

For the Christian Messenger.

River John.

Dear Sir,—

In the last Minutes of the Eastern Association the River John Church is reported as containing fifteen members. It is also reported that the said Church had sent no letter to the Association for four years. According to the constitution the Church was "Considered as withdrawn from the Association:" especially as, while the fact was known, no steps were taken to "make some inquiry respecting it."

On the 19th ult. a Council was held at River John, and a brother was ordained pastor of the Church. Two of our ministers were present. Considering all the circumstances, I beg to ask whether or not that transaction was a violation of the Apostolical canon: "Let all things be done decently and in order." To me it appears to have been a case of doubtful propriety.

The Church had liberty, and the ministering brethren had liberty. We Baptists are very unfriendly to restraint. I am disposed to believe that the ministering brethren possessed information which they held to justify them in the procedure. Still, it appears to me that a delay of a few months, giving to the Church time and opportunity to set itself right with the Association, and to make some additional inquiries could not have been injurious, and would have been an orderly course.

My principal object in writing this letter, however, is to call attention to the fact that only two ministers were present at the ordination. Those brethren assumed the responsibility of introducing another minister into the Denomination.

Very little is said on the subject of ordination in the New Testament. No rules are given—no order prescribed. The cases reported are all exceptional. Our methods may vary without being contrary to law.

But the desirableness of uniformity was felt at an early period of Christian history. It was held that at the ordination of a bishop three bishops ought to be present, Cyprian states in one of his letters (he suffered martyrdom A. D., 258) that in his time it was customary for all the bishops of the province to be present at the ordination.

Some years ago, one of the New Brunswick Associations passed a resolution recommending that no ordination should take place unless five ministers were present.

It is not necessary to specify any specific number: but I take the liberty to suggest that efforts should always be employed to bring together on such occasions as many of the ministering brethren as possible, who may unitedly examine into the case, recognize the candidate, and welcome him to their fellowship.

Yours faithfully,
May 12, 1876. J. M. CRAMP.

For the Christian Messenger.

London Correspondence.

BAPTIST ANNIVERSARY OF GREAT BRITAIN AND IRELAND.

The London "May-meetings," (as they are called, though held in April) are just over. The objects of the Denomination's fostering care are akin to those for which your Associations and Conventions meet; and but for the addition of a Translation and a Tract Society, I might say, the objects are precisely the same. Yet matters are more thoroughly, more earnestly, more generally discussed with you. You do not select men to move resolutions, men to make speeches on definite subjects, to whom as by deed of assignment the management and conduct of these subjects belong; yet you have the resolutions and the speeches, and after careful observation, I am bold to say, your debates are more interesting, because, each speaking as he may be moved to speak, a life and fire energises the whole which cannot be kindled, or glow to any appreciable degree where business is introduced and transacted in that stiff, formal, oligarchical style which characterizes an English assembly. Let it not be supposed that all is dull and mechanical with our English brethren. Far from it! But the general tendency is towards automatic processes. They resemble more the close ephor government of Sparta than the broad democracy of Athens.

Enough for generalization. I have said these meetings are over, and they are pronounced by the hoary-haired venerable fathers, whose faces yet beam beneath the mighty utterances of a younger generation, to have been the best on record.

The Foreign Missionary Society met in their rooms in Holborn, on Thursday 20th, and from that time till to-night, every day has been filled with business. On Friday evening BROWN of Liverpool, preached the Home Mission Sermon in Regent's Park Chapel. The discourse was throughout a tirade against the English church, charging it with the present condition of the rural and village population. Now, as all his hearers knew that the Established Church has not done its duty (what church has?) as such a sermon would awaken only feelings of acerbity, and engender strife, as it could have little power in influencing the hearer to greater effort for Christ, I have come to the deliberate conclusion that it was intended rather to elicit applause for the speaker, than to redound to the glory of Almighty God. Nonconformists and Churchmen are at drawn swords; and I maintain it is the duty of the former to sheath the dagger and conquer Church-Establishment by divine love. Therefore, he who fans the existing flame, panders to the lowest passions of a plaudit-giving audience, while he not only divests himself of a God-like manhood, but injures by driving his opponents to exasperation, instead of appealing to their candid judgment, the very cause in whose defence he is set. If any of your readers think this sentence too severe for an anonymous writer to lavish on the illustrious orator of Liverpool, I am yet entitled to an opinion. With wrangling on petty religious differences the air of the age is reeking. Christians are weakening themselves by internal warfare, while the enemies without are rallying with tremendous earnestness. Man! regard thy neighbour, as a fellow man on the storm-heaving sea of life; and because he does not wear the same clothes, or follow the same fashions as those do; do not, therefore, in God's name, shoot him with the barbed arrows of bitter words, which pierce to the very soul! Make him a brother with whom you may journey in peace—but it is madness unexampled to attempt transforming him into another *tu*. Along parallel ways you may move, but not till later day visions dawn will ye tread together coincident paths. But to report, not criticize, is my task.

THE BAPTIST UNION FOR GREAT BRITAIN AND IRELAND

met on Monday morning. Opening services were conducted by McLaren, of Manchester, the retiring President; after which the new President, Landels, of London, took the chair. His inaugural address on "Our Denominational Position" was interrupted in its delivery by frequent and long-continued cheers. A thoughtful address, it dwelt upon the difficulties which the denomination has now to face, and proposed remedies which seemed to commend themselves. One extract on the question of poor ministers:—

"Might not some of these pastors whose time cannot be fully occupied with their ministerial cares, manage, by following some secular occupation to add to their scant incomes? . . . This would involve some unpleasant considerations, but surely none that would not be preferable to present poverty? . . . Is it, then, a more lowering thing to work for one's livelihood than to spend a life of gentility in semi-idleness, and leave one's wife and family to starve?"

As I can only glance at some of the meetings, passing over various of minor importance, I come to the Union's session of to-day. The Education question was the most interesting—not College Education, but Common School. The new Act, as near to perfection as is supposable with a State church, admits of religious instruction in schools. Now, in some districts, where the majority are Anglicans, teaching of no very evangelical nature has been introduced, and though attendance on it is optional, Nonconformists feel it a device to cramp and dwarf the religious sensibilities of the young. Everywhere they are violently protesting, and there is reason to believe that in no distant day the mother country will possess such schools as the Colonies have, and a system as just, though godless called, where the state assumes its own proper work of secular education, leaving the religious element in the hands of those to whom its teaching belongs. On this question the British blood grew warm. In a battle for liberty, I believe, the descendants of the barons who waited on John at Runnymede, or the Ironsides who summoned a Charles to the bar of judgment, yet survive. When an M. P., the son of Havelock of immortal memory, incidentally protested against the new title of "Empress" those ceilings echoed and reverberated with

the demonstrative cheerings of the Baptist delegates.

After this session the members of the Union dined at the Metropolitan Tabernacle at the invitation of the London Baptist Association. Hitherto I had been supplied with a delegate's ticket and now came another for the dinner. It was a fine sight to see those groaning tables in the basement of the Tabernacle, it was a finer to observe the ease with which they were lightened, and the good humour which everywhere prevailed. Claret, sherry and ale were so abundant that at first I declared there was no water on the table; but a glass of it was brought to satisfy my curiosity. Now, that may seem strange to your readers, but let it be remembered that ale is used here as you use tea—and with no more excess, save by the gin-hop drunkards. Whether it be owing to the climate or to constitution, or to some other cause, I know not, but Englishmen can use with moderation that which Canadians dare not taste without fear of ultimate excess.

Next came the toasts and speeches. "The Queen," with no additional title, except it be 'beloved,' was enthusiastically received; and Havelock, on the alert, as every Statesman is, to make political capital, assured the audience, amid bursts of cheers, that that was consistent with true Liberalism. Soon came a more serious matter, which, barely mentioned, and the eyes of those hundreds of stout, brawny, beef-eating, ale-drinking Englishmen moistened with tears and all became hushed as a room where the body of a loved soul lies still and silent. We caught the feeling, and our heart was heavy too, at the prostration of him, whose sermons our father had read for us, and taught us to love, while we admired as some demi-god their author. Later we had heard him preach, talked with him privately, and our old feelings, while losing some of their sublimity by the very consideration, were deepened by the childlike simplicity of character and the true nobility of soul, which characterized the most eloquent of English preachers; Spurgeon, to delay no longer, is again in great suffering. His body is racked with pain. And yet he wrote a letter to the Association so full of wit and humour that one marvels to know that every word was penned under writhing pain. Of course his object is not to mar their pleasure by relating his trials. And so he regrets he cannot join them at the pigeon pies, wishes them good appetites, thinks his end is approaching, and if Plimsoll can do nothing for the sinking craft, or lighten her deck loads, the ship which has had its day will sink or be scuttled, he supposes. "God grant it may not be so," whispered some hundreds of voices. They pass their resolution; they telegraph their sympathy to the great and noble heart: they engage in prayer, earnest and wrestling, for his recovery.

Last scene of all is

THE MISSIONARY MEETING

in Exeter Hall, at 6 o'clock. That immense room is full even before the hour. Sir Robert Lush takes the chair. And for three hours the attention of that great audience is held by speakers from Britain and from India, who present the subject of Foreign Missions in all its varied aspects. STEPHENS, of Sheffield; SMITH, of Delhi; MORGAN, of Howrah, were among the speakers.

This sketch must suffice. More might have been written, but the writer must plead want of time. To return from Exeter Hall at 10, to have supper, and then to write a report of these gatherings for the Messenger before bed-time necessarily imply haste.

On the whole, the Anniversaries of these old country Baptists are attended with much real good in knitting them together, and in devising means and methods for the better furtherance of the "glorious gospel of the blessed God."

London, April 27th, 1876.

The Christian Messenger.

Halifax, N. S., May 17th, 1876.

* We owe an apology to our readers for omitting last week a notice of the meeting held in Granville St. Church, on the previous Wednesday evening. It having been a week before, and the arrival of Rev. W. B. Boggs occupying so much of our thought, and the meeting being announced, we somehow had the impression that the account had already been given in our pages, until it was too late for it to appear in our last.

The meeting had been announced in anticipation of Brother Boggs' arrival,

and with the hope that he would be able to be present and give some account of the mission work as he had seen it in the East.

The meeting commenced by singing appropriate hymns and prayer from two brethren, after which Rev. E. M. Saunders read a portion of Scripture and called on Rev. J. F. Avery to engage in prayer. Rev. Dr. Cramp, the Foreign Secretary of the Baptist Missionary Board for these Provinces, then occupied a few minutes in referring to the position of the mission undertaken by the denomination, and the feelings with which such an apparent reverse as that before them—a missionary having to return before entering upon the real work he desired and sought to engaged in—should be regarded. He recognized the guiding hand of the Divine Master and did not doubt that it would ultimately appear that even this was intended to further the great cause so dear to their hearts. The knowledge that Brother Boggs would be able to give the Board and the Churches, would doubtless awaken in them a more intense interest in the people to whom our Churches have sent the message of salvation.

Rev. W. B. Boggs then gave a rapid outline sketch of his experience and journeyings in Burmah Siam and India, and the great disappointment he had felt in being ordered to return, as the only way in which there was any prospect of his restoration to health, and indeed of his living more than for a very short period. He felt as if ordered to the rear before the battle commenced, yet he was ready to submit if it was as it appeared to be the will of the Master, and still to labor at home on behalf of the cause in any way he might be able. He had seen enough to shew him that nothing short of the gospel of the Lord Jesus could raise the heathen from the condition of darkness and degradation in which they are found. He had seen some of the blessed results in the devoted Christian people who had been gathered into churches from the mass of heathenism which surrounds them in those dark lands. He gave a number of exceedingly interesting details shewing the reality of the change in the converts and the blessed influence of gospel truth on their hearts and lives. The meeting was closed by singing and prayer. Some time was spent at the close in friends offering their warm greetings to Mr. and Mrs. Boggs.

We are informed that the Churches at Sydney and at Charlottetown have both given invitations to Rev. W. B. Boggs to the pastorate. Both sent on the invitation to him in Liverpool, G.B. The former church is the one which he labored with several years before going to Portland, St. John. We are not informed at to whether Bro. B. will accept either of these invitations at present. It was too soon after his arrival for him to determine. He went on to Truro, and thence on Wednesday last to St. John, to have an interview with the Board before making any decision as to future plans. We trust that the wisdom that cometh down from above will be given to our brethren so that they may devise and carry out such plans as may be for the benefit of the Missionary cause and at the same time the good of the churches engaged in this great enterprise.

The friends of Rev. Dr. Cramp will be pleased to know that his recent visit to Halifax shews that his health which had been feeble during the winter is quite restored. He preached in Granville Street Church on the Lord's Day morning with great freedom and ease. In his eightieth year he is comparatively active and vigorous. He is now employing himself with the History of the Baptists in Nova Scotia preparing the copy for publication, with sketches of several of the more prominent men, in case it should be desirable and expedient to bring it out at some future time, and he is spared to complete its revision.

LOWER STEWACKE.—We were grieved to learn that our brethren in this place had been disappointed in getting ministering brethren to attend for the purpose of opening their new House of Worship on the day appointed. There may have been substantial reasons was inconvenient there should be some other arrangement made which may better suit all concerned. This church has claim on our brethren, and we hope that an early appointment will be made and be attended with better success. The efforts made to get the House built has been very considerable and praiseworthy for the number of people in that locality.

THE INFANTS' HOME.

About eighteen months ago a "Home" was opened in Halifax for the purpose of saving the lives of neglected destitute infants. There are at present in this Home upwards of thirty little ones, and applications for admission are of almost daily occurrence. Temporary relief has been given to a large number for whom their parents or others are now providing. There are several now in the home who are about two years of age, the Committee earnestly desire that these little ones may be adopted in to christian families. These children are perfectly free from disease and in the best health. They have been brought up so far, with much care and not a little expence, almost wholly by the Christian people of Halifax. It is hoped that as they reach the age of two years, friends in the country will be found willing to offer permanent homes, and thus co-operate with the committee in saving infant life and in carrying out the work of the Infants' Home to completion. Some may wish to adopt at a still earlier age than two years. The committee will gladly receive in writing applications from persons desirous of adopting any of these infants, but they would greatly prefer that applicants should visit the Home and see, and select for themselves. The work of saving and caring for these "little ones" is the Lord's work, and we confidently expect the co-operation and aid of the benevolent everywhere.

Correspondence to be addressed to
Mrs. J. SCOTT HUTTON,
Secretary Infants Home,
Corner Ingles St. & Tower Road.

THE BAPTISTS OF PRINCE EDWARD ISLAND.

In our next we shall commence the publication of a series of articles on this subject, prepared by Rev. W. H. Warren at the urgent request of the P. E. Island Baptist Association. These articles will comprise Historical Sketches from the earliest introduction of Baptist principles to the Island, and will possess deep interest for all the members of the Island Churches, as well as for Nova Scotia Baptists, with whom they have been so pleasantly associated in Christian work for many years past.

We shall print a few extra copies, as we believe that a number of our brethren on the Island who have not yet become subscribers to the Christian Messenger will shortly wish to have our weekly visits, more especially that they may possess these articles as they appear. We would respectfully solicit from our subscribers in each of said churches to make the above known immediately so that the name and subscription of such persons may be forwarded without delay.

We have to thank our London correspondent for his letter, and its free, outspoken utterances on the matters of which he writes. He seems somewhat disturbed, however, by the strong utterances of Rev. Hugh Stowell Brown, in reference to the evils of the Established Church.

Perhaps if our brother had felt the iron heel of ecclesiastical oppression under a church, established by law, as our English brethren have, he would think somewhat differently, if he had seen the awful consequences of the simoniacal tradings in men's souls which prevail in that church, or the widespread infidelity which is the fruit of these abominations in England, he would have had more sympathy with the principle of dissent which they feel so strongly. Where men feel that they are themselves responsible for the character of the laws under which they and their fellow-men live, and that it is their voice that has to do with putting men in power for the administration of those laws, there it is that the sturdy, free expression of opinion demands that things shall be called by their right names without fear or a desire for favor. There may be, and there are, good men in the Established Church. Yet that does not alter the case, except to intensify the terrible evils which enchains them, kills their noblest impulses, and gives them the character of hirelings often in their own estimation and oftener in the estimation of the masses, and so prevents a vast amount of good being done which they might otherwise do.

The Hon. Baptist Noel, as a clergyman and chaplain to Her Majesty, was never the man or the christian minister that Baptist Noel, pastor of a London Baptist church became, and so of scores of others. Spurgeon would be no Spurgeon if he ate the bread of the

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