

ANNUAL REPORT

Of the Free Baptist Churches of New Brunswick for the Year ending July 1st 1859.

Beloved Brethren.—With profound gratitude to Almighty God for the innumerable mercies which have crowned our lives during the year that has just closed, we proceed to record some things relative to the cause of God among us as a branch of the Christian Church since our last General Conference. Among the elders of this Conference, death has made no breach during the last year. From among the lay members of our churches some have gone—gone we trust from the church militant, to the church triumphant. Each passing year is carrying some away—some of us that are here to-day will in all probability be in eternity ere next Conference—our earthly mission will be closed, and we shall either be the inhabitants of the glorious world with the saints in light, or we shall be where no prayer nor praise, no love nor joy, no faith nor hope, will ever be enjoyed nor felt. If such be the uncertainty of our existence, and the eternal future to which we are hastening, be of such terrible import, how important that we should well improve the present time to some purpose, and be ready for a discharge from our labours, with the approval of God, and the assurance of immortality and eternal glory. To live well, we must live for God—he who lives for himself, or for a selfish end, like those who live for pleasure only, are dead while they live; and better would it be for such if they had never been born.

We are gathered to-day from various localities—our object we trust in coming together is not the promotion of merely human ends—many of us profess to be labourers with God; the upbuilding of his kingdom should be to us the first of all objects, and sinking every selfish and personal feeling into absolute nothingness, our business is to gird on the truth in doctrine, in practice and in spirit, and following the Captain of our salvation, do battle boldly and valiantly for the cause of our Redeemer. That this may be the case, let every heart pray, and that ere this Conference closes, the Holy Spirit may descend with power, that within these walls may be displays of God's sovereign grace—that a true revival of scriptural piety may be felt in us that are here, and extend to all our churches; and also that there may be added to us such as shall be eternally saved.

The past year has in some respects been one of some trial—financial embarrassment and other causes have contributed to render the year less fruitful in some fields than it probably otherwise would have been; but God has nevertheless owned us this year, and upon our banner we can reinscribe as before "Hitherto the Lord hath helped us." You are aware that at our last General Conference, our churches were divided into districts, and a preacher assigned to each. This arrangement has in some places proved beneficial, in others it has not; when the whole facts connected with this arrangement shall have come before you in the course of this meeting, you will be able to judge more perfectly relative to the judiciousness of continuing this mode of supplying our churches with ministerial care.