

body who will occupy at least fifteen minutes in the exercise. 4. Make a long and tedious dissertation on some topic in which nobody has and never had any interest, and then read another long-versed, long-metred hymn, and call on some brother or sister who has by this time become half asleep "to join in the devotions." 5. Be sure, in no case, to allow of any voluntary singing, but always hunt up your own hymn yours. If, after the prayer is over, and the people are seated, the longer you hunt the deader the meeting will get, and the more sorry the people will be that they came out. Conducted in this way a meeting is certain to grow thin and freeze up, and die at last a perfect death.

For the Christian Messenger.

Day of Humiliation.

DEAR BROTHER,

It will be remembered that a resolution was passed at the late meeting of the Convention, recommending the churches to set apart and observe Thursday the fifth day of December next, as a day of humiliation and prayer.

The recommendation originated with the Committee "on the state of the Denomination." Their report contains this passage:—"Your Committee observe, with deep regret, that the number of conversions, as indicated by the baptisms reported, falls far short of any number recorded by this Convention since 1853, in which year the increase was unusually small. This is a matter for grave consideration and serious inquiry." In view of this melancholy fact, they urged the desirableness of holding a day of humiliation and prayer, and the Convention concurred in the proposal.

That there is much cause for humiliation will be generally admitted. That it is befitting to examine seriously our state, as individuals and as churches, and to enquire whether there are any stumbling-blocks in the way, the removal of which may tend, by God's blessing, to the restoration of prosperity, will not be denied. That God has often graciously regarded his people when they have humbled themselves before him, confessing their sins, and has "remembered them in their low estate," is matter of history.

The pastors of the churches will no doubt enter heartily into this arrangement, and use their best endeavours to secure a devout observance of the day appointed. May an abundant blessing follow!

Yours truly,
J. M. CRAMP.

Nov. 1 1861.

Christian Messenger.

HALIFAX, NOVEMBER 6, 1861.

Church Matters. Admission, &c.

In reference to the communication of "A church officer," on another page, we may remark that we do not attach much importance to uniformity of action in our churches in cases of discipline. The independence of each church might be seriously compromised by attempting to apply such a rule. Every case has circumstances which belong to itself alone, and there are shades of character peculiar to every subject of such action which might make it necessary to pursue a different course from what may have been adopted in another, even in the same church. It is undesirable, we think, to make the law of precedent in one church of any force in another. Let each case be treated on its own merits.

In the reception of members, we believe generally the vote should be a unanimous one. A majority would not ordinarily desire for the admission of a person to fellowship until every member could receive such person cordially into their full confidence. There might, however, be a factious opposition of some who had resolved to continue hostile, notwithstanding they were unable to produce satisfactory reasons for such hostility. In such cases, if previously harmonious, one of two results must follow—either a want of unanimity must afterwards prevail in the church, or the exercise of discipline would be necessary, if the member were received by a vote of the majority only.

It may not be amiss to copy here the remarks of Dr. Hiscox on the Mode of Admission to Baptist Churches. He says:—

"There are three ways in which a person may be admitted to membership in the church: 1. By Baptism.—A person may be admitted by baptism, on a profession of faith in Christ. Such a one makes known his desire for baptism to the pastor, or brethren, who become satisfied of his fitness for membership. Then the person, if encouraged by the pastor and brethren, comes before the church at its church meeting, or such other time as it may appoint, and relates his Christian experience,

and views of duty and of doctrine. After he has retired, the church votes whether he shall be received to membership "on being baptized."

In some churches, the name of the candidate is announced at a public meeting, previous to that on which he is to be received, to give all an opportunity of acquaintance with the fact. In some churches also, the candidate is required to come before a committee and make his request; and if the committee regard it unfavorably, his application is not presented to the church at all. 2. By Letter.—A person may receive from the church, of which he is already a member, a letter of commendation and dismission, and with it be received to membership in another church, providing the one from which he comes be of the same faith and order.

Such a one is received by vote of the church, as in the previous case; and though not absolutely necessary, yet it is desirable that he should be present, and verbally express his wish to be received.

3. By Experience.—It is sometimes the case, that persons who have received baptism, but by some means are not in members of any church, or are members in another denomination, desire to be admitted to membership. They bring no letters, nor are they re-baptized; but after giving a satisfactory relation of their Christian experience, and if their faith and Christian character be satisfactory, they are admitted to the fellowship of the church on their Christian experience. The names of candidates to be received by letter and experience, as well as those for baptism, are publicly announced at some meeting previous to their reception.

Dr. H. also adds the following as Notes:—

Persons cannot be received to membership on the credit of letters, from other denominations. Such letters are accepted only as testimonials of their previous standing and Christian character; but the applicants are to be received either by baptism—if not already baptized—or on their Christian experience, related in person before the church.

It is a rule, generally acted on, that no person shall be received into the church to the grief of any one who is already a member. Hence, although the vote of a majority present at any regular meeting properly decides any question of business, yet, in receiving and excluding members, and other important business, it is very desirable there should be a general harmony, and if possible, entire unanimity.

It is customary, when members are admitted to the church, whether by letter or baptism, for the pastor to give them, "the right hand of fellowship." This is usually done at the communion service, immediately before the ordinance is administered. The act is designed, simply as an expression of the church's welcome and fellowship for those received; and though not required by any scriptural authority, is very appropriate, and is favored by Scripture analogy. In some churches, particularly at the South, the hand of fellowship is given by the various members present, in order, instead of by the pastor exclusively; a practice which, though less convenient, is a more forcible expression of fraternal welcome.

Further, in reply to our correspondent, we hardly see the same necessity for unanimity in a vote of exclusion, although it would be well to use every possible means of satisfying the whole body before proceeding to take a vote on such a question.

With regard to giving publicity to a vote of exclusion, we are not aware that a church is under any obligation to publish its acts. There may be cases, however, in which this might be necessary for the purpose of preventing further injury to the body. Of that, however, each church must judge for itself.

There is much diversity of opinion and practise we believe, in respect to the eligibility of female members voting on all church matters. In the reception of members, of course they have a voice equal in all respects to that of male members. It would be well if the brethren were always as ready to do good as the sisters, and as capable of forming a correct judgment on matters coming within their sphere of action. Their own discretion will ordinarily prevent any improper intrusion into the matters more properly belonging to the brethren.

Concerning another point referred to by our brother,—a member of a church being released from his obligations—the following extract from Dr. Nehemiah Adams may be of service:—

"It" he says, "any one is sorry, that he ever professed to be a Christian, and thinks that he is not one, and would be glad to be released from his obligations, we would say, 'Your only hope of happiness and safety, here and hereafter, and the only relief for you from your present embarrassment, lies in your becoming a faithful follower and friend of your Redeemer. As for escaping from your vows to God which your lips have uttered, and which your soul made when you were in trouble, you cannot do it. If you should receive a letter signed by your pastor, the office-bearers, and the members of the church, releasing you from the church, you might feel relieved for a while; but that letter would soon be to you a heavier burden than poor Simon the Cyrenian bore, if, with unwilling neck, he endured the reproach of Christ. On a dying bed that letter would seem to you, in your dreams and visions, like a great gate shutting you out from heaven. What a sight it would be to see you before the Lord your Judge, with that letter in your hand! It would be the last thing which you would take with you to the bar of God."

We have received another letter from "Modesty," entitled "The Rev. Mr. Rand making a clean breast of it," referring to his communications in the C. Messenger and P. Witness on the case of the Rev. Mr. Elder; but as we before intimated that we are not desirous of continuing the discussion in our pages we do not feel at liberty to insert the letter in full. We are ourselves quite satisfied on the subject, as we believe our readers generally are, that Mr. E. had rejected an institution of Christ, and had substituted a human invention to which all the errors of Christendom may more or less be traced; and the church of which he was pastor could not therefore consistently have done otherwise than they did.

As, however, a portion of "Modesty's" letter refers to Mr. Rand's imputation of inconsistency in the cases of Judson and Baptist Noel, and cites facts in their defence, we should do injustice to the memory of the honored dead, and to our respect for the highly estimable living, were we to refuse insertion to "Modesty's" vindication of them. He says:—

"Up to the present moment the severest thing done by either (the editor and correspondents of the C. M.) has been to publish Mr. Rand's effusions and laugh at them. But instead of regretting and recalling, on reflection, the rash and silly assertions with which he commenced, he persists in adding to them, almost weekly, others, each, if possible, more reckless than its predecessors. Such is the character of these productions that no view it is possible to take of the subject, can save off the conclusion that, in writing them, Mr. Rand has most seriously compromised himself. The evidence of the justice of that opinion is only too abundant."

"4 Mr. Rand, conscious that any such course of conduct (as to publicly profess a certain religious belief and privately hold an opposite one) would be repudiated by Baptists, and denounced by them as mean and dishonest—thinks to silence them by the sweeping assertion that it was the principle adopted and acted upon, as far as convenient, by the most revered of their body, specially naming among others Judson and Baptist Noel, both of whom he involves in his groundless slander of the eminent living and his groundless slander of the eminent dead. It is impossible to conceive of anything more utterly false than the charge Mr. Rand so confidently brings against those just and good men. Judson's change of views, in regard to the subjects and mode of baptism, were slowly forced upon him while preparing himself to meet the arguments of the Baptist Missionaries he expected to encounter in India. Immediately he arrived at a decision, he wrote to the American Board acquainting them with the fact. His work on "Baptism" is simply a sermon he subsequently preached in Calcutta. Baptist Noel was formerly an Episcopalian clergyman, and one of the Queen's Chaplains. His mind became disturbed concerning the connection of the Church with the State. In 1848 he resigned his chaplaincy and seceded from the established church. For sometime he remained unconnected with any denomination. In 1849 he published his work on Church and State, and subsequently he united with the Baptists. So far from writing a work in favor of Baptist views while filling the office of a Pedobaptist clergyman, there is no evidence that he had any leanings towards the Baptists till some time after he had left the Church of England. It will tax all Mr. Rand's ingenuity to clear himself from the obloquy of having made such charges against such men for such a purpose. Either he knew the facts or he did not. On neither supposition is he far from a very serious imputation."

Temperance.

The Grand Division of the Sons of Temperance commenced its Annual Session on Wednesday last, and continued in Session morning, afternoon, and evening, till about one o'clock on Friday.

On Wednesday evening the Bands of Hope were received in the Division room and appropriately addressed by Avarad Longley, Esq., G. W. P.

The officers elected for the ensuing year are,—

- G. W. Patriarch.—Mr. J. D. B. Fraser, of Pictou.
- G. Associate.—Rev. N. Gunnison.
- G. Scribe.—Mr. P. Monaghan.
- G. Treasurer.—Mr. G. G. Gray.
- G. Chaplain.—Rev. W. G. Parker, of Nictaux.
- G. Conductor.—Mr. D. Marshall.
- G. Sentinel.—Mr. E. Morrison.

Applications were received from several places for the Quarterly Sessions. They were decided to be held as follows:

- In January, at Hantsport.
- In April, at Londonderry.
- In July, at Baddeck, C. B.
- In October, (Annual) at Halifax.

On Thursday evening a public Soiree was given, to which all the members from the county were invited. The room was filled. The tables were abundantly supplied and the company were enlivened during the evening by a number of pieces on the fine organ, at which Mr. J. C. Craigen presided.

After the supplies on the tables had furnished the repast, the intellectual festivities commenced by a speech from the Grand Worthy Patriarch, J. D. B. Fraser, who occupied the chair on the occasion. The following report of the speeches from the Sun, although

very brief, yet may give some idea of the spirit of the meeting.

The chairman on rising expressed the pleasure he felt on looking at the progress of Temperance principles at the present time, and drew a contrast between the state of society now and that which existed some twenty or thirty years ago. That meeting, he said, was one of the pleasing results. The good produced had been in a great measure the work of the middling class of society,—the higher classes, notwithstanding they suffer much from intemperance, had unfortunately kept aloof to a great extent. Various examples of this were given, and the evils of fashionable society commented on. The good which had been accomplished in Pictou County by restricting the sale of alcoholic liquors, was referred to; much more good, he said, would have resulted had the administrators of the law been as active in suppressing the causes of intemperance as they are in putting down other vices, which spring from it. Exertion should be made to conquer intemperance by saving the youth and acting on the moderate drinker. Moral suasion, he said, changed the occupation of many liquor dealers in his vicinity, who had seen its bad effects. Now there were men engaged in it who will not give up without the law takes hold of them; and he regretted that the infringers of the liquor law could so easily find legal minds to defend them in their wrong. He spoke of the many temptations which beset our people, particularly the young, and the great necessity for co-operation in the extension of temperance.

Rev. Mr. Gunnison was called on by the Chairman for an address;—that gentleman remarked that in the programme the Committee had decided to give the brethren from the country opportunity of being heard. It was pleasing to hear new voices at such gatherings.

The Rev. Dr. Cramp congratulated the Chairman on his recent elevation to the office of G. W. P., and the Order in having such an old and tried friend of temperance at its head. The speaker referred to a difficulties promoters of temperance experienced, and reminded them of that passage in the good book which says, "Be not weary in well doing." The Dr. gave several examples of difficulties overcome by patient perseverance. He also, in a very feeling manner, referred to the number of leading members of the Grand Division who had passed away from earth, who were present with him and the G. W. P. at the session of the Grand Division in Pictou eight years ago. He brought to mind those reminiscences merely as a reminder to all present that they too must pass away. The reverend gentleman referred to the pleasantness of the present meeting,—and closed with quite a burst of eloquence, in which he expressed a hope that those present would be guided by that good book which all there believed in, and if they rightly sowed, they should in due time reap their reward.

We regret exceedingly that, for want of space we are unable to give an outline of the several interesting speeches made. The other speakers were: A. Longley, E. McDonald, R. McGrigor, Esqrs and the Rev. Messrs Parker and Gunnison.

The letter of Rev. Dr. Cramp, in another column, will commend itself to the churches generally. The fact of there having been a smaller number of additions to them during the past year than for many previous years, demands serious consideration. This circumstance, however, is not peculiar to Nova Scotia, nor to one denomination. We regret to find that the same thing is seen in New Brunswick and other places. In the Salem (Mass.) Baptist Association, recently held, the churches "reported 66 baptized, 78 received by letter and experience, 498 dismissed, 28 excluded, 69 died, during the last year, leaving a total membership of 4,557, which is a loss of 475 from last year. Of the 498 reported as dismissed, four hundred and sixteen were dropped by the Worthen street church, Lowell, because nothing had been heard from them for years."

In the Old Colony Association, only five churches received any accessions by baptism. Of the 60 baptized, forty-three were baptized at South Abington, were a very precious work of grace had been enjoyed. There are in the Association only five churches which have a membership as high as 100 each."

In view of these facts may we not well, on the appointed day, come together for special attention to this matter. The recommendation of the Convention will, we trust, be concurred in by the churches in the three provinces, and steps taken to hold appropriate services, so as to make it a simultaneous assembling of ourselves as a community to call upon the God of Heaven to remember his people, and bless their labors for the salvation of their fellowmen.

THE REV. J. E. GOUCHER informs us that having become the pastor of the Baptist Church at Port Medway, he will be glad for all letters and papers for him to be addressed accordingly.

May the Church at Port Medway and its Pastor be abundantly blessed in the formation of this new relationship.

THE ATHENAEUM BAND OF HOPE will give an Entertainment at Temperance Hall, tomorrow night. Consisting of Dialogues, Recitations, Music, &c. Price of admission, 4d.