

Correspondence.

For the Christian Messenger.

United States Correspondence.

It is the season for our 'Associational gatherings. These occur every week in different parts of the State. If they do not awaken the interest they did it is because so many religious societies exist which share with them at their meetings the love of believers. Once the Association was the great meeting of the year to which Baptists came from all quarters to renew their acquaintance, hear of each others' welfare and sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus. Now the year has numerous great meetings in which the various aspects of truth are presented, the different branches of christian labour are contemplated, and in which the worlds' great claims through a crucified Redeemer are pressed with earnestness home to the heart. In all of these the Baptists feel an interest, and so far as convenient, if not as possible, avail themselves of their spiritual profit and enjoyment. But the local interest of our Associations remain. In them the churches are usually well represented. Believers come together for a spiritual feast, and this season, thus far, they have not been disappointed. In revivals have not been as numerous or powerful as in some other years have been reported, yet the gentle influence of the Spirit has been manifest, an advance has been made in spiritual growth, the claims of the objects of benevolence have been met, and numbers have been redeemed unto Christ. Peace and harmony also prevails. Those terrible evils which distracted the nation, whose influence was felt in every neighbourhood, and that penetrated so deeply into the christian heart, have been forever removed from our land. Now we can meet at our annual gatherings without heart burnings, divisions, inflammatory resolutions, and fiery discussions, and keep the unity of the Spirit in the bonds of peace. The terrible war which the nation endured has proved a national and spiritual blessing in removing many of the evils that abounded. God makes the wrath of man to praise him, and all things to work together for good to those who love him.

Our churches are very jealous of their rights. As the gifts of the Redeemer they are highly valued. When wrested from them by human governments they were regained once more at a costly price. The days of trial and persecution have made a deep impression on the hearts of Baptists. Then they suffered grievously for conscience sake.

State churches, councils claiming ecclesiastical authority, Associational legislation for the churches represented, and every thing else of a similar character, they most heartily repudiate. Christ has made them free in their church government of any superior human authority, holding them bound to His Word, and responsible only to himself, and in their freedom they are resolved firmly to stand. It would amuse a spectator or who was not thoroughly informed in Baptist usages and history to see the carefulness used in forming Associational Constitutions, lest this liberty should suffer any encroachment. The spirit of the fathers is as apparent in their sons as was that of Elias in the person of John the Baptist. Nor are they any too particular; for it was by slow degrees that the churches lost that liberty which now they have regained and so greatly enjoy. And while it is retained, though from error in judgment, personal prejudices, and want of due deliberation, acts of injustice may sometimes be done to individual members, yet this will be far more than compensated in the blessings possessed and the good that it effected. So long as the churches maintain their independence soul liberty will be retained and enjoyed, and the conscience will appeal to no sovereign but God.

Services of Recognition are becoming quite common when ministers assume their pastoral charge. This custom is borrowed from other denominations and is regarded by many as highly beneficial. It is by no means obligatory on either minister or church, and would soon go out of use were an attempt made to enforce it. But when it is mutually acceptable to the new minister and his church a united profit should be derived from its services. As the pastor is welcomed to his position, his duties, his trials, and to the new circle of friends that now gather around him, and solemnly charged to be faithful to himself, his people, and to God, his mind is taken back to his ordination, its responsibilities, and the past of his life, and he can not fail to renew his dedication, as all these influences are again thrown around him. And while the

church is made to feel that this new pastor is theirs, the obligation enforced will stimulate the conscience and secure more faithfulness in duty. Perhaps the services will make the pastorate more permanent, if so, then a lasting good will be secured.

J. M. H.

For the Christian Messenger.

Missionary Church Polity, &c.

Dear Brother,—

At our recent Convention, one of the speakers shewed very forcibly that the Discipline of Mission churches is more strict and Scriptural than our own. In looking over the Missionary Magazine of May, I was struck with some remarks in this connection by the much lamented and eminently successful Thomas, of the Bassein Mission, which now have a painful interest on account of his sudden death following so closely their utterance.

Telling of the necessary division of one church into two, he says:—

"Nor was this a complicated matter. There were no letters of dismission to be read.—Simply one church agreed to separate into two churches. Then, before the elders from neighboring churches and the missionary, they agreed to love and aid each other, to maintain the ordinances of the gospel among themselves, and to extend the blessings of Christ's kingdom in the world. Hence we all agreed that they were two real churches of Jesus. How simple is their formation! Yet how mighty, through God, is a church of Christ!"

Again, speaking of "one of the most disordered churches in this part of Bassein," numbering "one hundred and twenty-five members," he says:

"Almost five years ago the Pastor of this church was guilty of open sin, and was of course, expelled from the church. Thus far all was in order. But here the difficulty commenced. A large party in the church, mostly relatives of the Pastor, were opposed to calling a new minister. They said their old pastor, if he should repent, ought to be reinstated as their minister. But the majority prevailed. They called another man as their preacher, and though they restored the offender to the privileges of the church, they opposed his becoming pastor or preacher again. Upon this the friends of the offender withdrew themselves a few miles, and proposed to become a new and separate church. The names of all were still upon the church record at Gai-ha-be. Yet for three years the disaffected had never reported themselves to the church. Again, bad reports were in circulation about many of the lost members. Our first work was to have the Gai-ha-be church erase these wanderers, these, to them, lost members. This was done understandingly. The church understood that they had cut off thirty members from all connection with them."

Subsequently fourteen of them "were found without fault," and "constituted into a new church," with "another man as pastor."

And yet again:—"Several members of the Ko Toh church had been to me in the city, complaining that three ordained men and several elders had decided, that one of their brethren, an elder of this church, was guilty of immorality. But they affirmed it was not so; and, to prove it, declared that the church in Ko Toh had not excluded the said elder. On arriving in this place, I found that nearly all the church believed the man guilty, but hardly dared to exclude him. They feared to act and tried to hope that a quasi-council was all-sufficient to act for them. We tried to make the church feel that they must take action, act at once, act at all hazards."

Mr. Thomas' biographer says, "he was a worker for Christ, ever in remarkable sympathy with Christ. His idea of missions was eminently apostolic in both aims and methods. He sought the elevation of the Karen people, and for this he worked on the Divine plan, and availed himself of none but evangelical processes."

His views were strikingly in harmony with the following extracts from a tract published by the A. B. P. Society, entitled "The Discipline of the Primitive churches," taken principally from the writings of Andrew Fuller:

"In every community there must be some where an authority to carry the laws into effect. In the church, this authority is in the body or majority of the church; 'yea all of you be subject one to another.' 'Sufficient to such a man is this punishment, which was inflicted of many.' The church, then, is the highest tribunal, and from the decision of the church there is no appeal." "There is often a party found in a community, who, under the name of tenderness, are for neglecting all wholesome discipline, or if this cannot be accomplished, for delaying it to the utmost. Such persons are commonly the advocates for disorderly walkers, especially if they be their particular friends or relatives. Their language is 'He that is without sin, let him cast the first stone.'" "Did church members feel their obligations, and respect their covenant vows as they should, we should never be pained by witnessing those factions which so often rend and sometimes destroy those sacred communities. The only remedy for existing evils is for every church to

carry into effect the laws of Christ promptly and impartially; and for every member to submit to the authority, with which Christ has invested His church."

THETA.

For the Christian Messenger.

Temperance and the Church.

Dear Brother,—

In your last issue, I notice an appeal for "the hearty co-operation" in "secret Temperance organizations" of "all who love Temperance." In justification of the course of some who "keep themselves entirely aloof," permit the following quotation from the writings of Rev. Hubbard Winslow a name that must command respect, howsoever his sentiments may be received.

Yours very truly,
A CHURCH MEMBER.

"Is there no ground for the apprehension that other associations for the professed purpose of reforming and saving mankind, are, with some Christians, coming into more consideration than the church of the living God? In this age of numerous and imposing associations making strong and bold claims upon us, we need to be doubly guarded lest any of them be suffered to divide our affections with the church. Better, a thousand times, that a number of Associations should be scattered to the winds, than that they should be allowed to divide churches and alienate their members, secularize and profane religion, and scatter the seeds of iniquity in the very garden of the Lord.

The church of Christ is the only divinely constituted society for reforming the world. Benevolent societies, for securing and putting into operation the means of diffusing the Christian religion on the earth,—such as Bible, Missionary, Education, and other kindred societies undertaking to reform mankind independently of the church; but they are the instruments or means of the church, by which, through the grace of God, she is laboring to accomplish her work. There is no other power upon earth adequate to reform and save mankind, but the Christian religion. This only, is the power of God unto salvation. And there is no other depository of this power, but the church of the living God, which is the pillar and ground of the truth." We shall not here undertake to decide the great question, whether any human societies, excepting such as are the instruments of the church, should be organized for the professed purpose of reforming mankind; this much, however, we are bold to say, that the church must ever hold the supremacy, ever be made the pillar and ground of the truth; and no other society should be countenanced which tends to divide with it our affections. No society can be good, which does not increase rather than diminish the strength of our attachment to the church. Let this test be applied to all reformatory societies of human invention.

"There seem, indeed, to be inherent difficulties in the way of the permanent and valuable success of many modern reformatory societies, which cannot be obviated. Composed of heterogeneous materials; men of all kinds of principle, and of no principle; men of all kinds of character and conscience, and men of no character nor conscience; embracing men of various and conflicting designs; some, perhaps, honestly seeking the suppression of a vice, and others, under pretence of doing the same, really seeking a mercenary, ambitious, or political object; they have the elements of their early dissolution and death within them. 'Can two walk together except they be agreed?' It is as difficult now, as it was in the days of Amos. Experience has fully decided that reformatory societies, composed of unbelievers as well as believers, tend so surely and speedily to become connected with secular, mercenary, ambitious, political ends, that Christians who would keep themselves pure need to be very cautious in forming alliances with them. Those who join them from good motives not infrequently find, after a while, that they have mistaken their company; and they retreat back into the church, to operate again there in a more congenial element, and in a more Christian way.

"Generally speaking, those Christians who have the least to do with those reformatory societies of human invention; who are content to put forth their moral influence upon society, as members of the church of Christ, by their personal character and conduct; who, by their holy examples, their prayers, their labors in Sabbath Schools, their co-operation with their pastors, their benefactions, their spiritual conversation, adorn the doctrine of God our Saviour in all things;" though they may seem at first to operate more slowly, yet operate more safely, and in the end accomplish a thousand fold more real good to mankind, than those who are impelled by a fiery and tempestuous zeal in other and more secular methods of reform.

"When the Christian church maintains her proper place and character, she is entirely aloof from all worldly ends; she has no alliance whatever with mercenary, ambitious, political objects; she belongs to a kingdom that is not of this world. Yet there is no virtue which she does not promote, no iniquity which she does not condemn. Not the absence of a single vice, nor the presence of a single virtue, is to be desired in our world, which it is not her high prerogative, acting in the name of Christ to secure. Constituted by God for the express purpose of maintaining and extending the cause of righteousness; composed of homogeneous materials; men called

out and separated from the world unto God, for the express purpose of promoting his kingdom; armed with divine truth; attended with the promised presence of Christ himself, and the power of the Holy Spirit; surely, if any society upon earth can reform and save mankind, the church can do it."

For the Christian Messenger.

The tissue of Christian principles.

We find it in the writings of "the beloved disciple." Love is the warp; obedience and faith form the woof; the design is the life of the regenerate. Here it is; examine it and secure it for yourself.

"We know that we love the children of God, when we love God and keep his commandments." Now "this is the love of God, that we keep His commandments;"

"And this commandment have we from Him, That he who loveth God love his brother also," and again "this is His commandment, That we should believe on the name of His Son Jesus Christ, and love one another,"—

"For love is of God, and every one that loveth is born of God, and knoweth God,"

And "whatsoever is born of God overcometh the world." But "who is he that overcometh the world, but he that believeth that Jesus is the Son of God?"

We may unite the ends of the web with the words of Jesus himself,—"He that believeth on me, though he were dead yet shall he live."

B. A.

Sept. 12th, 1868.

For the Christian Messenger.

Ashes of Roses.

"Ashes of Roses. O yes its a beautiful colour, so very delicate." These were the words that caught my ear as the ladies glided by me on the pavement, and they fell on my heart with a strange sad meaning.

Ashes of roses! Yes the roses that have bloomed so freshly in life's young morning, we have seen them one by one whither, and leave behind nothing but the ashes. Hopes that we have cherished. Friends that we have loved we have seen them pass away. But when the light has gone out forever in the laughing eyes, that seemed dear to us as life itself, we have turned away heartsick. Oh! with what soothing influence comes the remembrance that there is a land where the faded flowers shall freshen, freshen, nevermore to fade. That there the love which here we lavish on the withering leaves of time shall have fadeless flowers to fix on in an ever bright spring clime.

Yes, we all have our ashes of roses. Some wear them next the heart, and hide them by a laughing face. Some, perchance, only know them as a favorite colour for a dress, or the trimming for a bonnet, but happy thrice happy are they that can see the roses fade without a murmur, knowing that they will bloom again, and that those sweet little buds that scarce had waked to life and beauty ere they have been,

"Nipped by the wind's untimely blast,"

in this cold world of ours will bloom, to full perfection in the green fields and beside the river of the water of life.

There the sun blaze never scorches,
There the star beams cease to chill,
There no tempest stirs the echo
Of the wood, or wave, or hill.

There we'll find the joy of loving
As we never loved before,
Loving on unchilled, unhindered,
Loving once and evermore.

MRS. JAMES.

Halifax, Sept. 2, 1868.

For the Christian Messenger.

IN MEMORIAM.

MARY ANN DIMOCK.

Died at Newport, on the 25th of June, Mary Ann, daughter of Shubael Dimock, of Rawdon, aged 48 years.

Sister D. united with the Baptist church at Rawdon, in early life, of which she remained a consistent member until she was removed by death.

In the morn of life her Saviour, she obeyed,
Humbly walking in the pathway, where he led.
Careful, shunning worldly pleasure's, slippery paths,
Where young pilgrims oft make shipwreck, of their faith.

Weeks and months of pain and sickness, she hath borne,
Nights of weary waking, watching for the dawn;
Yet her features ever lighted, with a smile;
For her Saviour's presence cheered her, all the while.