

comfortable, the day being chill, with a strong east wind, which shook the ill-fitting window and roared wildly in the chimney.

Since he was taken with this strange illness nearly a week ago, he had not once been out, nor had he asked for drink. Nothing had passed his lips but water, and when Lisa pressed him to take a little of her plain food, or a drink of tea, he turned away with disgust, and impatient, faintly-uttered refusal.

He sat in the broken chair beside the fire for about half-an-hour at a time; but for the most part he lay curled up on his comfortless pallet like a worn-out dog. He was a small, thin man, with a head that looked too large for his body, and large sunken eyes that seemed to be trying vainly to see whatever he gazed at.

The doctor had been once to see him, and had ordered some medicine which he would not take, and nourishment which he could not, even had Lisa been able to get it for him. So now it seemed to her there was nothing to do but watch beside him and pray for him, which she did with all the earnestness of her nature.

To-day he was not so quiet as usual, and Lisa much distressed at his manner. Once or twice he tried to get up to creep about the room, but his strength was gone, and he was obliged to lie down helplessly again, muttering incoherently to himself. Lisa tried to make out what he said, but only caught the word 'Lord!' now and then, uttered miserably, as he had been wont to do for years in his tipsy seasons.

'Shall I read a bit to you, dad, or sing one of my hymns?' asked Lisa, fearing vaguely that the end was coming.

'I don't know,' he answered in a faint absent manner. Glad that it was not a direct refusal, Lisa sang through, 'Just as I am, without one plea,' hoping that the dull senses would take in the theme, and that hope and comfort might come to him even at the eleventh hour.

The day seemed interminably long to Lisa, shut up without anything to do but watch and pray; and the roaring of the wind, and beating rain that dashed against the windows between the brief bright bursts of sunshine, made her feel very melancholy.

As the afternoon wore away her father made a weak, moaning noise now and then, which she could not listen to without weeping. 'Poor dad, what is it?' she said as she sat down on the edge of his bare bedstead, and smoothed the scanty pale hair off his forehead. 'Is it cos you're so cold, dad?' she asked in tones as tender as a mother would use to her sick child. He made no response but a little gasping moan, and she went on, 'Yes, you're so cold, poor dad, and I've got nothin' to put over ye, no, nothin' but the poor thin things as is on my back. Oh, if I'd only jest got a blanket, or somethin' thick and warm! Oh, poor dad! what shall I do with him?'

Her courage, even her faith, suddenly forsook her, and she trembled from head to foot with apprehension, and sobbed piteously. She had prayed for years for her father; she had been praying all day intensely, but no answer seemed to come; and now, with faith and hope eclipsed for a season, she cried out in darkness and anguish of spirit, 'Why haven't the Lord answered? What's He going to do with my poor dad? Lord! Lord! Lord Jesus!' she cried, as miserably as ever her father did in his tipsy yearnings after the Unseen; and sitting down on the floor in an attitude of despair, the tears streamed down her face, and sobs shook her slender frame.

Feeling that a great cloud hid the Divine from her, she turned desperately to the human, and felt that she must have some living creature with her at that awful hour. She knew all the neighbours about the place, most of them were 'desperately bad lots,' as she was wont to say, and the very few decent ones on whom she could rely for sympathy and help, would be out at work now, she knew; and if she waited until they came home,—well, it might be too late, she said shudderingly. The one creature above all others whom she would have liked to bring to her father's side, was her beloved Sunday-school teacher, Miss Marnier; but, alas! she lived too far away.

While considering what she should do, a slight convulsion passed over her father, and he stretched himself out rigidly. A cry of terror escaped her, and she started up from the floor, thinking it was death. But in a moment his limbs relaxed, and after a slight gasp he breathed regularly again, and opened his eyes.

'What is it, dad?' implored Lisa, with white, trembling lips. He made no answer; and she crept quietly out of the room, and ran away with breathless haste to Matthew Pedder's.

(To be Continued.)

ASSOCIATIONAL SERMON.

Contending for the Faith.

THE INTRODUCTORY SERMON PREACHED BEFORE THE NOVA SCOTIA EASTERN BAPTIST ASSOCIATION AT PORTAUPIQUE, JULY 9TH, 1877.

BY THE REV. STEPHEN MAROH.

Published by request of the Association. (Concluded.)

"It was needful for me to write unto you, and exhort you that ye should earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints."—JUDE vs. 3.

III. We must contend for a REGENERATED CHURCH MEMBERSHIP. The church is "an assembly" of christians;—"the house of God;"—"the household of faith;"—"It consists of believers in Christ Jesus;"—"faithful brethren;"—"called to be saints." It is a "spiritual house;"—"composed of "living stones;"—"a holy temple in the Lord." Its members are spoken of as "born from above;"—"born of God;" "renewed;"—"become new creatures" in Christ Jesus, and heirs according to the hope of eternal life." They have "received Christ"; hence, he has given to them "power to become the sons of God, even to as many as have believed upon His name." Therefore, none but such have any right to the position and privileges of membership in the Church of Christ. The unconscious, the "dead in trespasses and sins," the indifferent, the worldly, the unbelieving, have no part or interest in the visible kingdom of Christ on earth. It is intended for those who make a voluntary and credible profession of their faith, by acts prescribed, and ordinances instituted by the great Master himself. My brethren, let us not be less earnest in maintaining this principle than were our fathers, but with irrepressible zeal and fidelity contend for it with all our powers. It may be affirmed with truth that all evangelical bodies insist upon this point more strenuously than formerly; but many of them hold also "that the infants of believers are entitled to like privileges." It is at this point we join issue with them. We affirm that the scriptures teach nothing in reference to the admission of infants, or any others, to the privileges of the church, unless or until they have been regenerated by the Spirit of God, and can give some evidence thereof by confessing with their mouth the Lord Jesus and avowing themselves His disciples. Out of the teachings to which we allude have grown up the dogmas of baptismal regeneration, sacramental efficacy, and kindred errors. Out of these have sprung many of the heretical tenets which have filled Christendom with almost endless disputes and controversies. From them have the worst results ensued in the secularization of the church, and the advancement of Materialism and Infidelity. The worst enemies the church has ever possessed have been some of those who were admitted as her sons in their infancy, but who in maturer years discarded both their own religious obligations, and those of their ancestors. Brethren, let us herein keep closely to the inspired Word, and see to it that we endeavor as far as practicable to "keep the door of the church carefully guarded against all those who cannot give scriptural evidence of their union with Christ." Never let us from any considerations of worldly advantage or enlargement deviate from this principle; and let us, wherein we find that we have through inadvertence failed to use a proper discretion, (and such instances are not wanting,) use our influence to maintain and exercise a wholesome discipline, so that the Church of Christ may retain her purity and stand forth as a body distinct and separate from the world, "a holy nation," "a peculiar people, zealous of good works." It is a matter for rejoicing that the importance of repentance and faith, prior to church membership is being urged with great fidelity by the distinguished Evangelists whom God has raised up in various localities all over Christendom;—that the watchmen upon the walls of Zion begin to see more nearly 'eye to eye' upon this subject, fraught as it is with so much that is indispensable to the interests of Christ's advancing and extending kingdom. In view of the instructions of the Divine Word, and of the constitution and practices of the early christian church, let us still

earnestly contend for the faith as once delivered unto the saints, and insist that all the members of our churches shall in some manner give credible evidence that they are regenerated by the Holy Spirit prior to their admission to the privileges connected therewith. Thus may we expect that Christ will acknowledge them when he shall ultimately "present to himself a glorious Church, not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing" Ephes. v. 27.)

IV AND LASTLY. Let us contend for THE MAINTENANCE OF A VIGOROUS AGGRESSIVE CHRISTIANITY. The members of all our churches are called upon by divine appointment to become "co-laborers together with God." Hence, they are required to put forth earnest and industrious efforts to promote the kingdom of their Lord. They must work in His vineyard—go out into the highways and bye-ways of the world and compel the poor and perishing sons of men to come in and partake of the rich and bounteous provisions of Divine love; to receive and rejoice in the blessings of His salvation. Many of the haunts of misery and sin are yet unentered. At home and abroad, much ground remains unoccupied. Patient toil and self-sacrifice for Jesus' sake must be borne; and shared in not by the few only, but by the masses. Alas! that there are in our churches so many drones; that there are so many weak and sickly among us; that so many fold their arms indifferently, and slumber; while a number more look idly on, expecting others to take the field, perform the work, sow the seed, and gather in the ripened golden sheaves from the vast harvest fields.

The church is still in need of laborers, for "the harvest truly is plenteous, but the laborers are few." Nevertheless we believe they are increasing in number, and are beginning to understand better than heretofore the vast responsibilities devolving upon them. Let them push out into the unoccupied wastes of our own and other lands and tell "the old, old story," and extol the wondrous love of God, who gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish but have everlasting life." Were all the members of christian churches vigilant, active laborers for Christ, how much more rapidly would the cause of Jesus be advanced; and there would as of old "be added unto them daily the saved." "The wilderness and the solitary places would be glad for them, and the desert would rejoice and blossom as the rose;" Zion would become fair and glorious; and as her converts increased the cry would be renewed, "Who are these that fly as a cloud and as doves to their windows?" The tabernacles of Jacob would be greatly enlarged, and her temples be thronged with worshippers. The spirit of enquiry and earnest seeking after God would become widespread, opposition would almost cease, and error hide itself. Truth would walk forth arrayed in her robes of meekness, gentleness and grace, to attract and win the hearts of thousands who were before the bond-slaves of sin and Satan.

But this state of things cannot be realized apart from the cultivation of that spirit of aggression which characterized the saints of old. The disciples of Jesus must now, as of yore, go "everywhere preaching the Word." They must scatter the beams of spiritual light which have already fallen upon their own hearts. Religion must become for all, not something hidden away in the deep recesses of the human soul, but a bright and glowing lamp which casts its brightness forth upon the darkness and sorrow of the world; an alluring and magnetic power that shall attract and gather to itself multitudes on every side.

Cast your eye over the world and you will discover how aggressive are the powers of evil. Satan and sin, error and superstition, engage and occupy in their service all the agencies which human skill and ingenuity have devised, to aid in bringing votaries to their feet. The platform and the press, the tongue and the pen, philosophy and science, are made to bear their share in the work of publishing and extending principles which enshroud the soul in darkness, and bolt and bar the path to immortal glory. These all continuously cry out to their serried legions, "Enlarge the place of thy habitation." And shall the grand and glorious truths of Chris-

tianity be suffered to remain in abeyance? Shall not her redeemed and consecrated forces be marshalled and summoned to the field? and push their way forward to seek to overturn and to disperse the darkness, misery, and evil which desolate the earth?

Brethren and sisters in Christ, let us up and to our posts for Truth, also, in its very nature aggressive; it is spreading, and shall spread, AND TRIUMPH. No longer can Truth be confined in some dark cell, or be concealed in some Alpine Valley. No longer is it content to struggle for its existence among the cloisters of Erfurth, the schools of France, the hills of Scotland, upon the shores of the Lucerne, the banks of the Thames, or the Severn, or, like some exile, seek a home for herself among the desolate American wilds. She is destined to ride forth in her MAJESTY, and unfurl her banners, not only over those portions of the earth which have already been christianized, but over all the world; to win her way until she has become the mightiest Victor the world has ever known; and all her enemies shall be subdued beneath her feet. To assist in the attainment of this victory is the work of the christian church, the work of each of its members.

It is to be achieved under God by the patient, persevering setting forth of the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ, by making him known, by declaring his Almighty power, his infinite love; by inviting and encouraging all to look to him and be saved: to believe on him and obtain everlasting life.

And hence this work must not be confined to the ministry; it must become the work of the whole church. Lay agencies must be utilized and enlisted much more generally than at present. Especially must this be the case in the larger towns and the more sparsely inhabited districts of the country. There are in many of our churches, and even in some of the smallest, gifted brethren, and sisters too, who may, and ought to, employ at least a portion of the Sabbath day in work for the Lord in regions contiguous to their own residences; and more particularly where the stated ministry is not enjoyed. This they may do with benefit to themselves and profit to others, by establishing and sustaining prayer-meetings, Sabbath schools, Bible classes, or readings from the Word of God accompanied with religious exhortation. And this not as a merely spasmodic effort, or as something which may be engaged in or neglected at pleasure, but as a sacred trust reposed in them by their Master, and by their christian brethren; a trust which should be accepted and engaged in, not as a burdensome task, but as a loving labor for the Lord. Thus some of our smaller churches, which with difficulty maintain their existence, would become an aggressive power, and under such a system would grow and thrive, and in a short time become self-sustaining. And multitudes more of the churches in which pastors are employed, who are greatly overtaxed by constant journeyings and labors of various kinds, would find that much of that toil might be borne by themselves, and the pastor's heart be cheered by the support and co-operation thereby rendered him. Such movements would not fail to result in enlargement and spiritual growth, bringing comfort to the Lord's own people, and salvation to those who were afar off. Thus also would the talents and gifts of private members of the churches become developed, and an army be raised up who should become efficient in fighting the battles of the Lord. Thus many of the false and unscriptural ideas which find their way so readily into every community would be superseded by the truth of God's Word and the pure gospel of Jesus Christ. There would be raised up those who would become efficient workers as home and foreign missionaries, and by their labors, conjoined with those of the ministry and the entire Christian Church, our educational and missionary enterprises would be abundantly sustained, both with men and means.

If it be objected that all this is impracticable, if not impossible, that it is difficult to find suitable persons willing to engage in such work, we reply, such objection proves that christian duty is not as fully apprehended as it should be, and that there is a lack of zeal and self-devotion on the part of those who

profess to be the Lord's people. It reveals to us the necessity for urging upon the attention of all the duty of "contending earnestly for the faith once delivered to the saints." True christian earnestness would ensure success; and a large-hearted benevolence would not fail to exhibit itself as the result.

But this exhortation supposes the cultivation of the true spirit of christianity. This contest is not to be maintained in the spirit of the world, nor of sectarian partizanship, nor with a view merely to the increase of numbers, or of wealth; but out of sincere love to Jesus, and an earnest desire to rescue the perishing from the bitter vassalage of sin, and direct them to the only source of hope, "the Lamb of God, who taketh away the sin of the world." Our chief aim must be to secure the glory of Christ, and the maintenance of the undying principle which he has laid down in his word for the guidance of his followers. Our contention must not be "in deceit, or in guile," but "for the truth's sake." So engaged their would-be substantial growth in grace, and the supporters of the truth would be multiplied.

Brethren, let us with redoubled energy apply ourselves to the task imposed upon us. Fling out the gospel banner! Unfurl it to the breeze! Let the soldiers of the Cross gird on their armor. The conflict is proceeding; the time for action has come. If in the world's contest for the acquisition of power, or territorial predominance, or commercial advantage, men forsake their homes and go forth with the deadliest weapons into fierce and bloody encounters with each other, and sacrifice millions of treasure and thousands of lives, knowing that though victory may crown their conflict, still, sorrow, misery, devastation and death must be the attendants,—shall not the soldiers of the Cross with greater enthusiasm go forth to the bloodless triumphs which are ensured to them, with a like spirit of self-sacrifice; and the more so when they reflect that life, and peace, and blessing are their attendants where-soever they go; and that they win not lands or perishable substance, but souls to Christ. Think, my brethren, of the toil, the suffering, the tears, the prayers, and the blood of Jesus. Think of the perishing myriads all around. Think of all the promises of the eternal and unchanging God. Think of the Holy Spirit's quickening power, and of the abiding presence of Jesus with his people. Think of the heaven of bliss, and the crown of life! and then anew resolve that by your love to Jesus, and your hope of everlasting felicity, you will from this time forward ceaselessly and "earnestly contend for the faith once delivered unto the saints." The contest will not last long; the season of toil will soon end. And then will come the rest, the Crown, the song of victory, and the glory everlasting.

"Happy the company that's gone,  
From Cross to Crown, from thrall to throne;  
How loud they sing upon the shore,  
To which they sail'd in heart before.  
Earth was to them a seat of war,  
But palms of triumph now they bear:  
They long'd to see their Saviour dear:  
They sought him here, but find him there.  
They walk in white, without annoy,  
In glorious galleries of joy;  
And crown'd with everlasting bays,  
They rival cherubs in their praise."  
—[Erskine's Song of Heaven.]

Correspondence.

For the Christian Messenger.

Honors for the Students of Acadia College abroad.

Mr. Editor,—

The remark has often been made in my hearing that outside of Wolfville Acadia College is very little known. To show that this is not correct I give some recent instances of what her students have been doing in Massachusetts.

Last year's Freshman Class at Newton contained 24 members, graduates of Brown, Colby, Denison, Michigan, Madison, Acadia and Harvard. At the annual written examination which determines the standing of the students there, two graduates of Acadia led, viz., Messrs. Stevens and Black. Mr. Stevens, I understand, got a standing of 93 out of a possible 100.

Boston University, as many of your