

most of the beds in the ward changed occupants more than once before she was well enough to receive a visit from Abbott, whose messages, faithfully delivered day by day, had comforted her with the feeling that she still had a friend in the outside world. It was the first Sunday in the year, and the ward was crowded with friends of the patients, all quiet and conversing in whispers, when the nurse told Hagar that Abbott was come to see her. She lifted up her eyes, and looked inquiringly at the tall, strong man, whose grave face met her gaze with an expression of friendly concern.

"I'm Abbott," he said, "the man whose cab knocked you down. I'm come to see what I can do for you—what amends I can make. My dear mother lay dying, and I was hurrying to get to her in time. It was a very foggy morning, and the driver did not see you."

"Did you get in time?" asked Hagar faintly; "was your mother dead?"

"No, thank God!" he replied, "I was just in time; we said good-by to one another. You know your little baby also died that same morning?"

Hagar's lips quivered as she nodded her head in silence.

"Yes," he said softly, "that same morning the little blossom died; so I had it buried with her, in the same coffin. We could not ask your leave; but you wouldn't have said 'No' to that?"

The tears were stealing down Hagar's cheeks; but there was almost a smile upon her white face.

"Oh, it was good of you," she murmured.

"Now," he said, after a little silence, and he spoke in a more cheerful and quicker tone, "let us know something about you. You've been lying here like a poor dumb creature that can't give account of itself. Nobody knows your name, or where you come from; and your friends must think you are dead. There has been no one to ask after you save me. You will be well enough to be discharged in a week or two. Let me find your friends for you; or let me write to them."

"I haven't got a friend in the world," she answered; "I am quite alone. Even God has forsaken me."

"No, no," he said earnestly, "that is impossible; nobody is ever forsaken. You must not say that of God. But you had a home once?"

"Yes," she replied, "I had a home once, a happy home, and a husband, and two little children, and an old blind father, that I'd never left. But they are all lost, all lost and gone."

"Not one left?" he said in a voice of deep compassion, that seemed to open her heart and lips, as she looked up into his pitying face with tearful eyes.

"Not one!" she cried. "I was going to drown myself if I dared. But there's always a judgment after death, and I was afraid of that. God is angry with those that go before he calls them himself, and I was afraid, though I longed to die. I'm afraid of getting well now, and being turned out into the cold street. What is to become of me? Where am I to go?"

She was getting excited, and her voice was growing high and shrill. The nurse came to the side of the bed, and shook her head warningly at Abbott.

"There, then!" he said soothingly, "don't be afraid; think of me as your friend. I'll prepare a place for you when you're well enough to leave the hospital. If my dear mother was living, it would be a joy to her to come and see you, and take you home with her. But there, be content. Nobody is ever really forsaken."

"God has forsaken me!" she answered.

"That is impossible," he said again; "you are wrong in speaking so of God, your Father and my Father. Have you never heard what he says in his own book, 'Zion said The Lord hath forsaken me, and my Lord hath forgotten me?' That is exactly what you are thinking in your own mind."

"Yes," answered Hagar eagerly. "Ah!" he continued, smiling down upon her, "and now listen to what the Lord says to that—'Can a woman forget her child? Yes, she may forget, yet will I not forget thee.'"

But as he spoke these words in a glad voice Hagar's face grew terrified and shocked. "Yes! I did forget?" she cried, in a loud key, which startled the quiet ward. Then she broke into a passion of sobs and tears, which shook her feeble frame sorely, and the nurse coming up quickly bade Abbott in a sharp and angry tone to be gone at once.

Correspondence.

For the Christian Messenger.  
Our Foreign Missions.

No. 3.

Dear Brother,—

In the discussion of the present state of our Foreign Mission it has been assumed that our Board has at some one of its recent meetings accepted the resignation of brother and sister Armstrong, and thereby, in so far as lay within its prerogative, severed the ties which connect Mr. and Mrs. A. with the mission. This has been published as a fact, and it has not been officially confirmed or denied. We still look in vain for authoritative information respecting the matter. It becomes us, therefore, to consider carefully just what interests are involved in this apparently hasty and inconsiderate action of the Board, and upon whom the responsibilities of conducting and sustaining this sacred work devolves.

Directly, the management of the mission is in the hands of the brethren comprising the Board. They appoint and supervise the missionaries, and to them also is intrusted the disbursement of the funds raised by the churches for the support of the mission. Indirectly, the whole business is in the hands of the Convention, by which body the Board is appointed, and to which the Board makes its annual reports. But outside of the Board, and the Convention too, there is a large constituency deeply interested in this great work, whose claims and wishes cannot be ignored or lightly esteemed.

Foreign Missions is a principal subject in the discussions of the seven Associations now existing in these Provinces. These bodies do much by their prayers and labours to foster the spirit and develop the resources of Foreign Missions, and although not organically connected with the direct business of the great enterprise, yet their labours and influence must be taken into account in conducting the great work now upon our hands and upon our hearts.

The churches too, in their church capacity, must be held prominent in this work. Although the Convention and the Board all have membership in the churches, yet the constituency of Foreign Missions in their church connection ought to be emphasized, for the churches are of divine origin, and it is their work to give the gospel to the heathen. The work enlists their best sympathies; for it they pray and labour, and for its support they cheerfully give their money.

In this fellowship of labour in the great Foreign Mission work, and by an unbroken communion during a long series of years of constant communication, the hearts of the churches of these Maritime Provinces are closely knit to the hearts of our brother and sister Armstrong. Indeed, it may be taken for granted that nothing but the impossible will permit a permanent separation between these missionaries and our churches in missionary labour. They will not yield their beloved labourers in the Lord to be united to other Boards and other churches until they are persuaded that it is the will of the God of Missions that it should be so, of which fact, I am assured, they are far from being convinced at the present time.

The Spirit's message is to the churches. By and through the churches His work is accomplished and His power manifested. The Convention and the Board are but the instruments organized by the churches to carry into operation their great enterprise, and this is why I urge that the churches should meet in special Convention to deliberate upon this great crisis which has come upon our mission by the resignation of brother and sister Armstrong.

It may be thought that this matter can be delayed until the regular meeting of Convention in August next. But it must be remembered that Foreign Missions is only one of the great enterprises which must be discussed at the annual meeting, and the time allotted to it is quite insufficient for that full investigation which the importance of this case demands. All-night sessions in addition to all-day sessions cannot, in the nature of things, be desirable; neither can they be expected. And,

besides, it is of the utmost importance that the peace and harmony of the entire body should be preserved. This, I fear, may not be the result if a full discussion of this case should be carried on through the public press; and the great interests involved demand that the fullest investigation must not be delayed.

Special meetings of Conventions are not unknown to us. It will be remembered that when a great crisis arose in connection with our Foreign Mission work, a special meeting of Convention was called at Amherst in May 1875, and great good resulted from the action then taken.

If the Board and other brethren do not think that an emergency of equal, if not greater, importance has now arisen, I trust they may be so convinced as the subject becomes more fully developed.

R. M. K.

For the Christian Messenger.

Have the Members of a Baptist Church the Scriptural right to Commune in other Baptist Churches of the same Faith and Order?

Intercommunion is either *wrong, right, or indifferent*. To practice it as being *indifferent* robs the Lord's Supper of its character as a religious act, both as it concerns the churches and the individual communicants. "Nothing should be performed as a religious duty which may as well be omitted."

Intercommunion must therefore be either *right or wrong*. If it is *right* then there is a "Thus saith the Lord" for its observance. And before a "Thus saith the Lord" can be claimed, there must be either a divine precept or example, or both, shown for its practice. Otherwise it should not be regarded as being incumbent upon the churches. We know of no passage of Scripture which, with a fair interpretation, can be regarded as being either a divine precept or example for its practice. The only text that we have heard quoted as bearing on this subject is Acts xx. 7: "And upon the first day of the week, when the disciples came together to break bread, Paul preached unto them, ready to depart on the morrow," &c. This passage does not state that Paul partook of the ordinance with them. All that can be claimed from it is a vague inference. Even if it could be shown that the apostles practiced intercommunion, we do not think that an argument could be based upon their practice. We do not sustain that relation to the churches that the apostles did to the churches of their own planting.

All that the ablest defendants of this practice—after years of discussion of the question—claim for it is courtesy, which is a concession that it is without scriptural authority. What authority has courtesy with the positive ordinances of Christ's churches? Does not every Baptist say "Positively none?" And besides, this argument of christian courtesy not only leads to the carrying of the ordinance to all organizations claiming to be churches, but also to all individuals claiming to be christians!

"That which proves too much proves nothing at all." The very fact that it is impossible to find a "Thus saith the Lord" upon which to base this practice is certainly a strong presumptive argument that the custom is not right.

Having seen that intercommunion is neither indifferent nor right, we will give an outline of some of the reasons why the practice should be regarded as unscriptural.

1. There is not to be found in the whole range of the New Testament a single word that teaches that the Lord's Supper is a joint right to be held and practised by churches in common.

2. It is subversive of the doctrine of church independence. "No one who is not a member can claim any right to come to the table, or take part in any other act of fellowship."

3. It encourages a disrespect for church discipline.

4. It virtually commits the purity of the ordinance to chance.

5. It is contrary to the analogy between the Passover and the Supper. "The rule was that each family should observe the passover separately."

6. It is not necessary. Every member either has or may have his own church to commune in.

Now is it desirable that we change our practice? We reply:—1. It would be more in keeping with Scripture teaching.

2. It would prevent numerous perversions of the ordinance.

3. It would tend to preserve the heaven ordained separate and independent condition of our churches.

4. It would have a tendency to elevate the standard of individual piety, and consequently promote the cause of Christ on earth.

5. It would, under God, tend to, and ultimately silence, the charges of illiberality and bigotry which are now so often made by Pedobaptists against Baptists.

6. It would exert a strong influence against so many who are Baptists going into Pedobaptist societies.

7. It would only be practicing a right indicated every time a church invites persons "of sister churches of the same faith and order" to commune with it.

A few words will indicate our views concerning the most popular objections to church communion:

1. It is claimed that intercommunion is right *per se*. But, we ask, where is the limit of its application? Who is to be the judge in the premises? Would not the throwing the ordinance outside of the church be *wrong per se*? And is not the administering of the ordinance to members of churches who are notoriously immoral in their lives quite as *wrong*? Hence this idea of self-evident right of intercommunion is met by a self-evident *wrong* of equal force! Basing an important ordinance upon any such assumption is exceedingly dangerous. We have already noted some of the evils which its operations lead to.

2. It is claimed that this restriction is contrary to universal and immemorial usage. This, we think, is incorrect. It can be shown that church communion has been recognized, and, by some churches, practiced for years, if not more or less from the first planting of gospel churches on this continent. And, supposing that what is claimed by the objection is correct, can Baptists be governed by unauthoritative usage? This is especially a pertinent enquiry when the results are so injurious. Baptists ask for Scripture usage.

3. Others prefer intercommunion because "it permits communion with our dear friends and relatives, who are members of other churches, who chance to be present at our observance of the Lord's Supper." But what have our dear friends, &c., to do with our celebration of the sufferings and death of Christ? This objection shows that intercommunion really does, at least sometimes, pervert the design of the ordinance. The Supper is designed to commemorate the death of Christ, and not our affection for kindred and friends. Is there not too much affinity between this objection and the often-refuted cry of open communion to be insisted upon by intelligent Baptists?

4. And, finally, it is said that "our own enlightened consciences teach us that to restrict the ordinance to church members would be wrong and sinful." Where would such argument land us? To intelligent persons the statement of such an idea is its refutation. It reminds us of an address said to have been delivered in favor of open communion. The speaker is reported to have said, "I know that the restricted brethren have the Scriptures and logic on their side, but we have the religious feeling on our side." To which a brother replied, "We want the religious feeling that is based upon a 'Thus saith the Lord.'" "The imagination of man's heart is evil."

I have now presented a condensed view of this subject, as seen by a number of Bible students, among whom the writer claims a humble place. But this paper is not presented as an exhaustive discussion, or even as containing the complete Scripture argument in favor of church communion. That is left for abler pens. We have been led to write this much, in defence of what we regard as being the teachings of divine truth, by questions asked us by esteemed brethren, and all that we ask is that the subject shall be seriously and faithfully studied in the light of God's Word. May the Lord lead us into all truth.

Respectfully,  
J. C. BLENKNEY.  
Berwick, N. S., Dec. 30, 1880.

The Eleventh Annual Report of the Nova Scotia Central Board of Women's Missionary Aid Societies for 1880.

The commencement of a New Year suggests thoughts of gratitude, of progress, and of more earnestness of purpose in whatever lies nearest to our hearts; and surely the Missionary cause is one which stirs our Christian sympathies as nothing else can do. The history of the past year is one especially calculated to cause our minds to dwell on the goodness of our Heavenly Father in protecting and caring for our dear Missionaries, Mr. and Mrs. Armstrong, who have crossed the seas in search of health. Our friends sailed from India in May last, and, after spending a month in England, arrived in their native land in August. Meanwhile our own Missionary, Miss Hammond, had been summoned from her home in Bimlipatam to take charge of the school and mission affairs in Chicacole, during the absence of Mr. and Mrs. Armstrong. Her situation there is a trying one in many respects. With great responsibilities resting upon her, she has little society, and must pass many lonely hours. Yet her days are busy ones, well filled up with work, and we trust her health may prove equal to the strain, and not suffer in consequence. She shall speak for herself. In a letter dated Bimlipatam, March 9th, she says:

"We have started a prayer meeting for Telugu women, and find it rather difficult to conduct one; that is to explain a few verses and pray, as I can only do it in an imperfect manner; my explanations are not what I desire they should be, and my prayers are short. Yet I am very grateful that sufficient health and strength have been permitted me to acquire the language even to this degree. A large part of the present year must be spent in study. I daily pass several hours in this way."

Her next letter is dated in June, after her removal to Chicacole, when she writes:

"My school and visiting at Bimlipatam had been quite encouraging for the last few months, and it was not a small trial to lay them aside, but as it seemed my duty to come here, I did so, and will do my utmost for the promotion of the work in its various departments. There are some families of native Christians in the compound, who cannot well be left wholly to themselves. I have thirty-six names on my register this month. I have admitted some little boys between five and eight years, and thus far the plan has worked well. I only wish I had two hundred girls and boys. I try to hope that the darkest days for my school are over; be that as it may, the future is held safely in God's hand, and I only live in the present. The children are learning first and best, the knowledge of God. I can see herein steady improvement."

In July she adds: "Our very hot weather is over for this year; it is still hot, and so sultry! you have no idea how close it seems. This kind of weather affects me more than the very hot, and is a great tax on the strength. Yet it is not a little that has to be done here. I work in the schools rather more than three hours daily. That, with all the other things which require attention, and my studying, does not leave me much time for loneliness. I do not do as much visiting at the native houses as I should like, and cannot but help thinking that it would be wise for the Boards to send a lady out for this work. Two of us could do much more than one in every way. There is work here, at Bimili, and at Bobbili, if we only had the money and those willing to give themselves to it. If I could say but one word to the Central Boards, it would be, husband your money in every wise way, and as soon as possible send out young ladies. It is the women who need the most lifting up, and they can only be reached by going to their houses."

The other sisters in the mission field have been doing what they can, as far as their time and strength have permitted. Mr. and Mrs. Churchill have suffered much from sickness during the past year, yet they have purchased a house in the town for school purposes, and have been able to do something in this way, as well as in other directions for the work. Mrs. C. writes:

"Some of the Brahmin boys who attend my Sabbath class came round the day after we returned from Bimili to see us. Eleven came to the school the next day, and in three of these I was much interested. They paid very good attention, and asked many questions. Two were brothers, and wished to know if every one who believed on Jesus would go to heaven when they died; I said, yes, if they truly believed; then they said they both believed on Him. I tried to show them it was not enough to say they believed in Jesus, if they did believe in Him, they would love Him, and study the Bible to find out what He wanted