

The Visitor's Pulpit.

The English Baptists and Close Communion.

ADDRESS BY REV. J. E. CRACKNELL.

"Then they that gladly received his word were baptized; and the same day there were added unto them about three thousand souls; and they continued steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers."—ACTS 2, 41, 42.

In previous addresses we have dwelt on the subjects and mode of baptism; have shown that repentance and faith are prerequisites to baptism; that possessing these nothing should hinder baptism, but that the all-prevailing motive of Christ's love and love to Christ should lead the believer thus to profess him before the world.

We now propose to consider the question of Communion, or the Lord's Supper, in relation to baptism. Nothing appears more reasonable than that believers should seek not only baptism, but the privileges of Church membership; seeking union with those who on thoughtful and prayerful consideration, seem in faith and practice to be nearest to the Scriptures. It is not only reasonable, but right and desirable, that baptism should be associated with the highest privilege of Church membership, viz.: Communion with the Lord's people in the ordinance of the Lord's Supper. This is the order taught and maintained by those who are called strict or close-communication Baptists; thus designated because they refuse to receive to the Lord's Supper the unbaptized. They are regarded as very rigid by those who differ from them; are called narrow-minded and exclusive: with what justice we will leave others to judge, when we have looked at the question and the practice of other Christians in relation to this subject.

The Episcopalians associate infant sprinkling with Church membership. Children are taught to say, concerning their baptism, "wherein I was made a member of Christ's Church." If their baptism has been neglected in infancy, however much they desire "communion" or any church privilege, it would be persistently denied them until the omission had been rectified by the administration of what is called the "Baptism of those of riper years." Until this should be attended to, not only communion but a Christian burial in consecrated ground would be refused, should they depart this life unbaptized. Surely in the face of this "strict and close communion" on the part of Episcopalians, they never charge the Baptists with exclusiveness.

The various sections of Nonconformists who hold infant sprinkling, differ from each other as to what baptism does for the child, but all agree that baptism is associated with church membership and necessary to communion. Should any one, declaring they never had been sprinkled or baptized, desire the privileges of membership, our Congregational brethren would say baptism must be attended to first, and forthwith sprinkle, before receiving them to communion or membership. Thus they also are strict or close communion. The Baptist cannot possibly allow that infant sprinkling is New Testament baptism; that what was done to an unconscious infant can be accepted as "a profession of faith," and therefore is of course compelled to regard those who were only sprinkled in infancy as unbaptized; and in refusing such the privileges of communion is acting on precisely the same principle as Episcopalians and the various sections of Nonconformists.

Baptists are divided into three classes, viz.:

1. Those who simply maintain the order observed by others, differing from them only as to "what is baptism;" and require baptism on a profession of faith in Christ before partaking of the Lord's Supper, or participating in the privileges of membership.
2. Those who receive only the baptized to membership, but welcome the unbaptized as communicants at the Lord's table.
3. Those who receive the unbaptized not only to communion but to all the privileges of church membership; these are generally called Baptist, but sometimes designated Union Churches.

In England, views on the communion question have become so connected with doctrinal views, as to lead to great confusion in many minds.

The terms "strict Baptists" and "hyper-Calvinistic Baptists" have been regarded as synonymous, although there are many holding strict communion who have no sympathy with hyper-Calvinism. The word "particular," which expresses views on redemption, is by many supposed to

refer to communion, and "particular Baptists" to mean "strict Baptists," while there is no necessary connection between them. The churches known as "moderate Calvinists" are for the most part open-communication. Some of the General Baptist churches are close-communication. It would be well if terms frequently used were more clearly defined, and matters kept distinct that have no real connection.

Strict communion has frequently been associated with a spirit not the most brotherly.

This has driven away many who nevertheless held the principles. Close communion is not necessarily narrow, bigoted, or unbrotherly; but the truth may be, and often is, maintained in a narrow, unbrotherly spirit. This is to be deplored. We speak of England, having no personal acquaintance with the Baptist churches in Canada or the States. Our impression is that these evils do not exist there to the same extent; that Baptist principles are firmly maintained independent of theological distinctions, and in connection with much brotherly and Christian intercourse; and that to this, our good Baptist brethren there owe the prominent position they now occupy.

The tale has been frequently told by the advocates of an "open table," that a celebrated preacher, on being informed by a Baptist deacon, "You cannot commune at our table," replied "Oh! I see I am mistaken; I thought it was the Lord's table." This always seems to present the most powerful argument on the opposite side to that which is intended. The deacon was unwise in using the expression "our table;" and to the reply about its being the Lord's table, he should have immediately answered: "You are right, it is the Lord's table, not ours; had it been ours, we might have invited you; but being the Lord's, we, his servants, must teach you 'to observe all things whatsoever he hath commanded.'" Clearly, to our own table in our own house we invite whomsoever we please, no servant of ours would act contrary to the regulations of our house. To the Lord's table, in the Lord's house, it is our duty as his servants to receive those who come in the Lord's way, and according to the Lord's word.

If strict or close communion be departed from, and the unbaptized be received at the Lord's table, why should they not be received into full membership?

Is it consistent to receive to one, and refuse the other? receiving to the highest privilege of church membership and refusing inferior privileges. The result is that in many churches there are numerous communicants over whom no discipline can be exercised, because they are not members. Every month they take their place at the Lord's table, and frequently have a greater influence in the church than the baptized members.

Consistency seems to demand either that a church be a regular Baptist Church, acting according to the practice of other denominations, viz.: requiring baptism before either communion or membership; or that it be a "Union Church," with conversion the only condition of membership.

The Baptists in England would occupy a very different position to-day, if all had been true to their convictions and principles; if people had been regularly instructed on the subject from the pulpit, and children taught in the Sunday-schools; if the churches, while manifesting a spirit of brotherly kindness to all, and co-operating in Christian work, had been found firmly and faithfully maintaining the order of the New Testament.

Letter from India.

REV. J. N. FOLWELL, Cor. Sec. Am. & For. Bible Society:

My Dear Brother,—I am in receipt of your letter of March 8th, and have noted its contents. I had learned of the death of Bro. Ward, through the papers, before I received your letter. A good man, and tried, has gone to his reward. It was a warm, brotherly letter, the last one I had from him. The work of spreading God's Word goes on more and more, though workers are called to join the sanctified throng above. Others are found to take their places. It is one cheering aspect of our work that, though we fall, we are assured the work will go on by other hands until His name is known in every hamlet on earth.

The question of the Telugu Scriptures is this way at present. The only Old or New Testament in Telugu accessible, is that of the Madras Auxiliary of the British and Foreign Bible Society. A Revision Committee is now at work for this

Society on the Telugu Bible. On this committee are two Baptist Missionaries, Dr. Jewett, representative for the Telugu Missions of the Missionary Union, and myself for the Canadian Baptist Telugu Mission. For my part I am unwilling longer to use the present Telugu Testament, and much less the Tentative edition just given to us by the Madras Auxiliary. It is thoroughly sectarian on the Pedobaptist side of the "Baptismal controversy." We have "near to" and "from near" the water, in the place of "into" and "out of," and in the VI. of Romans "to or for Christ," instead of the way it is in English, and ought to be, of course. There is a meeting of the delegates in June, and we are to take up the Gospels. We will know then whether we are going to get along with the Madras Auxiliary Bible Society, on the other hand, we will have to get out a separate edition of the New Testament. Of course, we of the Canadian Mission will go together with the Union Missionaries in this, if it takes place. We will look to you largely to help us, if the necessity arises. The \$500 I asked you for was partly to meet this contingency and partly to carry on our Bible distribution in this north Telugu country. Of course, there are parts of the Old Testament which we can circulate, and portions of the New Testament until we are furnished with better. I presume Mr. Clough asked simply for the necessities of his own field, and would use even \$1000 if he could get it. I shall not ask him for any of it. We have to pay a certain amount for the Scriptures that we get from the Madras Auxiliary, and though we get something back in sales it is a small part of the outlay. The colporteur has to be paid. It is to meet these expenses of the distribution of God's Word, as well as translate or revise it if necessary, that we want funds. At present I have to purchase my Scriptures, and pay the colporteur out of Mission Funds. I did not think to use all of the \$500 asked of you on my own field, which is certainly large enough to absorb it all; but it would, if used in helping to get out a New Testament be equally in the interest of all the Canadian Baptist stations (5) as my own. And if not needed for this object, on the supposition that the Madras Auxiliary will give us such a Testament as we can use, it would go to circulating of Scriptures as indicated above. Of course I should expect to report to you how the money was spent. At any rate, I do not expect to use any money to circulate the kind of Telugu New Testament at present accessible. I have done this as long as I could. As it is now, it is not, to my mind, the Word of God, I would stultify myself in selling it as God's Word. I have made up my mind on this matter.

In the light of what I say the committee can send me \$500 or \$250 as they think best. I will promise that it be faithfully used either in getting out a faithful Telugu Testament, and if that necessity does not arise, then the scattering God's Word among the millions of Telugus in this region.

While we have separate Mission Societies for the United States and Canada, I see no necessity for separate Bible Societies. Your aim and name are large enough to include the Dominion of Canada. At present I have no money for Bible work, whether that be the preparation of a true version or the circulation of God's Word, or both. What money you have given to Mr. Clough or other missionaries South, will be spent by them in the interests of their work. What is to be spent in the interests of our work here we wish direct from you, and for it will be directly responsible to you.

Praying that God may prosper your noble cause, I remain

Yours truly,

A. V. TIMPANY.

Baptist Mission House, Cocolanada, April 23, 1879.

Letter from Mrs. Sandford.

MY DEAR MRS. MARCH,—What can I tell you this rainy day that will be of interest? Could you look upon us it would be a dark picture to say the least. For the last four days it has been raining heavily, the greater part of the time. This change took us by surprise, for we did not expect the like before the middle of June. We can scarcely look upon it as the Southwest monsoon, for the wind does not come from that direction. It is a great rain, however, and we welcome it with joy in some respects, although it has caused some damage.

We hope now to escape the hot days and weeks which we thought must be in store for us.

The walls of the school house, which were built of mud, and nearly completed, have gone down and must be built again. The other buildings we trust will stand although if the rain continues much longer there will probably be some further loss; but we hope for the best.

There is so much of the uncertain connected with every thing undertaken in this country! I suppose this must be so to some extent in every land, but we feel it, here daily, and have learned to be disappointed often if not discouraged. We must believe that our way is not always the best way, though we cannot tell why.

Miss Hammond occupies the upper part of the house now, where she finds it airy and quiet. We think it not quite safe in a storm, so she sometimes sleeps below. I expect the new house will not be finished before Christmas. But for the sake of being in town we may move in before that time. Oh, this job of building is a hard, tedious one, and requires much strength and patience. Besides this, it takes so much of Mr. Sanford's time from direct Mission work. However, it must be built by somebody.

Wednesday 28th.—And still the rain continues falling, reminding me very much of this season in Burmah. I have taken a severe cold. Several of the natives around us are down with fever, and four of the school girls are coughing badly. I am obliged to deal out a good deal of medicine these days, quinine, painkiller, etc.

Miss Hammond is keeping very well indeed, for which we are very thankful. Especially to day do we feel that we have great cause for thankfulness. We have just heard of the death of a young English lady who came out at the same time she came. She came with the intention of remaining with her sister, the bank agent's wife, who was lonely. They will feel very sad. She died of dysentery, one of the diseases of the country.

Carrie is of course telling you all about her doings here. Since she goes to the school for a while in the morning, and has her teacher for a while in the afternoon, I have taken charge of the girl's sewing again. At present they are doing some sewing, and crocheting for me, for which I will pay them, so that they can buy some new singing books for themselves. I wish you could hear them sing. We are planning to send two of them to their parents in Toungoo, by the next Rangoon steamer as deck passengers. One of them, Sarah, is not at all well, and as we have reason to think she never will be strong enough to work as we wish her to do, it seems best by all means, to send her home now, especially as her parents are anxious to have her with them. In reply to a letter I sent them concerning Sarah, they asked us to send the little sister, Taramary, too, and I think we will do so.

These girls came at the beginning of the school two years ago, before their father was called to go with the Regiment to Burmah. We feel sorry to part with them for neither of them have yet met with the change which we so longed to see in them, but they know the way of life. They go to Christian parents, and we shall have hope for them. Several of the remaining ones are orphans, with no one to claim them. These we will keep if their lives are spared, and if it is your wish we should do so. I think we told you that the expense of each one has been about five rupees per month, including salary and everything.

We miss the Churchills more than a little since they went to Bobilli, but hear from them quite often. Little Bessie has been ailing for some weeks; was very ill last week. My babe, too, who is just beginning to walk and lisp a few words, has had a real pull back; his trouble, I think, is caused by teething.

I have no especial good news to write you this time concerning our work. May you ever remember us and these people before the Lord.

With kind regards to all, in which Mr. Sandford and Miss Hammond join me, I am, always in Christ, your loving friend and sister,

M. S. SANFORD. Bimlipatam, May 24th, 1879.

A Word About California.

There are many discouraged or discontented men who, having failed to realize their expectations of "getting on in the world" in this part of the country, look with longing eyes toward California as a State of boundless resources and grand opportunities, and imagine if they could only get there they would find profitable occupation and speedy competence. To

all such restless souls we commend following statements from a private written by a gentleman who has many years in California, and speaks from personal observation. He says:

There are more lies told about California and its capacity for business than any other State in the Union. The very little government land left worth taking up. Good land, fit for ing purposes, is held at such high as to place it entirely beyond the reach of moderate means. Good lands are held at from \$100 to \$300 acre; and it costs so much to own land here, where three seasons out of five are dry, that small farming pays. I am not a croaker, but I am in telling the truth. So many are by the reports that are sent abroad our State, that it is an injury instead benefit to us. Men come here, often with families, expecting to obtain situations and good wages, and find it is just as hard work to get along here is at home, and they lay it all to country. We have been completely run here in with people wanting and there is nothing for them to do.

It is well to look on both sides of question before deciding on the relinquishment of even a very modest source of come for the uncertainties of migrating a new and distant region of which little known, and where the conditions of "winning" may prove far less favorable than imagination has painted them. men of large capital California no presents great opportunities, in farming as well as in mining and other industry. But poor men would better think a while before going there, unless they secured profitable and permanent employment in advance.

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PACIFIC RAILWAY TENDERS.

TENDERS for the construction of about one hundred miles of Railway, West of Red River, in the Province of Manitoba, will be received until noon on Friday, 1st August next.

The Railway will commence at Winnipeg, and run North-westerly to connect with the main line in the neighborhood of the 5th base line, and thence Westwardly between Prairie in Fortage and Lake Manitoba.

Tenders must be on the printed form, which, with all other information, may be had at the Pacific Railway Engineer's Offices in Ottawa and Winnipeg.

F. BRAUN, Secretary. Department of Railways and Canals, Ottawa, 16th June, 1879.