For the Christian Messenger.

THE MINISTERS' INSTITUTE AT ST. JOHN, N. B.

SAINT JOHN, Feb. 28.

Dear Editor,—

I find the following in Rev. Dr. Tupper's "Appendix, No.2," published in the *Messenger* of last week, and with your permission submit a brief comment on the views advanced therein. Dr. T. says:—

"On my way to the Convention in Fredericton, I attended the Ministers' Institute in St. John. The arrangements, made known to me some time afterwards, did not appear to me as good as those adopted at our Institute in Wolfeville, at the close of the preceding year.—In that any member who chose to offer a few remarks on the subject of a Lecture, was at liberty to do so; but in this others besides the Lecturer were only permitted to propose questions to him. But some questions which may be advantageously discussed in private or in a select company of established believers, are hardly suitable to be proposed before a promiscuous assembly such as attended the Lectures in St. John. Individuals are liable to imagine—undoubtedly some did—that the querist disbelieved the sentiment concerning which he made inquiry. When a skeptic, or advocate of error, puts a puzzling question to an evangelical believer, it may, in many cases, be met, and answered in effect, by proposing to him one more difficult to answer: but this cannot be consistently done when the querist is professedly a believer in evangelical doctrine. Moreover, a Lecture prepared some years before, may be very good, and yet the writer of it not be always in readiness to answer immediately all the questions that may be proposed concerning the subject of it. When such questions are asked in the presence of numerous assemblies, and are not answered satisfactorily, or not at all, as was the case in some instances, the proposing of them is likely to do harm. (2 Tim. ii. 23.)

With Dr. Tupper's judgment in regard to restricting the exercises of the Institute to Ministers, in order to avert the evil at which he hints, I can heartily concur. But perhaps the evil to be feared might be avoided by the exercise of some prudence in asking questions before a promiscuous audience. The arrangement against which I understand the Doctor to urge a special and strong objection, was as follows—as given in our "Basis of Organization:"

"4. That this Ministers' Institute shall not partake of the character and proceedings of a DEBATING SOCIETY.

5. That we will consider ourselves in the position of PUPILS, as in a THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY; and the LECTURER of the occasion shall be regarded and treated, for the time being, as the TEACHER of the Institute.

6. That any member of the Institute shall be at liberty to propound *Questions*, always to be addressed to the LECTURER when it is the wish of the member to have any point of the subject under examination more clearly elucidated."

Here is *restraint*, under which some brethren might feel uneasy, but, as it proved it was a necessary and beneficial restraint. No mortal mind could forsee the entanglements and the end of a *discussion* among *ministers* on theological questions, permitted *ad libitum*. The course adopted, and pursued with some wholesome freedom, at our last Institute, was nearly unanimously approved, and by some warmly commended as eminently judicious and profitable. Several of the Lecturers, who had repeatedly given Lectures at Ministers' Institutes, and who had witnessed and deplored the confusion arising from *discussions*, in which men had sought to assert, expound and defend every diversity of opinion, sometimes wholly irrelevant, suggested the arrangement we adopted. Nor do we think, with due respect to Rev. Dr. Tupper, that the course pursued by calls for a defence—it commends itself. The Lecturer is invited to give us instruction on a certain subject in the sphere of theological literature. He *prepares* himself for the task assigned him. As in the case of nearly all of our Lecturers last Summer, they had been for years studying profoundly and comprehensively their themes; had nearly exhausted, in their researches, the whole literature of the subject in hand, had enjoyed the advantages of large and standard libraries to aid them in their investigations; had given instruction on their topics to many classes of theological students. Now we should aim to *draw from such men all they know about the topics under consideration*. What do we, as *ministers*, care for the *extemporized* opinions of each other? We go to the Institute to learn something *worth* learning, and not to ascertain each others conflicting views. For example, how much more edifying it was to sit and listen to the thoughtful, calm and forcible views of Dr. Hovey on the great and painfully perplexing subject of ESCHATOLOGY, than to discuss each other's crude notions, or to hear how this brother's and that brother's mind is disturbed and distracted with doubts. For Dr. Hovey, during the past eighteen years had given his days and nights to questions bearing on that branch of theological study. Then, besides, after inviting and accepting a man to lecture before the Institute on some theme of standard importance it seems like a breach of courtesy to pass over *his* deliverances and proceed to deliver *our* views. Furthermore the Institute has not requested us to occupy the time with giving what *we* have thought, or read on the subject that is up for consideration. Nor does the defence we here bespeak for the Lecturer, carry in it a demand that the members of the Institute should either surrender or modify their views, but simply and only that they *hear* what he has to offer, and to elicit, by questions, what he has not incorporated into his discourse. In a word, the Lecturers are present to *teach*, and the rest of us to *learn*, if there is anything to be learned.

W. S. MCKENZIE.

The Christian Messenger.

Halifax, N. S., March 8th., 1871.

EDUCATION IN BURMAH.

In the appeal from the Missionaries in Burmah, inserted in the *Messenger* of the 8th February, this passage occurs:—"The great work of education for the Burmese has been but feebly attempted, the consequences being that work has mostly passed into the hands of a society which is known throughout the missionary world for bold and unscrupulous proselytism."

In an appeal "to the friends of Karen Education," issued by the Missionaries on the 1st of January last, we find the following statements:—

"We see Catholicism and Ritualism crowding in upon us. And Karen Christians have reached the point where they begin to see something of the value of an education. Many of their children are panting for it, and have it they will."

Mr. Brayton, a returned missionary says that for years past, children of Burmese Christians have been obliged to go to Catholic and Puseyite schools, because we had not the schools for them. Facts are stubborn things. Shall we meet them and save this mission?"

These are serious and alarming facts. There are "Village Schools" among the Karens, in which hundreds of children are taught reading and writing, but much more is required. The enlightenment already received should be followed up by a good and thorough education. If the children are neglected, so that they learn semi-paganism at the Catholic Schools, or Semi-popery at the Puseyite Schools the results will be fearfully destructive to souls.

Should an independent mission be established by our Convention, it is to be hoped that this matter of education will be provided for from the first. It is of the highest importance.

THE GOSPEL IN ROME.

A few weeks since we copied an interesting article from the London Missionary *Herald*, giving some account of the progress of evangelical truth in Italy, and especially in the city of Rome. A later issue of the same periodical gives us further particulars. Mr. Wall writing thence, Nov. 4th, says:

"This is the third Lord's-day that I have been permitted to speak in this city. This morning we had our first service; twenty were present. This evening my room was *closely* filled by about *thirty* attentive hearers. Our meetings have constantly increased, and there is every prospect of blessing. I look back over the past fortnight with deep thankfulness, which I am sure our brethren in London would share with me, if they could witness what is going on.

"This week I have had the pleasure of receiving two brethren from Bologna—the evangelist and bibleman. The American-Baptist brethren have also sent a minister to aid in the work in Italy, who in a very short time will open various stations in other cities. In union with him we have a second room, which I opened last week. It is in the Via Campidoglio, near the court where I believe Paul was judged (Phil. i. 13), about thirty yards from the prison in which tradition states he was imprisoned, and not more than a hundred steps from the ruins of the imperial palace, where the saints resided who sent their salutations to Philippi, as our brethren here will soon send their salutations to you in England."

"No language can fitly describe the absolute ignorance of the Scripture which exists in Rome. The Pope's hatred of the Gospel is diabolic. One of my hearers was imprisoned six months, because he was seen reading the New Testament; another was sent to the galleys for six years, because he refused to go to confession.

"The sale of Scriptures in Rome is very limited, but the portions distributed are received with the greatest readiness. Two or three thousand are already in the hands of the Romans. Very pleasing results have come to light, and a desire to obtain them is increasing on every hand. To-morrow night we open a third meeting at the Ponti St. Angelo, almost under the shadow of the mighty wings of the statue, and near to the Vatican.

"*Tuesday, November* 6.—Yesterday we opened our third meeting. In the morning I went with our American brother and the two biblemen to distribute in that quarter. From shop to shop, and house to house, we went, gathering little groups, and announcing Jesus. The people received us with the greatest joy, and followed us down the streets in crowds. After we had distributed nearly two thousand copies, we returned to our lodgings. Though I offered to soldiers and citizens, and priests, we even met with but one who insulted us. In the evening about thirty came to our first meeting in that quarter. When I began to pray, the poor people began to repeat my words, as they do at vespers in their own churches. They listened with the greatest attention to the addresses after."

A Wesleyan Missionary, the Rev. H. G. Piggot, also writes from Rome to the following effect:—

"When Signor Prochet came here to commence the work for the Waldensians, he called on the head of the Police Department to ask what would be done in case he should open a hall for public worship. 'To my profound personal regret,' was the courteous reply, 'if you were to open a hall to-day, I should be compelled to close it to-morrow.' 'And how long is this state of things to last? Weeks? Months? Years?' 'No, not years—but you may calculate on a month or two.' 'And if I were to invite a few friends to my own private lodgings?' 'Well, first of all,' said the official, interrupting him, 'I should beg to know nothing at all about the matter. So Signor Prochet took the hint, and commenced a service in his private lodgings and evangelists of other Churches have imitated his example, and the authorities have shut their eyes, and are supposed to know nothing of what is going on. There are now five of these little centres, one supported by the Waldensians, three by the Baptists (American and English), and one by the Free Italian Church. From fifteen to five-and-twenty people attend each service, mostly of the labouring class. It is a small beginning, but is all that can be done in the way of public preaching for the present, so long, that is, as the Provisional Government lasts."

Mr. Editor,—

Is it true? In reading an article on Tobacco in a Baptist paper last week, I found the following statement: "Every blackguard loves tobacco in some shape." I wish to know if that is a fact, or if there are any well-established statistics to sustain such a conclusion.

ENQUIRER.

In reply to Enquirer we can only say that we are not intimately acquainted with the class of persons he mentions and are scarcely prepared to offer an opinion. Perhaps we may arrive at an approximate decision in the matter by considering 1st, that a large proportion of those who are commonly regarded as blackguards do use tobacco; and 2nd, that only a small proportion of christian men use it; and a much smaller proportion approve of and defend the practice. Then again, we believe it would be found that out of those christians who use it the habit was formed previous to their making a profession of religion. But few men are accustomed to smoke or chew tobacco when going to the House of God.

Whilst therefore we cannot affirm that all who use tobacco are blackguards, we cannot say that "every blackguard loves tobacco.

Whilst then, we would recommend total abstinence from tobacco as well as intoxicating drinks, we think the statement a doubtful and unguarded one.

The following lines, which we find in a contemporary, may commend themselves to others besides our correspondent, for the lesson they teach, if not for their poetry.

THE WEED.

Smoking the weed—chewing the weed—
Don't you think its an evil, indeed?
Look at it, preachers,
Look at it, teachers,
Smokers and chewers,
Drawers and hewers;
Look at it fairly,
Look at it squarely.
Don't you think its an evil, indeed?

Smoking the weed—chewing the weed—
Don't you think its filthy, indeed?
Messing the carpet—messing the floor—
Messing everywhere—and even what's more,
Polluting your dear little babe's fair cheek;
Polluting your dear loving wife, who's weak
With the trials and troubles of life!
With the insinuant weed which is rife!
Doing its mischief!—doing its wrong!
Leading you the dark pathway along,
To rob your beautiful home, indeed!

Smoking the weed—chewing the weed—
Don't you think it's a robber, indeed?
Don't you think it's a robber of wealth?
—Don't you think it's a robber of health?—
Count up the cents you spend in a year
For the noxious weed, which you love so dear;
Think of the comforts—think of the joy
You keep from your wife, and your darling boy!
Ah! think of it, fathers,—think of it, mothers,—
Think of it, sisters,—think of it, brothers,—
Count it up twice,—count it up thrice—
Think of the habit,—think of the price,—
You are creating, and paying?
With the dirty weed!
For the robber weed
Apparently, far outweighing
The love you should have for your home, indeed.

W. S.

Here is the opinion of another of our correspondents on the tobacco question generally. We have had it in hand several weeks, but it has just come to the surface in connection with the above enquiry:

FOR THOSE INTERESTED.

It has always struck me as being a strange anomaly in morals, that while dealers in alcoholic drinks, are deservedly reprobated by all good men; those who sell that poisonous enervating weed, tobacco, are considered quite respectable. It is well known that the immoderate use of this narcotic is the bane of our American youth. It is gradually sapping their life-blood and undermining their whole physical constitution; and yet those who largely contribute to bring about such deplorable results, who pander to depraved appetites, by temptingly displaying their choicest brands, wash their hands in innocency and say—"Am I my brother's keeper?"

All the arguments that were once used by respectable(?) liquor-dealers to quiet their consciences are now used by tobacco-dealers to quiet *theirs*. Educated public opinion has compelled the former to renounce his respectability or his calling, and we hope it may soon do the same for the latter.

CHAI.

Dec. 24th, 1870.

The following letter has been handed to us by a friend, with a request that it may be inserted in our columns for the edification of our readers. It is from a surviving brother of Rev. Dr. Clay, to Mrs. Clay, relating to the sad event, which, as it now appears beyond doubt, has precipitated so many souls suddenly into eternity, and brought sorrow to so many hearts. The truly christian sentiments that pervade the letter, the manifestation of the power of gospel faith to console and cheer the heart when the heavy blow of affliction falls, which is here exhibited, we feel assured will be appreciated by all those whose hearts are divinely influenced. Most devoutly do we hope and pray that the God of the fatherless and widow will sustain, comfort, and support the bereaved ones, and that they may find in their own happy experience that "behind a frowning Providence He hides a smiling face."

BRIDGEWATER, DUNDAS,
Jan. 27th, 1871.

Dear Sister Sophia,—

Your kind letter came duly to hand, but by the receipt of the telegram from me on Saturday last, you see we were aware of the fate of our dear brothers, previous to its receipt. The telegram was sent to us by Mr. Dean, but we had given them up long before; indeed, ever since that fearful Monday night, Oh! what a calamity has fallen upon us, Oh! my poor dear brothers. what a fate!! But I fear to tell you that that is not the whole. Our dear Sister is in a most pitiable state, she has partly lost her reason, so that she seems to have forgotten her bereavement, and is the whole time labouring under some fearful dread of coming evil, she is dreadfully concerned about the salvation of her soul, and thinks she has committed the unpardonable sin. She is in a sad way poor thing, but I trust that God in his goodness will restore her to her former soundness of mind.

Poor Grandma and Charles are almost dying of grief, but still I do not think it has affected their health. But I know you will rejoice with me, when I tell you that the chastisement has brought Charles right down to the feet of Jesus, where he is now sitting, and in his right mind. O let us bless and praise His glorious name for this.

Poor Grandpa is broken right down, although he does not show it much, still I know he is suffering intensely. Poor Fanny and Annie, how deplorable their condition, I do not know what they are going to do; God Almighty help them, and oh, may he help us all through this our hour of trial, I feel I need his help just now. Oh, what should I do, if I could not pour out my soul to my God at this time. What a load now rests upon my poor weak shoulders, but I feel that my God will give me strength to bear it. I have to be the whole time with my poor Sister, as she is not fit to be left alone.

We have heard no particulars yet respecting the wreck, but we are sure it is that of their schooner, I wonder if any of their chests were found on board.

O my Dear Sister, I thank you for your kind letter of condolence, you say you would like to be able to come and see us in our trouble, you would like to be able to mingle your tears with ours, Oh would not that be a consolation, to meet and tell our troubles to our God together. Oh I wish I could get over to you, but I cannot leave, I have too great a charge to attend to here. But still although separated we can all call upon the one God in the time of trouble and He has promised to deliver us, and may we unite in saying, Thy will O God be done.

Yours in deep affliction.

THOMAS CLAY.

P.S.—If the Doctor is able to bear it, I think it would be well for him to see and write to some one there, and get the affairs of the schooner put to rights, he has a better chance than we have; as his influence will be more likely to command respect and secure justice being done.

There must have been not less than £200 on board of her in gold. T. C.

Since the communication from Yarmouth, in another column, was mailed, we have learned by telegram that Dr. Day baptized four persons on Lord's day last, and that more are received for baptism. The church is revived and shewing good indications of further progress. We heartly congratulate our brethren of both churches, and trust that the new "Temple church" may resemble the old one by having glorious manifestations of the saving power of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Elder Jacob Knapp is laboring with much success in Tremont Temple, Boston.

Notices, &c.

COLCHESTER COUNTY SABBATH SCHOOL CONVENTION.

The quarterly meeting of the Colchester Baptist Sabbath Convention will be held in the School-house at South Branch, Upper Stewiacke, on the last Friday of this month commencing at 2½ o'clock, P. M., evening session to commence at 7 o'clock.

A. J. WALKER, *Sec'y*.

Truro, March 1, 1871.

RECEIVED FROM WOMEN'S MISSION AID SOCIETIES.

North Sydney—Mrs. J. B. Moore, $7 00

M. R. SELDEN, *Sec.*

LETTERS RECEIVED.

J McLearn, Esq. A. McDonnell, $6. W. F. Cutten, Esq., $33. Joseph Sabean. J. Miller. H. E Morrow. Rev. Dr. Tupper.—C.W. N. dis. Jan. '69. M. Kinsman, $4. A Marshall, $10. Rev. S. B. Kempton. A. Martell, $2. W. B. Chandler, $2.50. T. B. Layton, $2. B. B. Moses, Esq. J. E. Lockwood, 1 sub. Jas. E. Potter, Esq. J. B. Kinney, $2. Ezra Layton, $6. G. W. Freeman, $34.38. W. Crawford,—yes, $3 credited all right. Rev. W. H. Richan, $7. W. H. Chipman, $3. Jas. B. McNutt, Esq., $4. Rev. G. E. Day, M. D. Rev. J. C. Morse, $2.

News of the Week.

A PUBLIC TEMPERANCE MEETING, (the fourth of the series) under the auspices of the City Divisions of the Sons of Temperance, will be held at Temperance Hall on Monday evening next, the 13th inst., when the Rev. J. M. Cramp, D. D., of Wolfville, and others, will address the meeting. Chair to be taken at 8 o'clock. A collection will be taken up to defray expenses.

The Prisoners in the Penitentiary are to have a series of popular lectures. Rev. Mr. Grant gave one on Thursday last, on the late war. Professor Lawson is to give another on the 15th inst.