

Correspondence.

For the Christian Messenger. Baptist Buddings in Nova Scotia. No. 2.

Dear Editor,—

Allow me in this number to speak of some of the Baptist Budings of Upper Stewiacke.

At the time that the late Mr. Graham was settled over the Presbyterian Church in that neighbourhood, there arose some circumstances of a somewhat unpleasant nature. He had, prior to this time been over a church and congregation at Cornwallis, and in those days it was customary to sign a document which they designated a call, by which the people bound themselves and their children, to support the minister, and this call was supposed to be in force during the life time of the minister. Such a paper had been in force for the support of Mr. Graham. But in the course of time, as the children grew up to do business for themselves, many rebelled, and refused to pay, and at last recourse was had by law, to force them. As a consequence the little spark became a flame, and the church itself became too hot for their minister. So Mr. Graham left and settled at Stewiacke. Some of his church members having a strong attachment for their minister, sold their farms and moved with him to Stewiacke. Among the number was Mr. Abraham Newcomb. The sacrifice which these men made was very great. Yet the love they had for their pastor nerved them to the endurance; and as for their Church Polity, as it went back for so many generations they did not call it in question. Mr. Newcomb was a man of deep reflective mind and after being settled in his new home, occupied much more of his time in the study of the word of God. New light broke in upon his mind and the Bible became a new book to him, he had new views of himself as a sinner, and new views of the requirements of God's holy law. That the religion of Jesus Christ was a personal act between the soul and its God—that we were to worship him according to the dictates of our own conscience, but yet in harmony with his word—that our faith in Christ was a personal individual act, and that according to our faith so would it be given unto us—and that religious freedom was in harmony with the word of God as will as with reason. He was also led to a careful examination of the ordinances of the church of Christ, and the result was, that he was led to believe that every soul when brought into the liberty of a child of God should put on Christ by public profession, and be baptized into his name, that baptism was not intended as a regenerating ordinance, but being made new creatures by the grace of God through faith in Christ Jesus, baptism was the answer of a good conscience, being the fruit of our obedience to Christ and a testimony to the world that we were his disciples—that the ordinance was an unmeaning ceremony when the recipient was destitute of faith—that while it was a duty enjoined upon the believer it should be withheld from the unbeliever. From this time Mr. Newcomb saw the sandy foundation of infant sprinkling, and as a believer in Christ, that it was his duty to be baptized, in harmony with New Testament order. From the stand he had now taken, it behoved him not to put his light under a bushel, but upon all suitable occasions to stand forth for the defence of the truth of God's word. Baptist interest sprung up in the neighbourhood and amidst great opposition, the Lord added to their numbers. A church was organized and Mr. Newcomb was chosen as a deacon, and continued so until his death. It may be said of the Baptist Church at Stewiacke that while it was but a feeble band yet it stood fast in the truth.

After the demise of Mr. Graham, Mr. Smith took the field, and thinking that he would check the tendency of his people from drifting into the Baptist Church, resolved upon preaching a series of sermons upon infant sprinkling, and these very sermons were the means of leading many to a more careful study of the word of God, and the result was the Baptist cause was strengthened. Father Smith remarked that Bro. Smith was making more Baptists in Stewiacke than the Baptists themselves. One old lady told a writer that she had been brought up

in the Presbyterian Church, and thinking that the teachings of her church were in harmony with the word of God, she had never troubled herself about the ordinances, but when Mr. Smith in his discourses misapplied the words of Scripture by saying that all the infants were the children of God, not by an individual faith in Christ Jesus, but by the faith of their believing parents, and if one of the parents was a member, then were the children holy, she said that from these expressions she was led to a more careful study of the scriptures, and was thereby led to unite with the Baptist Church.

It may be said of Mr. Newcomb that he was a bright and shining light, and as a Christian was loved and respected. He was called from the church militant in the year 1836, and his companion in 1840, yet the savour of his name has been for good. One of his sons, James Newcomb, studied at Acadia College, and entered the ministry, but after a few years was called to join the church triumphant, and though dead, yet speaketh—and our Bro. S. N. Bently, of respected memory, of the Halifax North Church was a grandson of Mr. Newcomb.

Thus when we go into any of our churches, and trace the leading and directing hand of the Almighty, we are ready to exclaim "What hath God wrought!" Windsor. L.

For the Christian Messenger. On Laying Foundations.

By REV. W. H. RICHAN.

The children of to-day will be the men and women of a few years hence, and human society will then be what they make it. If they grow up intelligent and moral, and under the control of Christian principles, there will be a golden age of intelligence, high toned morality, and spiritual prosperity. If, on the other hand, they reach maturity, ignorant, immoral, and governed by the principles in vogue with an ungodly world, there must be confusion and every evil work. Now their future characters will depend, under God, upon the culture and bias given in the days of their youth; or in other words, upon the nature of the foundation laid in early life. How important then that such influences shall be brought to bear upon the young, during their most susceptible years, as shall tend to the inculcation of right principles, the formation of correct habits; the development of their intellectual and moral powers, and the increase of substantial knowledge; that thus may be laid the foundation for lives of piety and usefulness. Let us then inquire what are the essentials of a good foundation.

1st. It must be upon a solid basis. No wise man will lay the foundation of his dwelling upon the surface of the soil. He will dig down till he reaches the solid rock or hard pan. Otherwise his stones will be liable to settle or to be thrown out of position by the frost and other disturbing influences. In like manner the foundation of religious life must be laid deep, even in the heart. The loose debris of passion and folly should be thrown out, and the stones of Gospel truth embedded in the very subsoil of the learner's nature. A mere intellectual understanding of the Scriptures is not enough, and cannot satisfy any conscientious teacher. "Thy word have I hid in my heart," said David. This heart work should be the main design and constant aim of all who seek the best interests of the young. Without this, mere intellectual acquisitions may be not only useless, but positively injurious, rendering their possessor more efficient for evil than he otherwise would be. But "Who is sufficient for these things?" The most skillful and painstaking instructor, though he may succeed in cramming the memory, and calling into exercise the various faculties of the intellect, cannot penetrate that mysterious region which we are accustomed to call the heart, and which, according to the testimony of scripture is "deceitful above all things and desperately wicked." And yet there is important work for the teacher to do in this regard. Let him fill his quiver with the arrows of Divine truth, and with these, pointed, barbed, and feathered, by illustration, and appeals, take aim at the very centre of the moral nature, praying for the operation of that Spirit

whose office it is to convince of sin, and apply the truth. One principle thus deposited in the heart will be better than many floating in the brain.

2nd. We should build with the most durable materials. For a structure intended to serve a mere temporary purpose, anything will do for a foundation; but for a mansion designed to last for ages only fine grained, compact stone should be chosen. There is some granite which contains too large a proportion of felspar, this will crumble; and some slate is of so coarse a texture, and so mingled with foreign substances that it is apt to sliver. But if the slate be pure and fine, and the minerals composing the granite be well proportioned, and finely mixed, they will endure for centuries. Now in laying the foundations of moral character, we build, not for a little season—but for eternity. The material then should be of the most enduring nature. Such material is truth. It never changes or decays. Scientific and philosophical theories, if founded on truth will stand the test of time, otherwise they must explode and perish. So is it with every moral and spiritual structure. It is not enough that we teach some truth mingled with much that is false and fanciful. Such a mixture like ill proportioned granite or adulterated will crumble and decay. Every false system of religion embraces some truth, without which it could not stand a day, but in many instances the truth of God is made of none effect by the tradition of men. God desires truth in the inward parts, and it should be our aim to deposit it there—pure, unadulterated truth, dug directly from the inexhaustible quarry of God's word.

3rd. A foundation should be laid in order. Some years ago a beacon was built upon Wesse's Ledge, Barrington Harbor. The foundation consisted of rough stones, dropped promiscuously from boats. In a short time the whole structure, costing several thousands of dollars, tumbled into ruin. I will not say that loose disjointed truths dropped at random are useless. Often they are as "apples of gold in pictures of silver," and used by God for the accomplishments of his purpose in the salvation of men. But if we would fortify the soul against the pernicious errors that are abroad, if we would form characters symmetrical, consistent, and influential, order which is "Heaven's first law," must not be ignored. Without this there can be no well regulated family, no efficient school, no prosperous church, no thriving community. It is an important element in the formation of bodily habits, and still more so in the construction of mental and moral character. One design of the projectors of the "International Series of Lessons," is to direct a due proportion of attention to all the subjects which come within the range of revealed truth, and this in as systematic a manner as possible. And it should be the aim of every teacher to lay the stones of his foundation in such a way as to give a comprehensive view of the whole truth, and at the same time to induce habits of order in those taught.

4th. Every stone must be levelled and arranged in agreement with the corner stone. So every truth imparted should have some reference to Christ. A lesson without Christ in it lacks the essential element; for "of him, and through him, and to him are all things." The Jewish builders rejected him, let us not neglect him. It is impossible to make too much of Christ in our teaching. Paul's determination was "to know nothing among men save Jesus Christ and him crucified," and the Sabbath School teacher should know nothing else in his class. "The old, old story, of Jesus and his love," should saturate all our teachings. This is the cement which binds all the stones of truth together, and unites them all with the "Head of the Corner." "Other foundation can no man lay." All other ground is sinking sand.

Lastly, the spiritual mason should keep fast hold of his "sword and trowel." As when the walls of Jerusalem were rebuilt, so now, there are many enemies to withstand. And so many helps are furnished in these days that there is a temptation to lay aside the "sword of the Spirit," and rely upon man made weapons. Human aids are very helpful when judiciously used, but the best of commentaries is a miserable substitute for the sacred text. Again, there are so many discouragements that the builder

is tempted to relax his efforts and relinquish his trowel. Let such remember the injunction of Paul. "Let us not be weary in well doing, for in due season ye shall reap if ye faint not."

For the Christian Messenger.

Dear Editor,—

Brother DesBrisay in the Messenger of June 11th, in speaking of the late John Shaw and of his preaching in Cape Breton, brings to my remembrance a circumstance which will help to illustrate the effects of Brother Shaw's preaching.

I went to the Island in the Spring of 1836, and in passing through, my conductor having a sister married to a deacon of the Presbyterian Church, we stopped at their house to rest. After dinner he asked me to go with him and he would introduce me to his minister. I thus had the pleasure of forming an acquaintance with a man of God that I ever after found to be of a most pleasing nature, for in after times in traveling through the Island, circumstances would bring us on the footpath of each other, so that we would seek shelter under the same roof.

While such Christian fellowship was pleasing to ourselves it had a good effect at the houses at which we stopped, for I always found a welcome acceptance. Brother Shaw visited the Island in 1837, and our good Brother invited him to preach in his meeting house, but when the leading men in the church heard of it, they demurred and told him that if he let a Baptist minister preach there, they would never finish it. He told them that while the meeting house was theirs, yet he thought that the privilege of opening it to a friend, but that he would make no disturbance in the church. One thing he would do and that was to open his own dwelling—and the very men who refused the meeting house came to hear. Brother Shaw took for his text Luke xi. 21, 22, "When a strong man armed keepeth his palace his goods are in peace," &c., and he preached a most sublime discourse upon the honor and sovereignty of Jehovah in the conversion of sinners and the upbuilding of his church. The next summer when Brother Shaw came, they had employed a catholic man to plaster the meeting house, and he said to Mr. Shaw, you need not go to the minister's house to preach this time, for the meeting house is mine and I intend to have it clean for you. But there was no opposition; Brother Shaw's discourse the year before had scattered all the rubbish, and the people came joyfully to hear the words of salvation. When I saw his death in the Messenger I could well say "there is a prince and great man fallen this day in Israel." Windsor. L.

For the Christian Messenger.

"His Appearing and His Kingdom."

SECOND ARTICLE.

The purpose of these articles, as already stated, is to shew that the doctrine of the personal and visible reign of Christ, with His elect on the earth, during the Millennial period to follow His coming again from Heaven,—as it is plainly set forth in the Scriptures, has always been a part of the true Christian faith. This doctrine is variously spoken of as Pre-Millennarianism, Christian Chiliasm, and in a less precise way, Second-Adventism. Opposed to it is the opinion now prevailing among many denominations of Christians (including the Baptists), that the world at large is to be converted, and a period of universal peace and righteousness is to elapse, before the Lord comes; also that when He does come, it will be to raise all the dead to life, to judge mankind, to destroy the world, to banish the wicked, and to take His people to Heaven.

Whether the one or the other of these two sets of opinions is the truth as revealed in the Bible, is of course a question of interpretation. To me it is very clear that the Scriptures teach the former. But were I to quote passages in proof of my belief, some one else would at once quote other passages which, viewed from the stand-point of his present opinions, seem to him to teach the contrary. Accordingly it is my purpose to bring forward the testimony of eminent Christian writers,

from the immediate successors of the apostles down to those of our own times, shewing how they have interpreted the Scriptures in relation to the second coming and the kingdom of Christ. My authority for most of the quotations to be adduced is the admirable volume entitled "Premillennial Essays" edited by Rev. Nathaniel West, D. D., of Cincinnati (Chicago, F. H. Revell; pp. 528.)

I shall first present testimony to the fact that the Church in the first three centuries of the Christian era was premillennarian,—to which the following assertion by Dr. John T. Duffield, of Princeton College, will form a fitting preface. He says "The doctrine of a millennial era before the Advent" (the doctrine taught in our pulpits and Theological Seminaries) is a novelty in the history of the Church, proposed but little more than 150 years ago, and avowedly as 'a new hypothesis.'"

1. DECLARATIONS OF THE EARLY FATHERS. Barnabas:—"The Sabbath Rest will come when the Son of God shall appear and destroy the Lawless One. Then all will be sanctified completely, . . . when Christ comes back to reign."

Papias, the companion of the Apostle John and of Polycarp, is said by Eusebius (an Antichiliasm) to have held that "there will be a millennium after the resurrection of the dead, when the personal reign of Christ will be established on this earth."

Justin Martyr (A. D. 140):—"Many . . . do not confess this, but dare to blaspheme the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, and say there is no resurrection of the dead, but that at death their souls are received up to heaven. . . . But I, and others who are right-minded Christians on all points, know there will be a resurrection of the dead, and a thousand years [reign] in Jerusalem, built, adorned, broadened, as the prophets Ezekiel, Isaiah, and others, declare." etc.

Irenaeus (A. D. 172.) a disciple of both Papias and Polycarp, defended the premillennarian doctrine against the Platonic Gnostics, quoting the words of our Lord, "Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth," and the promise of similar import in Psa. xxxvii. 11. "Christ," he says, will Himself renew the inheritance of the earth, and reorganize the mystery of the glory of His sons. "In the times of the kingdom, the righteous shall bear rule upon their rising from the dead, when the creation, having been renovated, and set free, shall fructify with abundance of every kind." "John distinctly foresaw the first resurrection of the Just, and the inheritance in the kingdom on earth."

Tertullian (A. D. 200) wrote a book in defence of the Pre-Millennial faith, entitled "The Hope of Believers," in which he asserted a post-resurrection kingdom on earth, of spiritual blessings.

Lactantius (A. D. 300):—"It is ordained by the disposal of God Most High that the present unjust age, a space of time having been accomplished, shall have an end, when all wickedness becoming extinct, and the souls of the godly called back to a blessed life, there shall flourish a quiet, tranquil, peaceable and golden Age, the Lord Himself then reigning. The righteous king will institute a great judgment on the earth respecting the living and the dead, and will deliver all the nations in subjection to the righteous who are alive; will raise the righteous dead to eternal life, and will Himself reign with them on the earth, and will build the Holy City, and this Kingdom of the righteous shall be for 1,000 years. Then, the last judgment of God will come to pass against the nations. Then also shall the wicked arise, not to life, but to punishment. The second resurrection shall take place. This is the doctrine of the holy prophets, which we Christians follow."

These few testimonies are selected from among many. Did space permit, I might bring forward as witnesses to the same faith such men as Clement, the companion of Paul and John,—Polycarp, who conversed with those who had seen Christ,—Hermas, to whom Paul sent greetings (Rom. xvi. 14),—Hippolytus, a disciple of Irenaeus,—Cyprian, the proto-martyr of Carthage,—Melite, Commodian, Nepos, Methodius, Victorinus, Gregory of Nyssa, Sulpicius Severus, Paulinus, and others. All these held the Chiliasm doctrine, and are exponents of the Christianity of their times.

In my next article, I shall quote from modern writers in reference to the prevalence of Chiliasm in those early ages. July 1st, 1879. LUEB.