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A REPOSITORY OF RELIGIOUS, POLITICAL AND GENERAL INTELLIGENCE.

"Not slothful in business: fervent in spirit."

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WHOLE SERIES.
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Poetry.

A Little while.

BY DR. BONAR.

Beyond the smiling and the weeping,
I shall be soon;
Beyond the waking and the sleeping,
Beyond the sowing and the reaping,
I shall be soon.
Love, rest, and home!
Sweet home!
Lord, tarry not, but come.

Beyond the blooming and the fading,
I shall be soon;
Beyond the shining and the shading,
Beyond the hoping and the dreading,
I shall be soon!
Love, rest, and home!
Sweet home!
Lord, tarry not, but come.

Beyond the rising and the setting,
I shall be soon;
Beyond the calming and the fretting,
Beyond remembering and forgetting,
I shall be soon.
Love, rest, and home!
Sweet home!
Lord, tarry not, but come.

Beyond the parting and the meeting,
I shall be soon;
Beyond the farewell and the greeting,
Beyond the pulse's fever beating,
I shall be soon.
Love, rest, and home!
Sweet home!
Lord, tarry not, but come.

Beyond the frost-chain and the fever,
I shall be soon;
Beyond the rock-waste and the river,
Beyond the ever and the never,
I shall be soon.
Love, rest, and home!
Sweet home!
Lord, tarry not, but come.

Nova Scotia Church History.

For the Christian Messenger.

The Baptists of Nova Scotia.

PERIOD VI.

From A. D. 1828 to A. D. 1838.

LETTER XLVII.

INCREASED ATTENTION TO FOREIGN MISSIONS.—THE FOREIGN MISSIONARY SOCIETY.—MR. ELDER'S SECESSION.—REMARKS.—THE COLOURED PEOPLE.—THE CHRISTIAN MESSENGER.

My Young Friend,

The Missionary cause enlisted the sympathies of our churches at an early period. Contributions were often sent from this Province in aid of the Burmese Mission. It was judged desirable to foster this spirit. In the Minutes of the Association for 1832 the following passage occurs:—

"Intelligence being communicated in many of the letters from the Churches, and from other sources, of the formation of Ladies' mite societies, and the collection of monies by other means, for the support of Foreign Missions, especially that in Burmah, it was deemed expedient to form a general society for the purpose of carrying the wishes of the donors into effect, as well as for the further promotion of Missions in general—in consideration whereof it was

Resolved, that whereas the Nova Scotia Baptist Association is at present constituted a Society for the promotion of Domestic Missions, it be henceforward a society for the promotion of both Home and Foreign Missions.

Various regulations were made for the collection and disposal of contributions, and the establishment of auxiliary societies. A subscription of a dollar a year constituted a person a member of the general society; membership of an auxiliary society might be obtained by the payment of half a dollar a year. If no special appropriations of the funds were made by the donors, it was recommended to divide the proceeds equally between domestic and foreign missions. J. W. Nutting Esq. was appointed Treasurer for foreign missions, and Rev. E. A. Crawley, Secretary.

When the Association met at Chester in 1838, it appeared that upwards of £140 had been received for foreign missions since the es-

tablishment of the society, and duly forwarded to the American Baptist Missionary Board in Boston. A more enlarged plan of operations was now thought practicable, including the employment of a missionary of our own. The action taken is thus recorded in the Minutes:—

The subject of Foreign Missions was introduced, when several of the brethren addressed the meeting, and it was Resolved.

That this Association having taken into serious consideration the lamentable condition of the heathen world, the consequent imperative duty of Christians to send them the word of life, the especial command of the Saviour, "Go ye into all nations" &c., and the pecuniary pressure suffered at the present time in the funds of the Missionary Societies in America, therefore, solemnly, and as they trust in the love and fear of God, do now propose to their sister Association in New Brunswick to form a United Society for the maintenance of Foreign Missions.

And inasmuch as Christians in these Provinces owe not only means but men to so holy and divine a cause, and some there may be, secretly desirous of devoting themselves to this blessed work, who are deterred, from the want of suitable preparation and means, and inasmuch also as this Association is assured that a Missionary proceeding from the bosom of the Churches in these Provinces, would tend greatly to increase Christian sympathy and effort, as well as to revive and encourage any other benevolent undertaking in which the Churches are engaged; it is further

Resolved,—That this Association request that of New Brunswick to form themselves into such Foreign Missionary Society and to unite with them in pledging themselves and the Churches to the adequate education and maintenance of some one suitable person as a Missionary in some foreign field so soon as one possessed of suitable character shall be found in the judgment of such Committee as the United Society may name for this purpose.

A Committee was appointed to confer with the New Brunswick Association, and another Committee to prepare and publish "an appeal to the Churches of N. S. and N. B. on the subject of their duties in respect to the establishment of a Foreign Mission as well as the increase of their Home Missionary operations, and the continued maintenance of such a system of Education as will tend to support these benevolent undertakings, to which the Churches are so loudly called." The proceedings of the Foreign Missionary Society will be narrated in subsequent letters.

At the same meeting of the Association the condition of the coloured people in various parts of this province was taken into consideration, with special reference to the recent death of the venerable John Burton, who had laboured among them so earnestly and usefully. It was resolved, "That the churches be urged to make such immediate enlargement of their contributions to the home missionary funds as will enable them to provide a missionary who may permanently devote his time and labours to the instruction of the coloured people of the province of Nova Scotia, and the melioration of their condition."

I must now go back to the year 1834. A painful incident occurred in that year. I refer to the secession of the Rev. William Elder from the Baptist body. Some years before he had acquitted himself well in the controversy with the Pædobaptists, and it might have been supposed that he was sufficiently established in the faith. But a change of sentiment had taken place. Instead of avowing it at once, and retiring from his post, which would have been the straightforward course, Mr. Elder continued to preach and labour, as pastor of the church at Bridgetown, while he was at the same time preparing for the press a work on infant sprinkling, in which he avowed his departure from the principles held by our denomination. The fact of his having become a Pædobaptist was concealed. Contrary to his wishes and intentions the subject of his forthcoming publication was divulged, and great excitement followed. In their distress and difficulty (for it was altogether a new case) the church at Bridgetown judged it best to ask advice of their brethren. A Council was convened. The following brethren met on the occasion:—Elders E. Manning, T. S. Harding, W. Chip-

man, R. McLearn, R. Cunningham, E. Masters, T. H. Porter, E. Stronach," and others. The esteem in which Mr. Elder had been long held led the members of the Council to labour hard, both privately and publicly, for his restoration. But their efforts were fruitless. He clung to his new opinions with unshaken tenacity. Nothing remained, therefore, in the opinion of the Council, but to advise the church to exclude him from their fellowship. The vote to this effect was unanimous. The decision was reported to the church, in the presence of a large congregation; the advice was received, and Mr. Elder was forthwith excluded. Some hard words were spoken on both sides, but it is unnecessary to report them;—the speakers have met in the land of peace and purity, and are brethren again.

Mr. Elder had hoped to be amicably and honourably dismissed to the Congregational denomination. But the Council decided that this was entirely out of the question. They said that his conduct involved a breach of covenant, and that under such circumstances a dismission could not be granted. Besides, dismissions, like the "epistles of commendation" of which the apostle speaks, (2 Cor. iii. 1.) are only given to churches "of the same faith and order." Neither could a certificate of good standing be issued in such a case, since, according to the constitution of our churches, a Pædobaptist can have no standing at all in them. The direction to withdraw from every brother that walketh disorderly" (2 Thess. iii. 6.) must be obeyed; and surely the renunciation of one of Christ's ordinances necessitates the application of the rule. The same result would have followed, had there been an abandonment of any important doctrine of the gospel—justification, for instance, or the Deity of Christ. The inspired writer says, "If there come any unto you, and bring not this doctrine, receive him not into your house, neither bid him God-speed; for he that biddeth him God-speed is partaker of his evil deeds" (2 John 11). Christian forbearance is a duty, but it must have its limits. We may differ among ourselves as to the modes of stating or explaining certain truths of Christianity—but the truths themselves must be inviolably held:—there is "one faith." We may differ from each other, too, respecting the time of administering christian baptism; but infant sprinkling and believer's baptism are not modes of the same ordinance;—there is only "one baptism." If any members of our churches renounce that baptism, their connection with us necessarily ceases—nor do I see that they have any right to complain of it.

The Council was held on the 19th of March. At the meeting of the Association at Amherst in June following the proceedings of the Council were reported to that body, and a resolution was unanimously passed, approving and adopting the same, and declaring that "Mr. Elder is therefore no longer regarded as a minister in connection with us."

I do not know how the Association could have consistently acted otherwise. It was a union of Baptist churches. Mr. Elder had openly avowed himself a Pædobaptist, thereby dissolving his connection with them. It was on his part a voluntary withdrawal. Whether the Association had passed the resolution or not, his connection with it had ceased, as he was no longer a Baptist minister. The minute of the Association recorded that fact, and it was expressed, you will observe, in the mildest manner. Having stated that Mr. Elder "had departed from several important articles held by our churches," and and was therefore "not qualified" to continue in the body, it proceeded to declare that "Mr. Elder is no longer regarded as a Minister in connection with us." Here is no anathema—no deposition—or attempt at it: all that is affirmed is that Mr. Elder is no longer regarded as a Baptist minister. A resolution of a similar kind would be passed, I doubt not, by the Synods or Conferences of other Protestant denominations, if any ministers of theirs were to give up sentiments or practices held by them as vital to their respective unions.

I have dwelt longer on this subject than some may deem desirable, because an endeavour has been made to stigmatise the action of the Council and the Association as cruel and unjust, and even anti-protestant—as a denial of the right of private judgment. You will see clearly, I think, that this is an utterly mis-

taken view of the case. Christian churches, like other public bodies, must be established on well-defined principles. The qualifications of their members must be expressed in clear terms, so as not to be misunderstood. If those principles are forsaken, or those qualifications are found not to exist, the bond of fellowship is broken. The parties have exercised their right of private judgment in the matter, and in the further exercise of that right may join themselves to other societies. No one prevents it. We may think them deceived. We may even deplore their apostasy. But we do not interfere with the exercise of their right, however we may lament the manner in which it is exercised. Such interference is by no means implied in the removal of such persons from fellowship, nor can that removal be construed into an act of persecution. It is rather a necessary procedure, which their departure from recognised truth or practice has rendered obligatory. If any of our ministers or members were to become Roman Catholics or Universalists (these are extreme cases, I admit—but they will serve equally well for illustration—), they would be excluded; not because they had chosen to exercise the right of private judgment, but because they had forsaken truths which we regard as essential to the integrity of the christian faith, and the maintenance of christian union. To call it persecution would be unspcakably absurd. Societies, as well as individuals, have rights. In the exercise of those rights, christian churches are limited only by the revealed will of their Lord. They have power to receive, to reject, and to govern, within the range of that will, honestly interpreted. And it is his will that they should "try the spirits whether they are of God," and deal with them accordingly. See 1 John iv. 1-6. For their conduct in this matter they are amenable to the Heavenly King.

Mr. Elder's publication assumed the form of a "Series of Letters on infant baptism." A reply was issued in 1835, bearing the following title:—"A Treatise on Baptism, as appointed by our Lord Jesus Christ, and practised by the Apostles and first christian churches; containing a reply to Mr. Elder's Letters on Infant Baptism, and a solemn appeal in favour of a spiritual Church. By Edmund A. Crawley, A. M." In this elaborate and vigorous production Mr. Crawley examined and discussed the subject in all its bearings, and in a masterly manner. The brethren expressed their sense of the value of the work by passing the following resolution, at the meeting of the Association in 1835:—"Resolved. That the Association highly appreciate the valuable production of brother E. A. Crawley on Baptism, in reply to Mr. Elder, and that they will cordially sustain him in any future production on the same subject he may be induced to send forth."

The "Baptist Missionary Magazine," which was commenced in 1827, and was published at St. John, N. B., was removed to Halifax, at the close of 1832, and committed to the joint Editorship of the Rev. C. Tupper and J. W. Nutting Esq. The substitution of a weekly Newspaper for the Magazine was first brought forward in New Brunswick. The brethren in Nova Scotia concurred in opinion with their New Brunswick brethren. A paper entitled "Hints respecting a Religious Newspaper" was appended to the Minutes of the Association for 1835. At the meeting in 1836 a resolution was passed, expressing the opinion that "such paper ought to be commenced with the beginning of the ensuing year," and the members of the Association pledged themselves "to sustain it to the utmost of their ability."

Such was the origin of the "CHRISTIAN MESSENGER." It was published at first, as the Magazine had been, under the auspices of the Missionary Board, and was a Denominational undertaking. The first number was issued Jan. 6, 1837. The Editors were the brethren John Ferguson and J. W. Nutting, Brother J. W. Burs, then resident in Halifax, was "Agent."

It will be interesting to record the proceedings of the Association respecting the Paper. I extract them from the Minutes.

1837. (At Yarmouth.) Resolved.—That this Association do highly approve of the publication of the Christian Messenger, and do adopt the paper as the organ of the Bap-