

For the Christian Messenger.

among Churchmen and Dissenters. The old barriers which formerly existed—the feeling which regarded Dissenters as schismatics and religious quacks—have been weakened of late years, considerably. But for an Archbishop himself to take the initiative—to personally invite co-workers with him, though of differing sentiments—is indeed a grand step. God's blessing be on the good old Primate, and all who, with him—arrayed though they be in lawn, broad cloth or fustian—strive to unite Christians of every land together, in one fraternal alliance!

(Remainder next week.)

CIRCULAR LETTER.

To the Churches composing the Central Nova Scotia Baptist Association.

DEAR BRETHREN,

The year which has now closed has been distinguished by much mercy. In many of the churches an extraordinary blessing has rested on the preaching of the gospel, and great numbers have believed and turned to the Lord. Backsliders, too, have been restored, slumberers aroused, and languishing ones quickened into new life.

It is a fitting season, therefore, to call your attention to the obligations connected with church fellowship, and to point out the various methods by which individual believers may advance the interests of the churches to which they belong.

The Lord Jesus has established Christianity on a social basis. It is at once the religion of the individual heart and of holy combination. The former is necessary to the latter. We must be "in Christ" before we can lawfully belong to the church; and whoever is "in Christ" ought to join the church. Christian duty can be but partially discharged, and christian privilege cannot be half enjoyed, by the solitary believer. When the love of God is shed abroad in the heart the love of the brethren will be its necessary concomitant, and neither can be fully developed unless, in obedience to the Saviour's appointment, his servants form christian societies.

The first outpouring of the Spirit was characterised in this manner. Those who believed "were together"; they "continued daily with one accord in the temple, and broke bread from house to house"; they were "of one heart and one soul." And as fast as men and women were converted they "assayed," like Saul, "to join themselves to the disciples." There was no neutrality in those days. The sect of the "borderers" had not come into existence.

The letters of the apostles furnish very express teachings on this subject. Christians are instructed to view church fellowship as connected with pleasures, rights, and obligations; the pleasures are to be enjoyed, the rights maintained, and the obligations fulfilled. These three things are inseparably joined together. We cannot experience the pleasures of the spiritual union unless we guard its rights from infringement, and conscientiously discharge our respective duties. In other words, it is with the church as it is with the individual believer; happiness is linked with obedience, and that obedience has respect to all the Lord's commandments. The Saviour has said, "If a man love me, he will keep my words; and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him."

We have obeyed the Master's orders. We have been baptized into "the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit." We have become members of the church of God. We have entered into solemn contract with each other. What are its terms and conditions?

In the first place, we are bound to regular attendance at the meetings of the church for the worship of God and for purposes of church fellowship. This is so obvious that it cannot require explanation or enforcement. The society will fall to pieces if this duty be not constantly regarded. Its very existence depends on the punctual performance of the duty. Whenever the church meets, all its members are under obligation to be present, unless hindered by providential circumstances. The healthy state of the soul will appear in the effort to remove hindrances out of the way, that the path to the church may be open and unobstructed. Slight excuses for non-attendance will not be allowed to prevail. He who would encounter a storm in attending to his worldly business will not suffer a shower of rain to detain him from the house of the Lord.

We may remind you, in the second place, brethren, that mutual edification is the grand object of church fellowship. "Ye are members one of another." The ordinances of the gospel are to be regularly observed, and the advantages attendant on the instructions of a faithful ministry should be prized and improved. But this is not all. The blessings that would otherwise follow ministerial fidelity will be withheld or but partially realized if the mutual obligations of christians are neglected. We have something more to do than to fill our places and listen to sermons, in which some seem to think that the "whole duty" of church members is comprised. The minister cannot think for us—nor feel for us—nor act for us. We owe duties to one another which none but ourselves can discharge. Banded together for the promotion and increase of godliness, our several gifts are to be consecrated to the general good. The strong can support the weak, the better informed can instruct the ignorant, and all can contribute in some way to the profit of all. By free interchange of thought and brotherly conference on things divine, we may materially aid each other, and secure the advancement of a strong-hearted piety. This is no human theory. It is Christ's own arrangement. He is the Head, and from Him "the whole body fitly joined together and compacted by that which every joint supplieth, according to the effectual working in the measure of every part, maketh increase of the body unto the edifying of itself in love."

We may here make a special reference to the younger members of the churches. In seasons of revival many join us whose knowledge of the truth is very scanty, and in whom the rudiments of christian character are but just beginning to show themselves. They need careful training. Difficulties, doubts, and dangers will beset them. When the first fervours have passed

away they will be in imminent peril of getting into a cold, formal state. How shall this be prevented? You must not, brethren, impose the duty exclusively on your Pastors. They are in most cases overtasked already, and compelled to be too long absent from their studies. But be that as it may, your exertions are also imperatively required, and you have opportunities for the exercise of christian influence which the ministers of the gospel do not possess; besides which, these objects of solicitude are ever among you, and always within reach. Watch over them, we entreat you, with anxious care. Despise not the rude conception or the stammering tongue. Affect no surprise at their ignorance. Assist them in their inquiries after truth. Kindly remove stumbling-blocks. Bear with their weakness and mistakes. Imitate Him who did not "break the bruised reed nor quench the shoking flax."

In order to the accomplishment of these purposes, it is desirable that christians should frequently assemble for free conference and prayer. On such occasions the word of God may be jointly examined, interesting questions discussed, cases of conscience considered, and such assistance administered as will tend to enkindle holy emotions and confirm holy habits. Such meetings are indispensable whenever the pastor is necessarily absent on the Lord's day. They are also eminently conducive to the development of gifts for usefulness.

Thirdly, we have to request you to consider the importance of individual and united effort. Some persons greatly misunderstand the design of church union. They seem to think that it is being planted in a nursery ground, to be tended and taken care of. So it is; but that is not all the truth. The church is a school, in which all have something to learn. The church is a workshop, in which all have something to do. The church is an army, in which every soldier has his appropriate duty. The church is likened to a body, in which every member is of use. Spiritual health and prosperity can only be enjoyed when activity is the recognised order. We fear that in most of our churches a large amount of talent is suffered to run to waste. Christians whose energies might be usefully employed, under proper direction, content themselves with indolent occupancy of their places, and as a consequence fall into a state of spiritual lethargy and disease; while the hands of the pastors are enfeebled and their hearts distressed, for want of co-operation.

Brethren, "suffer the word of exhortation" in regard to this matter. Is there not much work yet to be done? Are there not many families in your neighbourhood which are still destitute of the saving knowledge of the truth? Are you not all acquainted with unconverted persons, who may be brought within the range of your religious influence? May not some of them be already inquiring, and longing for a christian friend, to teach them the way of the Lord more perfectly? Is it not probable that many plans may yet be devised for the development of the church's power and resources? Ought we not to be as desirous to do good as to get good? And would it not tend to the general welfare if at our church meetings, there were not only expressions of christian feeling, but consultations respecting christian effort, and allotments of labour, suited to each one's qualifications and opportunities?

There is one department of christian effort to which it may be proper that we should refer more particularly. It is connected with the right use of property. When we gave ourselves to the Saviour we included in the surrender all we then had, and all that he should at any time entrust to us. He expects us to be faithful, and he will one day "take account of his servants." The support of the pastor liberally provided for and punctually paid (and liberality, be it remembered, is justice, and punctuality a duty,) together with the expense necessarily incurred in carrying on the worship of God, constitute a standing demand in every church. These claims, and all other claims of the cause of God, will be easily met if every christian man shall resolve to contribute, honestly, conscientiously, and proportionally, "as God has prospered him."

Finally—permit us to offer a remark or two on the preservation of church purity. This, too, is the concern of every member. If brotherly love be unbroken, and holy consistency maintained, the church will be in a healthy state. A diseased condition results from failure in one or both respects, and that may be traced to previous personal declension. Hence the importance of unremitting effort for the attainment of fervid piety. We should jealously guard against whatever may tend to chill the ardour of the soul, or induce laxity of deportment. When converts are brought into the churches they should be taught to take a high stand from the beginning, utterly renouncing the world's code of morals, and the world's follies and frivolities. The law of love is to prevail among the members of the church, and the law of holiness in regard to "those that are without."

Let us see to it that we watch the commencement of strife, and require the application of our Lord's rule, Matth. 18. 15-17, in all cases of personal offence. Let us recognise the duty of mutual caution and warning, and account that brother or sister our best friend, who faithfully points out a danger which we may not see, or reproves us for the evil, or the appearance of evil which it may be we have unconsciously indulged. Let us have confidence in one another, giving credit always for pure motives and good intentions. Let all men see and know that we have not only forsaken the vices of the world but its vanities, and that we are walking through it as "strangers and sojourners." Let our conduct as members of the church of Christ comports with the dignity of our calling, so that, wherever we are, and whatever engaged in, we may not forget that we profess to belong to God's "chosen generation"—his "royal priesthood"—his "holy nation"—his "peculiar people." And if there be any "root of bitterness," or disorderly behaviour, or unholy deportment, let the rod of discipline be promptly applied, that the evil may be put away, and the righteousness of the christian profession vindicated.

All this is demanded of us as followers of the Lord Jesus Christ. His word is the lawbook in the affairs of the church. No other standard can be set up. No other rule can be regarded. We are bound to observe all that it commands, and to abstain from all that it forbids. If, with stern and uncompromising fidelity, we do the Lord's will, and enforce obedience thereto in the churches, we shall enjoy a continued blessing, and many will say, "We will go with you, for we have heard that God is with you." May the Lord "make you perfect in every good work to do his will, working in you that which is wellpleasing in his sight, through Jesus Christ, to whom be glory for ever and ever. Amen."

AN ADDRESS.

To the Baptist Church at Margaree, Cape Breton.

DEAR BRETHREN,

After mature and prayerful deliberation, I have come to the conclusion to tender to you my resignation. Knowing your isolated position, and from that fearing lest it may be some months before you may get a minister, I feel sorry to leave you. But there is consolation in the thought that God never forsakes his people.

I have enjoyed many happy and delightful seasons with you, the remembrance of which will always be refreshing. I shall still be especially interested in those dear young people whom I have led down into the baptismal waters. O brethren, carefully watch over the lambs of the flock, they will need all your care.

Our parting, dear Brethren, is but for a short time, a few years at most, and then if we love God and are called according to His purpose, all things will work together for our good, and we shall be re-united where parting is no more known. While we are here in the body, dear Brethren, I would fain occupy a place in your affections. Be assured you will in mine. Though absent in the body, I will be present "in the Spirit"—"joying and beholding your order and the steadfastness of your faith in Christ. Let us bear each other on our arms of faith whenever we approach the throne of heavenly grace; and then

"Though sundered far, by faith we'll meet  
Around one common mercy-seat."

"Now the God of peace, that brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, that great Shepherd of the sheep, through the blood of the everlasting covenant, make you perfect in every good work to do his will, working in you that which is well-pleasing in his sight through Jesus Christ, to whom be Glory for ever and ever. Amen."

"I remain dear Brethren your's in Christ.  
ROBERT R. PHILLIPS.

April 8th, 1857.

REPLY.

Dear Brother,—In reply to your resignation tendered to us some weeks since, we would desire to express to you our high esteem of your labours of love amongst us.

We cannot but feel that the great work of your Master is your aim. Your christian deportment during your residence amongst us, leads us to feel that you have learned of Him who was "meek and lowly of heart."

When we contrast the state of the Church with what it was on your arrival,—we feel that we cannot be too thankful to the kind friends in Nova Scotia, for sending, and the sacrifice you have made in taking up your abode with us. Your labors have not been in vain.—18 have been added to the Church, 17 by baptism and 1 by letter. You enjoy our confidence and that of the community at large.

Now, Dear Brother, as you are about to leave us, May the Great Head of the Church be with you and bless you; give you souls for your hire, and seals to your ministry so that when Christ cometh the second time without sin unto Salvation, He may give you the welcome sentence—"Good and faithful servant enter into the joy of your Lord."

JOHN I. INGRAHAM, }  
LACHLAN McDONALD, } Deacons.  
WILLIAM S. HART, }

For the Christian Messenger.

Notes of a Tour in the United States.

RAILROADS—EDUCATION—ALBANY.

MR. EDITOR,

Having explored to a limited extent the renowned City of New York, I proceeded to Albany by the Hudson River Railroad—on the west side of the river from which it derives its name. It is 150 miles in length, connecting the cities of Albany and Troy, with the "great Emporium of the State." Its erection cost nearly \$7,000,000, and is said to be inferior to none in the Union. The trains are drawn by horses from the starting point in Chamber's street to the 31st. street, where they are exchanged for the noisy locomotive which flies off with a speed scarcely credible, and throws the poor horses entirely into the shade.

There are situated on the banks of this beautiful river a large number of cities, towns, and villages, of considerable note, and about which much of interest might be said; but space forbids even a passing notice of them. Many of them are laid out with considerable taste, the buildings of a superior order of architecture, and copiously supplied with manufactories of various descriptions, with everything around them indicative of industry, prosperity, and wealth.

I need hardly say that this land of freedom is well nigh overrun with "churches" of all kinds and characters, and for aught that I know, more than one half of them could be dispensed with, without any serious damage to the true religion or morals of the country.

There are at the same time among evangelical bodies many extensive and flourishing churches, who by their indefatigable and prayerful efforts, are exerting a vast influence for good, and in many places are making the enemy of all righteousness to tremble on his throne. It is truly a gratifying reflection that in a country so distinguished for every species of iniquity, there are many also distinguished not less for thorough, deep-toned piety, than for the most exalted and munificent christian liberality.

There is one thing especially which the traveller in this country cannot fail to admire: I refer to its magnificent system of education—Colleges, Institutes, Academies, and Schools of a superior order—in active and efficient operation in every part of the land. They are governed by a system which places them within the reach of the greater part of the youth of the country. Here the sons and daughters of the poorest peasant may be educated on a level with those of the most opulent citizens. Here poverty has no power to doom a young man of promise to a life of ignorance and toil. If he possess talent and energy, and evince a resolute determination to advance, nothing can successfully oppose him. Evils there may be connected with such a system; but de pite those evils it cannot fail to elevate the country where it exists. It is proceeded. Between New York and Albany the largest city is Poughkeepsie, 75 miles from the former. Its streets are regularly laid out, and lined with many magnificent public and private edifices. It is surrounded by one of the richest agricultural districts in the State of New York, has a population of over 15,000, and is a place of rich and extensive commerce. There are in this city about 17 churches. Many of these are large, and elegantly furnished, and add to the external appearance of the place. There are also several Academies, besides extensive and flourishing manufactories, &c. Next in importance is Hudson, 28 miles below Albany. It stands at the head of ship navigation on the Hudson River, and is the terminus of the Hudson and Berkshire Railroad. It is very pleasantly situated, and commands a splendid view of the Catskill mountains. This city has a population of some 8,000, in the centre of an extensive trade, and interspersed with many splendid public buildings.