

Christian Messenger.

HALIFAX, JULY 23, 1862.

The Communion Question.

Efforts are sometimes made to shew that Baptists are the most uncharitable of all religious communities, because they regard—

- 1st. Communion at the Lord's Table as a church ordinance,
2nd. Baptism as the initiatory ordinance to the church of Christ, and
3rd. Immersion as the only scriptural baptism.

These three principles consistently carried out, demand that only members of those churches with which they are fraternally united should be invited to participate with them in the Lord's Supper. They are, however, no barrier to the observance of all the other courtesies of christian life.

It is known to our readers that Paedobaptists do not all agree to commune with each other, but it may not be known to all that those bearing the same name in many cases have no fellowship and refuse to commune together.

An article in the Cincinnati Pres. Witness, in defence of their restricted communion of the United Presbyterians, puts the subject in a very clear and satisfactory light.

The inconsistency of open communion is very apparent, but the other serious difficulties it involves are quite sufficient to induce consistent Baptists to follow the light they have on the subject, rather than make a law without Divine authority.

The practice of inviting all who are in good standing in other churches, to unite with us in the communion of the Supper, is wrong, because it is inviting those over whom we have no jurisdiction or control.

When we admit persons to the privileges of our house, it is understood that they conform to its rules. Foreigners, coming into our country and claiming the rights and privileges of citizenship, acknowledge the obligation to obey our laws.

The practice named is wrong, because it practically takes the question of fitness for admission to this ordinance entirely out of the hands of all church officers, where it of right belongs, and leaves it wholly in the hands of persons thus invited.

Nor does it excuse the matter to say, that in such cases of profanation, the responsibility rests on the parties acting thus. Such is not the fact. It is true they are guilty, but the chief responsibility rests upon the officers of the church.

But in close connection with this, it may be observed, that such a system renders church discipline a mere farce. To-day, for instance, the Session of any given congregation may find one of their members guilty of something, in doctrine or practice, which is inconsistent with his profession, and may as a consequence suspend him from the privileges of the church, until he gives evidence of repentance and reformation.

with the persons who suspended him to-day. Nor is this an extreme case. Similar cases would necessarily more frequently occur were it not that everything like discipline in the church of God is in a great measure laid aside.

In adopting the open communion system we must necessarily cease to maintain a consistent testimony for all the distinctive principles of our profession. For instance, where is the force of our testimony against any sin, so long as we unite knowingly with those guilty of sins in the solemn ordinance of the Supper?

And one of the manifest tendencies of the open communion system is, to assimilate the churches thus practising in their doctrinal views. Hence how very common it is to find in churches professedly Calvinistic, every grade and shade of Arminianism. It not only assimilates in doctrine, but also in practice.

But finally, the tendency of the open communion system is to develop the most inexcusable form of sectarianism. This, it is true, is the very contrary of what is generally believed. Of all persons in the world, the close communions are regarded as the most sectarian.

The facts thus elicited respecting this matter we will now briefly state. The number of communicants connected with this church engaged in the manufacture or sale of intoxicating liquors as owners or responsible heads of establishments, is eleven.

We, as a committee, would humbly recommend to your Reverend Court the adoption of the following or similar resolutions:— 1st, That in view of the state of our Church and Community, in these Lower Provinces, as now brought under our notice, we regard ourselves as under special obligations to advocate by persuasion and example, the principles of Total Abstinence.

2nd, That the members of this Synod be earnestly recommended to co-operate with the friends of Temperance in their several fields of labor, in all judicious efforts for the success of the cause, to preach at least one sermon each year on temperance, and to refer to the subject occasionally in their public discourses.

3rd, That the Synod do strictly enjoin on Sessions and Presbyteries, greater fidelity and diligence in carrying out the discipline of the Church against those who continue in the liquor traffic wherever evil consequences to morality are clearly traced to it.

At the same Presbyterian Synod, on the 2nd Inst at New Glasgow, a case of Appeal was tried Mr. and Mrs. John Fraser had been "suspended from Church privileges for keeping a public house where intoxicating liquors had been, for a time, sold contrary to law (without a license), and in which when the sale was subsequently legalized disorderly practices were alleged to have been allowed."

That the Synod sustain the Appeal on the ground that the proceedings of the Session have been vitiated by the want of any meeting of the parties to meet the Session; but in sustaining the Appeal, and in reversing the decision of Session and Presbytery, the Synod declare that in their opinion the keeping of a house in which liquors are illegally sold, or which is disorderly in its character, is a good ground of suspension, and if persevered in, exclusion from the membership of the church.

The Rev. H. Crawford moved and the Rev. A. Fraser seconded— Whereas the late Synod of the Presbyterian Church of Nova Scotia declared that carrying on the liquor traffic by members of the church is inconsistent with the obligations of the christian profession, and as the Session proceeded in the premises in accordance with that declaration, the Synod dismiss the Appeal and sustain the decision of Session and Presbytery.

On the question being taken, the first motion passed by a large majority.

In reference to the last item in the report of our New Brunswick Correspondent, on another page,—the future of the Christian Visitor—we find that the following report on the subject, was adopted by the N. B. E. Association:

At our denominational gatherings reference has frequently been made to the absence of any Baptist church in Newfoundland, and to the fact that Baptists in that country, in consequence of being without any organization, are under obligation to other bodies, for the opportunities of joining in public worship.

The object of this Society shall be the preaching of the Gospel throughout Nova Scotia, Prince Edward Island, and Newfoundland, the assistance of feeble Churches, and the planting of new ones.

The want of funds and a suitable person have hitherto prevented a mission to that country.

We were glad to learn, a short time since, that a Baptist minister, we believe from England, had commenced preaching in St. Johns. A letter received from Rev. J. Davis, a few days ago, gives further information concerning this movement.

"On my way home from the Association I fell in with a respectable man from St. Johns, Newfoundland, a Wesleyan by religious profession, who gave me some interesting information about the Baptist brother now at work in that city. His name is Smith. He occupies at present a Temperance Hall, capable of accommodating some three hundred hearers. There he preaches twice on the Lord's Day; while, during the week he fills up two evenings with preaching and a prayer meeting. My informant had repeatedly heard him. He described his ministry as warm and earnest; not too deeply

tinged with peculiarities of any kind, but full of great Gospel announcements. The hall in which he preaches is well filled. There is plenty of room for him. He is favourably received, and prospects of great usefulness are opening before him.

We shall be glad to obtain further information of the progress and prospects of the work on that island.

Temperance.

At the late meeting of the Synod by the Presbyterian Church, a report was adopted from a Committee of that body appointed for the purpose of considering the question and reporting thereon. This report contains some statements which will interest the friends of Temperance. It says:—

Your committee, after careful consideration and earnest prayer proceeded to issue to each pastor of a congregation in connexion with the Synod a circular, soliciting as much information as possible respecting the whole subject, and we are gratified to be able to report that our circulars, instead of being treated with disrespect or neglect, as has sometimes been the fate of such papers, have by nearly all our ministers been promptly and satisfactorily responded to.

The number of ordinary hearers and supporters of the church engaged in the manufacture or sale of these liquors, as responsible heads, is 25. And further, that during the last few years about fourteen have withdrawn their pecuniary support from the church in consequence of our advocacy of total abstinence.

That in thirty congregations progress appears to have been made in the temperance cause: that in and around seven the cause seems to be losing ground, and that in six more it is extremely difficult to decide whether or not any progress is being made; that about one half of our communicants are total abstainers, while a large majority are temperate, if not total abstainers in practice, and that in the case of several congregations, while the cause of temperance is making progress in the church, in the surrounding community over which the church has no control, drunkenness and all its degrading concomitants are largely on the increase.

It is very observable the three Havers's were here 86 years; Mr. Beddow and I have been the same—86 years,"

"A squad of Indiana volunteers, out scouting, came across a female in a log cabin in the mountains. After the usual salutations, one of them asked her, 'Well, old lady, are you a Secesh?'—'No,' was the answer. 'Are you a Union?'—'No.' 'What are you, then?' 'A Baptist, an' always have been.'—Home Jour.

"The Rev. Henry Havers, ejected from Stambourne Church in 1662. He, his grandson, and nephew, preached from 1662 to 1748 successively—86 years.

"The Rev. Messrs. Mayhew and Hallem, from 1748 to 1774.

"The Rev. Mr. King, from 1774 to 1776.

"The Rev. Mr. Beddow, from 1776 to 1810—34 years.

"The Rev. Mr. Spurgeon, from 1810 to 1862—52 years.

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"The Committee on Periodicals beg to report—We believe that it would tend to secure the peace and union of the body to say nothing of the past in relation to our Periodicals. The Proprietor of the N. B. Baptist and Christian Visitor having submitted to this body his design to give up the publication of our periodical on the 1st February next, and the Rev. I. E. Bill being unable by the failure of his voice to continue his labors as a preacher, and having long experience in publishing a Religious paper, we think the providence of God directs us in a certain course,—we would therefore recommend this Association to request the Rev. I. E. Bill to be the sole proprietor and publisher of our paper, and to be responsible for everything appearing in its columns, and we request that he should visit our churches to secure the co-operation and sympathy of our pastors and church members, and we recommend this Association to pledge to him their support if he should accept the paper on the foregoing conditions."

C. H. SPURGEON'S GRANDFATHER has been the minister of a church at Stambourne, Essex, from 1810 to the present time—a period of 52 years. In the London Baptist Magazine (June, 1862) is a Note from Mr. C. H. Spurgeon containing a few lines from his grandfather, which will be read with interest, as follows:—

The ancient chapel at Stambourne, Essex, in which my aged grandfather has preached so long, is certainly one standing contradiction to the statement, that "every one of the 331 meeting-houses built by the ejected, has since become a meeting for Socinians."

C. H. SPURGEON.

P. S.—I have just received a note from my venerated grandfather, which may interest our readers:—

"MINISTERS WHO HAVE PREACHED AT STAMBOURNE.

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