

CHRISTIAN VISITOR.

SAINT JOHN, FRIDAY, MAY 10, 1850.

ACADIA COLLEGE AND THE DEPUTATION IN ENGLAND.

We sincerely regret the occasion of calling the attention of our readers again to the misapprehension existing in some quarters relative to our deputation and especially so, as it seems to bring us in conflict with a brother whom we highly esteem; but as the judgment and feelings of many brethren are involved with ours, and, as we regard it, the credit of the Convention also, and the good of Acadia College, we cannot consistently be silent.

Our readers will remember that a few weeks since we penned an editorial commenting on an anonymous communication which had been sent from Nova Scotia and which appeared in the British Banner endorsed by its Editor, Dr. Campbell, the purport of which was that the Baptists of the Province were imposing upon the religious public of Great Britain, and that the doings of the Convention held in Bridgetown, N. S. last September were a sham &c. In publishing this letter in the Christian Messenger an editorial appeared in which the Deputation in England was pronounced to be an Agency under the Convention together with the Nova Scotia Education Society.

The object of our editorial as will appear to those who consult it (No. II of Vol. III.) was to deny the allegations of the correspondent of the Banner, and also to correct the misstatement of the Messenger in regard to the Deputation, which we represented as follows: "The Deputation in England is not the Deputation of any society save only of the Union Convention of the Baptists of New-Brunswick, Nova-Scotia, and Prince Edward Island—a society which never received a penny from any State or Province directly or indirectly, and never solicited one that we know of. It is soliciting funds not for the Nova-Scotia Education Society, nor for Nova-Scotia as such but in behalf of a College surrendered to the controul of a government, ten members of which are appointed for New-Brunswick, and ten for the other Provinces by the Union Convention. It is for the promotion of Education not in Nova-Scotia alone, but in these three Provinces, each fully and fairly represented."

In reply to this we soon received a counter-statement from Dr. Crawley—a very lengthy epistle, avowing himself the author of what had appeared as the editorial of the Christian Messenger, and attempting to show that the editorial of the Christian Visitor had mis-stated the case. We immediately wrote to Dr. Crawley informing him of our regret at declining his communication, giving our reasons at length, and we think respectfully, upon which he expressed his acquiescence, and requested us to let the subject rest there, which we were glad to do.

In the Christian Messenger of Friday last however, our brother has solicited space to republish our editorial alluded to, and also his reply which we had declined. In his request brother Crawley says, "I had written to the editor of the Visitor in April, to give my views of the case. This he declined to publish on the ground that there were several matters in my letter which he should feel called upon explicitly to deny." In this refusal I at once acquiesced, &c. Now we more than regret, we complain that this method of representing the incident does us great injustice; for no reader however partial he might be to us, and to the view we have taken, would fail to consider us as not only uncourteous to use such language to our brother, but unjust to refuse him the privilege of presenting his view to our readers.

Brother Crawley says in request to the Messenger, "I beg you therefore to publish that editorial of the Visitor, with my answer to it, which I now send you, that our brethren and the public generally may learn explicitly the points in question."

We must think if brother Crawley had published the letter in which we declined his communication, he would have presented a fuller and more explicit statement of the points in question than appears either in our former editorial or in his reply; besides doing us justice, by showing in the language, style and reasoning which we employed, that we were neither uncourteous nor unjust to him. This in substance we proceed to give, and our readers we believe will all concur with us in judging it inexpedient to publish our brother's reply.

In regard to the action of the Convention at Bridgetown, relating to Acadia College, then let it be understood; we present one view of the

transaction: brother Crawley presents quite a different one; and the question is which is right?

We beg to reply, the statement we give is precisely and exactly that given by the Deputation, brethren Bill and Francis, in England, in several periodicals; and by other brethren, as we shall soon show; so that we are not defending our own individual impressions merely. Now one very material fact affecting the decision of this question is this: We were present when these transactions occurred in the Convention, and took an active part in the discussion and action, so also were brethren Bill and Francis, and the others whose testimony we will soon present: we therefore possess the best possible means of giving a correct statement; but brother Crawley (and we hate to mar his elaborate reply) was not present, did not hear what was said, nor witness what was done, and of course is therefore under the greatest possible disadvantage for making a counter statement. Now we ask, how can brethren and the public generally learn explicitly the points in question from one who was not there, and who therefore could not know, and who refuses to admit the testimony of those who were present, participating in all that was said and done?

We presented this to brother Crawley as one reason for declining his communication, that this inconsistency would at once appear to every one. The Report relating to the management of the College was brought into the Convention by the Chairman who had drawn it up, on Tuesday, A. M.; following the report was a series of resolutions, the latter of which and they only were discussed; they made no reference to the government of the College, as will be seen by Minutes page 6: h. On the afternoon of this day, brother Crawley left for Halifax. The Report itself was not discussed nor any of its preliminaries or details settled till Wednesday, A. M., as will appear by Minutes page 11, when the whole subject of controul and support was brought forward and fully discussed. We then were present, seeing and hearing, but brother Crawley was far away.

We stated furthermore to brother Crawley that our chief anxiety in alluding to this subject in our paper was to exonerate our Deputation, and relieve them from the difficult position into which they had been thrown; and that his communication did not do them justice. We do think that brethren making the sacrifice that our Deputation have made, in leaving their churches and their families, and who have exerted themselves so faithfully and strenuously on such a mission, deserve every consideration at the hands of their brethren, and it is exceedingly hard, in their absence, and while they are yet spending themselves in our behalf, to make statements derogatory to them, unless they are most clearly apparent.

In his reply, brother Crawley says, "all would have been quiet, if it had not been for the ground too hastily taken by the agents in London, that the Convention eschew Legislative aid." * * * "They have unhappily been hurried by the circumstances into taking this ground and we, none of us in my judgment, consult well our own character or theirs, unless we as speedily as possible relieve them from their mistake, and give our brethren in England a frank and full view of the real state of the case." Now it is easily ascertainable whether this imputation is correct; whether they hastily took this ground in London, or were hurried into it by circumstances.

In the Christian Visitor, October 19th, 1849 we noticed the appointment of the Deputation to England. The "Baptist Reporter," published in London, with which we exchange, copied our notice into their next issue after receiving it, adding the following note:—"We should be very sorry to say a word in discouragement of this visit, or of the esteemed brethren who have undertaken the mission, and yet we deem it right to apprise them that a similar visit to England, several years ago, did not obtain favor in the sight of the brethren in England, because the managers of the institution were understood to be favorable to receiving grants from Government for its support. The success of the present deputation will, we apprehend, depend upon this matter being 'all right.'" This of course fell under the eye of the Deputation, who were thus called upon when in Liverpool, at the very outset of their mission, to make their statement. In the next number of the Reporter we have an Article headed, "Acadia College, Nova Scotia," commencing as follows:—"Last month we refered to the Deputation appointed to visit this country to solicit pecuniary aid in behalf of

this institution, and intimated, that the object might not find favor with the English dissenters, if its managers were receivers of Government support. In a note from the Deputation, Messrs. Bill and Francis, these brethren now state distinctly that 'the institution is directed and sustained purely upon the voluntary principle, and consequently is independent of all government interference or controul,' this will do: and now we wish them God speed."

Let those acquainted with the cool dispassionate manner of brother Bill and with the power of apprehension of both brethren, Bill and Francis, and their conscientiousness, both of whom were present at the deliberations of the Convention, and so personally interested in its action, with the Minutes of the Convention and their credentials in their hand, giving the above statement to the "Reporter," judge whether those brethren are the mistaken ones, the hasty ones, or the author of the reply.

Brother Crawley may not have known of the above correspondence when he penned his reply, but he knew of it before he published it; for we took the trouble of copying it verbatim, as we now do, and gave it as a reason for declining his communication. It is hardly to be expected that the friends of the Deputation, their churches and families will consider it a consistent return for their sacrifice and exertions to be so misrepresented to the brethren and to the public in despite of this correspondence which proves the contrary.

In regard to the Convention eschewing legislative aid, we simply ask, was there any occasion or call whatever for the Convention to eschew by resolution or vote or by any action whatever legislative aid? It never received any, it never sought any, it never gave any one the least occasion to think it ever would ask any; indeed, its very constitution, covering the three Provinces, would seem to forbid its making a consistent appeal to any legislature for aid. Why then look into the minutes for a vote where none was called for!

The question of legislative aid is involved in that of controul. Brother Crawley in his reply says, "You know very well, as we all know, that the question of legislative aid, as a matter of principle, was never raised at the convention." Yes; as a matter of principle, it was not raised; but as a matter of fact the subject was raised, and discussed; and we participated in the discussion; and brethren who were present will not forget this feature of the discussion.

The question was fully discussed as to how the current expenses of the college would be met; and here we may remark, that this whole action in regard to the College was based on the presumption that Legislative aid would be withdrawn from Acadia College, whether the Baptists wished it or not. Few if any had any expectation that the grant would be continued. This was the occasion of the anxiety on the part of its friends in Nova Scotia, and was represented at Bridgetown, and the year before at Fredericton as the reason why the College should be adopted by the Convention. The question discussed therefore was this:—*In the absence of Legislative aid, how is the College to be sustained?* The question was asked, what amount was necessary per annum to meet the current expenses? And the reply was £400. The question was then asked, what is the amount of the one pound subscriptions and yearly donations? This was given. It was then concluded that with a similar effort in New Brunswick to get subscriptions of one pound each, to be conducted by the Union Agent, the balance would be made up for its current expenses; and that in lack of these subscriptions for the Academy, its regular receipts would nearly support it, and what might be lacking was to be supplied by some device of the N. S. Education Society as the New Brunswick Education Society would sustain its own Academy. The prosecution of this Agency in New Brunswick for pound subscribers was only deferred till brethren Chase and Chipman, who were appointed to do it, could give a statement of the debt of the College to the Agent, so that a full statement of its financial affairs could be given to any one who asked it. Instead of this being effected in six weeks, as was thought it might be, it was not ascertained till a short time since, after this controversy commenced. In less than a week however after this statement was made in St. John a few brethren subscribed £50, to be paid annually for five years; this was not a general move, but one of a very few; and an effort generally in the City and Province would of course give it a respectable increase. This however is based on the condition that the action of the Convention is sus-

tained; for, if Legislative aid is received for the College, then that, with the pound subscriptions of Nova Scotia, exceed considerably the amount of the current expenses.

Brother Crawley says: "It would be queer enough, however, for any denomination of Christians to repudiate as on principle (as our brethren Bill and Francis have done in a letter to the Patriot newspaper) a source of income for one object, which the same denomination of Christians in the same place is at the same time receiving and snugly enjoying for another similar object." Again, he says: "They have been plainly bewildered, or they never could have penned a syllable disparaging to the principle of legislative aid, &c." Now we have read over and again their note in the Patriot newspaper, and what they have written for other periodicals, and we do not see a single line or hint on the principle of legislative aid. So far from disparaging it, in the very note in which they state that it is to be dispensed with for the College, they state explicitly that it is continued for the Academies. Does any one judge that brethren Bill and Francis could be betrayed into such an act, to denounce a thing on principle and then profess to the very same public and in the same note that they continue to act upon it. No, they represented the matter correctly. It was an experiment with the College, they hoped it would succeed.

But now, to the main fact of the transfer of the controul without expectation of legislative aid for the College.

First: Our readers will notice the language of the Report itself, as drawn up by Hon. J. W. Johnson, who, by the way, cannot well be charged with using generally equivocal or ambiguous language. (See page 6 of Minutes.) "The Committee recommend that the support and government of Acadia College should be separated from the Academy at Horton, and that Acadia College should be adopted, supported, and governed as the collegiate institution of the Baptist denomination in the three Provinces, and be placed under the direction, supervision, and controul of the Convention; and that the Theological Chair be in like manner placed under the controul of the Convention."

"That in carrying this object into effect the Committee further report that Acadia College be separated from its immediate connection with the Academy at Horton, and its constitution be modified and altered in such a manner as may be necessary for placing it in the proposed relation to the denomination of the lower Provinces, and bringing it under the controul of the Convention."

How there can be any misapprehension about the meaning of language so simple and terms so explicit we cannot conceive.

See again page 11 Minutes: "2d. Resolved, That in the opinion of this Convention it is inexpedient at present to interfere with the Charter of the College, but that Governors be appointed by the Convention from both Provinces to take in charge the College in its behalf."

Could any fact be more intelligibly expressed? Brother Crawley in his reply alludes to this resolution to show that the Government of the College still rests on the Education Society because it was deemed inexpedient to interfere with its charter; in other words, he would show by the first line of the Resolution that all the rest of it was false and that the Resolution had no meaning; whereas, at the instance of Hon. J. W. Johnson who drew up the Report and this Resolution, and whose advice in regard to legal objections we all considered competent, we concluded, as he thought it unnecessary to change it, to leave the charter as it was; for who would think of disturbing us, if we took our own burden upon our own shoulders, and bore it without troubling others.

We now ask how else, but upon the assumption of an actual transfer of government and controul could the Convention take it upon itself to appoint a full Board of Governors and a new Treasurer for the College?—to appoint an Agency in its behalf, and a Committee to superintend the Agency? On what other ground would they assume the amount due to the Professors of Acadia College as the debt of the Convention?

The way in which this action was regarded, by those present may be inferred from the course adopted by the Deputation in England, as we have stated; and by the perfect coincidence of opinion on the part of the three brethren appointed for New Brunswick to superintend the Agency; who perfectly accord with each other and with the Deputation.

Again, an officer of the College, specially interested in the movement, writing to us soon