

terests of Sabbath Schools within the Province." The Convention meets with each Association, when a general Report of the state of the schools connected with our churches is furnished. County S. S. Convention are occasionally held, and thus information is communicated and zeal sustained and heightened. It may be hoped that this Institution will exercise a powerful influence for good.

March 30, 1863.

Yours truly,

MENNO.

## Christian Messenger.

HALIFAX, APRIL 15, 1863.

### Foreign Missions.

FOREIGN Missionary work is now so much a part of regular christian effort that a want of interest in it argues a deficiency of information, or a perverted judgment, concerning the Master's direction: "Go ye into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature." A very little consideration is required to make a christian feel that those who are sitting in darkness and the shadow of death have claims on his heart, his prayers and his purse.

Much labor has doubtless been already bestowed by the various organizations brought into being for this special purpose. The church has numerous agents now in the distant nations of the world, and yet when we put these all together what are they in comparison with the demand. Were Jesus now upon earth he might still say as he did eighteen centuries ago: "The harvest truly is plenteous but the labourers are few: Pray ye therefore the Lord of the Harvest that he will send forth laborers into his harvest."

How little do Christians realize their privileges and the power placed in their hands to bless the world! Those who properly appreciate the work of the Lord Jesus in sending to them the word of reconciliation and in giving them a good hope through grace, will desire to re-echo the sound until it has found its way into all the dark places of the earth, which are now as full as ever of the habitations of cruelty.

There is no better way of trying to estimate the position of the heathen than by considering how we should feel in similar circumstances. A visit to one of the converts would teach us how he valued the great blessing conveyed to him by the instrumentality of the church. On becoming acquainted with such a person, and knowing that he is but one of a large number, if we knew that our contribution had been the very means of saving him from idolatry and making him acquainted with Christ, we should not despise the smallest mite appropriated to this sacred service. Or, if accustomed to pray for a blessing on the word sent forth, one may very properly feel that the success of a missionary is a direct answer to his prayers, and that the conversion of souls is the result of his small expenditure of labor.

These few thoughts have been suggested by reading the following account of a convert from Hinduism in India, given in the last number of the *London Missionary Herald*.

#### VISIT TO A CHRISTIAN CONVERT.

By Rev. T. Egan.

Too generally converts in India are weak in character, and feeble in purpose. They need constant watching and support. The contrast is very striking in regard to Subha Chund; and his courage, self-denial, and consistency have been greatly blessed.

Mr. John Gregson and myself went out to the west of Delhi lately on a preaching tour. We visited a large number of villages, and found attentive hearers in nearly all.

The people among whom we went nearly all of the *jat* caste; and the attention with which they heard the Gospel, as well as their personal kindness to us gave us no little pleasure and encouragement. However, the object of our journey was to visit our dear brother Subha Chund, at Rona, and to see what prospect there was among his friends. When he became a Christian (as you are aware), all his friends forsook him, including even his wife, who left him for six months, taking with her all the cattle to her father's house in another village. He told her to take *att*,—that he could afford well to suffer the loss of all things for Christ.

Then his friends cast him out of the village. He went, lived for seven months alone (no, not alone), under a tree in one of his fields. Day by day he visited his village to preach Christ. He was insulted and abused in every possible manner, but from him was no retort. He returned a blessing for a curse, love for enmity, and this *living* gospel soon told. A large number of people began to admire his conduct; a few visited him in his field at night to hear him read, sing and pray; and now there are 50 families in the village who are his sincere friends, and who have even suffered to be outcasted by the other inhabitants, on account of their adherence to Subha Chund.

Don't think that the above are all candidates for Christianity. No, as yet they are merely friendly to our brother, with one exception. The man is evidently a believer in Christ, but his faith is still weak. His words to me were "I have come to the cross, and I stand to consider whether I can carry it or not."

Subha Chund is respected by all who know him; even those who still will not associate with him, confess to his virtues. One of them said to me when I asked the crowd to which we preached the gospel had not improved Subha Chund. "Yes," said an enemy, "it surely has, for before he was a rough rope of hemp, but now he is become a smooth silken cord."

Thus we could appeal to him as a proof of the power of the gospel. His wife he tells me, is now a Christian and a loving wife, but I did not wish to baptize her yet. Surely this is the Lord's work.

Much needs to be done at home in sending the word to our fellowmen, but, while this should be attended to, the foreign field must not be forgotten. If such trophies as the above are given to the followers of Christ in this work, there is great encouragement to continued and persevering labor.

Long before the Christian era the people of God were instructed to say among the heathen "the Lord reigneth" see Psalm 96. 10. But the fuller revelation of gospel grace in these later times demands a corresponding spirit of sacrifice and service.

PRESBYTERIAN "DIVINE RIGHT."—The editor of the *Home and Foreign Record* of the Presbyterian Church of the Lower Provinces, in discussing the question of Synods, recommends Presbyterianism as the cure for the difficulties in the Episcopal Church. He says:—

"While the true and radical cure of the evils felt in the Church of England can be effected only by giving up 'Prelacy,' we believe that diocesan Synods properly regulated are a step in the right direction. Union gives strength, and once that 'clergy' and 'laymen' are accustomed to meet and discuss church affairs they will gather courage and self-possession, and perhaps learn by degrees the wisdom of still further curtailing prelate power. Prelacy may thus fall as it arose—slowly and almost imperceptibly."

The following expression from the same article with respect to the power of church courts over the conscience, may suit the Editor of the *Presbyterian Record* and those who think with him, very well, but we doubt if Prelacy or even Popery may not be upheld on the same principle. He says—"the courts of the Church have a *divine right* to meet, to deliberate and decide, and the devout christian will regard the decisions of these courts as binding on his conscience."

This was the ground taken by the Puritans for their witch-burnings and their persecution of the Baptists and Quakers in New England, and indeed it has been for all the ecclesiastical atrocities inflicted on good men in all ages. The Jews even decided to demand the crucifixion of the Lord of life and glory by what they deemed their *divine right*.

Mercifully, times are now changed, or the divine right decisions of the Synods might, even now, fall upon offenders with the same force as formerly, and compel weak consciences to listen to their behests.

We cannot endorse the views of our contemporary, as we believe they are the source of all spiritual thralldom, nor can we admit that a Christian church should be governed by any other body than itself. We are glad however to find the editor qualifying his statement somewhat, by the following exception:—

"There is no appeal except to God the judge of all. As there are cases in which rebellion and revolution may be justified in the civil community; so there are cases in which a christian may lawfully disobey ecclesiastical courts, but these are rare and extreme. When the Presbytery or the Synod opposes itself to the truth of God's Word, then the path of the christian is clear: let him obey God rather than man."

It appears then that notwithstanding the "divine right" to decide, it is possible for the Presbytery or Synod to "oppose itself to the truth of God's word." What then becomes of the divine right? Its decision is no more divine than that of the Episcopal Bishop, or of any more popular voice of a church, i. e. it is divine when it is right. In such case as the editor supposes in the above extract, the "right" is all wrong, and the solemn decision of an august ecclesiastical body ceases to be such as should bind the christian's conscience.

The truth is, such language is without meaning and does not belong to the present day, however significant it may have been in the palmy days of Presbyterianism, when the Church enjoyed, in reality, the power of the secular arm to sanction and enforce the decision of her Divine Right.

If the Word of God is to be the arbitrator in difficult cases, and the christian is to allow it to decide them for him, we presume he need not let the decisions of "these courts" trouble his conscience in the cases of less difficulty.

Far be it from us to encourage a contumacious spirit. Where the church confines itself to its legitimate sphere, and its members are governed by scripture principles, there will be no need of any appeal except it be to a Higher Power to confirm the action of the church. In churches which are governed by Courts, we believe that whenever an appeal is made to the higher Courts, so called, it becomes destructive of christian fellowship, and for all purposes of church life worse than if it had been left simply with the church. In all such cases it is better to appeal directly to the highest court—the Court of Heaven—"to God the judge of all."

### Early Religious Training.

To Rev. H. Angell, Chairman, and the brethren composing the Western Sabbath School Board; Rev. T. A. Higgins, Chairman, &c., Central do.

Rev. D. W. C. Dimock, Chairman, &c., Eastern do.

DEAR BRETHREN,

The honorable position we have been respectfully called to fill in connection with the Baptist Sabbath School Convention, must be my only, and, I believe sufficient, apology for addressing you on a matter closely connected with the welfare of the rising generation, and the labors of our brethren throughout the province. I had thought of doing this by circular, but considering that it would be more expeditious and economical to make use of the *Messenger* for that purpose it has since occurred to me that the subject would by this means be opened for more general consideration.

There is one feature of our Sabbath School operations which I think has not hitherto been so much thought of as its importance demands. It is well known, that, in this province, we have never generally adopted any Catechism, or book of religious instruction for youth. Some of our brethren may have made use of one and some of another, but no general concurrence has been given to one in preference to another. Perhaps in a majority of our Sabbath Schools Bibles and New Testament are the only books used for reading in the classes, or committing lessons to memory. Where any others are found, the one more common than any other, I think, is that entitled "The Baptist Catechism; commonly called Keach's Catechism; or, a brief instruction in the principles of the Christian Religion, agreeably to the Confession of faith put forth by upwards of a hundred congregations in Great Britain, July 3, 1689; and adopted by the Philadelphia Baptist Association, September 22, 1742." Other brethren, who have probably been unacquainted with this, have had the Assembly's Catechisms—drawing a pen through the objectionable portions, in which they teach infant baptism. The Methodist and Church of England Catechisms have also been used in some instances. Of the latter we need only say that many members of that body themselves refuse to teach their own children certain portions of it. This has led to indifference and often to utter neglect of parental instruction. Each of these compilations however have their excellencies.—The first mentioned is, of course, the only one as a whole, we could consistently recommend. It is published by the American Baptist Publication Society at Philadelphia, and I believe is pretty extensively used there.

I need not say to you that Baptist parents and Teachers generally may possibly have greater difficulties to contend with than many others, in the early instruction of the young, from the circumstance of their having no small book recognized by the churches generally. Whether the children of Baptists are commonly as well trained in religious knowledge as those of conscientious members of other denominations, I will not now venture to affirm, but I think where parents or teachers have an intelligent appreciation of the Word of God they strive no less than others, and in general no less successfully, to make their children acquainted with the contents of the Sacred Volume and what constitutes true vital godliness.

If, however, any further facilities can be provided than already exist for enabling those connected with Baptist congregations to communicate the elements of divine truth to the rising generation, we should certainly endeavour to provide them. We are happily free to adopt whatever course may be most likely to effect this, and in doing so we need anticipate no opposition or interference from any quarter.

Do we not then require a small book suited for Sabbath School use, and at the same time adapted to parental instruction? If this is decided in the affirmative, we may proceed to consider what are the practical steps to take in its preparation. It must, of course, have the old divinity, but taught in simple language, so as to produce thought and reflection in the

youthful mind, and lay a foundation for subsequent thorough examination of the Bible and its teachings. How shall this be accomplished?

If, brethren, you have seen and felt this want, and agree with me in the foregoing remarks, I need not offer another word, by way of inducing you to give your ready co-operation, to an endeavour to obtain this desideratum. Is a Catechism the most desirable form for such book of instruction? If so, some may imagine that our easiest method would be to adopt the above "Baptist Catechism" or some other. Or make a revision of it.—Or a compilation might be made such as might receive the imprimatur of the Sabbath School Convention, or of our Associations, or both. A work thus prepared and published at the request of the churches would probably be generally adopted in the Sabbath Schools throughout the Province, and I believe would greatly aid parents generally in communicating religious instruction to their children.

That I may learn the views of the brethren on this subject, I therefore respectfully suggest that those who compose the three Sabbath School Boards should, as early as convenient, institute enquiry as to the desirableness of making such provision, and I beg to request as a favor that you will without delay write me the result.

It might be well at our coming meetings of the S. S. Convention or perhaps earlier, if the Boards deem it desirable, to request some one or perhaps a Committee of two or three brethren to prepare such work and submit it to the three Boards for their acceptance.

Hoping soon to hear from you,

I am yours very truly,

S. SELDEN,  
President Provincial Baptist Sabbath School Convention.

P. S.—I should be glad to receive communications from other brethren besides those named above in reference to this subject.

S. S.

We beg to acknowledge the receipt of a copy of the Report of the Superintendent of Education for the Province of Nova Scotia, for 1863, by Rev. Alexander Forrester, D. D. It is a neat pamphlet of 31 pages, printed by James Barnes.

As we gave an official summary of this document a few weeks since, we shall not give more than a few further items and remarks such as we think will interest our readers.

Dr. Forrester strongly enforces the necessity for some further provision for the support of Teachers than is at present in operation. He says, in reference to taxation:—

"It is, we think, demonstrable that compulsory taxation is the best method of awaking a universal interest in the cause of Education; and this, in our opinion, ought to decide the matter; inasmuch as, when this is secured, every other good effect will, in course of time, ensue. However unpalatable this doctrine may appear to some, there is, we hold, neither an interest nor a party in Nova Scotia, that its introduction would not largely benefit. It is alike the friend of the poor and the rich, of the teacher and taught, of the parent and child, of the State and the Church."

He shows how each of the three parties or constituencies interested—the Province, the County, and the School District—would be benefited, and should bear a portion of the burden of providing education free to every child in the Province.

By such means—taxation—every family might receive a sound and good education for less, on an average, than \$2 per annum. The amount now paid is \$4.92. For every dollar paid by the Province, \$2.78 is paid by the people.

The number in Nova Scotia receiving education is 40,517, being a little over 12½ per cent of the whole population, or nearly one in eight.

Total sum raised by the people, \$161,150 56

Total sum granted by the Province, 65,027 54

We have also received a copy of the Agricultural Report for the Province of Nova Scotia for 1862. By Rev. Alexander Forrester, D. D. This is a pamphlet of 24 pages also printed by James Barnes.

The letter on another page from Mr. Hutton, the esteemed Principal of the Deaf and Dumb Asylum, will be read with much interest. We trust the Institution under his charge may have such favor from the Legislature as it demands and deserves.

In consequence of yesterday being a General Holiday appointed for the celebration of the Prince of Wales' marriage, the steam-printing-press was not in operation. We had therefore to send our first edition to press on Monday evening, and are compelled to defer giving those of our readers to whom we send the *Messenger* on Wednesday morning, an account of yesterday's proceedings.