

For the Christian Messenger.

Circular Letter.

THE CENTRAL BAPTIST ASSOCIATION IN NOVA SCOTIA, TO THE SEVERAL CHURCHES WHICH IT COMPRISES.

Dear Brethren,

In the providence of God, the time has come for our gathering together, by which we are refreshed in the renewal of christian affection with so large a portion of the Ministers and Messengers of the Churches, and, which also supplies an opportunity for our annual address to the churches.

We beg leave to direct your attention to the duty of a regular attendance on the public worship of God, and the administration of the word and ordinances of the Gospel. We are aware that we cannot too earnestly enjoin upon you the more private duties of Religion, especially family worship, together with the reading and study of the word of God; but notwithstanding the punctual performance of these in the most faithful manner, and spirit in which they can be effected, together with all the real amount of spiritual good arising out of their faithful performance, both to the individual, the churches, and the world, they can never be offered with the hope of acceptance with God when performed with a view of lessening the obligation to the performance of the more public duty.

We shall first endeavour to show that God has commanded the public worship of his church. In evidence of this our only authority is the Word of God and the example of the early christians. Under the Law of Moses God united public worship with the keeping of the Sabbath, in these striking words:—"Ye shall keep my Sabbaths, and reverence my Sanctuary: I am the Lord."

In the epistle to the Heb., x. 24-35,—we have a very comprehensive command for this duty. "And let us consider one another, to provoke unto love and to good works: not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together as the manner of some is; but exhorting one another; and so much the more, as ye see the day approaching." God has enjoined public worship; and made it an essential duty of a Christian church. Reason and experience both confirm us in the belief of its great usefulness, in promoting the highest good of man and the glory of God.

God's designs and commands are in striking harmony in all his works; but especially so in his plan of Christianity; to effect a part of these great designs was the command given for public worship. The apostles were impressed with this design; and therefore hastened to disencumber themselves from other claims; saying: "But we will give ourselves continually to prayer and the ministry of the word"; hence it was suggested that "He gave some Pastors and Teachers" "for the perfecting of the saints till we all come in the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ."

This part of our subject we presume is pretty generally understood. We therefore pass on to notice in the second place, the effects arising from the neglect of this duty on the part of the church, on the service of the pulpit, on the church and congregation at large.

All great undertakings among men lead bystanders to look for results commensurate with the effort employed to produce them, which, when effected amply illustrate the utility of the enterprise. Religion is capable of supplying the most expensive illustrations of its great usefulness in "souls renewed and sins forgiven." The Bible is just a declaration that God has employed on the scheme of religion, his unsearchable riches of wisdom and knowledge. By means of his people he gives evidence to the world of his being, goodness, and love, "Ye are my witnesses, saith the Lord, that I am God." "Ye are the light of the world and the salt of the earth."—"That ye should be for salvation unto the ends of the earth." The purpose of God in the institution, and establishment of public worship will be easily perceived.

Remember therefore, Dear Brethren, that wherein any of you are living in the neglect of this duty, you are throwing in the way of your Pastor serious hindrances to his success in the public ministry of the Gospel. If he be intent on, and devoted in the spirit of his holy work, he will have given himself up to prayer and the study of the Word, that he might come to you as a cloud full of rain; but should he find your seat vacant from Sabbath to Sabbath, his hands will hang down, and his heart will be discouraged, his energies will flag, his services will be meagre and uninteresting; in short he will be compelled to take the oversight with grief and not with joy, and that will be unprofitable for you. Remember that your pastor has a constitution like other men, and may be easily disturbed. Pascal says: "man is very weak; why does that able philosopher wander in his theories?—a sand-fly is buzzing in his ear." Every care should be taken on your part to aid your minister in his work. You and your families, as far as may be, should be present in season; and your presence should be a guarantee for the uninterrupted of the services. The humble and unsuspecting christian minister, witnessing your absence from time to time, would be ready to trace its cause to a want on his part rather than on yours. Such impression would be likely to follow him into his study and preparation for public service, and would not fail to neutralize the best energies of his heart, and seriously embarrass his ablest powers to feed the Church of God, and to win souls to Christ. Other members, too, would

probably be led by your example, till the cause might become deserted, and sink into decay. It should always be borne in mind that the church is a society for mutual edification, for the discipline of its members, and the advancement of the kingdom of Christ on earth. Every member should supply his place in strengthening the general Cause: but all may fail unless each one perseveres in the practice and spirit of the duties of the Gospel. Fervent love to God and the brethren always inclines the soul to a cheerful compliance with christian duty.

But there is one other case which we will name. It is the effect produced by your absence, not only on the pulpit service, and on the church, but on the unconverted portion of the congregation. By you the utility of the Christian Religion is to be illustrated and confirmed, certain traits of character, evinced by you, become witnesses for God before the world that he is their author, "By this shall all men know that you are my disciples." Religion exemplified by you in spirit and practice, will be one of the most powerful auxiliaries to the preached word, to convince the understanding and reach the conscience with the force of truth. But should you neglect to obey the commands of God in regard to the public duties of religion, your pastor would be unable to appeal to you to enforce the claims of religion on his fellow men, as he could not say of you, "ye are our epistles read and known of all men,"—neither could he add "from you sounded out the word of the Lord, not only in all Macedonia and Asia, so that your faith to God-ward is spread abroad, that we need not to say anything, for they themselves know what manner of entering in we had unto you, how that ye were turned from dumb idols to serve the living and true God, and to wait for his Son from Heaven, even Jesus who delivered us from the wrath to come." The unconverted expect more from you than they do from themselves; yea, ye yourselves expect more, and God requires more, seeing he has connected his own glory with you, "That you should be to the praise of his glory who first trusted in Christ." Let, then, your light shine before men "that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in Heaven."

Neglect of the worship of God, seldom arises from a view of avoiding pharisaical conformity to form and usage; on the contrary, it is indicative of a sad and lamentable want of the enjoyment of true piety at home. The Bible uniformly teaches that where true godliness lives in the heart, its constant aspirations are to the sanctuary of God. Its loudest exclamations are, "I love the place where thine honor dwelleth." "I was glad when they said unto me, let us go into the House of the Lord." "One day in thy courts is better than a thousand." "Why should I be as one that turneth aside by the flocks of thy companions." Then dear Brethren, go ye up to the worship of God, whither the tribes of the Lord go up. Gladden by your presence the soul of your pastors, that they may be able to say, "now we live if you stand fast in Christ."

Dear Brethren, one and all, as you value the peace of God in your own souls, and regard the interest of God's cause on earth, be watchful, be sober, be vigilant, always abounding in the work of the Lord. Let the love of an agonizing Saviour constrain you to duty. Let the horrors of that eternal darkness and despair which await the finally impenitent move one and all of you, that ye come to the help of the Lord—to the help of the Lord against the mighty.

Correspondence.

For the Christian Messenger.

Acadia College Agency.

To the friends of Acadia College,

Your agent has visited the field in Nova Scotia, and is now on his way to New Brunswick. In leaving Nova Scotia he would urge promptness on the part of subscribers and agents in forwarding all monies due, so that the expenses of the year just closed may be defrayed before the commencement of another year. A list of persons who have consented to act as local agents is here subjoined:—

IN THE WESTERN ASSOCIATION.—William Churchill, Esq., Yarmouth and Chebogue; J. C. Anderson, Pubnico, &c.; Deacon Joshua Chadsey, Locke's Island, Sable River, &c.; T. R. Patillo, Esq., Liverpool and the College Notes in Milton; J. T. Freeman, subscriptions in Milton; Rev. R. R. Philp, Port Medway and Mills Village, and Luther Leadbetter, Northern District; Deacon Joseph Rogers, Hebron; Nelson Corning, Esq., Chebogue; Rev. C. Randall, Weymouth and St. Mary's; Rev. J. C. Morse, Digby Neck; Brother Arthur Collins, Briar Island; Rev. Obed Parker, Hillsburg, &c.; James Potter, Esq., Clements; Reed Hall, Esq., Granville; Rev. George Armstrong and Deacon Morse, Bridgetown; Asaph Marshall, Esq., Wilnot; Rev. W. G. Parker and Dea. S. L. Chipman, Nictaux; Dea. Danl. Whitman, Albany; Rev. Chas. Tupper, D. D., Lower Aylesford and Upper Wilnot.

IN THE CENTRAL ASSOCIATION.—Wm. Randall, Esq., M. D., Bridgewater, &c.; William West, Esq., Upper Aylesford; Harding Parker, Pleasant Valley, &c.; Melatiah Kinsman, Billtown; Brother Albert Bishop, Kentville and New Minas; William Davison, Esq., Canaan; Rev. A. S. Hunt, Canaan; G. V. Rand, Esq., Wolfville; Rev. E. O. Reed, Gaspereaux; Rev. Wm. Burton, Falmouth; John Bezanson, Esq., Chester; Rev. D. M. Welton, Windsor and Newport; Rev. Jas. Stevens, Rawdon; David Ellis, Junr., Sackville, Windsor Road; David Thompson, Esq., Hammond's Plains; Rev. W. H. Humphrey, Halifax.

IN THE EASTERN ASSOCIATION.—Rev. H. Eagles, St. Mary's, Isaac's Harbor, &c.; W. Bigelow, Esq., Canso and Crow Harbor; C. Jost, Esq., Guysborough and Manchester; Rev. A. Porter, Antigonish and Merrigomish; Jacob Layton, Esq., Upper Stewiacke and Musquodoboit; Ezekiel C. Wheelock, Esq., Brookfield, Lower Stewiacke, St. Andrews, &c.; Brother L. J. Walker, Truro, &c.; Rev. Maynard Parker, Upper Londonderry; Rev. James Reed, Lower Londonderry; Rev. Benjamin Scott, Onslow, (?); Rev. J. E. Balcom, Amherst, Maocan, and West Brook; Brother J. W. Johnson, Glenville, Little River, and River Philip; John Bigelow, Senr., Pugwash and Goose River; Bro. N. Sutherland, River John.

Cape Breton.—J. L. Tremain, Esq., Port Hood and Mabou; Wm. Hartt, Esq., Margaree; Rev. Hugh Ross, Bouldardrie, Bras d'or, and Sydney; Elder McQuillan, Mira.

Prince Edward Island.—Rev. J. Davis, Charlottetown, Lots 48 and 49, St. Peter's Road, North River, and Cavendish; Rev. Malcom Ross, Tryon and Bedeque; Elder McLeod, Uigg; and Rev. John Shaw, Three Rivers and East Point.

All monies should be directed to James R. Fitch, M. D., Treasurer, Wolfville. Will the local agents see that the new College year begins next September without an accumulation of debt?

Yours, &c.,

DAVID FREEMAN.

For the Christian Messenger.

Address to the Revd. William Hobbs,

From the Baptist Church at Ragged Islands.

DEAR BROTHER,

More than three years have elapsed since you kindly accepted the Pastorship of this Church; and we feel great pleasure in bearing testimony to your zeal and faithfulness in your Master's cause.

During your stay with us, many souls have been converted and added to the Church;—You have been the instrument of organizing three other Churches in this county; and four Chapels have been finished, and dedicated to the worship of God,—together with two others, now in course of erection, with the prospect, we trust, of being finished at an early date.

And now, dear brother, since you have decided upon leaving us for a foreign station, to labour in the Master's vineyard on the other side of the globe,—while we cannot but regret having to part with you,—we desire submissively to say, "the will of the Lord be done."

We solicit an interest in your prayers. We shall continue to pray that God will prosper your way, and that you may be eminently successful in winning to Christ, souls that may adorn your crown in the day of rejoicing.

In conclusion, we pray that you may have a safe and speedy passage across the ocean to the place of your destination, that the best of Heaven's blessings may attend you through the remainder of your earthly pilgrimage; and that when the trials of life shall have closed, we may hail you on the peaceful shore of that better land where "Farewells" are never heard.

Signed, in behalf of the Church,

XERXES Z. CHIPMAN.

Ragged Islands, 4th June, 1859.

REPLY:

DEARLY BELOVED,

Your very flattering address is received with pleasure for which please except my best acknowledgment and kindest wishes for your temporal and spiritual prosperity.

You speak of three years or more that have elapsed since we became united as pastor and people, permit me to say that these have been amongst the most pleasant years of my life—and as such I shall always remember them with pleasure. Uninterrupted harmony and peace having been experienced through that whole period without one unkind word or act from any person, either professor or non-professor, "Behold how good and how pleasant for brethren to dwell together in unity."

In reviewing this period doubtless there is much that calls for gratitude on the part of both pastor, and people,—Whilst we are free to acknowledge that had we lived more faithfully up to our privileges, very much more might have been accomplished.

Whatever prosperity has attended my weak services is to be attributed in part to the cooperation of my brethren and friends connected with the church and congregation as well as in other settlements where I have laboured in erecting and completing the Houses for Religious Worship of which you speak, and also of contributing so liberally for the support of the pastor, all of which will not soon be erased from my memory.

Be assured dear brethren, that it is only from a firm conviction of duty that I have decided on leaving you for another and more distant field of labour. Your prayers are earnestly solicited, that it may tend for God's glory and the salvation of souls.

Finally, my dear brethren and friends, farewell, be of one mind, live in peace, and may the God of love and peace be with you all, Amen.

Yours fraternally,

WILLIAM HOBBS.

Lock's Island, 4th June, 1859.

For the Christian Messenger.

Baptist Church in Lunenburg.

DEAR BROTHER EDITOR,

It is interesting to know that the boundaries of Zion are being enlarged, not only among the churches of long standing but also where Baptist (Bible) principles were till recently unknown. I have observed, especially of late, a waking up to the truth in many places which were supposed to be impervious to the light. Movements are made for the erection of churches in several of these localities. The following extract of a letter from the town of Lunenburg, signed "A friend to Baptists," is an example. After several remarks as to the necessity and feasibility of such a movement, the writer concludes, "What we would wish to know is, if the sister churches would lend a helping hand in the affair, as it would be difficult and almost impossible for us to undertake it ourselves. We have no doubt, if the object could be accomplished, it would be the means of adding to the church and, we trust, of bringing sinners to Christ."

I should think that if application were made in suitable places, assistance might be obtained. No doubt every true friend of Zion would say, both in word and in deed, to the brethren in Lunenburg,—"Go forward."

Yours in the truth,

D. FREEMAN.