

For the Christian Messenger. From Rev. D. G. Macdonald.

Our joy in the Lord's work is frequently broken by visits from the death angel. On the 20th ult. our dear brother, Mr. Willard Estabrooks, and wife and family, were called to mourn the loss for a little while, of their darling Walter, aged about eight years. The dear boy, after less than two weeks' severe illness, caused by inflammation of the brain—illness borne without a murmur—in the exercise of cloudless and child-like faith in Jesus, calmly fell asleep in Him who said, "Suffer the little children to come unto me."

Yesterday we were again summoned to the house of mourning. On this occasion we mourn the great loss of a devoted wife, a tender-hearted mother, a loved and loving daughter, an affectionate sister, a respected member of the community, a devout, faithful, and deservedly honored child of God and member of the Baptist Church—the lamented wife of L. C. Harper, Esq. Sister Harper was 28 years of age, the daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Fitch, late of Kings Co., Nova Scotia. The community and the church and the parents have sustained a great loss, but the loss is most keenly felt in the home she adorned and made happy. Our friend, the bereaved husband, has our deepest sympathy. He is left with three little boys, one of them the son of the lamented mother, the other two adopted; these latter have indeed lost a second mother. A babe, born a few hours before her departure, was buried in her arms.

The esteem in which sister Harper was held could be known by any one present in our covenant meeting on Saturday, where more than forty persons in tears lamented our loss, and spoke of her worth. The funeral was large and the occasion solemn. Improvement of the mournful providence was sought by an address from the shortest verse in the Book of consolation. May the mourners find the comfort that it is calculated to give.

Yours in Christian love, D. G. MACDONALD. Sackville, June 4, 1883.

For the Christian Messenger. Councils and the Independence of Churches.

Your correspondent of May 16th, writing on "Councils and the Independence of the Churches," while stating much that every Baptist would readily endorse, takes ground exceptional at least to some. Errors in church government have doubtless been baneful to the church; but has not the deprival of independence been the worst feature of all? Has not Christendom groaned for want of liberty of conscience, and "freedom to worship God" according thereto?

While human nature remains what it is we may look in vain for perfect and perpetual harmony, even in our churches. We shall find enough to mortify us before the world, after we have brought into action our most effective machinery, among which we shall find place for the Ecclesiastical Council. The fourth under "Part second" in our "Articles of Faith and Practice," has, we deem, nothing objectionable in it. It leaves room for our claim to church independence, while it points to interdependence, enlightenment and counsel in trying times.

In every society a ruling power is essential to the well-being thereof. Unanimity is most desirable, but not always attainable. If there should be two sides the larger, surely, and not the smaller, must represent the body for the time being. Not to yield this is to violate every principle of government. Nor is such society thereby disqualified for further action. True, important questions may be at issue regarding the interests of the body. If this be a church the time may have come to seek counsel. This, we presume, however is for the church to decide. Careful and prayerful consideration is very necessary, as the results are largely theirs; but until the advisability of any action is seen, such church is illy prepared to act.

If any action should be intelligent and hearty, action in the church of Christ certainly should; and it may be assumed that some are so dull as to conclude that the obligatory attendance of a Council is somewhat like blind-folding a church, and leading them on to open their eyes on scenes that may be, and may continue to be, very uninviting at least, from which, however, there can be no remove. They have vowed to abide by it, and in honor must.

If Councils held powers of exorcism, or possessed infallibility, what a cure they would be; but, respected as they should be, their history dares to hint that they are composed of men "subject to like passions as we are." Not many years ago a Council spent a protracted period investigating the doings of a church, at the close of which pressure was used to bring the church to agree to adopt, unconditionally, their decision. The church declined to allow more than an advisory right. The Council withdrew, feeling somewhat injured, but when asked for a deliverance on the questions, officially acknowledged that they had not gotten the full bearings of the case. Was the decision of the church unwise?

Why not as Baptists yield some points at issue between us and our Paebaptist brethren, so numerous, intelligent, and apparently conscientious. We are in the minority here. By simply yielding our right of private action there might be formed a grand, united body. Do not Baptists assume to stand, even alone, upon principle, and may not important principles underlie our church questions? Are Baptist churches and their members only mere machines?

In the deduction drawn from the member's submission to the church, viz., the church's submission to the Council, is there not a grand distinction in this? The church receives her being and obligations from Christ, her head, while the authority of the Council is, to say the least, questionable.

But are not the discovery of a wrong and the hearty action of the wrongdoer essential to the removal thereof in the best sense? What can be made of an individual, or party, who will not rectify, as far as possible, their mistake when convinced of it, and who can work successfully in the church of Christ on a platform he could not conscientiously choose for himself? Formality and hypocrisy are not supposed to be in demand, according to Baptist theory.

Neighboring churches of Christ, by counsel, may render effectual service to each other by unfolding righteous principles, coupled with earnest Christian persuasives; but is it safe to conclude that each church represented in a Council is prepared to take the responsibility that must fall on each through the action of their exponent in the Council, while such action is fixing the destiny of the church in question? Can any representative take part in such without the special authority of his constituency?

As to the passage in Matt. xviii. 15, etc., if this passage does not teach, unconditionally, the independence of the church the book must be more mysterious than some think it to be. If it be true that two parties in a church must, as necessarily, take the position under an outside body, as the two members in the passage, must under the church, we may find each body to which the matter is referred, in turn, dividing upon it, (for even Councils are liable to division), and, in the end, we may be obliged to leave it to the decision of some character, akin to him for whom a certain body hold supreme reverence. And, in reality, do not the two parties exist every time a member refuses to hear the church? The church by judging becomes an interested party, and there is a square issue.

It is allowed that "the trouble usually begins between individuals;" hence the disaffected member may become the nucleus of a faction against the church, and having relations and friends in the church inclined to favor him, may demand a Council, and thus enlist more sympathy, until the church is rent in twain. And if it be an established thing that but a slight commotion necessitates a Council, it may not be hard to predict "whereunto this would grow." Is there any assurance that from any given case of discipline there may not

grow a disjuncture? Ought all church discipline to be dispensed with? Is there not room to fear that the system advocated in the above named paper might do more to cause schism than to cure it, unless we propose to change our entire polity.

Some appear to gather almost unlimited authority from the so-called "Council at Jerusalem," Acts 15. But what can we find in it more than this, certain members of the church in Jerusalem, see v. 24, went abroad and taught doctrines that were not purely Christian, assuming, doubtless, that such was the doctrine of their church, which church was really tainted with it, see v. 5, but which was disputed by Paul and Barnabas, who with "certain others" were sent to the church from which these had come to get the truth in the matter, and bring tangible evidence of the same.

The "sentence" is given by James, the supposed pastor of the church, which sentence is ratified and forwarded by "the apostles and elders and brethren." Is it a mark of unpardonable stupidity if one should fail to discover, even here, the pattern of the modern Council? Is it too much for each particular Church to assert that "One is [her] Master even Christ?"

WILLIAM SPENCER. Weymouth, May 18th.

Baptist Book and Tract Society, 104 GRANVILLE ST., HALIFAX.

Subscriptions to Capital Fund: Wolfville—Mrs. J. D. Harris, \$5. Onslow—John Blair, \$2.

Berwick—Edward Parker, \$5; W. C. Shaw, \$5; Ida Moody, \$1; Daniel Hartley, \$5; Mary Hartley, \$5; Martha Vaughan, \$5.

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Nictaux—Fidlers Achates, \$5. Bass River—George A. Fulton, \$4. East Ragged Island—Capt. Chadsey, \$2.50; Mark Page, \$1; H. W. Page, \$1.50; M. James Matthews, \$1; Rev. I. McKenna, \$3; Allan McKenna, \$1.

GEO. A. MACDONALD, Sec'y. June 6th, 1883.

Pope Pius the ninth's personal effects have been sold at auction in Rome much to the annoyance of the faithful who consider that the late Pope's family ought to have preserved every atom of his belongings as a relic. There was a miscellaneous collection of crucifixes, sacred pictures and images, portraits of crowned heads and celebrities, missals, etc., but the public was not very eager to buy, and in many cases the things fetched even less than their intrinsic value.

A Catholic paper says the progress of the Catholic Church in America is wonderful, and that "in every State and Territory its teachings prevail, and its children multiply." The San Francisco Monitor asserts that the number of Catholics in the United States is now between twelve and fifteen millions. But this is an assertion that seems to be more than half imagination rather than a fact.

Dr. Bliss, agent of the American Bible Society in Constantinople, writes in review of the quarter of a century spent by him in Bible work, during which the combined circulation of the British and America Societies in the Turkish Empire amounts to 1,128,780 volumes of Scriptures in thirty languages, of which more than a million have been circulated by sale at an average price of about twenty-five cents a copy.

The Christian Messenger.

Bible Lessons for 1883. SECOND QUARTER.

Lesson XIII.—JUNE 24, 1883.

QUARTERLY REVIEW.

GOLDEN TEXT.—"God... did visit the Gentiles, to take out of them a people for his name."—Acts xv. 14.

DAILY HOME READINGS.

- M. Lessons I. and II., and Context, Acts, chap. viii. T. Lessons III., IV., and V., Acts, chap. ix. W. Lessons VI. and Context, Acts, chap. x. T. Lessons VII. and Context, Acts, chap. xi. F. Lessons VIII. and Context, Acts, chap. xii. S. Lessons IX. and X. and Context, Acts, chap. xiii. S. Lessons XI. and XII., Acts, chap. xiv.

The Lord Jesus, through the Holy Spirit, Extending his Work to the Gentiles.

REVIEW.

1. The Thirteen Golden Texts, recited in concert. 2. Special Review Exercise. [The Pastor or Superintendent will ask the questions; and the verses given under each will be recited or read from the open Bible. Teachers will give the first text; Boys the second, Girls the third; or they may be given by classes.]

1. What was God's gracious purpose towards mankind? Isa. xlix. 6; John iii. 16; Eph. iii. 9.

2. What noble mission was offered to Israel? Ex. xix. 5, 6; Isa. ii. 3; Acts iii. 19-21.

3. How did they treat this offer? Acts iii. 14, 15; Acts vii. 51; 1 Thess. ii. 15, 16.

4. Who became the people of God, instead of Israel? Eph. i. 22, 23; 1 Cor. i. 24; 1 Pet. ii. 9, 10.

5. How was this done through the instrumentality of Israelites? Rom. i. 3; Acts i. 8; Phil. iii. 5.

6. By what power was it effected? Mark xvi. 20; Acts x. 45; 1 Thess. i. 5.

7. How ought we to improve God's kindness to us? Rom. ii. 4; Rom. xv. 9; John xiv. 15.

8. What ought we to do for those in darkness? Mark v. 20; Matt. xxviii. 19, 20; Rom. x. 15.

9. What Foreign Missions have we, and how many members in Mission Churches? [Let some one, previously appointed, be prepared with a short paper, in answer.]

ANALYSIS.

I. Simon the Sorcerer, Acts viii. 14-25. 1. The Work in Samaria, 14-17. 2. The Case of Simon, 18-25.

II. Philip and the Ethiopian, Acts xvi. 26-40. 1. The Axious Inquirer, 26-34. 2. Instruction and Baptism, 35-40.

III. Saul's Conversion, Acts ix. 1-18. 1. Saul and Jesus, 1-9. 2. Saul and Ananias, 10-15.

IV. Saul Preaching Christ, Acts ix. 19-31. 1. Saul in Damascus, 19-25. 2. Saul in Jerusalem, 26-31.

V. Peter Working Miracles, Acts ix. 32-43. 1. Eneas Healed, 32-35. 2. Dorcas Raised to Life, 36-43.

VI. Peter Preaching to the Gentiles, Acts x. 30-44. 1. The Experience of Cornelius, 30-33. 2. Peter's Address, 34-44.

VII. The Spread of the Gospel, Acts xi. 19-30. 1. Unknown Missionaries, 19-21. 2. The Mission of Barnabas, 22-26. 3. The Grace of Giving, 27-30.

VIII. Herod and Peter, Acts xii. 1-17. 1. Peter in Prison, 1-4. 2. The Church at Prayer, 5. 3. Deliverance, 6-11. 4. Surprise, 12-17.

IX. Paul and Barnabas in Cyprus, Acts xiii. 1-12. 1. The First Foreign Mission, 1-5. 2. The Consul and the Sorcerer, 6-12.

X. At Antioch, Acts xiii. 13-16, and 43-52. 1. The First Sabbath in Antioch, 44-52.

XI. At Iconium and Lystra, Acts xiv. 1-18. 1. At Iconium, 1-7. 2. At Lystra, 8-18.

XII. End of First Missionary Journey, Acts xiv. 19-28. 1. Paul Stoned, 19-20. 2. Teaching and Organizing, 21-25. 3. Return to Antioch, 26-28.

NOTES.—I. In the Lessons of the First Quarter, we saw the Beginnings of the Christian Church. In the Lessons of this quarter, we note its Progress both among Jews and Gentiles. In the first three Lessons, we mark certain preparatory steps and indications, looking to the widening out of the work to the world. 2. In the next five Lessons, we have the gospel presented now to the Jew, and now to the Gentile. It seems to be a transition period, in which the motto is, "To the Jew first, and also to the Gentile." 3. The last four Lessons present the First Foreign Missionary Tour, and open widely and effectually the door to Gentiles. We see the first missionary setting out from Seleucia, the seaport of Antioch. We land with Paul and Barnabas upon the first missionary field, Cyprus. We traverse the inland with

them, and set sail for Perga, push our way through "perils of rivers, and perils of robbers," to Antioch in Pisidia.

Help for Parents, or for the Teacher of the Primary Class.

REVIEW.—LESSON THOUGHT:—Spreading the light of the gospel.

TRUTHS TO BE TAUGHT:—1. Divine light cannot be bought. 2. Possession of the light gives joy. 3. Divine light may be had by true seeking. 4. Duty to show the light. 5. The light has healing in its beams. 6. The light is free to all. 7. Believers should let their light shine. 8. Wicked men cannot put out the divine light. 9. Blindness of some to God's light. 10. The light will meet opposition. 11. The light overcomes selfishness. 12. The light a source of comfort and love.

It will give pleasing variety and add much to the interest of the class in the Review, to give in story form, Lessons I., V., and IX.; present in word pictures, Lessons II., III., VIII., and XI.; and use questions upon Lessons IV., VI., VII., X., and XII. All the Lessons are to be given in consecutive order, of course. The method of forming word pictures has been suggested in connection with several past lessons. In using them, or the Lesson story, questions are necessary, to occupy the children, and to assure yourself that they are getting clear conceptions of your words and thoughts, and these should be put in the simplest manner, but closely in the line of the truths of the lessons. —Abridged from the Baptist Teacher.

Booth's Department.

Original and Selected. Bible Enigma.

No. 229.

Here are ten Scripture names which if correctly found will show by their initials who were brought from Egypt to the promised land, and the initials will show who were driven out before them:

- 1. The son of Abraham. 2. The country whose queen came to see Solomon. 3. The eldest son of Jacob. 4. A king of Judah who had a disease on his feet. 5. The servant of Elijah. 6. The father of Rachel. 7. One of David's mighty men, who was of the children of Benjamin. 8. The dwelling-place of Abraham. 9. The mother of Cain and Abel. 10. What did Moses tell the children of Israel to offer to God?

Here are six names. Find them and you will have in the initials a prophet, and in the initials his mother:

- 1. The place where Eli was priest. 2. The husband of Priscilla. 3. The country of Jethro. 4. The last word written on the wall of Belshazzar's palace. 5. The word that opened the ears of the deaf. 6. The father of Noah.

CURIOUS QUESTIONS.

No. 78. I am composed of six:

- My first sounds like a beverage With the ladies when not cold; My next is yourself—now guess it, Whether you're young or old; My third is the name of a little verb We could scarcely do without; My fourth is the name of a letter, You'll find that at once, no doubt; My fifth, in the Scottish language, Is a member of your face; My last will ask a question Of reason; but not of place. My whole you'll find at Christmas Upon a well-spread table; Failing in that, then look on a map Of Europe, if you are able.

Find answers to the above—write them down—and see how they agree with the answers to be given next week.

Answer to Bible Enigma.

No. 228.

- 1. F ootstool...Heb. x. 13. 2. O ffering...Heb. x. 14. 3. R everence...Pa. lxxxix. 7; Heb. xii. 4. E vil...John xvii. 15. 5. R eproach...Heb. xi. 26. 6. U nicorn...Num. xxiii. 22. 7. N ation...John xi. 51-2. 8. N ine...Luke xvii. 17. 9. I gnition...Isa. xi. 1, 10, 12. 10. R eurrection...John xi. 25.

FORERUNNER—Heb. vi. 19, 30.

ANSWERS TO CURIOUS QUESTIONS.

No. 73. Robert Bruce—1314.

No. 74. T I M E I T E M E T I E M I T

No. 75. How much better is it to get wisdom than gold! and to get understanding rather to be chosen than silver! Prov. xvi. 16.

No. 76. 1. Hospitality. 2. Congregationalism. 3. Rheumatism. 4. Prognostications.

No. 77. It is believed that the bark of a dog is an effort to speak. It is supposed that they do not bark in a wild state.

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