

REPORT

OF THE

NOVA-SCOTIA BAPTIST

EDUCATION SOCIETY,

FOR THE YEAR ENDING JUNE 1835.

ADDRESSED TO

THE SOCIETY AT HORTON,

*June 24, 1835.*



PRINTED AT "THE NOVASCOTIAN" OFFICE.

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## REPORT.

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Before we advance to the details of this Society since the last report of your Committee, which will necessarily be but brief, it may be appropriate to the present public occasion, and best facilitate the objects sought by the Society, to occupy your attention by a short review of some of the principal considerations which set forth the high importance of the undertaking in which you are engaged ; and in doing so, we first notice,

*The importance of education to the civil prosperity of a Country.* It is well known that barbarous nations have always been ignorant, and that progress in arts and sciences, success and increase in trade, a due administration of justice, and an upright and wise government, especially of a country grown large and wealthy, by the combined operation of all these causes, are necessarily dependent on the free diffusion of the means of education. To this sentiment, it is not usual to meet much opposition ; every one generally admits its truth. If the youth of this Province are to fill with credit the various municipal or professional offices which the country requires—if they are to be skilful physicians, successful lawyers, or intelligent merchants ; if, as jury men, they are to decide with wisdom in difficult causes, where the property or the life of a fellow being hangs on their judgment—if, as magistrates, they are to exercise their high office with dignity and discretion—or as the representatives of the people, they are to represent, not merely the will or the wealth, but the wisdom of their fellow subjects, and really to legislate for the public good—in all these cases, it will be admitted, that they need in greater or less degree a due portion of judicious, well directed education. To provide, then, the means of such an education, is a duty as pressingly incumbent on any country, as almost any other demand of private or public necessity. Individuals should feel it as they feel the duty of providing for bodily sustenance—communities should appreciate such an object as holding equal claim with the construction of roads or bridges, or the encouragement of commerce. But, if education be thus extensively important, of course, no considerable portion of any community can be justified in neglecting it ; the establishment and support of adequate schools and academies, is an object which demands combination of effort and of means ; and hence, the Baptists of Nova Scotia, forming so large a portion of the population, owed it to the community of which they formed a part, as well as to themselves as individual citizens, to take a direct and active share in the education of the Province. They have thus far done well towards the discharge of this duty in the establishment of the Horton Academy.

But again, education is highly important *as an auxiliary in the diffusion of religious truth*. The Committee of this Society, when they look round on the body of their constituents—on the multitudes by whom they find themselves always surrounded on the anniversaries of this Society, and of the churches—the fruit of the labours almost wholly of those who have not been in the common sense educated—ought to be amongst the last to drop a syllable which should seem to depreciate the value of these labours. Nothing, in fact, is farther from their wish or intention than thus to depreciate them. They are foremost among those who venerate the excellent servants of Christ to whom allusion is now made, and especially those aged labourers still amongst us who look back at the early dawn of the Baptist Churches in this land, as an event which they witnessed, and in which they, with but a few others, were, under God, the sole agents. But, while thus joyfully offering our meed of deep and unfeigned respect and affection, we would remind the Society that the meaning of the term education is sometimes misapplied in its connection with the present subject. These honoured ministers of Christ, are not in the strictest sense uneducated men. Education, in effect, commences in our earliest infancy. With or without the consent of their guardians, children cannot but be the subjects of a species of education—and, in like manner our excellent brethren who have been the pioneers of our Zion in its earlier period of hardship and toil, as they are now its support and ornament, have in effect obtained in the midst of pains, privations, and unwearied labours, a species of education, of peculiar value to them, inasmuch as it is so wholly self-acquired. These brethren are, in fact, Theologians. By individual effort, guided by the Holy Spirit, they have wrought out for themselves, much of that knowledge which it is the object of seminaries rather to *facilitate* than to give. Thus, from the case of these brethren themselves, may be gathered an argument for the importance of education in a religious point of view; they possess a degree of real education, without which, acquired either by similar labours, or supplied by the advantages of previous mental culture, no young minister will be competent to fill their place, as they are successively removed to their rest above. It is a matter of fact, that education as directed in places of learning does *facilitate* the acquisition, in the course of a few years, of that sort of knowledge which our elder brethren possess as the fruit of a long life, and the result of much painful experience; and it must also, of course, furnish information in many important and useful subjects, the knowledge of which is otherwise never acquired. It is an important object, therefore, to provide such facilities to those pious young men who are disposed and able to take advantage of them, as may, with God's blessing, enable them to exert in the churches, in a shorter period, the same degree of influence as their senior brethren have attained by longer delay and toil.

It should be remembered, too, that the country is no longer now what it was when our elder brethren commenced their labours; it was then comparatively rough and uncultivated, both in mind and soil, to a much greater degree than is now the case; and consequently, any young labourer in the Lord's vineyard, meets, in many instances, a very different

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population from that which enjoyed the first ministrations of the Gospel in our denomination. He finds the people what they are now, not what they then were; he goes amongst those who have been subject to the various improvements which have spread through the country, during the course of thirty, forty, or fifty years; and doubtless, there are places, and the number of these is increasing, where such a labourer, if a modest man, will feel himself incompetent to occupy the station assigned him. He sinks beneath the position he should fill; or if not altogether so, he sinks beneath a range of respectability in it which every minister of the Cross should, with a holy ambition, aim to bring within the circle of his influence.

In further proof of the importance of education in the present point of view, your Committee cannot but refer to *the indications of the divine will as manifested in his providence*. The Providence of God is an index which it becomes us carefully to notice; and in a review of the past and present history of the church, we shall see learning repeatedly employed as a means in God's hand of diffusing religious truth. When the untutored fishermen of Galilee were selected as the heralds of the cross of Christ, they were prepared for extensive usefulness by learning miraculously bestowed upon them. They obtained by instantaneous endowment those gifts of tongues which in the present day can only be acquired by long and laborious study; and were guarded from all danger of error by immediate inspiration. When in the East, "the candlestick" of the seven churches of Asia was "removed out of its place;" and in the West, the "man of sin" was fully and fearfully revealed; the withdrawal of education from the mass of mankind was a striking characteristic of those gloomy ages in which the sentiment was openly propagated, that "ignorance is the mother of devotion;" while, on the other hand, a distinguished feature of the glorious Reformation of the sixteenth century was the aid which learning was permitted to render the cause of God. It was by means of literature that the long hidden volume of sacred truth was unveiled. It was speedily translated into various modern tongues, and its truths expounded and enforced orally on the people by such men as Luther, Calvin, Bucer, Melancthon, Zuinglius, and many others, who were among the most distinguished in that day for literature, as well as leaders in the work of grace by which the truth was rescued from its long oblivion. How strikingly, too, has the head of the church manifested his will that learning should be cultivated, in the lesson with which the history of modern missions furnishes the christian world. When Carey and Ward heard within them that *silent* voice which directed them to the distant and neglected heathen, they felt themselves *called* to seek by a close attention to literature a fitness for their arduous work. Judson, too, and Schwartz, and Buchanan, and Martyn, and Gutzlaff, have all been trained for their labours and their successes, by the advantages of mental culture. To these causes may be added the uses which God has condescended to make of learning in raising from time to time a bulwark around the truth. The attacks of Infidels, the perversions of Papists, the sophistries of Socinians, the false glosses of pretended christians, of whatever name, have all been repelled by the aid of learning.

In connection with these thoughts, your Committee proceed to notice *the duty of pious young men to seek an education.* Where young men possess all other needful qualifications for the ministry of God's word, and the way to *mental cultivation is open*, we hold it to be their duty to seek it. We are fully sensible of the strong claims which will often be made for the immediate exercise of their gifts; and we do not venture to say that these claims may not be sometimes so urgent as to justify their yielding to them, and thus submitting to all the subsequent pain and toil which a modest and sensible youth must necessarily feel in thus devoting his life to ignorance in many respects insuperable. But with these exceptions, and perhaps they ought to be more rare than they are, we hold to our proposition—It is the duty of our pious youth possessed of ministerial gifts, to *seek an education.*

This appears from a consideration of a general law by which God is pleased to govern human conduct; which is, *to adapt our means to our end.* When a man is called to devote himself to the work of the ministry, it is not to address a particular individual, or one particular class in society only, that he is called. Such may be the call of many a *private christian.* The range of the *ministerial* call is much wider. The minister of Christ devotes himself to his master's service, in whatever way his services may be demanded, he goes forth as a herald of the cross to society *at large.* The rich and the poor, the learned and the unlearned, all equally come within the scope of his ministrations, and hence, if he would adapt his means to the end, he must aim at that varied information, which, with the grace of God, and the teaching of the holy spirit, will qualify him to meet all the varieties of station and human character.

We arrive at the same result, when we reflect on the duty incumbent on every christian *to improve to the utmost every talent committed to his trust.* Every thing we have is a talent. If the religious young man, possessed of ministerial gifts, has also an opportunity to obtain an education, these are his talents. Is he improving them to the utmost if he neglects that opportunity? Say not he improves his talent best by preaching. He may still preach, though studying, if necessary; and we take it now to be conceded, that with education his ministerial gifts will generally be more available than without; is he then improving those talents to the utmost if he remains in ignorance?

"*The call of God,*" in such cases must be a call to seek an education. We allude of course to those who have the means, and are not peculiarly pressed to immediate labour. The ministerial call is never a call *merely* to embrace this or that opportunity to preach. It respects the future as well as the present; it is a call to devote not an hour, or a day, but a life; and hence, it involves the necessity of obedience to the principles above named. The rules which God has laid down for our guidance are, as already stated, that we should adapt our means to our end; and improve our talents to the utmost; and hence, when he calls a man to his sacred service, he calls him to obey these rules. The inward working of that spirit which prompts him to devote himself to the work of God, will also prompt him, if viewed aright, to see it his duty to set about that work in a way accordant with the divine procedure, and

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the principles which God has established for the regulation of our conduct. An important illustration of this is afforded by the case of Carey and Ward, as well as by a hundred missionaries who have followed them. Feeling themselves called to preach the gospel to the heathen, they found it necessary to qualify themselves by previous study. So the preacher at home, should in most cases, where the way is open, feel the like necessity.

If these positions are admitted to be just, then the Committee feel themselves prepared strongly to urge on the churches *the duty of providing their pious youth with the means of education*. If it is the duty of the minister to preach, it is equally the duty of the people to sustain him. If it is his duty to improve his ministerial gift by mental culture, it is the duty of the people to provide him with the means. It would be a happy circumstance for this and the surrounding Provinces—a happy circumstance, possibly, to many a distant land, and many a heathen fire side whither our churches, like the little band of warm hearted Moravians in Silesia, might send forth their cultivated sons as heralds and missionaries of the cross, if they were aroused individually to feel their duty to furnish all the means of improving to the utmost all the ministerial gifts which God graciously raises up amongst them; not only by providing a place of education, but by defraying the expenses of those who are qualified and willing to repair thither: but at present our attention must be turned to the history and present condition of the Seminary of this society at Horton.

#### PAST HISTORY.

If we may judge of the call of a minister by the hand that has guided him to labor and success, notwithstanding innumerable obstacles, surely the like evidence exists that God called our churches to the establishment of this Institution. In the midst of much discouragement it has fought its way—it has by the mercy of God triumphed over many difficulties—has obtained a large measure of respectability and usefulness; and how clearly has the hand of God directed the labours of its friends, who often could scarcely anticipate what would be the final issue of their undertaking.

This Seminary you know originated in 1828, at the meeting of our churches just seven years ago on this same spot where we are now assembled. It met the warm approbation of our aged fathers in the ministry, and influenced by their hearty recommendations, there has been collected for its support from time to time in the Provinces, and abroad, about the sum of £1000.

Its operations commenced in a small house, still on the ground purchased as the site of the present commodious edifices, under the care of Mr. Chapin, of Amherst College, Mass. In 1830, Mr. C. returned to his native country, and the Rev. Mr. Pryor, A. M. the present Principal, consented to take the charge he now holds, at the earnest request of the Committee; and the present Academy building, commenced in that year, was completed and occupied by the autumn of 1831.

In the commencement of the last mentioned year, the Society received

from the Legislature of this Province, a donation of £500, and in the two succeeding years the sum of £300.

### THE BOARDING HOUSE.

It being found exceedingly necessary that there should be a Boarding House connected with the Academy, under the controul and direction of the Teachers and the Committee, a house was hired for this purpose at £40 a year, where a number of scholars were immediately accommodated. The whole number receiving education at this Seminary having ranged from about 30 to near 70 in the year.

In 1833, the hired boarding house not having been found sufficiently commodious, the Committee felt themselves called on to use their utmost efforts to attempt the erection of a suitable Boarding House on the premises, and accordingly sought subscriptions to that object, and having obtained a sufficient amount to justify the undertaking, the present Boarding House was commenced in the autumn of that year. The projected building was to contain suitable apartments for the Principal and his family, as well as for the Assistant Teacher and the Steward of the Establishment, and afford accommodation for at least 50 scholars. All which has now been completed at an expense of about £1200.

### LOSS OF THE GRANT IN 1834.

In the winter of 1834, while the Committee were struggling under the accumulated burthens that this new undertaking imposed upon them, they were appalled by the withdrawal of the annual vote of the Legislature, which they had enjoyed for several years, and to which the success and good reputation of the Academy, and the continued support of other institutions in the Province, not at all superior to this, seemed to give Horton Academy so fair a claim. They were already personally liable for large sums of money, the only security for which was an equitable claim on the property of the Academy; but feeling the urgent importance to the interests of this institution, that the Boarding House should be completed, they determined to borrow the money which would be necessary to enable them to advance, and to throw themselves on the good feeling of the denomination and the public, to reimburse them.

In the spring of the present year, the building was completed, and a proper person having been engaged as Steward, the establishment is now in full operation, and promises fair to reward abundantly the labours of this Society as an institution of great public benefit. And, as a rent of £30 a year is received from the Principal, for his apartments, and from the Steward the annual sum of £1 for every boarder at the Academy, the present system produces an annual saving in expenditure, notwithstanding the additional sum of money borrowed to complete the Boarding House.

The expenses of a scholar at this institution, remain as they were before, viz. 7s. 6d. per week for boarding, lodging, and washing; and from £3 to £5 a year for tuition; making, therefore, when two months

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During the last year, five young men were professedly pursuing their studies at this institution, in preparation for the ministry, only one of whom has received any assistance as a beneficiary of this Society, the sum obtained in England for this object being nearly exhausted, and no direct appropriations having been made in this Province to the personal support of such students.

The Committee have every reason for the most perfect satisfaction as regards the respectable footing of this institution, and the high reputation which it possesses as an efficient and well conducted Academy. The Rev. Mr. Pryor, the Principal, continues to discharge his duties with unwearied assiduity, and has received very competent assistance during the past year, from two young gentlemen who have obtained their education at this Seminary; and the government of the institution has continued to be as originally projected, "mild and paternal without laxity, and religious without sectarianism," all denominations being equally admitted to its advantages. The present assistants being desirous of pursuing their own studies yet farther, the Committee are now in search of an assistant more advanced in age and experience.

The condition of this country is such, however, as has been now abundantly tried, that higher academies cannot be sustained solely by the tuition money they receive, and at the same time furnish education within reach of the means of the bulk of the population. They must be supported to a considerable extent either by the Public Treasury, or by private contributions, or the country must remain without the important advantages of a liberal education.

The withdrawal of the Legislative supply, therefore, during the last year, subjected the committee to the most serious inconvenience, as they were entirely destitute of any other means to sustain the instructors of the Academy, and were also pressed with the additional burthen of the Boarding House. The various accumulations of debt, for which they are personally responsible, on account of the original purchase of the property yet unpaid, and the recent erection of the Boarding House, the salaries of teachers, and other expenses, now amounts nearly to the sum of £2000; and although they cannot allow themselves to doubt but that the Baptist community will feel themselves imperatively called upon to take this burthen from the shoulders of the committee, and sustain an institution thus useful, not only to themselves, but to the public at large; yet, the Committee feel it their duty to arouse their most serious attention to this subject, and to demand immediate and prompt assistance, if the denomination would save themselves from the disgrace and severe injury of suffering this institution to sink under the weight of debt that presses it, and eventually either to go into private hands for other purposes, or to pass under the management of some other body of people, who should be found more ready to make sacrifices in its behalf.

*SUBSEQUENT PROCEEDINGS.*

On the above report being concluded, several of the Ministers and other friends of the Society addressed the Assembly on the great importance of Horton Academy, and the urgent duty of the denomination to sustain it. A more powerful impression appeared to be produced in its favour than on any other previous occasion, and an immediate subscription being proposed towards defraying the heavy debt the Committee now sustain, the most gratifying readiness was manifested on the part of the respectable audience present to contribute towards this object; and, in the course of an hour or two, the sum of £448 was subscribed.

It being the opinion of the Society that this subscription ought to be continued throughout this Province and abroad, the Rev. Messrs. Bill and Vidito, were appointed as Agents in Nova Scotia, and the Rev. Mr. McLearn was commissioned to undertake an agency for the same object in the United States.

Mr. Bill having since declined the Agency from peculiar circumstances, beyond his controul, the Committee are at present in search of some person to take his place, and they now urgently call on all friends of this Institution in this Province to consider the burthen which the Committee now personally sustain for no mere private benefit, and to contribute such assistance as the acknowledged public advantage of Horton Academy so justly merits. They also venture to express their earnest hope that this Institution will not be without friends in the United States, to encourage Mr. McLearn in his arduous engagement. The sympathies of christian charity thus exercised are never found to impoverish; and, if the friends of education and of religion in that Country will consider the comparative newness and poverty of this, and especially the very limited means possessed in general by our denomination in Nova Scotia, and the vast importance of seeking amongst ourselves a body of efficient Ministers of the Cross, trained to the hardships and familiar with the peculiarities of the Country, the Committee cannot doubt that the heart and hand of Christian liberality will freely expand in aid of an object so closely indented with the cause of God.

☞ We ought not to omit noticing the indefatigable exertions of W. A. Chipman, Esq. which, devoted as they have been from the first to promote the interests of the Education Society, have been successfully employed in collecting funds for the erection of a large and convenient barn in the rear of the Academy building, which is now complete.

