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Associational Documents.

Harmony essential to success.

THE LETTER OF THE N. S. WESTERN BAPTIST ASSOCIATION
ADDRESSED TO THE CHURCHES OF WHICH IT IS COMPOSED.

Dear Brethren,—

If we draw important truths from what our eyes behold, and our ears hear, we shall only be imitating the example of One whom it is always safe to follow, and whom we all alike profess to obey. For many of the most important doctrines which came from the lips of our Lord, sprung forth apparently from events occurring under his own observation.

The necessity for harmony of action in all our work for Christ is the theme which the hour suggests. "Have faith in God," is a fundamental of our religion. We have some faith in God and in his Son Jesus Christ our Lord. We have very strong confidence in our peculiar views and doctrines as a denomination. This is all right and absolutely essential to growth and prosperity. But is it not possible that there may be some weakness in our movements, some inefficiency in our efforts, for the want of a little more confidence being placed in the judgment and integrity of each other? We believe that time is lost and words are wasted, and progress often impeded, because of what seems to be a growing tendency of the age, a disposition to distrust either the words or the wisdom of those with whom we have to work.

Harmony of action requires—

1. Confidence in the judgment of each other. Men cannot always see alike. It is best that they should not. For if all were cast in the same mould, either physically or mentally, we should have a very monotonous world. If every tree were like its fellow, every mountain like the other, or every man like his brother, we should hardly know whether we were ourselves or somebody else, whether we are entering our own houses, or the houses of our neighbours. Harmony in Nature, springs from the infinite variety of things which touch upon, overlap, or embrace each other. A great multiplicity of objects brought near together, as mountain, plain, lake, stream, tree, constitute, when looked at from a distance, the beautiful landscape, all the more lovely because each object differs from the other. So a great variety of opinions and individual conceptions of things, very different from each other when viewed separately, may, when seen from a higher and more distant standpoint after all constitation but one rounded and completed thought. He who regards his own judgment on important matters as all-sufficient, and would therefore obliterate and annihilate every other opinion, acts as foolishly as the man who would shovel down the mountain, chop down the trees, fill up the lakes, dam up the streams, and then place himself in the middle of the level plain, with his small banner flying in the breeze, desirous of being the admiration of all beholders.

It may require all that you and your brethren as well, can think, put together, and compress to make one full and completed thought. "In a multitude of counsellors there is safety." It is not by taking the opinion of one or the counsel of all as individuals, but by gathering a little from each, and putting all together as into one crucible, then, by applying heat, we get the essence of the whole, and by such combination there will be safety. In this way it will be seen that some respect is due to every Christian man's opinion on all important questions. Harmony of action and more satisfactory results will be secured, when, as fellow Christians, we learn to place a measure of confidence in each other's views, even if they should seem not to harmonize with our own. Perhaps a root thought coming from one, and a trunk thought from another, and a few branches from a third, if only you could get them to blend, might make the tree a more beautiful and fruitful one than either alone.

2. Confidence in each other's integrity is also absolutely essential to harmonious action. It is well to have some proper estimate of our own opinion, otherwise we should ever be in hesitation and never prepared for action. But when we become so wedded to our own opinions, that we come to regard every other man as either a rogue or a fool, because he ventures to think otherwise, then are we using our own importance as a sledge hammer, with which to batter down the reputation of others. The same thing seen by two individuals of equal discernment and honesty, may be very differently described, because differently understood, and if neither is willing to allow any latitude as to the difference of standpoint from which the other is looking, each must proclaim the other false. In worldly men and worldly matters, this is bad, but among religious men, and in connection with religious matters, it is far worse. Far better is it to cultivate a broad charity, that thinketh no evil, that believeth all things, that rests in unshaken confidence in the intentions and the integrity of those with whom we labor.

Brethren, it is far better to be deceived occasionally, than always to distrust. It is better to allow two culprits to go unpunished, than to hang one innocent man; and so it is better, perhaps, to repose confidence in two hypocrites, than to regard and treat one sincere follower of Christ, as though he were a hypocrite. Be assured brethren, that there is not with us all the unwavering and unflinching confidence in each other's honest integrity, and faithful adherence to the right that is essential to loving and harmonious and successful action. In this way it is that articles sometimes appear in our papers which cast very serious reflections upon the integrity of the men who have been chosen to discharge important duties for the denomination, and who are perhaps doing honest and faithful work. Ministers, hard worked and poorly paid, too, are often severely criticized by members of churches, and perhaps, even by their brother ministers, for some one word spoken, some doctrine advanced, or some omission in the performance of duty. The criticism being started, perhaps, one will vie with the other to see who can say the severest things; in other words, who can most effectually mar the work which the other is trying to accomplish.

A charge has been preferred against our brethren on the other side of the Atlantic of a different kind. Those who have the opportunity of reading the accounts of their public gatherings, might almost think that there is some ground for the charge. Some one has said of them, that in their annual meetings they form

themselves into a sort of mutual adulation society, and indulge in needless, if not even fulsome praise of each other. A retiring president is loudly praised for what he has done. The new president is lauded to the skies for what he is going to do. And so with their faithful secretaries and hard worked committees. We do not desire to hear this amongst us, and no charge has yet been preferred against us on this score. On the other hand, with us it is too often the case that if a man will do hard and self-denying work for us, and if he gets clear with but little disparagement, and, like his Master, endure it patiently, he may be congratulated on his good fortune.

Brethren if we are to grow and flourish as churches, and as a denomination, and maintain an unbroken front before the world, we must be united. We must have unshaken trust in God. We must repose a measure of confidence in each other, as members of the body of Christ, and as co-workers with Christ in bringing a lost world back to God. We must defend each other's reputation, stand by each other in the ranks, and show that we love the Saviour, by loving and helping all that belong to him, and strive to maintain his cause in the world.

The following documents of the N. S. Western Association will have an interest for other persons besides the members of that body:

Report on Education.

The prosperity of our Institutions at Wolfville affords cause for gratitude and encouragement. During the collegiate year just closed, sixty-two young men were in attendance, eleven of whom graduated in the early part of the present month. The prospects for the coming year are exceedingly promising.

The withdrawal of the Provincial grant to Acadia College throws upon the friends of the institution an increased financial burden, to make suitable provision for which our denominational wisdom and beneficence will be taxed to the utmost. As an Association we are, in the opinion of your Committee, already pledged to co-operate heartily with our brethren of the Maritime Provinces in endeavoring to meet these enlarged demands.

Our attachment to Acadia College, and our unwillingness to surrender in any measure our denominational control in the management of its affairs, leads us to express approval of the course pursued by the Governors and Alumni of Acadia College, in regarding with disfavor any overtures looking toward University consolidation.

Your Committee regret that the condition of our College treasury renders difficult the adequate sustentation of the Theological Department. We cannot consistently recommend the discontinuance of instruction in this Department; but would rather urge upon all our brethren the necessity of aiding to the utmost Drs. Crawley and Welton in their efforts to raise \$20,000.00 for the permanent endowment of a Theological chair. It affords pleasure to your Committee to report that our Academy and Ladies' Seminary are being efficiently managed, and that the outlook for the next year is favorable. Our young men and young women owe it to themselves to take advantage of the superior facilities afforded by our Institutions at Wolfville for the acquisition of the liberal education demanded by the times. Let our churches and the friends of Education generally give every encouragement in this respect.

Submitted respectfully,

W. H. WARREN, Chairman.

Report on Missions.

Your Committee believe that it is the duty of the Christian church to give the gospel to the heathen, and that we should look upon the success which has attended the labours of our missionaries in India as affording the amplest encouragement to persevere. The reports sent home by the missionaries show that they have been labouring both earnestly and faithfully in their various departments of Christian work.

During the past year, the state of Mrs. Armstrong's health was such as to necessitate a return to her native land. It is a matter of deep regret that both Mr & Mrs. Armstrong have since terminated their connection with the Board of Foreign Missions.

We rejoice, however, in the prospect of the vacancy thus created being supplied at an early date, as Bro. J. R. Hutchinson, of Acadia College, has been engaged by the Foreign Missionary Board, and expects to sail for his distant field of labour in August next.

Our hopes for the triumph of the gospel over idolatry, superstition, and heathenism, are "as bright as the promises of God."

It is very desirable that another man should be placed on the field as soon as the state of the funds will permit.

Your Committee are happy to report that our Home Missions are being carried on with many manifest tokens of the divine blessing. Upwards of 50 souls have been occupied for the whole or part of the year. A goodly number of converts have been baptised. The field of missionary operations in these provinces is wide, and in many parts is "whitening unto the harvest."

In the French Mission Church a good work has been going on; five have been baptised, and the outlook is hopeful.

It remains for our churches to lay the cause of Missions—both Home and Foreign—to heart, and to shew their interest in these by an earnest spirit of prayer on their behalf, and by contributing to their funds to such an extent as shall be commensurate with their needs.

Respectfully submitted,

J. CLARK, Chairman.

Think twice before you believe every evil story you hear, and think twenty times before you repeat it. Say to yourself, "This may not be true, or it may be exaggerated," unless you have proof of the veracity of your informant. Persons sometimes tell falsehoods, they often make mistakes, and they sometimes "hear wrong."

True souls are made brighter by sorrow. The ocean is most phosphorescent after a storm.

Correspondence.

For the Christian Messenger.

Foreign Mission Notes.

Dear Brethren,—

Kindly permit a few words in reference to matters which concern you all. To withhold longer, very justly might be considered a neglect of duty on our part. Consequently, though somewhat removed from our ordinary quiet course, we are constrained to speak what we think. May the spirit of the Master pervade all our communications, so that we be instrumental only in provoking to love and good works.

Evidently our Foreign Missionary operations have reached a point where the machinery does not work sufficiently well to produce entire satisfaction. The creaking indicates friction. Possibly a fresh anointing with the "oil of Grace," would set all right. Let us see. It is much to be regretted, however, that the constraint has become so severe as to cause a wheel to fall out of its appointed place. Possibly there was also a flaw in the wheel, not having been tempered with the rest. A wheel out of place is a very unhappy circumstance, both on account of its impaired usefulness, and the disturbance caused to other portions.

It is certainly the part of wisdom to look into this matter carefully, and if any just cause for disaffection be found, remove it forthwith. The aim of these lines is to assist by reporting the view presented from the eastern side to one pair of eyes, you will bear in mind, doubtless, that 'distance lends enchantment to the view.' The point from which we see an object must needs be taken into account, as well as the way in which the light falls upon it.

A microscope is not required to discern a cause of friction. The unaided eye by taking a careful survey will detect this fact, namely, we have been running too long on a short allowance of oil. There was amply sufficient in the storehouse; but we did not apply it. Now in connection with this neglect, something should be said.

To particularize is not our object; neither to magnify a little into much; but to reduce as far as is consistent with the best interests of the cause.

A BRIEF REVIEW.

In starting on this enterprise, you sent young men, who lacking experience, were under the necessity of making their way as best they could. However well assured you were of their integrity, their adaptedness to the task undertaken could not inspire the fullest confidence. Their fitness could be proved only by the trial. Probably, to the eyes of many, who were not very sanguine, their beards had scarcely grown; nay, even up to date are immature. But whether they have done well or ill thus far is the part of others to say. They are conscious of weakness, errors in judgment, and failure in several respects of attaining the best results. It is certain, however, they have not had their work cut out, and made ready to their hand. The difficulties incident to pioneers have fallen pretty freely to their lot. Their struggles with these have seriously hindered them in evangelistic efforts, and consequently to many who do not appreciate the situation, the missionaries appear at a disadvantage.

Add also the fact that those elected to perform the part of an Executive Committee or Board, were treading new ground. They had neither experience nor precedent to guide; but like the young missionaries must necessarily feel their way along. They held a responsible trust. They must be as economical as possible in the expenditure of mission funds, lest financial embarrassment should cripple our efforts. They have been truly successful in husbanding available funds so as to carry forward the work undertaken. In the absence of any settled policy except that of economy, and the evident desire to accomplish the best results, they have done what in commercial phrase may be termed a safe business. But it appears to me their design has not contemplated enlargement commensurate with the best interests of the cause, both at home and abroad. It seems rather content to work within parallel lines, too well satisfied when the funds already in hand are made to do the best possible service. We mention this as item number two, in accounting for the friction above named.

Having set out, as we supposed, in obedience to our Master's call, we thought we discerned the field awaiting our coming. But Siam only proved a halting station on our course to the Telugus of India. We have often heard it said, "The longest way round is the safest way home." In this case, however, the coming cost time, and money, and severely tried weak faith. "What a loss! say some," Who were to blame for this mistake, the missionaries or the Board, or both? Perhaps further experience will convince all that there really was no mistake. True it was not in our programme. So much the better, if indeed the Lord of the harvest overruled our plans to bring the foreign mission efforts of the Dominion Baptists into co-operation on this northern Telugu field. The history of most foreign mission enterprises furnishes no lack of similar apparently adverse circumstances attending them at the outset. But weak faith becomes weaker, and ardor cools unless there be something to sustain them. Then, too, we remember well that many good brethren were dubious about the propriety of undertaking to plant a mission independently. They rather favored the method followed since the beginning of our Foreign Mission efforts. Of course these could not lend inspiration to this new scheme. When apparently baffled or making doubtful progress, how easy to say, "I told you so. It is about as I thought it would be."

In the midst of this experience, a serious blow falls upon us. Acadia College burns to ashes. Nevertheless, holding the important place she has ever had in the interests of the denomination she could not long remain a ruin. But from her ashes she arises in fairer proportions, greater promise, and enters upon a grander era than the past. But this fire consumed much of the people's money. The reinvesting of our institutions with suitable buildings took much more; and will continue to take for some time to come. This severe loss, and this heavy demand occurring while many of our