

The Christian Messenger.

Halifax, N. S., April 12, 1882.

BIBLE KNOWLEDGE.

The exercises of a Sabbath School "Review lesson," which we witnessed recently, suggested a few questions which have doubtless been often asked before, but may bear repetition occasionally. With all the improvements in sabbath school work, and in the appliances for Bible study, do we really know the Bible better than our fathers did? Without doubt the average Sunday school scholar may be able to answer many questions about the Bible, and has much general information which a generation ago was known only to the ministry. But does he know the Bible? Does he recognize a quotation from scripture when he hears it and can he locate it correctly? Still better has he a fund of rich scripture texts stored up in his memory, and can he quote them at will? Can he instantly turn up any chapter and verse that is required?

Questions like these are worth thinking about. Ministers, even have been known to preach sermons from texts not in the Bible, supposing them to be there. Quite recently we have heard of a learned D. D., announcing to a large congregation to which he was a stranger, that his text would be found in the 26th chapter of the Acts 28th verse, and proceeded to read when he was considerably disconcerted at not being able to find it there. After some little delay it was discovered that the New Version of the scriptures had found its way into the pulpit, and it did not contain his favourite text, at all. It is not unusual to hear quoted as scripture by persons who ought to know better, such familiar aphorisms as Sterne's "God tempers the wind to the shorn lamb," or from the Prayer Book, "In the midst of life we are in death," or again, "Cleanliness is next to godliness," or even Hamlet's, "Angels and ministers of grace defend us." Now all of these are very good and may be true, but they are not to be found in the Bible.

We have serious doubts whether this generation is as familiar with the Bible as it imagines itself to be. In the olden times when copies of the scriptures were rare and high priced, it was beyond the reach of any but the rich—and even the rich to say nothing of the poor, would seldom be able to read the precious volume if they could get it. Lack of Bible knowledge was then not a notable thing. But now when not to be able to read is considered a disgrace, and when a good copy of the Scriptures can be bought for twenty-five cents, or had for nothing, if too poor to buy, there is certainly no excuse for ignorance of the Scriptures. Especially is there no excuse for Christians. The distinction between knowing about and knowing the Word of God is much more important in view of the great interests and issues involved. Therefore we may repeat the divine injunction, "Search the Scriptures."

Suppose on next review day, the superintendents of all our sabbath schools, make a record of all the persons in their various schools who have read the whole Bible through in course, and can recite correctly the names of the several books in the sacred canon in their consecutive order, and also the 'Ten Commandments,' the 'Lord's Prayer,' with the 'Beatitudes.' If the information is furnished us we will be glad to publish the facts with the names if desired. We should hope that not a few will be found who have accomplished this much in exact Bible knowledge.

The Deceased wife's sister's bill has at length passed the Senate by 40 to 19, which we trust will settle the question; notwithstanding appeals to the Governor-General and to the Queen to refuse assent to the bill. The vote was not a party one nor at all denominational. The discussion was full and free. A similar law will doubtless soon pass the Imperial Parliament, and so do away with the absurd illegitimacy of children of such marriages. We congratulate our friend the Church Guardian, Presbyterian Witness, etc., that common sense is at length to rule in this matter rather than ancient ecclesiasticism.

LONGFELLOW AND HIS POEM "EVANGELINE."

We copy the following correspondence from a contemporary. It will interest Nova Scotia readers just now:

MONTREAL, 7th Feb., 1882.

W. H. Longfellow, Esq.; Dear Sir, I am certain you will excuse the liberty I take in writing you, when I tell you, that I am a descendant of the Acadians of Grand Pré; that I have often read your Evangeline with ever-increasing interest, that I have just returned from Grand Pré full of enthusiasm over the details of that wonderful history, and that now I am very anxious for further information in reference to that people.

If it be not taxing you too much, you would do me a great favor by giving answers to the following questions:

1st.—Were you ever at Grand Pré? Everybody I saw in that region of country insists that you never were.

2nd.—How did you obtain the facts—as I suppose they must be facts—in relation to Evangeline?

3rd.—If the story of Evangeline, Gabriel, her father, be true up to the time of the father's death, may the same be said of her subsequent wanderings and death at Philadelphia?

A few words from you, Sir, will greatly delight a grandson of one of the fellow-sufferers of Evangeline.

LOUIS N. BEAUDRY, French Missionary.

CAMBRIDGE, Feb. 9, 1882.

Dear Sir,—The poem of Evangeline is so far historical only as it is founded on the dispersion of the Acadians. The story itself of a maiden separated from her lover and, after life-long wanderings, finding him dying in a hospital, is a legend, or tradition. The name Evangeline is of my own invention, as are all the details of the poem.

I am sorry to say that I never was at Grand Pré.

I am prevented by illness from writing you a longer letter on the subject. Yours very truly,

HENRY W. LONGFELLOW.

It has been ascertained that Infant Sprinkling is an old pagan rite engrafted like many other things on the profession of Christianity. The American Nation, of a recent date, in a review of Von Konrad Maurer's work on this subject, makes the assertion that the earlier tribes of Germans and Scandinavians were accustomed to sprinkle their babes at an early day after birth, and that this ceremony was connected with the naming of the child, and with certain legal advantages. 'It seems probable,' says the writer, 'that before the influence of Christianity began to be felt in Northern Europe, the practice of infant baptism was prevalent. When the Christian missionaries came to these districts, they adopted many of the customs of the people, and imported them into the Church. We know, for example, that they gave the names of saints in the place of heathen gods. The Roman Catholics did not totally abolish idolatry, but furnished a new set of tutelary gods and goddesses.' The conclusion of the critic, who seems to write simply as a historical scholar, is 'that the heathen form of baptism was adopted by the Christian Church, for surely there is no intimation in the Bible that Baptism was ever applied to infants. The usual idea has been, perhaps, that sprinkling was suggested by the sprinkling rites of the Old Testament. But if the pagans had such a rite as sprinkling infants, we can understand how Jewish and German customs could work together to subvert the original New Testament teaching.'

A BAPTIST DEACON was recently asked: 'Do not Baptists believe that only those who are baptized shall be saved?' He answered: 'If we did so believe, we should certainly have our children baptized; that we do not have them baptized is of itself an answer to the question.'

Our modest lady-like Canadian Missionary Link for April, comes with its precious light for dark places. "Women that are at ease" a good article from Woman's Work fills its first page. We then have a letter from Mrs. McLaurin, posted in Egypt, showing how she and her devoted husband—true missionaries both of them—spent their time in England and Scotland, on their way to "the dear Telugus." In London she says "us went to hear Spurgeon, who feasted us

right royally. 'Wherefore we receiving a kingdom which cannot be moved, let us have grace whereby we may serve God acceptably with reverence and godly fear.' This was his text; 8000 persons hung with deepest interest on his glowing words, while so peculiarly did his message suit our case that we could almost believe he had known there were those listening, whose faces were turned towards the dark places of the earth, where there would be special need of such grace and gratitude as he described."

The Link has also a number of articles from our and their missionaries some of which have already appeared in the MESSENGER.

Rev. J. E. Cracknell, who was here in the fall, is acting under the authority of the Dominion Government in promoting emigration from England to Canada, and giving information to intending emigrants.

News of the Churches.

THE TABERNACLE.—April the 2nd two persons were received into fellowship. Last Friday evening we had a very encouraging meeting, and the unexpected pleasure of hearing a Baptist minister who was introduced by Rev. Dr. Clay. Brother Salmon then in brief told us of the Lord's goodness and dealings. He said he was returning from Glasgow, where he had been on a visit, after 25 years sojourn in this country; he came here a sailor lad, and the Master called him to follow and work for him. His visit home had resulted in the salvation of souls; working in connection with Mr. Moody's meetings he had had both pleasure and success. The journey thus far on the return, had been a very happy and eventful one. He came in charge of a lot of little Scotch boys, going west, and the meetings on shipboard had resulted in much good, and the captain was among those who found Jesus. Thus did our brother make our hearts glad by relating his story of working for Jesus.

A letter was read from Burmuda, thanking the Pastor, on behalf of some of the men on "H. M. S. Northumberland, for the good they had received and expressing their desire to be back again in the Tabernacle.

Our Tea Meeting was the means of netting \$86.00.

Shares are being taken slowly, read our advertisement, and see if you cannot put your name down to help us to plaster our basement, and thus help us in the good work.

WEYMOUTH.—The Rev. N. Drayton pastor of the African Baptist Church in Weymouth, writes that the Sabbath School gave a very interesting entertainment at Weymouth on the 22nd ult. The singing, recitations, and dialogues were well rendered. The Rev. W. H. Banks gave an address on the occasion. There was a large attendance and it was very successful.

HAMPTON, ANNAPOLIS CO.—As a result of special meetings, a bright day is dawning for the church at Hampton. Blacksliders who have been away from the fold ever since the great revival of 1877, are coming home; and a great many others, hitherto impenitent, are seeking the way of salvation. May these revival influences spread all over this whitening harvest field.

Yours hopefully,

E. H. SWEET.

Port Lorne, April 1, 1882.

HANTS CO.—At the Ministers' Meeting at Windsor, on 28th ult., a paper was read by Rev. Joseph Murray, A.M. on "The Tenure of the Pastoral Office." The Conference asked the paper for publication in the Messenger, if the editor will find room for it. Considerable discussion took place on, How to raise money for Convention work. Special meetings have been held at Falmouth with encouraging results. A number of conversions are reported. A revival is in progress at Waterville also, under the labors of Bro. A. F. Whitman (Lic.) The Newport Church is at present supplied by Bro. Locke, of P. E. I. Rev. E. Whitman preached with much acceptance in the evening from Psalm

lxiii. 28, "But it is good for me to draw near to God." The next meeting is to be held at Scotch Village on May 16th, Rev. Joseph Murray to preach.

KINGSTON, AYLESFORD, April 10.

Dear Brother Selden,—You will be pleased to learn that God has visited one section of this church in a marked manner. Christians here have been quickened, wanderers have returned, and the voice of rejoicing is heard. Some very striking conversions have occurred. Young men have been bowed down under the power of God's Spirit, have seen themselves sinners, and found Jesus mighty to save.

On March 26th, five put on Christ by baptism, and yesterday twenty-one followed the steps of the Master, and still there are many others looking Zionward. The work has been quiet, but deep and powerful, and reminds one of days past, when in this land the fountains were broken up and the clouds gave forth abundance of rain. We are praying that the whole church may be visited. Pray for us.

F. BEATTIE.

LOWER GRANVILLE.—We learn six persons were baptized at Stoney Beach last Lord's Day, by pastor, Isa. Wallace, and that two more are received for baptism, and many others are seeking salvation.

O'LEARY, P. E. I., March 30th, 1882. We are glad to learn from Rev. E. N. Archibald that "a blessed revival is in progress at Cape Wolf, eight were received into the church on Sabbath the 26th, and we expect as many more to be baptized next Sabbath."

RUSSIA.—An American paper says, "Mr. Schieve baptized the cashier of the St. Petersburg and Warsaw Railway. An officer of the Imperial Bank granted the use of the bathing house connected with the bank for the purpose of baptism. The officials were much impressed with the ordinance. Mr. Schieve had an interview with Count Ignatief on the subject of some Baptists who were exiled. The nobleman received the Baptist preacher graciously, and referred him to the head of another department of the Government to deal with the matter."

In Memoriam.

DEACON HARRIS HARDING MORSE,

died at his residence Paradise, March 29th, 1882, aged 55 years. He was the youngest son of the late Handley C. Morse. Disease had been gathering strength for years; yet his last sickness was short and his death so sudden, the stroke has fallen upon us with great heaviness. During a gracious revival of religion in 1839 at the early age of 12 years, our Brother was baptised into the fellowship of the Wilmot Baptist Church, by Rev. N. Vidito. In 1878 he was chosen to the office of Deacon and worthily filled the position. His whole life gave evidence of his being a subject of God's saving grace. He stood in the front rank as a worker for God and has fallen at his post. The mere observer would have judged him worldly, seeing his devotion to business, but he was zealous for God, and cared only for the world as he could use it for God's glory and the good of others. He was cheerful in disposition, uniform in temper and unassuming, with a good hope in Christ, he sought in the faithful discharge of every duty to keep a conscience void of offence toward God and all mankind. Giving himself first to God and then to his people, in efforts for the good of others he spared not himself. His was the willing mind and the ready hand. He carried the cause of God upon his heart, and recognised that it had claims upon his time and his wealth, he cared for Zion. "Poor, mourning, bleeding Zion" were words which fell from his lips in the last prayer meeting he attended, and when he knew he must die he said "I could die easier if the cause was revived." When his pastor told him he thought God would spare his life he replied, "I am nothing, if God can accomplish mere by my death than by my life let me die." His house was a home for the minister of the gospel and

whoever was his pastor he found in him a willing and ready helper. His residence was several miles from the House of God but his place was seldom vacant, for in the church he found a home. His words were few, his counsel wise, his practical piety permeated every act—he was truly a burden bearer. He was in hearty sympathy with all our denominational enterprises and had such fellowship with Christ Jesus that his confidence in the Book of Ages was not shaken by the last of foes. Many expressions uttered in weakness and with difficulty during the last few days of his life will be long remembered. He would say "It is all right," and then "What would I do now if I had no Jesus." "God has been so good to me, and yet I have been so forgetful of Him." He knows best.

"While on his breast I lean my head And breathe my life out sweetly there." He will be greatly missed in the family, in the church, and in society, while his memory will long be cherished in many hearts and homes. "The memory of the just is blessed." "He being dead yet speaketh." The funeral occasion was improved by his pastor Rev. J. T. Eaton, from the words of Psalm ix. 10. The Rev. N. Vidito also addressed the mourners. May God sustain the widow and the fatherless children and bless to his brethren his dying message, "Brethren stand at your post."—Com.

Paradise, April 8, 1882.

Review of Books.

JOB'S COMFORTERS.

No. 70 Standard Series: Job's Comforters or Scientific Sympathy, by Dr. Joseph Parker of London, re-issued by Funk and Wagnalls, Dey Street, New York.

This is a religious satire in which Huxley the Moleculite, John Stuart the Millite, and Tyndall the Sadducee, at tempt to comfort Job in his afflictions by what they have severally written in their scientific works. We may give a quotation or two from this choice little book:

"There was a man in these latter days whose name was Job; the same was a follower of Jesus Christ, and his delight was in the law of God, from whom was all his expectation. Job went among men as one who ceased not from prayer, nor hesitated to declare the sufficiency and joyfulness of a life of faith in the Son of God. Day by day he blessed his bread in the name of heaven, and set the Lord always before him as the source of his strength and the giver of every good gift. And unto Job were born sons and daughters; and as for his wheat fields and orchards, they were fruitful beyond measure. And it came pass that a sudden blight fell upon the whole fortune of Job, and that Job himself was bowed down in weakness and in great fear. His children perished out of his sight, and his ground brought forth abundantly no more; and it was as if God had forsaken him in unexplained and terrible anger, and given him over as a prey to the enemy. Yes, his wife also spake not a word of sympathy, but talked of death as the only release from grief so unendurable. Now, when the new leaders of human thought heard of all the evil that was come upon Job, they came every one from his own place: Huxley the Moleculite, John Stuart the Millite, and Tyndall the Sadducee. And when they lifted up their eyes afar off and saw Job more a shadow than a man, they whispered to each other, "This comes of religious faith," and they hastened toward him with swift feet. So they sat down beside the shattered man, and in less than seven seconds Stuart the Millite, began, metaphorically, to throw stones at his bewildered head.

"Just what might have been expected," said he; "this comes of your star-gazing, and of reading the patriarchs, instead of watching the markets. I always say that a man brings all this sort of thing upon himself; and that as he makes his bed, so he must lie upon it. Be your own god, and then pray as much as you like. Humanity is divine."

But Job answered and said: "O that my grief were understood, and that you could heal the pain that is in my heart! For then would I bless you as those who speak wise words. Behold, this cometh out of mine own hand; for wherein have I dared the Most High to overwhelm me?"

Then answered Huxley the Moleculite, and said: "Cease from thy languishing, nor let thy repining any longer be heard. Understand thou that this disturbance is entirely molecular: by some means or other the molecules have got into a disordered condition, and that singular white-brown fluid found in the heads of human animals

has become a little addled, diluted, or otherwise injured, and hence these phenomena. All animal life is more or less subject to this visitation; and, viewed scientifically, yours, Job, is a singularly beautiful case."

Whereupon Job moaned in the bitterness of his soul, and cried, saying: "O that my children were about me as in the days that are gone, and that I could recall the light which made my home a scene of gladness! If not, would God I might die and be at rest! My children! my children! whence have ye fled from me?"

Then answered Tyndall the Sadducee, and said: "Thy children have melted into the infinite azure of the past, as all living things must melt. They have gone again to the dust; but in their decomposition there will be liberated gases and other elements, which, mingling with the general chemistry of nature, will contribute somewhat to the nourishment of animals and plants; and in this way the decomposed children of Job will be of great use in the chemic economy of the universe."

Then was Job full of indignation, and his soul was overwhelmed within him. "Miserable comforters are ye all," said he; "and yours is the wisdom of fools. Have ye seen, sore trouble, and has your day suddenly been turned into night, or have your eyes stood out with fatness, and your souls been long at ease? Know ye what it is to be carried away as with a flood, and to be thrown down by an irresistible arm? Your words are strange to me, and your speech without savor."

Then answered John Stuart the Millite, and said: "Are thy children more than the children of other men that they should live forever? Reform the sanitary arrangement of the country, return a thoroughly representative parliament, to St. Stephen's, give woman the franchise, and let all leading articles be signed by the names of the writers, and then we may look for better health, higher wages, and more general comfort. This you may call utilitarianism, but I call it common sense."

And Huxley, the Moleculite, said: "Why grieve for children, and why moan and groan over the inevitable? You should take a scientific view of all things. What my friend the Sadducee has said is strictly scientific. We live upon one another all through and through creation. We find the origin of protoplasm in the vegetable world; the plants drink the fluid containing carbonic acid, water and ammonia, and thus maintain themselves in vigor; and then the animals, in their turn, eat the plants, and perform a high feat of constructive chemistry by converting dead protoplasm into the living matter which is appropriate to itself."

Thereupon, in paternal anguish and rage, Job smote Huxley the Moleculite to the ground, and Tyndall the Sadducee exclaimed: "Why this, O Job?" And Job answered in bitter sarcasm: "The moleculite! And God do so to me, and more also, if I smite you not one and all for your madness and cruelty. O my children! my children!"

But Huxley the Moleculite, and John Stuart the Millite, and Tyndall the Sadducee reasoned with Job, and besought him to restrain himself, and offered to lend him their complete works to while away his childless hours and his consuming sorrows. Moreover, Tyndall the Sadducee answered and said: "We are the founders of a new school; we are the valiant leaders of the new age, and we are prepared to suffer, if need be, a good deal of advertisement, and are even willing to risk all the consequences of a remunerative circulation of our books. Let me speak to thee, I pray thee, nor let thine anger be too hot."

Then Job answered, "Say on." And when Huxley the Moleculite had retired from Job according to the square of the distance which formerly separated them, Tyndall the Sadducee opened his mouth and said: "What is thy complaint, and what is thy desire, that we may answer thee?"

And Job answered: "My complaint is that I am sore wounded, and that my life is impoverished and filled with woe. The delight of mine eyes is taken away, and no longer is mine ear filled with music; and they that knew me turn away from me, and they that understood me are numbered with the dead. O that I might have my request, and that God would grant me the thing that I long for! Even that it would please God to destroy me; that He would let loose His hand and cut me off! Is there not a God in heaven, and is He not King over all the earth? Why is His hand heavy upon me, and for what reason hath He shut up my soul in darkness? Answer me, if ye have understanding."

"We will answer thee," said the Sadducee, "and let thee know the measure of our wisdom. We have stretched our minds across cosmic spaces and cosmic periods, and have seen the sufficiency of matter to grow and recombine and produce startling effects; we have seen nothing, indeed, of which matter is incapable; it seems to be its own