

CIRCULAR LETTER.

To the Churches composing the Eastern Baptist Association.

DEAR BRETHREN,

More deep and earnest piety, is the special need of our churches—Piety consists in a firm belief in, and right conception of the Being, perfections, and government of God; proper affection to him; a resemblance of his imitable perfections, and conformity to his will. In piety towards God there will be conviction of sin, faith in Jesus Christ, love to God, "righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost," in a word piety is walking with God. Depth of piety is religion entering into, pervading all the faculties of the soul, and becoming the warp and woof of our moral, and spiritual existence. It is feeling and saying "My Father's will be done," "For me to live is Christ," and "Whether we eat or drink, or whatsoever we do, do all to the glory of God." There will be seasons of holy converse with heaven leading the soul to say within itself "My meditation of Him shall be sweet, I will be glad in the Lord," and a solemn sense of the presence and purity of the great Jehovah calling forth the frequent prayer "Let the words of my mouth, and the meditation of my heart be acceptable in thy sight, O Lord my strength and my Redeemer." Depth of piety in the soul, like the deep under-currents of the ocean, which though calms and storms may affect the surface, pursue their onward course, causes an undercurrent ever setting heavenward. In the heart will be the well of living water springing up into everlasting life. *Deep toned spirituality.* Earnestness in religion is the mind drawn intensely towards the one momentous concern—salvation, great common, eternal,—drawing forth the prayer "Lord save or I perish," "God be merciful to me a sinner."—The Holy Ghost records of such a one "behold he prayeth." Here is "seeking first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness" striving for the strait-gate, selling all to purchase the pearl of great price, laying aside every weight, and the besetting sin, and so running as to obtain, taking the cross, willing to be crucified inwardly and outwardly, following Jesus, fighting the good fight of faith, and laying hold on eternal life. All concern must give place to this one, all things laid under tribute to its furtherance. Earnestness in religion is the warmth of Divine love, in the soul intensified by heavenly influence, and right views of things; it is being "fervent in spirit serving the Lord;" ever elevating and purifying its subjects. He who is the subject of this not only urges forward in his course, leaving all grovelling and meaner spirits far in the distance, but invites others as he runs, saying, come to Mount Zion, Christ has marked the way. Thus pressing onward his prayers ascend to God in holy groanings, his contributions go to the Lord's treasury, and his conduct shines with a heavenly lustre which others see, and join in the acclaim of "Glory to God."

This preciousness of Jesus to the soul; this "converse with the skies," this deep devotional spirit, heavenly groanings, and "aspirations after a higher and holier existence" is what we need. The piety of Noah walking with God and doing according to all that God commands. Here then is our view of deep and earnest piety. Where soul piety exists, it will manifestly develop itself. With this the Church will be a Goshen amid Egyptian gloom—a verdant oasis in the world's moral desert; not as a bonfire on Mount Zion, but a beacon light to benighted sinners; "the light of the world," "a city set on a hill." All and each one of our churches need this, all and each one of the individual members, both ministers and people. To give this needed thing to some one else than ourselves will not do, generalizing or society-forming will not suffice instead of individual earnest piety. To this deep and earnest piety there are many dangerous hindrances. The world, the flesh and the devil always oppose. Let us look at a few of the forms of evil prevailing in churches at the present. It is an easy thing to gain admission to membership of a church without genuine piety, and thus become a dead weight, or diseased member of the body. The tests which once were a guard in this respect are now greatly removed. It is easy to see the danger here incurred, especially if the individual is of extensive influence. The tendency is to drag down the soul, to induce a spirit of worldliness, and thus draw off from spirituality of mind. All this lets the world into the church. Christ's Kingdom is not of this world. The taste for amusements and social parties is another danger of the present. Too often there exists a continued round of social gatherings throughout the winter evenings. These though expensive are well attended, while benevolent societies and prayer-meetings receive but a passing notice; but that is not all, there may be seen the Christian professor, joining in the most light and frivolous pastimes. In these there may be nothing decidedly immoral, but then they remove the distinction between the Christian and the ungodly,—effecting the most dangerous worldly conformity. Of this nature are many of the winter parties and tea meetings—also Sabbath-day company, conversation, and light reading. These have a tendency to destroy the life of religion, if it ever existed. Then witness the commotions, and divisions arising from political dissensions, destroying the spirit of love and union among church-members, making one feel as though there was nothing known at certain times, but the religion of politics. Gain,—Gain, also is the watch-word of farmer and mechanic, of the mercantile and of the professional class. Mammon is the god of the age, and of Anglo-Saxons in particular, at whose shrine the present earthly prosperity of many professors causes them to bow in homage. This is one of Satan's drag-nets, to catch all both bad and good. Locomotion and electricity are characteristic of the present. The bustle and rapidity, the din and hum of the world on every side shut out, as it were the Christian from sober reflection, study of God's Word, and prayer. Amid universal confusion, will he break, and retire for communion with God? But stop! to enumerate is vain. On every hand, behind and before, are foes, and within, a traitor, what then? Gird on the whole armor, nor put it off, "lay aside every weight," and press onward for the prize. Be in earnest.

Dear Brethren:—in view of our condition, dangers and calling, we ask, what do we most need? The answer is ready, more deep

and earnest piety in our churches. Where this exists there will be vitality in the soul, a power within. The tree of abundant fruit must be alive at the heart. All great movements work from their centres. It is God's method. The hidden fire, the heavenly flame in the members of our churches, will start benevolent action,—bring together scattered churches, heal difficulties, supply means for carrying on the world's conversion, keep up a continual revival; purify the churches; sanctify the affections; give power to christian effort; and enlarge the attendance at the meetings. It will send forth light to the benighted; balm to the wounded, and a hand to wipe away sorrow's tear. This mighty power working from the centre, will be ready to embrace, and skilful to invent ways and means, for doing good. Resuscitation, health and vigor will be seen wherever it exists. For want of more of this deep and earnest piety, what one of our institutions is not in some measure paralyzed? what one of our churches is in doctrine and practise, all that a church ought to be? what is the state of our Missionary organizations, and educational establishments? where are our Colporteurs? Is the standard of piety as high, and the revival flame kept up as they ought to be? What do our prayer-meetings say? what the Lord's treasury? Look at our worldly conformity! Is the prayer ascending to God in humble fervor for more laborers to gather in the harvest? See friends, neighbors, the world around us rushing on to ruin, and how little do we do to save them. Zion languishing, but where is the helping hand, of warm christian influence? Let us look correctly at the fearful sin of not striving more for deep and earnest piety. fellow in imagination one immortal spirit as it is either borne by angels to the abode of peace, or dragged by foul fiends and plunged amid the wailing of the lost, and then sum up the whole of peace and woe from this unit. What then is required in view of all this and vastly more, but for the church to have the vital energy of deep and earnest piety, that she may send out her showers of blessing, and streams of benevolence into innumerable ramifications. With heaven in the eye, and glory in the soul, may we urge our way onward, truthfully saying to the perishing around, "Come with us and we will do thee good," and in temper, zeal, and devotion, appear as the world's beacon light, and it is heard on every side, "God is with thee."—Therefore my beloved brethren "be ye steadfast, unmovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labor is not in vain in the Lord."

Religious Intelligence.

TUSCANY.—In Tuscany the bishops complain of the disorder of their dioceses and the spread of Protestant opinions. To check this, doubtless, the civil power has interposed. Persecution has again shown itself. Four persons have been doomed to imprisonment for the great crime of visiting a convert. Life was ebbing away, and they called to sympathise with him, when at the instigation of the priests, they were cast into prison. The Pope is likely to visit the Tuscan territory, and this zeal for the Church may be gratifying to his headship.

PRUSSIA.—Fresh fuel is added to the flames of Ecclesiastical controversy. Dr. Stahl, a distinguished criticiser, has found occasion, in some statement of the friends of the Alliance to impugn its principles, and to question the tendency of its acts. Men like Stahl and Hengstenberg are annoyed at the Union. The power of forms, and Church authority cannot stand before it. The Christian character and the church state of Baptists will be recognised, and they and their friends dread the influence which will result from such an event, and in the capital of the Prussian dominion. Hoffman and Kunze have nobly met the shock of these angry champions of the past. There is no shrinking from the contest. Their ability is quite equal to that of their opponents, whilst there is this mighty difference, they have truth and righteousness on their side. The public are marking the struggle with growing interest, and probably no sitting of the Alliance in any place, will have gathered around it such an amount of attention as will be fixed on the forthcoming one at Berlin.—The religious statistics of Prussia are just published. One or two items we select. The population is upwards of seventeen millions. The Protestants are divided into various Lutheran sects, but altogether number some 10,534,750. They prevail most in Brandenburg, Pomerania, Saxony, Silesia, &c. The Roman Catholics are 6,418,312, and are found chiefly in Westphalia and the Rhenish provinces. There are 234,241 Jews, and they exist mostly in the Polish provinces. Of Greeks there are 1,380. The Baptists number 3,333; they have sixteen ministers and fifty chapels. The Moravians reckon about 3,000, and the Irvingites report about 1,300 members, with twenty-one pastors, and twenty-seven churches.

THE WORK OF GOD IN SWEDEN.—An important spiritual reformation is now in progress in Sweden, the following will interest our readers:

A few years since, the cherished Nelson, who went out as a Sailor Missionary, labored at Gottenburg, and a Baptist church was formed. Persecution soon arose, and the missionary was banished. The influence of the truths he had preached, however, could not be banished. An educated man (Rev. Andreas Wiberg) who had preached for eight years in the Lutheran Church, was led by them, first to the Cross, and then to examine the subject of baptism. He was convinced, and desired to be baptized; but there was no Baptist minister then in Sweden or Norway. He sailed for America. On his way the vessel was detained two days at Copenhagen, Denmark, where he met brother Nelson, who baptized him at midnight in the Baltic.

After reaching New-York, he became for a time a colporteur of the Publication Society, laboring among the sailors and emigrants of that city. Then he prepared his work on "Christian Baptism," which the Society stereotyped in the Swedish, and which has been so blessed of God. Feeling a deep interest in the religious condition of his native land, he offered himself to the Missionary Union as a missionary for Sweden. They being unable to appoint him, he applied to the Publication Society, which commissioned him as Superintendent of Colportage in Sweden. The Society was led to this step by the significant fact, that while the laws of Sweden positively forbid, under heavy penalties, all preaching except by the clergy of the State Church, they give entire freedom to the press. You cannot, under the sanction of law, preach the truth, but you may print and circulate it as much as you like. Colporteurs may, without molestation, go from house to house, and from village to village, distributing books and tracts, and speaking to small companies in private houses on the subject of religion. Some of our brethren do dare to preach publicly, but it is always at the risk of imprisonment.

Brother Wiberg arrived in Stockholm, Nov. 7th, 1855, just twenty months since. Upon his recommendation, four other colporteurs were appointed about the 1st of January, 1856.

These were the beginnings of the work in Sweden. Since then, twenty-one Baptist churches have been organized, twenty-four ministers ordained, and about one thousand hopeful converts have been baptized!

During the year 1856, forty-three believers were baptized in Stockholm, the capital of Sweden; forty-eight at Elfdahlen; one hundred at Sundsvall; in all, four hundred and ninety-two persons were baptized in Sweden, during the past year!

DO THE SPIRITUALISTS BELIEVE THEIR OWN DOCTRINES?—The following capital test is given in the N. Y. Examiner:

A SPIRITUALIST'S BACKERS.—A long-bearded customer recently entered a spiritual bookstore in this city, and applied for an agency. He proposed to take a large quantity of books to his part of the country, "away out West," where he represented that he could soon sell them, as he was assured by the "invisibles." The enterprising bookseller was, of course, delighted with this prospect of a sale; but his enthusiasm was somewhat dampened, when the long-bearded gentleman remarked that he had no money, and wanted the books entirely upon credit. "Are you responsible?" was the natural inquiry of the merchant.

"Perfectly."
"What evidence of your reliability can you furnish?"
"I have the best of backers—men whose names you know well."

The merchant's countenance brightened. "Very well," said he, "let us see your papers."

Thereupon the customer presented the following document:—"To whom it may concern: We, the undersigned, having been acquainted spiritually with Mr. _____, of _____, Wisconsin, for many years, recommend him as perfectly reliable, and would not be afraid to trust him to any amount.

GEORGE WASHINGTON,
THOMAS JEFFERSON,
HENRY CLAY,
THOMAS PAINE,
JOHN MILTON, and others.

"Through Jane E. _____, Medium."

The bookseller remarked, that the backers were good, if the medium was reliable; but he thought, on the whole, he would prefer to keep the books. The customer hereupon denounced the bookseller as an imposter, telling him that he did not believe his own doctrines, and that the spirits would expose his duplicity to the world. Of this he felt assured by the spirit of prophecy within him. The bookseller was not convinced.

United States.

THE LATE RIOTS IN NEW YORK.—Since our last issue three persons, Mr. Thomas Sparks, a special policeman, Mr. John Meyers, a tinsmith, who was accidentally wounded while passing through the Bowery, and Patrick Kerrigan, a rioter, have died from wounds received during the Sixth Ward riots. Coroner Perry has examined the matter very fully, with a view to ascertain the names of parties engaged in the riot, and after exhausting all the testimony which could be procured, the jury found the following verdict: "We find that James K. Bide, Bernard McGivin, Frank Fitzpatrick, Edward Dye, Thomas McGeary, and James Lane, William Gill, Jeremiah Ellis, Patrick Mooney, Owen Gilmartin, Thomas Rooney, Daniel Sweeney, Patrick Hayes, Barney alias Owen Gallagher, and Patrick Moore, were active participators in the riot in Bayard street, on the 4th of July."

Upon the rendition of this verdict, Coroner Perry issued warrants for the apprehension of the persons implicated, except those already in prison. Edward Dye, Patrick Mooney, and Barney, alias Owen Gallagher, are the only persons in the Tombs against whom the jury rendered their verdict. All efforts to arrest the other parties have thus far proved futile.

MORE RIOTING.—During the week the rowdies in the upper part of the Seventeenth Ward, known as Mackerelville, have made several attempts to overawe the police, but in each instance were put down by decided measures. The police regulation closing the rum shops on Sunday displeases the Germans, and on Sunday afternoon an attack was made upon the police in Avenue A and Fourth street. After a sharp contest the police dispersed the mob; but not before several officers had been disabled by brickbats. A German named Muller, who was going along quietly with his family, was shot in the breast by a stray ball and killed. Others were wounded, but their names have not yet been ascertained. The police arrested six or seven of the rioters, and lodged them in safe keeping. Officer Hadden is dangerously wounded, and may not recover.

On Saturday night, the Staten Islanders, to the number of 150 men, made an attack on the Hospital buildings at Seguin's Point. They painted their faces and disguised themselves in other ways, and made an attack from three several points. Over 100 shots were fired, mostly by the assailants, who as soon as the howitzer was brought out ran off. A number were wounded among the rioters, and one policeman was shot in the hand.—N. Y. Paper.

A son of Professor Stowe, aged nineteen, was drowned at Andover, Mass., on Thursday, while bathing. He had just returned from Europe with his mother, Mrs. Harriet Beecher Stowe. They arrived in the *Persia*, on Tuesday evening and the young man reached home Wednesday, his mother going to Fish-kill, to pay a short visit to the family of her brother, Rev. Henry Ward Beecher.

At Chicago, on the 4th inst., a rocket entered a third story window on Clark street, and struck Mrs. Sarah A. Smith in the center of the forehead, entering about six inches, and from appearances, exploding within the cavity of the skull, scattering her brains in all directions.

The United States squadron on the Chinese station will consist of seven vessels, viz: the steamers *Minnesota* (which left Hampton Roads on Wednesday evening), *Mississippi*, and *San Jacinto*; and sail ships *Portsmouth*, *German town* (sitting at Gosport), *Levant* and *Vincennes*.

New barley from Southern Illinois has appeared in the Cincinnati market, and new wheat from Mississippi in the St. Louis market. On Thursday last, the first new flour was received in Norfolk from North Carolina, and sold at ten dollars per barrel.

The woods in the lower sections of New Jersey, it is said, will be literally filled with whortleberries the present season; many of them are beginning to ripen.

Jacob S. Willets, near Flatbush, L. I., died of hydrophobia, on Sunday last, after being violently exercised with the disease for about twenty-four hours. He was bitten by a strange dog, about the first of June, when the wound was cauterized, and completely healed up, nor did any symptoms of the disease appear till Saturday, when Mr. W. was taken with spasms in attempting to drink a glass of water. He was about forty years of age, and leaves a widow and four children. He was a highly respectable farmer, and son of the prominent Quaker banker and merchant of this city, Samuel Willets.

A lady in Carlyle, Ind., left her infant in its cradle for a few moments, and what was her horror on returning to find that it had been stolen, and a negro baby left in its place. No clue has been found to the kidnapper.