

Councils among Baptists.

We copy the following from the *Canadian Baptist*. Rev. Dr. Fyfe, the writer, held the pastoral office for several years, and is now the Principal of the Baptist Educational Institution at Woodstock, Ontario:

Mr. Editor,—I have been asked to state my views, respecting the power which exists in the Baptist denomination to review the disciplinary acts of the particular Churches. It is well known that independent churches may, in times of excitement harshly exercise their great power over some one, or more, of their members; and the question is often asked, can nothing be done to help members when hardly dealt with? On this question I have been asked to state my views; and with your permission, Mr. Editor, I will do so very briefly.

1. I hold to the complete independence of each church in regard to all matters of discipline, within the Scriptural and Christian limits. That is, each church has the absolute right to treat its members just as the Scriptures direct and not otherwise. So long as its discipline has not transgressed the letter, or the recognized spirit of God's word, no power on earth has a right to interfere with its actions; and it is a piece of presumption for any body of men to attempt to interfere with what the church has done.

2. When an aggrieved party calls for a council, they must first show that they have not been scripturally dealt with. *This is their who's plea.* They cannot plead merely, we are not satisfied with the action which turned them out of doors. It is not sufficient to say, there are many excluded members who are wealthy, and reputedly pious; because many wealthy men, and reputedly pious men, may merit to be excluded. I believe that there are some people who may be true children of God, whose temper and disposition unfit them for membership in any independent church. The only question, then, which need be asked of an excluded member, or members who ask for a council, is, has the church of which you were lately members, treated you unscripturally? If it can be clearly shown to any church in the neighborhood, where this unscriptural treatment has been received, that the word of God has been violated in the transaction, then that church (3) should appoint a committee to visit the offending church, and say to them, you have been accused to us of having departed from the Scriptures in the treatment of your members, in such and such respects. Let the charges against the offending church be clearly stated, and let a careful inquiry, in a fraternal spirit, be made among the officers of the offending church, in regard to the truth of the charges. Let an attempt be made to convince the church of their error, if they have erred. Then, if they refuse to hear this committee, let notice be given them that a council will be called at a given time, and let them have a copy of the charges against them, which are to be brought before the proposed council, that they may be prepared to meet them by their representatives.

Of course, such a council has not the least authority over the offending church. All it can do is to advise the church which called the council what to do in the premises.

Permit me to say in conclusion, that the fostering or petting of excluded members, who cannot clearly show that they have been unscripturally treated, is the most mischievous course in the world. It only fosters factiousness and insubordination in our churches. In a country like Canada, where the membership of our churches are so very diverse, in position, education, training, habits, &c., we may expect a good many difficulties, and we need a great deal of forbearance.

I am, &c.,
R. A. FYFE.

Missionary Intelligence.

Burmah.

MISSION TO THE SHANS.—LETTER FROM MR. BIXBY.—*Baptisms—Tour to the Mountains.*—Toungoo, Jan. 13, 1868.—If I have written less within the year, I have labored no less, nor have I been less conscious of the Master's blessing. In September I baptized eight Europeans, and with the number my dear daughter, who is now twelve years old, speaks and reads Burmese fluently, and loves to tell the little heathen children of the great love of Jesus. She is therefore already a missionary. I have since baptized three non-commissioned officers. These Europeans form a branch of the Toungoo town church, which is made up of representatives of several nationalities. We try to preach the gospel to "every creature," and some are given us from all the races and tribes to whom we have had access.

I have just returned from nearly a month's tour on the mountains, in the course of which I visited six chapels and several other villages, preaching the gospel, confirming the churches, counselling the assistants, and baptizing believers. I baptized thirteen at Kyah Maing, among them the chief of the Kyah Maing district, and the chief of the Kyah Maing village. The Lapet Ing people are building a new chapel, and there are several candidates for baptism. The same is true of Shway-nau ghyee.

FROM MRS. BIXBY.—*The Work on the Mountains.*—"I cannot tell you how much I am enjoying this tour among the mountain tribes. Much as I had been told and much as I thought I knew of Mr. Bixby's work on the mountains, I am overwhelmed with surprise at every village we visit. Our visit at Quatau-blow, [a wild Saukoo village,] has been one of the most interesting. To see those wild looking people

come in until the chapel was as full as it could hold, and sit quietly for an hour to listen to the preaching of the truth, and then bow themselves reverently in prayer,—to say nothing of the singing, in which the young and old join,—was surely enough to make one rejoice.

"I think it is so delightful, this working on from village to village, getting a foothold for the truth in each, winning the hearts of the people as the missionary does, and then turning them whithersoever he will. We had a most interesting Sabbath at Shway-nau-ghyee.

"Mr. Bixby preached three hours during the several services, and the people listened as I never saw a congregation listen before. The old chief sat motionless, with his eyes fixed on the preacher, his countenance varying in expression as some new truth was pressed on the conscience."

"Jennie and I invited the little girls to come in for a Sabbath school. We began with six little girls, but soon almost the whole village came in and engaged in the exercises.

"Moung See dee has evidently been faithful in teaching the people. There were fourteen who could read well."

"Thus the work goes on, from village to village, from year to year, and thus it will go on, if not interfered with, until the Shan country shall yield to its power. "If the vision tarry, wait for it."

Death of Native Preachers. We are greatly afflicted in the loss by death of Moung O, one of our best Burman preachers. First Moung Ong, then Moung Tong Myat, and then Moung O, were called to their reward,—three good men and useful preachers. They all were faithful unto death, and their examples are now before the churches while they enjoy their crowns. We mourn our loss, but rejoice in their gain.

Pray the Lord of the harvest to "send forth more laborers."

BASSEIN MISSION.—LETTER FROM MR. THOMAS.—*Visit to Churches North of Bassein.* Bassein, Jan. 8, 1868.—I communicated about two weeks ago an account of a tour among the churches of this district, lying to the south and west of this city. After writing that letter I started to the jungles again, and have but just returned. This trip has been among the churches up the Bassein river to the north.

Discouragements. The women of this district are in a worse state than the men. These women work in the fields with their husbands; they are careworn, with children clinging to them every moment in the day. No child here can be left alone for a few moments, shut up may be in a room, while the parents attend to their household affairs. Here, in these Karen houses there is no room into which to put these children. They must be held by might and main to keep them from falling through these bamboo floors, or over the edges of the verandahs, on which are no protection. Hence women grow old here while very young, they are without nearly all the privileges enjoyed by women in New England. They seldom attend meeting, or only with a child or children, too troublesome to admit of the mothers' hearing God's Word.

The missionary's wife is in the city; but there is not more than one Karen woman in a hundred who ever goes to these good missionary women; and alas, there is no female missionary to go to these Karens; all are away, or worn out with years of toil.

I have only written a few of the disheartening things which have pressed themselves upon my attention during the past two weeks. I am oppressed with a burden upon my soul,—a burden which no human hand has placed there, and which no hand but that of our gracious God can relieve. I bless God that I have been permitted to preach the gospel to so many and with such freedom here in Bassein. But my strength is nearly gone. But there must be hard, persevering, earnest preaching of the gospel here. There must be work done.

HENTHADA MISSION.—LETTER FROM MR. DOUGLASS.—*Labors in Myanong.* Henthada, Jan. 2, 1868.—My wife and I, with two of the native preachers, have labored the past three weeks in Myanong, fifty miles north of Henthada, and seven other towns on the river in that part of the district. There are in each of those towns from two to nine thousand inhabitants. Our reception and work in each place was quite similar. Many of the people, especially the women and children, had never before seen a white female, so that on entering the town we at once had a crowd of men, women and children around us; but in all cases they were civil and respectful. In each place we found a zayat or house in a central position, where we found rest and ate while in the place.

The towns are usually narrow and stretch a considerable distance along the bank of the river. In each place we commenced work at one end of the town, and went leisurely along the principal street to the other end, which in some places required three or four days. As we advanced along we would stop under a large tree, a mandat, or the verandah of a house before which there was a large open space where a crowd could assemble. I usually commenced by reading a passage of Scripture, a few questions and answers from one of the catechisms, or a passage from a tract. In a few minutes a congregation of from fifty to two or three hundred would assemble. When I would commence speaking, all would at once become quiet, amazed to hear a foreigner speak their language, and equally so at the character of the message presented. After speaking half or three quarters of an hour, and presenting some of the elementary and fundamental truths of the Bible, I would allow any who wished to ask questions, which some of the men were always eager to do; but as soon as they commenced, I usually stepped back and called on one of the native preachers to answer the questions. An anim-

ated discussion would then commence, which in some instances lasted two or three hours. I was much pleased on several occasions to see the native preachers, especially the younger one who was with us, on perceiving the strength and subtlety of his interrogator, turn the subject from the abstruse metaphysical dogmas of Buddhism to the practical influence of the gospel of Christ upon the heart and life, take the initiative and relate his Christian experience. As he narrated how the truth was brought to him and opened up to his mind, how old things passed away, and new views, feelings, hopes and aims were imparted, he secured undivided attention, and evidently on some minds left a deep impression. At the close of each such service, tracts and portions of Scripture were given away in considerable numbers, but given only to those who could read, and who manifested a desire to know what the tracts and books contain.

Doubtless curiosity brought the multitude about us, and we see as yet but little fruit from the seed sown and the labor performed in that part of the field; but it was curiosity that caused Zacchæus to climb the sycamore tree, from which Jesus called him down and told him, "the Son of man is come to seek and to save that which was lost." So also I hope that some of those who heard the truth, though attracted to the place by curiosity, will eventually "receive Him joyfully."

Correspondence.

For the Christian Messenger.

United States Correspondence.

BAPTIST ANNIVERSARIES.

Dear Messenger,—

The American and Foreign Bible Society held its 31st Annual Meeting in the Mariner's Church, on Saturday morning, 23rd inst.—After an excellent prayer meeting, the more public services commenced by calling to the Chair the 3rd Vice President of the Society, Rev. Dr. Gillette of Washington, D. C., who delivered a short address followed by the reading of an abstract of the report by the Rev. Dr. Babcock, and the reading of the Treasurer's report. The chief item of interest during the session of this Society was the appointment of a committee to confer with committees that may be appointed by similar societies, with reference to a basis of reunion and cooperation for Bible work. This elicited earnest remarks from Revs. Dr. Hiscox, of Brooklyn, Dr. Hodge, of N. Y., and others. The addresses were delivered as follows: Rev. Dr. Pollard, Mass. on The Bible; its preserving power—it preserves our theology from corruption, our ministers from degeneracy. It is the source of the most powerful and beneficent influence to raise all nations—the source of our most precious hopes, &c. Rev. C. B. Crane of Hartford, on The Duty of Baptists to support a Baptist Bible Society. Rev. Dr. Jeter of Va., on Baptist indebtedness to the Bible. Rev. W. F. Bambridge, of Erie, Pa., and others.

The afternoon of the same day, the Bible Union held its Semi-Annual Meeting in the same place, presided over by Rev. Dr. Armitage, of N. Y. After singing and prayer the Rev. Dr. Wyckoff read a short report full of good things, one item gratified us exceedingly, that the receipts of the last 12 months exceed all previous years. Rev. J. Francis, of California, offered a few remarks in favour of the Society. Rev. J. D. Fulton with his accustomed earnestness presented the subject of The Bible is a light—its lantern must be clean, the life it must be true. Rev. Dr. Brown, Chancellor of Lewisburg University, presented in an able address some of The Beauties of the New Translation—(I am pleased to have to state that it has been solicited for publication.) Rev. A. J. Gordon, Mass., confirmed the truthfulness of the remarks of the previous speaker with reference to the great doctrine of Believers dying and rising in Christ as symbolized by the act of Baptism.

Rev. Dr. Gillette spoke in commendation of the Society. Revs. Dr. Miller, Dr. Jeter, Dr. Colver, Dr. Webb, of N. J., all followed in the same strain. It indeed was highly gratifying to see some of the prominent men of the American and Foreign Bible Society on the platform of the Bible Union. A committee was appointed to confer with similar committees for union. In the evening the Rev. Dr. Arnold, of Madison University delivered a very clear and concise address on the New Version—pointing out with discriminating judgment where some old English words might have been retained without injury to the original (this is to be published) He was followed by Rev. Dr. Armitage in an eloquent and powerful reasoning address on The difficulty of expressing Divine ideas in human language.

On Sabbath Day Anniversary Sermons were preached in behalf of the American and Foreign Bible Society, in 23rd St., N. Y., and Brooklyn,

and in behalf of the Bible Union in the Mariner's Church, by Rev. Dr. Sarles of Brooklyn. In the morning, the Rev. Dr. Hovey with his usual ability, preached in behalf of the American Baptist Publication Society—in Madison Avenue Church. In the evening in 16th St. Church, excellent addresses were delivered in behalf of a pure literature, by Rev. Dr. Gardner, Wayland Hoyt and others.

Monday, morning and afternoon.—After a prayer meeting, Dr. Colver read the Scriptures and others took part in the services—the Treasurer's report was read. Receipts ending March 1st, in both the Business and Missionary departments are \$234,412 63. This is an increase of \$34,685,55 over the receipts of last year, leaving out the Memorial fund. Disbursements, \$178,792,95.

S. Colgate, Esq. of N. Y., moved the adoption of the report in a speech on The Need of such a society. A very interesting subject was presented for discussion, viz., "Would it be wise for each Baptist Association, and is it practicable to sustain a Colporteur Missionary within their bounds and under their own direction." This excited considerable attention and discussion. Brethren from all parts spoke with great effect upon this subject. It seemed to be the conviction of all the brethren that such an agency ought to be employed, that our churches demand it—that our denominational consistency demands it—also another subject of vital importance aroused the attention of the brethren—recommended by this Society. The employment of a Sabbath School Missionary or Superintendent for all the States whose business shall be to organize Teachers Institutes—arouse churches to the importance of engaging in Sabbath School teaching, &c.

In the evening the Rev. R. J. Buckland of N. Y. delivered an excellent address on Tracts and Books as a christianizing Agency—followed by speeches from Dr. Colver and others.

Tuesday morning, after a very excellent prayer meeting, in which items of Revival News were communicated, the Rev. J. F. Elder, of Orange, N. J., preached a sermon of point and power on "Thy Kingdom come"—dwelling particularly upon how to bring it about. The annual report was presented, showing the increasing work of this noble society. Interesting speeches were delivered by several brethren during the day, on the work of missions at home.

Wednesday.—Report of the Committee with reference to the education of colored preachers was presented, and excited considerable discussion bringing out J. D. Fulton, Dr. Colver, Dr. Mason, and Dr. Backus, and others. A committee was then formed to consider a basis of co-operation between this and the National Theological Institute. Other interesting items were presented during the day but this report will perhaps be sufficient to indicate:—

1. That the Baptists are beginning to awake to the magnitude of their work.
2. That they see more and more the need of presenting a united front to the world.
3. That if they would succeed, they must have the spirit of their Master.

A DELEGATE.

New York, May 26th, 1868.

For the Christian Messenger

IN MEMORIAM.

MRS. SARAH MORE.

Sarah, daughter of the late Rufus Bant, Esq., of Granville and wife of James More, Esq., Caledonia, Queens County, died at her home, Aug. 7th, 1867, aged 47 years.

She was enjoying her ordinary health, and busily engaged in domestic duties when her days were numbered, and almost instantly she fell asleep in Jesus. In childhood she was mild, and lovely. In youth thoughtful and anxious, and through life in every relation faithful and devoted. Early burdened with the sense of sin her struggle for freedom was severe, but peace came, and the transition from bitter anguish of soul to the joy of her heart was clear and triumphant. About the year 1839 she was baptized by Rev. John Chase, and to her death lived a devoted working child of God, thereby developing her own inner and higher life. She was not content to enjoy religion alone. Her zeal for the spiritual welfare of others was active and ardent. While hospitable and benevolent to all christians, her special and constant prayer was for the prosperity of her own loved Zion. In her prompt and systematic benevolence she always gave as the Lord prospered her. The Bible, the throne of grace, and the house of God were the sources of her strength in which she grew more and more into the likeness of her Divine Lord and Master.

MRS. FLORA MCPHEE.

Rev. Wm. McPhee writes from Upper Baddeck, C. B., on the 23th ult:

Dear Brother,—Sadly, I have to relate to you,