

Correspondence.

For the Christian Messenger.

Plain Letters, on a plain subject, to plain folks.

[No. 11.]

"It is more blessed to give than to receive."

"From above the horse gate repaired the priests, every one over against his house. After them repaired Zadok the son of Immer over against his house."

"After him repaired also Meshullam the son of Berechiah over against his chamber," Neh. iii, 28.

"So built we the wall; and all the wall was joined together." "So we laboured in the work: and half of them held the spears from the rising of the morning till the stars appeared." iv, 6, 21.

The scene enacted by the Jews in the troublous times of Nehemiah illustrate the principle of individual responsibility. The success which they had in repairing the walls of Jerusalem, amid the assaults of the enemy on every hand, may, under God, be attributed to this that "the people had a mind to work," and each one "over against his own house."

This individualism has ever been in all ages and in all lands, a remarkable feature of the Baptist denomination. But by a large majority of the denomination in Nova Scotia it is now in a great degree if not wholly overlooked. We seem to be in danger of entirely losing sight of this principle which is our glory and our crown. Scarcely a tithe of the members of the churches, with their property, and influence are consecrated to the cause of the Redeemer.

In my last, allusion was made to various excuses which are pleaded for not giving to the objects of christian benevolence. But the want of a sense of individual responsibility is one of our greatest difficulties. The objects in themselves are good, desirable, indispensable. So necessary are they that they must be promoted. The churches, the denomination will never allow them to sink. O no. That will never do. It would be disgraceful, ruinous. The denomination could never lift its head again in a christian land. The churches would have to hide themselves in the background as the off-couring of civilized society. The very name of Baptist would be deservedly cast out as evil, and trodden under foot. The principles of eternal truth would be dishonored. Religious liberty would be retarded in its progress, and rolled back until its living sparks could be again found only in the smouldering ashes of the martyrs. Our institutions must and will be sustained by the denomination. So reason a large number of the Baptists of Nova Scotia. But who or what or where is the denomination that will do all these great things? Were are the churches that will perform these exploits? Whatever the denomination or church may be, it is not a key with which the individual may lock up his purse, nor a shield to protect him from his own responsibility. Each one of us must give account of himself to God. Suppose that in the times of Nehemiah when the Jews were building the wall of Jerusalem, a few, I will not say many, had forgotten their own duty. The whole work would have been betrayed and destroyed. And can we say that now, our work is less important, and our danger less imminent, than theirs.

As to the church each individual is an integral part of the whole. He is a member of the body of which Christ is the Head. He is to fulfil the office assigned to him according to the grace afforded. The duties which he owes to Christ he cannot delegate to another. Neither should he wish to do it. If he is a member of Christ, he is a living embodiment of divine love. His aim and delight is to communicate the gospel to others, and to sustain whatever is fitted to promote this desirable result. When he experiences the grace of God, the evangelization of those around him, of society, of the world, and of all future generations is henceforth the object of his life and the burden of his prayers. Friend and foe alike enjoy the benefits of his christian solicitude. This individualism is the true principle of union and co-operation among the people of God, and of success in promoting the gospel. Each one looks to his great master, and says "for me to live is Christ." The excellencies of fallible men are not an adequate standard for him to attain, neither are the feelings pleaded as an excuse for his delinquencies. Each one "covets earnestly the best gifts," and desires above all things to run in the "more excellent way" of charity and benevolence. If all felt thus how soon might it be said in the highest sense, "The earth is the Lord's and the fullness thereof, the world and they that dwell therein?"

What hinders the speedy evangelization of the earth? The selfishness of the christian

world. What prevents the distinctive principles of the bible from being universally adopted, a hoary priestcraft from being abolished; the traditions of men from giving place to the word of God, and a pompous ceremonial from yielding to the simple forms of spiritual worship? An adequate reply is—the blind selfishness of those who profess to follow the bible. Nothing can retard the progress of truth more effectually than this. The powers of darkness will rage in vain, when in the heart and life of each one who professes to be a follower of the Lamb, the principles and the fruits of covetousness shall give place to those of

CHARITY.

Nova Scotia, April 2nd, 1860.

For the Christian Messenger.

Singing in Sabbath Schools.

MR. EDITOR,

I have always found you alive to the interests of our Denomination, and ever ready to advocate that which will increase its prosperity and oppose whatever will hinder. I therefore take the liberty to communicate a few thoughts in reference to an institution which lays near my heart and is closely connected with the prosperity of our Churches:

"Tis the Sunday School, that blessed place; Oh I would rather stay Within its walls, a child of grace, Than spend my hours in play."

This part of our religious operations I feel is too much neglected. It does not occupy that place in our thoughts, our contributions and our prayers that I think it ought. We make arrangements for Houses of Worship to have them convenient; for preaching, to have that properly sustained; and for the Singing to have it carried out consistently. But the Sunday School, if thought of at all, is generally the last. Seldom is any consideration given for the convenience of the children. Seldom any scheme devised to keep the finances in a healthy state. Seldom is an arrangement made for bringing all the children connected with the church and congregation within its walls and making it so interesting that from it they may

"Never wish to stray."

But to follow out each of those thoughts would make too long an article for my communication. I must therefore confine myself to the one thought at present on my mind, viz. Singing, in our Sabbath Schools:

Who shall sing if not the children? Did not Jesus die for them? May they not with other jewels Sparkle in his diadem? Why to them were voices given, Bird-like voices sweet and clear? Why unless the song of heaven They begin to practice here?

We should study to make the School attractive to the children, and one thing that goes far towards accomplishing that end is good singing; simple hymns in child-like language, set to suitable music, and the children taught to sing. Secure the best book published, and let the Teachers remain at the close of the School with the children to practice, or meet with them on some other occasion until they learn the tunes. Teachers that will make that sacrifice will have Scholars

"That will love to come to their Sabbath School. And learn of their Teachers dear. Who point them with love to their home above, And the crown that awaits them there They will love to come to their Sabbath home, But they will not come alone. They will each bring in from the depths of sin Some wretched wandering one Whose feet now stray in the broad broad way, Who know not of God or heaven; And would bid them taste of the blessed feast, Which their Fathers love hath given."

Such a Book is published by H. Waters, 333 Broadway, New York. He publishes 4 books called the Anniversary and Sunday School Music Book.

No. 1, 32 Tunes and hymns. \$2 per 100. No. 2, 34 Do., \$2 per 100. No. 3, 80 Do., \$3 per 100. No. 4, 39 Do., \$2 per 100.

Or the 4 bound in one called The Sabbath School Bell, \$10 per 100, plain; bound, \$15 per 100, or extra do., \$20. They can be purchased as above, or of James DeMill, St. John, N. B. If you have them not already, I should recommend you to keep a supply at your office, and interest yourself in introducing them.* I can recommend the work, as I have examined many and consider it the best of any I have yet seen. Any School that do not feel able to purchase the large Book, I would recommend No. 2 as the best of the small Books. This Book, The Bell, is used in many of our Schools here, and gives general satisfaction. Rev. Mr. Cadey, pastor of the Baptist Church in Portland has

* The Sabbath School Bell may be had at the Christian Messenger Office, No. 49 Granville Street.

interested himself very much in this respect, (it would be well for our Sabbath Schools if we had more such pastors). The School connected with his church gave a Concert, a short time since, which was spoken of in the highest terms by those present. I observed one of your Granville St. teachers there, and from the way his eye sparkled I concluded he enjoyed it,—and I flattered myself that soon I should learn that the walls of Granville Street School would be resounding with praises from juvenile voices.

"Singing their simple rhymes, Said o'er a thousand times."

But I fear I am becoming tedious. If agreeable, I may at some future time take up some other of the above thoughts and give my views upon them. I wish to see our Schools in a more efficient state, and our members more alive to their duty in connection with these institutions.

JAS. E. MASTERS,

St. John, April 9th, 1860.

For the Christian Messenger.

The Dying Indian.

'Twas midnight! The winds moaned through the tall pines, or came in fitful gusts and found its way through chink, or aperture, as stretched upon some boughs covered with a blanket lay a poor suffering Indian, of the wilds of our own Acadia. The strong man, and the bold hunter had yielded to disease. The active limbs which never gave out in the chase, and the arm that never missed its aim were alike powerless. Consumption had done its work, and now he stood alone upon the margin of the river of death, with none to point him to the cheering hope of the gospel, to the blessed assurance that the "blood of Christ cleanseth from all sin."

Oh think, ye who have stood at the bedside of a departing saint with every thing of this world to soothe his passage to the tomb, and the hope of a blessed immortality filling his bosom with peace,—of the distress and darkness of him whom I write. The inmate of a wigwam lying, not on a bed of down, with few, if any, of those kind attentions so comforting to the sick, but, above all, with none to whisper of the dying love of Jesus, or in the sweet soft cadence of his native tongue, which best he loves to hear, to commend his departing soul to his God.

For not then as now had the feet of the Missionary gone into the dwelling of the Indian with the Bible translated into their own language. We are glad that a better day has dawned for the poor red man.

But even in those days the word of the Lord was sometimes read or taught to one of those for whom Christ died; and the light thus let into their dark hearts could not be extinguished by Pope or priest,—as in the case of him of whom we write. He had been brought up among the white people on the Island of Prince Edward, and taught to read the Bible, and perhaps to love it, for we are told that he used to talk of it to his children and try to teach them.

With the brightening of the mental faculties as he neared the eternal world came back to him written on memory's page scenes of his youth! And visible perceptions too of that hereafter which all must realize, live as they may, when they come to die. He began to feel a void in his heart and a longing for something on which to cling, with an undefined feeling that it might have been better with him than it was.

And then came across his mental vision a scene of his youth; when he had owned a bible, a precious bible given to him by a kind friend, perhaps the same one who taught him its blessed truths. And then came crowding back on memory's page, how, just as he began to relish the words of holy writ the priest took from him the holy gift with fierce denunciations; and in the agony of that hour he exclaimed, "Oh that the priest had not taken my bible from me, for then would it not all have been dark to me, and I should have known where I was going." Oh! if that blind guide could have foreseen how ardently that poor child of the forest would long for that book, when he came to die, could he have found it in his heart to have deprived him of that word which giveth life! Alas! yes how gladly would he, if he could, have taken every bible in the land, as well as his, and had them chained in a polluted cloister or shut them from the people within the Vatican. What would he care if we had all been left with nought but the glimmering star of reason or the ignis fatuus of tradition to cheer and illumine our path.

But blessed be God the light of the glorious gospel has begun to dawn on those who sat in darkness and the shadow of death; and they have seen a brighter day.

"And that mighty angel to whose hand The everlasting word is given. Waves his broad wing o'er sea and land, And soaring cleaves the vault of Heaven. And say! Shall aught oppose his flight? Aught dim with clouds his flaming scroll, No! Not till Truth with sacred light Shall visit every human soul."

And though this poor Indian had not felt the light in his soul; he felt the darkness, and may not the God of grace and mercy have appeared to him in that hour when flesh and heart do fail.

And thus he passed away, and perhaps it was never told the priest who took his bible from him what were his longings in that hour. And all around him thought he did in their faith, and they buried him in the rites of the Catholic church, in a quiet spot, and though no storied urn or plainer inscription of *Requiescat in pace* marks the spot, yet may we not hope that in the morning of the resurrection he will be found among the blest, while many who were among the wise and the learned, who hindered those who were entering the kingdom, shall find themselves forever shut out.

ELIZA.

For the Christian Messenger.

The Messenger: its friends and its foes.

MR. EDITOR,

Having been a constant reader of the *Christian Messenger* for twenty years past, I feel that I am in a position to speak with tolerable accuracy of its management during that period. From the beginning it has been the organ of the Baptist denomination in this Province, and as such necessarily the warm and untiring advocate of Civil and Religious Liberty, which involves equal rights and privileges to all, irrespective of class or creed. These principles are probably as well understood and as generally applied in Nova Scotia as in any country upon the globe; and the *Messenger*, perhaps, may claim some credit for their wide diffusion. Some, however, who had professed an adoption of those views, have for unworthy purposes sought to apply a more straightened rule. It is of these I wish to speak. One would suppose it quite enough for men to ignore their own principles and seek to carry into practice what they formerly condemned, without perverting some facts and grossly misrepresenting others; but unfortunately the former too often leads to the latter. In this communication I do not wish unnecessarily to refer to the past not yet to individuals or parties, but I confess, Mr. Editor, I find some difficulty in restraining my indignation when I see you malignantly assailed, for no other reason than because you refuse to lend yourself to base and selfish purposes; but I have not admired the less your christian forbearance than your independent action. Nothing, perhaps is more to be regretted than the somewhat divided views entertained by our body in relation to some matters of a denominational character, for which, however, there would seem to be no remedy but generous concession and mutual forbearance; but I most respectfully submit to some who differ from their brethren whether it is not carrying their liberty to an extreme, when they not only countenance men, unscrupulous and ill-informed upon denominational matters, and allow them to misrepresent prominent brethren well entitled to their confidence, but seemingly encourage them in seeking to throw odium upon the body to which they are attached.

It were as well, perhaps, to be out-spoken and plain in this matter, disclaiming at the same time any disposition improperly to influence or persuade, in regard to what may legitimately form matter for private opinion in reference to the affairs of the country. For I take it to be not only natural but inevitable, with a people recognizing no arbitrary control that diversity of views should obtain upon questions of public policy; but where statements shamefully untrue are made by those aspiring to the confidence of the people, with no earthly end in view but to sow the seeds of dissention, in hopes of profiting by their growth, I feel that I shall not subject myself, in the estimation of the correct thinking, to the charge of improper interference by a relation of some particulars calculated to elucidate the subject in hand.

At a political gathering held not long ago in the upper part of the county of Annapolis, and addressed by persons of some notoriety in that county, great liberty was taken with your journal. The speakers had calculated on their hearers having the same want of conscientiousness which they themselves possessed; but the untrue statements made, proved too much for those who knew better, so that the *Christian Messenger* instead of being depreciated was rather benefitted by the slander; and the object sought