

Messenger and Visitor.

THE CHRISTIAN MESSENGER
VOLUME LVIII.

PUBLISHED WEEKLY BY THE MARITIME BAPTIST PUBLISHING COMPANY.

THE CHRISTIAN VISITOR
VOLUME XLVII.

Vol. XI., No. 6.

SAINT JOHN, N. B., WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 6, 1896.

Printed by G. W. [unclear] North Side King St.

Messenger and Visitor.

WEDNESDAY, FEB. 6, 1896.

AN EDUCATION NUMBER.

We devote this issue largely to the papers and addresses delivered at the recent Educational Institute held in this city. We gave as full a report at the time as could conveniently be obtained; but the importance of the entire subject and of the phases of it considered and, we may add, the thoroughness of the discussions, require us to publish in full where we can do so. It will be seen by the addresses herewith published that our relations to education are manifold and worthy of careful study. And our people, we believe, have an interest in the subject that will secure for this issue a thorough perusal.

But the topics treated do not exhaust the subject of education. They only open the consideration of it. Enough is given to suggest more; enough to show we are attempting to handle a great work. It is clear that there is no interest of the people, either material, social, intellectual or religious that is not deeply affected by the education furnished in the various systems adopted. An interest in education is therefore about the same as an interest in all the welfare of our fellow citizens. The training of the race determines largely what the race shall be; the education a denomination gives its adherents fixes, within certain limits at least, what that body shall be and do. To be concerned about our education is to be concerned about all our interests.

The speakers made it evident also that education and christianity are closely related. A culture without the aid of christian motive and inspiration will be narrow and selfish; a christian people without training is robbed of half its power, fails to appreciate christianity itself. As it is "with all saints" that we learn the height and depth of the love of Christ so it is only by knowing something of His truth for all men that we come to know it fully for ourselves. Culture of some kind is sure to come; the only question is whether we can by God's help, pervade it with His spirit, mould it by His truth. If this cannot be done christians themselves will be affected by the currents of thought antagonistic to christian belief.

It becomes clearer all the time that our educational enterprise is not a thing by itself. We cannot lay it aside and go on with the other departments of our activities. These efforts all rise or fall together; the work is one. The workers we need must themselves be the product of our common life to be fitted to extend it. Their power is vastly increased by associated study. They are able to receive more and to give more because of their identification with the mind of the denomination in the way of discipline and association. Missions call for education and our educational expenditure stimulates to missionary service. Our churches need educated laymen and the laymen need the education we seek to provide.

The difficulties of supporting and managing our institutions become apparent with every conference on the subject. The smallness of our resources—if all were available, and the extent to which what we have is unavailable—explain many of our troubles. But that is not all. Unity of views is no so easily secured among earnest men, each of whom is anxious to do the most for the cause. We have to gather students as well as money and to supply an education for varied classes with partial equipment. It is not always the case that churches, where the members are thoroughly acquainted, get along with their business without friction; and it is not surprising that troubles sometimes emerge in conducting general affairs. The difficulties are not few; neither are they slight.

But there are encouragements. God is light. He will therefore give light. There is a disposition to seek Him. There is general appreciation of the work accomplished; there is a zeal to do more, if not always according to knowledge. There is a constant supply of students. There is, apparently, on the part of the authorities a growing sense of the need of instructing the churches in educational matters. There is on the part of a few an increase of appreciation of what it costs to maintain a university. It will become more evident that the denomination cannot get what it does not pay for; and that it needs to have the best possible service.

The responsibilities already assumed are as heavy as ought to be incurred with the capital possessed. A large portion of the debts should be removed at the earliest possible date. The institutions should be made to prosper by the large constituency so much in need of the culture they are intended to impart. We hope for more educational institutions and for greater progress in our colleges and academies.

OUR DUTY IN THE LIGHT OF SOME OF OUR DISTINCTIVE PRINCIPLES.

BY PERS. SAWYER, OF ACADIA UNIVERSITY.

A paper presented before the Baptist Educational Institute, St. John, Dec. 29th, 1895.

In directing attention at this time to four of our distinctive principles, it is not my purpose to examine their merits or to search for the ground on which they rest. As they are generally accepted by the members of our churches, I wish simply to enquire, what bearing they have on questions of duty in respect to the promotion of education among our people.

I. As the first one to be considered, I name *Personal Obedience to the Revealed Word*. Obedience is a moral act. It must proceed from the heart in response to moral motives. The presentation and enforcement of these motives belong to the office of the preacher, and we may leave them in his hands. But intellect and faith are related. Faith must be attended by some intellectual conception, and that conception should have some rational basis. How shall we know what the Revealed Word is which we are to believe? We do not accept the doctrine of obedience to councils, or ecclesiastical dignitaries, or the church to which one may belong. We hold to personal obedience to the Revealed Word. How is this doctrine to be applied in practice? Where is this Word? Is it here, if so-how came it here? What is the evidence that it has come to us in its original form? Is it a book that any one, no matter how ignorant he may be, can correctly understand? These are questions which it is not sinful for me to ask, questions which a reflecting mind cannot let pass without a satisfactory answer.

Let us take facts as they are and analyze the case as well as we can. In the first place let us not forget that spiritual things are spiritually discerned. As a people we have given as much prominence to this truth as any other community of christians. But is this discernment wholly the product of supernatural illumination? An eminent teacher in Baptist institutions of the last generation said near the close of his life, that the churches at that time were holding substantially the same doctrines as had been accepted among them at an earlier period, but that the proof-texts for these doctrines had been largely changed, many of those formerly used having been discarded and new ones having been substituted in their place. Others could corroborate this testimony. Here the inquiry rises, Did the Divine Spirit in an earlier time enable christians to see doctrinal truths in passages in which the Spirit at a later time taught christians no such truths were revealed? You may answer the question as you please; but whichever way you answer it, you will have started some suggestive inquiries. It must be admitted that, although it may not be easy exactly to define the limit and mode of its operation, there is, nevertheless, a human element in the interpretation of the Book.

If we admit for the present that the majority of the people rest their belief in the authority of the Word on the declaration of the leaders in the church, or on the traditions current therein, such being the case, it is evident that a class of persons is needed who can trace the history of these traditions and assure themselves and others that the "deposit of faith" once delivered to the churches has been handed down unimpaired. The Roman Catholic church "understands the meaning of all this and sustains colleges of trained men whose business it is to make themselves acquainted with all the changing phases of religious belief and the relations of all these to the symbols of divine truth that have been accepted in that church. We, who as a people ought to be even more zealous in promoting such studies, are late laborers in this field of critical enquiry. But it may be claimed that the main thing for us is to have, for the guidance of the people, the living interpreter of the living Word. A candid examination of the case from this point of view may not give us much more comfort. If we enquire for authorities in Biblical exegesis, we can name some in our denomination who deserve a place in the most honorable rank in such studies; but in this department our chief reliance is on the labors of men in other denominations. Not until a very late date has anything better than the most meagre provision been made in our theological seminaries for exegetical studies. In cases where more generous provision has been made, frequently the professors have been so overworked that anything like original study has been impossible. We may

congratulate ourselves that at least better views are prevailing in the governing bodies of our institutions. But it seems to me that the logical outcome of the doctrine which we as a people have been so ready to proclaim to the world as peculiarly our own, has been very dimly apprehended, not only by the mass of our people, but even by the majority of the leaders in our churches. Though evidences of improvement are visible, advancement is slow. Our principles should call us to the front rank in efforts to provide proper equipment for Biblical studies and for whatever is related to them in all departments.

II. The next principle which I name—*The Right of Private Judgment in Religious Concerns*—is closely related to the preceding, perhaps implied in it; but it is so frequently made prominent in distinct form in the statement of the beliefs of our denomination, that it deserves special notice. As the doctrine is commonly stated, it means no more, perhaps than a declaration of freedom from the dictation of priests, bishops, councils of any other ecclesiastical authority,—freedom also from servitude to creeds and formulated articles of belief. As a declaration of such freedom, it has held an honorable place in the literature of religious revolutions. But every right implies some corresponding duty. If

the ministrations of the pulpit should be adapted to an enlarged scope of the duties of church members, General Intelligence should be promoted. If there is to be found anywhere a people marked by quickness of apprehension, breadth of view, wide acquaintance with facts, eagerness to learn all that can be known of the teachings of the Bible and of every thing that has a bearing on a clearer understanding of its doctrines and precepts in practical life, it would seem that it should be the people who accept and publicly profess the doctrine which we are now considering.

Perhaps some may prefer to say that while the doctrine under consideration is true theoretically, there are limitations to its application in the conditions of actual life which make it necessary that the practical decision of such questions as have been suggested should be determined by a few and that the great majority must follow their leadership. In regard to this view it may be remarked in the first place, that this is by no means the generally understood meaning of the doctrine of the right of private judgment. But if this should be the accepted interpretation, then there certainly must be need of properly qualified leaders in the churches. How are they

to be obtained? Not by miracle, but by the wise use of natural means. Provision must be made to this end. Competent men duly trained must be forthcoming from time to time—men qualified to lead in the intellectual and spiritual life of the people, in all departments of church service and in all other departments that may be auxiliary or subservient to the highest efficiency in that service.

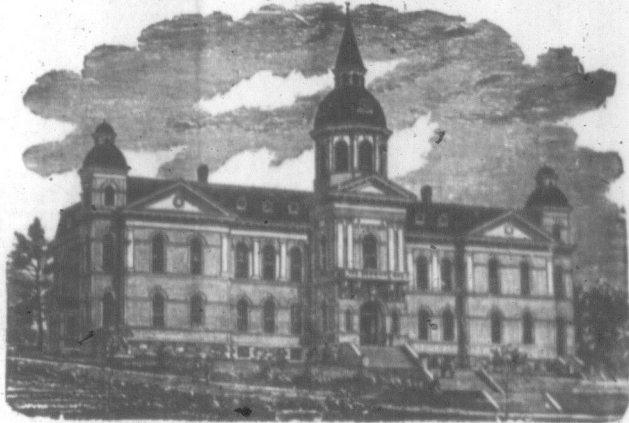
III. The next principle to which I ask attention is logically related to the two preceding, namely, *The Individual is the Unit of Church Growth*. It may be said that other denominations accept this in some sense that is true. But in no other communion does the principle have the same significance as with us. Some denominations really make the family the unit of church growth. Some who hold the doctrine of baptismal regeneration appear to give more prominence to the distinctive addition of the individual to the church. But with them the individual is passive in the transaction,—not active. With us the process takes place by mutual action. The church by its attractive power draws the individual to itself. The individual is drawn by sympathy into fellowship with believers, but he comes into that fellowship intelligently and willingly. This has been the ideal type according to which the followers of Christ have been gathered into the body of his living witnesses. This method of growth probably means something more than may appear on the superficial view. The law of activity and the law of growth in this case will be found to be closely related. Voluntary, spontaneity of action will be the natural sequence of this method of union. Whether the logic of the case has been perceived by our people or not, they have, possibly by some instinct, been led along this line in the development of their church-life. The tendency among us has been away from rigid organizations. The Salvation Army doubtless is useful in reaching a class whom it is difficult to reach by the ordinary religious services. But its methods of discipline and its subordination of orders are entirely alien to the spirit of Baptist churches. On the other hand the order of the Jesuits is a striking example of an agency which carefully trained servants of a supreme authority, acting in unceasing

obedience to that authority, can labor effectively in instructing and guiding trained and cultured minds to submit to the dogmas and rites of a church which is probably the most perfect example of thorough organization that has ever existed among men. But such an order would be utterly inharmonious with the spirit of Baptist churches. If it were brought into existence among them, it would come to be dictator over them or be broken by them. It is true that we are now introducing into our churches organizations of various kinds in order to promote christian activity. But may not this mean that we have lost faith, or failed to apprehend the meaning of some of our fundamental principles? Spontaneous, cooperative activity is the ideal that harmonizes with our fellowship in church-life. Our growth as a denomination has actually coincided with a more or less complete conformity with this ideal. Our limitations have been caused by departures from it, or by altogether too narrow views of the range of its application. Our theory of church-life requires us to make the most of the individual and to trust largely to his activity in the common cause. We boast of a membership on this continent of more than three millions. How is this mass of individuals to be held together in the unity of one

language received the meaning that the State must not contribute in any way for the support of any religion. Though this is now the generally accepted signification of this inherited doctrine, yet, if we do not mistake, certain illogical consequences of the earlier applications of the doctrine still persist. It is at least probable that the doctrine has in many instances, been interpreted to mean that it is wrong for christians to take part in the administration of civil affairs. Facts indicate that this opinion has prevailed quite extensively. Look into our legislative halls, our courts of justice from the lowest to the highest, note the office-bearers in the Provincial and the Dominion governments,—look at the various professions, look across the border into the United States and institute similar inquiries there, and tell us whether Baptists are as numerous in the various posts of public service as their number and their wealth should lead us to expect. Our people have always held that civil government is an institution established by God. But while making this confession they have apparently been willing that others should bear the responsibilities connected with the administration of the affairs of this institution. Hence it has seemed to them to be of small importance to make suitable provision for training men for the various positions of influence in public and social life. Indeed there has been in some quarters a feeling that the distinctions which might arise, if christians should engage in these forms of service, would be inconsistent with that uniformity of social and intellectual life, which was falsely supposed to be the proper condition of the christian brotherhood. I believe this to be a serious perversion of the true view of christian service. Because the church "touch cannot enter into alliance with the civil power, it does not follow that christians must abstain from all connection with civil affairs. If 'tis a christian is the highest style of man," he is just the one who should be found in every position of influence and helpfulness for good among men. Therefore it is our duty to make varied and ample provision that our youth, who undoubtedly have capacity for these several departments of service, may have the requisite opportunities to prepare themselves to meet these responsibilities honorably and usefully.

If the preceding interpretation and application of some of our fundamental principles are correct, we must find in them an urgent invitation to cultivate larger conceptions of our duties to the church and society at large. I believe that, if these principles were more thoroughly understood in relation to the spirit from which they have proceeded, and to their application to our social, educational and religious problems, we should find in them a source of inspiration to enlarged efforts, and a guide to point the way to achievements worthy of a people who have been called to be, not imitators, but leaders in every good work.

—In order to make room for the valuable articles published in this issue touching various phases of the subject of education as related to ourselves as a denomination, it has been necessary to curtail as much as possible the space devoted to editorial articles and correspondence. We therefore pass by for the present some matters of considerable interest which otherwise would have received attention at our hands, and we regret that it is necessary also to hold over some correspondence until next week. These articles were, with one exception, presented in substance before the Educational Institute held in this city a few weeks ago. Rev. Mr. McIntyre had been invited to present at that time a paper on Academic Education, but his engagements did not admit of his preparing the paper for that occasion, and he has accordingly, at our request, written for this issue of the MESSENGER AND VISITOR an article which will be found upon the third page. There was one paper presented at the Institute which does not appear in this number—the excellent paper of Prof. Keirstead on "The Voluntary Principle in Higher Education." We regret that we were not able to find room in the same issue for all the papers. But we feel safe in withholding Prof. Keirstead's on the principle that good wine will keep, and perhaps our readers will have as much on the subject of Education—excellent as it all is—as they will know what to do with at one time, and they will have all the better appetite for the excellent article held over when they find it in a subsequent issue. It has been necessary in this issue, to place some of the departments out of their accustomed places. The Bible Lesson and the B. Y. P. U. column will be found on the seventh page instead of the third.



ACADIA COLLEGE—THE PRESENT BUILDING.

men claim the right of judging for themselves, this claim means something more than the bold declaration that others must not decide for them. It means also that those who claim this right must justify for themselves. When the right is stated in this form, it carries with it the implication that they who claim the right are qualified to decide for themselves,—they are qualified to decide what religious doctrines to accept and what to reject,—to solve the meaning of doubtful words and dark expressions,—to accept or reject dogmas the meaning and the proof of which have taxed the powers of the strongest and most acute thinkers. When the doctrine is thus presented, it might be thought strange that any one would have the hardihood to claim such a right, but that every one would find an infinite relief in the privilege of placing the responsibility of selecting his religious beliefs on some one else. But that privilege is not open to the members of our churches. According to their own doctrine, they must choose, they must accept or reject.

Here again let us remind ourselves that the spirit aids the faithful in finding and following the truth. But is this a miraculous guidance, or is it assistance in the use of the natural powers of the mind? Most of us will be ready to admit that a human element is present in selecting and judging in such matters. The finite powers of the human mind must be exercised on these questions. It would be natural to conclude that a people holding such opinions would be foremost in preparing individual members of the church to discharge as successfully as possible such momentous duties. Perhaps if we had been a little more careful to promote this kind of training, defections to superficial creeds and illogical doctrines might have been less numerous among us. If our profession of belief be genuine, it follows that the best possible means should be used that each and all may be properly prepared to sustain these serious responsibilities. As these responsibilities cannot be delegated, except to a very limited extent, the entire body of believers should be put into the best possible condition for meeting these serious obligations. The Sunday school should be conducted with increasing efficiency and thoroughness and with a broader view of the work that ought to be therein per-

formed. The ministrations of the pulpit should be adapted to an enlarged scope of the duties of church members. General Intelligence should be promoted. If there is to be found anywhere a people marked by quickness of apprehension, breadth of view, wide acquaintance with facts, eagerness to learn all that can be known of the teachings of the Bible and of every thing that has a bearing on a clearer understanding of its doctrines and precepts in practical life, it would seem that it should be the people who accept and publicly profess the doctrine which we are now considering.

Perhaps some may prefer to say that while the doctrine under consideration is true theoretically, there are limitations to its application in the conditions of actual life which make it necessary that the practical decision of such questions as have been suggested should be determined by a few and that the great majority must follow their leadership. In regard to this view it may be remarked in the first place, that this is by no means the generally understood meaning of the doctrine of the right of private judgment. But if this should be the accepted interpretation, then there certainly must be need of properly qualified leaders in the churches. How are they to be obtained? Not by miracle, but by the wise use of natural means. Provision must be made to this end. Competent men duly trained must be forthcoming from time to time—men qualified to lead in the intellectual and spiritual life of the people, in all departments of church service and in all other departments that may be auxiliary or subservient to the highest efficiency in that service.

III. The next principle to which I ask attention is logically related to the two preceding, namely, *The Individual is the Unit of Church Growth*. It may be said that other denominations accept this in some sense that is true. But in no other communion does the principle have the same significance as with us. Some denominations really make the family the unit of church growth. Some who hold the doctrine of baptismal regeneration appear to give more prominence to the distinctive addition of the individual to the church. But with them the individual is passive in the transaction,—not active. With us the process takes place by mutual action. The church by its attractive power draws the individual to itself. The individual is drawn by sympathy into fellowship with believers, but he comes into that fellowship intelligently and willingly. This has been the ideal type according to which the followers of Christ have been gathered into the body of his living witnesses. This method of growth probably means something more than may appear on the superficial view. The law of activity and the law of growth in this case will be found to be closely related. Voluntary, spontaneity of action will be the natural sequence of this method of union. Whether the logic of the case has been perceived by our people or not, they have, possibly by some instinct, been led along this line in the development of their church-life. The tendency among us has been away from rigid organizations. The Salvation Army doubtless is useful in reaching a class whom it is difficult to reach by the ordinary religious services. But its methods of discipline and its subordination of orders are entirely alien to the spirit of Baptist churches. On the other hand the order of the Jesuits is a striking example of an agency which carefully trained servants of a supreme authority, acting in unceasing