

doctrines which they held, and had no fellowship with their practice. I was not a member of any religious society, and had no particular partiality for any denomination of Christians. I attended different meetings according to my inclinations, or circumstances, always cherishing a respectful regard for the Sabbath and the ministry. In this way I grew up to manhood, hoping at some time to become a Christian, and afterwards arrive at heaven.

At length, the Spirit of God, whose influence I had often felt, impressed my mind more deeply, if not more seriously than ever before. I looked at the subject of religion calmly, but with an earnest sincerity, desirous to know what I should do to be saved. That I was a *great* sinner I knew, and felt, and had no hope of salvation, except through the boundless mercy of God in Christ Jesus. One of the sources of my grief was that I had been so ungrateful towards God, when He had been so kind and gracious towards me—His claims upon my heart, my service, my *all* seemed to me to be most just and reasonable. I felt that I had received every thing from Him, and that I ought to surrender every thing to Him. This surrender I made as I trust, and regretted that I had no more to give. In doing this, I found an uncertain peace, and yet I hardly knew why. It seemed to me I had done nothing, that I could do nothing, which should entitle me to such peace, or secure the divine favor. Over and above all else, was a sense of my indebtedness to God, and my desire to do everything that I could for God. My former plans, pursuits and preferences were as nothing to me, and the prayer of my lips, the prayer of my heart by day and by night, was, "Lord, what will *thou* have me to do?" I was willing to go anywhere, do any thing, were I only sure that it was the will of God. This led me to inquire earnestly how I should know *what* was the will of God. I considered how God made known His will to the patriarchs, the prophets, the apostles, and asked if I was to be guided as they were? Should I wait for some heavenly messenger, or heavenly voice to come and tell me what to do? Should I follow my own impressions and inclinations, calling these the teachings of the Spirit of God? Should I wait for some heavenly messenger, or heavenly voice to come and tell me what to do? Should I follow my own impressions and inclinations, calling these the teachings of the Spirit of God? Should I be safe in doing this? Was this the way God designed I should be guided? These questions came often, and in reply, there would be something saying "We have also a more sure word of prophecy; whereunto ye do well to take heed as unto a light that shineth in a dark place." I considered this, it seemed to me, that God had given His word as the revelation of His will concerning men, and as their guide in all the duties of this life.

Never before had that word appeared so important, so precious, so true, so sufficient. It was all that I needed, and I resolved to take it as my safe guide in all matters of religion. I had no doubt as to the wisdom of doing this, and the safety of doing this. The Bible became my constant companion. I read it; all the time asking, *Lord what wilt thou have me to do?* and all the time looking into his word for an answer. Up to that time I had not thought of making a profession of religion publicly, but only of doing God's will, in any way he might direct. I loved Christ and believed in Him. I cared for nothing so much as his approbation. I loved Christians as such but had no partiality for any denomination of Christians.

But not long after this, I read that Saul after his conversion "assayed to join himself to the disciples." This opened to me a new train of thought, and I began to inquire whether this was not the proper course for me, and for every one who was truly converted. I knew that in all great enterprises there must be combined effort and strength, and that there were great advantages in being associated with others in religious things. It became evident that for this very purpose Christ had instituted his church, and that his disciples here would not only increase their strength and usefulness by combining it with others, but that they would find provision for the fuller development of their social and religious nature. It appeared right and reasonable that all who loved Christ should confess him, and combine their strength to do his will. And this I saw was required. But here I met with a difficulty. Christ's disciples did not agree. There were different denominations, and with which ought I to unite? Or if I was to confess Christ before the world, when, and where, and how should I do it? To settle these questions I betook myself to the Bible. I believed that would teach me, guide me, and where or to what, I had not a thought or wish, only to do right. I felt sure there was a right way, and my anxiety was to be in that way. I read, and thought, and

prayed, holding no conversation with any upon controverted points, intent, upon getting at the teaching of Scripture as to duty.

BUNYAN, in *Zion's Advocate*.

For the Christian Messenger.

The Associated Alumni of Acadia College.

MR. EDITOR,—

With your permission, I would through the medium of the *Christian Messenger*, call attention to the action taken by the Associated Alumni of Acadia College, at the Meeting of the Society held in Nictaux, in August last, in respect to supporting a Professor in Acadia College.

At a Meeting of the Governors of the College, held the first day the Convention met, Dr. Cramp strenuously urged the appointment of a Tutor, as an additional instructor in the College, stating that he and the rest of the Professors had already as much duty as they could possibly perform, and that such appointment was essential to the efficiency of the College. This suggestion of Dr. Cramp, however, was not acceded to, and the Governors, from prudential or other reasons, declined to make the appointment.

The Associated Alumni one of whose objects is, as you are aware, the advancement of Education in connection with Acadia College, by sustaining either wholly or in part Professorships; at their meeting held the day after, took the application made by Dr. Cramp, into consideration, and determined to supply the desideratum, this they decided to do, by attempting to sustain a Professor, and many of the Alumni having studied themselves under Dr. Pryor, and still retaining for him sentiments of the warmest affection and respect, the following resolution was unanimously passed:

Whereas, The Associated Alumni deem it advisable to make arrangements for sustaining a Professor's Chair in Acadia College, and whereas this Society deem that the appointment of the Rev. Dr. Pryor to a Chair would be advantageous to the College, and acceptable to the denomination in these Provinces,

Therefore Resolved, That this Association take immediate steps with the approbation of the Governors of the College, to sustain in whole or in part the Chair. And that a committee be appointed to confer with Dr. Pryor and the Governors as to the practicability of his accepting said appointment.

A Committee was then instructed to wait upon the Governors and acquaint them with the resolution, who in relation thereto came to the following decision:

Whereas, The Associated Alumni of Acadia College have proposed to this Board to assist in the support of another Professor in the Institution, providing Dr. Pryor be chosen to that office.

Therefore Resolved, That this Board do accept the proposition and extend a cordial invitation to Dr. Pryor to accept a Professorship in Acadia College, pledging \$200 per annum to his support, if necessary.

This prompt and handsome response of the Governors doubtless afforded Dr. Pryor much personal gratification, while the action taken on the subject by the Convention by resolution, proved that the Alumni had not miscalculated the sentiments of the denomination in regard to Dr. Pryor, and that absence had not impaired his influence, or abated the kindly feelings universally entertained for him, during the many years that his time and labour were so faithfully and energetically devoted to advance their educational and other interests. Dr. Pryor has intimated his acceptance of the appointment, and that he will be ready to enter upon his duties in April next, at which time his present connection with the Church in Boston of which he is pastor, terminates, and no one can doubt that with a Faculty consisting of a President, and Professors of such large literary attainments and influence with the denomination, Acadia College will take ground in the foremost rank of Collegiate institutions in these Lower Provinces.

In deciding to take upon themselves the sustaining of a Professor, the Alumni were well aware that they assumed large responsibilities—responsibilities from which they would have shrunk in view of their recent organization, and the consequent fewness of their numbers, but for the exigencies of the College, as shown by the President—responsibilities however, which large as they are may be easily met by united action, energy, and zeal, and upon the discharge of which they enter with the commendation of the denomination of the three Provinces as expressed in the "cordial approval" of the Convention, and the ready acceptance of their proposition by the Governors.

All who have studied for any period, no matter how brief, at the College, or the Baptist Academies at Wolfville or Fredericton, are eligible to become members of the Society

in their own right, upon payment of a fee (Annual) of twenty shillings. All others who wish to join are balloted for, and pay the same fee,—and the donation of twenty five pounds at any one time constitutes a life member. Were the whole or a majority of those who have participated in the educational benefits received from the College, or the Academies enrolled as members, the Society would possess an income adequate for the prosecution of all the purposes of its organization, and it is earnestly to be hoped that such will no longer delay, but will by joining the Society and assisting by their means and influence repay in some sort the debt they owe their Alma Mater.

But there may be some, who though they may not find it convenient to join the Association, would yet be willing to assist towards Dr. Pryor's salary—to meet their views, it is proposed to open a subscription list, for any amount parties may wish to donate to the Society for one or more years for this specific object. I perceive by reference to the Minutes that there are in this Province seventy five ordained Ministers over Churches in connection with our body, and in New Brunswick seventy—if each of these churches were to furnish ten subscribers at one dollar, or even half a dollar a year each, the object would be accomplished, and surely from all the churches in the two Provinces, we may fairly expect without hoping too much to average so small a number. Surely all that is needed for success, is active agents in the various churches to bring the Society and its objects to the notice of the people, and with this view circulars will before long be sent to one or more persons in every church, urging them to co-operate with the Society and undertake the management of the work in their several localities, but if those willing, in view of the object sought, to undertake the labour, would correspond with me or M. Wetherbe the Secretary of the Society in Halifax, the business would be much facilitated.

In the mean time recommending the Associated Alumni of Acadia College, to all those interested in the advancement of education.

I am your

Obedient servant,

J. W. JOHNSTON, Junr.,

President of the Association.

Christian Messenger.

HALIFAX, DECEMBER 25, 1861.

SUBSCRIBERS who are in arrears, but are uncertain as to the amount of their indebtedness, and have no other opportunity of sending to our office, will greatly oblige by forwarding to us any convenient sum by letter, through the post office. We shall be happy, in acknowledging the receipt of the same, to inform them to what date the sum sent will pay.

Christmas Day,

with all its pleasant associations has again arrived; and again we stretch forth our hand to all our friends, young and old, rich and poor, together, and wish that they may all truly enjoy "A merry Christmas and"—but we will reserve the remainder of the seasonable salutation for our next number.

The history of this festival reaches back into the remote and rude ages of barbarism. Long before the Christian era had dawned on Britain its painted inhabitants were accustomed, during this month, to meet and indulge in feasting and revelry, in honor of their god Thor. The season was called by them *Gaill* or *Yule* and is so designated in some parts of Britain to the present day.

The pagan Romans celebrated their *Saturnalia* in honor of *Vesta*, the goddess of purity, during the same season. When Christianity, was adopted as the national religion they conceived the idea of transferring their seasons of heathen festivity to events in connection with the introduction of the Gospel; and thus the feast in honor of *Vesta* became the anniversary of the nativity of Christ. The partially instructed people were by this means rendered less reluctant to accept the new religion than they would have been if deprived of their holiday seasons. A similar change was made in the observances of the Ancient Britons. When the Christian teacher had supplanted the Druidical and Saxon Priests, the feast of Thor was superseded by the Christmas rejoicings.

In former years the singing of carols and nocturnal *wai's* or *watchers* ushered in the morning. Family greetings commenced with the early dawn. The yule log being placed on the hearth, the bright blaze cheered and attracted the household, and made them forget for a time the discomforts of stern Winter. The stories of past adventure and family legends, having some truth but often more of fiction, occupied the attention of the assembled family. The misletoe bough, another relic of

darkness, to a great extent, the minds of the the Druidical superstition, was hung in the centre of the room and afforded opportunities for lads and lasses to try its reputed virtues.

The time appropriated to Christmas was evidently and historically inappropriate as commemorative of the nativity of Christ; the anniversary of that event properly belonging to the summer season. It was not consequently fully established until the sixth century. The Roman nation, which then comprehended the whole civilized world, determined on changing their reckoning of time from that of the building of Rome to the Christian Era, calling the new epoch *Anno Domini*, or the year of our Lord. The year, in different ages, has been considered as beginning on various different days, but since 1582 it has been on the 1st of January. The closing up of the old year has consequently since then, become blended with that of Christmas.

This season being adopted as the celebration of God's great gift to man, has thus been made the time for "sending portions" and making presents. A suspension of business has become more or less the practice in all christ countries for the purpose of older members freely mingling with the younger branches of families in amusement and pastimes. The long evenings are thus made occasions of cementing family affection and, especially in "merrie England," of rendering home attractive by its social enjoyments and intercourse. At such seasons too the absent ones, are especially thought of, and made the subjects of kind remembrances and good wishes.

Our neighbours of the United States in the enjoyment of their independence and liberty, have sought by the Annual Thanksgiving to make up for the absence of the English Christmas Day. Without regarding the superstition connected with its observance we can enter into its enjoyments and make use of it for all the good purposes to which it may be applied. For ourselves we prefer our national time-honored institution to any appointment of government.

The poor and unfortunate at this season have special claims on those capable of alleviating their sorrows, "for ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ; that though he was rich yet for your sakes he became poor, that ye through his poverty might be rich," so should those who are blessed with abundance distribute to the destitute, and thus make the orphan's and widows' heart sing for joy, and shed a ray of sunshine on their pathway; and thus proclaim the love of God to sinful men.

The last week of the Year.

Last things are always surrounded with solemn considerations. However unwelcome, yet they will nevertheless make their appearance. Another page of the world's history is nearly filled. Time will soon turn it over and seal it up with its predecessors, and a new one will be laid open to be inscribed with the record of coming events. The days of 1861 are numbered, they have been hurrying on, each one passing by with regular march to allow another to come in with its new supply of blessings and mercies from Him "who crowneth the year with his goodness."

Before the appearance of the New Year it may be well to pause and gather the lessons of promise and warning we are taught by the Old. A glance at the list of the Departed, given from week to week, will shew that we may say to ourselves as the patriarch of old said, "When a few years are gone then shall I go the way whence I shall not return." Ah, must it be so? Must I go? and shall I not return? Yes, even so, as the year 1861 with its solemn load of our "deeds done in the body" passes into Eternity, so must each of us, alone, go forth into the vast unknown to meet our account. It has been said of us hitherto, "Let it alone this year also, and if it bear fruit, well; and if not, then, &c." but we have no reason to conclude from this that the same will be repeated, and that we shall be allowed to enter upon another year. We pray that each of our readers may be wise for himself, and may be spared to see the bright dawning of 1862, and with us enter upon it with holy resolution and hope.

We this day complete the first quarter of a century in the history of the *Christian Messenger*. We might appropriately ask the attention of our readers to some of the changes effected in the world and the church, during the past 25 years, and, instituting comparisons between the then and the now, shew some indications of the progress which has been made. Some of the expectations then cherished have been realized, but clouds still hang over the world. The shades of night still cover the heavens almost to the horizon. We have still to wait as those who watch for the morning. Although darkness covers the earth and gross