

and interest would be allowed till possession. A living close to a station on the Brighton Railway; population small; the income approaches £400 a year; immediate legal possession.

A rectory, most desirably situate in a home county; age of incumbent, nearly seventy; lowest price, 4,000 guineas, with $\frac{3}{4}$ per cent. allowed till vacancy, and if wished £1,000 may remain on mortgage.

The rectory of *Shelton*: there is a good parsonage-house, the income about £1,100 per annum; incumbent sixty-three years of age."

What a very odd supplement to the Acts of the Apostles would the foregoing advertisements form! Imagine Paul writing to Apollos, that a comfortable living was falling into hand at Ephesus, and offering to advance such portion of the purchase money as could not remain on mortgage!

NOTICE!

The holders of Notes due the former Proprietors of the *Christian Messenger* are respectfully requested to collect the same before the 20th day of April, ensuing, and transmit the amount, less the expenses of collecting, to this office. If any Notes remain unpaid at that date, the parties holding them are hereby requested to return said Notes, or renewals of them, so that further steps may be taken forthwith.

Christian Messenger.

HALIFAX, MARCH 30, 1859.

The Communion Question.

A spirit of enquiry is abroad in the Christian world, and many of the observances of religious bodies are being subjected to close scrutiny and examination. Whatever will not bear the test of Scripture truth is, more than ever before, placed in danger, and liable to be disregarded by God-fearing people.

We hail this as a highly favourable "sign of the times," and are well pleased to encourage the desire to investigate, with becoming humility, hoping that it may induce a greater conformity to New Testament principles and practices, in other churches, as well as those with which we are more immediately associated.

Many of the peculiar principles of Baptists are being adopted by other bodies, and, gradually but certainly, light is breaking in upon the darkness, and those parts of their practices which rest only on human authority are being disregarded and must ultimately be entirely banished.

The Communion question is one on which Baptists can well afford close examination. Much of superstition has been connected with this ordinance by professed Christian bodies. It appears necessary to notice slightly their views on this question to enable us to perceive clearly the estimation in which it is held by that portion of the Christian church with which we are more particularly identified.

The Roman Catholic Church demands the adoration of the Host and teaches that this contains the actual, personal presence of Christ,—that the wafer is changed into the real Divinity, and therefore as an act of homage its communicants receive it in a kneeling posture. We shall not stay to trace this error through its lesser imitations in professedly Protestant communities. The dogma of the real presence is generally rejected by Protestants, but the practice of kneeling at the altar for communion, which is derived from the Roman Catholic Church, is still observed by some other bodies.

By several churches the act of communion is held to be a Sacrament, and therefore in some way efficacious in the work of salvation. Others again, not chargeable with this error, seem to think that it is an institution to be observed in some general manner by professing Christians, without regarding church fellowship as a pre-requisite, and they thus appear to make this the great sum and substance of Christian profession, without reference to any other union with the church. Baptist churches, however, hold that the observance of the Lord's Supper is but one of the commands of their Divine Master, yet highly significant of the bond of union which exists amongst those partaking, and also of union between them and their ascended Saviour—the Lawgiver and Head of His Church—to be observed by his people "till he comes."

Like their Pedobaptist brethren, Baptists believe the command, to be baptized, a preliminary one to that given by our Lord to his disciples, when he said, "Do this in remem-

brance of me." But unlike them they hold that *all baptized members of their churches* are eligible to a participation in this Divine ordinance, whereas all Protestant Pedobaptists, we believe, have a large number, probably a majority, of their membership, *who are never expected to commune with them at the Lord's table*, and would not even be allowed to do so, except by some act of previous examination or application subsequent to baptism.

Much of error has arisen from supposing that Church fellowship consists merely in partaking of the Lord's Supper, and by forgetting that the fellowship which is presupposed by this act of obedience is that which gives to it all its significance and value. What value would a Presbyterian, for instance, attach to an invitation given him to join with Roman Catholics, or with the Church of England, or even with Wesleyan Methodists in communion? We may go farther, and ask, Would a Free Churchman think it a Christian privilege to unite in Communion with Kirkmen? (Church of Scotland) with whom they are entirely agreed in religious sentiment, but from whom they have separated themselves on a question of Church temporalities. We refer to this merely for the purpose of shewing that church fellowship is an essential pre-requisite to church communion, and where the former does not exist there can be no proper realization of the latter. This is a point which we think should have more prominence than it has hitherto received. Even members of sister churches have no inherent right by which they can claim a place at the Lord's table with a church of which they are not themselves members, except it be by special invitation. It is customary, we know, for members to unite in communion with those "of the same faith and order," when an occasion may offer; and of course it is very desirable they should embrace every opportunity of doing so, but it is merely in the exercise of Christian brotherhood, and not from any right they possess independently of the wish of the church with which they so unite. Members, therefore, removing from one locality to another, should also remove their membership with as little delay as may be, so that they may unite with the disciples of their Master in sustaining the cause of Christ and in obeying his commands.

The exercise of discipline, even in Baptist churches, is too often considered merely an exclusion from the Lord's table; whereas, it is properly a public severance of fellowship from those who have by some misdemeanor forfeited their claim to Christian character and the confidence of their brethren.

The union of Christians in church relationship with those they recognize as believers in the Lord Jesus Christ is the simple New Testament principle on which Baptist churches are formed. The recognition of this principle has been the foundation of religious liberty for the past 1800 years and whether they have been called Baptists or Waldenses, Lollards or Mennonites, or any other name, those holding these sentiments, whether hunted by persecutors, or protected by their rulers, have ever been among the greatest conservators of all that is good in church and state.

We cannot pursue the subject this week, but must return to it on another early occasion.

The following is from the *Presbyterian Witness* of Saturday last:—

OPEN COMMUNION.—All the leading denominations in the United States, with the exception of the Baptists, practice what is called Open Communion—that is—they welcome to a seat at the Lord's Table all whom they have reason to believe are sincere disciples of the LORD. The Baptists, however, make a firm stand for "close communion"—dipping being in their view an essential preliminary to sitting down at the Lord's Table.

We are not surprised to find our contemporary following, at a humble distance, some of his American superiors in their attempts to misrepresent Baptists. We have only time and space just to put to him a question or two, which, when he answers satisfactorily, we shall be the better prepared to enter upon the discussion of what he chooses to designate "Open Communion."

1. Do not "all the leading denominations" make baptism a prerequisite to communion?
2. Do Presbyterian Churches welcome "sincere disciples of the Lord" who have received only Roman Catholic baptism, or do they require them to be re-baptized? (Anabaptize them.)
3. Do Presbyterian Churches "welcome to a seat at the Lord's table" pious Quakers and others who differ from them on the subject of baptism?
4. Will the Editor of the *Presbyterian Witness* engage, on behalf of his favourite "Open Communion" Churches, to admit even all who have been admitted by baptism, as members of those Churches?

5. Which does he think most like "Close communion?" Baptist Churches who admit the members of their own and sister Churches, or Pedobaptist Churches who refuse to admit some of their own baptized members?

We have all the facts respecting Mr. Howell's ordination, and may probably use them for our friend's enlightenment on some early occasion.

Registration of Births, Marriages and Deaths.

THE subject of Registration is one that demands more serious consideration than it has hitherto received in the British Provinces. The Bill for the Registration of Births, Marriages and Deaths, introduced by the Hon. Attorney General on the 7th instant, ought to have immediate attention. The present Statute on this subject has never been enforced, and, we believe, is worse in its effects than if we had no law on the subject. Our readers are not entirely uninformed on the necessity which exists for such an enactment. The very imperfect or entire absence of Registration, if much longer continued, will entail on the coming generation highly injurious consequences, and will be a very just cause of reproach upon the present generation.

We regret to learn that the introducer of the Bill has deferred its consideration till next Session.

Mr. Akins' Report on Public Records, just received, unintentionally, gives an item or two of evidence showing the necessity for such a law. He says:—

"I may also mention as part of what has been done during the present year, the arrangement of several thousand marriage license bonds, taken at the secretary's office on the issuing of marriage licenses, extending over a period of about eighty years. No register of marriages having been kept in the secretary's office, these bonds are the only record of the licence having been issued, and as such may be of considerable importance."

Further on, he remarks:—

"The ancient criminal records from 1749 to 1775 are among the papers which have fallen into my hands. They were scattered about the province building, but have been gathered up and placed in boxes, and deposited in the law library. These with the papers of the court of error, marriages and divorce, escheats and forfeitures of land, and the proceedings under order of governor and council for the sale of intestate estates, all require to be looked after, being in a state which almost preclude reference."

The Hon. Attorney General may have hesitated in pressing this Bill forward during the present Session because of its requiring an outlay of some 5 or £600 per annum. We think, however, such consideration should not have the effect of keeping back legislation so intimately connected with the welfare of the whole people of the Province.

We perceive that an attempt is being made to legislate on this subject in Canada. The Bill, however, introduced into the Canadian Parliament, unlike the measure to which we have above referred, is an attempt to enact a law scarcely better than the one we now have. The *Christian Guardian*, the Toronto organ of the Wesleyan Methodists, speaks of it in a leader entitled "Tinkering again." We shall take the liberty of making a few extracts from this article. The Editor says:—

"We can hardly bring ourselves to believe that so absurd a measure as this Bill displays will be entertained by the House of Assembly; but lest this should take rank among some of the other singular occurrences of the day, we are not disposed to allow it to pass unnoticed."

"We have no hesitation in saying that the Bill, should it unwisely become law, will be a dead letter, like similar acts which have formerly been passed. Clergymen do not derive their authority from the State to administer baptism or perform funeral rites; nor will they undertake to perform the uncompensated task of furnishing an account of matters connected with these duties, and with which the civil power has no right to intermeddle. We cannot but regard it as an insult to the whole body of Clergymen, to say to them as this Bill does, that they must perform this service for the State without fee or reward, and under the fear of a penalty of from ten to eighty dollars, for neglect of duty."

"We should like to be serious over this very grave matter, but our comic propensity is too strongly excited to brook restraint at the idea contained in the second clause of the Bill, that all priests and ministers doing the clerical duties of religious communities and hospitals, shall make entries in books furnished them for the purpose, of all births, deaths, and burials, so soon as the same shall have been by them performed." How largely the clergy practice in one part of the service here indicated we leave the mover of the bill to determine, and from thence deduce and demonstrate the propriety of the rather novel mode of expression employed. We rather incline to the opinion, however, that reports under that one head will be more scarce from Clergymen than under the others which the Bill includes, even should it become law.

"If the statistics sought to be obtained by the proposed bill, be important and serviceable to the community, let a measure be adopted which will provide the proper-paid agents for performing the work."

We are glad to have a Bill before us against which no such objections can be made, and which, when brought into operation, we believe, will be generally acceptable, and will place this part of our social arrangements on a permanent and satisfactory basis, similar, as far as circumstances will allow, to that now in force in the Mother Country.

We trust the matter will not be lost sight of, but will be taken up in an enlightened manner, without reference to denominations or parties.

Prohibitory Enactments.

THE recent execution of Fleming at Toronto, for murder, has been made the occasion of a movement on the part of the Hon. Col. Prince, by his bringing in a Bill for prohibiting the carrying of offensive weapons and preventing the exposing of them for sale.

The criminal above referred to, states in his confession that he purchased the dirk, with which he committed the awful deed, without any intention of using it on any person, and was induced to obtain it simply from seeing it in a window for sale. He appears to have been free from any malice afore-thought, and was under the maddening influence of strong drink when he took the life of his victim.

We think the *Christian Guardian* treats this matter in a very proper light, by charging the crime upon the drinking rather than upon the weapon in question, and asking for a prohibition of the traffic in strong drink rather than of weapons. "Now we ask," says the *Guardian*, "what was the real cause of the crime in this case, by which two lives have been sacrificed,—the dirk or the whiskey? Was it not obviously the latter? Where, then, is the justice or the humanity, of making the carrying of deadly weapons a punishable offence, and prohibiting their sale, while grog-shops are legalized and protected in carrying on their murderous work? We say nothing against the object of the Bill under consideration; that is all proper and right; but it is somewhat remarkable, that the mover of himself has been one of the most conspicuous in his opposition to the efforts for compelling the grog-shops to observe a truce from Saturday evening till Monday morning, in their blighting and cursing warfare against all the best interests of civil and religious community. What wisdom or common sense is there in legislating dangerous weapons out of the hands of men who are generally harmless whilst in the sober exercise of their rationality, and at the same time throwing wide open those places where the same quiet persons are transformed into demons, and prepared for any violence or crime which circumstances afford them the opportunity to commit? With all due respect for our sage legislators, we beg leave to express our opinion that the proposed Bill against carrying deadly weapons, is beginning at the wrong end, and is an attempt to prevent an evil by dealing with, at most, only a secondary cause, or an accessory, instead of aiming a death-blow at the principal, from which the consequences flow. Shut up the grog-shops, and declare the crime-inciting act of "putting the bottle to a neighbor's mouth" a punishable offence, and those scenes of disorder in which the vicious are incited to the use of dangerous weapons, will seldom occur; and even when they do, will be divested of that violence which generally prevails when the whole course of fallen nature is "set on fire of hell." This would be a more patriotic and salutary course of legislation, than that which, while it aims to remove an evil, is careful, for the sake of personal gratification, to shield and maintain the very source from which the evil proceeds."

Past and Present.

THE last number of *The Journal of Education* contains a letter from the Rev. J. Spratt, the veteran Presbyterian Minister of Musquodoboit, contrasting the state of Education in the neighbourhood where he has so long laboured at the present time with what it was when he first settled there. He says:—"Two or three generations, with few exceptions, have passed away without the benefit of education. At that time the teacher at Ship Harbour was rather a thirsty soul, for his employers complained to me that he had taken a frolic for three weeks. They said they would have thought nothing of two or three days, but three weeks was too much."

Mr. S. gives a list of seventeen places where now they have school-houses, the best being at Musquodoboit Harbour, Ship Harbour, and Sheet Harbour.

"The tone of religious feeling," he remarks, "is slowly but steadily advancing. They have three church ministers on the Eastern Shore, who preach the gospel with ability and diligence, and leave no means unemployed to gather souls to the Saviour. I well remember when divine service was held for the first time in a private house at Ship Harbour, that the owner returned from Halifax at the time of the