

Christian Messenger.

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"Not slothful in business: fervent in spirit."

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ORGANIZATION.

THE CIRCULAR LETTER FROM THE EASTERN NOVA SCOTIA BAPTIST ASSOCIATION TO THE CHURCHES OF WHICH IT IS COMPOSED.—

Dear Brethren,—

In considering our necessities as a Denomination we would respectfully invite your attention in this our annual Letter to the lack of the organizing element in our churches.

By organizing element is meant the arranging and applying of the gifts and powers of a church so as to perform in the best manner the greatest amount of labor for God. Or in the words of the Apostle to the church at Ephesus, "The whole body, fitly joined together, and compacted by that which every joint supplieth, according to the effectual working in every part, maketh increase of the body, unto the edifying of itself in love."

And we are led to speak on this subject at present from the fact that such a desideratum is becoming more and more apparent.

Christians are aiming at the practical part of religion; at the Missionary work enjoined upon the disciples in the commission; but do not fully understand how it is to be performed. Earnest men of God are spending less time in silent studies, writing huge volumes for future controversies, and more in seriously pondering the question, "How can we morally and spiritually elevate the masses by which we are surrounded? In what way shall we most rapidly advance the Saviour's kingdom?" We have arrived in fact, at an intensely earnest working age. When "the salt of the earth" is no longer to be left "en masse" in solitary churches, but thoroughly dissolved, and placed in close contact with diseased and dying humanity. And that is the highest style of a church which so directs its abilities as to execute the greatest amount of Christian labor.

The strength of a church is not so much owing to locality—social advantages—numbers or wealth, as to consecrated and active membership. A working church, according to natural laws, is a strong church. Strength and vigor are sequences of healthy exercise. And no enduring spiritual power can be enjoyed by any church without regular healthy action. The pastor may visit from house to house, warning, rebuking, and exhorting with tenderness and tears. On the Sabbath he may ascend the sacred desk with oil finely beaten for the sanctuary, and dispense it with a holy discrimination, yet without a corresponding effort on the part of his hearers, all his endeavours to edify or comfort will be unavailing.—We will take an instance from the experience of the Rev. Andrew Fuller. He states that at one time his people were much depressed, and all his efforts to arouse them failed. In vain he labored among them during the week; and on the Sabbath taxed himself to the utmost to lead their minds up to God. About this time, however, he had become greatly concerned respecting the heathen world, and laid their condition before his people. He began to preach with new zeal, and hold special meetings on the subject of Foreign Missions. The church began to pray and make liberal collections. From that moment all tokens of sadness disappeared.

Such is the effect of useful activity. Jesus follows all his laborers with the encouraging promise, "Whatsoever is right I will give you."

A working church is comparatively a safe church. Jealousies—divisions and strifes, for the most part, flourish among those who are at ease in Zion. When the all absorbing aim is "to work for God," there is no time to stay for evil purposes, no desire to harbor them. If more time were spent in planning special labor in the Master's vineyard, less would be required for calling councils and settling difficulties. Here, then, we have strong reasons for organization. But where is it to begin.

It is evident that the strength of our denomination does not lie entirely in her Institutions of learning, nor in a few wealthy members, nor wealthy churches, but in all her Churches and Institutions combined. The little churches located in obscure portions of our province form an essential part of the strength of our denomination. And it is utterly impossible for it to make any marked advancement while they remain in their present torpid condition. Before we can sustain Acadia College in the noble position it has lately assumed; and send out men to the Foreign Mission field; and hold our position in the van of the professing Christian world; our churches must bring into exercise those powers which now lie dormant. Organization must be the watchword. Our Pastors must be organized! Deacons of Churches and Superintendents of Sabbath Schools must become organizers; until the brothers and sisters in our land shall become one united band of Christian laborers, until our effort shall echo our prayer, "Thy kingdom come;" and every layman, as well as minister shall say, "Here am I, send me."

We have no desire to leave the plain teaching of the Bible for the diverging paths of fancy and scepticism, but God demands that we develop those principles of Christian activity with which the Scripture abounds.

It is not for us to plan work for our brethren, but point out some objects towards which their attention ought to be directed.

The first we shall notice is the Sabbath School. This field is open to all who are anxious to do some good for the Master. It is easy of access, and yields an abundant harvest. The most delicate and sensitive female may organize and carry forward a Sabbath School. Yet while such is the case, there are scores of churches and neighbourhoods entirely destitute of Bible training. And it is painfully evident, that of the many in operation, few are accomplishing what they ought, from the lack of the organizing spirit. Bright little faces and palpitating hearts, are in the school, looking in vain for something animative, attractive, and instructive. Dull routine often takes the place of cheerful work, and the pupils fail to be interested in the glorious truths of the Bible. Nor ought we to gather the children into schools, and neglect the more advanced in life. We might well imitate our brethren of the United States in forming "Church Bible Schools" which embrace the whole church, and as many others as will attend. Such a school would become a vast power in elevating, strengthening, and establishing the church in Christian principles.

The raising of monies for Benevolent purposes is another work which requires the wisdom and skill of zealous Christians. No one doubts but the means to endow our Institutions of Learning, replenish our Mission Treasuries, pay Pastor's salaries, purchase Sabbath School libraries, &c., are to be obtained, had we machinery adapted to the purpose. A great mistake is made in collecting monies, by endeavouring to obtain large sums at long intervals, whereas, the true principle is, "Little and often." Systematic and liberal giving is one of the main sources of a church's prosperity. And on this point there is great need of training, so that a complete system of individual liberality may be developed.

The last instance we shall note, is that of small churches unable to support a pastor. A large number of these are scattered over our Province; and by their local position cannot join with another of the same order in procuring preaching for even a portion of the time. The result is, the conference meetings are discontinued; the Lord's Supper is never dispensed, except by some travelling preacher; the Sabbath School dwindles, the prayer meetings are neglected, and the church dies. And this sad case of extinction furthermore takes place not far from some more fortunate church which enjoys the preaching of the word throughout the year. Now it is possible for churches as well as individuals to act the part of the Priest and Levite. The word of God is "Bear ye one another's burdens, and so fulfil the law of Christ." Let our large churches allow their Pastor to labor two or three months of the year with small destitute churches or neighbourhoods, and meantime, let them call in some young man to supply his pulpit. The advantages of such a course are many and apparent. The Pastors themselves are greatly benefitted by the change, the church too is more interested in the Missionary work. The weak little churches have for a season the wisdom and experience necessary to their depressed condition, and our young men, by laboring for a time in an influential position, are strengthened, established, and encouraged in their life-work.

And another point in connection, which seems in weight to overbalance all the rest, is the immediate relief of the M. Board, by supplying, in a measure, other importunate demands for assistance. The cry for help would not only be answered, but the monies now spent on Home Missions might be poured into our Foreign Mission treasury, thus lifting off a portion of the responsibilities which are now lying so heavily upon us.

Other cases might be enumerated which call loudly for the organizing skill of earnest Christians. We would not underestimate the noble works which are being performed, but would urge to greater advancement.

Brothers, the work is in your hands. Why should the world in its secular callings have the ripe skill and wisdom of the age in devising new and superior modes of progress, and the church of God be left to follow slowly in the rear?—"Bring ye all the tithes into the storehouse." Tithes of faith, wisdom, skill, and zeal for God. Jesus is scanning the field and the workmen. Let us so deport ourselves that he shall say of us, "Well done, good and faithful servants."

SAINT-WORSHIP IN THE CHURCH OF ENGLAND.

The Rev. Orby Shipley, an English clergyman, has just published a work, entitled, "Invocation of Saints and Angels; compiled from Greek, English, and Latin sources, for the use of members of the Church of England."

"Here are litanies of 'Angels,' the 'Holy Apostles,' the 'Blessed Virgin,' and 'All Saints,' in which they are personally and directly implored to 'pray for us.' Mr. Shipley is not affected by the doubtful identity of Raphael, for instance, whom he invokes on the strength of the apocryphal legend of Tobit. 'O Raphael, who restoredst sight to Tobit; pray for us.' He is quite sure, too, that Raphael drove away the evil spirits from Sarah, and on that ground he is invoked to 'pray for us.' Gabriel is identified as 'descending with Azariah and his companions into the furnace, and is therefore to 'pray for us.' The angel who wrestled with Jacob is not identified, but he is invoked as 'Thou who touchedst him on the hollow of the thigh.'"

"The formula of invocation for Mary is 'Blessed Mary, Mother of God, ever Virgin,' Matt. i. 25 notwithstanding. The 'Holy Innocents' killed by Herod are invoked to 'pray for us; so are 'Holy Andrew,' 'Holy Matthias,' 'Holy Mark,' and the rest of the Apostles, little and great; the

doubt about the identity of Bartholemew being left unsolved. The litany of the Apostles founds an invocation upon every historic allusion to them in the Gospels, which is intolerably tedious, and if, without irreverence, we may say so, painfully suggestive of the structure of 'the house that Jack built.' Even the things done and spoken to them are cited; for instance, 'O ye holy Apostles, whose feet, supper being ended, Jesus began to wash, and to wipe them with the towel wherewith he was girded, pray for us,' and so on, for one hundred and sixteen sentences, in which the illogicalness is as intolerable as the superstition. In addition to this, each individual history of the principal Apostles is turned into a separate litany. All the 'Holy Monks and Hermits' are also invoked to 'pray for us.' * * * * * We hardly know whether we feel the most profound contempt for this drivelling nonsense in the form of devotion, or indignation that a clergyman of the Protestant Church, endowed by the nation, should put it forth with impunity."—*British Quarterly Review, July.*

THEY WON'T TROUBLE YOU LONG.

Children grow up—nothing on earth grows so fast as children. It was but yesterday, and that lad was playing with tops, a buoyant boy. He is a man, and gone now.—There is no more childhood for him or for us. Life has claimed him. When a beginning is made it is like raveling a stocking; stitch by stitch gives way till all is gone. The house has not a child in it—there is no more noise in the hall—boys rushing pell-mell; it is very orderly now. There are no more skates, sleds, balls or strings left scattered about. Things are neat enough now. There is no delay for sleepy folks; there is no longer any task, before you lie down, of looking after anybody and tucking up the bedclothes. There are no disputes to settle, nobody to get off to school, no importunities for impossible things, no rips to mend, no fingers to tie up, no laces to be washed, or collars arranged. There was never such peace in the house! It would sound like music to have some feet to clatter down the front stairs! Oh, for some children's noise! What used to ail us, that we were hushing their loud laugh, checking their noisy frolic, and reproving their slashing and banging the doors.

We wish our neighbors would only lend us an orphan or two, to make a little noise in these premises. A home without children! It is like a lantern and no candle; a garden and no flowers; a brook and no water gurgling and gushing through its channel.

We want to be tried, to be vexed, to be run over; to hear children at work with all its varieties. During the secular days this is enough marked. But it is the Sabbath that puts our homes to the proof. That is the Christian family day. The intervals of public worship are spaces of peace. The family seems made up that day. The children are at home, and you can lay your hands upon their heads. They seem to recognize the greater and lesser love—to God and to friends. The house is peaceful, but not still. There is a low and melodious thrill of children in it. But the Sabbath comes too still now. There is a silence that aches in the ear. There is too much room at the table, too much at the hearth. The bedrooms are a world too orderly. There is too much leisure and too little care. Alas! what mean these things? Is somebody growing old? Are those signs and tokens? Is life waning?—*H. W. Beecher.*

"SHOW ME CHRIST."

A man blind from his birth, a man of much intellectual vigor, and with many engaging social qualities, found a woman who, appreciating his worth, was willing to cast in her lot with him, and become his wife. Several bright, beautiful children became theirs, who tenderly and equally loved both their parents. An eminent French surgeon, while in this country, called upon them, and examining the blind man with much interest and care, said to him, "Your blindness is wholly artificial; your eyes are naturally good, and could I have operated upon them twenty years ago, I think I could have given you sight. It is barely possible that I can do it now, though it will cause you much pain." I can bear that," was the reply, "so you but enable me to see." The surgeon operated upon him, and was gradually successful; first there were faint glimmerings of light, then more distinct vision. The blind father was handed a rose; he had smelt one before, but had never seen one; then he looked upon the face of his wife, who had been so true and faithful to him; and then his children were brought, whom he had so often fondled, and whose charming prattle had so frequently fallen upon his ears, but whose beaming countenances he had never beheld. He then exclaimed, "Oh, why have I seen these things before inquiring for the man by whose skill I have been enabled to behold them! Show me the doctor!" and when he was pointed out to him, he embraced him with tears of gratitude and joy. So when we reach heaven, and with unclouded eyes look upon its glories, we shall not be content with a view of these. No, we shall say, Where is CHRIST?—He to whom I am indebted for what heaven is; show me HIM, that with all my soul I may adore and praise Him through endless ages.