Correspondence.

For the Christian Messenger.

State Anniversaries of Massachusetts Baptists.

We started from home early on the morning of Oct. 26th, to attend the Baptist State Anniversaries. They were held this year in Fall River—a long distance from our home, as measured by the old modes of travelling. But the cars swept along like a thing of life, passing by many of the beautiful towns of the old commonwealth of Massachusetts, coursing through cities, stopping, wherever we did, at stations apparently only to take on passengers, for they multiplied till all sittings were occupied. Old friends met and shook hands. The Baptist camp is large, and comrades in the common Baptist faith are often far separated. But these annual gatherings give them the chance of meeting—meeting in the cars, and before they reach the hospitable church holding out welcoming hands to greet the comers. All faces ripple with smiles, or billow with laughter that fairly becomes tempestuous. A happier company you rarely ever saw than that which filled the many cars that morning. There were the great D. D's. bending and limbering into genial souls. Professors, preachers, laymen, men and women of love and faith and courage for God, from the far reaching ranks of the Baptist faith in this and other States, here mingled in one common brotherhood—every man a peer among his equals.

EARLY HISTORY OF THE LOCALITY.

Fall River is in the south eastern part of the Taunton river, and overlooking Mount Hope Bay. Here, King Philp of Indian fame ruled his braves. His residence, Mount Hope, is in full sight, and over the waters of this beautiful bay his keen eye swept,—and his word of command sent hundreds of canoes coursing too and fro in war-like array. Mount Hope was the centre of his operations in the great Indian war of 1675 against the colonists. Thirteen towns were destroyed, and 600 colonists lost their lives. But the great Indian chief who wept at the first, when he heard a white man's blood was shed, was doomed after three hard years of war to weep again. King Philip's tribe and the brave Narragansets, with whom he formed an alliance, wasted away; and at last driven to his head quarters, this famous "Sachem of Pokanoket, youngest son of Massasoit," fell dead at the hand of one of his own race. These bits of history came to us, as in the elegant spacious residence of that fine specimen of Baptist faith and manhood, Jefferson Borden, we looked out upon Mount Hope.

But what fine names the Indians gave to places! Many of them have been retained, and many more lost entirely—names sounding so rich and full. Our language does not equal theirs in the names either of persons or places. It does not do to translate those names. If you do, you take the poetry and beauty out of them. Let the Indian words be. Any man who translates them, ought to be indicted for committing a public nuisance. What barbarisms the translations often seem to be. Sitting Bull, Standing Bear, and Spotted Tail, are intolerable. These translations almost provoke our hate against the chiefs. We should not be prejudiced against them in advance. Let us have their rich Indian names with the poetry all in them, the sense of dignity and bravery too; for the poor Indian does not get any too much respect paid him and his rights in this country. How much better than any English is the name of Philip's tribe, Pokanoket, and of his father, Massasoit. We were up the Penobscot in Maine a year ago to Moosehead Lake, and found that state abounding in these rich fine Indian names. Let the good people of Maine, who have just now in the presidential election retrieved their good reputation, go on and establish it, by making it a State's prison offence to change any of these splendid histories or traditional names into English. Longfellow has done a great service to literature in preserving many of them in his Hiawatha, and deserves the gratitude of his countrymen. Fall River is a translation, not so bad as many others, yet it has lost nearly all the poetry and beauty of the Indian word. The Indian name for the place was Quequechan which means falling waters. Out of the great pond or lake, nine miles long on the highlands, just back of the city, came the water tumbling in torrents down the rugged steep. It cannot be seen now, for modern civilization has covered up this splendid water-fall beneath streets, and builded great mills over it, along down to Mount Hope Bay. But that water-fall must have been a splendid sight in the old colonial days Not only has modern civilization covered up the "Falling Water," but metamorphosed the poetic Quequechan into Fall River. Oh what profanation of beauty,—who can bear it?

FALL RIVER CITY.

This city is one of the large fine cities of Massachusetts, which surround Boston, like a cordon of forts. It ranks with Lowell and Worcester. Its growth has been marvellous in the last decade. It has almost doubled its population, and contains now almost 50,000 inhabitants. Its great mills and factories are some of them along the water-fall, and others scattered over the outskirts. Here the great palace steamers of the Fall River line, to New York, have their eastern terminus. Trade centres here. The climate is much like that at Newport. The evenings of the hottest summer days are cool, for the ocean breeze sweeps up the bay and gives to the nights the refreshing coolness of Newport. Besides, the fogs though somewhat troublesome at times, are not so great as to interfere much with the largest comfort. It is a delightful place to live in. A home on Rock St., like that in which we spent a few days, above and away from the bustle and crowd of factory-life, overlooking Mount Hope Bay, when the white sails come and go, would fully satisfy our highest earthly ambition in such matters.

We have three churches in this city, besides two or more Mission interests. Two of the churches are large and strong. Rev. A. K. P. Small, D. D., a growth of Maine brain and heart,—is pastor of the Old First Baptist Church. His preaching is like a chime of cathedral bells, pealing forth the gospel. Imagine yourself just under the cathedral at Antwerp, while the chime is ringing out some song of Heaven. Now the notes are small and sweet and penetrative—you *must* listen enwrapt—then again they come to you full and strong and mighty as thunder; while the thoughts he gives you breathe with a divine life, and burn as with the fire of the Holy Spirit. We think now of Cowper's description, and if it does not fit this man of the First Church, we do not know to whom it applies.

His theme divine,
His office sacred, his credentials clear.
By him the violated law speaks out
Its thunders, and by him in strains as sweet,
As angels use, the gospel whispers peace.

With the other large church of Fall River we are not so familiar, though in college days we endeavored to magnify our office in both of these churches. It aims to be a sort of Tremont Temple, and is called, we believe, "The Temple," trying to do for Fall River such a work as Tremont Temple is doing for Boston; and we will not dispute the large opportunity for such work when so many factory people are crowded together.

It is to the First Church we come now. The building is spacious, the audience room is large, seating perhaps about 1000 people, and both rich and beautiful in its carpeting and its ornamentation. The Old First Church people evidently "take pleasure in her stones, and favor the dust thereof." The vestry and church parlors are below. So complete are the arrangements here, that a small colony might abide as in a palace. We are given a cordial welcome. The hour for the "Conference of Baptist Ministers" has come. The officers were in their places, and devotional services were held. The usual routine business was despatched, and then came

THE ANNUAL ESSAY, BY REV. GEORGE E. MERRILL,

Pastor of the First Baptist Church of Salem. He is the brother of Hon. J. Warren Merrill, of Cambridge — a member of a noble excellent Baptist family of social distinction. Fine natural abilities and the culture of Harvard, are in this young bishop of the Salem Church. Already he has written three or more books, among the best which are now in our Sunday School library, and adapted to the reading of the older scholars. We knew him in the Theological Seminary and in the minister's circle since, and were prepared to hear one of the freshest, finest essay from him. It was all we expected too, and many who did not know him as we did, when he had finished the reading, burst out in praise of this rising light in the scholarship and culture of our denomination. It pays to give the best and largest opportunities to students for the ministry. The churches reap in the after years a hundred fold; and nothing in the *Messenger* pleases many of us more than the sturdy efforts the Baptist people of the Provinces are making for higher education and culture in the ministry and out. Among human means, this and Sunday School work will increase their power as nothing else will. Give the churches a ministry of brain power, as well as soul power, if you would have them grow, and mould society into their own likeness. The Baptist fathers of Nova Scotia had the gift and the wisdom of prophetic sight when they planted Acadia; and the present fathers of the denomination, at the head of whom stand such honored veterans as Dr. Cramp, known almost everywhere, and Dr. Crawley and Dr. Tupper, are planting with equal wisdom, when they raise the standard of education at Acadia; add thereto a Ladies' Seminary and develop the Theological Department.

But how easy to let fall the topic we had in hand, and speak of the grand things the Baptists of the Provinces are doing for education! We take the topic again as horses are said to take the bit and rush on.

REV. MR. MERRIL'S ESSAY

was upon "*The Bishop of Crete.*" He told the story of Titus' life only as a frame work around which to build church polity, and he thought our Baptist polity differs largely from that gathered from Paul's instructions to his helper in the gospel. To Titus was committed a paternal sway over the churches. Just as a father might decide what should be done, and then call upon all the family to help him do it, this bishop ruled in the church. In those days the polity was decided by the rulers or leaders, and the common people were often not called upon to assent or dissent, and the instructions given Titus were in harmony with this leadership. Having by clear analysis drawn out the church polity of that day, the essayist compared it with our Baptist polity, and he thought Titus managed his trust so that not so great a proportion of the churches under his care, had no pastors as in our time. "There are in the United States 23,912 Baptist Churches, of which only 14,596 have ministers, and 9,316 are without pastoral care. In our denomination the ratio of pastors to churches is only 61 per cent, among the Congregationalist it is 95, among the Methodist 70, the Presbyterians 93, the Roman Catholics 70, Episcopalians 119, or 19 per cent more pastors than churches." The essayist also spoke of the vexatious features of our polity in New England, contrasting widely with that of apostolic times. Did you ever hear of the appendage to a church called a "society." We have it here, and an interesting curiosity it is to the ecclesiastical anatomist. Sometimes it happens that the church is the appendage, or if it is not, that curious phenomenon often occurs of the tail wagging the dog. If you desire to see that curiosity, come over, you will not be long in New England, before in some quarter you will see it, the tail will be quite steady, doubtless taking itself to be the dog, and the dog will begin to wag too and fro—"the society," will dismiss the pastor and not allow him to have any salary, although the church wish to retain him; or the church will dismiss the pastor, and the society will not concur, but, if the church persist, oust the church altogether from their place of worship. This is an extreme case, but it has lately happened in Cambridge. The tail has shaken the dog clear off. Our churches in Nova Scotia are fortunate in having no such appendages. They are an invention of modern times. Titus knew nothing of them, and we think if he were in Massachusetts, one of the first things he would do, would be to sever these unnatural caudal extremities from them. As the reporter on the ground said, the essay was "a brilliant effort, indicating extensive research, thorough study, and a keen perception of the early Christian churches, as well as of the churches of the present day." Discussion followed the reading of the essay, and the morning and the noon were the first half day.

In the afternoon, the first thing "on the boards" was the Treasurer's report. The Conference exists to take care of the Aged and Infirm Baptist Ministers of the commonwealth, and to preserve fitting memoirs of those who are translated to the church of the First Born above. For this benevolence the permanent fund and the churches of the state have poured into the treasury the sum of $2,377.66, and eight good and true men have been supported. How delicately this is done too! Their names are known only to the officers of the Conference. Their feelings are unharmed while their pressing wants are relieved, and they are made happy.

Of the ministers of the Commonwealth who died during the year, one was especially conspicuous, Rev. John Blain of Mansfield. What a glorious record he has left! He was one of God's noblemen, of apostolic zeal and power. Preaching was as natural to him as to Father Manning or the Hardings of Nova Scotia. He was sixty years in the ministry, and when taken sick, was still planning great things in the Master's vineyard. He baptized over 3,000, and had given during his life over 20,000 dollars to the Lord's work, and at his death left 10,000 more to Home and Foreign Missions. He it was, who led Gardner Chilson to will his great fortune of about 400,000 dollars, to Missionary and church objects. But at 3 o'clock

THE ANNUAL SERMON

came on, preached by Rev. C. H. Spaulding, of South Boston. His text was Gen. xxiv. 49—the words of Abraham's servant to Laban when asking the hand Rebekah for Isaac. Topic—"*The consecration vow of the Ambassador of Christ.*" Like Eliezer, the minister has made a vow—not to win a bride for Isaac, but for Christ. The sermon was well-planned and richly illustrated, and we saw the parable clearer than ever before. One of the points made was especially comforting to the earnest, faithful ambassador. It was this of "*Restfulness as the results.*" Ministers often fret and worry. Many church members are like dead weights the pastor must carry them along. And then the indifference of the people to all the stirring facts and truths of the gospel often almost crushes him. In our boyhood days we used to hear a good old Methodist local preacher pray almost every Sunday, and often in the week meetings. In phrase more expressive than elegant,—he was sure in almost every prayer to tell the Lord that preaching to the people was "like pouring water upon a duck's back." We have never forgotten the simile. The minister has laid out his strength in his sermons, hoping that in the evening he will find many hearts aroused as his own by the truth. But there is no unusual demonstration. The gospel has slid off oily consciences, "like water from a duck's back." What shall the minister do—worry his head into aching and sleeplessness. Nay, but like Eliezer, be restful as to results. And now we think that, after a hard Sunday's work, we shall feel no more like a volcano ready to burst from the pressure of internal fire, but lay our heads and hearts down to sleep quietly till the morning.

There, Mr. Editor, I have given you an account of the Annual Meeting of only one of the societies which held their anniversary at Fall River this year, and that too more in brief than in detail. Our ministers and churches are happy in taking care of the aged brethren, worn out in preaching the gospel, and who have no earthly home of their own. It is a blessed work. Let the younger ministry of Nova Scotia emulate the good example their Massachusetts' brethren have set them.

POTAGE AU GRAS.

AFRICA.—Another of the popular errors to be corrected, is that the African Sahara is a great desert. On the contrary, it is now pronounced a cultivated country, fruitful as the garden of Eden. It is said by recent travellers to be a vast archipelago of oases, filled with flourishing towns and villages, each surrounded by a large belt of tropical fruit-trees.—*American Messenger.*

For the Christian Messenger.

An Experience.

It is with a rejoicing heart that I endeavour to pen a few lines, which by God's grace may be the means of leading some benighted soul to a knowledge of the truth as it is Christ Jesus.

I had the advantage of a Christian education, but having strayed far from the path of rectitude and duty I became schooled into the belief of the unconscious state of dead, and the final annihilation of the wicked, and I endeavoured to lead others into the same noxious doctrine. It is with shame I confess that I was on the verge of eternal ruin. But in all my wanderings and deviations from the path of duty, my Heavenly Father did not forget me, but His omniscient eye kept watch over the poor prodigal, and he brought about a wonderful way of reclaiming me from the jaws of impending destruction.

While passing through Cambridge, Hants County, I called upon the Rev. D. McLeod, and remained some days with him, and after some conversation with him, he introduced the all-important subject of man's future destiny Being at that time bitterly opposed to the truth, I sought to prove my doctrine from God's word and disprove his views. But God helping him, as I believe he ever does, he convinced me of the errors of my way, and the need of conversion to God. He prayed with and for me and I have reason to bless the Lord my, eyes were opened, and a great burden has been rolled away from my heart. The Sun of Righteousness arose with healing in his wings, and dispelled my gloomy doubts and fears, and brought heaven into my soul, and how gladly did I renounce the errors that bound my soul in their iron fetters.

I thank God that there is "now no condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus." I would now warn all under whose eyes Providence may place these few lines, to be aware of the fearful errors which came near destroying my soul, and to hear and obey the glorious gospel of God.

ALFRED FIELDING.

For the Christian Messenger.

Appreciative Addresses.

TO REV. JOHN A. GORDON.

Dear Brother,—

With sorrow and disappointment we learn that it is your intention to accept a call to another field of labor and remove from this place. If any effort on our part would induce you to reconsider the matter it would be gladly put forth. During the four years of your pastorate you have endeared yourself to the young and old, to believers and unbelievers in this place. Indeed it can be truly said that you are of "good report of them who are without." Your self-sacrificing efforts in behalf of the people's interests, morally and spiritually, we can never forget. Your earnest uncompromising defence of the "faith once delivered to the saints," has won the admiration of your brethren, and your Christian courtesy under these circumstances has given you an influence over your opponents which few possess.

But above all, we rejoice in the spiritual prosperity of this church since you became our pastor. The Lord has graciously visited us once and again for the last four years. About forty-six have on profession of their faith been baptized, and six by letter received into the church as well as an equal number in Dundas, and other sections in which you have labored. The most perfect harmony has prevailed in the various sections of the church, over which you have been overseer, and we do most sincerely pray that graater success, and as great harmony may attend you in your new field of labor.

We hope and pray that the Lord may so control affairs as to lead you back to us.

Rest assured, dear brother, that our best wishes and most earnest prayers for the protection and blessing of God, will always follow yourself and your loved wife and family, and we in return would crave an interest in your prayers.

Signed in behalf of the Church,

ALEX. SCOTT,
ALEX. ROBERTSON,
ROBT. FRAZER. } Deacons.

West River, Lot 47, P.E.I., Oct. 22, 1880.