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OUR SABBATH SCHOOL CONCERT.

We briefly stated last week that the Sabbath School Concert in the Free Baptist Church, Fredericton, on Tuesday evening, the 23d ult., was a success. The large audience present seemed pleased and gratified, and we have heard but one expression in relation to it since—that of admiration and approval. We promised, in our last, to give the programme of the exercises. We do this for the information of those who may wish to introduce similar exercises into their Sabbath schools, and also to remove objections which may exist in some minds to Sabbath school concerts. We were quite unacquainted with the matter usually introduced into these exercises, as well as the order of them. Our idea of what they might be, was gathered from attendance on one or two occasions at similar exercises in the Sabbath school in Carleton, under the excellent superintendence of brother D. W. Clark. Although the one given in our own Church gave universal satisfaction, we nevertheless, can see where improvements can be made, by the introduction of additional exercises.

We remark that our Sabbath school is not large; it is held at half-past nine o'clock, a.m.—an unfavorable hour at this season of the year; our three religious services during the day, prevent our holding the school at any other time. The number of scholars that took part in the concert was consequently small, and it being the first exercise of the kind in any of the schools of Fredericton, rendered it merely an experiment.

The introduction of music by the choir was an important improvement on the similar exercises that we had witnessed, and gave much additional interest to the occasion. The following is the programme, which we drew up before the exercises commenced, and which was strictly followed throughout:

1. Hymn in the Sunday School Bell, page 52, given out from the pulpit, and sung by the choir.
 Reading of Proverbs, 4th chapter, by the pastor.
 Prayer, by the pastor.
 Opening remarks, by the pastor.

These were brief, and alluded to the nature and object of the exercises—leaving indulgence for any defects that might be discovered, and particularly requesting that no expressions of approval or disapproval might be made during the meeting.

Music by the choir. Then commenced the recitations.

1. An extract from John B. Gough's lecture on "Hallelujah," delivered in Ketter Hall, London, before the Young Men's Christian Association—by Woodford Yerxa, aged 18 years.
 2. "A child's thoughts of God," poetry—by Frederick Carpenter, aged 6 years.
 3. "Little things," poetry—by Minnie McLeod, aged 5 years.
 4. "The Sand and the Rock," a poem, by James Montgomery, in two parts—by Wesley Carpenter, aged 16 years.

Music by the choir.
 5. Dialogue on "The Sabbath"—by Wesley Carpenter, Woodford Yerxa, and Arthur Freeze.
 6. "A Child's Faith in God," poetry—by Ezekiel McLeod, aged 7 years.
 7. "Little Words," poetry—by Emma Yerxa, aged 7 years.

Here followed the singing of a beautiful Sabbath school hymn, by Master Frederick Lawrence and his sister, Miss Jane Lawrence, aged about 14 and 12 years respectively, children of Mr. Lawrence, Kingsclear. These are scholars in a Sabbath school in Kingsclear, under the very efficient superintendence of Mr. D. J. Holder, who also teaches a day school in that place.

We had made arrangements with the Rev. B. F. Ratway to be present, and give an address appropriate to the occasion. We regret to say that the illness of brother R. prevented his attendance, and we were obliged to supply his place ourselves. This address followed the singing by Master and Miss Lawrence. Then music by the choir; after which, the recitations were resumed.

8. "The Confession of King Alcohol," poetry—by Eldon Carpenter, aged 12 years.
 9. "Go, feel that I have felt," poetry—by Abbie McLeod, aged 14 years.
 The circumstances which induced the writing of the thrilling lines composing this piece, are as follows: A young lady, in New York, was in the habit of writing for the Philadelphia Ledger on the subject of temperance. Her writings were so full of pathos, and evinced such deep conviction of soul, that a friend of hers accused her of being a fanatic on the subject of temperance, whereupon she wrote these lines.

10. "Eternity," prose—by Arthur Freeze, aged 10 years.
 At this stage of the exercises, the collection was taken up, which, we are gratified to say, amounted to the handsome sum of THIRTEEN DOLLARS—a good evidence that the audience was interested and pleased. The choir sang a beautiful anthem while the collection was being taken.

Next followed the reading of an original essay, by brother Eldon Freeman, which he had written for the occasion. At our request, he has permitted us to publish this essay, which will be found in another column. We do not hesitate to say that it is highly creditable to the author. [Brother F. is a member of our Church, and a student at the University.]

Recitations again resumed.
 11. "A Sabbath School Teacher's meeting in Heaven with a former scholar," prose—by Edith Yerxa, aged 11 years.
 12. "The Destruction of Jerusalem," blank verse—by Albert McLeod, aged 12 years.

Here again followed the singing of another beautiful Sabbath school hymn by Master and Miss Lawrence, assisted by three young ladies—Miss Hannah Eady, Miss Elizabeth Tinker, and Miss Georgina Wheeler, about 14 years of age respectively—all scholars in Mr. Holder's Sunday school, Kingsclear. Mr. H. very kindly volunteered this addition to the exercises by his own children, and which afforded additional interest, and was creditable to the musical abilities of the young people. We tender our thanks to them, and to Mr. Holder, who kindly permitted them to join in supplying our exercises with interesting features.

13. "How a little child may do good," a dialogue—by Cassandra Carpenter, aged 14 years, and Addie Carpenter, aged 10 years.
 Music by Choir.

14. "Mystery of Providence," poetry—by Frederick Althorn, aged 9 years.
 15. "The Census," prose—by Miss Anthony.
 16. "The Burial of Moses," poetry—by Arthur Freeze.

Concluding address by pastor.
 17. "Good Night," poetry—by Wesley Carpenter. Domology by Choir.

The foregoing is the exact programme of exercises; the time occupied was precisely two hours, during which the greatest quietude and attention were manifested by the large audience present. The recitations were given under the supervision of brother E. G. Freeze, who with brother Freeman, took part. To prepare the schoolmaster in it, and we have no hesitation in saying that it was one of the most interesting and profitable juvenile entertainments we ever attended. To the choir we are under obligations for the excellent and appropriate music furnished. The severe illness of Mr. Perkins to whom we are indebted for the present efficiency of the choir, prevented his attendance, which we feared would be a serious drawback to the music, but Miss Loggin, who kindly came with the request to supply his place at the Melodion, performed her part so admirably, that no inconvenience was felt. We tender her especially our sincere thanks.

We have given the foregoing extended and particular notice of this concert for the special interest of our

our readers. We regard them of great utility if properly conducted, but if light and trifling pieces are introduced for reading they will be likely to do more harm than good. Great care is necessary to maintain in them a strictly religious and moral character, and to always let the aim be, not to amuse, but to instruct and improve. If the exercises are allowed to degenerate into mere amusement, to provoke laughter, and furnish mirth to the audience, they will be no better than some of the entertainments which occasionally disgrace some of the public halls of our cities.

THE CHRISTIAN ERA.

AN ORIGINAL ESSAY, READ AT THE SABBATH SCHOOL CONCERT IN THE FREE BAPTIST CHURCH, FREDERICTON, DECEMBER 23d, 1892.

By Eldon Freeman, AGENT GENERAL. The commencement of the Christian era is marked by one of the greatest events which ever has, or ever will occur in the world's history—the birth of our Saviour, Jesus Christ.

The appearance of this divine personage on our globe, marks the commencement of that mighty revolution of mind, which has since been going on, and is still extending among the nations of the earth. It was then that those just conceptions of the deity and true principles of christianity, which the Jewish nation had received from the Almighty, began to be diffused over the world. The day star had arisen, which heralded the rising splendour of the morning sun; and now, the glorious beams of the Sun of Righteousness began to stream forth in glad tidings of salvation to a perishing world, dispelling the thick darkness which brooded over the minds of men, and cheering their rugged pathway with his bright rays of life and immortality beyond.

The commencement of this grand movement, is now very justly adopted by all nations professing christianity, as the great turning point in history—the fixed era to which all other events occurring antecedent, or subsequent to it, are referred.

The birth of Christ, by many learned men, is said to have occurred about four thousand years after the creation recorded in the book of Genesis. This brings us to a very interesting period in history.

The Roman empire had reached the meridian of its greatness; every nation, accessible to its arms, lay prostrate before its iron power; rival monarchies and contending princes had ceased their strife, and the troubled elements of sanguinary war, which had for ages convulsed the world, had sunk to repose under the mild reign of Augustus Caesar. The boundaries of this vast empire extended, on the north, to the rivers Rhine and Danube in Europe; on the south, to the burning sands, which fence the interior of Africa; and on the British Isles, in the west, to the river Exe and the Tyne. In the east, the empire included all the countries around the Mediterranean Sea, the most fair and fertile portions of the habitable earth.

But, alas! how gloomy, how doleful was the religious aspect through all this realm, over all these conquered nations. With the exception of the Jews only, gross darkness of superstition prevailed—millions were chained down to superstition, morbidly clinging to their lifeless mythologies, and vainly worshipping their idol gods.

But the world was preparing for the dawn of a brighter day—the introduction of christianity.

It would seem that the powerful influence of heathenism was rapidly decaying. The Greek religion which aimed only to deify earthly existence, could afford no comfort in misfortune. The Roman religion was ridiculous, and forever stripped of its power, by being degraded into a mere tool for political ends, and by the exalting of worthless despots to the rank of gods. The Jewish religion had sunk into a state of materialism and superstition, and was deprived of all its moral and religious earnestness.

Expectations that some extraordinary personage was about to appear, were at this time, in various forms and degrees of clearness spread over the whole world, by the political and religious contact of nations, and, like the first streak upon the horizon, announced the approach of day. The Jews in particular, were anxiously expecting the coming of a Messiah, whose birth had been long foretold by the prophets; but they imagined he would appear as a temporal prince to free their country from the dominion of the Romans.

Thus in an age sunk in superstition, yet anxiously awaiting deliverance from its outward and inward misery—in such an age appeared the Saviour of the world. In humility, in the form of a servant as to the flesh, yet effulgent with divine glory, he came forth from a despised corner of the earth. It is not surprising that the manner of his appearance disappointed the expectations of the Jews. No royal palace designated the spot where he first appeared; a lowly manger was the place of his nativity; Joseph, a humble carpenter, his reputed father; and Mary his virgin mother, though descended from the house of David, is undistinguished among the daughters of Judah.

The life of our divine Saviour, may be summed up in few words, "he went about doing good," he closed his mission by offering himself a sacrifice upon an ignominious cross. His disciples were men of the humblest walks of life. To twelve of these, styled apostles, was given a commission to preach the gospel to all nations. Thus divinely appointed, and on the day of Pentecost, being imbued with the gift of the Holy Ghost, they commenced their mission by promulgating the gospel in Jerusalem, and with such astonishing effect that 3000 persons were converted to the first sermon of St. Peter.

The apostles, thus encouraged, set out to announce the truths of the gospel to a world shrouded in moral and religious darkness.

Animated with the desire of carrying out the great design of their beloved master, to subvert the whole world to himself, they often exposed their lives to the greatest peril, and went every where proclaiming the word of life. Christianity spread in a rapid and extraordinary manner, which appears more wonderful when we reflect that the apostles, with few exceptions were poor and illiterate, destitute of worldly power or influence; that their master belonged to a nation undistinguished for importance; that the religion they preached led not to promise of worldly pleasure, honour, or riches; but on the contrary often exposed its professors to scorn and reproach, persecution and temporal loss; in short it had to contend not only against the long established superstition of pagan worship, but also against the prejudices, passions and vices of the world.

Yet allured by no earthly advantage, subdued by no other power than the force of the gentle, the Greek and the Jew, the apostles, meekly bent their necks to the yoke of Christ, shake off their ancient prejudices and profess themselves the followers of the crucified Saviour.

During the first century of this era, we find that the light of christianity had spread its cheering rays over the various provinces of the Roman empire. St. Peter visited the towns of Samaria, Judea, and Syria, traversed the towns of Asia Minor, and is said to have made Rome itself the scene of his labours. St. Paul carried the glad tidings of christianity to the Gentile nations. Passing through the provinces of Asia, Pamphylia and Phrygia, he converted thousands to the Christian faith; from thence he visited Greece, where his labours were crowned with success; finally he left before his eloquence, and flourishing churches, as in the cities of Corinth, Philippi, Thessalonica, Athens, and Ephesus. From Greece he directed his course westward, and visited Rome also. The other apostles most faithfully fulfilled their mission, so that the gospel was proclaimed throughout every known country. But when our Lord predicted the triumph of the church he also foretold its persecution. His predictions have been literally fulfilled; wave after wave of scourging persecution swept away the early faithful of the Church, to receive a martyr's crown. Prison, cruel tortures, and death, have marked the history of the Church in almost every age. No power on earth has failed in its hostility to the band of God-fearing Christians, and done its utmost to annihilate the infant community. But the gospel has triumphed over all its enemies, its history through all ages, furnishes the strongest evidence of the indestructibility of