

Correspondence.

For the Christian Messenger.

Past and Present.

Nations and governments have changes thrust upon them by sudden revolutions. Families, communities and churches experience the same imperceptibly. The greatest errors in doctrine or practice have been very gradually introduced into the Christian church. What at first was looked upon as an innovation shortly became established as a necessary part of worship, till the primitive church was buried under a mass of superstitious observances; and that which a century before would have been designated gross perversion of truth, if not simple idolatry, now could be indulged in with apparent devotion, and defended with uncompromising zeal. At the time of the Reformation, corruption in doctrine and practice had become so palpable that such an immediate and powerful change as affects nations under despotic sway only, could reach the evil that threatened the overthrow of the Christian church. The Reformation under Luther effected much—and simplicity of worship again was observed. Still there was room for improvement; Christians taking the Bible for their rule aimed at a further change; and simplicity of worship of a high order was manifest among various Protestant sects, especially among the Baptists. They rejecting infant Baptism, the link which bound together the church and the world, became more separated from its maxims, and were willing to dwell alone, distinguished for their singularity. But changes which as I remarked, came gradually and almost imperceptibly into churches—unfortunately reached even to those societies, who, professedly worshipped Christ with scriptural exactness. The change has passed so prominently over the Baptist churches that a comparison now with the order of worship half a century since, would show a very marked alteration. Alterations are sometimes improvements but not always; those who know the former days and have witnessed the change, can best judge whether the churches have made advancement, or otherwise in the mode of conducting their worship. There may be great formality and stereotyped order in the pulpit, and in the church where there is neither a manuscript sermon nor a written Liturgy. A discourse now is expected to embrace just so many minutes in its delivery—or, transgression on the part of the preacher, of a few minutes longer, acts like electricity on the pockets of his hearers, and they do not forget to remind him of their wishes, for him to stop. So in prayers—if the Pastor or a brother is drawn out in his feelings to be somewhat excursive, he soon hears of it, and is cautioned that his thoughts and aspirations must not exceed a certain limit. And so with reading the scriptures, at most a Psalm, a short chapter, or a few verses must suffice on each occasion, or discussions would arise upon the propriety or impropriety of taking up time with this part of Divine worship. We ask is there a change in this respect in recent years? Many now in our churches not very aged, will remember the mode in which worship was conducted in the pulpit and in the assembly, in their early days. I recollect the preaching of our venerable ministers, now departed, and their powerful prayers—and the proceedings connected therewith. Frequently a short prayer over the word before reading, then a chapter perhaps two—and after singing, a prayer that seemed to take no denial—a prayer whilst it entered into the ear of the Lord of Hosts, also called up the aspirations of the church, and at its close a solemn stillness seemed to intimate that those present were duly prepared to hear what God the Lord would speak by the mouth of his servant. The sermon followed, sometimes long, sometimes short—few ministers had watches, and churches moved on without clocks at that period. Our ministers in those days were not learned—viz: as we understand learning now—but they were men of strong minds, retentive memories, deep research and ready communication—apt to teach—and their discourses, though devoid of the mathematical accuracy that characterizes modern pulpit usage—were filled with practical thoughts drawn from the volume of inspiration and brought home to the consciences of the hearers with a “thus said the Lord.” The service did not end with the sermon; and though our churches did not contend for a plurality of Elders—still in practice they enjoyed the benefit of

such. The minister having ended his sermon sat down with an intimation that liberty was given for the exercise of gifts—consequently the case was, that seldom a congregation separated without listening to the short addresses of one, and perhaps two of the members present—and if none rose soon for this purpose the minister called for one of the church to pray. As there were usually a variety of gifts in the church, such a course was considered to edify and strengthen the disciples, and tended much to arouse the careless and impenitent; the minister also felt encouraged when his sermon was such as to call up speakers to witness for the truths he had been proclaiming. All this was done quite orderly; the speakers were usually the aged and experienced deacons, men of strong minds, sterling piety, and unaffected zeal; sometimes it happened that a brother overstepped the bounds of prudence, and made his addresses too long, but this occurred less frequently than might have been expected. Sometimes a young brother but recently added to the church, would feel impressed with a desire to exhort the unconverted around him, and in doing so, the church frequently discovered in such, those who were called to preach the gospel. The various gifts of the brethren being thus called forth, a large number in every church became fit to lead in public worship, and as the ministers and pastors of churches were fewer then than now, and were called frequently to leave their charge to minister in distant places, consequently no great inconvenience resulted from it. But some there are now in our churches to whom these things will be novelties; a change has taken place as before remarked. A time came when persons from the cities, and persons of polite learning entered our country churches, and it began to be whispered that we lacked order in our Sabbath meetings, if no public discussions arose, still, it was evident a change had been suggested. A young minister would close his pulpit labors without giving an opportunity to speak, and others again would quote as applicable—“let all things be done decently and in order,” and as speakers are usually sensitive, they who used to be ready to speak a word in season to him who was weary—no longer pressed forward to this duty, and soon it fell into disuse in the most, if not all, of our churches. The change was gradual, but effectual, and now I leave your readers to judge whether it has been beneficial or not. Are our churches now working more orderly than then? Are our services on the Lord's Day better attended? Are conversions more frequent? Are Christians more active? And do the gifts of the church become improved more than formerly? or cannot we trace a heartless formality, stealing over the exercises of the sanctuary, our prayer-meetings, and our family altars?

HINT.

For the Christian Messenger.

Exposition of Scripture.

MESSRS. EDITORS,

A desire to ascertain the exact import of the language of holy writ, evidently ought to be encouraged. Therefore as no one has responded, through your pages, to the query proposed by an “Anxious Enquirer,” I am disposed to offer a few remarks on the text mentioned by him, namely, Rom. viii. 35, “Who shall separate us from the love of Christ?” It will be remembered that he wishes to know, whether “the love of Christ” means our love to Him, or His love to us.

In our inquiries relative to this point, it seems proper to consider, which construction of the text is more congruous, what the same phrase appears to denote elsewhere, and to what conclusion the context would naturally lead.

1. It seems incongruous to speak of “separating” persons from the love which they bear to another. In such case their love would rather be spoken of as being extinguished or quenched. But the idea of being separated from the love which another bears to us, or severed from his affections, is perfectly natural.

2. When the same Apostle says of himself and his ministering brethren, “The love of Christ constraineth us,” he is obviously treating of the great love evinced by the Saviour, in dying for sinners, and thereby laying them under strong obligation “not henceforth to live unto themselves, but unto Him which died for them.” 2 Cor. v. 14, 15. So likewise when he speaks of “knowing the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge,” he unquestionably employs the phrase in the

same acceptation. (Eph. iii. 19.) I am not aware that it is used in any other sense.

3. The immediate context may be thought to indicate, that Paul is there speaking of love to Christ; since it would be natural to inquire whether “tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword,” might not induce believers to renounce the Saviour. It is to be observed, however, that people are sometimes forsaken by professed friends in seasons of tribulation and distress; and consequently it was pertinent for the Apostle to assure the disciples of Jesus, that He would not thus forsake them. (See Isa. xliii. 2-4, xlix. 13-16. John xvi. 20, 22. Heb. xiii. 5, 6.) The inspired writer does indeed speak of “them that love God;” but he immediately traces this love to its source, by adding, “who are the called according to his purpose.” So John says, “We love Him because He first loved us.” (1 John iv. 19.)

In the connexion in which the text under consideration stands, the Apostle is teaching of the eternal and unchangeable love of God exercised toward His people in their predestination, calling, justification, and glorification, and evinced in the gift of “His own Son,” who was “delivered up” for them; and he concludes by assuring them, that nothing “shall be able to separate them from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.” So after speaking of the infinite love which Christ has manifested toward the recipients of His grace, in dying for them, rising again, and making intercession for them, he exultingly asks, “Who shall separate us from the love of Christ?” He triumphantly adds, “We are more than conquerors through Him that loved us.” (Rom. viii. 28-39.)

May this love influence the hearts of all the disciples of Jesus to love Him supremely to “love one another with a pure heart fervently,” and to love perishing sinners, and put forth diligent and persevering efforts for their conversion and salvation!

Yours in Gospel bonds,

C. TUPPER.

Aylesford, Feb. 1, 1856.

For the Christian Messenger.

Acadia College Library.

There is wanted at the present time a large addition to the Library of Acadia College. This want is now more keenly felt from the fact, that the Library of the Rev. Dr. Cramp, so long used by the Dr. in connection with his duties in the College, has been nearly destroyed by the recent fire.

To suppose collegiate instruction can be imparted, or obtained to advantage, without a Library in some degree equal to the demand, is like supposing that a man can become a historian without history.

The present Library of Acadia College is insufficient. Its only legitimate means of enlargement is from the “DeWolf Fund,” so called, from which at most but thirty pounds per year can be realized. The proceeds of that fund have been annually expended under the direction of the officers of the College, for the enlargement of the Library. We need however, at the present time, the sum of five hundred pounds for the above object. I propose to give one fiftieth part thereof, so soon as the remainder shall be raised; or one fiftieth part of any sum, not exceeding the amount named, that shall be raised for that purpose by the first of October next.

JOHN CHASE.

Wolfville, Feb. 7, 1856.

[We heartily recommend the above liberal proposal to the favorable consideration of the Baptist Denomination and the friends of Education generally. The injurious consequences of the late loss of Dr. Cramp in the destruction of his valuable Library is too obvious to need further comment. It is a loss however which we think the Denomination and all who feel deeply interested in the progress of sound and liberal Education, should feel themselves bound in honour and conscience as far as possible, to remedy, as well to Dr. Cramp individually, as for the indispensable interests of the Institution in which he is labouring with so much zeal and efficiency. We sincerely hope a general response will be made to the suggestion above stated, and shall feel gratified in recording the names of any who are disposed to meet it.—Ed.]

For the Christian Messenger.

Letter from Port Hood, C. B.

DEAR SIR,

Brother Benjamin Spencer is here preaching the gospel, and expects to go hence to the Strait of Canso, and thence to Cape Canso by the way

of Guysborough. We have seen so little of missionary labour in this quarter of Cape Breton for a long time past, that our Brother's presence is indeed a matter of deep thankfulness.

Suggestions that have appeared in the Christian Messenger of late, on the subject of a better plan for conducting the Home Missions, should not be lost sight of. An agency for the sole purpose of collecting for the Home Missionary fund, I conceive would be attended with the most beneficial results. But I need not enlarge just now, I shall revert to it perhaps at another time.

Yours in the bonds of the gospel,
J. LEWIS TREMAIN.

February 8, 1856.

For the Christian Messenger.

DEAR BROTHER,

Please give notice in your valuable paper of an arrangement made by the Revs. G. F. Miles, John Rowe, E. B. DeMill, and the subscriber, to hold, with their respective churches, regular quarterly meetings, for mutual edification, and for the purpose of more united Christian effort in the spread of truth.

Our first regular meeting was held in the Baptist Chapel at Point DeBate, commencing on Monday, 21st ult. The meetings were continued during the week, and were beneficial in enlivening the Church, and frequently a deep and solemn feeling was manifest.

We purpose making arrangements to employ a missionary to labour in the destitute settlements around us, or in such places as we may consider expedient, and for which purpose £8 were there raised. The friends shewed a disposition to give of their substance to this important object.

It was resolved that our next meeting be held with the first Baptist Church, Sackville, commencing on Monday, 21st April, at 6 p. m.

D. McKEEN.

Lower Maccan, Feb. 5, 1856.

[Christian Visitor please copy.]

For the Christian Messenger.

Obituary of P. M. Callbeck.

DEAR BROTHER,

On Jan. 21st., our friend Dr. Tremain, called on me, with the painful intelligence, that our beloved brother and father in Israel, PHILLIPS M. CALLBECK, Esq., of Tryon; was in a low state and not expected to survive; requesting me, if practicable, to go up and see him.

I left home at 2 p. m., and staid that night at his daughter's, (bro. Newzoms) at Crappaud, where I remained until the afternoon of next day it being a severe snow storm,—when bro. Newzom took me on. On our arrival I was kindly welcomed by bro. Callbeck. He said “he was glad I had arrived,” I asked him if he was conscious that he was a dying man, he said, “Yes,—But, I have cast away all my religious experience and feelings—and have come to God, as I came at first; a guilty, weak, and helpless sinner.” His feelings were very much aroused. I replied then you realize you are accepted of him. With composure he said, “I do.” After a few minutes he gained strength, and enquired how the little Church in town was doing—he felt very anxious to ascertain if he was known to the newly baptized, and asked, “are they walking straight?”

On going to his room in the evening I perceived he was drawing near, to the close of life I proposed reading, and prayer. He replied, “be short or I shall not be able to sit, and hear you.” After prayer I asked him, if he found the same consolation now, as he had formerly enjoyed. He said, “I do,” and exerting himself to speak, he said, “I have enjoyed more of the Divine presence since I have been confined to my room, this week past, than ever I did before.” I said, “You know, in whom you have believed.” He answered, “I do.” I asked him if he had changed his views on divine truth. He answered, “O no.” After quitting the room for a short time, on my return, I found him entering on the conflict with his last enemy. He was seated on his bed-side, supported by his friend. I called the family together, but he had no power to speak, and in the space of five minutes he fell asleep in Jesus, without a groan. Thus died Phillips M. Callbeck, Esq., in the 85th year of his age, Jan. 25th, 1856.

On the Sabbath I preached in the Baptist Chapel. The church are few in number, but I am happy to say our brother Eliphalet Reed, from Sackville, is laboring among them with acceptance.

On the Tuesday following, the remains of our beloved brother Callbeck were followed to the grave by a numerous family and a large circle of friends. Altho' the weather was severe and the