

Correspondence.

For the Christian Messenger. The Associations and the Convention.

Mr. Editor,—

In the CHRISTIAN MESSENGER of the 3rd inst. appeared an article by A. J. Denton, in which he urges the holding of the Convention before the Associations; and expresses the belief that the change would tend to the more harmonious and vigorous working of the various organizations of the Baptist denomination. He states that at present there is much friction and great indifference. Now, how so changing the time of holding the anniversary of the bodies named is to lessen that friction, and produce harmony and vigour in the working of the various organizations of the Baptist denomination we are not told; except indeed, that the Convention is to lay down or indicate a policy which all the Associations are expected to carry out. The intention of the brother, doubtless, is good. But the mere changes of time referred to seems to me utterly insufficient to produce the result contemplated. Union and harmony are exceedingly desirable in Christian and denominational work; but in order to secure this some more potent force is needed than the mere temporal precedence of the Convention Anniversary over those of the Associations.

What is needed is not a change of time, but a larger, much larger, measure of the spiritual element in the churches, Associations, and Convention, and especially in the management of the important interest committed to the Board. The spirit of humility and confidence, of brotherly love and frankness, would do more to produce harmony and vigour, satisfaction and success in our denominational enterprises at home and abroad, than the cleverest manipulation in timing the Convention first, and marshalling the Associations in order can effect.

And, moreover, instead of the Associations waiting to receive a policy from the Convention, the Convention should be largely guided by the matured views arrived at by the Associations and churches.

It is indeed true that the Associations are wanting in interest; and one cause of this, I presume, is that the management and control of what used to belong to the Associations have been handed over to the Convention. Still union and harmony, vigour and life could, it is believed, be maintained, and progress made, if the proper course were pursued towards the Associations. Each Board authorized by the Convention should supply full information as to its operations, condition, and wants to each Association, so that the latter may be able intelligently to keep the objects before the churches, and foster a growing interest in them among the people.

This can be done as well before the Convention as after, provided the proper information be furnished in time; and such Associations can do much towards awakening an interest in the meeting and work of the Convention, and so further its success.

If any Board does not or will not supply to the Association and churches, through the CHRISTIAN MESSENGER and through the Christian Visitor, by delegation, or otherwise, the requisite intelligence concerning its operations and condition, it is no wonder if dissatisfaction exists in respect to its management, and possibly misjudging and injury may result.

But Bro. Denton says: "It is evident that the recent Associational resolutions in regard to Foreign Missions have been made in the dark, and that the cause has been injured through want of knowledge, and hasty and imperfect criticism."

I am at a loss to perceive what authority or right the brother has to make this allegation. Has he obtained that knowledge, the want of which he alleges to be the cause of criticism injurious to the Foreign Mission? If so then, it does not appear necessary to wait till after the Convention to get the requisite information. All that is needed is a desire and readiness to impart it, and the circle can be easily enlarged.

Now, it would be interesting to know why it was that on Foreign Missionary matters the Associations were kept "in

the dark, and thereby, as alleged, passed resolutions "in the dark," and how it came about that Bro. A. J. Denton obtained that wonderful illumination, in virtue of which he is able to pronounce categorically that Associations erred in their resolutions, and brethren were at fault in their criticism.

Has a member of the Board, or its Secretary, furnished Bro. D. with light from the missionary rooms, and denied or withheld it from churches and Associations? One is almost tempted to infer such to be the case. But perhaps it came in some unaccountable way. It is high time, however, that private communications ceased, and similar correspondence were discontinued.—They operate to weaken confidence, create dissatisfaction and disunion, and inflict injury on those who possibly do not deserve it.

If the Foreign Missionary Board had fulfilled its obligation to publish monthly in the denominational press the proceedings of its meetings, churches and Associations would not have been left a whole year "in the dark" concerning its doings and designs.

That the Associations have the right to express their views on all matters connected with the great departments of Christian and denominational work embraced in the Convention cannot be questioned; and all that is needed to do so satisfactorily is sufficient information respecting the operations of each Board for the preceding nine months. Surely the Boards can do this. Especially with a paid Secretary, and two denominational papers at his service, it ought not to be difficult for the Board to supply the churches and Associations with the requisite information on Foreign Missions to enable those important organizations to judge wisely as to the past and act faithfully in future for the support of those Missions.

It is hoped the denomination will consider well before committing itself to the unnecessary change proposed.

GEORGE ARMSTRONG. Kentville, N. S., Aug. 8, 1881.

For the Christian Messenger. Baptist Colportage.

Dear Editor,—

By the arrangement of God's providence, it has been my privilege to spend seventeen years in the book business, and I have tried to keep prominent the spiritual good of the people in selling, giving, and circulating as much soul-saving Baptist literature as possible; also by employing first-class travelling salesmen to do the same work. May I not be excused for venturing to give a few suggestions, learned from experience, of the different modes of conducting colportage.

There are two plans by which colportage can be carried on; both are good, and may each be tried as the finances of a society may permit. Let us speak of them as the pastoral and the mercantile plans. In both none but intelligent Baptists, of strong convictions, real love for truth, and love for souls, should be employed, or may hope to succeed in all respects. Is not a genuine call from God to this work just as necessary as it is for one who is to fill the sacred desk? May it not be true that the aggregate results of a life work spent wisely in colportage is likely to accomplish fruits as much for the cause of truth and the salvation of souls as one spent in the office of pastor.

I shall first notice the pastoral plan of colportage. In the carrying out of this plan the colporteur is expected to visit more particularly the destitute districts, and from house to house to do real pastoral work as opportunity offers. In these districts two results may be expected. 1st. That the sale of books will be small. 2nd. That the opportunities for donations of small books and tracts will be abundant. Of necessity this work cannot be self-sustaining; and experience proves that the average annual cost to a society for such a workman is \$350, yet it may be looked upon as a wise investment.

In the carrying out of the mercantile plan, the colporteur or agent is supplied with an assortment of standard religious works and stationery, adding such a variety of poetical, historical, scientific and other works as are morally unobjectionable. The agent is expected to sell the books without any advance upon the current retail price; meanwhile

they will be furnished to him at such a reduction from the selling price as will secure to him fair wages if the work is carried on with suitable energy. The agent being thus thrown wholly upon his own resources for reward, naturally plans to visit the best districts for business, to the neglect of the poorer ones, but in every section good books are needed, and there will be opportunities to speak for Christ and His truth.—Of course the agent is furnished with a variety of soul-stirring instructive tracts and pamphlets for free distribution, part of which shall be denominational. It cannot be expected that as much effective religious work will be accomplished by the mercantile plan, as by the pastoral; yet surely it is a great gain to have so large an amount of religious and denominational literature put in circulation free of cost to the society. The agent will be loyal to the interests of the society employing him, striving to awaken the sympathy of churches and Sabbath schools in the Book Room, so that the sales shall thereby be increased. One such mercantile colporteur has been for the last two years at work on P. E. Island. Another true man gives evidence of being called of God for the work and desires it on the Baptist platform. There being no society in existence to employ him, he has accepted work in connection with a Union Society for the present. O that men whom the Lord raises up among us could be used for the spread of truth in its fullness and purity. These suggestions are commended to the consideration of all those who are interested in the immediate establishment of a Baptist Book Room. For its realization let us pray, plan and labor, and see if the Lord will not sweetly incline some of His stewards to furnish the capital necessary for the enterprise.

DIMOCK ARCHIBALD. Halifax, Aug. 4th, 1881.

For the Christian Messenger. The Scots Bay Shad Fisheries.

Near a century has passed since Shad began to be caught at Scots Bay. Of the manner in which they were first caught we know but little; about the beginning of this century a company of merchants belonging to Cornwallis, Horton, Parrsboro and Windsor, had a seine built, and built a large store to cure their fish in, and a long house to keep their boss and fishermen in, with a store in one end of it which contained a small supply of boots and shoes, a few jackets and pants, and a large supply of rum, tea, and tobacco, with which they paid their men at enormous prices. They used a spring seine, which was tied down in rough weather, and sprung at high water, when the weather was favorable, and the boss thought fit. I presume it was very seldom sprung on the Sabbath, not from religious or moral motives, as the boss and most of the men were Catholics and consumed enormous quantities of rum, and frequently had fights on Sunday, much like the old faction fights in Ireland, but they were all hired men. Large quantities of the finest shad in the world were taken, but they were badly cured, the boats got wrecked, the seine torn, and rotted, and the whole thing went down and passed away. Soon after, one settler here made or bought a sweep seine about fifty rods long, with which, when shad were seen breaking water near the shore in one particular place, where it could be used to advantage, considerable quantities of fine shad were swept out. But this was a small affair, and lasted but a few years. There were few inhabitants, few religious meetings, and no Sabbath Schools; people strolled about the beach on Sunday, and often saw the Shad breaking, and then, as now, they were a great temptation for if the owner did not often sweep for them on Sunday, others obtained the seine and swept them out, and the owner got a share. The foregoing history the writer had some forty years ago, from a then aged, but intelligent and communicative inhabitant, who had been here for many years, an eye witness to all he related. In 1837 the writer bought a farm here, and got a right in the Set seine, which had then been in use some 7 or 8 years, and was the only one then here; there were then eleven owners in it, now nineteen. The rule then was to fish Sunday the same as a week day;—excuse, that it was a

Set seine and could not be opened without a great deal of trouble, and if a door was made, the fish would be scared by crowding through a hole, and never come back again. It was found that when a large quantity of munhaden, and few Shad were going—or there was not salt on hand to cure the shad with—a small hole through the seine to allow the fish to pass in and out, 'till the salt came, or the munhaden left, excited no fears that the Shad would never come back, or the fishery be ruined. The writer then with the help of a small minority, began to struggle to put down the Sunday fishing, and after a few years arduous labor, the small minority became larger, and at length a majority; a piece of the seine was so fitted and prepared, with little trouble or expense, that it can be opened and shut, almost as easily as a gate or barn-door. There was then no Justice of the Peace at Scots Bay—and no "Fisheries Act" in existence, this was some twenty five years ago. A small and mean minority did, and still do, exist—who a few times have left the seine shut and stolen out some shad on Sunday for themselves, but there is little trouble with the old centre seine. Not so with the south seine commenced some twenty years ago—they had, and still have a majority of inveterate Sunday fishermen. I have plead with them, coaxed, and threatened, and at length as a regular complaint has been laid before me in writing, I am endeavouring to enforce the "Fisheries Act" to compel them to keep their seine open on Sunday as a close day. But I am informed that some leading church members and public officers are concerned in this Sunday fishing—that loads of fish are brought home and cured on their account, while they are attending church on Sunday. It is pretended that there is no law to compel persons in salt water to open their seines, that it is only in rivers—where they fish salmon that it is in force. I sincerely hope this is a misrepresentation, and that in the interests of religion and morality—and of this community, and those immediately affected by their examples that they will be pleased to rise and explain either that is not so—or if it is, why it is, over their own signatures, in a public manner in this or some other newspaper, as it seems to me a most serious and important matter. We have a small seine under the North Shore at this place with five owners, one of them came to me some ten years ago, when they got it up and I drew an agreement for them, at his request pledging themselves each to the other never on any account to fish that seine on Sunday. That pledge has never been violated, and that seine in proportion to its size and cost takes every year, as much value of fish as either of the others, I say most decidedly after forty four years personal experience there is not, nor can be, anymore excuse for Sunday fishing than for Sunday hoeing of potatoes. In vain we have preaching or Sunday Schools, if Deacons and parents sustain such an awfully demoralizing practice—Men and Boys shouting. Carts rattling past the Meeting or Sabbath School, and whole families engaged dressing and curing fish, at all, or any, hours of the otherwise peaceful Sabbath day.

WILLIAM A. TUPPER. Scots Bay, August 1st, 1881.

For the Christian Messenger. Letter from France.

(From our correspondent.)

PARIS, July 26, 1881.

The French bathing season is already far advanced. It begins officially on the 25th of June, feast of Saint Peter. It is the feast of fishermen, and the clergy go in procession on that day, and solemnly bless the sea; after which the pious, and those who are merely regulated by custom, alike feel that they may take baths in perfect safety. Then follow the ten halcyon weeks, during which keepers of hotels and lodging-houses try to make money which is to provide them with luxuries or comforts during the remainder of the year. They have few visitors before the last week in June, and once September has arrived, the first burst of bad weather sends all the bathers scudding home; the task of money-making has therefore for public caterers all the excitement of a race against time. If August be cold or rainy it is hardly possible to estimate

the losses and disappointments which fall upon thousands of speculative persons interested in the bains de mer. Ostend and Blankenburghe, Dieppe, Trouville, Deauville, Fécamp, and Etretat, have not, like Brighton a winter season to fall back upon. During nine months of the year they are regarded as uninhabitable and are almost deserted! Their best hotels are closed; their Kuranaals or casinos offer no accommodation to those casual tourists (generally English) who turn up in search of sea-bathing as early as April if the weather happen to be propitious thereby perpetuating the British character for eccentricity. Ostend in May and Ostend in July are very different places. Let the sun in May shine as warmly as it pleases, let the sky be blue and the sea smooth and tepid, yet there will be no "Saturday till Monday" excursionists from the native population of Bruges, Ghent, and Brussels. There will be English families who will experience a great difficulty in haggling for the use of bathing machines, but who on the other hand will find lodgings wondrous cheap. They will have the sands and the beautiful Digne all to themselves. Their parley for machines will be watched with amusement, not unmixed with suspicion, by the solitary policeman mooning about the parade, and perhaps the Burgomaster will be referred to as to whether strangers have any right to enter the sea when the temperature happens to suit them. This grave question which none but Englishmen have ever mooted, has never been settled by a positive yes or no; and those of our countrymen who have endeavoured to give it a practical settlement by the cool expedient of undressing on the sands and walking into the sea without the assistance of a machine, have occasionally been lugged out by a half a dozen excited Flemish fishermen, and have been marched off to explain to the authorities why they presumed to risk their lives in such a fool-hardy fashion. In Belgium and France it is not expected that people shall bathe until "the man with the horn" commences his duties; and this official seldom emerges from his winter retirement until the almanack announces that the summer has come, and that the days have begun to shorten. He carries a brass horn under the arm of his pea-coat, and paces about the beach ready to sound a warning blast if he should see bathers getting too near the breakers, waters, or struggling out of their depth. Sometimes bathers are drowned in spite of these precautions, but it is always a great solace to the authorities to know that they perished to the strains of the brazen music, and nobody is to blame, except the victims who were hard of hearing.

The thrift of the Parisians of the lower class is certainly one of their principal characteristics. There are few French servants, petty tradespeople, etc., who do not find means to "lay one penny on another" with such effect that they come to have a bank account, and keep the same all the days of their life. The banking institution principally patronized by saving folk is the Caisse d'Epargne, and a good idea may be given of the extent to which money is possessed among the lower classes of French society by the fact that during one week from the 5th to the 11th inst, the number of deposits at the Caisse d'Epargne was 9,081, the total sum deposited being 670, 921 fr.

AUGUST.

THE WHOLE LOAF.—I know very well some of you will remind me of the old saying: "Half a loaf is better than no bread." Well—sometimes it is; and sometimes it is not. If I am entitled, say as a soldier, to draw a whole loaf in my rations every day, I might decline to be put off with half a loaf, lest the commissary should form an opinion that I had no right to any more than half a loaf. He might keep me on half loaves. There are a good many churches that keep their present ministers on a half loaf, because a former one was put off with that amount, or, perhaps, speaking figuratively, with a Boston cracker or two.—Spurgeon

The company appointed to revise the Authorized Version of the Old Testament finished their seventy-eighth sitting. The second revision of Isaiah was continued as far as chapter xxvii. 6.