

Correspondence.

For the Christian Messenger.

The Bible in Common Schools.

Messrs. Editors,

From your remarks in C. M. of the 9th inst., it appears that, while some are advocating the compulsory reading of the Bible in common schools, others are maintaining that it ought to be excluded from them. As I have not seen any of the communications on either side of this question, I can not, of course, estimate the force of the argument adduced, nor make any direct reference to them. It seems to me, however, the part of duty, to present, for consideration, my own view of the subject, deliberately formed some time since, independently of all party considerations, or opinions advocated by others.

The idea of prohibiting the use of the Scriptures in schools where the people desire it, appears to me too preposterous to be entertained for a moment by any unprejudiced mind. Such a measure would manifestly be a gross violation of their obvious right.

It is my sincere and earnest desire, that the sacred Scriptures should be universally received, read, understood, believed, and obeyed. The question, therefore, with me is this, What legitimate and justifiable measures are best adapted to further the attainment of this desirable object? Coercion is necessary to restrain the ill-disposed from injuring others. But attentive observers of human nature are aware, that united persuasive measures are much more efficacious in bringing persons to receive the truth and practise virtue, than are those of a coercive nature. Legal enactments may, indeed, sometimes make hypocrites; but they can never make sincere converts from error to truth, or from sin to holiness.

Should people be in any way compelled to have the Bible used in schools, where the mass of them conscientiously regard such use of it as wrong, their prejudices, and those of their children, would naturally be increased and strengthened, and they be much less likely to give a cordial reception to the truths of revelation. Such compulsion would obviously be an infringement on liberty of conscience and common rights, and would be adapted to excite determined opposition. As one extreme usually produces another, the proposal of any such measure may be reasonably expected to call forth efforts to exclude the Bible from common schools.

The fact is, there is no occasion for any controversy on this point; for it is not a proper subject of legislation. The interference of the civil power, in any way, with reference to religion, or religious views of any kind, leads directly to persecution. It is evidently the duty of government to secure to all, their civil and religious rights, without so favouring one class as to oppress another. The adoption of either of the measures that it seems have been proposed, would be a plain violation of this self-evident principle.

Nor is there the slightest occasion for any legal enactment in reference to this matter. As the law now stands, leaving it to the option of the trustees and proprietors of schools, every privilege that can be desired is fully enjoyed. The writer has taught school, in several places, and at different intervals of time, in the course of forty-four years past. Ever after he professed religion, he constantly read the Scriptures and prayed with his pupils daily, and frequently had classes reading them. Among the children committed to his charge were those of Baptists, Methodists, Presbyterians, Churchmen, and Roman Catholics. He is not aware that any dissatisfaction was ever expressed.

Among the lovers of the Bible there exist diversities of opinion with regard to the use of it in schools. Many of them deem it improper to make the sacred volume a common school-book. More than forty years ago, the late Bishop of Nova Scotia, then Dr. Inglis, expressed this view to the writer—that time teaching in Aylesford—and remarked, that he would have the Bible read, with special attention and reverence, in classes; and let admission to these be regarded as a privilege and honour, to be conferred on deserving pupils. This course would naturally tend to produce in the minds of the scholars a veneration for the word of God, and a desire to read and study it.

If parents desire to have the minds of their children stored with scriptural knowledge at school, they may employ a pious teacher, capable of communicating such knowledge, and let him know their wishes. If any are averse to the impartation of such instruction to their offspring by the school teacher, it is useless, as well as oppressive to attempt to force it upon them. Moreover, to require all teachers, of course including those

who are not religious, to impart religious instruction, is, to say the least, quite as preposterous as to require persons who are not grammarians to teach grammar.

There are likewise serious objections against the enforced use in schools of any prescribed form of prayer. It infringes the right of those by whom extempore prayer is preferred. Godly teachers are thereby denied the privilege of presenting their supplications, in accordance with the promptings of the desires of their hearts. It obliges unregenerate persons, who are enemies to God, to make a solemn mockery of prayer. This naturally leads the pupils to regard all religion, or devotional exercise, as a mere farce.

In conclusion, I remark, that, while civil governments evidently have no right either to enjoin or to forbid the use of the Scriptures, or the offering of prayer in schools, any more than in the houses of the people, it is highly desirable that parents and guardians should avail themselves of the right and privilege possessed by them, to obtain the services of decidedly pious teachers, whose instructions, example, and influence, will be adapted to promote the best interests of the pupils committed to their charge.

Yours in gospel bonds,

C. TUPPER.

Aylesford, Dec. 16, 1857.

For the Christian Messenger.

Memoir of Rev. John E. Cogswell.

(Concluded from our last.)

Messrs. Editors,

It can not be reasonably doubted, that preachers sometimes err by removing from places hastily, and without sufficient reason. When, however, it becomes evident that one's labours are not valued where he is residing, while they are desired and sought for in other localities, it seems evidently to be the allotment of Providence, and the path of duty, for him to remove. The members of the Baptist Church at River Philip were few in number, and quite limited with regard to means. The people generally esteemed Bro. Cogswell as a worthy man; but to numbers of them his preaching, after some years, did not appear attractive. Neglect naturally rendered it less inviting. There was neither a sufficient amount raised for the support of his family, nor was the usual attendance on his ministry such as to encourage him in his work. Under these circumstances, it seems that he ought to have removed to a more promising field, where he might have reasonably expected to labour with more comfort to himself, and more profit to his fellow-men.

It may be proper to suggest here, that it is highly desirable for every Church and congregation, if it be by any means in their power, to have a ministerial house, with a small portion of land, for the accommodation of their Pastor. By such arrangement his mind is greatly relieved from worldly care. Moreover, should it appear expedient for him to remove at any time, he could do so, without the inconvenience and sacrifice which, in many other cases, as well as that of Bro. Cogswell, attend the disposal of a place suitable for a Minister, but not for men of other avocations, and consequently not saleable.

It may be, however, that the course pursued by our valued Brother, under the circumstances in which he was placed, was as beneficial to the interests of religion as any that could have been adopted. There were many destitute settlements around the place where he resided, in which he laboured, in some cases steadily, and in others occasionally. In these places his public preaching and private visits were highly serviceable. He also performed a great amount of missionary service, which was manifestly attended with very beneficial results. The extensive field of these itinerant labours lay principally in Cumberland and Colchester, and consequently surrounded the place of his residence.

In the autumn of the year 1848 he performed a tour on Prince Edward Island. His faithful endeavours to promote the Redeemer's cause, and to do good to his fellow-men, were highly appreciated by the people among whom he travelled. He was said to have received an urgent call from the Church at Bedeque, to remove thither, and become their Pastor.

In the year 1849, Bro. C. was greatly cheered by witnessing a much more favourable state of religion at River Philip than had existed there for some years prior to that time: as also at Little River and Leicester, adjacent settlements in which he devoted a portion of his time to ministerial labour.

The Churches of which he formerly had the pastoral charge, at West Brook and Portauquique, continued to share in his affectionate regards. They were frequently visited by him, and his visits were received with gratitude and joy.

Having formed a pleasing acquaintance with many valued and worthy Christian friends on Prince Edward Island, he proceeded thither again in 1851. In the Journal of his indefatigable labours during this tour, he remarks,—"Never was my Master's service more precious to my soul than at present." Feeling a deep interest in the spiritual welfare of the people on this beautiful Island, he made a third acceptable tour through many parts of it in the following year.

In July, 1853, Brother Cogswell appears to have been appointed to fulfil a Mission of six months, or more, in Cumberland. In the fulfilment of this appointment he was remarkably successful. Especially at Wallace Road, Wallace River, Westchester, and Goose River his zealous efforts, in connexion with those of other Brethren, were attended with the manifest blessing of God, in the reviving of His work, and the conversion of many sinners. During the gracious visitations in these places Bro. C. baptized eighty-two persons, who gave satisfactory evidence of having been born again.

Encouraged and animated by these cheering tokens of Divine approval, our esteemed Brother performed an extensive missionary tour in the Eastern parts of the Province, and visited Canseau and adjacent places, in the autumn of the year 1854.

His subsequent labours appear to have been principally devoted to the spiritual welfare of the inhabitants of River Philip and adjoining settlements.

On the last Sabbath before his departure he preached at Black River in the morning, on the Christian warfare, and in the afternoon at Clare Mont, on mourning for deceased relatives, from Gen. xxiii. 2. "And Abraham came to mourn for Sarah, and to weep for her."

On the Wednesday following, August 6th, 1856, Br. Cogswell felt indisposed, and procured some medicine, which he designed to take that evening. As he was walking home alone, about half a mile from his own house, it appears that he dropped dead instantaneously. From the appearance of his body he seemed not to have struggled in the slightest degree, or even to have made any effort to protect himself in falling. An affection of the heart was supposed to be the cause of his death.

There is abundant reason for assurance, that this very sudden transition ushered the ransomed spirit of our dear Brother into the mansions of endless day. In his Missionary journals are frequent notices of sudden deaths, with judicious and striking reflections on the necessity and importance of being in readiness for such a solemn event. He lived habitually in the fear of God.

He was removed in the 48th year of his age; and left a widow, one son, and three daughters, to mourn their unexpected bereavement of an affectionate husband and kind father.

An appropriate funeral sermon was preached on the occasion by Rev. David McKeen, from Phil. i. 21. For to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain."

A brief review of Brother Cogswell's ministerial course, clearly exhibits the cheering fact, that his "labour was not in vain in the Lord." This should encourage and stimulate others to imitate his worthy example, by persevering in diligent

endeavours to do good. Evidently constrained by the love of Christ, he sought out a number of destitute settlements, and published the gospel in a number of places where it had not been preached before. Many of the Lord's children, settled in remote places, were visited by him, and comforted, strengthened, and animated to perseverance in the ways of piety. Through his faithful ministrations numbers of perishing sinners were undoubtedly plucked as brands out of the fire, and brought to believe to the saving of the soul. In the course of his ministry he baptized two hundred and eighty persons. It is not to be imagined that these were all converted through his labours. There were, however, numbers confessedly brought to Christ by means of his efforts, who were baptized by other Ministers. An instance has been communicated by Br. A. Davison, of Portauquique, in which a man who received baptism there since Br. Cogswell's decease, referred his conversion, under God, to the preaching of this faithful servant of Christ.

He was active in the gathering and formation of several Baptist Churches; and aided greatly in the strengthening and enlargement of others.

Our excellent Brother exercised a salutary influence, in many respects, among the people wherever he either travelled or laboured steadily. When not depressed in spirit he was affable in his private intercourse; but he happily avoided such levity as tends to degrade the Christian ministry. Not only was his preaching interesting and edifying, but his conversation also was instructive and profitable. In his missionary labours he was accustomed, in ordinary cases, to

devote the evenings, when congregations can be most conveniently assembled, to the preaching of the gospel in public, and the days to religious family visitation. The latter exercise though not so showy, is often quite as beneficial as the former.

Having witnessed in early life the deleterious effects of the use of intoxicating liquors, he felt deeply interested in the success of the Temperance Reform. By public lectures and private admonitions, he did much, in many places, to promote this noble cause of humanity.

Aware of the beneficial influence of a well-conducted religious paper, and justly regarding the Christian Messenger as such, he recommended it in his travels, and delighted in extending its circulation. He communicated a number of valuable articles for its columns. By reference to the Indexes, his Missionary Journals, and Letters, may be found over his own signature; and his other communications, so far as is known to the writer, over those of Philippi and Philomulus or Philomules.

Our literary Institutions in Wolfville, where he had studied for a time with profit, shared in his regards and attentions. He evinced a lively interest in their prosperity, and strove to enlist the energies of the people in their favour.

He diligently inculcated, by word and deed, a strict observance of the holy Sabbath. In connection with this, he encouraged the establishment and maintenance of Sabbath Schools, for the religious training of the young.

Though Br. Cogswell was an industrious man, and laboured much with his own hands when at home, for the support of his family, yet, as a great part of his time was devoted to the preaching of the gospel in new settlements, where the inhabitants were generally poor, he never accumulated any considerable amount of property. He had no earthly inheritance to leave to his widow and children. "A good name," however, coupled with the pious example of a prayerful and upright Christian, which he has left them, is of much greater intrinsic value. It may moreover, be confidently anticipated, that the just claim of our esteemed sister and her fatherless children on the sympathies and assistance of the denomination, will not be disregarded. The munificence of one of her connections, by whom her son has been supported at our Institutions in Wolfville, is worthy of record and imitation. The pleasing fact that the only son of our dear departed Brother has, while pursuing his studies there, been brought to hope in the Saviour and to confess Him before men, ought to be recorded to the glory of Divine grace, and for encouragement to persevering piety, as also to acts of beneficence.

In conclusion, let all who are engaged in the momentous work of the Christian ministry, be encouraged to persevere, how dark soever the prospect may seem, in the diligent use of all scriptural means for the advancement of the cause of Christ. Let all believers earnestly "pray the Lord of the harvest that He would send forth labourers into His harvest"; and let every one faithfully strive, in imitation of this example, to bear at least some humble part in the extension of the Redeemer's empire, by leading lost sinners to "the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world." May the recollection of the extreme suddenness of the exit of this man of God, arouse all to an impressive and abiding sense of the infinite importance of "being also ready!"

Yours in gospel bonds,

CHARLES TUPPER.

Aylesford, Dec. 10, 1857.

For the Christian Messenger.

LONDON CORRESPONDENCE.

[From our Special Correspondent.]

London, Dec. 4, 1857.

MR. EDITOR,

THE PANIC, THAT WAS.

It is a proud proof of England's position, that though a hurricane of war broke forth in one of her dependencies which is an empire of itself—though another empire embroiled her in war—though America dragged her into sympathetic financial convulsions—yet, unsubdued she shakes off all those destructive elements, and after a passing throe, pursues her onward way, calmly, majestically, and victoriously. India is quelled; China awaits our pleasure; and the monetary world, which is the pulse of social condition, is recovering itself. God keeps us ever, in the future, as in the past, and stretch forth his preserving hand over our noble country!

I have headed this, "the panic that was." My last letter developed the real stability that lay beneath surfacial alarm; and that stability is now reasserting itself. Gold-holders are coming more freely into the market; the Bank issues of notes