

The Christian Messenger.

Halifax, N. S., May 28, 1884.

THE BAPTIST UNION OF GREAT BRITAIN AND IRELAND.

In our last we gave some remarks on the President's opening address at the first sitting of the Union on Monday, April 28th.

After the address of the President, the Report was read by the Secretary. Although we in this Province are not in any way practically connected with the Union, yet many of our readers are deeply interested in the operations of the body in Great Britain. We therefore make a few extracts from this document. After noticing that there was a clear increase of 14,000 in the membership of the churches, the amount expended in building new places of worship, in enlarging of old ones, in building new school-rooms, and paying off church debts, principally in London, are noted. The Annuity Fund was reported as showing that of the promises given up to the end of 1882, amounting to £58,000, £53,000 have been paid. The number of persons participating in this fund in 1883, was 478 members and 278 wives, making a total of 756. The sum paid to these was £4,112.14.11. Of the Augmentation Fund the sum of £3,288 had given £20 to 196 pastors, and to 18 the sum of £10 had been returned, and £8 to each of sixteen pastors.

These matters drew forth more or less of remark, previous to the adoption of the report.

The election of Vice-President, who becomes president next year, resulted in choosing Rev. Samuel Green, D. D.

The second day's session began by the reception of a fraternal address from the Baptist Union of Scotland. A paper on "Truths essential to church prosperity," by Bro. W. Anderson, was read by the Secretary.

In this there were many good things. It stated that there are five features of Church Prosperity. 1. Life. 2. Christian Character. 3. Fellowship. 4. Worship. 5. Work. These were developed. The first of these—Life—is by a full and hearty reception of the Gospel of Christ. The second feature follows on the reception and practice of Christian ethics. The third, by following the dictates of the new command of Christ. The failings of brethren are not to be regarded as any reason for suspending true fellowship. Christ did not reject his disciples for their want of love to Him. The truths essential to Worship are the genuine Bible Theology, and the fifth—Work—must be in accordance with the revealed Will of God concerning His kingdom. These truths, with men fitted to apply them, and the blessing of God, the church must and will prosper. The discussion which followed the reading of this paper was highly interesting.

Rev. J. H. Shakespeare, M. A., of Norwich, said: We have seen the picture of a band of men and women, whose life is hid with Christ in God, walking worthily, their hearts knit together, worshipping in spirit and in truth, striving together for the faith of the Gospel—in other words, a prosperous church. We have been asked to give our assent to the truths which find their centre in our Master's life, and their expression in His teaching, as the power under God through which this splendid ideal may be realized. And I for one am now free to confess that there is nothing in all this which is open to discussion. It cannot be necessary in this assembly to say what our brother has said, except for emphasis or impression, and not for instruction. All I can attempt is to lay stress on one or two points; to fill in a detail here and there. And I am afraid it must seem a poor thing to offer details after the enforcement of the principles which are as the life, the light, the electric force, sweeping, thrilling, vibrating everywhere. The ideal pastor is he who casts the chain of his spiritual influence round young and old, not only in the pulpit, but much more powerfully in the home; to whom the face and name of every child in every family is familiar, who enters into every joy, and takes upon himself a share of every sorrow confided to him. The preacher who gathers a large church around him and does not strain every nerve to find each one something to do, commits the crime of missing a grand opportunity. There are large congregations which thrill sympathetically every week at the

eloquence of a preacher, who give nothing and do nothing. Their union is nothing better than a rope of sand, and they will at once scatter if their burning and shining light were removed, unless some one else appeared to row the boat while they lay under silken awnings. Every member should be a worker, an evangelist. Every church should evangelize its own neighborhood. We have left it to the Salvation Army to do, and then we have grumbled at it for doing it, forgetting that it is our own work, our own burden, our own mission.

Dr. Stock said: I have been thinking while sitting here of three most prosperous ministers amongst us. I take Mr. Spurgeon, and I take Dr. Maclaren, and I take that patriarchal and saintly brother, Dr. Stanford, of Camberwell, and I ask myself, what have been the lines of their teaching? What has been the character of their ministry during the long years they have been among us? You all know what it is. We have their public writings, and we know the truths that lie near their hearts—the grand old evangelist verities; and it seems to me that what we need is not a new gospel in harmony with the spirit of this age particularly, but the old Gospel of the grace of God through Jesus Christ, and the love of that Gospel, faith in that Gospel, revived among us, and presented as in the pulpits of those three brethren they are accustomed to present it. These new-fangled notions of attracting the masses have generally proved a failure.

At the close of the discussion, the President said, if you will allow me in your name, I will send the following telegram to the Rev. W. Anderson:—"The assembly thanks you earnestly for the paper by which at cost to yourself you have enriched it. The Lord restore and bless you and make your present affliction a quiet resting-place."

A resolution was then passed condemning the opium traffic. The following resolution on the State Church was then introduced and adopted:—

"That this Union, while desirous of seeing religion freed from the patronage and control of the State, is also wishful that, so long as a State Church exists, the authority of the Crown and Parliament, in all matters relating thereto, should be maintained, and that the arrangements made for the government of the Church of England should be helpful to the spiritual well-being of the nation, and, therefore, regarding courts consisting of ecclesiastical persons only as inconsistent with the rights of the laity and dangerous to liberty, trusts that Parliament will not re-establish Episcopal or kindred courts for the trial of ecclesiastical causes."

The condition of Africa, especially with reference to the treaty of Congo with Portugal, which gives that country an opportunity of carrying on the slave trade, was here taken up and discussed with some earnestness, and a resolution carried unanimously.

An address was then given by Rev. John Aldis on

GLAD SERVICE. After a few words of introduction he proceeded as follows:—

As pastors, preachers, deacons, teachers, we have one common and grand ambition. Our duty and pleasure are bound up with church prosperity. We have heard of the truths essential to it. Yet much depends on the temper with which these are treated, and to one element of that temper I now refer—gladness.

SERVE THE LORD WITH GLADNESS.

Such is the gracious word that invites and binds us all. If understood of worship, that we have to guide and promote; if of Christian life and work, we must raise this also to the level of worship. But I speak not now of the nature of our service, but of the temper in which it should be rendered. The Lord loveth a cheerful giver; so, too, He loveth a cheerful worker. His servants are not slaves but free men. Glad service is every way right and good. It honors God. He cannot delight to see His servants doleful, and they do not commend His service by their gloom and complaints. He has forgiven, adopted and enriched us. He has exalted us to share a service which angels might envy, and we will not dishonor Him. He is the blessed God, and in fellowship with Him we will bask in the bliss till, like Moses, we reflect the glory. This gladness will help us. The joy of the Lord is our strength. 'Tis oil in the bones; it makes the eye clear the feet swift, and the hands strong. It re-tunes all the chords of our unstrung nature to give out the true music of the great salvation. When Habakkuk could sing, "I will rejoice in the Lord," he could add, "He will make me to walk on my high places." When Zion wakes and puts on strength, then she puts on her beautiful garments. This will help the people. We hear the demand,

BRIGHTEN THE SERVICE.

I know not what this means, nor to what it tends; but I do know that men want to be made happy, and that if we would make others happy we must be happy ourselves. The Master has called us to be patterns and guides. Men expect us to be such. We have accepted the claim. We cannot get rid of it if we would. They come together from scenes of care and toil, of conflict and suffering. They want the touch of healing, and the light of love. They need rest in the green pastures, and refreshment by the still waters. Where shall they find this but in the service, and with the servants, of the Lord? The time of service will help us. The Lord's-day is a priceless memory and a blessed hope. It should waken every heart, light up every face, and tune every voice. Round the family altar, in the Sunday-school, in the pulpit and the pew, this pious mirth should sing, "This is the day which the Lord hath made, we will rejoice and be glad in it." Our personal experience will help us. Much study is a weariness of the flesh. We are proud of the intellectual, but it tasks the brain sorely. I would that we were richer in the experimental, for that would give the heart freer play. I have often had proof of this. I had, long ago, elaborated my Sunday morning sermon, and was duly vain of it. Next day a sensible and sympathetic brother said, "I thought you seemed poorly yesterday morning." That has occurred more than once. We ought to be happy, for we are saved. We have found the pearl of great price. We deal not with a speculation or an argument, but with a living fact. Before it can be a doctrine for the intellect, it must be an experience in the heart. We testify that we do know, and the most blessed thing we can know: "Whereas we were blind, now we see." Men love to tell of their joys; whether a coin or a sheep is found, the cry is, "Rejoice with me." Christian joy is generous, and invites all to share it. "The humble shall hear thereof, and be glad." The theme of the service, both in sermon and song, will help us. From first to last that is the anthem of the advent: "Glad tidings of great joy." We have to tell of One who is all in all for us, whom we love supremely and trust entirely, whose sacrificial death is the grandest proof of His love to us and the well-spring of our love to Him, in that it has plucked out the sting of sin, cleansed its stains, and broken up its thralldom. The burden of sermon and song will be His matchless character, the abiding miracle; the puzzle of unbelief, and the rapture of faith, which flashes into the soul the ideal of perfect goodness, awakens the yearning desire to be conformed to it, and inspires the assurance that this shall be, and that we shall be satisfied when we awake with His likeness. This must be. The Church can only weep to the words, "They have taken away my Lord." But this will be enough: "Then were the disciples glad when they saw the Lord." So always this is the proof, and the reward, of the true disciple. This gladness is the abiding inheritance of such. The young are strong and hopeful, and are apt to be confident and vaunting; the old are worn and wounded, and are apt to be desponding and complaining. With both there are illusions. These are nothing new; they are as old as the race. Faith can keep us equally from presumption and despair. Those who "believe do enter into rest." In them is the perpetual keeping of Sabbath. They are not carried about with strange doctrines, for they have dropped anchor within the veil, and "Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, and to-day, and for ever."

NO WORK OR PLACE ON EARTH CAN EQUAL OURS.

It blesses us in every faculty, and to the utmost degree, and it does this most perfectly when our whole nature is flung into it. It promotes intelligence yet strengthens faith; it increases both our forces and our sense of dependence; it exhorts to honour, yet deepens humility; it enriches, yet makes more generous; it inspires equal hatred of sin and compassion for sinners. Our work is not hindered by misgiving. In other walks of life, when important interests are involved, we give advice or exert influence with anxiety. We mean well, and do our best, yet we are not sure; but this invitation goes out with the whole soul in it, and it is as confident as it is loving: "Come with us, and we will do you good, for the Lord hath spoken good concerning Israel." Our service entails no regret, except that we have done so little, and that little so ill. For the rest, our soul is filled with adoring gratitude that we were allowed to share such a work, and crowned with any measure of success in it. In view of its effects on others, it yields a surprising gladness. We have held back some who were rushing to ruin, and reclaimed the wandering from the path of error and sin; we have brought the sin-burdened to the Saviour, and lifted them to the heritage of faith; we have calmed the agitated mind, and healed the wounded heart. The service has been most welcome and precious

when all else has become powerless or painful. They have told us their grateful love, and have looked it when they could no longer speak. The memory of it will live on when death itself shall die, and the joy of it shall sing when the heavenly anthem "drowns all music but its own." Not the service of the angels could yield more exalted honour or more intense delight. Returning home, you will have your sorrows, but

"THE SECRET OF THE LORD" IS WITH YOU.

So you will understand His meaning and welcome His purpose. If wants oppress, if temptations assail, if pain and sickness bring weakness and weariness; if bereavement shall make your hearth and heart desolate, all this will fit you for greater usefulness, that you "may be able to comfort them that are in any trouble, by the comfort wherewith ye yourselves are comforted of God." Thus you will see, and show, all mystery and sorrow steeped in the sunshine of love, as you are completely one with Him who "rejoiced in spirit and said Father, I thank Thee, for so it seemed good in Thy sight." Some of you are young. With free heart and good hope you have entered into this service. Permit me to congratulate you. You have a good Master, and will have a rich reward. Some of us are old; not much service remains for us where the thorns and thistles grow; but there is a yet higher service for which the present is only the training. Let us lift up our heads and hearts, for our redemption draweth nigh.

About fifty years ago, in Rochdale, I took leave of a highly gifted and cultured young medical man. He was near death, and at parting, I said, using a familiar Lancashire strain, "Farewell, We'll meet in glory." As he pressed my hand, a heavenly beam lit up his face, and he continued:—

"And, oh! what joys shall crown That happy meeting; We'll bow before the throne, Each other greeting."

Even so, beloved, 'tis bright and good here, but 'tis brighter and better there. Let us be glad.

"Refreshed, again we start, Though for a while we part, Yet, always joined in heart, We'll meet in glory."

At the close of the meeting an invitation was given, "with warm Christian greeting," by the London Baptist Association to the pastors and delegates present to dine at the Metropolitan Tabernacle.

MORE FAITH, OR MORE FAITHFULNESS?

In the social meetings of our churches we frequently hear the prayer for "more faith," but it may well be questioned whether the need for "more faithfulness" is not very much more urgent. It is true, without faith it is impossible to please God; but it is no less true that the only way to gain a large measure of faith is by doing the will of God. "If any man willeth to do his will, he shall know of the teaching," are the pregnant words of Christ; and experience has amply confirmed their truth. Attention to this truth was called in a letter from a correspondent in a late issue, and, now since our churches have been so largely recruited through the conversion of so many, especially of the young, who in such generous members have lately joined our ranks, it will bear still further urging.

"If ye abide in my word," says Christ, "ye shall be ye truly my disciples; and ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free." This sentiment is re-echoed in the message conveyed through the apocalyptic vision. "To him that overcometh" are the guerdons promised, the fruit of the tree of life in the Paradise of God, the immortal life, the hidden manna, the white stone, and the new name.

For the development and growth of the new life our Lord has made efficient provision in the power of association. The young convert cannot too soon or too heartily engage in the regular work of the church. In his love for her, and in his devotion to her welfare and growth, he will find a very correct gauge of his love for the Master. And nothing is more striking than the beautiful way in which Christian work tends, by a reflex and reciprocal action, to develop a healthful and manly Christian stature.

The Kingdom of God is, however, not limited by the boundaries of any local church, and the Christian's love for Christ's cause should embrace all the enterprises of the entire "household of faith." Through our prayerful sympathy for these purposes, and our

self-denial exercised on their behalf, we will find helpful aids in the daily cross-bearing demanded of all who would follow Christ. It requires years to learn the blessedness of self-renunciation; and only by long and persistent effort is it possible to grasp the true secret of saving one's life by losing it for his sake.

Intelligent sympathy with the work of the denomination is only to be gained by means of the denominational press. By daily and weekly fellowship in the church, each member becomes acquainted with the work of the individual church; but through the press alone we learn of the objects and plans of the denomination, not to mention those of the entire Christian world.

At this point it is not too much to say that the pastors and deacons of the churches will find the CHRISTIAN MESSENGER their most efficient ally in aiding their young converts to efficient service in the Kingdom of Christ, and they will be wise in co-operating with us in carrying out our purpose of placing a copy in every Baptist family at least in Nova Scotia and P. E. Island. In accomplishing this purpose we feel that we will be promoting their highest good; and it is scarcely conceivable that a single family in the denomination would find it impossible, or very difficult to procure our weekly visits laden with help and inspiration.

One Thousand NEW SUBSCRIBERS

might be added to our list in two or three months if each of our Ministers, Deacons, and Church Clerks, would use a little effort in their own localities and make known to their congregations

THE VALUE OF THE CHRISTIAN MESSENGER.

We propose therefore to make a real sacrifice by sending the Christian Messenger to New Subscribers from the date of receiving their subscriptions up to the end of this year for

50 cents, TWO FOR ONE DOLLAR.

We will hold this offer open for the ensuing three months.

ENCOURAGE ENTERPRISE.

50cts. to the End of the Year,

TWO FOR ONE DOLLAR.

FURTHER. To any person sending us the names of TEN NEW SUBSCRIBERS with the FIVE DOLLARS we will send a Handsome Pocket Bible, with this fact printed in it in LETTERS OF GOLD.

JOHN WICLIF.

Last year we could hardly take up a religious periodical without seeing something about the 400th anniversary of Martin Luther's birth. A large amount of respect was paid to his memory. This year is the 500th of the death of the great English Reformer, John Wiclif, whose death took place December 31, 1384, in his 60th year. But little comparatively is being said of him, although his name deserves to be held in lasting remembrance no less than the great German Reformer. Whilst Luther was the great means of effecting a political change in his country, Wiclif was the means of rescuing the Scriptures and giving them to the English speaking people, and perhaps accomplished a far greater work than Luther. It is notorious that he was subjected to the most relentless persecution, not only during his life, but the Council of Constance in 1428 decreed that his bones be taken up from his grave and burnt, which was done by the Bishop of Lincoln, and his dust was cast into the river Swift. It was subsequently remarked that by this means Wiclif's grave became world wide, like his labors in the translation of the Bible in the English tongue.

The London Freeman gives some account of him, from which we gather the following:

John Wiclif was born at Spreswell in the valley of the Tees, in Yorkshires, in 1320 or thereabouts. His father came of Saxon stock, and appears to have been one of the poorer gentry of the country. Wiclif therefore belonged to the English people rather than to the Norman nobility, and the influence of this relationship is easily traced on his character and in his sympathies. What of school-learning he had in his early boyhood may have come from the parish priest. We incline to the opinion that the lad was afterwards sent to some good school at Oxford to be prepared for the University. It is said that he was only fifteen years of age when he went to Oxford. He became a famous University student in after days, and gained nearly all the honours that could be won. His college life brought him much distinction, and secured him many friends. He became well versed "in all the learning of the" Oxonians of his day, especially in dialectics and in natural philosophy. In due course he entered upon theological studies, and soon excelled his companions in his knowledge of the Sacred Scriptures and in acquaintance with the Fathers. As nearly as we can make out John Wiclif spent ten years in preparatory studies. He took his degrees, and became one of the ripest scholars of his age. As a teacher at the University, he was particularly famous in the frequent disputations in which learned men, like Knights, met one another in the lists and contended for the mastery. A challenge was given, and who would might come and do battle with the challenger. Wiclif was skilful in "fence" and "thrust," could defend himself against assailants, and take advantage of any false step of theirs or the exposure of a weak place. And so he became extremely popular. He was alert and keen and fearless, confident in the weapons he used, and resolved on victory. This scholastic tiling fitted him for the more serious battles of his after life, and did much to make him a successful controversialist. He also gave lectures on the Bible, in which he assailed many superstitions. Thomas Fuller, in his Church History, explains that his teachings from the professor's chair gave great offence. This was inevitable. Wiclif held fast in his Oxford days to the supreme authority of Scripture. He rejected the doctrine of the "real presence" in "the Eucharist," and denounced purgatory and pilgrimages. Dons and priests and students must have had "lively times" at Oxford while Wiclif was there. He took pleasure in provoking disputants, was never loth to cross swords with them, and, when they met in public, he provided rare entertainment for the freer spirits, for Saxon who disliked Norman monks, and for laymen who delighted in the discomfiture of priests. He had also a cure of souls, and preached on the Sunday, taking for his text-book, not the legendary lives of the saints, as was too often the fashion in the fourteenth century, but the words of Christ or of His apostles, he discoursed glad tidings to the people, and soon became as celebrated for his preaching as for his disputations.

HOUSEHOLD BAPTISMS.

Some short time since one of the Presbyterian ministers of Halifax in a lecture on "Baptism," was trying to make a point in favor of Infant Baptism and against Baptists, by stating that Household Baptisms amongst the latter were a thing unknown; ignoring the evidence we have, in the New Testament, that the three Household Baptisms mentioned there were all believers. There has however been some similar idea advanced in other places, and in reply thereto we find an article in the N. Y. Examiner shewing that it is not at all an uncommon thing with Baptists to have genuine Scriptural Household Baptisms, without infants, as in the Acts of the Apostles. We copy a few cases:

Rev. H. W. Read, for many years an Evangelist, says that he has baptized several scores of entire households—in one revival fifteen, and in another about a dozen. Rev. G. C. Baldwin, D. D., of Troy, has baptized twenty entire households, and Rev. G. B. Burnside, of Buffalo, reports nineteen. Rev. A. Stewart, for many years a missionary in Ontario, has baptized sixteen households, three of them at the same time and place. Rev. C. E. W. Dobbs, D. D., of Madison, Ind., in a ministry of twenty-four years has baptized eleven households, the youngest person in them being ten years old. Rev. F. M. Barbour, of Tuscaloosa, Ala., baptized nine households during ten years. Rev. A. J. Barrett, of Rochester, N. Y., has baptized six households, containing twenty persons, in a ministry of eight years. Rev. George Brewer, of Knoxville, Tenn.,