

all. "Look on it; lift it; bear it solemnly. Stand up and walk beneath it steadfastly. Fail not for sorrow, falter not for sin. But onward, upward till the goal ye win."

We welcome you as lovers of the Sunday School, may your gathering to-day teach us that it is, or may be made, a grand success, that its influence is being felt throughout the world in elevating the race of man, because it begins at the right time, and in the right manner, to lift up the Crucified Christ as the hope of the world; fosters a kingdom which owns no king but Jesus, and arrays in the garb of citizenship, the heirs of a heavenly city, and gathers jewels of humanity to deck the diadem of the Divine Conqueror. In this work you are girded and consecrated to self-sacrificing service, and by your zeal and energy may we be taught the transcendent importance of the labor in which we have been engaged, so with recruited ranks and encouraged hearts we shall re-enter upon a new campaign and may the Lord of Hosts lead us on to victory. We welcome you as men of power. When we see a steam ship ploughing her way through the mighty billows of the Ocean, or a railway locomotive rushing along with maddening speed, with its long train of cars attached, we are startled in surprise, and exclaim, "What a thing of power!" But the Sabbath School worker is an exhibition of moral power far vaster than either because he is backed up by, and linked to, the limitless forces of an Omnipotent God. He who is the means of making even a child's thoughts higher and purer, really does more for mankind, than he who by physical force conquers a world. Ye are the possessors of that silent force that uplifts the masses of the world, by the education of the conscience.

We welcome you to-day as men of influence. And may the influence imparted to us this day be persuasive and perpetual, moulding our characters to the plan of so exalted a service as that to which we are called;—an influence which will shed a halo of brightness over time, and gild with effulgence the eternity beyond. You can persuade us of the fact that not all are or can be men of lofty mental attainments, but every man can be, ought to be, a loving truthful heroic soul; and every man can transform his fellow by his presence, by the power that emanates from his character as a worker for Jesus.

And finally dear brethren may our hearts be fused together in the ardor of Christly devotion to arouse the teachers of our Sabbath Schools and the membership in all our Baptist Churches, to a lofty enthusiasm in this glorious work, and carry it forward with an abiding faith that God will not permit a devoted Teacher's life, however humble, to pass into nothingness, but will fill up to the brim his cup of rejoicing. So let us work, fellow laborers until we shall all stand in sublime eagerness awaiting the Redeemer's plaudit. Come, good and faithful servant, thou has been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things, enter thou into the joy of thy Lord!

For the Christian Messenger.
The Question of the Hour.

The present seems to be largely a transition period in our denominational enterprises. It is therefore an important period, and a time for deep and earnest thought, and far-reaching plans and purposes. In a word, this is a time for laying foundations, broad and solid, and projecting measures that will best affect the future and the whole of Baptist interests in these Provinces.

I shall confine myself at present to the bearing of this upon our educational and foreign missionary work. As respects the latter, I have long been of the opinion that the Baptists of this Dominion will never do their best in foreign lands until they combine in one great missionary organization. Plainly, it seems to me, and persistently is Providence pointing in this direction. Our missionaries have been strangely led to the same land and the same relation to those who formerly directed our operations. At present the prosperity of the mission of neither the Upper nor Lower Provinces is such as should convince us that our methods cannot be materially improved upon. It has been found, too, that we can no longer do the home work necessary without expense. And yet, neither Board has sufficient work to require the whole time of one man. But combine that work and then you have a place and occupation for the strongest Foreign Mission man we can find. And I am sure that such a combination would equally affect favorably the work

on the field, nor can I see any good reason why the Baptists of a country such as this should have two Foreign Missionary organizations instead of one.

And now a word respecting educational work. The Baptists of the Dominion are agreed in believing that it is very desirable, if it be not essential, that our ministers should be trained at home. There is a growing feeling that we ought not to be dependent upon the United States in this any more than in other denominational education and enterprises. It is this conviction that has had most to do in the building up of our Institutions at Woodstock and Wolfville. And yet neither school has accomplished, nor is likely to accomplish, the work that all are desiring and aiming at, and many anticipating. The truth is, the constituency of neither institution is sufficiently large or strong to build up an efficient Theological School. The world, I think, cannot produce such a school, maintained by so small a people as those represented in either of our Conventions. Does it not then follow that a great deal of the effort we are now putting forth in this direction is wasted, that many of the hopes cherished must be disappointed, and that we must start on an entirely different basis if we would be successful?

And what hinders the Baptists of this Dominion combining to build up one school of Theology? I presume the ready answer will be distance hinders. But does distance hinder the New England States combining to maintain their institution? Does it prevent the united efforts of the Southern Baptists? Is not the constituency of every Theological Institution in the United States at least as large as that of one among us would be? If so, distance is not our hindrance.

But some will say, We are not strong enough to build up an efficient seminary of this kind. Well, I admit, that we are not strong enough at present to build a "Newton." But Newton as it is was not the work of a moment. Are we to wait till we can vie with Newton before we begin? Let those who think so remember that Newton and Rochester are progressing as fast as we. Consequently we will have that objection in the future as much as now, and there is no hope of ever beginning. Beside, if our dominion be not strong enough to build an institution for theology how is it possible that any part of it can build up two?

I admit there are practical difficulties, and very serious ones. But are they insurmountable? And if they be, what are we to do? It seems to me that here is a problem for our wise men to work out. It also seems to me that this is the time for its solution.

T. H. PORTER.

The Christian Messenger.

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OUR PSALMODY.

There is perhaps no one thing that exercises more influence over a Christian community, or is a better index of the piety of its people, than the psalmody they employ in their devotional exercises. It has been so more or less ever since our Lord and his disciples, "sang a hymn and went out" after the institution of the Supper; or when Paul and Silas sang praises unto God at midnight, in the prison at Philippi, and a great revival followed. It was 'the singing of the gospel' by Mr. Sankey that drew together the thousands in Scotland, England, and the United States, no less than the preaching by Moody.

The Methodists have been known in England, and indeed everywhere, by their constant use for the past 100 years, of the "Collection of Hymns for the use of the people, called Methodists." Charles Wesley, the poet, was associated with his brother John, in preparing the sacred poetry for his book. The good opinion that great preacher had of his collection of hymns is not strictly adhered to in the present day. He desired that no one would "attempt to mend them, for" said he "they really are not able." And yet he did not scruple to take the hymns of other writers, alter them and adopt them for his collection, and that without the slightest acknowledgement.

The recent Methodist Conference at Montreal, spent a considerable amount of time in considering this matter, and in preparing a new Hymn Book for their congregations.

The Presbyterian Synods too have had this subject before them in the endeavour to get something better suited

to all. And so each body recognizes the importance of getting the best collection possible for the use of their people.

About 30 years ago the Nova Scotia Baptist Association adopted "The Psalmist" as its book of Sacred Poetry for use in the Public Worship of God. It was then the book most generally used by the Baptist Churches in the United States, and was said to be the finest collection of hymns known. The price at which it was sold was regarded as not excessive, and there was no difficulty felt in consequence of competition with other publications of a like character. In later years there has been a variety of publications in "Revival Hymns," "Gospel Songs," &c., which have been used in social meetings, more or less, in all the churches, and the demand was that some of the more modern hymns be incorporated in our general hymnal. To meet this want and to supply a smaller, cheaper book for social meetings, we ourselves made a Selection of Hymns and Spiritual Songs, from various sources, and published it at a price barely covering the cost.

This was found at the time to be useful in some of the missionary congregations in the country, as well as in the social meetings of the city churches. That little book is now out of print and a reprint seems hardly adapted to meet our present necessity. Similar efforts have been made by our brethren in Ontario; one by the late editor of the *Canadian Baptist*, and another more recently by Dr. Buchan, a very neat little book.

The Psalmist costing 85 cents in its cheapest edition is found to be too expensive for a large number of the people, and this cost becomes a real barrier in many places. In almost all our congregations there is a deficiency of hymn books, in many of them not more than one person in ten being supplied with a book.

Now it is impossible to have singing general in the congregations without having books containing the hymns. Even when the words are committed to memory there is a degree of uncertainty which prevents that confidence which is necessary to good singing. In the effort to provide for this felt need, the Baptist Publication Society at Philadelphia some few years since prepared and published "The Baptist Hymn Book" in a variety of styles and sizes, from 50 cents upwards, one edition having Tunes—an excellent collection, "The Baptist Hymn and Tune Book" at the low price of one dollar.

Although no action has been taken by our churches in their associated capacity, several of them—at Wolfville, Yarmouth, etc.—have adopted this book in preference to the Psalmist.

We have not time at our Associations or Convention to give for a full discussion of this matter but we need some united action. Perhaps we are not prepared to adopt the Baptist Hymn book and discard the Psalmist, but we should have some concerted action recommending one or other or both books, or great confusion will soon follow, and that to the detriment of the body generally. We invite the brethren to consider the matter and that at once as one that affects seriously our present condition and future prospects.

If something could be done to facilitate the getting a larger supply of hymn books in our congregations we are confident that it would largely affect attendance in many of our places of worship.

We have no project in view, but seeing the difficulty we would be glad to see the remedy; and ask the brethren to give us their views upon it.

A BEAUTIFUL PICTURE.

The immortal dreamer's conceptions, when taken out and looked at separately, are no less beautiful for being old. His book will never get out of date. Who could examine the following fine picture of "Christiana at the wicket-gate," with all its details, without discovering in John Bunyan a genuine artist:—

"So Christiansa began to knock, and as her poor husband did, she knocked and knocked again. But instead of any that answered, they all thought they heard as if a dog came barking upon them. A dog, and a great one, too, and this made the women and the children afraid. Nor durst they for awhile to knock any more, for fear the mastiff should fly upon them. Now therefore they were greatly troubled up and down in their minds, and knew not what to do: knock they durst not, for fear of the dog; go back they durst not, for fear the keeper of that gate should spy them as they went, and be offended with them. At last they thought of knocking again, and knocking more

vehemently than they did at first. Then said the keeper of the gate, Who is there? so the dog left off to bark, and he opened unto them.

Then Christiansa made low obeisance, and said, Let not our Lord be offended with his handmaidens, for that we have knocked at his princely gate. Then said the keeper, whence come ye? and what is it that you would have?

Christian answered, We are come from whence Christian did come, and upon the same errand as he; to wit, to be, if it shall please you, graciously admitted by this gate into the way that leads unto the celestial city. And I answer, my Lord, in the next place, that I am Christiansa, once the wife of Christian that now is gotten above.

With that the keeper of the gate did marvel, saying, What! is she now become a pilgrim, that but a little while ago abhorred that life? Then she bowed her head, and said, Yea, and so are these my sweet babes also.

Then he took her by the hand, and let her in and said also *Suffer the little children to come unto me*; and with that he shut up the gate. This done, he called to a trumpeter that was above, over the gate, to entertain Christiansa, with shouting and sound of trumpet, for joy. So he obeyed, and sounded, and filled the air with his melodious notes.

SPURGEON ON THE "PRINCESS ALICE" DISASTER.

Our English exchanges have told us some of the particulars of the sad accident which resulted in the loss of so large a number of lives on the Thames in the sinking of the steamer *Princess Alice*. Among the lost were several of the members of the Metropolitan Tabernacle Baptist Church. A sermon was preached on the occasion by Rev. C. H. Spurgeon.

The Tabernacle was crowded even beyond the usual crowding on Sunday mornings, every seat being filled and every inch of standing-ground being occupied, and perhaps there was not one person in the throng who did not anticipate that the great disaster which has filled every one's mind would be the theme of the sermon they would hear. The anticipation was fully realized. Taking for his text the 16th verse of Psalm xviii., "He sent from above, He drew me out of many waters," Mr. Spurgeon said he did not know how they felt at this time, but as for himself, a heavy cloud seemed to hang over each day. The remarkable calamity, so crushing and overwhelming, of which they had all been speaking to each other during the past week could not be got away from their minds at all. Five of the members of that church were amongst those who had lost their lives, and he could scarcely speak to any of the brethren without finding that some person with whom they had a connection more or less remote was in that unfortunate vessel. This heavy calamity should be turned to some practical purpose. He did not believe that these heavy calamities came in the form of judgments, but they were permitted and controlled by the overruling hand of God. The hand of God was in all things, in those that seemed to us to be evil as well as in those that seemed to us to be good. In much that seemed evil to man, even in their wickedness, we might trace the hand of God. He did not understand it, but he believed it. He did not attempt to justify the ways of God to man, but he believed that they were all for the best. One question which might arise was, when there was a great calamity, why did not God interpose and save life? Miraculous interpositions in time of great danger, he maintained, were not to be expected. It might be difficult to understand why God should permit evil, seeing that He was always master of the situation, and there was force in the old question of the negro, who asked why, if God was stronger than the devil, God did not kill the devil, and make an end of him. It was quite certain that there was much moral evil and great physical evil which God permitted, and which He could, if He liked, stop. He did not do so, and we did not know why. And yet we could see some reasons for His non-interposition. One was that His doing so would change the whole arrangement of the world. God had made this world and governed it by certain laws, and if those laws were alterable the whole thing would be turned from top to bottom. It was His plan that He should exercise His power in a certain way by what were called the laws of nature—not that there was such a thing as nature apart from God. All power emanated from God, but He had been pleased so to arrange it that His divine energy should go forth under certain laws and regulations. He could break those laws when he pleased, but in these days He did not do so. We must not suppose that if a calamity

happened it was through some special sin of those who suffered. "Think ye," said Christ, "that those eighteen upon whom the Tower of Siloam fell and slew them that were sinners above all men that dwelt in Jerusalem? I tell ye nay, but except ye repent ye shall likewise perish." We must not draw any inference from the destruction of a ship, or a building, or anything else, as to the character of the persons there. If we did we should probably do an injustice. In the late disaster one person who was mentally praying to God just before the collision might be drowned, and another sitting beside him, who was running over in his mind the words of a ribald song, might be saved. If there was interposition on the part of God to prevent such calamities this world would be the place of judgement, and that it could not be; for judgement was reserved for the time when all should appear before the great White Throne. He believed that there was in this world a judgement, for nations, but not for individuals. Besides, if God were to interpose to prevent such calamities, that of itself would involve many evils. Suppose, for example, farmers should choose to withhold the sowing of seed, there would probably be a famine; but if God were to interpose and produce nevertheless an abundant harvest, the result would be that men would be lazy. Suppose, again, that a disease came into the world, and God would not permit any one to die of it, the result would be that men would neglect drains and despise every other means of preserving health, and the whole world would become a dunghill. And if no life was ever to be lost by accidents there would be an end of looking out. Nor would a miraculous interposition be so great a blessing as some might suppose. After a time men would not be much impressed by it. When in Egypt the Angel of God smote the Egyptians, and spared the Israelites, that did not affect Pharaoh; it only hardened his heart the more. No, all things considered, it was best as it was, and the Lord knew it was so, and therefore let it stand. Neither would it be so great a gain to the men of God always to have their lives spared. They had to die some day, and they might as well die one way as another. There was very small choice, and probably a great deal less choice than some of them imagined. A Christian asked no immunity from death; why should he be absolved from it? It was better to die than to live, inasmuch as it was better to be in heaven than on earth. Though there were no miraculous interpositions, yet providential interpositions were frequent among God's people. How many could say, "He sent from above; He drew me out of many waters." They came in the way of deliverance from trouble, and, oh, how marvellously God, in answer to prayer, had saved many of them. God did not, even to save the souls of His servants, violate any of His laws. "The soul that sinneth shall die, and transgression shall have its just punishment," and yet the Lord would save His people, and His great salvation was described in the text, and every Christian could say from his experience, "He sent from above; He drew me out of many waters."

Mr. Spurgeon has been severely taken to task by some of the London papers for the above, charging, as they affirm, the accident to the act, or judgment of God. Mr. S. will doubtless defend his position.

The PROVINCIAL EXHIBITION at Truro was visited by vast numbers of people on Tuesday and following days of last week. The weather was very favorable. It had a fine display of horses, cattle, sheep, and poultry. There were 3712 entries of the various classes by about 700 exhibitors. The agricultural implements department was not quite equal to former years. Harris had a splendid display of flowers. Truro florists also had good exhibits in this line.

The Dairy produce was very superior but the arrangement for shewing it, as well as some other departments, may be greatly improved another year. The poultry was far finer than the boxes in which they were shewn. The pleasure in looking at such Exhibitions is greatly enhanced by the taste and care given to their surroundings.

The late Dr. Spence, formerly pastor of St. Andrew's Church at Ottawa, has bequeathed to Queen's College at Kingston about five thousand dollars; to the Ministers' W. & O. Fund near four thousand dollars; and to the 'Retired and Infirm Ministers' Fund' £500 sterling free of duty.