

Correspondence.

For the Christian Messenger.

Busy-bodies.

Dear Reader, doubtless like myself you have often been struck with the variety of human character, which everywhere forces itself upon our notice. Some men there are whose virtues produce in our minds feelings of veneration and admiration, and remind us of the apostolic injunction, "whose faith follow considering the end of their conversation." There are others whom we are compelled to regard with pity and disgust. In the foremost rank of these latter we place those whom Paul denominates "busy-bodies," a designation which but too correctly describe a class of individuals by whom most communities are afflicted. They are remarkable for their great activity, in fact they are always busy, for like the troubled sea they cannot rest. Now against industrious habits, I would be one of the last to urge objections. I believe every christian is called upon by his religious profession to be diligent in business, fervent in spirit, serving the Lord; but the misfortune is the persons of whom I complain instead of devoting their time and energies to these the legitimate objects of christian activity, grossly neglect them, and are constantly concerning themselves about things in which they have no right to interfere. They are busy bodies in other men's matters. But, let me not be misunderstood, I would not for a moment insinuate that the concerns of our fellow creatures should not in any case be the object of our attention. The law of love requires us to sympathize with them in their afflictions, and to labor by every means in our power for the promotion of their present and eternal welfare; but against thus troubling themselves in their neighbor's affairs busy bodies have insuperable objections. The chambers of the poor, the sick and the dying are not the places which they delight to visit; these they carefully avoid as though to breathe their atmosphere would be to expose themselves to certain death, and if you venture to remind them of the apostolic injunction "to do good and communicate forget not," the substance of their reply is, and it is not always uttered in the sweetest tone, "Am I my brother's keeper?" The other men's matters in which they interfere are very different from these. Some meddle with their neighbors' lives and property, while others direct their attention to their neighbors' characters. The christian church, it must be confessed, is not altogether exempt from "busy bodies"; and great are the evils which they inflict upon her. Such persons appear to believe that they have a special commission to look after the failings of their brethren, and that they are bound to put the worst possible construction upon their motives and proceedings. Instead of being influenced by that charity which "thinketh no evil," they cherish suspicion and industriously circulate reports having no real foundation; and thus they frequently produce discord and animosity, where without their interference peace and brotherly affection would have continued to prevail. "A whisperer separateth chief friends." The amount of injury which busy bodies have inflicted cannot be estimated. From the New Testament records it appears that their ancestors of the apostolic age were a great curse to the infant church. Paul himself, notwithstanding his varied excellencies, suffered severely from their malice, and often refers to them in terms which I would earnestly recommend to the consideration of the busy bodies of the present day. But this is not all, while they so sedulously attend to other men's characters they have neither the time nor the disposition to look after their own. Hence they are by no means remarkable for personal piety, and very often exhibit in themselves the very same failings they so severely condemn in others, why it is that so many neglect their own interests in attending to those of their fellow men, I do not take it upon me to determine. It may be, for human nature is subject to strange delusions, that such persons look upon themselves as very amiable characters and as very useful members of society. If so I would venture to intimate that they are alien in the estimate which they form of their own worth; that society could very safely dispense with their exertions; and that they are generally despised even by those who listen to them. The spectators of an execution do not, I believe, very generally admire the man by whom the axe is wielded, or the rope adjusted by which his victim is hurried into eternity. The application of this allusion to the destroyer of character, I leave to every intelligent reader. That these lines will be perused by busy bodies, I

know not; should any, however, in reading them discern some features of their own moral likeness, I would affectionately exhort them to study to be quiet, and mind their own business. By so doing they will improve their own character, secure the respect of their fellow christians, promote the peace of the church and be a blessing to their own neighbourhood.

February, 1866.

For the Christian Messenger.

Campbellite Baptism vs. Christian Baptism.

MR. EDITOR,—

In these days of commotion and novelty, new cases arise in the religious, as well as the political world; and our churches are occasionally called to treat with cases entirely new, and exceedingly baffling to their judgment. One which we have just now in mind, and which with propriety, we may give a little airing is the reception of persons into our church membership, from Campbellite churches.

We have but two regularly constituted ways of receiving into our membership. One is by a minister of our denomination first baptizing the candidate upon a profession of faith, and then extending, to him or her, the hand of church fellowship. The other is by a dismissal letter from a sister church.

The matter of the above subject, hinges upon the question, Is Campbellite baptism christian baptism? If it is, then may we properly enough receive into our membership, any coming to us from that connection, upon the baptism of that faith. If Campbellite baptism is not christian baptism, then may we with equal propriety discard it, and require the candidate to receive ours before being admitted to our membership.

To ascertain if Campbellite baptism is christian baptism, we will lay the two side by side, and note their points of agreement and disagreement.

1st. Christian baptism is the immersion of a person in water; so is Campbellite baptism.

2nd. Christian baptism requires of the person a profession of faith; so does Campbellite baptism. But here the agreement ceases. For

3rd. Christian baptism requires that profession to be, That the Holy Spirit has regenerated the soul; Campbellite baptism requires the profession to be that the Holy Spirit has done nothing saving to the soul, and will do nothing saving for it prior to baptism. In this the two are positively at variance. Christian baptism is administered to those, and those only who profess to have found Christ; Campbellite baptism is administered to those who profess not to have found Christ, or in other words, candidates for christian baptism, profess to be saved, being justified already by faith in Christ. Candidates for Campbellite baptism, profess to be lost, are under condemnation, and are seeking justification in baptism.

4th. The object of Christian baptism is an acknowledgement of Christ, as a Saviour, by yielding to the ordinance he has ratified and made his own. The object of Campbellite baptism is to procure a salvation, which that church teaches, and the Candidate professes to believe, cannot be obtained prior to, nor elsewhere than in baptism. In this again the two are positively and vitally at variance. We have no Articles of that church before us, from which to quote for it publishes no creed; but we have heard their religious teachers discourse, and propound the sentiment, we here ascribe to them. We have also conversed with members of that connection and obtained the same from them. Nor do we know but it is their glory to avow it.

The next question then, that justly arises in this connection is: Are the two points of agreement sufficiently important to entitle Campbellite baptism to our reception? or, Are the points of disagreement, sufficiently strong to destroy the validity of Campbellite baptism, and cut off its claims of recognition by our churches?

We have met with persons in our denomination who, we conclude for want of proper knowledge of the subject, were favorable to receiving persons into membership, into our churches upon Campbellite baptism; and we know a few cases in which such receptions have occurred. The view they took, so far as we could learn it, was, that so long as the person had been under the water he had received a christian baptism. We are, however, far from endorsing that view, and have thus attempted to set the matter in its true light. Possibly, yes probably, the same persons, and churches would refuse to receive into membership, a person upon a Mormon baptism, though that baptism is immersion. I ask, Why approve a Campbellite baptism, and condemn a Mormon one? In

both cases the ordinance is immersion. In both cases the faith is a corruption. And though that of the Mormon may at first view seem the more glaring, a closer examination will show the other to be equally as fatal. The one has no more claim to recognition than the other.

Or again, who of us, or which of our churches would receive a Greek into membership upon his Greek baptism, though it consists of not one, but three immersions, and administered to the person at as innocent a period as ever is found in his life. I think that a little examination of the subject, and a little reasoning will sufficiently show that the points of agreement are not sufficient to render Campbellite baptism, valid christian baptism. While at the same time the points of disagreement are sufficiently powerful to destroy every vestige of claim it sets up to our reception.

My line of argument too is consonant with the practice of the apostle Paul, recorded in the nineteenth chapter of the Acts, who was a Baptist minister, and met with persons at Ephesus, who had been immersed by some one, but he found defects enough in it, to destroy its validity, and though he does not seem to question their sincerity, yet before he could consistently admit them into membership in a Baptist Church he administered to them christian baptism.

I will not prolong my remarks upon this question, but will for the present leave it in the position I have placed it, for those who wish to do right to think upon.

Fraternally yours,

W. G. GOUCHER.

Hebron, Yarmouth, Jan. 22nd, 1866.

[If we thought proper, we might make the common avowal of bearing no responsibility in publishing the above communication, seeing that the author has appended his own name; and we might then leave the matter with our readers; but we do not so understand the position of an editor. We hold that he cannot free himself from the duty of making a proper use of his columns, to convey to his readers what will be for their general edification and benefit. And yet in questions of debate it is necessary under proper restrictions that a certain amount of liberty should be accorded in the expression of opinion, and statement of facts, or the press would cease to be an institution for eliciting truth and the exposure of error.

With these preliminary remarks, we may state that we have some doubts if the above writer has fairly represented the religious body referred to. There may be some members of that body and we believe there are, who hold the views he charges them with, but we know others who will not acknowledge them, as a fair representation of either their faith or their practice. Whilst some of them accept the term "Campbellites," and adopt it as their distinctive name, there are others, holding fraternal relationship with them, who regard the designation as an insult and call themselves "Christians," "Reformed Baptists," "Disciples," &c.

Without desiring to prevent a proper examination of the question raised by Mr. G. we would take the liberty of offering a suggestion or two in reference to what we regard as New Testament law in the matter of receiving members to church fellowship. If we were called to offer an opinion on a question of receiving a whole community into fellowship, such as the Presbyterians had before them two or three years ago, when Father Chiquay's congregations turned from being Roman Catholics and became Protestants; if we had to decide whether their baptism by the hands of a Catholic Priest should be considered valid, and recognized as sufficient, so that they might, as a body, be consistently received as members of a Presbyterian Church, we might have some difficulty in determining on the proper course to pursue. But in the above case the question is quite of a different nature, and we think far more easily solved; here we find persons presenting themselves, as individuals, for membership, and consequently each case, as we conceive should be treated on its own merits, without regard to any other. No precedent is required, and no law should be framed to complicate the question or embarrass the church. We think a decision may be arrived at by asking, and receiving answers to, two very simple questions:

1st. Is the person desiring to unite with the church, according to charitable judgment, a true believer in Christ, accepting the views generally of that church and desiring to walk in love and harmony with its members?

2ndly. Does he, or she, as the case may be, consider that the baptism already received, although not precisely in accordance with the regular order of the church, yet that it was ex-

pressive of faith in Christ, whether administered by a so-called Campbellite preacher, or an Episcopal clergyman, or a Methodist minister?

These two enquiries being answered in the affirmative, and the first especially being proved by a consistent walk and conversation—"By their fruits ye shall know them,"—we think should afford satisfaction to any christian church; and the brother or sister should be welcomed into the relationship desired, without reference to any previous action of that church, or having had connection or not with any other church. If, however, any of the existing members of the church are not fully satisfied with respect to the answer to the first of the above questions, delay should be recommended to the candidate, until he could be *unanimously* received—free from "doubtful disputations."

We believe that our brother is mistaken in his interpretation of Acts xix. 3, &c.

Having, as we trust, cleared the way somewhat for a proper examination of this subject, we hope that any expression of opinion in reference to our worthy brother's communication may not be inconveniently extended, and that it will be in the spirit of the Apostle's injunction, in Galatians v. 13, "By love serve one another."—EDITOR C. M.]

For the Christian Messenger.

DONATION VISITS.

TO REV. D. FREEMAN.

The following from the King's County Gazette, has been sent us with a request for publication:—

Mr. Editor,—

We had the pleasure of mingling with the throng who were assembled at the residence of the Rev. Mr. Freeman, on Wednesday evening for the purpose of giving utterance (not by words alone, but by actions which exert a far greater influence than mere words,) to the strong feeling of regard and high esteem in which the Rev. Gentleman is held by the inhabitants of Canning and vicinity, who make up those social gatherings termed "donation visits," and as we jostled and pushed our way through the crowd gathered in the different parts of the house, and marked the smiling and apparently happy faces which met our view at every point; we could not but think that it were pleasant to the Rev. Gentleman to have such a gathering at his residence, it certainly must be pleasant to those who were congregated there.

The way was opened for several very interesting speeches, by an address delivered by Mr. James Rand to the Rev. Mr. Freeman, accompanied by the very handsome sum of \$162, of which \$112 was cash.

The address was answered in a very pleasing manner by Rev. Mr. Freeman who was in turn succeeded by several other Rev. gentlemen who were present, and who excited by their remarks both mirth and gravity among their listeners.

P. S.—The interest of the occasion was largely enhanced by the presence of numerous friends from Perea also.

TO REV. W. L. PARKER.

Dear Brother,—

I desire to acknowledge through the Christian Messenger, the kindness of those members of my church and congregation, who on Tuesday 30th Jan., made me and my family a donation visit, about eighty came. The evening passed away very pleasantly, after we had partaken of an excellent tea, we had good music and interesting speeches by Revs. Jacob Whitman, (congregationalist,) R. D. Porter, J. H. Saunders, W. G. Goucher. The donation amounted to at that time and since in cash and useful articles \$87. Whilst I feel thankful to the Lord who is the giver of every good and perfect gift, I also thank the kind friends. I pray that the Lord may abundantly bless the donors with all spiritual blessings, and cause them to abound more and more in every good work.

Yours in hope of eternal life,

W. L. PARKER.

Acadia, Yarmouth Co., Feb. 9th, 1866.

For the Christian Messenger.

OBITUARY NOTICES.

ANSEL CROSBY.

Died at Hebron, July 17th, 1865, in the 78th year of his age. Full of years and ripe in the experience of the christian faith. Through life until the infirmities of age began to gain an ascendancy over him, his constitution was vigorous and his habits active. Commencing life with a patrimony, he chose farming as his occupation, though during some of the early years of his manhood, he was partially engaged in mercantile business. By industry and frugality he acquired a competency of this world's goods, for the supply of the wants of a large and respectable family which he raised up, and also to render the last years of his life measurably free from care. He remembered his Creator in the days of his youth. At the age of nineteen, he experienced and professed religion; during the first general and extensive religious awakening with which Yarmouth was blessed, through the labors of the Rev. Harris Harding. At that