

Associational Documents.

(Published by special request.)

THE FELLOWSHIP OF THE CHURCHES.

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

Dear Brethren,—

We are glad to know from your letters sent to this body, and from general report, that a good degree of harmony and fellowship exists among the members of the different churches. How sweet and pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity. To behold churches, consisting in many cases of hundreds of members, each differing from the rest in circumstances, in knowledge, in age, in experience, to behold these united in such tender bonds of sympathy, forbearance and mutual aid, to see them laboring heartily for the same cause, and voluntarily sharing common burdens, this surely is an encouraging prospect. Such a church bears upon it "the signature and stamp of power divine," is a tower of strength to the weak in faith, a rebuke to the despondent and sceptical. Long may such union exist among the members of our beloved churches, long may there be among them the fellowship of the spirit and the bonds of peace.

But brethren there is a wider fellowship of which we would speak in this letter, a unity not only of the members of each Church, but of each church with all the other churches, a sympathy and co-operation of every member of every church with all the members of all the other churches.

In speaking of this fellowship of the churches we must not be understood as forgetting, even for the time, that each church is strictly independent as to rights and privileges and can be controlled by no power on earth outside of itself. The New Testament gives us no example of any external authority dictating to the churches or claiming to control their proceedings, and the Spirit of the Gospel seems to agree with this spirit of independence. Our denomination having learned this truth from the Word of God, and by too bitter experience will not soon forget it. Certainly no interference with it would be tolerated to-day. But independence is not the whole of our polity, we are not merely "an aggregation of unrelated unity." Independence, as has been said, "is not isolation, in churches any more than in families or towns." Surely Baptist Churches have more intimate connection with each other than a Baptist Church and one of another denomination. We feel that there is a bond uniting us. This Association itself is a proof of this bond, for while it recognizes and insists upon the law of independence it partially embodies the principle of fellowship. It does not create the fellowship but is one of the results of the unity which already exists.

While churches of other denominations are united by external authority, as of Bishops, or Synods, or Conferences we feel that our union in sympathy, doctrine and work ought to be as complete at least, as that of any body of Christians, that being entirely voluntary it may be intelligent and real.

This fellowship of the Churches has its origin in the nature of the new life. Because we have been born "not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God," we have fellowship one with another, are one in Christ, one in God. It is love to our Lord which binds Churches as well as individual disciples together.

This unity of nature as new creatures in Christ is supplemented and in great part completed by unity of belief. Because we have "one Lord, one faith, one baptism," we are drawn together and into deeper fellowship than we can have with many regenerate persons who differ from us in doctrine. Having believed in Christ our people have been brought together, because they believed baptism to be "the immersion of believers and that the second ordinance should follow the first." We have also that fellowship which comes from unselfish endeavors for the most worthy aims, the perfecting of the saints and the salvation of men. Surely the union that comes from possessing the same spirit, from holding the same views of divine truth, and from earnest labor for the same cause must be very real and strong.

We would then urge you brethren to cherish these bonds of fellowship. Our Lord not only loves us as individual disciples, but as a united body, and surely not only as single churches but as that one church for which He gave Himself. If we are one in our Lord's mind we may well remember the unity.

This fellowship will enable each Church to rejoice with others in their prosperity. Some of our Churches have had the privilege of recording in their reports to us the abundant blessings of God received in the past year while others lament their low spiritual state. But if we are really one in our Lord then the joy of one must be the joy of all, blessings conferred upon one must have the response of gratitude from all.

This fellowship not only confers privileges, but involves duties. And among these we would mention: First, *The duty of preserving and increasing the fellowship itself.* If this fellowship is a part of our polity as churches of Christ, then we must remember and cherish it. It would seem that we ought to be all the more careful to hold it sacred because there is no external authority to enforce it. This union is promoted by unity of belief, and we must therefore aim to be united in believing the truth as it is in Jesus. We have attained to a good degree of unity of doctrine already. Indeed it is probable that Baptist Churches are more nearly one in this respect than many churches claiming more complete agreement because of the existence of external bonds. But we would ever remember that we are out only to be united, but united in the truth. We must attain this unity by devout study of that one Book which reveals the *One mind.* Though you have been often reminded, brethren, in these Circular Letters of the importance of scriptural study on the part of the entire membership of the Churches, we would venture thus to allude to it once more. Because our Churches are free we must all possess that freedom which the truth gives if we would have fullest fellowship.

Secondly, Churches should cherish a high regard for each others welfare and discipline.

Care should be taken in receiving persons who have been excluded, or who have withdrawn from other Churches. No church should give a Letter of dismission to one who would not be retained in that church without discipline. Nor should a church allow its members to walk disorderly while living among other churches any more than it would tolerate such conduct in resident members. Again, it is safe to say that many of the large number of non-resident members reported by our Churches reside in the vicinity of other Churches. These members should be urged to join those churches. Indeed such a view of the unity and fellowship of the churches should exist that in becoming connected with us persons would understand they were joining not simply one Church, but the entire body. It would then not be so difficult to persuade many to change their membership, while the fellowship of the Churches would be increased.

Thirdly, Our fellowship should be so real that when a church has been received it would not be allowed to suffer for want of the help other churches are able to give. But we fear there are

churches in our Association and certainly in our Province which ought to receive more support from the united body. If one of these small churches were placed between two strong ones they would not allow it to die, but when removed fifty or a hundred miles obligation to it is forgotten.

Fourthly, This fellowship should lead to hearty co-operation in efforts for objects of common interest and duty. While there is no absolute certainty that the voice of the majority is right it is well for us to abide by the general wish and prove our fellowship sincere. We should endeavour not only to preserve our independence but to show loyalty to the body whose interests are ours.

Thus united by faith and sympathy and combined in action we shall come not only to fuller fellowship with each other but with God. We may say with John, "These things we write unto you that you may have fellowship with us, and truly our fellowship is with the Father and with his Son Jesus Christ."

The following documents refer to matters of general interest to a large proportion of our readers, and thinking it desirable they should have the opportunity of reading them as early as possible, we insert them in advance of their publication in the Minutes:—

Report of Committee on Questions in Letters.

The Committee on Questions in Letters, on procuring "a brief history of each church" in the Association: Recommend, That such a history of the oldest church in this Association, the history of which is not already extant, and long enough to fill from one to two or at most three pages in the Minutes, be procured to be read at the Association in Windsor, 1880, and printed in the Minutes of that year. That such a history of the next oldest church be procured for the year following, 1881, and so on each year in succession till historical sketches of all the churches shall be obtained. And that the carrying out of this arrangement be entrusted to the Committee on Denominational Literature.

On Preparing Histories of Churches.

The Committee on Denominational Literature in regard to the matter of publishing in the Minutes of the Association a short history of each church, year by year, commencing with the oldest church in the Association—report that by reference to the Minutes they find that the 1st Horton Church stands first in regard to date, having been organized in the year 1778, and that the Committee recommend that the pastor of said church, the Revd. S. W. DeBlois be requested to prepare a short history of the church to be presented at the meeting of Association in Windsor—to embrace especially in connection with a full statistical report, the date and duration of the several pastorates with the names of pastors, also what, if any, other churches have sprung from the church as a parent stock, with the names of ordained and licensed ministers who have gone out from the church with whatever facts may suggest themselves as most valuable considered as historical data.

In behalf of Committee, S. MCC. BLACK.

Report of Committee on Education.

Your Committee beg leave to report, That both Acadia College and Horton Collegiate Academy are in a healthy growing condition. The number of students in the former during the year past has been seventy-three, in the latter one hundred and nineteen: sixty-two in the male Department and fifty-seven in the female. The increase of the number in the College is matter for congratulation. The diminution of the number in the Academy is to be attributed to the want of suitable accommodations rather than to any decline of interest on the part of the people.

The new College Building was formally opened on the 4th inst. On the evening of that day the closing exercises of the Academy were held, when four young ladies having successfully passed through the prescribed course of study received certificates of proficiency. The Anniversary of the College was held on the fifth inst. Thirteen young men received the Degree of Bachelor in Arts of whom four have the ministry in view.

The Seminary erected for the use of the Female Department of the Academy and also the new College Building will be fully completed and equipped before the beginning of the next term.

As the contract expires on the first day of July next and large liabilities will be incurred by the Board of Governors, it is absolutely necessary that all subscriptions to the Building Fund be paid before that time, or a heavy debt will rest upon our Institutions.

The Theological Department has been in operation during the year past with a fair degree of success.

Some modifications in the plan of said Department are in contemplation by the Board, which it is hoped will be satisfactory to the churches.

All which is respectfully submitted. STEPHEN W. DEBLOIS, Chairman. Berwick, N. S., June 24, 1879.

Report of Committee on Sabbath Schools.

Your Committee are of opinion that the Sunday School is a mighty agency for good, that the blessing of God upon this Institution in the past calls for devout thanksgiving.

Your Committee notice with gratification that most of those who are brought to Christ in youth have received lasting impressions in the Sunday School. Your Committee feel that it is all-important that all—both old and young—should be well taught in the great doctrines of Divine Truth, and that the Sunday School is one of the most useful means, whereby such instruction may be imparted. Your Committee would recommend that Pastors and church members should feel the importance of having the whole church engaged in Sunday School work, thus rendering this agency for usefulness still more effective.

Every Christian should seek to do something—yea much—for the Master, and in the Sunday School the youngest as well as the eldest may find much to do. By heeding the Saviour's injunction, "Feed my sheep,—Feed my lambs, and, Learn of me," Sunday School Teachers and Scholars particularly may honor Christ in their growth in the knowledge of Him.

Your Committee would recommend that in every case the Sunday School should be under the watch-care and supervision of the church, and that to secure a more general interest in Sunday School work on the part of the whole Association, your Committee would recommend that complete statistical information be presented to this Association, and that more time be given to the consideration of Sunday School work, recommending that at least one sitting be devoted to the discussion of this very important subject.

All of which is respectfully submitted. G. N. BALLENTINE, Chairman.

Correspondence.

For the Christian Messenger.

Trip to the Burmese Jungle, 1879.

BY MISS E. H. PAYNE.

The first thing to be done was to consider what we should take, and to pack the "food box," a very important item in jungle travel. Canned provisions must be taken, the buying of which makes somewhat of a raid on the pocket, as they are much more expensive than our daily living from the Bazaar (market) when at home. We cannot get much in the jungle, sometimes nothing at all. Bread must be taken to last as long as it will without moulding, and some plain biscuits to supplement. We had some trouble and delay about getting a cart, but trouble and delay are the order of the day in Burmah, and we finally got off only a few hours later than we had planned. We presented rather a curious spectacle as we set out, a variety of odds and ends which could not be stowed away inside the cart were tied on behind, as all carts have a decided "tip" forward, this is no difficult matter. Lucy and I seated ourselves as best we could among the things, with our feet squeezed in anywhere. The object of the natives in packing a cart, seeming to be, to make all as flat as possible and then sit on the top, however a push here, and a move there, made us comparatively comfortable, and we started at a pace varying from four to five miles an hour. The first thing that befell us was the hastily made roof of the cart getting caught in some trees, and breaking down on one side. That righted, nothing of further moment occurred, and we arrived at our first village about noon. Pah Auk is about two miles from the main road and we were well shaken and dusty enough before reaching it. Many of the houses were shut and the owners away in the paddy fields. We came to a hut at the further end of the village, and when we alighted from our cart, had quite a crowd around us. Several houses were offered to us, one of which the inmates were so anxious we should take that they proposed to "go away themselves and give us the entire dwelling." We considered their offer but declined on the account that if many people came to see us the floor would not sustain their weight, being made of split bamboo and pretty old and shabby, I was afraid to put my foot lengthwise on it for fear of going through. However we sat there some time and talked to the people, and then moved ourselves and our belongings to a Zayat close by. There was a better one at a little distance but we chose this to be near the people, much to the disgust of our boy, who had walked over to inspect the other one, and came back with glowing accounts of its superior cleanliness. Certainly the one we entered had no claims in that respect, but with the aid of a broom, the loose dirt and rubbish were soon removed from the floor. A curtain drawn across one end of the building seemed to make a room for Lucy and myself, our food box was set up on the priest's pulpit. An affair shaped very like a child's crib with an opening in front. There was a Kyoung quite near and after we had eaten rice with not a few lookers-on, we set out to visit it. Several Priests were sitting on the verandah and looked at us as we approached, I had my stereoscope and views, and they were soon eagerly examining the pictures, I might not sit on a level with them and they would not take the pictures from my hand, it being against their rules to take anything from the hand of a woman, so I spread them out on the mat, and they asked all sorts of questions about the places, etc., frequently exclaiming, "We never saw anything like this before." Wanted to know if I would sell them &c. They are a good introduction in many ways, the people are never tired of seeing them, and the one's who have done so, bring or send their friends and they may thus have an opportunity of hearing the gospel and getting tracts.

There were a number of men at the Kyoung, and they all talked and looked. We gave them tracts, and Lucy told more pleasantly than I could, in their own tongue, the story of the Cross. They listened well and in the evening two of the Priests came to our Zayat to talk more and look over our books, one of them turned over all the single gospels and tracts with a dissatisfied air finally saying, He wanted a "whole Bible." The nearest approach to that was a testament which I had had from my first arrival in Burmah. I produced it, and offered it to him, he turned it over and over in his hands asking very earnestly if I grudged it to him; I told him I would give it willingly if he really wanted to read and profit by it, and he seemed satisfied, the next morning he came again with it under his arm and told me how many chapters he had read. I asked him to come and see us when he came to Maulmain, and he asked many questions about our house, what we had etc., then saying, such things were not good for a Priest to see. I gave him a bottle of Pain Killer, and a loaf of bread, both of which he seemed to appreciate. We had a large audience in the evening, men, women and children and Yougin and Mah Shar the preacher and Bible woman were kept busy talking and explaining to them the things of the Kingdom. I wish you could have seen them scattered over the dirty floor, reclining as natives only can, reading, listening and talking by the light of one candle and a little lamp.

In the morning we took a walk beyond the village, and found other clusters of houses. A solitary Priest sitting in front of his Zayat took a tract and holding it some distance from his eyes began to read audibly. He told us he was seventy-seven years of age. As we went back the head man of the village came out with some flowers, he had been watching for our return, and asked us to go into his house. The ascent thereto, being by means of a rather insecure ladder. We always had a godly number of children following us, and the people expressed their wish for a School. One old woman with a wrinkled care-worn, pathetic looking face, was winding yellow silk for weaving. The white-haired old Sue sat by, surrounded by grand-children of all ages, they listened attentively to the gospel, and I longed for the assurance that their time-worn heads would one day rest in a Christian grave, and their souls find the home of the blest.

They bowed their heads reverently as Lucy prayed and said they had never heard these things before. Moodong was our next village and here we stayed at the house of our Bible woman's son, who has a school. The next morning was Sunday, and a number of children assembled at Sunday School, and later some grown people came together for worship. The preacher spoke from the passage "The entrance of thy Word giveth light." The air shimmered and glistened with heat as they sang "Behold the morning sun." In the evening we went through the village and into many of the houses, the people were glad to see us, and begged us to "come again." Wherever we stopped a group would gather round. It was ours to sow the seed and not to speculate on the quality of the soil. There were some fine orange gardens in this village and they told us the trees needed a great deal of care. Would that more care could be given to the souls of their owners. How can they hear without a preacher? How can they preach except they be sent? I must tell you about an old woman who was formerly a nun, she lived in a tiny little house which her sons had built for her. After she became a Christian she met a great deal of opposition and ill treatment.