

Union Convention at Nictaux.

We gather the following particulars of this Convention from the Christian Messenger—further particulars are deferred by its Editors as the minutes of the Convention will shortly be published.

The second meeting of the Baptist Convention for Nova Scotia, New Brunswick and Prince Edward Island, was held with the Church at Nictaux. On Saturday, the 25th Sept., a number of delegates assembled in the Rev. Mr. Bill's old Meeting House, when the Rev. Mr. Burton preached with much acceptance, after which the Directors present met together and made arrangements for preparing their Report. The Board for Foreign Missions also met, and spent some time in deliberation.

On Sunday the 26th, the dedication services occurred on the opening of a large and commodious place of worship just completed for the Baptist Church in that place. Sermon by the Rev. T. S. Harding, who preached to a densely crowded congregation, probably not short of 1400 souls, from 2 Chron. 6, 18, "But will God in very deed dwell with man on the earth?" After a brief intermission, Rev. Samuel Robinson, Pastor of the 1st St. John Church, preached an impressive discourse from Prov. 8: 30, 31, "Then I was with him," &c. The attendance was very large, and a great number being unable to gain admittance, services were held on both occasions in the old chapel to numerous congregations.

In the evening the Rev. Mr. Fitch preached to a large congregation in the old meeting house, and several sermons were preached in the surrounding country by different ministers present.

Early on Monday morning the various Boards met for the transaction of business. At 10 o'clock the introductory sermon, previous to entering on the business of the Convention, was preached by the Rev. Charles Spurden, Principal of the Fredericton Academy, from 1st Corinthians, xiv: 20—"Brethren, be not children in understanding," &c. It was a lucid, practical, and well adapted discourse. The Convention was then organized by its highly esteemed President, the Rev. T. S. Harding, taking the Chair, when the Delegates from the various Churches, Societies, Union and other bodies, or individuals entitled under the laws of the Convention, gave in their letters and names, and took their seats. A large number appeared; after which the Board of Directors gave in their Report, and a very full and interesting Report was also given in and read from the Board of Foreign Missions, by the Rev. Dr. Crawley, the Secretary. The Convention next proceeded to appoint various Committees, who were ordered to report on the respective matters given them in charge, early on Tuesday.

The proceedings which followed in reference to the interests of our Foreign Missions, were of the deepest interest. A number of the ministers and others present spoke on the occasion, and it was evident that an undiminished interest is felt throughout the Denomination to prosecute with vigor this great Christian enterprise, and not only to sustain with efficiency our present Missionaries, but, as soon as possible, to add to their number. Present difficulties, indeed, exist on this point, among which is that of obtaining some adequate to the important duty. The Board of Foreign Missions are, however, instructed to keep the object steadily in view, and enter into correspondence in order to effect it. The whole of the proceedings during the day were characterized by entire harmony, and a growing conviction in the minds of all, of the value and importance of the present Union. In the evening a most interesting meeting was held in the old Chapel, when several of the senior ministers present related numerous incidents connected with the early history and spread of the Gospel in the two Provinces, under the labors of the veteran band who are now fast receding from the scene of their arduous ministry, leaving behind them a name which shall be forever had in remembrance. The Rev. Messrs. Chase, Robinson, Burton, Vidito, Bill, Crawley, T. S. Harding, and others, addressed the meeting, and few, we believe, of those present, but felt that the season was both profitable and delightful.

On Monday morning, at 10 o'clock, the Rev. W. Hall preached a highly interesting discourse to a large congregation.

The Convention was then assembled, and the various Reports of Committees received. The

subjects reported on were: On amendments of the Constitution of the Convention—Bible Translation—Religious Periodicals—Colporteur Enterprise and Employment—Religious Liberty—Union with the Baptists in Canada—Improvement of Christian Ministry—Present state of Religion—Sabbath Schools—Temperance—Union Societies, and Quarterly Meetings.—On all these important matters, the meeting was addressed by the members of the Convention present, and the discussions which arose were productive of much pleasure and information, and tended greatly to exhibit the benefits which the working of the union between the Provinces must eventually confer on our general interests. The different Reports having been fully discussed, and several of them modified, and Committees, where needful, appointed to carry them out, were duly passed. A most important amendment of the Constitution of the Convention, recommended and adopted, was the nomination of two distinct Boards, composed of an equal number of persons from each Province, to take charge of the subjects of Domestic Missions and Education, so far as the respective institutions of either will admit, in order to consolidate the union on these subjects as far as possible, and bring the whole within the scope and supervision of the Convention.

The General Boards of Directors and Officers of the Convention on Foreign Missions, &c., were then named, and the next meeting was appointed to take place at Fredericton. A vote of thanks for the most liberal and cordial hospitality with which the members of the Convention had been received and entertained by the Church and inhabitants of Nictaux was then passed, in which we may say it would have been strange indeed if there had been a dissenting voice. The Meeting was closed with prayer by the Rev. Dr. Crawley, and the benediction pronounced by the venerable President, Mr. Harding.

While it afforded matter of regret, as well as of earnest prayer, that so little of a spirit of revival, and so much coldness is prevalent in our churches, it was still a cause of joy and gratitude that peace and union throughout our churches in all the Provinces, were never more general or predominant. No errors in doctrine, or relaxation of the fundamental rules of order or discipline, are observed, while the pulpit exhibits zeal, fervor, and faithfulness, and those who fill it are earnest in pleading with God for the people, and with the people for God. The measures commenced by the Convention now remain to be carried out by the churches and the people—each has his work to do, and let each see that he does it well.—The obligations assumed by the delegated body, are but a representation of the trusts committed to every individual member of our churches, and each occupies a station of deep and solemn importance.—There must be no vacillation—no halting—no relaxation of steady and determined Christian effort—if we would avoid the curse of Meroz, we must "come up to the help of the Lord against the mighty." The Baptists of these Provinces have, at this time, taken a new and imposing position, and they afford a noble example of what union can effect. How vigilant and how active have the enemies of truth and of God ever been in both Provinces, to sow discord and create disunion among them! but how signally have they failed! how often have they been defeated! Truth has triumphed, and our churches throughout the land are set for its glory and defence.—May such considerations prove incentives to us all, to gratitude, to humility—to trust in God's promises, and to earnest, unremitting, and active exertion.

Colportage.

The rise and progress of a great moral enterprise; its principles and relations; its present condition and probable destiny—these are themes of abiding interest. If it be true that "God is in History," it is pre-eminently true that His hand may be traced in those movements which immediately respect his spiritual kingdom; and which contemplate no other end than the salvation of a world purchased by the blood of the Divine Redeemer.

Five years since, two young men, from Maine and New Hampshire, one a licentiate and the other a layman, started for the West, under a commission from the Committee, to labor among the destitute in Kentucky and Indiana. One of them, after successfully prosecuting his work for four years, was called to labor as a mission-

ary in the principal city of his adopted State; the other is still in the Society's service in a distant Territory.

Thus began the American colporteur enterprise. These were the first American colporteurs. A somewhat kindred system had been prosecuted, however, for years, in the form of volume circulation, and had laid a broad foundation in the confidence and affection of the christian community for this extension of effort to the destitute masses of the country. The Society's books had been placed in the hands of tens of thousands of intelligent families, and were prized and loved, for their high-toned spirituality and sound theology; so that when the Home Appeal of the Committee was made in behalf of the millions who possessed not the treasures of grace and knowledge which these publications contained, a prompt and generous response came from the churches. From that day to the present, the almost universal demand has come from intelligent ministers and christians throughout the land—"speed the colporteur work; send the Gospel to the destitute. If men are wanted, here they are; if money, here it is. Onward with the colporteur enterprise."

The growth of colportage has been steady and rapid. The good providence of God has opened field after field; qualified laborers have been raised up; a thorough and extended system of supervision established, and the means to sustain the whole have been furnished with a cheerfulness and liberality encouraging to the Committee and honorable to the christian name. During the first year only two colporteurs were in the field: in the second twenty-seven were employed; in the third year seventy-six; in the fourth one hundred and forty-three; and the fifth year closes with a list of one hundred and seventy-five that have been in commission for the whole or a part of the year. During these five years more than 200 years of colporteur labor have been performed, and not far from 400,000 families visited, and 1,000,000 volumes circulated. In view of these results and the amount of present and prospective good accomplished, we may well exclaim, "What hath God wrought!"

As the work advanced, its adaptation to new and distinct classes of the population became obvious. When established among our native population, God opened a wide door among the immigrant Germans. When some twenty laborers were successfully employed among this class, the French population became an object of interest and effort: no sooner had the work among them fairly commenced than an opening appeared among the Irish; and now the Welsh and other classes, both Protestant and Romanist, are receiving the spiritual benefits of this simple mode of doing good. Missionaries in heathen lands are applying the principles of this agency to the work of evangelization, which they are carrying forward in the midst of untold difficulties. We know not why it may and must not be incorporated, in all its essential features, into every scheme for the successful and rapid propagation of the Gospel in destitute and neglected districts.—*Tract Society Pamphlet.*

Results--Conversions--Revivals.

A few instances, of the blessing of God upon the faithful labors of colporteurs during the past year, will afford encouragement to the friends of the Society.

"There has been for some time a powerful revival of religion in a neighborhood where I circulated many of your valuable books. Much anxiety was manifested to obtain the books. I visited a neighborhood where four weeks before I sold them a Library for their Sabbath-school. Some who were well informed told me that there had been more reading of religious books since I was there than there had been for five years previous."

COLP. E. TENN.

Our books are earnestly sought for and carefully read. I have known one book to go through eight families. One minister told me that he believed more reading has been done in the country since last May than had been in 10 years before, as far as our books have been circulated."

MR. I. C. VA.

"It has been remarked by good judges that there has been more reading since I brought the books into the country than ever before."

MR. M. W. VA.

"The books sold have in many instances produced a good effect. There is a manifest change (I am told by the ministers) in the attendance at church, and more interest taken to have youth

sent to common schools in several neighborhoods." MR. W. E. PA.

It must be gratifying to all to learn that the colporteur of the Association, Mr. Richard Crabb, is well supplied with the Books which are found to be so eminently useful in other places, and not only those of the American Tract Society, but also Sabbath School Libraries, of different sizes and prices, from £2 10s. down to 12s. 6d. A variety of Question Books, in the Old and New Testament, with all the necessary helps for Teachers, Superintendents, and Parents, to interest and instruct children, consisting of Maps, Bible Dictionaries, Antiquities, &c. &c.; also, Theological Works for Ministers; and upon application to him or to the Colporteurs Committee at St. John, consisting of Rev. E. D. Very, Rev. A. McDonald, Rev. John Francis, Deacons N. S. DeMill and A. McL. Seely, any work for the Family or Ministerial Library can be obtained, and always at the same price at which such works are sold at the counters in Boston and New York. We are pleased to learn from Mr. Crabb's letters to the Committee, that he receives a more cordial welcome the longer he labors. It is one of the most efficient instrumentalities now employed in the United States, and in many European Countries. If christians will but furnish the Committee the means for employing several men, a vast change would soon be effected through the province. Once passing over the ground only creates the thirst which succeeding visits must satisfy. "The more I sell," writes Mr. Crabb in his last letter, "the more is wanted: if I could but travel in one parish all the time, I should sell more than I now do by travelling from place to place. I can travel however in no place where books are not wanted; truly 'the harvest is great but the laborers are few.'" Several good and efficient brethren are ready to engage permanently in this work as soon as the Committee can feel authorized by the contributions of our christian friends to employ them.

Baptists and the Reformation.

Perhaps, we cannot better fill the same amount of space, than with the following excellent statements of denominational principles from an introduction to a volume of tracts on "Liberty of Conscience," issued by the Hanserd Knollys Society in England. This Society named from an eminent Baptist of the 17th century, is most laudably engaged in republishing treatises of great merit which otherwise might be lost to the Denomination and the World. The Society is sustained by an annual subscription; and each member is entitled to a copy of each of its publications, which are issued as often as the means thus contributed will allow. In this way every Baptist may avail himself, at a cheap rate, of a treasure of most valuable denominational literature; the character of the Publishing Committee being a sufficient guarantee, that nothing but what is truly valuable will be issued.

"The Reformation had scarcely boasted an existence of five years, when from the midst of its adherents, men arose who declared it to be insufficient." Their proceedings at once awakened the most virulent opposition, and bitter complaint. The chief weapon of the reformers was most unexpectedly employed against themselves; their professed scriptural teaching came to be examined by the test they had so successfully applied to the dogmas of Rome; and Scripture authority to be urged by men, whom Universities had not nourished, nor Academic honors graced, for practices and truths, to some extent destructive of the position which had been taken by the followers of Luther, Zuingli, and Calvin.

The church of God must be a community of holy men.

Faith is the result of Divine tuition alone, and cannot be compelled by fire or sword.

A rite which has neither the sanction nor command of the Lord Jesus Christ, or his apostles, must not be admitted among the ordinances of the Lord's house.

Secular potentates have neither place nor dominion in the kingdom of Him who is the blessed and only Potentate, the King of Kings and Lord of Lords. As there is but one Lord, so is there but one Lawgiver in the Church, Jesus Christ.

Such were some of those principles, the enunciation of which called forth a torrent of abuse and persecution upon the heads of the Baptists. They were regarded as the Pariah sect among religious communities and no outrage upon truth or justice was left uncommitted to crush them.

One simple principle, now regarded as an axiom of a scriptural church policy, lay at the foundation of this internal movement in the bosom of the Reformation. It shall be given in the words of the historian Mosheim:—"The kingdom of Christ, or the visible church he has established on earth, was an assembly of true and real saints, and ought therefore to be inaccessible to the wicked and unrighteous."

* Moedler's Symbolism, ii. 155, translated by Robertson.