

The kingdom of our Lord, though extended and extending, is not yet come; "We see not yet all things put under him." A mighty struggle is evidently impending. Scripture, its inspired and absolute authority, the primary foundation of the Christian faith, is being rudely questioned and impatiently handled.—The traditions of past ages have again emitted their miasmatic mists, like a noisome pestilence, to corrupt its holy truths. Infidelity, in bold yet covert forms, threatens to submerge all human hopes, and even the expectation of immortality, in a flood of spiritualism and transcendental philosophy, striking more or less openly at the historic fidelity of the records of truth, or making them to vanish away in imaginative myths. "It is not unlikely, said the sagacious Fuller, in 1796, "it is not unlikely that almost all our religious controversies will soon be reduced to one, upon which the great body of men will divide. Is Christianity true or false? Is there a God? Is there a heaven or hell? or is it all fiction? Agitated by those important questions, the greater part of the inhabitants of Europe and perhaps of America, including our posterity, may rank either as real Christians or as open infidels." Yes, the time is at hand, if not already come. We are summoned in the Providence of God to the defence of the Bible. It has ever been the endeavour of Baptists to embody all their Lord's instructions in a practical and living form. They have found his Word sufficient for every purpose of religious and ecclesiastical life, and by it are still prepared to stand. And, should another flood of tribulation again overwhelm the churches of God, their pastors scripturally guide and teach—should the principles we have endeavored to illustrate again undergo the fiery trial, doubtless now, as in all past ages, many amongst us will be counted worthy to testify with their blood the pure Word of our God, assured that, in the beautiful and striking language of Hubmeyer, who, in 1528, at Vienna, laid down his life at the stake, "Divine truth is immortal; it may, perhaps, for long, be bound, scourged, crowned, crucified, and for a season be entombed in the grave; but on the third day it shall rise again victorious, and rule and triumph for ever."

TERMS OF THIS PAPER.

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CHRISTIAN VISITOR.

SAINT JOHN, FRIDAY, MAY 14, 1852.

MINISTERIAL EDUCATION.

We often hear this subject spoken of as though it were of quite modern date among the churches of our denomination. No mistake could be greater. When our old ministers are spoken of as being able preachers and successful ministers of Christ, reference is understood to be made to those whose labors have covered the past half century and scarce a thought goes beyond; but these are truly modern men. Our faith is not so recent as to require us to regard these beloved and venerable men as its fathers or founders. We have been very much pleased in the review of some historical incidents, in connection with our denominational affairs, after the great English Revolution of 1688, which checked to some extent the more violent persecutions to which some of the ejected ministers were subjected and especially those of the Baptist persuasion. One of the first steps after their emancipation was the convention of an Assembly of ministers and messengers, from more than one hundred churches of christians, baptised upon a profession of their faith, in London and the country, which met in London July 3d, 1689, and was in session till the 11th of same month. They published a very full confession of faith, in thirty-two articles, supported by scripture references, which confession was signed by thirty-seven ministers in the name and in behalf of the whole assembly. The first signature is that of H. usard Knollys, who had been imprisoned for the faith; Andrew Gifford's name also stands attested, who was imprisoned three times in Newgate, and once in Gloucester Castle, for the testimony of a good conscience,

Benjamin Keach also signed it, who afterwards prepared a catechism in conformity with these articles and was twice put in the pillory for the said catechism, because according to one of the counts of the indictment against him. In reply to the question "Who are the right subjects of baptism?" he dared to state, "Believers or godly men and women who make a profession of their faith and repentance."

An admirable Confession of Faith in fifty-two articles, drawn up with the greatest care in 1643 and adopted by seven Baptist churches in London, in 1646, had been previously made and was the first thing of the kind published by the Baptists of England. This publication of Articles was to put a stop to the slanders which were busily propagated against them by their enemies. Some treatises had been previously published, one called "The Vanity of Children's Baptism," another which was entitled "The vindication of the royal commission of Jesus." This was given to many members at the door of the House of Commons and was dedicated to the House of Commons. Its design was to show that the practice of christening children opposes the commission granted by our Lord and Saviour; that it was a Romish or anti-christian custom, and was established by Pope Innocent III., who made a decree that the baptism of infants of believers should succeed, circumcision. For such reasons the Baptists were inveighed against from the pulpit and the press, and loaded with all the opprobrium of heresy. They were charged with being Pelagians, Socinians, Arminians, Soul-sleepers, and the like, and these confessions were published to vindicate themselves, and to show their general agreement with other Protestants in all points except baptism. When published it was acknowledged, by their greatest adversaries, an Orthodox confession.

Another Confession was published and signed by fifty ministers and messengers in 1678.

That the leaders of our brethren in England from the middle of the 14th century, beginning with Wickliff, who was unquestionably a Baptist, to the close of the 17th century, were eminently learned men and their literary attainments did not prejudice their piety is abundantly confirmed by the history of those times. They were able to state and defend their views with an ability which their enemies could not gainsay; and because of the impotency of their enemies, with all the learning and official influence of prelates, they were given over to the secular power to be convinced by prison, racks, and flames.

Ten years after the Convention alluded to, when the thirty-two articles were adopted, another Convention was called in London. This was in 1699, in the reign of William and Mary. The several objects of this Convention were thus set forth:

- To settle on the best measures for securing
- 1. Aid to support preachers who were laboring with small and feeble churches.
- 2. To send preachers into destitute places.
- 3. To furnish to young men who were sound in fundamental facilities for the study of the Greek, Hebrew, and other branches which might better prepare them for their work.

The support of Ministers, Home Missions and Ministerial Education were considered legitimate objects for Association and Convention by those who had passed some of the severest ordeals for the sake of Christ and his cause since Apostolic times. "We should admire to see an account of the discussions of a Convention of such men and for such objects at that day. Seventy years earlier than this the Puritans, who had for conscience sake fled to this western world, ejected from the Church of England and University—privileges brought with them—their regard for a well trained as well as pious ministry, and one of the oldest historical fragments preserved among their record is the following:

"After God had carried us safe to New England, and we had builded our houses, provided necessaries for our livelihood, settled convenient place for God's worship, and settled the civil Government, one of the next things we longed for and looked after was, to advance learning, and perpetuate it to posterity; dreading to have an illiterate ministry to the churches, when our present ministers shall lie in the dust."

Here was laid, in their early arrangements for Primary Schools, Grammar Schools, and particularly for Harvard College, the foundation of that taste for education and those superior educational facilities which are to-day the pride and boast of the State of Massachusetts. No State in the Union has had a more auspicious start, and yet in no State has there

flourished all that give dignity and credit to a people, more than in Massachusetts. The population is more dense in proportion to the extent of territory, there is more wealth, more intelligence and comparatively more enterprise than in any other state. There is also in that state alone as many ministers supported as there are churches in it; the ministry of Massachusetts is emphatically an able ministry and the churches of that State, both Independent and Baptist, are, among the most zealous and liberal in the world in regard to Missions and every philanthropic object. We are acquainted with one church in Boston, formed but ten years since and with but a small number to commence, which has raised, besides all that was requisite for its own pastor and the building of a large place of worship; £12,500 for Foreign Missionary objects. Such fruit must come from good seed and indicates not only good seed but the best of culture. In a Sermon before the Legislature of Massachusetts, a year or two since, Professor Park, of Andover, set forth "The indebtedness of the State to the Clergy," and a man must be hard to convince indeed, who can resist the conviction that her superiority has been the result of a laborious self-sacrificing, pious and highly educated Gospel Ministry.

We received yesterday, by the kindness of Mr. J. L. Read, a notice of the Installation of Rev. W. A. Coleman as Pastor of the second Baptist Church, Sackville.

The exercises took place on Wednesday of last week. The weather being favourable a large and attentive audience were present.—Prayer was offered by brother Charlton; sermon and charge to the Church by brother Francis; right-hand of fellowship and charge to Candidate by brother W. G. Parker, former Pastor of the Church.

Both this and the 1st Church are fully determined to secure the permanent ministry of the gospel, and have evinced a commendable liberality with reference to it. We heartily rejoice in their success and in the blessing with which the Lord is crowning their labors.

We would call attention to the advertisement of Mr. Thomson. We have long desired, as have others, to see some thoroughly good Institution opened for young ladies.—Mr. Thomson contemplates the establishment of such an Institution to be conducted by his daughter, who has been trained under the best possible advantages to make her competent to the undertaking. Mr. T., who has had thirty years experience in Teaching in the vicinity of Bath, England, with fifty students uniformly in his family, many of whom were trained to pass from his tuition to the Universities, will give his aid in some departments. Those wishing to have their daughters boarded in connection with the Institution will be accommodated by the care and attention of Mrs. Thomson.

Mr. Thomson, as preliminary to this, wishes to take a limited number of lads to teach, and would be happy to give instruction to young ladies at their homes, that his system of teaching may be known and its success witnessed. We hope he will be suitably encouraged. Mr. Thomson can be addressed through the Post Office; his present boarding place is at Mrs. Lawrence's, Union Street.

We beg pardon of our correspondent who has enquired for the article on Benevolence this week. We took it to the office for insertion that week and when too late to make the selection found that an amount of matter was set up for the paper sufficient to fill it, and not taking it from the office, that with another have both been mislaid and we know not where. We regret it, and solicit further favors with which we will be if possible more careful. Such things cannot always be guarded against.

TELEGRAPH TO THE PACIFIC.—A proposition has been made to Congress, by Henry O'Reilly, to establish a telegraph and line of mails from the Mississippi to California. He asks neither money nor lands from Government, but simply permission to do the work, and military protection for it. He proposes that the troops sent to the West, instead of being posted in large bodies, should be placed on a line extended westward—twenty men at a post, and these posts twenty miles apart.—He will have these men protect the wires and carry mails from one post to another. He calculates that the work can be completed in two years, and that then the Californians can have the news from here, several hours before it transpires.

This is entertained in many influential quarters with favor, as economical and advantageous in many respects, not only for facilitating communication but the general safety of the vast extent of country through which it would pass.

LETTERS RECEIVED.—Mr. William Woodward, with remittance; Mr. Alexander Brown, do.; Mr. George Parker, do.; Mr. W. H. Rogers, do.; Mr. J. C. Colpitts, Wm. Hamilton, Rev. Dr. Cramp.

Correspondence.

[FOR THE CHRISTIAN VISITOR.]

ATTENDANCE AT ANNIVERSARIES.

MR. EDITOR.—All must admit, that as a denomination the Baptists of these Provinces have enterprises on their hands which possess large magnitude in proportion to existing appliances. Not disproportionately large in relation to the necessities of the field to which they belong, or the real ability of the people to sustain them, but large with reference to the actual employment of means for effecting the end. "The ways and means" are from time to time laid before your readers, Mr. Editor, which have to do with our denominational progress, both by yourself and by your numerous correspondents; but necessity doubtless requires that these instrumentalities should be very considerably advanced in character beyond their present level, and their presentation through the Press should be repeated.

To this, however, it is not our design at present further to advert. We wish rather to invite attention to the fact, that whatever our measures of action, much of their value and success must be dependent upon the character of our principal anniversary occasions, and the extent of attendance at them.

These occasions, taking in the whole ground of our Convention, have now become quite numerous.

First in the order of time comes the College Anniversary at Horton, (this year) the first or second week in June; then that of the Western Nova Scotia Association in Liverpool, commencing Saturday, the 12th; then that of the Central N. S. Association at Hantsport, commencing Saturday the 26th; next that of the Eastern New Brunswick Association, at Sackville on the first Saturday in July; then that of the Eastern Nova Scotia Association at Pugwash, the second Saturday in July; next that of the Western N. B. ditto, the first Saturday in September; and lastly that of the Convention which assembles at Sackville, N. B., on the third Saturday in September.

The College Anniversary has been numerously attended from the commencement of the Institution to the present time; and the exercises have ever been looked upon as possessed of high interest, not only by its more immediate friends, but by the public generally. If this place of education is regarded as a central and commanding agency in our denomination, and its operations are watched with sedulous care, certainly it is only natural that its anniversary seasons, when some of its most significant manifestations are made, should be observed with much attention. Interest in any object is often much affected by local observation; it is emphatically so with a place of learning. It is true that appearances to the eye are not yet all which we wish, but it is believed that all truly considerate persons who visit Acadia College, will be much more impressed with the amount of what has been done, than with the minor defects or blanks which here and there present themselves. At least it may be hoped that a regard for what exists will impel to stronger desires for yet further advances. Now it is likely, that a very considerable number of the friends of the College have not yet been present at its anniversaries. If they design to act in its support in time to come, especially if they contemplate taking any part in the proposed endowment, is it not a duty which they owe to themselves, and to the object of their beneficence, to place themselves in a position adapted for proper observation? Let them resort to the seat of operations, and form the necessary acquaintances, and perhaps a desire of which they are not yet conscious may spring up, that Acadia College may take a position such as she cannot have without ample endowment. It may be added further, that two days of public examination will be held immediately before the anniversary, and it is contemplated to make this time of meeting of the friends of the Institution a