

Correspondence.

For the Christian Messenger.
Odds and Ends from England.

FROM BY REV. JOHN BROWN.
Dear Brother,—

Joseph Cook has reached our country and made his first appearance at the Congregational Union, held the other day at Birmingham. He was received with overwhelming, long and rapturous applause, as the brave man fully deserved to be. There is scarcely a man on the American continent who is more highly esteemed and honoured than the renowned lecturer of Tremont Temple. He intends working with all his might (and that means something) while in the country, in fighting down error, infidelity and scepticism. May he have a gloriously prosperous career, and have the earnest prayers of all good men, and may God raise up many more Valiants like him.

THE CHURCH (i. e. Episcopal) CONGRESS, was lately held at the very nonconformist town of Leicester. As usual at such conferences, the question of the relation of the Church to Dissenters was considered; the aim apparently, of some, being to try to win back those who have wandered, hoping that as according to Bishop Ryle "the great majority of Dissenters are Dissenters through ignorance," they may by enlightening their dark understandings, induce them to return to the arms of Mother Church, and again suck the breasts of her consolations. But somehow or other it so happens that the more 'light' there is thrown upon the doings and doctrines of the Church, the less disposition there is to unite with her.

There was however a tolerably strong feeling that the fault of Dissent was as much if not more the fault of the Church than the Dissenters themselves. "According to the Freeman," "The speakers even charged their own Church, and that in no mild language, with provoking Dissent by the tyrannies, bigotries, and religious sloth and indifference of which her clergy in former days had been guilty, and allowed that Nonconformists in those evil days had a sufficient reason for their existence. Indeed they seemed far more disposed throughout to confess their own sins than to accuse their Dissenting brethren." It is really too late in the day for our neighbours of the Church to try to bring us back. We are beyond hope. Birds got loose are not likely to be whistled back, whistle they never so sweetly. It is vain for twilight to say to the morning "Return to my arms O morning." To catch a comet, reverse the wheels of time, stay the rising of the sun and bring back Dissenters to the Church are all likely to prove alike successful. Would it be uncharitable to ask whether this desire for reunion arises from love or fear?

By the way, I must not forget to mention that an address from the Nonconformist ministers was read and warmly received and applauded. To which address Mr. Thew, Baptist minister added a few remarks full of weight and force, which were received with frequent cheers. Among other things when speaking of sinking differences of which there is a great deal too much, he said:

"If these differences are light or meaningless things, they ought to cease to-night; if they are not, it is at our peril and at yours that we seek to make them cease. There is another reason, too, that should make us hesitate to indulge in such talk, and it is this. I have noticed that differences sunk by contract have an unhappy knack of floating again; and I have noticed that they carried their perversity to an extreme, by floating at those junctures, for the supposed necessities of which they were first sunk. I would say then, humbly, let us not sink them. We need not obtrude them, but it is not complimentary to the intelligence of either party to think of sinking them. There is a more excellent way. Let us respect them. Earnest men do not differ, without at least, what appears to them, sufficient reason. The considerations which make you Churchmen, the considerations which make us Nonconformists are not whims. They are on both sides, spite of all our errors and sins, the serious judgment of serious men. Let us then respect them; let us rise to the higher charity—the charity of mutual confidence, the charity of mutual forbearance, and mutual respect."

His address was followed by loud cheers. These words have a true and royal ring.

I was much pleased in looking through REV. J. W. MANNING'S SERMON in the Messenger which arrived this morning, (and a shower of snow about the same time,) to find similar sentiments uttered, and although most of your readers have read the sermon, and if not, they should do so without delay, I will copy out the part to which I refer, in order that his words may be more deeply impressed:—

"We believe that all His commands are binding, and that we have no right to say, 'This we will do, and that we will leave undone, or change the manner of doing it. We have no choice in the matter. Here we stand! we cannot do otherwise. This is not sectarianism, nor bigotry. It is loyalty to conviction. It is fidelity to Christ, and such fidelity as will one day wear the crown, and hear the joyous welcome—'Well done!' To rescue the perishing and lift up the fallen we will go as far with our brethren of other names as they choose. We will stand by their side—or march shoulder to shoulder against the common foes. Nay we will lead the van or cover a retreat if necessary. But we must carry our banner into the conflict! We will not suffer it to be furred nor trailed in the dust. As long as strength is given, its folds shall flutter in the breeze."

I hope the whole of Bro. Manning's sermon has been carefully perused by all readers of the Messenger. To those who have not, let me say—read it, and to those who have—read it again, and may the preacher's shadow never grow less, nor his bow lose its strength.

Of course the event within the last few weeks has been

THE BAPTIST UNION MEETINGS IN LONDON, which were exceedingly enjoyable all through. I recognized no face from the Provinces, which would have been a great delight. Of course we shall meet above, but it is pleasant to meet now and again, while on the road. Before you get this, Bro. Selden, you will have seen full reports in our denominational papers. The papers read and speeches delivered were of an exceptionally high order, lofty in aim, and spiritual in tone. Home and Foreign Missions occupied a large proportion of the time and consideration of the brethren, and not a few were stirred up to feel and do more in that direction than they were accustomed to. The paper by Dr. Landels on "Missionary Consecration; are present contributions adequate to the claims of the work?" was simply a master piece, and had a thrilling effect upon the vast congregation. Among the many most excellent speeches that of Rev. R. Glover of Bristol carried high the palm. Of this address, the Christian World says it was the best ever given in Exeter Hall, and that is saying something. I only wish my friends beyond sea had been present. Revs. Glover and Landels are two fine, noble men, their appearance, I think adding some weight to their words. Mr. Glover has a magnificent countenance; it seems to glow with kindness and love, with eyes deep-set beneath somewhat heavy eyebrows. Dr. Landels has more of a stern appearance, and when occasion requires he can be so, and no less so when the occasion requires can be pathetic and tender. Dr. L. is one of the strongest men of the denomination. Mr. Glover made a profound impression on the thousands of his hearers when he said that "England spends more every three or four months in drink, than has been spent during the last eighty years by all the Protestant Christian Missionary Societies in the world." If that is not enough to put Christians to the blush, I don't know what is. Another remark, "If you want to know what a heathen is, a looking-glass and a little imagination will tell any of you," caused quite a ripple of laughter. There is wit and wisdom in it, is there not?

The closing meeting at the Metropolitan Tabernacle was the crowning service of the whole. It was a sort of Valedictory and Missionary meeting combined, and deeply interesting it was. Two missionaries were about to go out for the first time, and three returning to their fields of labour. This was the first meeting Mr. Spurgeon was able to attend. Before he came in his brother made a special request that there should be no applause whatever on his coming in, as it might affect his nerves. This caused a very loud smile; the idea that Mr. Spurgeon's nerves could be affected, seemed not to be understood. When this had subsided, Mr. J. Spurgeon remarked, "Well, you

will believe me when you see him." Soon after this

MR. SPURGEON

came very slowly down the steps to the platform, evidently in great pain, and stooping like a very old man. There was a general attempt to applaud, but it was soon suppressed. He spoke first, and left immediately after. His characteristic address was frequently applauded, and certainly it was one of the best I ever heard. Certainly in reading that address, no one would suppose it was given under such difficulties as Mr. Spurgeon was labouring under. He was unable to stand upright, leaning nearly the whole time with his left arm on the rail, supporting himself on the other side with his walking stick. His face beams and glows with happiness and good nature, and his eyes seem to sparkle with joy. Kindness, generosity, and love mark every line and feature of his manly countenance, and it is most evident that those troublesome pillars of his, support a house in which lives a soul brimming with the joy and happiness of heaven, and of unlimited confidence in God, as his speech plainly shows, of which the more a man has, the more happy is he.

I had the pleasure of hearing him preach on the following Sunday morning, and his son Charles in the evening, who preached a very interesting and enjoyable sermon on Christ and the disciples at Emmaus. He appeared quite calm and self composed; he has a clear and distinct delivery, and I could not trace the least effort to make it appear that he was the son of his father. Some say he attempts to be Spurgeon, but I could not trace it in the slightest degree. My impression is that he will wear, and wear well. In the afternoon of the same day Mounq Edwin gave an address, in the Tabernacle Lecture hall, and was listened to with much attention and evident interest. He has been on a lecturing tour in Wales, and is shortly going to Sweden on a similar mission.

I presume you are aware that Mr. Spurgeon is a teetotaler. In a late sermon on the marriage in Cana of Galilee in discussing the wine question, he said, "I abstain myself, from all alcoholic drink in every form, and I think others would be wise to do the same." The cause of Temperance is steadily yet most surely advancing in England. Public opinion is rising in its favour, and it is expected that in the next session of Parliament the licensing system and the fearful evils of the drink traffic will be grappled with, with a firm hand. I notice, by the way, that the students of the Regent's Park Temperance Society are offering their services free to temperance societies in and around London, to assist at meetings for the advocacy of teetotal principles. I find my letter has reached its full limits, so I will stay my hand, and remain, with loving remembrance to all friends.

Yours faithfully,

J. BROWN.
Melksham, Wilt., Oct 20th, 1880.

P. S.—Will you allow me to thank the many friends from whom I have received letters, and to say that I should most gladly reply lengthily to every one of them had I time to do so, and if for the present they will consider an occasional communication in the Messenger as addressed in part to them, it will be a relief to my mind, as I do not like to appear indifferent, or as if I were allowing them to slip out of mind. I need not say that prayer ascends to heaven daily for the many friends beyond the sea, whom I shall never—can never cease to love, and whom, to forget is impossible.

For the Christian Messenger.

That Convention Speech.

Dear Editor.—

I perceive that Brother Lavers has chosen to chastise me for the words which I used, or rather did not use, in my address at the late Convention. Having committed my thoughts to paper while they were yet fresh in my mind, I am happily in a position to place before your readers the precise language employed on the occasion referred to. Bro. Lavers accuses me of "speaking in the most disparaging manner," of many of my brethren in the ministry; of stigmatizing them as useless and failures; of "telling them in the most contemptuous manner that they had proved failures"; to all which I reply, I have done no such thing. I hope I am too conscious of my own imperfections

and unworthiness to thus speak of any brother, be he learned or unlearned, who is faithfully serving the Master to the best of his ability. To all such I can extend my warmest sympathy and esteem.

In the speech at Hillsborough I spoke of policies rather than of men, and endeavored to refer to the latter in the kindest way. I could not be true to my convictions, and to the trust which my brethren have committed to me, and speak otherwise in dealing with this denominational question. I have spoken my sentiments and believe they are the sentiments that ought to prevail.

In my allusion to a supply of ministers from abroad, the language employed is possibly capable of being misunderstood. My meaning is this: *that the ministers in Old or New England for whom there is nothing to do, who are not wanted to do the work that really requires to be done, and who may therefore go without any loss to the churches they leave behind:—that these are not the men whom it would be advisable for us to import.*

I will take the liberty of kindly suggesting to Bro. Lavers that in future he had better attend the Convention himself, or else learn of what is said there, from more authentic sources, before putting his charges before his public in the manner he has done.

The following is the address to which he has taken exception:—

Bro. Moderator,—

With your permission I will say a few words on that branch of our educational work with which I stand myself more immediately connected, namely, the Theological Department; and touching this Department I will confine myself principally to one thought, namely, its relation to the supply—the future and continual supply of ministers for the Baptist churches and Baptist mission fields of these Maritime provinces.

I make this topic the subject of my present remarks, not certainly from any lack of interest in the other branches of our educational work,—I hope I feel as much concerned for the welfare of the College proper and of the two departments of the Academy as those who devote themselves more exclusively to the advocacy of their interests,—but in order to call the attention of the body to a matter of great importance, especially at this juncture of our denominational affairs, and one which, to my mind, has not hitherto received the attention it deserves. Hitherto, or for several years past at least, the building up of the College proper, or of the Arts course in the College, has been the one object or almost the one object which many persons among us have proposed to themselves in connection with our Institutions of learning. To such an extent has this been the case that the Theological idea—the idea that chiefly inspired the founding of these Institutions—has been displaced from its original position and rendered practically inoperative. The purpose of our fathers of founding a school in which our young men having the ministry in view might be thoroughly trained for the work of Pastors and evangelists, has been—I will not say totally abandoned—but certainly held in an abeyance amounting to little more.

Now, Sir, I am far from taking the ground that too much has been done for the College proper or for the Arts course within it during the last ten or twenty-five years. I only wish the denomination had felt itself able and willing to do ten times as much. If any error has been committed, it has not certainly been that of excessive doing or excessive giving for the cause of secular learning at Wolfville.

But, Sir, I submit whether the policy of aiming principally at the advancement of secular learning alone has not been inherently weak from its one-sidedness;—whether a policy of broader aims and adaptations would not have proved a stronger one and led to larger results. And I submit, therefore, whether the time has not now fully come to decide that henceforth the Theological Department shall be deemed equally important with the College proper, and receive an equal amount of attention, so that our ministerial students may receive at home the training they require to fit them under God for the most successful prosecution of their life work.

I am glad, Sir, that the question before us to-day, is not the alternative of letting the Theological Department go for the sake of the College proper or of letting the College proper go for the sake of the Theological Department, although if this were the case,—if the necessity were actually laid upon us of letting one or the other go,—considering what our mission as Baptists is, considering that we are specially committed to the work of giving a pure gospel and a pure Christianity to the people, and of building up Christian churches after the apostolic model at home and abroad;—and considering that secular learning could be as easily obtained in these Provinces or out of these Provinces without Acadia College

as could Theological learning without our Theological School:—considering these things, I say: if the necessity were actually laid upon us of letting either the Department of Arts or that of Theology in our University go, I am not sure that it would not be better to dispense with the former.

But, Sir, this necessity is not laid upon us. The denomination has the ability and I trust also the disposition to maintain both these Departments in an efficient condition, and both, I maintain should stand and grow together, each lending support and grace to the other. Indeed, all our denominational enterprises are one, constitute one whole, and the success of any one of them involves the success of the others also.

Some of the brethren present to day feel themselves committed more particularly to the cause of Foreign Missions, others to the cause of Home Missions, and yet others to the cause of Education, Secular or Theological; and it is right that this principle of the division of labor should be acted upon by us; but it by no means follows that there is no relation—no affinity among these several causes, nor that those who strive principally for the promotion of one of them do not equally desire the promotion of the rest. I feel sure that when I am helping forward the cause of general education, I am helping forward the cause of ministerial education also; and when I am advancing the cause of ministerial education, I am also advancing the cause of missions, Home and Foreign. All these enterprises are most vitally related. The ligature that joins them, and through which passes the life-blood that is common to them, and by which they must simultaneously and harmoniously grow, cannot be severed without causing them all to bleed and languish.

Now, brother Moderator, permit me for a moment to inquire *what is the present want of our churches and mission fields in regard to ministers, and how this want can best be met.*

Taking the Year Book of last year as my guide, I find that there are in these Maritime Provinces about 110 more Baptist Churches than Baptist Ministers, ordained and licentiate, in active service. I do not mean to say that there are 110 Baptist Churches utterly destitute of Baptist preaching; for in several instances, as we all know, one Pastor ministers to two or more churches. And I think the wisdom of the Home Mission Board in so grouping our weak churches that the means of grace is put within reach of the greatest possible number of them is greatly to be commended. But after the most successful grouping that is possible has been attempted, I think—especially if we take into account the wants of many of the older and self-supporting churches, more than a dozen of which are without pastors to-day—I should be placing the estimate at a very low figure in saying that there is at the present time in these provinces ample room and ample support for 25 additional Baptist ministers of the right stamp. And I hope I shall be excused if I emphasize the words of the right stamp, for in the pulpit, above all other places, men of this character are required. No natural gifts can be too splendid, no preparatory discipline too complete, no devotion to Christ too hearty, no love to souls too burning, no common sense too strong in those who are to fill the place—the highly honorable and responsible place of ambassadors for Christ. I have named common sense among the qualifications of the minister for his work, and no qualification is more essential. You remember, perhaps, the words with which Dr. Dwight was wont to dismiss his Theological students to their life-work. "Now young gentlemen," said he, "if you want more knowledge of science, you must seek it in scientific books, if you want more knowledge of Theology, you must seek it in the Bible, the great text-book of Theology, but if you want more common sense, the Lord have mercy on you." Men of the right stamp are needed for every department of ministerial service, not excepting the humblest; and it will be found that the gifts and qualifications which make ministers most successful in the highest kinds of Christian service, make them also most successful in the lowest. The idea that almost any person, however untutored, however unskilled in the word, will do to preach the gospel among the unlettered, and in out-of-the-way districts, in other words, act the part of a gospel pioneer, a most important work certainly—has wrought no little harm in the past and ought to be forever exploded. We must believe that He whose understanding is infinite, and whose working is ever consistent with himself, thinks as much of sanctified knowledge as a means of doing good as of sanctified ignorance. "It needs all our learning," as one has said, "to make things plain." The preacher who is not willing to be understood by the simple, lest he should not be admired by the learned, is not fit to preach to anybody.

But to return from this slight digression: our want of ministers and missionaries is not only present but prospective. Not only do we need at the present time some 25 additional ministers, but we also need, and shall continue to need from year to year an annual supply equal to the demand caused by the multiplication of new churches and by certain of the older churches becoming self-supporting on the one hand, and by the usual diminu-