

CORRESPONDENCE.

HAMPTON, April 24th, 1848.

DEAR BRETHREN,—

This Communication contains a few fragments of Baptist History, which I forward in compliance with a request in a late number of the *Visitor*.

I am persuaded that a faithful retrospective view of the Churches through this Province will accomplish much under the blessing of God, for their prosperity in future, by enabling the followers of Jesus to avoid the rocks upon which many have split, and also inspiring them with renewed zeal by "remembering the years of the right hand of the Most High."

In reference to the origin and preservation of Baptists in the world, we might adopt the words of our Lord, "from the days of John the Baptist until now." But in regard to some of the Churches in this Province, it is difficult to name the honoured servants of God who first sowed the seeds of the Gospel truth in those communities where they exist, nor is it an easy matter to ascertain the circumstances which first led to their formation * and painful as the statement may be, it ought not to be concealed, viz., that some of the Churches have completely lost their visibility. In taking a glance at the Baptists in Sussex, I labour under the above inconveniences, but as most of those honoured men of God, who first proclaimed the cheering news of redemption in this region are still in the harness in the Church militant, I hope that any errors that may be made will be corrected, or deficiencies supplied.

Among the first Baptist preachers that visited this part of the Province, may be named the following highly esteemed brethren:—

Elder John Noice, of P. E. Island; Elder Joseph Crandall, of Salisbury; Elder Theodore Harding and Elder Edward Manning, of Noea Septia.

Nearly half a century has rolled away since they commenced proclaiming in this land the glorious doctrine of salvation through the blood of the Lamb. Heaven owned and blessed their labours, and numbers believed and were baptized. A Church was formed, consisting of forty members, by Elder Theodore S. Harding, in the dwelling house of Mr. Hugh Doyle, on the premises now occupied by Mr. D. Check, near the Episcopal Church, in the Vale. Mr. Thomas Ansley, who was the Clerk of the Episcopal Church at the time, was among the fruits of Mr. Harding's Ministry in that place, and who afterwards became a burning and shining light in the world. Mr. Harding is said to have uttered the following remarkable words at one of the first meetings that he held there, Mr. Ansley being present. "There is a man in this congregation whom God will raise up to preach the everlasting Gospel." There was much opposition to the Gospel in those days, some of those who persecuted the followers of the Saviour have since died sudden and unhappy deaths.

Intemperance was also doing its work of devastation, not only among the irreligious, but also among the professed people of God; and one who was a member of this church, died the victim of the drinking usages of society.

Some time after Mr. Harding left, Mr. Gilbert Harris of Nova Scotia, visited this place, and was the means of the conversion of many precious souls, the church gave him a call to become their pastor, and sent a request to Elder Harding to come and ordain him to that office. Mr. Harding accordingly visited them, but after due deliberation upon the matter, he, with other brethren, advised that Mr. Harris' ordination should not take place at that time. The church, however, insisted upon its being done. Mr. Harding remarked, that although Mr. Harris was useful as a preacher, yet he had not the qualifications of a pastor. The church still persisted, and Mr. Harding reluctantly complied. Do the will of the Lord, brother Harding, said one of the members. "I am doing the will of the people," was Mr. H.'s reply. Elder James Innis, of

I was informed that the Rev. Mr. A., Episcopal Clergyman in this place, having ascertained that a number of persons who attended Church had never been baptized, requested them to submit to the ordinance; three or four objected unless he would immerse them, stating and offering to prove from the New Testament, that the immersion of believers was the law of Christ. Mr. A. felt the force of the objection, and immersed them in the river that flows through the Vale. This occurred nearly fifty years ago.

Norton, assisted at the ordination of Mr. Harris, and at the same time two of the brethren, James Dougan and Mr. Freeze were ordained to the Deacon's office.

Elder Harding's fears were soon realized; the church languished, and ultimately lost its visibility. Mr. Harris left for the United States, since which time I have not been able to obtain any information respecting him. It is to be regretted that any church should proceed in so important a matter as ordination, without the concurrence of experienced brethren from sister churches; invariably, disastrous results follow. May our prayers ascend to heaven that we may be spared the recurrence of such evils, that the purity of the ministry may be preserved, that confidence in each other may be cherished among the churches, and that union, fellowship, and holy concord may be maintained among us as an associated body that we may consecrate our energies to elevate the denomination in righteousness and true holiness, and send the glorious gospel of the blessed God to the ends of the earth.

In the year 1823, Elder Joseph Crandall and Elder James Innis baptised a number of believers, and in the same year Elder Crandall formed a new church consisting of sixteen members; two or three of the number had been members of the old church before mentioned: they kept up the worship of God, and were visited occasionally by ministering brethren, until the year 1828, when brother Titus Stone was, at their request, ordained Pastor of the Church, by Elder Joseph Crandall and Elder Francis Pickle. Br. Stone's labours were blessed in the addition of twelve by baptism to their number. After Elder Stone ceased to be their pastor, the church was visited in successive periods by the undermentioned brethren who were instrumental in adding to the church the following numbers by baptism, viz: Elder Joseph Crandal, two; Elder Francis Pickle, one; Elder Wm. Pulcifer, two; Elder John Marsters, four; Elder James Blakey, seventeen; Elder David Crandall, twenty; Elder Saml. Hart, of the Free Christian Baptist body, four; also received by letters at different times, five. Total number in the year 1845, eighty three.

During this year the Church, assisted by the community, erected a neat and commodious place of worship, at the opening of which our venerable brother, Elder A. Maclay, D. D., was present, and preached in his usual able manner. In 1846, brother Jarvis Ring visited the church; he was employed by the St. John Domestic Missionary board. Brother Ring's labours were blessed to the church and community, and during his mission some important arrangements were made, two additional deacons, a clerk, and a treasurer were appointed; and one added to the church by baptism. After brother Ring's departure the church was destitute, until visited by Mr. Mathew Smith, from P. E. Island, who continued with them until February last, when some circumstances transpired which led to his being excluded by the church, a minute of which is entered on the church record, dated February 18th, 1848. Some important circumstances have taken place since that date, which are reserved for a future communication; I shall close the present one with a reflection or two, which have arisen in my mind, viz: 1st. that these churches, (although blessed with the visits of many excellent brethren, who have been the means of saving many precious souls,) yet have had to pass through the waters of tribulation, in consequence chiefly of being without the oversight of a permanent scriptural pastor, to maintain the order of God's house, and to teach the members all things whatsoever Christ commanded. 2d. From those churches who disregard heaven's will for building up believers in the faith, the blessed Saviour gathers but a small revenue of praise and glory.

3d. From such organization the associated body receive but little additional strength in faith, prayer and contribution. I feel the enquiry pressing itself upon me—how are perishing sinners throughout the world to be saved from eternal wrath, how are they to be brought to the Lamb of God, that taketh away the sins of the world, if churches neglect to use God's appointed means. Oh, Lord, grant we beseech thee, that scriptural order may be revived and maintained in every section of thy church. God be merciful unto us, and bless us, and cause his face to shine upon us; that thy way may be known upon earth, thy saving health among all

nations—let the people praise thee, O God, let all the people praise thee, &c.

I am, Dear Brother,

Yours in the Love of the Gospel,

JOHN FRANCIS.

For the Christian Visitor.

THE GOVERNMENT AND DISCIPLINE OF A CHRISTIAN CHURCH.

Letter 1st.

The union and peace of the church of Christ are of great importance to its purity and efficiency. This is shewn by the frequency of the exhortations given in the Scriptures to cultivate brotherly love, and forbearance, and union. Hence the exhortation, "be perfect, be of one mind, and live in peace and the God of love and peace shall be with you." The evil tendency of division and contention is to be seen in the following counsel of the Apostle: "But if ye bite and devour one another, take heed that ye be not consumed one of another." It is an obvious fact that the collective prosperity of a church depends on her peace and harmony. Without union and activity, no church can long retain its usefulness and purity.

The want of discipline in the church leads to discord and disunion and want of purity; no church can be long efficient without order and discipline.

Yet what spiritual interest beside is so greatly exposed and so frequently assailed as the union and peace of the christian church? There are a thousand forms of offence to disturb it, and twice as many forms of treating those offences which disturb it. It is a matter of most serious question whether the difficulties of the church do not arise more by three fourths, from the wrong manner of treating offences, than from the primary offences themselves.

And there are two very obvious reasons of this fact; one is disciplinary measures, as they exist, are more frequently the offspring of passion than of principle. Passion fixes its own end, which is to punish instead of restore. It makes its own law, instead of leading to the law which Christ has made and provided for the case. And passion thus legislates and executes, and makes mischief because it has never been fully brought to obedience to Christ's law; the honour of which law should be the moving principle in all church discipline.

Another reason for the difficulties which exist in our churches, has been the neglect of the pastors of our churches in not frequently preaching on the subject of church discipline. To have our church members scripturally instructed on this duty, they must have the law of Christ often explained to them. It has appeared to me that nothing is more necessary to the peace of our churches than right views on this subject. To know the nature of offences and how they should be treated, is then essentially necessary to the peace, purity and the prosperity of the church of Christ in the world.

The design we have in view in writing this letter is to lay before the readers of the Christian Visitor, the mind and law of the great Master and his inspired servants on this subject. Amidst offences of endless variety of type, I would not attempt any thing more than to lay down a few principles and rules to assist the young christian to understand the law of Christ given us in the statute book of his kingdom, for our guidance in this department of duty.

I have been highly gratified in reading an excellent work on church government, by Mr. Crowell, the talented editor of the Christian Watchman in Boston. It is called the Church Member's Manual. I have received some of the ideas embodied in these letters from that book, and I would recommend the reading of it to all our church members who are anxious to have right views on the government and discipline of the primitive church. I have just seen a little volume on the subject of church discipline by the Rev. Eleazer Savage of Rochester, N. Y., which I believe would be very useful if generally circulated through these Provinces. I have adopted his plan in the classification of offences which affect the church of Christ, as I think he has fairly drawn them from the word of God, and in many instances some of his remarks verbatim.

The Bible takes things as they are, and so must we. It proceeds in its instructions of every form, upon the principle that the best men in the church may grossly sin; and that the mere professor and hypocrite will fall; that "offences must needs come," because remaining depravity prevailing will induce them; and therefore that certain methods of treatment would be necessary in all such cases. We have then no new laws to make on church discipline, but to explain old ones. The servant must ever feel that he is dependent on the master, and when he speaks describing the "offence," and specifying the rule for its treatment, all should hear.

Church discipline is "the right treatment of

offending members." That is, the application of right principles in a right spirit to their conduct. An offending member is one who has transgressed some law of Christ's kingdom; for "where there is no law there is no transgression." The magnitude of offences is to be estimated by the importance of the law violated. Hence, as there are different laws of Christ's kingdom, laws having different degrees of value and importance, just as there are different laws in the state, so are there different kinds of offences, offences of various magnitude; and of course requiring different treatment.

There are five kinds of offences, namely *minor*, the smaller offences such as should be borne—*privy* or such as cannot be proved—*personal* as when one brother injures another in his person, reputation or property, and there is proof of the fact—*public* or such as equally injure all the members of the Church, and for which all require an equal satisfaction; and *insufferable* that is offences of such enormity as to require the immediate and positive removal of the member from the body, for the honour of the cause.

Under some of these five heads we think every offence may find what, on the whole, may be considered its proper place.

I am yours, &c.

SAMUEL ROBINSON.

St. John, April 20, 1848.

[For the Christian Visitor.]

HAMPTON, April 24, 1848.

Dear Brother Very.—It may be interesting to some of the readers of the Visitor to peruse the following extract from an old work, entitled "an Exposition of the 39 Articles of the Church of England," article 27, page 300. The name of the author had been broken out before I saw the book.

J. F.

"By the first teaching or making of disciples that must go before baptism, is to be meant the convincing the world that Jesus is the Christ, the true Messiah, anointed of God, with a fullness of Grace, and of the spirit without measure, and sent to be the Saviour and Redeemer of the world; and when any were brought to acknowledge this, then they were to baptize them, to initiate to this religion, by obliging them to renounce all idolatry and ungodliness, as well as all secular and carnal lusts, and then they led them down into the water, and with no other garments but what might cover nature, they at first laid them down into the water, as a man is laid in a grave, and then they said these words: I baptize, or wash, thee, in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. Then they raised them up again, and clean garments were put on them, from whence came the phrases of being baptized into Christ's death, of being buried with him by baptism into death, of our being risen with Christ, and of our putting on the Lord Jesus Christ, of putting off the old man, and putting on the new. After baptism was thus performed, the baptized person was to be further instructed in all the specialities of the christian religion, and in all the rules of life that Christ had prescribed."

For the Christian Visitor.

Dear Brother Very.—On Sabbath last, at Norton, after a discourse on the claims of the benevolent objects embraced in the Union Society, by Rev. John Francis, followed by exhortations from Rev. James Reid, Alexander Mutch, and a number of the brethren; it was resolved unanimously that this meeting consider it their duty to respond to the appeal of the General Union Board; by greater exertion on behalf of the Society, and that Mr. C. Burnett and Mr. John Hays be appointed to collect subscriptions and donations, and forward the same to the Association.

J. F.

THE LATE ARCHBISHOP OF CANTERBURY.—The will of the late Primate has just been proved in the Prerogative Court, and his widow inherits as personal property, independent of estates in land and houses, the immense sum of £120,000. During his occupancy of Lambeth palace, the late Primate kept an establishment equal in splendor to that of a royal prince—gave, during a portion of the year, most sumptuous banquets to large numbers of the aristocracy, and yet when he died he could leave behind him the above sum in money. The income of an English bishop none but a bishop knows.—*English Paper*

ARAB COLPORTERS.—The descendants of Ishmael, the Arabs of Mount Lebanon, heretofore regarded as most unpromising subjects of Christian civilization, have recently shown themselves capable of gratefully appreciating the labors of the American missionaries. Many of the converts, (says Rev. Mr. Whiting) may now be seen going out among their less favored countrymen, with huge loads of Arabic books—real Christian Colporters, circulating the Bible and religious books among the forty millions who speak that noble language, many of whom are able to read it intelligently.—*Christian Observer*.