

For the Christian Messenger.

Humiliation, Fasting and Prayer.

DEAR BROTHER,—

You have reminded us of the Resolution of the Convention, recommended a day of humiliation and prayer. May I call the attention of our brethren to it, for a moment.

1. We certainly have deep cause for humiliation before God. The low state of religion among us, is so manifest, that no one can deny it. If we may judge from what we see and hear at our Associations, Conventions, Sabbath services, and prayer and conference meetings, and every where else, we must conclude that there is scarcely a vestige of *vital piety*—or *devotional fervor*, left among us. Our backslidings are many; we declare our sin as Solomon—we have as a people departed from the Living God. Our condition is alarming in the extreme.

2. Fasting and prayer, confession of sin, and putting away iniquity, with deep repentance and renewed acts of faith in the Great ever blessed Redeemer, are the means and the only means of returning to favor and blessedness with God. See the examples of Moses, David, Daniel, the Apostles, and all the truly devout in all ages.

3. Fasting means *abstaining from food*, either in whole or in part, for a longer or a shorter period. Christ says: "when ye fast," Mat. vi. 16. Taking it for granted that his disciples would need and would use this precious means of grace, as well as the ancient saints of the Jewish communion. When the disciples could not cast out the demon owing to their unbelief, and the difficulty of the cure, He teaches us that *faith and power over Satan* are to be obtained by prayer and fasting, to a degree not to be obtained in any other way. Mark ix. 29. Jesus saith unto them, "this kind can come forth by nothing but by prayer and fasting." He tells us farther that although his disciples did not fast while he was with them "the days would come when the Bridegroom would be taken away from them, and then they would fast. On this principle we know the early church acted. Paul informs us that his seasons of fasting were frequent—"in fastings often," 2 Cor. xi. 27. Read the whole passage, because it clearly shows that these "fastings" are to be distinguished from the "hunger and thirst" mentioned at the same time. The latter were involuntary, the former designed. See also same Epistle, chap. vi. 5, where he tells how to prove our "apostolical succession."

4. Fasting and prayer should go together and should be made the business of the day. Dr. Tupper committed a grievous error in his youthful days when he attempted to fast and to travel and work at the same time. And another still more grievous, when, as he tells us in his autobiography—he abandoned the practice of fasting. I have no doubt he would have been a much holier, happier, and more useful man, had he *wisely* continued the use of this precious means of grace.

5. I would urgently recommend my dear brethren in the ministry especially to return to this apostolic practice. Let *private* fasting, and humiliation and repentance, precede public exercises to which our attention has been called.

6. For myself I would as soon abandon public worship and family prayer—yea baptism and the Lord's supper—as fasting. The authority for the one is as strong and binding as for the others. For the last two years more than ever before, I have been in the habit of setting apart seasons for special devotion—fasting and prayer. And I always get a blessing. I read the scriptures at such times with meditation thereon, I endeavor to search out and confess all my sins and shortcomings—I read, confess and pray, until the sweet influence of the Holy Spirit comes into my soul, and then I pray on—with the bible often open before me, literally on my knees—praying for myself—for my family, for the Indians—for all saints, for all churches, for my fellow-workers in the ministry, mentioning them by name, with other individuals. And God does often come very graciously near at such times, and I obtain strength—strength of body, often as well as spiritual strength—and the sweet relish continues with me for days.

7. Come, my dearly beloved, let us return unto the Lord. Oh take with you words and come unto his presence. Let us worship and bow down before him. Let us seek his forgiveness, and his help. Take off your ornaments, and leave them before the mount. Oh come to Gethsemane, and to Calvary. Come back, come back, my brethren, for we have grievously departed from the Lord. If so be that his anger may be turned from us.

S. P. RAND.

Christian Messenger.

HALIFAX, NOVEMBER 22, 1865.

THE CHURCH, A THEOCRACY.

We believe that a good deal of scepticism, or, at least indifference, exists on the subject of Church Government as well as on Christian Doctrine. And as "neglect" is all-sufficient to make us lose the "great salvation," so unconcern is the parent of the gravest errors in the church and the world. But a small proportion of church members unite with the churches of which they are members, because they have examined into the matter, and are convinced that the mode they adopt is the form taught by the apostles, and adopted by them in primitive times, and such as the Lord Jesus intended should prevail with his people through all subsequent ages. The prevailing indifference is, we believe, encouraged, too, by some of the denominations. Thinking their own the best, in certain respects, the advocates of each system use efforts to get scripture to sanction that system, rather than to correct what in it is not in accordance therewith. Although they may find certain particulars in which their mode of government does not exactly accord with the requirements of the New Testament, yet they suppose expediency covers more ground than those inconsistencies, and, we presume, they therefore prefer not to interpret scripture so as to interfere with the existing state of things.

The prevailing forms of church government may be classified under three heads, 1st. Congregational, 2nd. Presbyterian or Synodical, and 3rd. Episcopal, or by bishops.

The Episcopal comprises the Roman Catholic Church, the Greek Church, and the Church of England. In each of these a bishop, archbishop or patriarch, is the depository of ecclesiastical power, and has the control over his subordinate clergy. The lay element is not permitted to exercise any of the functions of government, either in the reception of members, the exercise of discipline, the admission to church ordinances, or choice of the ministry.

The Presbyterian form rejects the right of one clergyman to exercise any controlling power over another, believing that they are all on an equality, but that Synods and Presbyteries have the governing power over the churches vested in them, and that in the removal and settlement of ministers, those bodies are the sole arbiters. The ordination of ministers too under this form of church government, rests with those bodies without reference to the people over whom they are to be placed.

The Wesleyan Methodist body is a modification of the Episcopal and the Presbyterian, having perhaps more resemblance to the former than the latter.

The above classification has been supposed to resemble the three classes of human governments, Democratic, Oligarchical and Monarchical, but we are unwilling to concede that the analogy is correct, at any rate in respect to the congregational form. It may have more similarity to the democratic principle of government than to either of the others; but seeing that Baptists, and others who believe the congregational form of church order to be more in accordance with the New Testament, do not allow that they are at liberty to enact laws for their own government, but have only to act in accordance with the great Directory—the Word of God, it loses one of the chief elements of democracy, and becomes more like a theocracy than any other. The promise of the Holy Spirit to the church, to guide them, to remind them of, and to interpret the words of Christ, completes the analogy, and gives all that is essential to the theocratic form as in the days when God spake audibly to the people.

The laws of Christ's kingdom are all made, and only require to be understood, administered and obeyed to render the church a perfect organization for the accomplishing of all God's purposes in the world.

The Constitution is given in the Book, and the members have the right of private judgment in its interpretation, now, as of old, when the Bereans, who were pronounced more noble than those of Thessalonica, "in that they searched the Scriptures daily whether these things were so." Many now prefer the course of the Thessalonians, and create a disturbance, thinking by that means, to prevent the people from receiving the truth.

Congregational churches, both Baptist and Presbyterian, have been sometimes denounced under the supposition that they were antagonistic to monarchical governments. This, however, is a fallacy which is now pretty well exploded, and it is admitted pretty generally that those who are the most rigid in their adherence to this principle in rendering to God the things that are God's, are the

most loyal in rendering "to Caesar the things that are Caesar's."

If, like some other denominations, Congregational churches received into their membership those who made no profession of personal religion, and claimed for themselves the power to enact laws, they would be a dangerous element under some governments; but with this great fundamental—the Bible for their book of laws and constitution, the prevalence of christian churches is the greatest blessing that can exist in any land.

THE ENGLISH BAPTIST UNION held its Autumnal Session at Bradford, Yorkshire a few weeks since. It was no less satisfactory than that of last year at Birmingham. Previously to that, the meetings of the Baptist Union had been held in London. This new arrangement seems to promise very gratifying results. In addition to the great Missionary Meeting, a number of papers of much value and public importance were read. The following are some of the titles of them:—

"Our Colleges," by Rev. N. Hayeroff.
"Our Associations," by Rev. Mr. Mursell.
"Christian Beneficence," by Rev. Mr. Stevenson.

The Chairman's address on the source of the church's prosperity was a very able one, and calculated to be most useful to the ministers and delegates present.

The discussions in reference to the persecuted Baptists of Saxony, resulted in a resolution to appeal through the government to the king of Saxony in their behalf. Sermons were preached by Rev. C. H. Spurgeon and others. The meetings appear to have been of a highly gratifying character. The Union is becoming a most important concentration of Baptist influence; having all the advantages of the great centralization of power of other bodies, without the dangers of them, or the evils which those holding Congregationalist principles believe are connected with them.

We have received a communication from Kings County, expressing, in strong terms, the great dissatisfaction of a large number of the inhabitants, at the course lately pursued by the Sessions of that county, in respect to the School law of 1864. It appears that some appeal cases under the Assessment in two of the School Sections of that county, were brought before that court. By some means a decision was given to *quash* the said rates, making it necessary for the Trustees to refund the sums already collected for school purposes.

We have been informed that this act of the *Justices* has been declared null and void by the Crown Officers, consequently the law will be sustained.

Efforts to evade the operation of a law, because it may be distasteful, or even sometimes objectionable, are greatly to be deprecated. Those who hold Her Majesty's Commission of the Peace should be patterns of submission to the laws by which we are governed and protected, or anarchy and confusion must ensue. The parties who encourage illegal proceedings are often the first to suffer from them, and the readiest to complain.

HALIFAX YOUNG MEN'S CHRISTIAN ASSOCIATION.—The first Lecture of the thirteenth course before the Young Men's Christian Association will be delivered (D. V.) on Tuesday evening next, Nov. 28, at Temperance Hall, by Rev. E. Botterell. Subject:—JOHN WICKLIFF. Chair to be taken at half-past seven o'clock. Tickets may be had at the room 188 Hollis Street, price to members for the Course 25 cents, Non-Members 30 cents, Single Lecture 5 cents.

INDIAN SUMMER.—The weather during the past week has been most delightful, the thermometer ranging near 50° for several days. After the frosty nights and chilly days of the previous week, we could enjoy, although only for a few days or hours, the return of balmy summer. It seems almost a pleasure stolen from stern Winter who claims to rule over this and succeeding months, before he looks up the earth in his frozen chains and covers it with his downy mantle.

NEW PUBLICATIONS.—The following are some of the new publications that have recently appeared:

We have unintentionally omitted before to notice the reception of two pieces of music from Professor Saffery, of Wolfville. 1st. Two Sacred Pieces, "My Heavenly Home," and "Prayer, sweet Prayer," composed and arranged with Piano or Organ accompaniment, by E. C. Saffery. 2nd. The Review March, composed for the Piano, by E. C. Saffery. They are both good. The first contains some sweet flowing passages in the melody, highly appropriate to the sacred strains. The harmony in the accompaniment is full and well adapted to the subject.

The second is a spirited characteristic piece, and well sustains the idea of a Review March.

No. 9 of Murdoch's History of Nova Scotia or Acadie has made its appearance in due course.

It gives the account of the settlement of the City of Halifax in 1749.

The following extract shows that we have not yet made much progress in a branch of business which all through the 116 years has proved to be the great source of vice and crime.

"Licenses to sell liquors were issued by the government, on each of which a tax was paid of one guinea a month for the use of the poor. The number granted from July to December, inclusive, was eighteen."

Another extract will possess some interest just at this time.

"The first instance at Halifax of a regular trial for a capital offence, occurred this season. One Peter Cartel had killed Abr. Goodside, the boatswain's mate of the Beaufort, by stabbing him, and had also wounded two other men. The governor and council sat as a general court to try him. 31 August, o. s. (11 Sept., n. s.) a grand jury found the bill against him—a petit jury found him guilty of murder, and he was hanged under a warrant from the governor 2 13 Sept., 1749. There was a tradition that a large tree was used instead of a gallows in the earliest years of Halifax. This unhappy child of the forest stood near the market square.

Another Educational work has been brought out by Messrs. A. & W. Mackinlay: "THE ESSENTIALS OF ENGLISH ANALYSIS with Exercises by J. D. Morell." This is one of the most compact school books published on this branch of English grammar and gives our Schools, for 15 cents, a useful and practical treatise on all matters relating to the construction and dissection of sentences.

The Minutes of the Twelfth Session of the African Baptist Association of Nova Scotia are received.

We have received No. 37—No. 1 New Series—of a small sheet entitled "The Acadian," published by Mr. Theakston, of Wolfville. It was formerly a small "Advertiser," first published at Canning. It has now changed its local habitation, name and base, and professes to be "independent of Sect or Party."

The *Sunday Magazine* is an excellent monthly, edited by Dr. Guthrie, published by Strahan & Co. A copy of the October No. before us, from their establishment in Montreal, has a number of well written articles. It is very cheap,—15 cents a number, or \$1.75 a year.

LITERARY ITEMS.—A Memoir of the late Dr. Wayland is to be at once prepared by his wife and sons, who are his literary executors. They will also provide for the issue of a uniform edition of his complete works.

Lamarine has begun the publication of a "Life of Byron" in the *Paris Constitutionnelle*, translating the quotations into plain prose.

The author of "John Halifax," recently married, has written a book called "A Noble Life."

Mr. John Lovell of Montreal got a silver medal at the Dublin Exhibition for cheap and good educational works.

Ritchie, the engraver, has painted the death-bed of President Lincoln, and its surroundings, and is now engaged on an engraving of the picture, which promises to be a most meritorious work.

Bierstadt's well-known picture of the Rocky Mountains has been sold for \$25,000.

We received the following telegram from our esteemed friend, Rev. I. E. Billson Saturday last:

"My beloved daughter, Mrs. McHenry, died blessedly happy, last evening."

We sincerely sympathize with our worthy brother and the afflicted family in this bereavement.

NEWS SUMMARY.

The Royal Mail Steamer *China* arrived yesterday morning with 128 passengers for Boston, and 19 for Halifax, amongst whom were the Hon. Joseph Howe and Mr. James Hutton of the Horticultural Gardens.

The Confederate cruiser *Shenandoah* had arrived in England and was given up to the American Consul on the 10th Inst.

Waddell her commander, states that he had been in the Northern Sea, and first received intelligence of the surrender of the Southern States from the British barque *Barricuta* on the 2nd of August, and that since that time he had desisted from further acts of war.

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