

The Christian Messenger. Halifax, N. S., June 25, 1884.

THE CHRISTIAN MESSENGER, TO THE 1st of JANUARY, 1885, for 50 cents, TWO FOR ONE DOLLAR.

Every family should have its weekly Christian newspaper, giving information of what is passing in their own country and in other lands, in the Churches and in the State. We are doing our utmost by the above offer to induce families to receive its visits, feeling satisfied that to many, an introduction is all that is needed to accomplish this object.

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OUR ASSOCIATIONS.

THE NOVA SCOTIA WESTERN BAPTIST ASSOCIATION is one of the largest, if not the largest of the fraternal bodies of Baptists in the Dominion of Canada. It contains 66 churches and upwards of ten thousand members, (10,840). Many of its churches are in localities where no other denomination has any organization, or any settled ministry.

Hillsburg, the place of meeting this year, is a most appropriate term, as it is highly descriptive of the place, being a town of the steepest hills one can conceive of as having good carriage roads. Its original name Bear River is however preferred by many of the people, perhaps because the place under that name had secured for itself a character as the locality of the most romantic and beautiful scenery in the western part of the province. Its houses are adapted to the hill sides, and exhibit the taste of an intelligent cultivated people, many of whom are wealthy and all appear in comfortable circumstances.

The journey from Halifax to Annapolis by railway at this season of the year is most enjoyable. The abundant blossoms on the fruit-trees having scarcely given way to the incipient apples on the trees all along the road, more or less, from Windsor to Annapolis. The cheering indications of an abundant crop gives encouragement, that the lateness of the season has not interfered injuriously with the prospects of a large and generous supply of apples for home use and for exportation.

Arrived at Annapolis the ancient capital of the province, we find all the signs of growth and activity which usually characterize much younger communities.

The "Dominion" House has excellent accommodations for travellers in the shape of a good and well provided dining hall, and pleasant rooms close to the railway depot. Here we are provided with comfortable carriages for the rest of the distance—say 12 to 16 miles, along the southern shore of the Basin, a lovely drive with constantly changing scenery, bounded by the high mountainous ridge on the north side of the Basin. About eight miles brings us to Moose River, (Clementsport) with its precipitous sides and indications on the banks of the river of former mining industries. Having full confidence in the skill of the driver adds greatly to the comfort in travelling over such steep roads.

We arrived about 6 o'clock and found the well organized committee all ready to direct the travellers to their temporary homes. Rev. W. E. Hall, the genial and devoted pastor is on hand also, to make every body feel at home.

On Friday evening an appointment is made for a preparatory preaching service. Rev. J. C. Morse preached an excellent sermon and laid a good foundation in the grand doctrines of the gospel on which to build during the following days of business and devotion.

On Saturday morning a large number attended a prayer-meeting at 4 past 8. It was a deeply interesting service, and

awakened afresh the warm-hearted piety for which the Western Association has long been distinguished.

THE ASSOCIATION.

At 10 o'clock the delegates in goodly numbers assembled. Rev. J. A. Gordon, the Moderator of the past year commenced by directing the devotional exercises. Prayer by Rev. W. L. Parker, Rev. P. R. Foster and others.

The list of Delegates being read as obtained from the letters, the vote was called for Moderator. The Ballot being taken, Rev. J. Melbourne Parker was elected.

Revs. J. I. DeWolfe and G. H. Goudey were elected Secretaries. Brethren Alex. McDonald and B. H. Parker were made Treasurers. Brethren Dr. Welton, Dr. Rand and Rev. A. Cohoon were appointed to read the letters.

Brethren Rev. J. H. Saunders, S. Selden and Rev. Jas. A. Stubbert were the committee to examine the letters.

The first one read was from Hillsburg. It gave a most cordial and hearty welcome to the ministers and Delegates.

After some time expended in the reading of letters, Rev. A. Cohoon introduced a motion to appoint a committee to look over the smaller churches of this association, and prepare a plan for grouping them with other churches, so that they may all be supplied with ministerial labor as far as possible.

In the afternoon, after reading the letters, the report of the Committee on Obituaries was read by Rev. W. H. Warren. Several very touching addresses were given by Revs. A. Cohoon, C. Goodspeed, G. Churchill, P. R. Foster, J. H. Saunders, and others on the departed brethren—Rev. J. A. Durkee and Avar Longley.

Rev. W. Spencer read the Report on Sabbath Schools. Addresses were made by Rev. W. H. Warren, W. E. Hall, S. McC. Black, Dr. Rand, J. W. Manning, and others.

TEMPERANCE.

On Saturday evening a large gathering assembled in the church for the purpose of holding a Temperance Meeting, at which Rev. J. A. Gordon spoke "The Church of Christ the grandest on Temperance Agency."

Rev. P. R. Foster on "The necessity of church members being total abstainers and temperance workers."

Rev. C. Goodspeed on "The obligation resting on all Christians to unite in procuring and enforcing a Prohibitory Law."

Each of these addresses was a clear and powerful presentation of the theme, making the meeting one of the most complete and remarkable we ever attended. Added to the speeches, the Hillsburg brass band with a select choir very effectively rendered several choice pieces of music and temperance anthems. The impression produced with reference to the Temperance work, was such as will not soon be forgotten by the delegates and people of the place.

On Sunday the preaching at Hillsburg in the Baptist church, was by Rev. Dr. Welton and Rev. J. W. Manning. In the Methodist Church, Rev. C. Goodspeed and Rev. H. N. Parry. In the Advent Church, by Rev. W. H. Warren and W. Powell. Other churches around were supplied by Revs. J. T. Eaton, J. A. Gordon, J. D. Skinner, W. A. J. Blakeney, J. L. M. Young, W. L. Parker, P. R. Foster, J. Rowe, G. H. Goudey and A. Cogswell.

In the afternoon Dr. Rand gave a Class Lesson in the Sabbath School, on Romans xiii, 1-10; addresses followed from Rev. J. Clark and Rev. W. H. Richan. It is a fine Sabbath School, with a large number of bright intelligent young people.

We must reserve our further report till next week. The letters from the Churches showed that there had been additions to many of them during the year. As the letters had not been all read when writing this, we could not give the exact numbers, but they would reach about 500.

METHODIST CONFERENCE.

The Methodist Conference opened at Grafton Street Church on Wednesday at 9 o'clock, A. M., Rev. W. H. Hearts the retiring President in the chair.

After devotional exercises, the vote for President for the ensuing year was taken, which on the second ballot resulted in the election of Rev. G. O. Huestis, of Hantsport.

On the vote for secretaries, Rev. J. A. Rogers, of Yarmouth, was appointed Secretary of the Conference, and Rev. C. Jost, of Bridgetown, Journal Secretary. In the afternoon the Conference sat with closed doors, while the question of "Ministerial character" was being disposed of.

Reports from Sabbath Schools were presented, showing satisfactory progress. The returns show 10,303 scholars in the schools, 16,427 volumes in libraries; collected for missions \$777.00, collected

for school purposes \$3,315.00, number of schools 184.

A service in the interest of Sabbath School work was held in Grafton Street Church in the evening.

An Ordination service was held on Thursday, when two young men were set apart for the gospel ministry.

On Friday, the first Annual Conference of ministers and laymen met in the afternoon. After singing and prayer the 72nd Psalm was read. Rev. J. A. Rogers of Yarmouth was chosen President, and D. Allison L. L. D. Secretary pro tem.

A motion was proposed welcoming the lay element to the Conference. This was carried by a standing vote on the part of the ministers, and responded to by Hon. S. L. Shannon.

A Missionary meeting was held in the evening.

On Saturday the subject of education was before the body.

On Sunday the various city pulpits of the Presbyterian and Baptist as well as Methodist churches were occupied by members of the Conference, and the proceedings will be concluded to-day by a temperance anniversary meeting in the Brunswick street, church at 8 o'clock, P. M.

We had an article on "John Wycliffe" some weeks ago, since then the matter of a commemoration of his semi-centennial has taken shape and his name is very prominently before the English speaking peoples. In one of our exchanges we read: The five hundredth anniversary of Wycliffe's death will occur December 31, 1884. In anticipation of the approaching commemoration of that event a service was held at St. Andrew's church, Blackfriars, London, on May 21, when the Bishop of Liverpool preached a commemorative discourse, followed in the evening by a great meeting in Exeter Hall, at which the Earl of Shaftesbury presided. A conference was also held at the Mansion House during the day. In all of these meetings but one sentiment pervaded the addresses—that of high admiration and reverence for the character and work of the man who first gave the Bible to the English people in their own tongue, and who did not fear, in the very hey-day of Romish power and pride, to deny the supremacy of the Papal Church, and to expose, with merciless pen, the sins of Pope and prelate.

"Wycliffe," said the Bishop of Liverpool, "was the first Englishman to maintain the supremacy of the Scriptures, to denounce the Roman Church, and to translate the Bible." Professor Montagu Burrows, of Oxford University, urged at the Mansion House Conference the erection of a monument to Wycliffe in some conspicuous place. "His memory," he said, "should be raised upon a high intellectual pedestal such that neither lapse of time nor malicious misrepresentation could possibly overthrow it again." At Exeter Hall the Earl of Shaftesbury said: "In translating and circulating the Holy Scriptures, Wycliffe was the first, the greatest and the most direct reformer."

At the same meeting, Canon Taylor moved, that "the quincenary of John Wycliffe's death affords a suitable opportunity to commemorate his work as a patriot and church reformer, a translator and preacher of the Holy Scriptures." In making this motion Canon Taylor said significantly: "The great work which Wycliffe did for the Church is now in danger of being overthrown. We should beware of those who are trying to lead us back to the darkness and blindness of idolatry and mediævalism."

There was general agreement on the part of both Churchmen and Dissenters that an effort should be made to revive and popularize Wycliffe's writings. As many of these writings were addressed to the poor, and the simple language of the common people of that time, in which they were written, was not very different from the ordinary speech of to-day, this would be no difficult task. And these writings breathe a spirit of truly Apostolic fervor and elevation of thought. They belong to no special age; they are perennial in their homely sweetness and devotion. No grander memorial of "The Morning Star of the Reformation" could be devised than to republish and disseminate widely the simple but heart searching little treatises with which he sought to educate his humble converts in divine things.

The character and teachings of Wycliffe were not always held in high repute by the supporters of State churches. He had very radical notions on the subject of tithes and other clerical emoluments. "Would to God," he wrote, "that all wise and true men would inquire whether it were not better to find good priests, by free alms of the people with a reasonable and poor livelihood, to teach the gospel in word and deed, as did Christ and his Apostles, than thus to pay tithes to a worldly priest, ignorant and negligent, as men are now compelled to do by bulls and new ordinances of priests." This and similar views won for him the hearty dislike of many Churchmen. It is pleasant to see that some, at least, are now-a-days among his most ardent admirers. And there can be no doubt that as Scriptural views of truth and of church organization become more prevalent, the name of John Wycliffe will be held in higher and more reverent esteem.

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THE "TEACHING" AND CHRISTIAN LIBERTY.

This document, the "Teaching of the Twelve Apostles," is attempted by certain parties to be set up as a rule of faith and practice almost, if not quite, equal in authority to the New Testament. The character of the writing itself is a clear evidence at once of its want of inspiration, and of the marked inferiority of its authors to those of the New Testament; but we cannot refuse to examine the work, and endeavor to rightly weigh its claims to our regard, if not to our obedience.

In the chapter on Baptism, it enjoins on the ministry:

- 1. To instruct the candidates in the principles of the "Way of Life." 2. To fast, and to require the converts to fast one or two days beforehand, with as many others as can. 3. To baptize in living water, preferably in cold water. 4. When sufficient water for baptism is not obtainable, to pour out water thrice on the head, using the same formula as for baptism.

Of these, the 1st and 3rd agree with the New Testament, while the 2nd and 4th are at variance therewith, and, our friends assure us, introduce a broader liberty, into which we are strenuously urged to enter.

Let us examine them a little closely. Fasting, as an ecclesiastical requirement, is regarded by Paul with distrust, and is nowhere in the New Testament demanded as a condition of baptism. On this point then, the "Teaching" distinctly curtails Christian liberty. It lays a burden on the conscience, but, together with the first injunction, it excludes infants as effectually as do the repentance and faith required by the New Testament.

Infant baptism, therefore, must have arisen subsequently to the date of the "Teaching." It is infinitely more important, and, if false, vastly more dangerous in its tendencies and results than any question about the so-called "mode of baptism;" and it might have been expected that those organs of Pedobaptist opinion, which are so anxious to have Baptists conform to the "Teaching," would at once have bent all their energies to uproot it from their own communions; but on this point they have been strangely silent. They see that the law of baptism we follow repudiates the "Teaching," and their gaze is so intently fixed on that "mode" in our eye that they entirely overlook the "beam" in their own.

The last point in the chapter referred to is the one to which our attention has been almost solely called. It evinces, we are told, the liberty enjoyed by the early church in the administration of baptism, and, by contrast, exhibits in an equal degree the narrowness and bigotry of the Baptists. We cannot examine it too closely.

In those cases when sufficient water for baptism is not to be had, permission is given to substitute for baptism the pouring out of water on the convert's head, thrice, in the name of the Holy Trinity. This is a distinct alteration of the terms of the Saviour's last command; and it was made, we are told, by the "authorities of the church" of that day.

Later on, at the Council of Ravenna in 1811, the "authorities of the church" then assembled effected a further change

by permitting sprinkling, as well as pouring, at the discretion of the officiating priest. The liberty of the "church" of that day was thereby broadened, and at present almost all churches, except our own, allow any method at the discretion, not of the minister, but of the candidate. In these instances the church—the pillar and ground of the truth—permits the neophyte to interpret for her one of Christ's most important commandments!

On behalf of that real liberty with which Christ set his people free, and in the name of his own free people, we protest against such teaching. It is to set aside Christ, and accept the doctrine of the "authorities," on the one hand, or of neophytes on the other. To do either is to dishonor Christ, who is our only Master. His own last word was "to do all things whatsoever I commanded you," and He clearly warned us that they worship him in vain who teach as their doctrines the precepts of men.

The Christian preserves his liberty only when he clings closely to the very words of Christ. To substitute others at the bidding of any body of men, however lofty their station or arrogant their pretensions, is to descend from the freedom of Christ, and to place our necks under the yoke of bondage to men. Who are the "authorities of the church," forsooth, that we should listen to their counsel? They who ask us to obey the voice of the "Teaching" have themselves accepted the authority of the Council of Ravenna; but to be consistent, why do they not also accept the Council of Trent, or that of the Vatican? Will they point out wherein the "authorities" of one age surpass those of another?

History tells us that our churches, which have acknowledged no Lawgiver but Christ, held and maintained the true doctrine of soul liberty at a time when Christians of every other name were steeped to the lips in intolerance. Even now while we rejoice in the fullest measure of Christian liberty, and preserve inviolate the free independence of the Christian Republic, many of those who pity our bondage are in subjection to Synods and Assemblies, the unbending sternness of whose decrees recalls the rigid asperities of the Mosaic code.

The permission given by the "Teaching" deserves notice from another point of view. It implies that Baptism had come to be regarded as indispensable to salvation, even in the case of those new converts whose remaining hours of life might be as few as those of the thief on the cross. The water used must have been thought to be charged with a supernatural force, of whose benefit the dying penitent ought not to be deprived. That idea still lingers; and there are few among even the most enlightened of our Pedobaptist brethren who are entirely willing to see their dying babes depart to be with their Father before whom their angels continually do stand, without giving them the advantages of the baptismal rite. We are not surprised then to find, in chapter 13, the apostles of the New Testament transformed into the "high priests" of the new "Teaching."

The baleful working of the mystery of iniquity is thus seen in this planting of the doctrine of sacramental efficacy, the germ, if not the root-stalk of that tree whose stem is Popery, and whose fruit our ancestors found so bitter. They who walk beneath its shadow revel in the liberty of which our friends are so enamoured. They interpret the words of Scripture in a variety of ways, transforming "presbyter" into "priest," and "repent" into "do penance," but the liberty they enjoy is a tyranny more exquisite and more far-reaching than a Czar or a Sultan ever pictured in his wildest dreams.

WISDOM AND PHILOSOPHY of Jean Paul Richter. Edited by Giles P. Hawley.

This volume is a cabinet-box containing over 250 of the choicest gems literature has ever furnished the world. It has been well said of Ritchie "no writer has made such brilliant remarks and no ten have made so many." Nor is his wit of a sort that can do nothing but destroy. This volume of selections has been made with excellent taste and discrimination, and displays to advantage the range of Richter's thought and imagination. It will be prized by all who love the companionship of genius. Published in FOX & WAGNALLS' (10 and 12 Dey Street, N. Y.) Standard Library. Paper 25 cents.

THE THEOLOGY OF THE LONDON MAY MEETINGS.

The following instructive article is from the pen of the late Rev. John Stock, LL. D. It is probably the last work of this prominent English Baptist Minister. Only a day or two after it had been in print in the London Baptist, Dr. Stock the writer was waiting for a railway train at Mill Hill Station and fell dead in the arms of his daughter.

The theological atmosphere at the Spring Session of the Baptist Union was decidedly hazy. There was throughout a constantly recurring glorification of "the inner light," and but very little magnifying of the Holy Scriptures as the only rule of faith and practice to individual Christians and to churches. Chillingworth would have rubbed his eyes with astonishment had he been in our midst; but George Fox would several times have thought himself in an assembly of the early Quakers!

The President's address was exquisitely beautiful and fascinating and was well delivered. It contained some admirable points well put, but much of it would have gladdened the heart of any mystic. It made no appreciable distinction between the inspiration of Plato, and Peter, James, and John. It told us that God is perpetually revealing Himself to us, which is unquestionably true; for every flower that blooms, and every event that happens, is a revelation of His Providence. "He plants His footsteps in the sea, and rides upon the storm."

But surely there is a wide difference between the revelation of God in the hieroglyphics of Nature and the events of human history, and the miraculous revelation of Himself which he has made to us in the Holy Scriptures.

The "inner light" in an unrenewed man is darkness; and if the light that is in a man is darkness, how great is that darkness! He who trusteth in his own understanding is divinely pronounced to be a fool.

"Trust in Jehovah with all thy heart; and lean not upon thine own understanding." (Prov. iii. 5). "The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked." "To the law and to the testimony; if they speak not according to this rule, it is because there is no light in them." If men are to develop their creed out of their own inner consciousness, then each man will be a law unto himself, and the Bible will become a superfluity. Then every man will have a religion of his own according to his peculiar mental and moral idiosyncrasy. But the spirit that worketh in the children of disobedience is in Holy Scripture said to be the devil. To all such, incarnate Love said, "Ye are of your father, the devil, and the works of your father ye will do." This is the inspiration which works in all those who have not received the new life which is in Christ Jesus. It is "the entrance of God's WORD which giveth light; which giveth understanding to the simple."

Our excellent President used such terms as "revelation" and "inspiration" in half a dozen different senses, but without any discrimination between the various shades of meaning which the words convey. God does reveal Himself to the Church in every age, but the chief medium through which He reveals Himself is His written Word. That Word is the Sword of the Spirit. By it men are instrumentally born again. (See James i. 18, 1 Pet. i. 23, Eph. v. 26). By it believers are sanctified and trained for holiness and usefulness on earth, and heaven and glory after death. (See 2 Pet. i. 4, 1 Pet. ii. 2, John xvii. 17, Acts xx. 32). It is not by following any ignis fatuus of inner light, but by a solemn, prayerful painstaking study of "the lively oracles" that men are to grow in grace and in the knowledge of Christ Jesus. Theologians were set upon and ruled "out of court." But little account was made, too, of "exegesis." The spirit of prophecy in the man was to supersede the express revelation which God has made of Himself in the New Testament, or should at least take co-ordinate rank therewith. Indeed, it seemed to us, while listening to the silvery tones of that bewitching address, that a lazy man might take encouragement therefrom to sling all theological and exegetical investigation