

Correspondence.

For the Christian Messenger.

Setting off Churches.

DEAR BROTHER, "Enquirer and Defender," in the Messenger of March 2nd, notices a paragraph in my communication published Feb. 19th, by a piece headed "The cruel Baptist Churches: Where are they?" I presume the writer of that article will not claim that the churches are infallible. If not, he will then accord the liberty of speaking freely of their actions. At any rate, whether right or wrong, such is the position which I now assume.

In replying, I shall not follow the course so sagaciously marked out for me by "Enquirer and Defender;" but shall proceed according to my own view of the subject. Though his principles, to say nothing of his logic, might provoke criticism; yet the subject is one of too great importance to treat of otherwise than on its own merits, separately from personal considerations.

The question is whether we shall divide our extensive churches into a number of smaller bodies, or retain them mostly as they are,—whether we shall proceed on the principle of separation rather than on that of union—on the basis of number rather than on that of strength. It is doubtless expedient sometimes to set off a part of a Church when it has attained sufficient strength to support the gospel by itself, or when there is room for enlargement by such an act; but for a Church to send off, as by some unaccountable centrifugal force, a lot of fragments, without consistency or shape, one to be deposited in a sequestered valley, another on a rugged mountain, and still another by a lonely bay, for the apparent reason that she may enjoy freedom from care, in the heart of some highly favored community, is a scene too dark to contemplate with pleasure. The separation of churches into feeble portions is a growing evil that should be checked.

"Enquirer and Defender" lays down rules to be observed in the division of churches. But, supposing that these rules were followed, the facts remain the same. Little churches are still found in a miserable state of segregation, and that, too, by actual dismemberment from the parent stem. The way in which this was effected does not alter the case. It may have been done in the gentlest manner, and yet the "cruelty," as the writer terms it, is none the less. A traveller, who finds himself in the cold street at midnight, is none the less exposed because he was "bowed and scraped" out of the domicile when he had expected the rites of hospitality. Or, to use the illustration so much disliked by "Enquirer," if a child were found frozen to death, it would be no alleviation of the little sufferer's doom, to know that its mother placed it gently on the snow, put a pillow of down beneath its head, and soothed it into a state of unconsciousness by a sweet lullaby. The result would be the same as if the infant had been thrown there by rougher hands. So when we see a little Church, dwindling away beneath the chilling frown of a hostile world, and that, too, in the neighbourhood of a flourishing sister Church from which, perhaps, it has been separated, in the gentle manner indicated by the writer, we feel that the result is just as fatal as if effected in the most "cruel" way. The reasons for not giving names and places to prove this statement are obvious, and yet such facts could be adduced if necessary.

But it may in my opinion be fairly questioned whether the course laid down by "Defender" be generally adopted in the separation of churches. If it were expedient, I could cite a case, in point, which occurred not a thousand miles from his own home. Neither is it certain that it would be scriptural and proper to adopt the course marked out by him. The separation of a Church being a merely local event, has no precedent in scripture for the calling of a Council. We read of one Council to discuss a matter of very general importance; but of none that was called to fulfil the responsibilities and to interfere with the independent action of an individual Church.

The independence of the churches is a principle that is dear to the writer. But how often is this abused, as well as the calling of Councils. This abuse is even seen in the subject under discussion. Independence in adopting their own methods to promote the gospel is indeed a distinguishing trait of Baptist churches; but it may be perverted so far as to cut them loose from all obligations to benefit man and to glorify God. Such independence would destroy the obligations of large churches to cultivate the missionary field around them, and lead them to

sunder their connection with infant societies struggling into existence. A banking after a false independence may lead a small body of christian people in some little nook to be erected into a separate Church. But not having beforehand counted the cost, they "sin in haste and repent at leisure." While we value the principle of independence, let us not "grasp at the shadow and lose the substance."

Suppose, then, that each effective Church would assume the responsibility of cultivating the missionary field around, instead of curtailing it, would not this be the best independence? Suppose they should decide to take under their fostering care all the little churches in their neighborhood, would not this be the best way to free themselves from the charge of cruelty, and gain the character of benevolence? Would it not be better to leave the feet and hands attached to the body, rather than by cutting off the extremities, to prevent the free circulation of the blood, causing it to curdle in the veins and in the heart, and thus clogging the vital organs of spiritual life? If the Baptist churches would thus show their independence and their benevolence, then the "serious and grave charges against them" would cease, and there would be no need for "Enquirer" to spend his time in looking for them, for their light would shine, nor for "Defender" to be their champion, for "wisdom would be justified of her children."

Yours in the truth,
D. FREEMAN.
Canaan, March 10, 1859.

For the Christian Messenger.

An Enquiry.

Somewhere in Nova Scotia, or its dependencies, March 1st, 1859.

MR. EDITOR,

On the evening of last Lord's day, our place of worship being closed, I went to the Episcopal Church. The Rector told us in the course of his sermon, that St. Paul, after his conversion, was instructed for a number of years, in the Christian religion, and afterwards became a preacher of it.

I feel ashamed of my former ignorance, having always supposed that, after his conversion, St. Paul straightway preached Christ; but, having now obtained so much new light, I am anxious to satisfy my curiosity on one or two other points, and as it is conceded that Editors know, or ought to know, everything, I would feel obliged if you or any other Editor would kindly inform me how many years Paul had to study theology before being admitted into "holy orders," and at what College or University he pursued his studies.

When you have taught me these things, I shall trouble you with another question or two on subjects treated of in the same discourse, on which I would like to be informed.

AN "IGNORANT BAPTIST."

[We were not before aware of the concession here referred to, nor are we quite prepared to agree with the writer of the above, either that "Editors know," or that they "ought to know everything," and we are therefore not desirous of having such hard questions (!) as this put to ourselves. Our own experience enables us to speak for ourselves, and our observation is quite sufficient to teach us that our contemporaries cannot establish their claim to such distinction. We would direct our friend to imitate the "noble" disciples at Berea.—Acts xvii. 10, 11, and he may soon have the light flowing in and driving away his "ignorance."

By examining Gal. i. and ii. chapters and comparing what he finds there with Acts ix. and xxi. chapters and other passages, which the Episcopal Rector must have overlooked, he will conclude, we think, that the Apostle Paul went on a mission to the Gentiles in Arabia for three or four of the first years after his conversion.—Ed. C. M.]

For the Christian Messenger.

Acknowledgments.

I beg leave to acknowledge the following sums for the Foreign Mission, which, as I am journeying westward, on College business, on arriving at Aylesford, I will deposit with the Treasurer:—Robert Jones, Esq., Lot 49, P. E. I., 3s. 1½d.; John Davies, Sackville, Windsor Road, 7s. 6d.

I also procured from Mrs. Sarah Young, of Falmouth, two manuscript volumes, written by the distinguished Henry Alline, to be deposited in the College Museum. One is his original journal, written mostly in abbreviated characters, and the other volume is the key which explains the characters employed. These volumes also contain several pieces of original poetry, &c., written at length, on the autograph of that remarkable preacher. Such mementoes of the "good departed" are worthy of being treasured up as matters of historical interest.

Yours, &c.,
D. FREEMAN.
Gibson's Woods, Cornwallis, March 10, '59.

For the Christian Messenger.

Missionary Organization in Prince Edward Island.

DEAR BROTHER,

The accompanying resolutions contain our reply to the appeal of the Home Mission Board for help. The meeting at which they were passed was small, but unanimous and hearty. The future will test the worth of our movement.

In visiting throughout the Island, I find our brethren few, but not faint. The Campbellite crisis is past. Symptoms of a salutary reaction are manifest. We hope hereafter, for less disputation, more evangelical labour, and more prayer.

Some of us are anxiously expecting Dr. Cramp's reply to Mr. Maturin. The Romish controversy does not sleep here. Mr. Fitzgerald, the worthy Episcopalian minister in this city, has recently delivered two good lectures on the English Reformation. They were capitally attended, and well received. We are upon the eve of a general election too, in which Protestantism and Romanism will try their strength at the hustings. We are hoping for favourable results.

I must not forget to tell you, that a few weeks ago we had a tea-meeting, to raise funds for improving our place of worship. The large room of our Temperance Hall was well filled on the occasion. The Protestant ministers in the city were most of them present, and displayed a right brotherly spirit. On the whole, we had a genuine good time of it: it paid well too. Indeed, with some drawbacks, there is a good degree of union among our evangelical denominations. We are working well together in the Young Men's Christian Association; in connection with which we have had two united prayer-meetings, well sustained, since the opening of the year. Good ways these for combating Romanism. It is well to talk and write it down; but better to live and pray it down.

Your fellow-labourer,
J. DAVIS.
Charlottetown, P. E. I., March 10, 1859.

At a meeting of ministers and members of the Baptist churches of Prince Edward Island, held in the Baptist Meeting-house in Charlottetown, Feb. 23, 1859, the Rev. JOHN SHAW in the chair, the following resolutions were unanimously adopted:—

1. That we resolve ourselves into a Convention, to consider the state of our denomination in this Island, and consult for the promotion of its interests; appointing Brother Davis as our Clerk.
2. That a Society be formed in this Island, auxiliary to the "Nova Scotia Baptist Home Missionary Society;" it being understood that the funds raised in the Island be also expended here.
3. That any person contributing the sum of three shillings annually be a member of our Island Society.
4. That the affairs of this Society be managed by a President, a Treasurer, a Secretary, and a Committee of fifteen; all of whom shall be chosen annually, and five of whom shall constitute a quorum.
5. That the Committee shall meet at least once a quarter; and at other times at the call of the President.
6. That the following brethren be our Officers and Committee for the first year:—President, Brother Shaw; Secretary, Brother Davis; Treasurer, Brother DesBrisay; Committee: Brethren Alex. Scott, Duncan Robertson, Junr., Hector Johnson, John McDonald, Junr., Ewen Martin, Thos. Wood, Senr., Thos. Wood, Junr., John Ferguson, William Seaman, C. I. Burnett, Alexander McInlay, Donald Lamont, Malcom Livingston, Malcom Ross, and Solomon Schurman.
7. That the members of the Committee be requested to take measures for bringing the claims of the Society before brethren and friends in their several localities.
8. That the first quarterly meeting of the Committee be held at East Point, on the Saturday before the third Lord's day in June.
9. That we will hold Quarterly Meetings, after the manner of the brethren in Nova Scotia and New Brunswick, in connection with the quarterly meeting of the Island Missionary Committee.
10. That the above resolutions shall appear in the columns of the Christian Messenger and Christian Visitor.

J. DAVIS, Sec.
(Christian Visitor please copy.)

For the Christian Messenger.

DONATION.—Mr. Editor,—Please give the following a place in your columns:—On the 16th inst. the brethren and sisters of the Sydney Baptist Church, accompanied by those of North Sydney, made a donation visit to our much esteemed Pastor, Elder George Richardson. After partaking of the refreshments so bountifully provided by the ladies, the company was addressed by Elder Hugh Ross; prayer was offered by Elder Richardson, and warm exhortations by our venerable brethren Deacons Maloney, Stubbart, Peters, and others. Many felt, and could say, "It is good to be here." The value of the donations, in cash and useful articles, amounted to about £18 or £20. The amount of spiritual good accruing to the souls of the large number present is known only to the Great Dispenser of every blessing.

A YOUNG BROTHER.
Sydney, Feb. 22nd, 1859.

For the Christian Messenger.

Triumphant Death.—Singular Providence.

Last Lord's day we met in Central Chebogue Meeting-house to worship God. One of the members of the Church, Capt. John Hilton, son of Mr. Henry and Mrs. Eunice Hilton, deceased, after upwards of two years affliction from disease of the heart and dropsy, was enabled to resume his seat in the apparent vigor of health and energy of spirit, characteristic of former years. On entering the house, he greeted a number of his brethren with ardent pleasure. The services commenced as usual, and I addressed the congregation from "I will walk before the Lord in the land of the living." At the close of the discourse, Bro. Hilton arose and spoke, in a spiritual and happy manner, on the privileges of God's people, closing his exhortation with the Saviour's injunction on being ready for the hour of mortal dissolution. One of the deacons followed, who has lately rejoiced in the conversion of two of his children. Our brother said "Glory to God,—Amen, brother," and in a few brief moments, as his words died away, a slight fall was heard, just enough to attract attention, and our brother had fallen in the pew at the feet of his affectionate companion, and all was silent in death. Not a struggle nor groan escaped him.

Few can imagine the solemnity of the occasion. All were stilled with the evidence of the nearness of death. After a few minutes the services were resumed, and Bro. T. Blackader, from Hebron, who has his mind in the work of proclaiming salvation, addressed the weeping congregation. After the solemnization of the Lord's Supper and dismissal, the deceased was removed in the hearse to the residence of his stricken family. His mortal remains were committed to the dust on Thursday following, and a discourse delivered from Gen. v. 24, to a very full congregation. His weeping widow, two sons and three daughters are manifesting much resignation to this sudden providence.

Bro. Hilton was a man of decision and integrity. His mind was early imbued with Presbyterian theology, which imparted much of firmness to his manner. For many years he staggered at the operations of the Spirit of God, and considered the fervour of true christianity to be enthusiasm, and he felt it his duty to restrain it at least in his own family, in this he was truly impotent. Some sixteen years ago, when an extensive work of grace was in progress in Chebogue and Yarmouth, our deceased brother, coming home from sea, became impressed therewith, and although fallen depravity still resisted, yet when he sailed again in Nov., 1842, in the Brig *Emeline*, for Trinidad, he felt emotions of soul to which he had hitherto been a stranger. His appetite and sleep failed him; apparent danger threatened; he felt it his duty to pray with his crew; but continued to resist until it seemed to him that the brig was sinking. The crew saw his anxiety, and when he could refrain no longer, without any invitation, his crew followed him into the cabin, to hear his first audible prayer to God for mercy as a true penitent. Angels hovered over, and aftersome 8 days sail from Yarmouth, in that solemn hour, he found the grace of God, and before he left his cabin three others rejoiced in Christ the Lord. His brig became a Bethel and in twenty-four hours from the time of his liberation from the dark fetters that bound his soul, the whole crew, consisting of nine souls, entertained a hope in God.

When the vessel reached Trinidad, the people clustered around on the wharf and in boats, attracted with the novel sight and sound of the praises of God on shipboard, and many tears were shed by eyes unused to weep at the proclamation of God's grace. On his return he gave himself to Christ in baptism and joined with the people of God.

From that time until his dissolution, so far as I have been enabled to learn, christian consistency has marked his whole course, and many will long remember his fervent expressions of praise to Him who saves by his grace. The deceased closed his 63rd year in February last.

The sympathy of all christian denominations amongst us is manifested to his family as was seen in the attendance of Revs. J. Whitman and C. J. Knowles at his interment and while sister Hilton has buried four sons and two daughters in former years, for whom she has hope in Christ, she trusts that her companion has joined the society of the Redeemer and the redeemed, to enjoy the fruition of all his hopes; and therefore she calmly acquiesces in God's solemn providence.

May God bless this brief sketch to the minds of many shipmasters, that the abundance of the sea may be converted to God.

May God refresh his afflicted people here. Amen.

Yours in Christian hope,
March 5th, 1859. JAMES V. TABOR.