

For the Christian Messenger.

The Report on the State of the Denomination.

The Report of the Committee appointed by the Baptist Convention on the State of the Denomination.

The interests of the churches seem to have suffered in the same way as those of trade and commerce. There has been a decline. In scarcely one-half of the churches comprised in this Convention has an increase been reported. The gospel was preached to the people. Divine promises were expounded. Opportunities of seeking benefit from afflictive dispensations were faithfully embraced. But the souls of men still slept on. But few repented of their wickedness. In most of the churches there were mournful utterances respecting the low state of the cause. Christians exclaimed, "Wilt Thou not revive us again?" But they did not always employ efforts adapted to promote a revival, choosing rather to wish and wait, and so the revival came not. How could it be expected? At such times, unless the Lord graciously interfere, the slumber will become heavier, and it may be feared that in many instances death will succeed to sleep. "It is of the Lord's mercies that we are not consumed."

Inquiry into the causes of decline is always appropriate. Has the church been unsuccessful to the commission, in whole or in part? Has the sense of responsibility been too much restricted to officials, instead of being regarded as binding on the members of the churches universally? Have any been detected in asking, "Am I my brother's keeper?" Has there been any hiding of talent under a bushel, any clutching of gold, as though it were one's own, and not the Lord's? any coldness of affection—any haughtiness or reserve among brothers and sisters, injuriously interfering with the fellowship of the saints? Whatever the evil may be, let it be diligently searched out, and dragged to light, with confession and forsaking, that the Lord may be mercifully pleased to restore his people, and bless his inheritance with fruitfulness and health.

The Statistics of the Churches for the year are thus recorded:—

NOVA SCOTIA.					
Churches.	Baptisms.	Expulsions.	Deaths.	Total Members.	
Western Association.....	67	199	50	126	10,426
Central Association.....	50	177	58	87	8,301
Eastern Association.....	62	161	39	49	4,615

NEW BRUNSWICK.					
Churches.	Baptisms.	Expulsions.	Deaths.	Total Members.	
Western Association.....	77	365	12	54	5,815
Eastern Association.....	79	579	16	95	6,428

PRINCE EDWARD ISLAND.					
Churches.	Baptisms.	Expulsions.	Deaths.	Total Members.	
P. E. I. Association.....	18	28	8	21	1,532
	353	1299	177	412	37,017

The total number of members reported last year was 36,761. The difference, being 276, is the increase of the year—a lamentably small increase! Ferocious prayer, diligent effort, and strong faith, among all the churches, will be rewarded, it may be hoped, by a foretold increase, at heart, next year.

Five brethren have been ordained, viz:—

1878. Sept. 11.—C. H. Martell, Onslow, N. S.
Nov. 28.—J. L. Good, Sackville, N. B.

1879. March 26.—Truman Bishop, Tryon, P. E. I.
May 6.—Arthur H. Williams, 2nd Salisbury, N. B.
July 2.—R. H. Bishop, Upper Steviacke, N. S.

The number of Churches in the Convention is 353. The number of ordained ministers is 265. The number of Licentiates is 55.

The number of new churches constituted and of meeting-houses opened cannot be ascertained, for want of accurate and full information. The same remark applies to the statistics generally.

Reviewing the whole, the Committee submit the following observations:—

(1.) A careful and complete revision of all the lists of church members is obviously necessary. Sources of error are continually occurring; it is believed that very few of the existing lists are entirely correct. The churches are earnestly recommended to appoint examining Committees early in the Conventional year, by whom, in each church, the list of members may be carefully revised, and every name struck out that will not abide the closest scrutiny. So much carelessness has been often shown in this matter in years gone by, that very gross mistakes have crept in, false standing has been given to churches, and incorrect representations have been placed before the public.

(2.) There should be a roll-call of the members, at least once a year. It should take place at a public church meeting, at which every name should be distinctly read out, and sufficient time allowed after each reading, for such information to be given as may be desired, so that each member may know where every other member is to be found. The plan adopted in some churches, by which an annual publication is made of the Catalogue of members, and a copy given to each, is very useful.

(3.) The moral and religious standing of the members should be well known. The Christian church is a religious society; and that every individual member is a religious man or woman should be a well-ascertained fact, respecting which there can be no doubt. Every such person should be "known and read of all men," as "having a good report of them that are without," for honour, honesty, and all Christian virtues and practices, especially for the regular maintenance of family devotion.

(4.) The use of money, as prescribed in the New Testament, should be conscientiously and practically regarded (See 1 Cor. xvi. 1, 2). It is not at our option, whether we give support to the cause of God by liberal gifts, proportioned in amount to what we have, or not. Our hold is not that of proprietors, but of trustees, and we are accountable to our Master. On some points he has indicated his will by stringent requirements. The poor have a constant claim on us. The Christian ministry demands generous maintenance, much more generous than is sometimes bestowed. The Lord has ordained (not recommended) "that they who preach the gospel should live of the gospel." The habits of some churches in this respect are at least discreditable, and in certain instances disgraceful. God calls on us to give as He has prospered, and it is said that he who "soweth bountifully shall reap also bountifully." The Convention resolved at its last meeting that an effort should be made to obtain for Missionary and other Benevolent Objects, a sum that would be equal to a dollar a year from each member. That this may be accomplished without difficulty, by judicious and persevering management, should not admit of a doubt. Which church will be first in the field?

In accordance with the practise of our churches for many years past it is recommended that a Day be set apart to seek the Lord for a special manifestation of His grace and power, in the revival of his work among us. It is hoped that the brethren will agree to observe in this manner Thursday, November the 20th, and that the Pastors will call the attention of their congregations to the subject on the previous Lord's day, so that the day appointed may be a day of faith and prayer—a day of power and blessing!

Respectfully submitted,

J. M. CRAMP, Chairman.

For the Christian Messenger.

About Baptist Union.

OCTOBER 24th, 1879.

My Dear Sir,—

I have been reading the Report of the meeting of the Baptist Convention held last week at St. Catharine, Ont., and propose to offer a few observations. A new society has been formed, called "The Baptist Union of Canada."

The following persons are constituted members of the Union:—1. All Pastors of churches. 2. All ministers, otherwise engaged in denominational work. 3. Life-members by the contribution of fifty dollars at any one time;—but it is not provided that they shall be members of Baptist Churches! 4. Representatives of churches in the proportion of one to each hundred or fraction of a hundred members on the church-roll.

Nine Boards are to be annually elected, for Home Mission, Foreign Missions, and several other objects.

The Union will meet annually; but it must not meet at any place farther East than Montreal, nor farther West than Toronto! It must keep clear of the Maritime Provinces!

I observe that no provision is made for annual payments of any kind. This, in my opinion is a defect and tends "to lessen the constituency."

This Society, then, is not a Dominion Society, since it excludes the Maritime Provinces. Our Missionaries in India as I am told, are very desirous that we should be united to Canada; but we are shut out. Canadian Baptists must not meet East of Montreal or West of Toronto! If they overpass that line, the danger-flag will be hoisted!

It is a great scheme. Whether it will be workable or not, is doubtful. I shall probably address you again on this subject.

Yours truly,

J. M. C.

P. S. Dr. Castle has declined the Presidency of their Theological Institute, that is to be.

The Christian Messenger.

Halifax, N. S., October 29, 1879.

THANKSGIVING.

The giving of thanks is always appropriate to those who receive blessings and benefits. Ingratitude is a sin of which no one who has a proper sense of honor or right will be guilty, without feeling a sense of degradation and shame when brought to see such conduct as they ought.

The meanness of receiving good with indifference at the hands of our friends places us below the level of some well-balanced minds. If this be so with us in relation to our fellowmen, is it not much more so in our relation to our Heavenly Parent? We ought always to be prepared to acknowledge the Hand that supplies us with all our favors and affords us our ten thousand pleasant surroundings.

The Government—both Dominion and Local—have named Thursday of next week, the 6th day of November as a DAY OF GENERAL THANKSGIVING to Almighty God for the manifold blessings received at His hands, and especially for the abundant harvest and the continuance of peace vouchsafed during the present year. It is recommended that the said Day be fervently and devoutly observed throughout the land.

This recommendation we believe will be generally accepted by Christian people, and the suggestion acted upon. Public Worship will form a prominent part of the exercises of the day. The Baptist congregations will, we doubt not, assemble and bow in devout humiliation and hearty Thanksgiving for the blessings conferred on us as a people. Although we have much to deplore in ourselves and the many imperfections which exist in our industrial relations and commercial arrangements, yet, our condition, when compared with many of the other countries of the world, will be seen to be one which bears a most favourable contrast, and exalts us to heaven by the privileges we enjoy. We have had no devastating floods, or great famine, or fierce wars, nor any very general visitations of disease as in many other lands.

Poverty and want exist, doubtless, in some places, but these are alleviated by the sympathy of those able to aid in time of distress and sorrow. Under these considerations "let us then enter into His gates with thanksgiving and into His courts with praise," and we shall find that we are thus preparing ourselves the better for their continuance, and the increase of these blessings which are already enjoyed.

It has been customary for the Baptist Convention to name a day which they recommend the Churches to regard as a special Day of Thanksgiving, or of Humiliation and Prayer, as the case may be. This has usually been at the suggestion of the Committee on the State of Denomination. As that Committee were unable to present their Report during the sitting of the Convention at Truro in consequence of the absence of the Statistics of the Churches in some of the Associations, the Convention did not have the matter before them, but it was ordered that the Report be published with the Minutes of Convention. We copy the Report in our present issue and would suggest that arrangements be made for suitable services on the day named in the said Report. We trust that blessings will be bestowed on many of the Churches in answer to the prayers offered. By meeting thus we place ourselves in a position to receive the blessings promised to the thankful and obedient.

Our Yarmouth brethren have been holding meetings for presenting the action of the Convention to the congregations there. Much success has attended these efforts as they have gone from one church to another each week.

Rev. T. H. Porter has declined the invitation to supply the pulpit at Leinster Street, St. John, N. B. He is meeting with much success in his efforts in giving courses of lessons in Eloquence at Wolfville.

The elections to the new County Councils are being anticipated by requisitions for gentlemen, believed to be suitable for the management of the business of the counties, to fill the required offices.

It is well that many of our farmers have given their attention the past year to the cultivation of wheat. The rise in the price of flour will give them a great advantage over those who have not been so prudent.

Many years ago we remember hearing a good man remark that he could understand to some extent how he might be forgiven his sins; but how the sin of leading others into sin could be forgiven he could not at all comprehend. There seemed a degree of wickedness in it which was almost beyond the reach of forgiveness.

This was brought to our mind a few days since by receiving a communication from "an anxious mother" in reference to the evils arising from Card playing. The fact of Henry Ward Beecher having in his lecture on "Amusements" offered a sort of apology for indulging in this pastime, which has led so many into the ways of the transgressor seemed to her very sad and wrong. It had proved to her a great stumbling block. So that when a question was raised on the propriety of card playing, his example or permission was quoted in its favor, much to her grief and mortification. She says:

"Card-playing I consider something like dram-drinking, for instance, some great and respectable men may perhaps take the social glass and say there is no harm in it, whilst some poor fellow who has not the same control over his appetite, thinks he too may take his glass. The Rev. so-and-so drinks his wine or brandy, why may not I? It must be right or ministers and other great men would not take it, so through the influence of respectable people many a man is led down to a drunkard's grave or perhaps to the gallows. Likewise in card-playing, how pleasing it must be for one who is already fond of gambling, to hear an eminent man speak in favor of the sin he so dearly loves. As in the social glass so in the social evenings' enjoyment, the serpent lurks around, probably it may not bite us, but the force of our example may be the ruin of many a poor soul who, looking at us, says, there is no harm for me to play cards, for Mr. A. and Miss B., both play, I heard them talk familiarly, showing that they were well acquainted with the game. If there were any harm in it Mr. C. would not play for I am sure he would not like to see his own son grow up to be a gambler, thus it is our eyes are blinded. We might perhaps play cards all our lives without any particular injury to ourselves, not thinking that through our example some may be led on from one step to another till one ends his miserable existence by shooting himself, or his comrade, who has swept away his last remaining dollar, leaving his family to ruin and starvation. Let us remember the words of the Apostle, 'It is good neither to eat flesh nor to drink wine, nor any thing whereby thy brother stumbleth, or is offended, or is made weak.'"

Do not forget that NEW SUBSCRIBERS FOR 1880, paying in advance, receive the Messenger UP TO THE 1ST OF JANUARY FOR NOTHING!

A large interesting Sabbath School meeting was held in the Central Baptist Church at Yarmouth, on Monday of last week by way of carrying out the suggestions of the London Sunday School Union. Rev. Dr. Day occupied the chair. The different congregations united and the ministers spoke on the several topics named in the programme all connected with Sabbath School work as follows:

"The relation of the Sabbath School to the Church," Rev. William Robertson.
"Teachers and their work," Rev. J. J. Teasdale.
"Who should attend the Sabbath School?" N. Hilton, Esq.
"The relation of the Parents to the Sabbath School," Rev. Alexander McGregor.
"The spirituality of the work," Rev. J. Lathern.
Closing prayer and benediction, Rev. Mr. Brown, M. E.

It appears to have been a most harmonious and pleasant gathering.

Remittances for the Christian Messenger are always in demand. Please forward early.

Messrs LEE and SHEPHERD have ready for publication another of Mr. Geo. M. Fowles juvenile Books of Adventure, founded entirely on fact, in the "Heroes of History" series. This volume is the interesting life of the famous voyager Magellan, who, born late in the 15th century, and after various adventures started from Spain with five ships, that made the first voyage around the world.

THE REV. DANIEL WISE, D. D., author of a number of popular Juveniles, formerly Secretary of the Methodist Sunday School Union has written another story for youth entitled "Rodrick Ashcroft" showing how a brother and sister thrown by misfortune from wealth and a happy home, met the

emergency with great bravery and fought it through until they had lifted themselves to enviable positions.

"CASTLE FOAM," by H. W. French will also be brought out at once by the same house. It is a strong and dramatic novel founded in Russia during the brilliant reign of the Emperor Alexander.

The author's familiarity with the people and customs has enabled him to weave into an interesting story the pride, passion, treachery, magnificence, and the underlying truth of life among the nobility.

OUR HOME MISSIONS.

The attention of the churches asking aid, is hereby called to Art. 6 of Bye-laws recently adopted:

Art.—Any Church asking for an appropriation from the Board must make a written request to the Secretary, containing information on the following points, viz:

1st, The number in the church; 2nd, The extent and character of the community, and its prospect of growth; 3rd, The amount of salary they propose to pay; 4th, What part of it they pledge themselves to raise; 5th, The least sum that will suffice from the Board; 6th, The name of the minister in the field; 7th, What they propose to call; 8th, What part of the time they wish his labours; 9th, Whether it is not practicable for them to unite with some other Church as thus support a pastor. 10th, Any other facts that may aid the Board to form a correct estimate of their condition and wants.

Notices.

RECEIVED FOR HOME MISSIONS.

From Baptist Ch., 1st, St. Mary's, \$6.00
Church Argyle and
Publico..... 5.00
J. C. ANDERSON,
Treas. H. M. Board.
Yarmouth, Sept. 9, 1879.

P. E. ISLAND QUARTERLY MEETING.—The P. E. Baptist Quarterly Meeting will meet at Cavendish on Tuesday, Nov. 4, at 7 o'clock p. m. All persons coming by rail, will take tickets "Hunter River Station" where conveyances will be provided.

J. B. WOODLAND, Secy.

NOTICE.

The Baptist Ministerial Conference Kings Co., will meet (D. V.) at the Baptist Meeting House in Gaspereaux 10 a. m., of Tuesday the 4th of Nov. The members of this Conference please observe, that the time of meeting is changed from the first Monday of each month to the first Tuesday.

A full meeting of the Conference very earnestly desired. Each Baptist Church in the County should send a delegate and every Pastor and Licentiate the county should endeavour to be present.

Any person coming by train and requiring conveyance from Wolfville to place of meeting, will be cared for, will send a P. O. to Rev. J. Williams, Pastor of the Gaspereaux B. Church, inform him of the need of a conveyance.

It is expected, that Rev. S. McC. B. will preach at the public meeting in evening.

S. B. KEMPTON, Secy.

RECEIVED FROM WOMEN'S MISSION SOCIETIES.

Indian Harbor—Mrs. C. Allen..... \$1.00
M. R. SELDEN, Secy.
Halifax, Oct. 21st, 1879.

Acknowledgments.

Sir,—We the undersigned in behalf of the African Baptist Association Nova Scotia, held with the Digby Kings Church, County of Annapolis, leave to tender our most grateful acknowledgements for the kindness and hospitality shown to us, and we highly gratified at the good behavior and orderly conduct of the community general, and pray that the Almighty Disposer of events will bless their baskets and their stores and receive them into His kingdom.

Signed,
BENSON SMITHERS,
RANDOLPH LANGFORD,
Superintendent.

Letters Received.

L. Baker, \$6. W. R. Doty, \$6.
W. Sanders, \$13. Mrs. W. Phillips,
Rev. Dr. Tupper, \$2. Geo. Neiley,
\$2. J. A. Mosher, \$3.

Several important seizures have been made recently by the Customs authorities in Kings County. Smugglers need to curtail business for the time, find it necessary to be alive to the terrors.

The Cape Breton election last resulted in the return of Dr. McLeod the following vote: McLeod, 1098; Kay, 869; Dodd, 791. McLeod's majority, 226.