

THE CHRISTIAN VISITOR.

SAINT JOHN, APRIL 19, 1848.

THE AVERAGE AGE OF CONVERTS.

We were forcibly impressed recently by some facts published by the Am. Tract Society, and commend the same with a few comments to the attention of Christian Parents and Teachers. The facts are these: that from statistics of Revivals gathered in one of the United States, it appears that "in one revival out of eighty hopeful conversions, sixty three of whom united with the Church, not more than three or four were past the age of twenty-five." "In an extensive revival which followed in another town there was a similar proportion of youth." "In other revivals in the same State in 1845 and 1846, including in all not far from five hundred additions to the Churches, at least as large a proportion were from twelve to twenty-five years of age; and that these facts are perhaps a fair average throughout the country." Though surprised at first by the inferences necessarily drawn from such facts, yet the more we consider them and consult our own observation, the more we are convinced that these are sober facts upon which Churches and Parents may form their calculations for the future. The mean age of converts who come to an experimental and saving knowledge of Christ has for years been lessening, and has now come down to less than twenty-five years, we may perhaps say to twenty years. We think from what information we have of the revivals now in progress in New Brunswick and Nova Scotia, that these facts will be confirmed by them. We would suggest to our ministering brethren, the expediency of making memoranda of such matters. We would like to lay before our readers the results of such investigations, we think it would be calculated to do much good. Such as the following for instance:—How many of the converts are from the Sabbath Schools, and in what capacity—teachers or scholars? How many the children of christian parents? Where female prayer meetings are held, how many the children of mothers who attend it? How many between 12 and 18? How many between 18 and 25? How many over 25? The proportion and age of those who indulge a hope, and do not make a profession of religion: and, if it could be ascertained, the proportion, amongst the children of professed christians, between those whose parents maintain family worship, and those who have no family altar. We suppose every Pastor from general observation has his conclusions in his own mind, but we would like to see the tangible facts, upon which these conclusions rest, and we cannot but think they would be of great advantage to awaken Parents to proper exertions and a faithful discharge of their duties, also to give direction and tone to the energies of the Church.

Many parents are now criminally indulging their children in such dissipating recreations as forbid any deep permanent religious impressions being made upon their minds, and this under an impression that they are now young, and that bye and bye these youthful follies will be voluntarily relinquished, and then truth can find its way to their hearts. Others in a variety of ways are feeding the vanity of their children, and creating a pride for dress and outward show which absorbs their attention, and despoils the sanctuary of its sacredness, converting it into a mere theatre for the exhibition and observation of personal display, closing their ears to all divine appeals. Others again just at this period are anxious only for the temporal prospects and provisions of their children, that they have a proper schooling or a suitable trade, or the elementary preparation for a liberal profession, all under the impression that these are the special subjects for solicitude at such an age.

Let such parents consider the facts above noticed. Would you have your children become christians? Can you bear the thought that they never will be savingly interested in the religion of Jesus Christ? Consider then the risk a parent runs when he neglects the religious culture of his children even during their childhood; opinions and habits are forming which by the time of 20 or 25 years of age, will be an effectual barrier to all permanent religious impressions.

In the face of these facts, how intently should the eye of the church of Christ be fixed upon the sabbath school. Every year as proper attention is bestowed upon this honoured instrumentality, revivals, we are convinced, will be more and more restricted to its limits. He that would win souls must be a laborer there; parents, who would have their children converted, must encourage them in their attendance, and interest them in the exercises of the sabbath school. In view of these facts, those who acknowledge the claims of God, and feel the need of being born again, but have passed this

period alluded to as marking the ordinary bound, should deeply ponder their case. How many calls they have refused, how many overtures of grace have they rejected, how many convictions have been strenuously resisted, how aggravated must their case already appear in the sight of God; children are shouting hosannas to the Son of David, and are crowding into the kingdom, whilst they with increased light and increased obligations, yet despise and reject Christ. How much reason to fear every day and every hour the door may be shut. We feel deeply the responsibility of penning even these lines for the consideration of such, lest rejecting such an evident and solemn appeal as these facts make, it may immediately be said by Him who searcheth the heart and knows our conclusions, "He is bound to his idols, let him alone." What a fearful responsibility at last to meet twenty or twenty-five or thirty or more years of open, known, deliberate rejection of the gospel of the Son of God.—However solemn the appeal of these facts to unconverted men of maturer years, and to parents who have not been faithful in commanding their households after them, we can see great promise in them to the church of Christ.

Dr. Todd, one of the most observing men and also one of the most judicious writers in the United States, remarks in his sabbath school Teachers' Manual, that it was well ascertained that in general the church of Christ and the cause of religion derived more benefit from the conversion of one poor boy than of ten rich men. How cheering the fact that such a great part of its membership, is now gathering in in youth: their habits and sentiments, all to be moulded by the gospel, under the continual demands and incentives of this Missionary age.

It has long been evident, that the standard of personal piety must be greatly elevated, and that a deeper sense of personal obligation as stewards in God's household must prevail among Christians, if the kingdoms of this world were to be given to Christ through the agency of the Church; we think we can see how a reasonable expectation may now be cherished that God will speedily effect this, that is, by early conversion before the world has hardened the heart, before covetousness has barred all access to the cries of the perishing children of men.

A door is opened here, in the providence of God, which we are persuaded men cannot shut, for a proper preparatory training and education of the Ministry. Our Ministry, as we think, has evidently been greatly abridged by the paucity of youthful converts; it is yearly increasing, as suitable ones in suitable circumstances for qualifying themselves are brought into the Church, and in this more ample provision for a suitable Ministry, of course we can discern great encouragement for the Church of Christ.

Other reflections might be added, but we leave the subject for the present, hoping that the brethren who are now favored of God with a revival, will be kind enough to collect and forward the data suggested above, with such remarks as they may feel justified in submitting.

Our readers are aware that our esteemed brother, Rev. A. D. Thompson, has for many months been laid aside from pastoral duties, by a distressing bodily affliction; since our visit to Charlotte County, several weeks ago, brother Thompson has been able to leave home and visit his people a few times, but it is our painful duty to inform the many friends, who were rejoicing in his partial restoration, that he was last week thrown from his horse, and his leg was broken by the fall; we understand by a brother, who saw him last week after the accident occurred, that the bone was set, and at the time brother T. was quite free from pain, and manifested the most cheerful submission to the will of God.—We do most deeply sympathise with our dear Brother, and pray that the Lord will be his present and sufficient helper, in which, also, we know a host of warm friends in every part of the Province will unite with us.

We are glad to learn that brother Magee, who has been confined to his house for months past by a similar misfortune, has been able to preach for a few Sabbaths past, though not yet fully recovered.

ENGLISH BAPTIST MAGAZINE.—Our brethren in the country may not be aware that this valuable organ of the English Baptist Missionary Society, including under one cover, "The Baptist Magazine," "The Missionary Herald," and "The Irish Chronicle," "in all 64 pages monthly," can be had by applying to Deacon N. S. Demill of this city—price 7s. 6d. per annum, and no additional expense to those who receive them in this city.

"Testimonials and Memorials of the service of Lieutenant CHARLES HARE, of the Royal Navy, thirty seven years a Lieutenant."

We have read this pamphlet with a degree of surprise, that an officer of so great merit, and whose public and distinguished services have been so repeatedly brought to the notice of Government by officers of so great distinction, should be left unrewarded. But we do not consider the course of the British Government in this and like cases so anomalous as some of our contemporaries seem to do. It characterizes to a greater or less extent all human governments, and has been noticed in every age. It reminds us forcibly of Solomon's observation of the poor wise man that saved the city: Ecc. 9 ch. 14, 17 ver. We think the very fact that such services cannot command unsolicited honours from Government, whilst birth and fortune, though unsupported by worthy deeds, are a passport to its highest gifts, should go far to reconcile a worthy man to his unmerited neglect, if he has otherways a comfortable maintenance. Offices so unjustly bartered cannot increase the real fame of a deserving man, and no man whose esteem and respect are of any worth to such an one, will withhold them merely from the want of official attraction to call them forth.—This pamphlet very neatly executed, is for sale by the Publisher, W. L. Avery, Prince Wm. Street. Those who are quietly reaping the fruits of such services, are bound certainly not to forget them.

The Colonial Protestant for March has come to hand, confirming still more our opinion of its value. We think our ministering brethren especially, could hardly command at so trifling an expense; a more valuable aid. The worth of much of its matter is not at all diminished by once reading, but has a permanent value for future reference. Brethren can be supplied by applying to the Editor of this paper, \$1 per annum. Its Editor sent us, probably by mistake, a dozen extra copies for March, instead of a half dozen extras of the preceding months; new subscribers will of course wish to commence with the first number.

We would call attention to the Advertisement, in another part of this paper, of Mr. Scribner's Concert of sacred music.

Mr. S. is a successful teacher, and has devoted himself unremittently to his calling, and we believe to the entire satisfaction of those who have patronised him.

The proceeds above expenses are to be appropriated to the Sabbath School of the Carleton Baptist Church. We hope to witness a large attendance.

Rev. E. J. Harris returned from the States last week for his family, having accepted a call from the Baptist Church in Exeter, N. H. Exeter is a very pleasant manufacturing town, on the line of Rail Road from Portland to Boston, about 40 miles from the latter city.—Brother Harris carries with him the respect and best wishes of his brethren, who will be pleased to learn that his prospects are flattering; we hope the Lord will make him greatly successful in winning souls to Christ.

ERRATUM.—Credit should be given for the first two pieces upon the 172 page of this paper, to the Colonial Protestant.

The following article from the Macedonian, shewing the result of an appeal made by the Board of the American Baptist Union to the churches in the States, two months since, will be gratifying to all the friends of missions.—\$23,000.00 was called for, and already \$30,000.00 has been sent in, and the time has not yet expired. Brethren, shall our Union Board have so substantial and satisfactory a response to their appeal?—Ed.

CLOSE OF THE FINANCIAL YEAR.—The amount of donations and legacies received into the treasury of the Union, during the month of March, was \$27,064.39—making for the year, from the same source, \$85,894.42. This joyous result was communicated to the Executive Committee at their stated meeting on the 3d. inst., whereupon it was

Resolved, That in the statement now made, by the Treasurer, of the unexpected and unprecedented receipt of more than twenty seven thousand dollars during the past month, by which the expenditures of the financial year will be fully met, the Committee see new occasions for devout gratitude to God, and increased confidence in his favor and faithfulness to the missions.

Resolved, That the Committee will now unite in thanksgiving to God for his great goodness, and in prayer, that the contributors and his missions may continue to receive his fostering care and rich blessing.—Macedonia.

The Legislature of Nova-Scotia was prorogued on Tuesday. Sir John Harvey delivered an excellent but somewhat lengthy speech on the occasion.

Despatches from the Colonial Office had been laid before the Assembly—entirely approving of the measures which had been pursued by Sir John Harvey, with reference to filling up his Executive Council—recognizing the right to determine the amount of Sir Rupert D. George's retiring pension as properly belonging to the Assembly, and stating that to the decision of that body it must be left—and, with reference to the office of Queen's Advocate, or Proctor in the Court of Vice Admiralty, which the Hon. Mr. Johnston refused to give up, when he resigned the Attorney Generalship, announcing Earl Grey's decision, after due deliberation, that the ex-Attorney General may hold the office, providing he supports the present Administration, or abandon his seat in the Legislature.

His Lordship, however, tells His Excellency that in removing Sir Rupert D. George, he exceeded his authority—that, in point of form, the removal of that Officer, can only be regarded as a Suspension, as he held his office by virtue of Her Majesty's appointment. He informs his Excellency, however, that Her Majesty has been pleased to direct that he shall be considered as having been removed from the date when he suspended him from the discharge of the duties of the offices in question.

His Lordship expresses his satisfaction that the Council intend, as per minute in Council of February 8, 1848, to resist with firmness, the introduction of the mischievous policy of sweeping changes of subordinate functionaries.

His Lordship trusts that the system of Responsible Government, of which they so justly appreciate and apply the principles, may now be regarded as established in Nova Scotia, in a manner calculated to make it work for the general advantage of the Inhabitants of the Province.—Courier.

Mr. John Robb, of Dorchester, has recently constructed a neat model of a wooden bridge, which appears to combine the essential qualities of strength, lightness and economy. Those who are curious in these matters, have an opportunity of inspecting the model, by calling at the office of the Editor of this paper. If the work of Mr. Robb proves itself to be one of sound practical utility, the public alone will reap the benefit, as he is by no means desirous of securing a monopoly, by taking out letters patent.—Albion.

The Lieutenant Governor directs, that, until the departure of Colonel Sir WILLIAM MACBEAN GEORGE COLEBROOKE, K. H., the customary honors may be paid to him by all officers, Civil and Military throughout the Province.—Royal Gazette.

We learn that nothing definite has been done in the present sitting of the Executive Council, towards the organization of the new Government. Another Council will be called early in May, when the important appointments so long spoken of will probably be disposed of.—Fred. Rep.

MELANCHOLY OCCURRENCE.—On Monday last, Mr. Isaac Dittmars and Mr. D. Snow, Junr., of this place, were returning from Digby in a sail boat. When about half way across the Basin the boat was upset by a squall—they both succeeded in getting hold of the bottom of the boat the sea breaking over them and the weather being cold, the former (about 60 years of age,) died in about half an hour—the other, a young, hardy seaman, remained hanging on the boat near seven hours, when he was taken off and is now recovering. The deceased was a worthy upright man, highly esteemed and respected by all who knew him. His body was recovered, and is to be interred in the old consecrated grave yard of his forefathers to-morrow. He has left a widow and nine children for whom universal sympathy is felt.—Yarmouth Courier.

DESTITUTION.—The Cape Breton Spectator says—The condition of this Island is becoming every day more fearful! There is not sufficient flour in the stores to satisfy the demand for two weeks longer—and UNLESS IMMEDIATE steps be taken by the Executive, the consequences will be appalling! We have reiterated this fact over and over—if the cry is unattended to, we wash our hands of the results—we have done our duty.

The harbor is still open—what prevents the Government from expending the Road Grant for this County in the purchase of Breadstuffs and forwarding such food to north Sydney or Louisburg with all possible haste?—Yarmouth Courier.

BRITISH ARMED INTERVENTION.—Havana papers of the 12th ult., contain the manifestos and protests of Senors Guerrero and Lindo, Presidents of Nicaragua and Honduras, against the late high-handed act of Captain Lock, of the British frigate Alarm, who, on the 11th of January last, landed at Truxillo, taking military possession of that port, and forcing the Governor to recall troops of the Honduras government, who were said to be trespassing on the territory of Her Britannic Majesty's ally, the King of Mosquito. The President of Nicaragua speaks of an appeal to arms, to avenge violated nationality of the Central American Confederation.