

How I came to be a Baptist.

No 3.

Having thus advanced from one point to another in my investigations, I found that what remained for me to examine pertained chiefly to the constitution and order of a Christian church. And here also, I determined to make the New Testament my guide. In doing this I was soon convinced that strictly speaking, a church must be composed of believers only, and that others, old or young, could not rightfully belong to it. The question then arose, do believers belong to a church by virtue of their being Christians merely, or is there some other initiatory rite, in addition to this? To this question I gave much attention, as it seemed to involve principles of the utmost importance touching church-fellowship and order. It was evident that churches in different places were spoken of as being distinct from the whole body of believers. There was a care and discipline in these churches which pertained to their own membership exclusively, and letters were addressed to them and instruction given on the ground of their sustaining a relation to each other in the associated capacity, different from that which existed between believers generally. A church seemed to be something by itself. Composed of individual believers, organized for the mutual benefit of its members, and for united and more efficient action in promoting Christianity. I saw that it could in no sense be a legislative body and enact laws, but it was to take Christ's laws and execute them.— This was all that I could find that they were authorized to take his rules and apply them in receiving members, in disciplining them, and, if found necessary, in excluding them. Beyond the teachings of Christ and the apostolic instruction and practice as exemplifying that teaching, no church had a right to go.

Having my mind settled on this point, my next inquiry was, what are the ordinances of a church, and what the order in which they should be observed? It was clear as I perceived that there were but two standing ordinances, that is, ordinances which are to be perpetuated throughout all time.— These were Baptism and the Lord's Supper. But here a question arose which occasioned some perplexity. Was it designed that one of these should in all cases precede the other? Or were they to be observed indiscriminately, without regard to order? I knew it was the almost universal custom throughout christendom to place baptism first. But was this scriptural? Had I not just as much authority for observing the Lord's Supper then, as I was, as I should have after I had been baptized? This, of course, involved the disputed subject of communion. I saw this, and that only made me the more anxious to know what was the teaching of Scripture, and the order there established.

It was evident that believing and baptism were connected in the instructions of Christ; that the apostles baptized believers the first thing after they exercised faith, and therefore the Lord's Supper was not observed by those believers until after baptism. And it also was evident that baptism was an ordinance which a believer was to observe once only, while the observance of the Lord's Supper was to be repeated, and there was a fitness at least, in having baptism in all cases antecedent to communion.

Each of these ordinances must have its place I knew, and I could see reasons for believing that when one became a christian, he should next be baptized, and then partake of the Lord's Supper, rather than that this order should be reversed. And, moreover, there was evidence that baptism was to be regarded as an initiatory rite by which one was introduced to a Christian church: while the Lord's supper was something to be habitually observed by those who were actually members of the church. Such appears to me, to be the scriptural view of this subject. At least, I felt that I could reconcile all the passages of scripture pertaining to the order of a church with this view, as I could with no other. And in harmony with this my mind became established.

When I had advanced thus far, I began to look around, and see where I stood, and to what results my investigations led me. My mind had become settled on various points, but these had been examined so disconnectedly that I had hardly thought of them as a whole, or as favoring any particular denomination of christians.— I wanted to get at the truth in doctrine, and the right in practice, and beyond that I had little care. So then, I began to consider on what points my mind had become settled, and to reduce my incoherent thoughts and opinions to order. In doing this I found that I believed in the fundamental doctrines of evangelical religion; consequently in the necessity of a new heart in order to be a disciple of Christ.— I believed that when one became a disciple of Christ, then, and only then, was he a proper subject for baptism, and that baptism could be scripturally administered only by the immersion of a believer in water. I believed that a church properly constituted, was a company of baptized believers, associated to carry out the laws of Christ in respect to themselves and their fellow men; and that the Lord's Supper was an ordinance pertaining exclusively to a church. So far I had progressed, without hardly thinking that my views were tending towards those held by the Baptists, or that I ever should be associated with them.

BUNYAN, in Zion's Advocate.

Correspondence.

For the Christian Messenger.

Letters to a Young Preacher.

LETTER XXIV. CHURCH DISCIPLINE: DISORDERLY WALKING.

My Dear Brother,

It appears to me that ministers rarely preach upon Church Discipline. I do not recollect that I ever heard a sermon on this subject. Why is not this duty frequently presented before the churches, defined and enforced in public discourses? Some pastors may not be aware that this duty is incumbent on them. Perhaps some are not duly impressed with a sense of its importance. Others may be deterred through diffidence, or the fear of giving offence. In my opinion, however, no sufficient reason can be assigned for this neglect.

It may be suggested that this duty is so plainly laid down in Scripture that it can scarcely require to be explained. There are, indeed, some distinct and explicit rules given for our guidance. But so greatly diversified are the cases requiring discipline, that no man can reasonably expect to find a specific direction applicable to every one of them. In many of these, general principles must be attentively considered, and judiciously applied.

One comprehensive rule of Scripture is, "Withdraw yourselves from every brother that walketh disorderly." (2 Thes. iii. 6.) The Apostle specifies (verse 11) a case of this kind: "We hear that there are some which walk among you disorderly, working not all, but are busy-bodies." Hence it is evident that such persons are subjects of discipline, that they ought to be admonished, and, if they do not reform, excluded from church fellowship." (Ver. 10, 12, 14. 1 Tim. v. 8, 13, 15.) They should, however, like other excluded persons, be subsequently treated with kindness, (ver. 15.) and, if possible, be reclaimed and restored.

Instances sometimes occur in which an individual considers himself injured by another member of the church, and, instead of employing Scriptural measures for the adjustment of the disagreement, or the bringing of the alleged offender to account, he declines to renew his covenant with his brethren, and to commune with them in the Lord's supper. Such a one evidently walks disorderly. He refuses, or at least neglects, to obey plain commands of the King of Zion, (Matth. xviii. 15-17. xxvi. 26, 27.— Heb. x. 25.) breaks his covenant with his brethren, and condemns them all without cause.— This course justly subjects him to discipline, as one that is disobedient and unruly.

Another refuses to walk with the church because he conceives there is an immoral person retained in it. He should be reminded, however, that he is himself professedly a part of the church; and if he have not employed proper means to have the supposed transgressor either reclaimed or expelled, none of his brethren can be more blameworthy than himself in this matter. If he feel so aggrieved by the conduct of a brother that he can not enjoy his religious privileges, surely he must regard such a one as having, in effect, trespassed against him; and therefore can not reasonably question the obvious fact, that he is bound in this case to proceed in accordance with the plain law of Christ.— (Matth. xviii. 15-17.) Moreover, if one member have a right to decline meeting and communing with the church on account of one whom he deems immoral, but with whom he has not labored, undeniably all the other members have an equal right to do the same. In this case the pastor, who has no authority to "put away a wicked person," (1 Cor. v. 13.) and who can not consistently refuse to administer the Lord's supper to one who has not been excluded by the church, nor even laid under censure, may be placed in the uncomfortable position of having to administer this sacred ordinance to that person alone on whose account all the rest stand back! Obviously no man has any reason to be dissatisfied with a church for retaining one whom he has not duly visited and reported: nor even then, unless the proof is clear and decisive, such as would convict him in a court of justice.

A church-member who leaves his place, or withdraws from his brethren, under any pretext, walks disorderly. If it be merely by reason of the darkness of his own mind, the weakness of his faith and doubts with reference to his state, much forbearance should be exercised toward him; and efforts kindly employed to encourage his return. While Paul enjoins, "Warn them that are unruly," he adds, "Comfort the feeble-minded." (1 Thes. v. 14. Heb. xii. 13.) No one, however, can be consistently dismissed

from a church on the ground of his concluding that he is not a Christian. Would such dismissal, if granted, make a Christian of him?— Would it not rather seem to give him license to go on with the world contentedly and unbuked?

It may be remarked here, that should a member of a church think he had not been regenerated prior to his baptism, but that he has been since, it does not appear needful to repeat the ordinance. When it has been once scripturally administered on a profession of faith, its repetition would be inconsistent. Furthermore, such individual may be mistaken as to the time of his regeneration: and if self-deceived once, possibly, he may be the second time.

Cases too numerous to be minutely considered here, such as neglect of family worship, unchristian conversation, indulgence in worldly amusements, refusal to bear a due proportion of the expenses of the church, disregard of promises, the frequenting of taverns, infringement on the Sabbath, &c. may be justly regarded as disorderly walking. The pastor should himself cautiously avoid whatever may be so considered. He should also faithfully admonish such as fall into any of these habits; and urge others to labor diligently with them, and if not successful, to report them for further discipline.

A Christian church is compared to the human body, in which all the members have sympathy, and mutual care for each other. (Rom. xii. 4, 5. 1 Cor. xii. 20-27.) If one be diseased, all suffer with it, and all available means are employed for its restoration. Recourse is had to amputation in those cases only wherein the safety or welfare of the whole body demands it. So, while acts of open immorality require prompt action, improprieties of a less flagrant nature admit of the exercise of much lenity and forbearance. In such cases hasty exclusions are injurious. Disorderly-walkers should be kindly admonished, and faithfully warned. If, however, any persist in such courses as tend to dishonor God, corrupt the church, or harden the impenitent, fellowship must be withdrawn from them.

I would strongly recommend the reading of the list of members in Conference; at least semi-annually. Those who have not been at conference in the course of six months, should be visited, and, if able to attend, urged to be present at the next. In case of non-attendance, they should be reported, and if found to be walking disorderly in any respect, this should be stated, and they be dealt with as their delinquencies demand.

May the Lord grant you, my dear young Brother, wisdom and discretion in all these matters, so that your instructions and example may exert a salutary influence!

Yours in gospel bonds,
CHARLES TUPPER.

Tremont, Aylesford, Dec. 17th, 1861.

For the Christian Messenger.

Vegetable vs. Animal food.

MR. EDITOR,

I notice that you devote a space in the Messenger to the cultivation of the soil, the rearing of stock, and of late have given extracts in regard to the health of man.

A paragraph of your selections under this head in the Messenger of the 18th inst. headed "ANIMAL FOOD" is, as far as I can learn, without authority, wanting proof, and without foundation.

It states "It is a well established fact that amongst those classes who get the least animal food, mortality is the greatest, and disease is the most rife." Who can these classes be? It is not parts of Scotland who live chiefly on oatmeal, whose inhabitants are robust, strong, and active, and with whom disease is less known than in other parts where they have flesh in abundance. The poor Irish who cannot afford animal food, and, notwithstanding the want of comfortable houses and general cleanliness, are generally robust and healthy, one indication of health is their universal good teeth. An Irishwoman, who seldom eats meat and gets only the poorest vegetable diet, will endure in two years, more hardship than would kill ten English ladies, provided they had as many lives. There are more vegetarians amongst the Society of Friends or Quakers of London than any other class.— When this Society was most flourishing, as a consequence of its temperance, one half of those that were born in the Society, lived to the age of forty-seven years. Whereas of the general population of London, one half lived only two years and nine months. Among the Quakers one in ten arrived at seventy years of age, while of the general population only one in forty reached that period of life. In any clime the true followers of George Fox attained great age,

those in Rhode Island, U. S., averaged seventy four years. "One of the most common forms of disease generated by an exclusively vegetable diet is, scrofula." This must be a mistake.— Sailors on long voyages are subject to this disease, while flesh constitutes the bulk of their diet; but say some it is salted, true, but "the abundant supply of the needed material" is not a panacea, and does not prevent the scurvy.— Scabby heads and sore faces visit those children who eat the most animal food and grease. Of the lower animals the crow and the owl are lousy, the partridge and the pigeon are plump clear, and pretty. Visit a menagerie. The lion, the bear and the wolf are disgusting brutes. The keeper continually has to apply the sawdust to prevent the rising of unpleasant effluvia. You can approach the horse, the rhinoceros, or the elephant, and the olfactory nerves will escape with impunity. All our fine, noble and useful animals are gormyorous. That it is a generally entertained opinion that animal food creates power and enables the consumer to endure fatigue, I admit. And so it was, less than forty years since, and some of the present day believe that rum, brandy, and other stimulating drinks will do the same. It is quite possible that in the next forty years the mind of man may undergo as great a change in the latter as it has in the former. That flesh or grease will give heat is true, but it is the wrong way to obtain it. Were man to live on a proper vegetable diet his whole system would be more even, and he would be better fitted to endure either heat or cold than if he were stimulated by animal food.

My communication growing long, tis probable that it will be under your stove instead of the frisket (a part of the printing-press); but my inducement to pen this now is the appearance of a scarcity and high prices, before the Crop can be had again from the ground, hoping that it may be the means of some of your numerous readers reflecting on the best possible way to get the poor through the season, living to prevent disease, give health and insure old age.

Some of the subscribers to the Christian Messenger may complain of want of means to pay for their paper. If such, and all would discard those things which are only an acquired appetite, such as spices and all condiments, tea, coffee, tobacco, rum and all stimulating drinks, and live as nearly as possible as "Daniel" did in regard to his food, they would have plenty for all such purposes, and those who are wasting away, if not too far gone, would find that their disease, if not removed would be retarded, medicine would not be required, better health insured, and greater age guaranteed. The young ladies would not require rose and beet-water to give them the appearance of health. All would have more money to pay their minister, and newspaper, and have more time to read it.

It is wisely ordered that that which is best for man costs the least. Water, the cheapest of all drinks when one is thirsty, is the most delicious. When not thirsty it causes nausea, proving too hot man should drink only when thirsty.

Three pence worth of "the finest of the wheat" will keep a person as long as one shillings worth of flesh. As bulk is as necessary to life as nutrition, as much bran should be added to the flour as was removed from it.

It is probable it would be a blessing if man were deprived of all except "the staff of life."

Our wants are many, our needs are few.

R

25th December.

[As the paragraph our good vegetarian friend attacks, consists of but eleven lines, we reproduce it, so that our readers may not have the trouble of referring to it in the former number of the paper:—

ANIMAL FOOD.—It is a well-established fact that amongst those classes who get the least animal food, mortality is greatest and disease is most rife. One of the most common forms of disease generated by an exclusively vegetable diet is scrofula, and when traceable to this cause, the most speedy remedy is the addition of animal food to the diet. There are also many other forms of disease produced by the want of animal food, which require for their cure but an abundant supply of the needed material.

It will be observed that the writer only says WHEN scrofula is "traceable to this cause," (an exclusively vegetable diet), "the most speedy remedy is the addition of animal food to the diet." "R" speaks of scrofula and scurvy as one and the same, whereas they are very different diseases.

As to the paragraph being without authority, we think "R" should not despise it on that account, as the opinion of a meat-eating or dram-drinking doctor would not make the sentiments less objectionable to him. The signature of "Dr. H's flesh" to the paragraph would not