

[From the Minutes of the Western Baptist Association].

Circular Letter.

The subject we propose for consideration is, How can our Churches be made more efficient for the accomplishment of the divine purpose?

Remembering whom we are addressing, we must regard out of place any attempt to prove that the divine purpose here referred to is the conversion of souls to God, and the maintenance of true piety; or that it is the duty of every believer to give all the help he can towards rendering the Church as efficient as possible for that end. Nor can we presume that any intelligent christian requires to be convinced that, much as the church of Christ has accomplished, it is capable of doing far greater things for the glory of God, that there is in it a latent power mighty to the pulling down of the strongholds of sin as yet only partially developed and occasionally manifested; and that this divine energy would be productive of far more glorious results were there more faith and zeal in the professed followers of Christ. We are not about to dwell upon the sad deficiency presented by the church as a whole as regards unity, charity, sanctity, and earnestness, nor even to discuss how nearly we as a body come up to the New Testament idea of "a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a peculiar people," but simply to consider in what way our Churches may be made better adapted to fulfil their appointed mission in the towns, villages and rural districts of this province. To secure this desirable result then we would suggest in the first place.

1. We should aim at a more elevated piety in both ministers and people.

Every child of God should realise in his daily life that his existence on earth is continued simply that he may promote the interests of the Kingdom of Christ. A profession of religion, if it means anything, signifies the acceptance of this truth and a resolution to act upon it, by presenting the life to God a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable, not in word only but in deed,—deeds of Christian love, and zeal to bring souls to Jesus, to make his name honoured and loved, his cause supreme and progressive. As laborers for Christ our power with men is fixed by our power with God. Through Him, as far as he identifies himself with it, not by might nor by power but by his Spirit will any effort, any life, any church do great things for God. Without him we can do nothing. But need we be without Him? In our closets and daily life, in our fellowship and religious services may we not claim his promises to be with us unto the end of the world, to show himself unto us as not unto the world, to meet with us and bless us? Has he not made plain the conditions upon which he is willing to manifest his presence and power? "If ye abide in me and my words abide in you ye shall ask what ye will and it shall be done unto you. 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." God shuts himself out from no church, no heart. How powerful the influence of the every day life of one who habitually walks with God. A church composed of such would indeed be a light shining for God. A city set upon a hill. A church is efficient for bearing witness to the truth in proportion as it is distinguished by spirituality and holy living. The aggregate of the piety of its members, not their numbers nor their wealth, not the gifts nor the popularity of its minister, is the measure of its power for good. The word of life is God's instrument for turning the hearts of men to himself, and in the degree in which a church is a living embodied presentation of that word does it hold its faith efficiently. Sterling integrity, sincere deep piety and christian love, speak for God as nothing else can. Whatever will materially elevate the piety of our churches will do much for the cause of God. Is the importance of this duty estimated among us? Is reference made to it as frequently as needful? Is the standard of piety at which we aim that of the New Testament or of the conventional tone of sentiment around us? Are the high principles of integrity, christian love, heavenly-mindedness and zeal for Christ developed among us to a cheerful and hopeful degree? Are deep-toned piety and earnestness esteemed as essential to ministerial usefulness as talent and amiability? Do we value the spirituality and activity of our churches more than numbers or wealth? Is not the devotion of piety among us a theme requiring our thoughts, our earnest prayers?

2. By cultivating more of a missionary spirit.

The cause of Missions, home or foreign but specially the latter, has far too feeble a hold upon the hearts of our people. The contributions for these objects can be referred to only with pain. It is not our wish to treat this subject by reference to the past or to other denominations. Such comparisons are already too common and productive of no good. No one who loves the cause of Christ can reflect upon the number of Baptists in this province, the amount of wealth in their possession and the small sum annually contributed by them to the mission fund with shame and grief that the latter should bear such insignificant proportions to the two former. We are well aware that the language we are using may be employed by our enemies for taunt and insult, but that is unworthy of consideration compared with the sin of silence and concealment in con-

nection with what is so offensive to God and injurious to his cause. Can we expect the blessing of God to rest upon our churches while money is so highly valued and the salvation of souls so lightly esteemed. Brethren this is a great sin that we have to confess, a great wrong to rectify. Our love for the cause of God is no more than is indicated by what we are willing to do for it.

3. A more general and deep interest in our denominational institutions of learning.

We are not about to advocate the cause of education nor to plead for our local institutions. We do not intend to say anything respecting vacant professorships or financial deficiencies, but to allude to a fact upon which we will all agree, whatever may be the merits or demerits of our educational institutions, the saddest circumstance in connection with them is the indifference with which they are regarded by many among us, for that indifference every excuse is pleaded. The cross and mistakes of the past and existing defects and deficiencies and the discouraging prospects of the future, are urged as reasons for caring nothing about these institutions and doing nothing for them. Now admitting all that is said to be true, does it justify indifference? Ought it not rather to render it impossible. To whom do these institutions belong, who has the power to remedy any existing evil or deficiency in connection with them? Our churches! upon them the responsibility rests and in no way can they rid themselves of it. An enlightened zeal for the cause of God must include educational interests. Who can doubt that our future as a denomination must be largely influenced by the efficiency of our schools and colleges. If these are permitted to linger in their present state or to gradually diminish and die we must cease to occupy even our present position. But if new life be infused into them and enlarged opportunity for usefulness afforded them immeasurable good must result. This never will be the case till our churches take a more general and wise interests in the subject.

4. Greater care in selecting young men for the ministry.

Not a pulpit now filled but will soon be vacant, not a ministerial head now raised in our ranks but will soon be laid low. Not a voice that now speaks for God but will soon be silent in death. Brethren, when we are gone who shall supply our places? Shall successors to whom will then be entrusted such solemn responsibilities be men of lofty piety and superior intelligence, or the opposite? Our churches are determining that question to-day, by the encouragement, or discouragement they offer to those who present themselves as candidates for the ministry. A church may do much for the cause of God by the judicious selection of young men adapted for preaching the gospel, and a firm and wise discouragement of those not endowed with the necessary qualifications. But what are those qualifications? What should a church regard as essential in any young man who asks its sanctions for his engaging in preaching the gospel? We would answer: 1. Deep toned piety. 2. An earnest desire to do good. 3. A good degree of plain common sense. 4. An average amount of physical energy. 5. An aptitude for acquiring knowledge and facility in imparting it. Other qualities may be very desirable but these we regard as absolutely essential. He who is deficient in them is not called to preach, and whoever has them is leaving a great duty undone so long as he refrains from engaging in the work of the ministry. The writer had noted down a number of other topics upon which to dwell, but on consideration he has limited himself to the foregoing. Not because the others are not important but because these demand immediate attention. May they receive that attention in a prayerful, earnest and humble spirit. That our piety may be more complete, our zeal more manifest and productive, our regard for the future welfare of our denomination more general and wise and our successors more holy and earnest than ourselves.

Report of the French Mission Board.

In presenting their annual report, the Board, would gratefully acknowledge the continued tokens of divine favor, which have attended the labors of our esteemed missionary during the past year. Our brother, amid many discouragements and much opposition has toiled on, scattering the good seed of gospel truth, and laboring to disperse the darkness that everywhere enshrouds the minds of our Acadian French, and although the apparent success thus far is comparatively small, yet we trust that the period is at hand, when churches of baptized believers will be gathered among that people.

In July last, the Board called a Council to consider the propriety of setting apart Bro. Normondy to the work of an Evangelist. The Council met at the Mission House, Tusket, and decided to ordain our brother. The services were held in the Baptist Meeting house, Tusket, and were full of interest.

Last year, we stated that four families had left the Romish Church, and identified themselves with the cause of truth. We rejoice to learn that amid the most violent opposition, they continue steadfast. During the present year several others have abandoned Romanism, and have received the word of God. Two persons have been baptized, and have been received into the fellowship of the Baptist Church, St. Mary's Bay. Three others expect to be baptized shortly.

The Board would express their unabated confidence in our missionary. They believe him to be the right man for the work. He has a hard field to cultivate, much opposition to endure, and therefore has an especial claim upon the sympathies and prayers of the churches.

It is very desirable as soon as practicable to have an asso-

ciate with him in the good work. The field is too extensive for one laborer to cultivate and the constant and vigilant activity of the Romish priests, tends greatly to counteract the good that is done. We regret however to say that we are out of funds, and that we are in arrears to our missionary. Besides this the mission house is still encumbered with debt. Brethren, these things ought not to be.

Again, we would earnestly call upon our churches in the Province, to sustain the mission, by an increase of prayerful sympathy, and pecuniary aid, and thus cheer the heart, and inspire the courage of our missionary, and also infuse new life into the mission. Let us all act in reference to this mission in harmony with the watchword of the immortal Carey, "attempt great things for God, expect great things from God," and great will be our success and reward.

HENRY ANGELL,
Secretary.

Correspondence.

For the Christian Messenger.

Prince Edward Island—Auxiliary to the N. S. Baptist Home Mission.

DEAR BROTHER,

Last February twelvemonth we formed a little Society in the Island, in aid of the funds of the N. S. Baptist Home Missionary Society. The missionaries of the Society on the Island have accounted to the N. S. Board from time to time for such monies as have passed through their hands; but no distinct statement of these sums has been made up. Such a statement I now forward, for insertion in your columns. This, in fact, is the Report of our auxiliary for its first year. Those who have contributed the sums reported will find their contributions acknowledged, at least generally, and see what has been done among us in the whole. What has been done, that is, by the Auxiliary, since other sums have been raised directly for the parent Society, and accounted for in due course.

You have received notices, from time to time, of the results of our labours on the Island. To these notices I have little to add just now. We maintain our ground as a denomination, and rather more. A few have been baptized in the course of the year. We have not been disturbed by dissensions. We have perhaps more courage and hope than heretofore. We seem to have clearer views of our own principles, and of the importance of maintaining them. Thus we live in the present, and have hope for the future.

STATEMENT REFERRED TO AS ABOVE.

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Three Rivers, - - - - -	£4 6 0
East Point, - - - - -	4 7 6
Bellast, - - - - -	1 19 0
Uigg, - - - - -	1 18 0
Charlotte Town, - - - - -	3 10 0
St. Peter's Road, - - - - -	3 3 6
North River, - - - - -	2 4 6
Lot 49, - - - - -	0 15 0
	22 3 6

Your fellow-labourer,

J. DAVIS.

Charlotte Town, P. E. I., June 13, 1860.

For the Christian Messenger.

Obituary Notices.

MRS. LALEAH J. TREFFRY,

Died at Little River, Yarmouth County, April 4th, Mrs. Laleah Jane, the beloved wife of Mr. Rufus Treffry, aged 25.

She was thoughtful from childhood, and early indulged a hope in Jesus. Her natural diffidence restrained her from openly confessing Christ, and a sense of unworthiness and fear that she had not really become a subject of saving grace, deprived her of much of that confidence and joy it is the christians privilege to possess. During her lingering illness her mind was much stayed on God, and at times she rejoiced in hope of heaven. It was to her a source of the deepest regret that she had not made a public profession of religion, and but for her great weakness and rapidly failing strength she would have been baptized in the likeness of Christ's death. She met death with great composure, "Welcome, sweet death," were among her last words. Besides her husband, she has left 2 children, and a large circle of friends to mourn their loss. A funeral sermon was preached in the Free Christian Baptist meeting-house at Chebogue, from Heb. iv. 9., by Rev. Henry Angell.—Communicated.

MRS. ANN L. BANCROFT,

Died in Newport, on the 2nd inst., after only a week's illness, Mrs. Ann L., wife of Rev. Jeremiah Bancroft, in the 44th year of her age, leaving a husband and nine children, the youngest of whom was four days old, to mourn their loss. Mrs. Bancroft first entertained a hope in Christ about eighteen years ago, but did not publicly profess Him till the spring of 1851. As a christian, a mother, and a friend she was held in high esteem by all who knew her; in proof of which might be named the unusually long procession of friends, and from all the religious denominations, who followed her to her grave. Her end was peaceful and triumphant. When asked by her husband, just before her death, how the prospect seemed, she replied, "it is bright." The occasion of her death was improved by the writer from Job. i. 21, "The Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away; blessed be the name of the Lord."—Rev. Mr. McLeod, (Presbyterian) and Rev. Mr. Hennigar, (Wesleyan), assisting in the services. May the blank which has been made in the hearts and home of Bro. Bancroft and his family, be filled by the consolations of the Gospel of the Son of God.—Communicated by Rev. D. M. Welton.