

Deacons and Elders.—After the pastor, and laboring by his side, we need brethren qualified of God to be helpers of our joy. In this church, two officers distinct in main points, though often coincident in others, are recognized, and as we think, with both Scripture and common sense upon our side. It may and does often happen that the man of judgment, prudent in counsel, and skilled in money matters, is not gifted with speech so as to lead devotional exercises in the church or prayer-meeting, or beside the bed of sickness, or in the house of mourning. A good man for things temporal, in dealing with worldly matters, may not be an elder apt to teach and to exhort. On the other hand, a man may have all the qualifications of an elder, but be lacking in such abilities as are required for the serving of tables, the disposing of finances, and the securing of needed funds for the church.

Our deacons, nine in number, are elected by the church, at the suggestion of the pastor, after consultation with the previously elected deacons. It is open to any member to nominate whom he pleases at such an election, but in no case has the recommendation of the pastor and deacons been dissented from, for the brethren nominated were in every way called and qualified of the Lord. They are chosen for life; this having been the custom in such cases; and there being no strong reason for a change in the rule. Their duties are to care for the ministry, and help the poor of the church, to regulate the finances and take charge of the church's property, seeing to the order and comfort of all worshipping in the place. The work is divided so as to secure the services of all, and prevent the neglect of anything, through uncertainty as to the person responsible for its performance. One honored brother is general treasurer, and has been so for many years—long may he be spared to us; another takes all out-door work, repairs of the exterior, keeping the gates, appointing doorkeepers, etc.; another has all indoor repairs; while others watch over the interests of the new churches which are springing from our loins; and one brother as a steward sees to the arrangement and provision of the weekly communion, and the elements required for the Lord's table; thus with a common council we have separate duties. At every remembrance of these brethren we thank God—Some ministers have found their trials in their deacons; it is but right to say that we find in them our greatest comfort, and we earnestly desire that every church should share in an equal blessing.

Elders.—Our eldership, now sustained by twenty-six brethren, is a source of much blessing to our church. Without the efficient and self-denying labours of the elders we should never be able to supervise our huge church, containing at the close of the year 1868 3,860 members; and from which under the present pastor, about an equal number have gone to the church triumphant, or to other parts of the church militant.

The elders are re-elected annually, but usually continue for life in their office; fresh elders are proposed by the pastor to the already elected elders, and after some time has been given for thought, the subject of the propriety of their election is discussed at an elder's meeting, and if recommended with general unanimity, the names are then laid before the church by the pastor, and after opportunity is given for the expression of opinion, the vote of the church is taken. We offer no opinion here as to other methods of electing church officers, but we will add that no other plan commends itself so much to our judgment; no other plan is so safe for our church, or so likely to procure good officers. No other plan is so helpful to the pastor, who is most concerned in the choice, having to work with those selected; and no other plan as we can see will enable him so faithfully to discharge his office of guide and shepherd, in one of the most critical periods of the church's history. Timidity here is a crime, and the affectation of modesty in not wishing to influence the church is to our mind dereliction of duty. A church possessed of unlimited liberty of action, needs for the sake of its junior and less instructed members, to be directed in its choice of officers—the best men to do it are the pastor and officers already tried and proved, and the fear of giving offence seems to us but the fear of man which bringeth a snare.

To the elders is committed the spiritual oversight of the church, and such of its concerns as are not assigned to the deacons nor belong to the preacher. The seeing of enquirers, the visiting of candidates for church membership, the seeking out of absentees, the caring for the sick and troubled the conducting of prayer-meetings, cate-

chumen and Bible-classes for the young men—these and other needed offices our brethren the elders discharge for the church. One elder is maintained by the church for the especial purpose of visiting our sick poor, and looking after the church-roll, that this may be done regularly and efficiently. As a whole we cheerfully bear our testimony to the beneficial working of deaconate and eldership as distinct offices.—Both works are in a few cases performed by the same person, but the existence of the two bodies of men is in a thousand ways a great assistance to good government.

We reserve the remainder of this excellent article for next week.

For the Christian Messenger.

LETTER FROM BURMAH.

WOLFVILLE, APRIL 6TH, 1869.

My dear Bro. Selden,—

A recent letter from Bro. Douglas, of Burmah, enclosed the accompanying Report, which he requests me to ask you to publish in the *Messenger*. This, I presume, you will readily consent to, as the report contains many interesting facts.

In haste, very truly yours,
ARTHUR R. R. CRAWLEY.

BASSEIN, JAN. 6TH, 1869.

My dear Bro.—

The past year my labors have been divided between the Henthada and Bassein Missions. Returning from the meeting of the Convention held in Maulmain, we arrived in Henthada Nov. 28th, and a few days after started on a tour up the Irrawadda river. We visited all the large towns on the river between Henthada and the Promedistricts, a distance of eighty miles. A number of the towns on the river are large, containing from one to nine thousand inhabitants. We distributed in these towns tens of thousands of pages of Scriptures and tracts, and daily for a number of weeks morning until evening argued, reasoned with, and entreated the multitude who continually gathered about us, to believe and trust in Christ. Soon after we returned from this trip to the north we made another in the south and western part of the district and visited Ping, Soungnan, Zaloon, and other towns on the river.

When on these jungle towns we found in several places large numbers who had heard of the true God, of Christ the Saviour, had received and read tracts and portions of the Scriptures, and had obtained sufficient light to see the vanity and sin of idolatry.—Some of these in conversation freely announced their belief in the living God, and trust in Jesus as the true Prophet and Saviour.

On many of this people, who have so long walked in darkness and dwelt in the land of the shadow of death, the light has sufficiently dawned to reveal the ghastly degrading character of heathenism. The Pagodas and Kyongs are in many places neglected and are falling to decay. May we not hope that the fulfillment of the prophecy draweth nigh, and that the Church of God will heed the call:

"Arise shine for thy light is come and the glory of the Lord is risen upon thee, for behold the darkness shall cover the earth, and gross darkness the people, but the Lord shall arise upon thee and his glory shall be seen upon thee, and the Gentiles shall come to thy light and kings to the brightness of thy rising. Lift up thine eyes round about and see: all they gather themselves together, they come to thee, thy sons shall come from far and thy daughters shall be nursed at thy side; then thou shalt see and flow together and thine heart shall fear and be enlarged, because the abundance of the sea shall be converted unto thee, the forces of the Gentiles shall come unto thee."

With the churches in Henthada, Zaloon, and Ping Soungnan the first week of the year was a week of prayer. The prayer "Restore unto me the joy of thy salvation and uphold me with thy free Spirit, then will I teach transgressors thy ways and sinners shall be converted unto thee," was often repeated, heard and answered. The christian graces of all were quickened and enlarged. The native preachers with renewed vigor and life began to labor from house to house. In a little time a widespread spirit of religious inquiry was clearly manifest, and within two months thirteen Burmans were baptized. As Brother Crawley decided to leave Bassein and return with his family to America, on the 26th of Feb. I made over the superintendence of the Burman department of the Henthada Mission to Bro. Smith and returned to my old field of labor in Bassein. Although Bro. Smith's time has been wholly devoted to the work among the Karens, the Burman preachers and disciples have

been counseled and guided by Sr. Smith.—She has a good knowledge of the Burman language, and has taken a hearty and efficient interest in the work among the Burmans. The work has continued to progress, and since we left more than six have been baptized in the town of Henthada, who with the thirteen that were baptized shortly before we left, make nineteen Burmans that have been baptized in connexion with the Henthada mission within the year.

We all hope and devoutly pray that Bro. Crawley's absence from that field may be but for a short season, and that he may yet gather an abundant harvest from the seed sown during the long years that he toiled in that district.

We arrived in Bassein March 3rd, and on the first Monday in April commenced a school for the instruction of native preachers and Burman boys who would attend as day pupils. When we opened the school we intended to limit the number of pupils to forty, but within ten days that number had been admitted, and such was the urgency of parents to admit their sons, and the prospect of doing them good, that in a little time we had upwards of eighty names on the school roll, and sixty in daily average attendance. This school was in session six months. Geography, History, Arithmetic, and Astronomy were daily taught, but every pupil in the school spent one hour in each day in the study and recitation of a Scripture lesson, and all in the school attended the Sabbath school and recited the portion of Scripture assigned the previous Sabbath and committed during the week. Within the past month three of these boys have been baptized and we hope that in the hearts of others a saving work of grace has been commenced.

The school was closed at the end of the rainy season as we must spend a large part of the dry season travelling and working in the jungle. As we could make no provision for the boys during the dry season a few of them have gone into the Roman Catholic school, but we expect in April or May to again open our school, gather back most, if not all our old pupils, and receive a few in addition. By this method of instruction we hope that not only a large number of the most promising influential youth will be led to Christ, but through the children we are gaining access to and an influence over the parents.—Within a few weeks twelve interesting converts have been baptized, seven of them parents, and two of them men whose sons are in the school. These we hope are the first fruits of an abundant harvest yet to be gathered. A larger number of heathen have the past month attended the Sabbath School and Chapel services than we have been accustomed to see; a number of these and others in villages around Bassein that we have recently visited manifest a desire to know what they must do to be saved.

In all our towns in the jungle, in both the Henthada and Bassein districts we have been accompanied by one, two, and at times three of the native preachers, so that I have traveled and labored to some extent with each and all of them.—All of the Burman preachers laboring in the Henthada district, and four of those in the Bassein district, are supported wholly, or in part, by the Nova Scotia Missionary Society, and it gives me pleasure to make mention of the important work that these men are accomplishing. They have but little education, and in preaching have but little ability, but in distributing tracts and the Scriptures, visiting from house to house, and conversing with individuals and little groups of people wherever they can be collected, they are exerting a wide and important influence. With few exceptions they manifest an humble earnest spirit—and the message that they bear that there is a living God, a loving compassionate Saviour attracts their attention and commends itself to the conscience of the poor heathen.—Through the efforts of these men thousands have become acquainted with the truth, and now we need, oh so much, a Pentecostal outpouring of the Spirit of God.

These native preachers are poor and dependant on the aid that they receive for their daily food, and should their present patrons withdraw their support, to provide the necessaries of life for their families they would be obliged to give up the work in which they are engaged and engage in secular pursuits. Until churches have been raised up among the Burmans, as they have been among the Karens, on which the native preachers can rely for aid, will not those who cannot personally engage in the toil, hold up their hands, and encourage them on in the work?

Affectionately yours,
J. S. DOUGLASS.

We copy the following from the *Morning Chronicle* of last week:

THE QUEBEC SCHOOL BILL.

To the Editor of the *Morning Chronicle*:

SIR,
The "Express" of the 2nd inst. contains the following passage:

"Our Montreal telegram to-day announces that the new School Bill passed a second reading in the Quebec Legislative Council yesterday. Hon. Messrs. Ferrier and Hale declared that more than justice has been done to Protestants by the French Roman Catholics. In our next we will give a summary of the speech of the leader of the Quebec Government in moving the second reading of this Bill. The Act in question deals with the rights of the Protestant minority in a most generous and liberal manner, which has called forth the warmest approbation and admiration from all quarters, and stands out in strange contrast to the narrow and intolerant spirit manifested towards the Catholic minority in this province, by such men as Professor King and Dr. Cramp."

Allow me to offer a few words in explanation:—

1. The School system originally established in the Province of Quebec was *sectarian* in its character; that is, Roman Catholic tenets were taught in the schools, and consequently no Protestant children could attend them.

2. The Protestants would have preferred common schools like ours; but being unable to obtain them they contented themselves with the right to establish "Dissentient Schools," where their children could receive education without being interfered with by ecclesiastics or sectarian teachers.

3. There had been numerous complaints of unfair and ungenerous treatment; sometimes very nearly approaching to persecution; but it was scarcely possible to obtain redress. In the Parliament of United Canada, before Confederation, Lower Canada members would always carry their measures, because they were sure of the support of a certain number of Upper Canada men, who sympathized with them in politics, or wished to secure their help for measures of their own.

4. The Protestants judged that the time for relief was at length come, and they determined to try the effect of vigorous negotiation with Government. The present School Bill is the result. It is not a voluntary offering on the part of M. Chauveau; it is rather the fruit of Protestant pressure legitimately and wisely exercised; nor is it a new measure. It is an expansion of the old School Law, modified and liberalised.

5. It is, however, too soon to form a judgment respecting it. Some of the Roman Catholic bishops are alarmed or hostile, and there may yet be changes made before its final passage, which may materially affect its value. M. Chauveau's kind and just intentions may possibly be in some measure thwarted.

6. Quebec and Nova Scotia are not parallel cases. "Schools for all" have not existed in Quebec; we have them here. "Dissentient Schools" were demanded there, because the Provincial Schools were *sectarian*. "Separate Schools" are demanded here, because our Common Schools are *unsectarian*. The grievance in Quebec was real and practical, since Protestant children were excluded from the public schools. The grievance in Nova Scotia is imaginary, since our schools are free to all, and every religious denomination may adopt such measures as it prefers to secure the special instruction of its children in religion. I may add that the Quebec scheme of school government is exceedingly complicated and unwieldy.

7. In using the word "sectarian," I am not conscious of indulging a "narrow and intolerant spirit." It seems to me that it is the best word for the purpose. There is no exclusive or established church here. We are all sectarian. There is the Roman Catholic sect, and the Episcopal sect, and the Presbyterian sect, and the Lutheran sect, and the Methodist sect, and the Baptist sect. And we are all equal in the eye of the law. No one must assume "a look more stout than his fellows."

Yours, &c.,

J. M. CRAMP.

April 5th, 1869.

Christian Messenger.

HALIFAX, APRIL 14, 1869.

DEATH OF REV. T. H. PORTER.

The following telegram from Rev. R. D. PORTER, at Wilnot, was received yesterday morning: "My father died last night—easily, peacefully, and completely resigned."
R. D. PORTER.

April 13th, 1869.

REVIVALS OF RELIGION.

We find in many of our exchanges notices of revivals of religion in Baptist and other churches, in various parts of British America and the United States, as well as in Great Britain. In some the number of persons baptized is given; in others it is not. One of them, the Canada Baptist, gives a summary of the number gathered from various sources in one week. The editor says he expended four or five