

and also exempt from all those institutions which human prudence suggests to oppose the progress of iniquity, or to correct or reform transgressors."

All secular interference must therefore be excluded from this holy community. Its formation is the work of the Divine Spirit operating through the word. Its laws are the precepts, holy and self-denying, of the Lord Jesus Christ. Its ceremonies are the simple emblems and memorials of a life imparted and sustained by the Spirit of God, through the death of the Son of God. Here, since no human laws can intervene, no human allegiance can be due. The conscience is God's seat, the church his temple; which no human legislator should dare to desecrate, no human power control.

This primary and exalted idea of the Church of Christ, cherished and sought to be realized by the Baptists, was averse to the views of the reformers. From this difference naturally resulted the opposition, which, on the one side, led to the oppression of conscience, and on the other, to the maintenance of its freedom. The reformers by enclosing in the fold of the church all of every degree, age and character, were constrained to employ, and to rely upon external means to effect that internal change which was allowed to be an essential feature of the true Christian. The church with them was not the segregation of the good, in bonds of holy amity, and alliance with each other and the Lord, from the mass of pollution reigning around them, but embraced in its maternal arms all who at any age had been sealed by baptism as the church's own, whether they were helpless infants, or strangers to the power of spiritual truth. It was sufficient that they bore the magic mark, which, it was asserted made them children of God, and inheritors of the kingdom of heaven. Such a church might be constituted by human agencies; it was within human power to effect it; and accordingly, by the secular arm the reformer sought to frame it. The operations of the Divine Spirit were not absolutely essential to the formation of such a community; nor need they wait for living stones to build the temple of the Lord. The materials were at hand; the initiatory rite could be easily applied. Repentance towards God and faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, could be promised by surety, or supplied by an ascent to creeds.

It was, moreover the duty of the secular magistrate to shape and fashion the church, so called, to that form which his conscience, instructed by the word of God, or by the interpretations of the church's teachers, should dictate. To kings was granted the high honor of being its nursing fathers, to protect it from its foes, to maintain in physical comfort its ministers, to root out the weeds of evil doctrine, and to execute the decisions of the ecclesiastical body; force thus necessarily entered into this idea of the Christian community; and, without exception, the reformers yielded to the temporal powers the right of determining the form of the church in their respective dominions.

The fundamental idea of the Baptists was antagonistic to all this. They thought and said that the temple could not be built until God had provided the stones. Holy men must be first produced by the power of the Spirit of God, and then shall a building rise to the glory of Him who had redeemed them by his blood. No human workman could be of use but as the channel of blessing; it was the prerogative of God to creature anew in Christ Jesus. His word was the only effectual instrument of divine energy; force and coercion of every kind were inadmissible. *Faith is the gift of God; faith cometh by hearing and hearing by the word of God*; and no other weapon must the ministers of God's word employ.

Since, then, the church ought to be the aggregated result of an internal divine operation, exerted on every individual before he becomes a member of it, so in its formation no kind of outward compulsion can be permitted. The unconscious babe cannot be made a member of the community, where a hearty willing assent of the regenerated mind is an essential condition of membership, since intelligence is not there to give value and significance to the deed; nor may men be driven by force or fear as foolish sheep, within the fortified barrier of the nation's church, since these cannot convert the soul. "Thus it was an ideal state of the Christian church that floated before the imagination of the Anabaptists; the confused representation of a joyful kingdom of holy and blessed spirits, which inspired these sectaries with such deep enthusiasm, gave them such power and constancy of endurance, under all persecutions, and caused them to exert on all sides so contagious an influence."† In accordance with these views, they are represented by Justus Menius as thus introducing the novice into the sacred fold: "If thou wilt be saved, thou must truly renounce and give up all thy works, and all creatures, and, lastly, thy own self, and must believe in God alone. But now I ask thee, dost thou renounce creatures? Yes. I ask thee again, dost thou renounce thy own self? Yes. Dost thou believe in God alone?—Yes. Then I baptize thee in the name," &c.‡

† Mochler's Symbolism, ii. 157, 158.

‡ Quoted in Mochler's Symbolism, ii. 163.

Was it Labor in Vain?

Many fear it was, when they have persevered and seen no good result; and especially, if one for whose good they have labored has died without hope. But they may be mistaken. An article concerning an intemperate man, in the last Report of the New York City Tract Society, page 43, concludes with this lamentable statement: "The drunkard's grave received the rum-seller's victim;" but to that article something more pleasing may now be added.

That man left a widow and six children, one of them a daughter 18 years of age, and all the rest younger. While the father received the chief attention of the Tract missionary, the efforts that were without profit to him made an

impression upon his family. The eldest daughter became solicitous concerning her spiritual state, and sometime after her father's death sent for the missionary, that she might learn the way of salvation. He gave her useful counsel, and the Lord blessed it. She sought the Lord, and she found him, to the joy of her soul. He gave her the spirit of adoption, and her peace flowed as a river. But her time on earth was short, and she died rejoicing in God her Saviour. The mother and her family appear to be under a good influence, and the children enjoy Sabbath-school instruction. However discouraging, therefore, appearances may at first have been, the labor bestowed upon that family was not in vain.—*American Messenger*.

CORRESPONDENCE.

The following letter will be read with interest by those who, about a year since, contributed to defray the expense of a Missionary among the French population in this Province. It is in reply to a communication directed by appointment of the Association.

We are glad to learn also that the Executive Committee of the Bible Society are ready to employ a Colporteur to distribute Bibles and Testaments among those contemplated in this letter, as soon as a suitable person can be found who will undertake the labor. We know of an active, promising and pious young man, who was ready some time since for such a work, and upon the advice of christian friends came to St. John from the Grand Falls with such an object in view. We hope he may be introduced to the Committee. "The field is white already to the harvest."

MONTREAL, Sept. 14, 1847.

DEAR BROTHER,—Your letter would have been answered long ago, had I not been "pressed beyond measure" with business crowding upon me after a lengthened absence from home.

It would have afforded us great pleasure to send you a suitable colporteur—Missionary, but as yet we have not met with one whom we could recommend for the purpose. A converted Canadian would be preferred: it is obvious, however, that such persons, from their previous ignorance and bad habits, require long and careful training. We are under obligation to supply you, as soon as we can send an Agent in whom we can confide; and you may be assured that it will be our anxious endeavour to meet your wishes as soon as possible.

Your progress in New Brunswick is cheering. Fervent piety, diligence, and zeal will always obtain a blessing.

I send you a copy of the Montreal Register, containing the Report of proceedings at the Annual Meeting of the Canada Baptist Union, and beg to call your particular attention to the formation of the "Publication Committee," and the purposes connected with it. We propose to issue a connected series of works under the title of "The Baptist Colonial Library." The co-operation of our Brethren in Nova Scotia and New Brunswick is earnestly desired.

I have a very pleasing recollection of my visit to your province, and shall be happy to repeat it, should my life be spared, when it may be acceptable. If our worthy Missionary, Dr. Cote, could accompany me, you would all be truly delighted.

I am, dear brother,
Yours faithfully,
J. M. CRAMP.

REV. E. D. VERY.

For the Christian Visitor.

MR. EDITOR,—The enclosed letters were received a few days before the death of our late esteemed brother Rev. John Mills, and gave him much consolation in his dying moments while reading the letter to him. He would exclaim with wonder and admiration,—"What, me an heir of glory, &c." He died rejoicing in the doctrines of that gospel which He had proclaimed to others. He was buried with honour and respect by the church at St. Martins, where he had laboured with much acceptance for about two years. His funeral took place on the first Sabbath of last month: a large concourse of people assembled at the house at 10 o'clock, when, after singing an appropriate hymn, Brother Newcomb engaged in prayer. His remains were then taken to the Baptist Chapel, where a sermon from Job 14 chapter and 14 verse, was preached to a deeply solemn and attentive audience, by Rev. John Francis. After which service his body was conveyed to the grave, where Rev. John Masters delivered an affecting address and offered prayer.

Ballysagastmore, July 15, 1847.

MY VERY DEAR SISTER,—About an hour since I received your affectionate letter, which, under any other circumstances, would, indeed, be a treat to me, as I have long wished to get one from you; but, alas! the pleasure is now pain,

when it conveys to me the melancholy intelligence that my darling brother is not able to write. Oh! what would become of me at this moment if my Heavenly Father did not sustain me? I really don't know. And am I never again to see my dearest John in this wilderness? Father give me Grace to say "Thy will be done," for without this grace I never could. I shall have no brother now to care for me (if the Lord removes him), except Him who sticketh closer than a brother. May He who sympathized with a Mary at one time, who sorrowed for a brother whom she tenderly loved, listen to my weak supplications this evening, in behalf of a brother whom I tenderly love (and He knows this), and if consistent with His divine will, may He restore to us this object of our affections, and spare him to us and his little ones a little longer, before he goes hence to be no more seen. I know, dear sister, our loss is his eternal gain, for he is one of those who cleaves to Jesus, whom his soul loves, and who is washed and sanctified, and one whom nothing shall ever separate from Christ. Oh, how rejoiced my heart is to-night, that he is an heir of glory! and that, though the Lord in his mysterious wisdom may, for His own wise purposes, remove him, yet that I shall soon see him above, for I feel that I shall not be very long from my home. I pity you, my dear sister, listening to your poor patient, and can't alleviate his sufferings. May the Lord comfort you and support you in this trying hour. I don't wonder my dearest John should have been surprised at my silence; but I was not silent. When I got the first letter, he did not bid me write. I was indulging the delusive idea of seeing him. Oh, that I could now see him even for an hour! When the second letter came, to say I must not expect this, it came the latter end of May, and I wrote some days before the first of June. I am annoyed you did not receive my long letter; but I dare say it was not forwarded at once from St. Martins, and I should hope you have got it long since, so that my dear John will perceive I did not neglect to write.—I have been looking out for a letter from him in answer to mine, for the last ten days, and expecting to hear that the return of fine weather had restored him to health. But it was otherwise, and I must submit. "It is the Lord, let Him do what seemeth Him good." How my poor heart will long for another letter from you, or from dear John; shall I ever see his well known hand?—if not, what shall become of me? I can't write more on this subject, it is too much for me, dear sister, but again write. My brother Richard, who intended leaving the Isle of Man, has been very delicate, and has not been able to do so; he is better now, thank God. I am afraid the climate of New Brunswick has been very ungenial to dear John's constitution. I am sorry he did not try and leave it before; but he wrote as if he did not like to leave it. I am not able to write more, and with much love for my dearest brother, and same for yourself, my dear sister, I am ever your attached and sincere Sister,

M. D. MILLS.

P. S.—I hope Halifax is the Post Town. I am not sure, as you forgot your address. I don't wonder.

July 16, 1847.

MY DEAREST JOHN—I cannot let dear Mary's letter go, without thanking you for the lines you wrote in her letter to me. They cheered me in my sadness. Oh! you little know how much I feel at your long and tedious illness, but it is the Lord, and I must submit. I have been asking, if it be His will, that He would spare you a little longer to us, who love you. If in His mysterious wisdom He does not see fit to do so, then I shall not be long separated from you, for I feel every day my attachment to life weakened mentally and physically. I can't say more, but that I am your most attached sister, my dearest John,

M. D. MILLS.

P. S.—Write if you can, if not tell dear Mary to write at once.

"The Religious Tract Society," London.

This Society in its forty-eighth year made a considerable advance on the year preceding.—It issued 238 new publications, and circulated 18,224,836 copies. The total circulation, at home and abroad, in forty-eight years, amounts to nearly 442,000,000 copies.

The receipts of the year were £59,416 3s. 9d. or about \$285,000, of which £6,080 13s. 9d. or \$29,184 were donations. The gratuitous issues and grants in money amounted to \$38,092.

MISCELLANEOUS.

Church of the Holy Trinity—Consecrated Water—Baptism of the Cross.

But the present is a special occasion, and some parts and personages do not appear every day. The church of the Holy Trinity was filled densely as the men could stand, showing a solid mass of red caps. A platoon of soldiers with fixed bayonets are standing near the chancel, beneath the tall massive wax tapers. This military parade is in good keeping with the picture of St. George, the warrior Saint, mounted on his white charger in full tilt, and thrusting his spear into a red dragon under his feet. Mars is a favorite character still, though he has become a Saint and is christened with another name.—Presently four or five priests, headed by the bishop in gilded robes and mitre, issue from the chancel, and proceed to consecrate a vessel of water. This ceremony, after sundry prayers and collects, is accomplished by thrice dipping the cross in the water. This over, and then such a confusion. Every one is crowding and reaching forward to get some of this consecrated water. Small vessels of all descriptions, borne high above the heads of the people, are making for the door, and that is a fortunate cup that gets out without losing the best part of its contents. The most are satisfied to get a little sprinkling in their faces; another makes a bowl of both hands, and levying this full of the holy liquid from some passing cup, begins regularly to wash his face with it. But enough of this; and we will get out with the tide, already setting to that part of the harbor where the great curiosity will shortly be seen. In every direction the cups of consecrated water are carried off to families and friends, to be kept, perhaps the year round, for divers sacred uses.

We are fortunate in getting a station in my friend's balcony, overlooking the multitudes on the quay, and on the shipping in the neighborhood. Numberless little boats are crowding in close to the open space, where a half dozen men and boys, stripped to a tight pair of drawers, are plunging and splashing, impatient for the moment when they shall be the chief actors and heroes of the scene. But the procession is now approaching from the church, headed by tall, gilded lamps. Beneath these walk the priests, one bearing a cross, another the picture of some saint, preceded by little boys in white frocks, and holding long, burning tapers. An irregular crowd, with soldiery interspersed to keep order, complete as regular a procession as you ever see among the Greeks. All eyes are now turned towards the bishop as he approaches the brink of the water with the silver cross in hand. The divers, perched here and there on the bows of boats, are each one crying out, "Throw it here, throw it here." Another half minute, and there it goes, the adorable cross, high in air, and falls six or eight rods from the shore in twenty-five or thirty feet of water. The sea foams with the plunge of the divers, a shout long and long rises from the whole throng, and still louder, if possible, as the lucky finder is seen making for the shore with the prize in his teeth.*

The fortunate diver this year chanced to be a little boy, and the enthusiasm was the greater and more boisterous in consequence. As soon as he reached the shore, a Russian man-of-war close by, gaily dressed in flags and with the Grecian colors flying at the mast, fired a national salute; an incident this of more significance than would at first appear; for at St. Petersburg and other Russian towns on the sea the same scene is enacted, and perhaps at the same hour, with great religious and military parade. It is, in fine, an ancient and favorite ceremony of the Greek church; and is called the "Benediction of the Waters,"—also the "Baptism of the Cross," having a historical reference to the baptism of our Savior. Millions of hearts are beating in unison with the enthusiasm we are now witnessing. Sailors are specially interested in this ceremony. To-morrow it will be safe to go to sea, after days of detention in port, waiting "for the cross to be thrown." Doubtless, Neptune still takes it as a compliment; albeit the rites

*This fellow is handsomely rewarded. He has the largest share of the money he is authorized to collect during the remainder of the day, both in Piræas and in Athens. Accordingly he is soon after seen with his comrades, going from house to house, bearing the silver cross on a picture of St. Nicholas, the patron saint of sailors. Last year they collected the sum of 400 drachmas, or \$66. A handsome proportion of this was given at the palace.