

Correspondence.

For the Christian Messenger.

Catechism for the Young.

Dear Brother Selden,

I most cordially second your motion with reference to the use of a scriptural Catechism for the instruction of the young. I have thought much on the subject. It was named to me some time ago by a ministering Brother, who requested me to write upon it. Numerous other duties, however, have occupied my time and attention, and hitherto this has been neglected. Moreover, I feared the proposal would not succeed. But now that the subject has been introduced by you, I regard it as my duty and privilege to express my hearty concurrence in the measure.

To some it may appear preferable to teach children directly from the Bible. That they ought to be so taught is unquestionable. But in many cases it is advantageous to employ a variety of means; and all that are available for storing the youthful mind with sound religious instruction, obviously ought to be employed for that purpose. In connexion, therefore, with the method of teaching the young immediately from the sacred Volume, it seems to be highly desirable to induce them to commit to memory a plain compendium of the leading truths taught in the holy Scriptures, and of the principal parts of duty therein inculcated. This is a useful exercise both for the memory and the understanding. It may, by the blessing of God, tend to promote their knowledge and reception of scriptural truth, their adherence to it, avoidance of sin, and their observance of the Divine commands. I cannot hesitate to affirm, that the learning of a Catechism has been very serviceable to me, both in my youthful days, and in subsequent life. From my own experience of the benefits resulting therefrom, I would strongly recommend it to others.

As stated elsewhere, it was the Assembly's Catechism that I learned. In my family I used Dr. Baldwin's. The latter I like very well; but I am not aware that it is in common use. As uniformity in this matter is desirable, and the former is, in general, very good, and what is called "The Baptist Catechism" is substantially the same, revised, with a few alterations, by the venerable Benjamin Keech, and extensively approved and used by Baptists in England and America, probably we can not do better than to adopt it. If, however, any farther revision be deemed requisite, I shall not object, provided it be judiciously made.

It is obviously indispensable that every child be taught the Ten Commandments. Though the general import of these is plain, yet a brief definition, shewing distinctly what is required and what is forbidden in each of them, is evidently desirable. The giving of this in the Catechism proposed for adoption, with a brief explanation of the several parts of the Lord's Prayer, renders it peculiarly useful.

It is my earnest desire that the subject of the general use of a suitable Catechism in our Sabbath Schools and families, may be duly considered, and deliberately discussed in our Sabbath School Conventions and Associations; and that we may be enabled unitedly to adopt such a course as will, by the Divine blessing, be beneficial to the rising generation.

Of course it will be understood by all, that nothing like compulsion will be attempted in any case. No children will be required to learn any Catechism in a Sabbath School without the concurrence of their parents or guardians.

May this effort to promote the religious training of the young be successful, and beneficial!

Yours in gospel bonds,
CHARLES TUPPER.

Aylesford, April 23, 1863.

For the Christian Messenger.

Dr. Forrester's Report on Education.

Mr. Editor.—

It is not long since your columns contained a discussion concerning the Normal School, some of your correspondents affirming, and others denying its proclivities to be mainly Presbyterian. By the former it was asserted that as Dr. Forrester, the ruling spirit of the school, was a Presbyterian Minister, he would be likely to use his position for advancing the sentiments of his own denomination. And it is to be regretted that this inference, for which no occasion should have been given, has however been justified by the part which Dr. Forrester has taken, and seems disposed to take in the educational matters of the Province.

It is well known that Dalhousie College has been offered the Presbyterians, and that they hope, in accepting it, to control the Education of the Province. Ostensibly, indeed, this is not their purpose, since the other Denominations are invited to a joint participation with them in its benefits; but that such is their real purpose is plain from their knowing that the other religious bodies, having well equipped Colleges of their own, can never enter the proposed partnership. Now if it should appear that Dr. Forrester sympathized with the proposal to transform Dalhousie College into a Provincial University, while it should be, in fact, a Presbyterian College; and that he was in favor of linking the Normal School to said College, in the educational machinery of the Province; an argument would hereby be furnished for the belief that he is aiming at Presbyterian ascendancy, by making his own denomination the educators of the province, and that he would not hesitate to make his position, as Superintendent of Education, subservient to this end. And such does appear. The offer of Dalhousie College to the Presbyterians, made at their last Synod by the four Presbyterian Governors of the College, its only governors at the time, was particularly pleasing to Dr. Forrester. This he has proclaimed in his late Report on Education, to which I wish more especially to call the attention of your readers.

On comparing this report with the Dalhousie College Bill, it is difficult to escape the conclusion that they were both prepared by the same hand; or, that the mind that framed the former, was at least consulted in the drafting of the latter. Certain it is they were both drawn by a Presbyterian pen.

One of the most remarkable portions of the Doctor's Report is the following:—

"Dr. Forrester recommends the establishment of Dalhousie College as a Provincial University, and the appointment of a Council of Public Instruction, of which the Superintendent of Education should be a member, and to which he should act as Secretary. The duties of this Council are thus described:—On this Board ought to devolve the whole arrangement of the educational interests of the Province, from the Common School up to the University; to possess and direct the endowment of Dalhousie College; to expend all the money that has been or may be granted in support of the Provincial University, or of the Normal and Model Schools; to make or alter from time to time, with the consent of the Governor in Council, any statutes, rules and regulations which may be deemed necessary for the government and discipline of the University and Grammar and Common Schools throughout the Province; to appoint and remove from time to time teachers and professors and other officers and servants, to prescribe and fix their duty and remuneration; to make and alter as may be deemed necessary from time to time any statutes or regulations touching the course of study, the establishment of scholarships, examination for matriculation, degrees, scholarships, &c., &c."

In this extract several things are especially noticeable. But overtopping them all is the parade which Dr. Forrester makes of his own abilities. Having proposed that Dalhousie College be established as a Provincial University, and that a Council of Instruction be appointed to manage the entire educational interests of the Province, he then suggests that he himself be a member of said Council, and act as its Secretary. In other words he recommends that every school and college in the province, including the Normal and Model Schools of Truro, be subordinate to the contemplated Provincial (Presbyterian) University, and that he fill the most responsible office in their management. Hear this, ye learned Doctors and Professors of King's and Acadia! What think ye of having your respective colleges reduced to the position of mere dependencies of Dalhousie, while the diplomas which you may grant shall confer no honor at home or abroad as compared with those which shall bear the signature of the illustrious Secretary.

The clearness and depth of Dr. Forrester's mind are manifest in the following sentence, taken also from his late Report:—

"It is contended however, that knowledge to be thus self-propagating and propelling, must be possessed of three elements or characteristics:—First, a clear, accurate and intelligent conception of that which is recognized,—Second, a precision such as that the child shall discern just what the proposition amounts to, and how all its elements stand related to one another, so that he can hold the one and the other up before him as a distinct, complete, and practical entity,—Third, a thorough discrimination, or such knowledge as that in passing from one step to another there shall be a right and firm understanding of the relation between them, and of what the one has to do with the other."

Now to ordinary minds, here would seem a distinction without a difference. Ordinary minds would say that first, second, and third, if they mean anything, mean one and the same thing.

Hoping that the question of popular Education in the province may ere long receive an equitable adjustment.

I am yours, &c.

AYIN.

For the Christian Messenger.

Dangerous Doctrine. Deadly Error.

Messrs. Editors,—

I have recently met with a book entitled "The Christian Home" by Phillips, which has been quite extensively circulated during the last year in the western and some of the central counties of this Province. The work appears to have been written to arouse the people with whom the author stands identified to a deeper interest in their general religious welfare, and particularly in the institution of infant baptismal regeneration. The title of the book is rather a pleasing one; the external finish is quite nice, adapting it to a parlour table; and some of the chapters teach sentiments good and truthful; some teach very doubtful ones; and the doctrines propounded in the eleventh chapter under the heading "Christian Baptism," are so unscriptural; that having examined the work I cannot pass them over in silence. Not so much from the fear that any intelligent Baptist would be injured by reading them, but from the conviction that many who have bought the book have been gulled by the appearance and title, and many more might be thus induced to give a dollar for it, who would not, did they actually know what were its contents. The book is certainly in the wrong place where it takes up its abode in a baptist family. That is, it is to them worthless property.

I will give you some of the assumptions of the author under the above caption:

"God commands us not only to dedicate our children to him, but to do so in the way he has appointed viz., in and through christian baptism."

"It is revolting to the parent's faith to forbid his little ones the privilege of the church."

"Baptism in the christian home is eminently infant baptism."

"The baptism of our children is grounded on their need of salvation at every age and stage of development."

"His gospel excludes none, neither is it restricted to a certain age or capacity."

"Besides, the idea of following Christ teaches its full meaning only through infant baptism."

And yet with the plainest teachings of the gospel before them, is it not strange, that there are so many virulent enemies of infant baptism?

Speaking of the position of the opponents of infant baptism he says, "It assumes that faith is bound to a particular age. It also assumes that this faith must necessarily be exercised by the subject of christian baptism." "Baptism," says he; "is that sacrament by means of which the order of divine grace is continued." "It generates faith, and its development is from authoritative to free, personal faith."

No parent therefore who neglects the baptism of the child can have "the answer of a good conscience towards God."

Having devoted about a dozen pages of the book to this sort of doctrine, the writer then proceeds to chastise those pedobaptists who abuse the ordinance, he says, by perverting it from its true purpose.

He says first that it is often abused by neglecting the proper time of its administration. He declares that the proper time, is "the earliest period of infancy." The children of the Jews, then were not circumcised early enough.

He then states it to be abused by using it only as a name-giving ordinance, and "not appreciated as a channel for the communication of God's grace to their children."

He further declares that by many pedobaptists it is quite neglected, "over which he grieves, and utters his conviction that this great neglect is owing to their low unscriptural views of its nature and practical importance." "For," says he, "if they realized its relations to the plan of salvation, and its office in the appropriation of that salvation to their children, they would not permit them to grow up unbaptised."

He declares the laxity of both ministers and churches of his connection to be very great, on this point. The sin of this neglect is truly astounding.

He says of ministers "they hardly ever utter a word of warning from the pulpit against it." And to prove that his sorrows have foundation, he quotes statistics as follows; viz., from the *Mercersburg Review*, the Presbytery of Londonderry reports but one baptism to sixty-four communicants. The Presbytery of Buffalo city

he same. The Presbytery of Rochester city, one to forty-six. The Presbytery of Michigan, one to seventy-seven. The Presbytery of Columbus one to thirty. In the Presbytery of New Brunswick there are two churches which report thus: One reports three hundred and forty-three communicants and three baptisms; another reports three hundred and forty communicants and two baptisms.

In Philadelphia, one church reports three hundred and three communicants and seven baptisms. Another two hundred and eighty-seven communicants and one baptism.

In view of this discovery, the author exclaims: "The statistics speak volumes." "They tell us how christian parents neglect the baptism of their children, and also how the church winks at it. From this neglect, we can easily infer their indifference to it. If we refer to the statistics of all other churches, we shall witness a similar neglect. It is now difficult indeed to induce parents to have their children baptized, because they think it is of no use. Let them wait, they say, till they grow up, then they will know more about it. This shows us where the parents stand."

Poor weak-eyed man! How the light troubles him. That light of truth he would exclude from all mankind, and bar his own heart against it. He is in trouble. God is bringing the people to proper convictions and views of Christianity, despite all the false teachings of the author and his kindred spirits. God's word is mighty and will prevail.

Phillips' statistics show that error is becoming decrepid. That many of the sons and daughters of God are coming up out of Babylon, sick of idolatry, and feeling their way after the true worship and true salvation of the living God.

The statistics he quotes do indeed "speak volumes." Herein is an encouraging omen for those believing and preaching the truth as it is in Jesus; "They shall reap if they faint not." Unenviable indeed is the position of that man who, in the last half of the nineteenth century, will labor to scatter broadcast over the earth such poisonous seed; whose mind can oppose itself to the word of God, and fill some twenty pages with doctrines which he terms vital, and yet in support of which he does not nor can he successfully quote one passage of divine authority. Men of protestant communities ought to be ashamed to teach for christian doctrines the commandments of men, and create an ordinance for themselves opposed to the clearest revelation. It is enough for men of the papistical order thus to insult God by attributing to a human ordinance that which cometh only from God. Of the purchase and reading of all books teaching false religion, as well as of the acceptance and practice of false religion itself, we hear God saying: Wherefore do ye spend money for that which is not bread, and your labor for that which satisfieth not? Hearken diligently unto me and eat ye that which is good, and let your soul delight itself in fatness.—Isaiah lv. 2.

Yours fraternally,
W. G. GOUCHER.

For the Christian Messenger.

To the Churches composing the Eastern Baptist Association.

DEAR BRETHREN,

Permit me to invite your attention to a subject which I consider stands intimately connected with our interests as a denomination as well as directly with the true statistics of the body namely, that of the correspondence of each church with the Association. Several of the churches have not done so for over three years, others for a still longer time.

According to article 7th of our Constitution: If any church cease to correspond, or communicate with the Association for three successive years, such church shall be considered withdrawn, and shall be discontinued from the Minutes, with the proviso, that inquiry may be instituted with reference to the omission.

Some of these churches, by deaths, removals, or by more distressing causes may have lost their visibility. Others, however, perhaps destitute of pastoral oversight, and their members, not living contiguous to each other, have neglected too much their prayer and church meetings, and having nothing as they may think of interest to communicate, have ceased to correspond with the Association. Earnestly, but affectionately dear brethren, I exhort all the churches in connection with the body to meet us with, if possible a delegate, or at least a letter, at our approaching anniversary at Bedeque, P. E. I.

When there are no pastors or church clerk let not the deacons, or some of the members