

livered before the President and Fellows of the Royal Society, who came to Shoreditch expressly for that purpose, but after a time their attendance ceased. In 1856, the Fairchild Lecture was delivered by the Lord Bishop of Oxford. The "Flower Sermon" is generally preached in the church of St. James', Mitre-square, Aldgate; but this year it was delivered in St. Catherine Cree, Leadenhall street, a change rendered necessary by the large attendance usually present on such occasions. The church of St. Catherine Cree, possesses some historical importance from the circumstance that it was Archbishop Laud's pompous consecration of the edifice which formed a chief ground of accusation against him. Holbein, the celebrated painter, was buried here, and among the monuments still remaining is that of the famous Sir Nicholas Throgmorton. The delivery of the Flower Sermon took place on the evening of Whit-Tuesday last, the preacher being the rector of St. James', Aldgate, Dr. Whittemore. The service commenced at seven o'clock, by which time the building was completely filled, chiefly by young persons, nearly all of whom carried bouquets of flowers, which imparted a most singular garden-like aspect to the interior of the edifice, filling it also with an almost overpowering fragrance. As might be supposed, the numerous street flower-sellers outside drove a brisk trade, and were not long in disposing of their floral treasures. All this time the church bells were ringing a lively peal, on the cessation of which the choir, consisting of fifty singers belonging to the St. Paul's "special service" choir, began singing a hymn to the familiar tune "Durham." The order of evening service followed, Mendelssohn's beautiful anthem, "Judge me, O God," touchingly rendered, succeeding the third collect, an original hymn, written specially for the occasion, forming a kind of prelude to the sermon.—The text chosen by Dr. Whittemore was Exodus xxv. 34—"And in the candlestick shall be four bowls like unto almonds, with their knobs and their flowers." At first we were apprehensive from the ominous mention of candlesticks in the text, that we were destined to hear a lecture thoroughly Ritualistic in its tendency, but we were agreeably disappointed the preacher confining himself to an eloquent and almost poetical exposition of the various illustrations suggested by his subject and their different symbolical meaning. And yet it seemed to us that much more could have been made of the occasion, that less might have been uttered respecting the works of man as exemplified in the golden candlesticks of the Jews, and more of the marvellous creative power of the Almighty as shown in the elegant almond flower. Still, the discourse was a most impressive one, especially where the preacher derived from the almond blossom a few words of consolation and comfort for the aged. Before the termination of the sermon the church was so crowded, that large numbers found themselves unable to obtain admittance. Not a few, however, lingered in the porch until the last notes of the grandly swelling anthem, "How lovely are the messengers," had died away; then, amid the clanging of the bells overhead, and the hum of whispered conversation in the edifice itself, the congregation slowly dispersed, and the Flower Sermon service of 1868 came to a close.—*Christian World.*

For the Christian Messenger.

That Resolution.

Dear Brother,—

I am glad that the resolution which was not passed by the Eastern New Brunswick Baptist Association has found a place in your columns. It would have been sent you when I forwarded a notice of the meeting, if I had obtained a copy.

Brother Todd corrects my statement. I used the words "require," and "bind," whereas the resolution itself has "recommend." But I did not quote the resolution, because, as I have just remarked, I had not obtained a copy. I said, "the object was to require . . . to bind." And so, I have no doubt, it was. The mild word "recommend" was chosen, but it has been too commonly understood, in such case, that the recommendation is intended to act as a requirement. It reminds me of the course adopted by the bishops of Rome, in the fourth and fifth centuries. Many letters were sent them by country bishops, requesting advice, for it was supposed that the bishop of the metropolis must be a very wise man. The Roman bishops saw their advantage, and were not slow in availing themselves of it. At first, they gave their opinions in a friendly and respectful style. Then they became bolder, and directed their country brethren how to act. Finally, those brethren were astonished at the change of manner. They wrote for

advice, and they received a *decree*, with an anathema tied to it, if they should dare to disobey. Thus the great apostasy gradually grew up.

The *Christian Visitor's* account of the discussion at Sackville is imperfect and partial. Many other considerations were adduced in opposition to the resolution, besides those mentioned by him. Brother Moser, for instance, dwelt with great force on the ability and right of the churches to manage their own affairs—shewed the contrariety of the resolution to the word of God—and protested against the attempt to constitute the ministry a privileged class.

I am sorry to see such frequent references now-a-days to "the usage of our denomination." Our "usage" is, or ought to be, to appeal "to the law and to the testimony." The wish to establish uniformity of custom, and to treat custom as law, smacks of popery.

The "usage," as regards Councils, was originally borrowed, I believe, from the Congregationalists of New England, with whom the synod is an established institution.

I am surprised at the use that is made of the narrative in Acts xv. That transaction is regarded as "the first Christian Council." But surely it was not council at all. The church at Antioch was in a "serious difficulty," and "determined that Paul and Barnabas, and certain other of them, should go up to Jerusalem unto the apostles and elders about this question." It was an application to the mother church for advice. Dr. Hackett says—"This assembly is often called the first Christian Council; but we need some license to apply the term in that way, since a council consists properly of delegates from various churches, whereas two churches only were represented on this occasion." Barnabas and Paul, let it be observed, were not delegates, in our sense of that word. They did not take part in the discussion, but only "declared what miracles and wonders God had wrought among the Gentiles by them." The decision was the act of "the apostles and elders which were at Jerusalem"—the act of one church only. Barnabas and Paul did not help to frame the decision: they received and reported it.

It is remarkable, too, that though many "serious difficulties" occurred in the churches during the period comprised in the New Testament history, there is no mention of a council. The Apostles always directed the churches to attend to the work of discipline, as it might be requisite, but they said nothing about synods. Every church was competent to transact its own business, in subjection to the laws of Christ, and by the guidance and aid of the Holy Spirit.

The rise of councils is referred by ecclesiastical historians to the second century, and it is generally supposed that they originated in Greece. Like other innovations it wanted authority. As it was thought that the meeting at Jerusalem was the nearest approach to a Council that could be discovered in the New Testament, it became the fashion to maintain that it was one, or at any rate *very like* one. So the Church of England does not venture to affirm that infant baptism was instituted by the Saviour, and contents herself with saying that it "is in any wise to be retained in the church, as most agreeable with the institution of Christ," who "favourably alloweth this charitable work." Baptists say of all such novelties, "How readest thou?"

Since writing the above I have seen the *Christian Visitor* of the 30th ult. It contains an elaborate defence of Baptist Councils, the main argument being that this mode of settling "serious difficulties" was practised by "our fathers." The "fathers" spoken of were good men—wise men—great men—but as liable to weakness as ourselves. The question is not, whether this or that practice was patronized by the "fathers," but whether it comes within the limits of the precepts, the precedents, or the principles of the New Testament. We Baptists ought to be very jealous in this matter, lest we become liable to the charge of inconsistency.

Yours, &c.,

C.

Aug. 1, 1868.

For the Christian Messenger.

"New wine" and "Old wine."

Mr. Editor,—

A letter in your last issue from the Rev. Mr. Todd gives to your readers the *ipsissima verba* of a resolution prepared and introduced by him to the notice of the Association lately held in that place. I am glad the resolution was withdrawn. Its adoption would have been without a parallel in the history of Baptist Associations, and would have been a wanton departure from the good old way.

Among other things, the Association, it seems, was asked to assert that "Baptist Churches of this country are constituted upon the Associated principle." This reads very much like nonsense, but it doubtless has a sense. Can it mean that churches are "constituted" by or through the Associations? If it does, the doctrine is novel to Baptists, and very absurd withal. It may be, however, that the New Brunswick Associations themselves, are constituted on a basis altogether different from other Baptist Associations in this country. I have not their constitutions at hand for reference, but it is hardly necessary to say that in all other parts of this continent, the existence of a Baptist Association *pre-supposes* the previous existence of Baptist churches.—Regular Baptist Associations are composed of "delegates appointed by the churches." There may be delegates from corresponding Associations; but if there were no churches there could be no Associations. Any increase, moreover, in the number of churches composing any Association, pre-supposes some provision in its constitution for the reception of additional churches.—Article 7th of the Western Association of Nova Scotia is as follows:

"The Association may receive any church which shall apply for admission by sending a letter and delegates, and shall give satisfactory evidence of its faith and order."

This must be, substantially, the provision in all regular Baptist Associations. As then, there must be churches before there can be an Association, and as Associations must increase by the admission of churches from without, it is incredible to any Baptist mind, that the Association was asked to assert that churches are constituted by or through Associations. "Constituted on the Associated principle" may be thought to sound very Baptist in phraseology, but in sentiment it is assuredly *un-Baptist* to the core.

But perhaps the expression means, that a company of baptized believers, though maintaining faithfully the ordinances of the gospel, are not a "church" unless they are connected with an Association. If this is the meaning, it is a dogma which has neither scripture, nor the teachings of "our fathers" to rest upon. So much for one of the *whereases* upon which Mr. Todd asked the Association to predicate the resolution which he had prepared.

As for the resolution itself, it is difficult to fix its meaning definitely. But after a good deal of study I conclude that the Association was asked to make *two* "recommendations," of the following tenor:

1. That in all cases where ministers have rendered themselves amenable to discipline by any acts of indiscretion or immorality, a church should call a council of ministers and brethren from sister churches before any disciplinary action is taken. It would be the duty of this council; (1) To make such enquiries and to give such advice as might tend to harmonize conflicting opinions and protect accused persons from the injurious influence of false and malicious aspersions; and (2) to inflict such disciplinary chastisement upon all offenders as the nature of the case might demand.

2. That as a general rule, if a church invites advice from such a council, and the council gives any advice, the church adopt the same as a final settlement of the questions at issue.

Now, for a church to call a council in a difficult case of discipline (whether the offender be its minister or simply a member) would doubtless be a judicious course in many cases, provided the whole business of the council were confined to assisting the church in reaching correct conclusions in the case. The course would be in harmony with scripture, and the practice of "our fathers." But for a church to commit the discipline of any of its members to a council, would be unscriptural, and contrary to the practice of Baptist churches the world over. It would be emphatically Presbyterian "in sentiment." And to suppose that a council which would permit a church to hand over to it the infliction of disciplinary chastisement, would give "advice," even though asked for it, shews a lamentable ignorance of church history.

I can readily believe that the resolution "was written by one who is not quasi-Presbyterian in his sentiment." The sentiment of portions of the resolution is not "quasi" at all,—not almost, but altogether Presbyterian. But the phraseology is Baptist. The Association was not asked to "require" or "bind" the churches to do, so and so. No, only to "recommend," "recommend"! How could it be otherwise, when prepared for the adoption of the Baptist body in Eastern New Brunswick? It is new wine in old bottles; and the old saying is again verified, "the new wine doth burst the bottles, and the wine is spilled, and the bottles will be marred."

I do not wonder that the brethren allowed Mr. Todd to withdraw the resolution offered by him, for "no man having drunk old wine straightway desireth new, for he saith, The old is better." It is to be hoped that the few among us who are Baptist in phraseology and Presbyterian in sentiment will put their new wine into new bottles. They may thus save their wine (if they like it) for their own use, and prevent the good old bottles from being marred.

May I, Mr. Editor, venture to offer Mr. Todd and his partners a bottle of old wine,—wine which has made glad the hearts of Baptists these 1800 years. I wish I had had the privilege of handing it to the Sackville Association, but I was not there. Here it is:

Whereas, The Great Head of the Church in giving directions for the management of the churches, and in pronouncing threatenings upon the churches for dereliction of duty, has made each church accountable for the purity of its morals and the soundness of its doctrines; and *whereas* in the history of religion corruption in christian morals and unsoundness in doctrine have so frequently followed the transfer of these solemn obligations from individual churches to ecclesiastical Councils; and *whereas* each church is directly accountable to its Divine Head as well in seeking and adopting the advice of a Council as in all other of its acts; therefore

Resolved, That in the opinion of this Association, when any church seeks the aid of an advisory Council, they are morally bound to adopt the advice given when it does not require them to violate what they believe to be their obligations to Christ, and when it approves itself to them as sound and scriptural; but when such advice does not approve itself to them as sound and scriptural or would compel them to violate what they believe to be their obligations to Christ, then they are solemnly bound not to accept such advice; for whether they act with or without the advice of a council, they are equally amenable to the Great Head of the Church.

YOURS,
AN OLD-FASHIONED BAPTIST.

Christian Messenger.

HALIFAX, AUGUST 5, 1868.

THE CONVENTION.—We beg to call attention to the following

NOTICE.

The churches to be represented in the Convention, meeting with the Germain Street Baptist Church, St. John, Aug. 22nd, will each favour the Committee on Entertainment by forwarding without delay the number of its Delegates, to the undersigned, that suitable provision may be made for their comfort.

L. MCMANN,
Chairman of Committee.
St. John, N. B., July 27th, 1868.

The externals of religion are often looked upon far more seriously than its essentials. The effort recently made by Earl Shaftesbury in the House of Lords was to get rid of some of the symbols employed by the Ritualists, under the impression probably that he would thus change the doctrines inculcated from the Church of England pulpits where these objectionable practices are maintained. It is strange that men will so content themselves by dealing with the shadow whereas the evil is in the substance—the errors held by the parties. Formalism, sacramental efficacy, priestly power, and baptismal regeneration are the poisonous seeds from which these obnoxious weeds arise, with their soul destroying influences. The *Leeds Mercury* has the following very truthful remarks on this subject:—

"Let us suppose the bill successful, and let us suppose that candles are put out, incense pots put by, the sacramental wine delivered from aqueous dilution, the rainbow tints of the vestments once more blended in the white surplice, the human voice restored to its natural tone instead, of dragged out in a drawing chant—what then? Does it make the smallest matter whether wine has a drop of water in it or not? Whether huge pillars of wax are lighted or unlighted, present or absent. Does anybody suppose that it is of the slightest importance whether the people are breathing pure air or sniffing incense whether a man is dressed up like a peacock or appears in plain clothing? Is it not obvious that these are but outward signs of doctrines which are either good or bad in themselves, but which the evangelical party deplore as fatal to the purity and simplicity of faith? Let us suppose that at Lord Shaftesbury's parish church the ritualistic practices were in full force, and that his bill were carried, and all of them suddenly swept away, would he feel any more satisfaction in listening Sunday after Sunday to the spiritual teaching, and in joining Sunday after Sunday in the worship, of the clergyman who had introduced these practices, and only withdrawn them because he was compelled? Would he not feel that the discrepancy of views which made him object to the practices of the clergyman were just as strong as ever? Would he not feel that they were just as much out of harmony in doctrine and heart as they were before? To get rid of the practices without getting rid of the doctrine is worse than useless, for we hold that if the doctrine exists it is better for the practices to exist too. Taking the worst view of ritualism the lighted candles and gorgeous apparel are like the stuff mixed with arsenic, by which the most unlearned eye can detect the difference between it and other white powders. A man who goes to a ritualistic place goes with his eyes open; he does not go expecting to hear