preserved by all the friends of the College.

The following is the Table of Contents:

ADDRESS BY THE REV. E. A. CRAWLEY, D. D.—The Rise and Progress of Higher Education in Connection with the Baptist Denomination in the Maritime Provinces.

ADDRESS BY THE REV. J. M. CRAMP, D. D.—Sketches of the Religious History of Acadia College and Horton Collegiate Academy.

THE VAUGHAN PRIZE ESSAY BY ALBERT COLDWELL, A. M.—History of Acadia College.

RECORDS OF STUDENTS AND GRADUATES OF ACADIA COLLEGE during the Ante-Collegiate period, by the Rev. D. W. C. Dimock, A. M.

RECORDS OF THE GRADUATES OF ACADIA COLLEGE by the Rev. S. W. Deblois, 1843 to 1858. By B. H. Eaton, Esq., A. M., 1858 to 1865. By Herbert C. Creed, A. M., 1865 to 1866. By Albert Coldwell, A. M., 1867 to 1878.

LIST OF GRADUATES OF ACADIA COLLEGE, 1843-1878.

Report of the Education Society for 1832.

Schedule of Pupils at Horton Academy during the year 1838. Extracts from Records of the Education Society, 1843 and 1838.

Petition for Act of Incorporation. Charter and other Legislative Acts.

The printing is well done, the paper is good, and the binding very neat, making a book of 260 pages, with a handsome cut of the new College building, and another of the old one. It is well worth One Dollar. Our readers are pretty familiar with the history of Acadia College so far as it has been made public, but it is here given in a very readable and concise form, and the younger portion of them may now become fully acquainted with the earlier effort of its originators, and the progress of the work during the first fifty years of its existence.

The Record of the Graduates will be perused with interest by each of those whose names are included in the list. These being given by the four gentlemen chosen for the task, each taking a portion of the time, constitute a most pleasing feature of the work, and will be as eagerly read as the addresses of the senior gentlemen or the Prize Essay by Mr. Coldwell.

This volume has appeared very opportunely just now, as the subject of the Higher Education is so generally under discussion. It will doubtless be a means of inspiring men of means with a determination to do what they can to sustain the Institutions, which now need the fostering care of all the friends of Education in these Provinces.

Grave difficulties surround the Governors and Faculty at the present time. One of the greatest of these is perhaps that which was intended to be a strong arm of support—the Convention Scheme—which, failing to supply all that is needed, and yet rendering it difficult to make the Appeals to the Denomination

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