

want of it would be much rather such.

It is a strange objection, as urged by some, that it would be more worthy of God and of his perfection, to suppose that he would not find it necessary to lay his improving hand upon the world in the form of a supplementary revelation. As if the question were simply one of later improvement, and not rather our necessity, as erring and sinful men, that God should meet us with his truth and mercy, in order that we might go to him. Or when it is objected, again, that through a revelation the human mind would be condemned to mere passivity—a thing unworthy of it and contrary to its nature, for its being is one of activity and real exertion. While without a revelation the best possessions and the best thoughts will be given us, and our problem in life will be, as it rises like a star above the horizon of our mental world, to survey it and attempt its solution. Still, in all things we are first of all receptive and then only spontaneously efficient. This is wholly the case when the question is concerning the highest truth and communion with God.

In short, as regards both God and ourselves—in each case we must say: so far from a revelation of God being impossible, it is rather that which answers to God's nature and our own, which meets our being and our necessity.

4. But when all this is admitted, there yet remains a stumbling-block to modern thought, and that is miracles. Whoever believes in revelation, believes in miracles. But miracles, it is affirmed, are impossible. The old world believed them to be possible; hence it regarded them as real and believed in them. We know that they are impossible. The old world believed that it should regard as supernatural much that it could not explain as natural, and so it sheltered itself in the acceptance of miracles. We have penetrated more deeply into the inner recesses of nature and have gotten another view altogether of its forces and laws. Modern research has lighted up the mysterious primeval forest of wonder and banished its gloominess, and what is not yet light will become so. The modern spirit demands that everything proceed naturally. Miracles conflict with modern research. It regards them as impossible, and so also does it regard revelation.

The mind demands, indeed, that it conceive of all things in their natural and necessary connection. But is there a sphere of necessity only? Is there not also a sphere of freedom? Man stands under the law of necessity, so far as he is a natural being, so far as as he is a subject of physical science. But is man a natural being only, is he not also a personal, moral, and thus a free being? Is he a subject of natural philosophy only, is he not also a subject of moral philosophy? And does not the realm of ethics stand higher than that of physics? If man then is free, because he is a personal, moral being, is this not especially true of God? Or is God so bound by natural laws, that he is not free to move his hands? We must deny God himself, if we deny that he is able to work miraculously. Rousseau himself speaks so strongly on this point that I could not do better than quote him. "This question—namely, whether God can work a miracle—if seriously entertained, would be impious, were it not so absurd in itself; and to punish a person for denying this would be showing him too much honor; it would be sufficient to put him in custody. Who ever has indeed denied that God can work miracles? True, he then proceeds: to establish the reality of a miracle, we should have to understand the laws and forces of nature in their fullest circuit. And this is an objection which has often been raised against the possibility of miracles, that we cannot attain to any certainty of the reality of a miracle. But this appeal to unknown laws, in order to escape the acknowledgment of a miracle, would be almost what Kant has designated the principle of the corrupt reason. We all know that there is no unknown law of this natural arrangement of things by which a dead man could be brought to life. Why then has the negative criticism disputed a succession of Biblical narrations as impossible, if the reality of miracles could in no case be established, but unknown laws of the natural world could come into play? But we carry within as the certainty that there is much more than this natural arrangement of things. The certainty of the supernatural is indeed the foundation of all religion. As reasonable as is

religion, so reasonable is this certainty, so reasonable also—miracles. Do we not believe that the world was created? And what is the creation but the first miracle? For we name that a miracle when something arises which proceeds not from present natural forces and laws or at least does not proceed fully from them, but includes in itself something new,—something that comes into connection with nature without being wrought from it. But this is true in the highest sense of the creation. Nor less is it true of the redemption of humanity, or of the inward renewal of individual men through the power of divine grace, which is not simply the product of already existing presuppositions.

The power of such free and wonderful working lies in the being of God and we all involuntarily acknowledge it. We pray. What does this mean if not that we believe in miraculous power? For we believe that God is free and not bound by the necessity of the relation of things, but freely controls this according to his own will. We could not help praying and hoping to be heard, if there should only come to pass what must come to pass, and not rather what God wills should come to pass. We desire for ourselves, we desire for our children the protection of God; we call upon him in need and entreat him to turn away evil from us; we implore him for the recovery of a sick friend, we hope to receive help from him, &c. What does all this signify but that we believe in a living God, who can do what he will. In doing what he will he does not indeed act arbitrarily, his acts are inwardly supported, and controlled by a high purpose; still he does what he does because he will, not because he must. And this is conformable to nature in God; for—as Jean Paul says—"miracles on earth are nature in heaven." Shall the natural coherence of things in the creation hinder him? Mathias Claudius says (iii. 29): "Whether the prayer of a deeply stirred soul is strong and can effect anything, or whether the *nexus rerum*, that is, the natural connection of things, does not permit the like, as certain learned gentlemen maintain, I shall not attempt to decide. I have all respect for the *nexus rerum*, still I cannot help thinking of Sampson who left the *nexus* (connexion) between the gate and the two posts uninjured, and, as is well known, carried the whole thing—the gate and its posts—to the top of the hill; in short I believe that the rain comes when it is most needed, and that the hart pants not in vain for cool water, if one only prays right and is rightly disposed."

But, says the objector, does not miracle do away with natural law? And is this conceivable, after it has been once established?—But is not God the God of natural law also? What is natural law but the act of his will? May it not be made subservient to his will and purpose? But it is not once true that miracles cancel natural law, they only affect the particular course of its operation and place it under the law of a higher Will and a higher power. We have analogies of this in a humbler sphere. If my arm hurls a stone into the air, it ascends contrary to the nature of the stone and to the law of attraction, but a higher force and a higher will has entered, which produces effects which are not effects of the lower forces. These lower forces and laws are not abolished, but operate still. So in the case of miracles a higher causality operates and produces an effect, which is not the result of the connection of those lower causalities, although it dovetails well into that connection. This higher causality coincides in the last analysis with the highest moral aims of being. To serve these aims is the highest and fairest function of nature. Thus miracle stands in connection with nature, but it is morally and not arbitrarily conditioned; it is not contrary to nature and its determination, but in a high sense conformable to it. The highest moral purpose, however, is that of the divine love. It is the divine love which takes power into its service; it is the redemption of humanity which accomplishes the higher new history of humanity on the stage of the world; it is salvation in Jesus Christ in which the ground and justification of miracles, because of revelation, lie.

The block of granite, which was an obstacle in the pathway of the weak, becomes a stepping stone in the pathway of the strong.—Carlyle.

For the Christian Messenger. Home Missions.

The regular monthly meeting of the Home Mission Board was held in the vestry of the 1st Baptist Church, Yarmouth, on Monday, Sept. 12th.

The following brethren were elected as officers: A. C. Robbins, Esq., Chairman; Rev. G. E. Day, M. D., Vice-Chairman; A. Cohoon, Co. Sec'y; W. A. Randall, M. D., Recording Sec'y; Rev. J. A. Gordon, Treas., and Rev. A. H. Lavers, and Deacon James Crosby, Auditors.

- Grants were made as follows: 1. To the Newcastle field, Northumberland Co., N. B., \$125, for the year beginning Aug. 1st, 1881. Bro. E. R. Curry, missionary. 2. To the Digby field, N. S., \$100, for the year, beginning Aug. 1st—Rev. J. H. Saunders, pastor. 3. To Ludlow &c., Northumberland Co., N. B., \$100, for the year beginning Aug. 1st, 1881—Rev. W. M. Edwards, pastor. 4. To New Maryland, York Co., N. B., \$75, for the year beginning Aug. 1st, 1881. 5. Rev. M. Normandy was appointed a missionary to the French in Digby and Yarmouth Counties.

Several other applications were considered but were deferred for further information.

Terms for Application. Hereafter churches or fields intending to make application for aid can obtain from the Cor. Sec'y. forms for such application.

A. COHOON, Cor. Sec'y. Hebron, Sept. 15, 1881.

For the Christian Messenger. Mr. Ralph M. Hunt,

preached in the Dartmouth Baptist Church, on Sabbath morning last, from John xv. 8. The congregation listened with evident pleasure. The discourse itself could not fail to interest, and instruct. Mr. Hunt being a Licentiate of this Church, and the church being so long and faithfully served by his lamented venerable father, were additional reasons for their gratification.

Brother H. has completed the second year of his course at the Newton Theological Seminary, and has spent the summer months travelling in England and Scotland.

He proposes to engage in ministerial work for a year or two before returning to Newton to complete his course in Theology. The Church that may secure his services will be blessed with an earnest and efficient labourer in the cause of Christ.

E. J. G.

For the Christian Messenger. Colchester and Cumberland Counties Baptist S. S. Convention.

Dear Messenger.—Some of our Baptists think anything and everything good must appear in your columns, and if the matter is not very good, the CHRISTIAN MESSENGER will make it so.

But to business. I was requested to send you an account of the Colchester and Cumberland Counties Baptist S. S. Convention, recently held at St. Andrews. As intimated in notice of Convention in CHRISTIAN MESSENGER, the St. Andrews friends did all they could to make the meeting a success. Delegates who went by train were conveyed to and from place of meeting; but the greater number went in their own carriages. All were well taken care of while there, as the St. Andrews friends know well how to do it. After the opening exercises, the following officers were elected, viz.: Rev. C. H. Martell, (re-appointed), President; C. Haverstock, (Lic.), and Wm. Cummings, Vice-Presidents; A. J. Walker, Secretary and Treasurer; Executive Committee of seven. The remainder of this meeting was taken up with reports from Superintendents and others, from which we gather the following:

Teachers do not have enough love to Christ. Do not go to the school prepared; are not, as they should be, filled with the Holy Spirit.

Not enough interest taken. There is plenty to do, and we ought to lay out work and then do it. The older members of the congregation should be in the school. S. S. Teachers should not take vacations. Many are too lazy to teach. Study the Bible to get something to give to others. Lead the children to Christ, and then remember the Saviour's admonition, "Feed my Lambs." We want for teachers, men and women imbued with the love of Christ. Let the teacher be interested, and there will be no difficulty in interesting the children.

In the evening we had a very interesting paper, which elicited some discussion. The writer dwelt mainly on the abuse of helps. This paper is to appear in CHRISTIAN MESSENGER, and will speak for itself. Including some letters received too late for the meeting, eleven schools reported, one new school included.

The children of the Sabbath School were present, and discoursed sweet music at intervals during the evening, which added much to the interest of the meeting. We think all were well paid for the time spent, and the delegates would return to their schools determined to be more faithful in the future.

The next session will be held at Brookfield, Colchester County, due notice of which will be given.

A. J. WALKER, Sec'y. Truro, Sept. 16, 1881.

The Christian Messenger. Halifax, N. S., September 21, 1881.

PRESIDENT GARFIELD IS DEAD.

He died at Long Branch on Monday at 10.35 in the evening. His death seems to have been from sheer exhaustion. "Previous to his death the only words spoken by the President were that he had a severe pain in his heart. It is supposed by the surgeons that death was occasioned by a clot of blood forming on the heart. Dr. Bliss was the first one notified of the President's expression of pain, and upon entering the room at once saw the end was near. Members of the family were immediately summoned to the bedside. All arrived and perfect quiet prevailed.

Mrs. Garfield bore the trying ordeal with great fortitude and exhibited unprecedented courage. She gave way to no paroxysms of grief, and after death became evident she quietly withdrew to her own room. There she sat, a heart-stricken widow, full of grief, but with two much Christian courage to exhibit it to those about her. She, of course, was laboring under a terrible strain, and despite her efforts tears flowed from her eyes and her lips became drawn by her noble attempt to bear the burden with which she had been afflicted. Miss Mollie was naturally greatly affected, and bursts of tears flowed from the child's eyes, notwithstanding her noble efforts to follow the example of her mother.

The death scene was one never to be forgotten. Perfect quiet prevailed, and not a murmur was heard while the President was sinking.

A telegram was immediately sent to the President's mother in Ohio and to the sons, Harry and James, now at Williams' College, as also to Vice-President Arthur and other prominent public men.

Perhaps there was never a chief magistrate of a great nation over whose last moments there has been such wide spread anxiety and concern. The rulers of all the civilized nations will feel deep sympathy with the Great Republic in the loss of its head. The family of the late President will awaken heartfelt grief in thousands of families, not only in that country, but in the Dominion of Canada, in Great Britain and Ireland, and wherever the English Language is spoken.

We last week had a few lines on the disciplinary proceedings in reference to Dr. Thomas. The following from the last Wesleyan gives a fuller account of the matter:

Another point has been reached in the proceedings against Dr. Thomas, of Chicago, for "disseminating doctrines contrary to the Articles of Religion or Established Standards of Doctrine" of the Methodist Episcopal Church. The secular papers generally credit the Presiding Elder—Dr. Willing—with having given Dr. Thomas "generous scope" in his statements in self defence, in spite of the efforts at limitation put forth by Dr. Parkhurst on the part of the prosecution. On the evening of the 9th inst., after several witnesses had been called to prove the charge of heresy and Dr. Thomas had been heard from the stand, the case was given to the committee. After brief deliberation they returned a verdict sustaining the charge, which must therefore be carried to the Conference. There was no little excitement caused when Dr. Parkhurst, in addressing the committee said: "There are gray-haired, godly men in the city; there are broken-hearted mothers in this city, who are weeping over the ruin of their sons, whose downfall in theatre going, dancing, and beer drinking, and card playing began with accepting these views from Dr. Thomas." The Dr. was charged with denying the inspiration of the Scriptures, and the doctrine of the atonement, and with teaching the idea of a probation after death.

GRANVILLE STREET CHURCH.

The services in this church last Lord's Day were of an unusually interesting character, and will not soon be forgotten by those who were privileged to be present. In the morning the Rev. E. M. Saunders preached the closing sermon of a pastorate of fourteen years. The text was from Heb. xiii. 25—"Grace be with you all, Amen." After brief introductory remarks showing that the text is used at the close of nearly all the Apostolic epistles, and at the commencement of several, Mr. S. alluded to the changes which had taken place in the church and congregation during his lengthened pastorate. Many who had welcomed him when he first came to Halifax, now dwell in other lands, or had gone to their home abode. He referred to the years of depression in business which had occurred during this period, and felt glad to be able to state that notwithstanding this, the Pastor's salary had been increased, \$3000 had been expended on the church, and \$9000 on the Spring Garden Building, and large sums had been given to the benevolent objects of the Denomination. He also alluded in detail to the spiritual progress of the church, 116 had been received into the church by baptism during his ministry. He did not take any credit to himself, but felt that his labors had been very imperfect, yet was thankful that God had enabled him to labor with the church, and had given some success. He had felt it his duty to retire on account of his health being then somewhat impaired, and, in deference to the views of some who believed that a change would be beneficial for the church. He trusted God would direct and provide for him and his in the future, as he had always done for his servants in the past.

The action taken by the church, being the action of all, all are obligated not only by original vows but by recent action, to united efforts for the promotion of the best interests of the church. He also spoke in warm terms of the affection and esteem ever manifested for him and his family by the church and congregation, and concluded by expressing his own wishes for their growth and prosperity, affectionately commending them to the grace of God, both now and hereafter.

INTRODUCTION OF THE NEW PASTOR. REV. ALEXANDER MCARTHUR.

It is a very unusual circumstance that the retiring pastor of a Baptist Church is present and introduces his successor, and commends him to the people of his charge, yet this was happily the case in Granville St. Church, on Sunday evening. It had so happened, altogether unintentionally on the part of both, that they had not met until a few minutes before the evening service.

The services were commenced by the Rev. Mr. McArthur offering prayer, and giving out the hymn,—

All hail the power of Jesus' name, Rev. E. M. Saunders then read the Scriptures 1 Corinthians ii., and engaged in prayer, invoking blessings on both minister and people.

Rev. Mr. Saunders then addressed Rev. Mr. McArthur, and, on behalf of the church, gave him a most hearty welcome, and introduced him in very fitting and kindly words to all the labours and responsibilities of the sacred office just vacated by himself. He eloquently welcomed him to our pleasant city, and to its many benevolent and philanthropic institutions, where he would find a large field for his Christian sympathies and labours and he could assure him of the fullest co-operation and brotherly kindness of Christians of all denominations in connection with these public enterprises. He assured him of his desire and intention to do all in his power, whether he remained in the city or otherwise, to render aid in his work, and facilitate his labors and usefulness. He also warmly welcomed him to a place among the Baptists of these Maritime Provinces, to their labours in building up and extending Collegiate education, a work with which Granville Street Church had from its inception been fully identified, to our Foreign Missionary enterprises to the Telugu people of India, and to the Home Mission work in these Provinces. These enterprises were well worthy to receive his fullest sympathies, and presented a field sufficient to engage his largest Christian labours.

Mr. Saunders then left the platform, and Mr. McArthur in reply thanked him for the very unexpected expression of kindly welcome, and noticed what he was pleased to term the royal reception given him on board the Alhambra, on Saturday afternoon. In considering